

MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



MISITES

SPECIAL EDITION
VOLUME 19 NO. 2



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our annual MiSITES Awards Issue, which is a celebration of excellence, dedication, and the remarkable achievements that inspire us all. In this issue, we honor firms, individuals, and teams whose passion, innovation, and impact have set new standards in the landscape architecture profession. These awards are more than recognition—they're a tribute to the hard work, resilience, and vision that drive progress and uplift our spirits and the communities we work in. As we shine a spotlight on these outstanding honorees, we also celebrate the spirit of collaboration and the shared commitment to making a difference.

If you or your firm have never submitted an award, I hope this issue inspires you to do so next year. Professional awards serve as recognition of excellence, innovation, and dedication within a given field. They not only validate a student's, individual's, or firm's hard work and achievements, but also enhance credibility and reputation among peers, clients, and the broader public. Our awards are meant to inspire continued growth in the profession and motivate others to strive for similar success, fostering a culture of high standards and continuous improvement.

2025: VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2 **MICHIGAN** CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

As once said anonymously, "Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let go", and as I prepare to leave the role as president, I am filled with gratitude, humility, and hope. Serving as your president has been a great honor of my life, and I will forever cherish the trust you placed in me. Together, we faced challenges with courage and pursued progress with conviction. Though my time in this role comes to an end, my belief in the strength, resilience, and promise of our profession remains unwavering. I leave with confidence in the future, knowing that the spirit of unity and purpose that defines us will continue to guide our path forward.

- Vanessa Warren, Chapter President 2024-2025

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SPECIAL THANKS!

Special thanks to the Michigan Chapter Awards Chair Stacey Tobar and the Awards Committee for coordinating recognition, and to the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter ASLA for jurying the awards of 2025.



Michigan Chapter of ASLA



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GENERAL DESIGN - LARGE PROJECT - HONOR

OTTAWA SANDS COUNTY PARK

FERRYSBURG, MICHIGAN

VIRIDIS Design Group & David Yocca, FASLA, PLA

At the confluence of the Grand River and Lake Michigan in West Michigan, Ottawa Sands County Park is a remarkable transformation of a 345-acre post-industrial sand mine site into a resilient public landscape rooted in ecological restoration, innovative outdoor recreation, and inclusive regional access. The landscape architecture team partnered closely with Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission to develop a comprehensive, community-driven master plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first phase, the Idema Explorer's Campground, brings this ambitious vision to life with site-sensitive design that integrates native habitat restoration, diverse overnight accommodations, seamless trail and water connections, and universal accessibility.

Located in Ferrysburg, Michigan, Ottawa Sands County Park is part of a rare freshwater dune and wetland system bordering Lake Michigan and the Grand River. Decades of industrial sand mining degraded the site, leaving behind steep slopes, compacted soils, and fragmented habitats. A 60-acre inland lake, formed by excavation, now anchors the site, surrounded by open dunes, early successional woodlands, and wetland pockets. Acquired by Ottawa County Parks in 2018, the site is envisioned not only as a standalone park but as a key destination within the Grand River Greenway—a 36-mile network connecting Lake Michigan to the City of Grand Rapids through protected lands, multi-use trails, and water routes.

A Collective Community Visioning Plan:

Through the collaborative efforts of the master planning process, a clear vision emerged for the future of Ottawa Sands County Park—one rooted in restoration, recreation, and regional identity. The following core goals shaped

the foundation of the master plan and guided the design of its first built phase, the Idema Explorer's Campground.

1. ECOLOGICAL HEALTH: Restore and Protect the Site's Unique Ecological Features.

Ecological restoration is the project's defining value. In response to community input, only 8% of the park's 345-acres was designated for redevelopment, with those areas carefully selected based on the most heavily impacted zones from the former sand mining operation. The approach focuses on reestablishing interconnected natural systems historically native to the site to manage stormwater, build habitat, and strengthen resilience.



THE SAG







2. UNIQUE DESTINATION: Offer Diverse Overnight Accommodations to Engage a Wider Range of Visitors. The master plan positions Ottawa Sands County Park as a distinctive regional destination, offering rare immersion in nature despite its proximity to adjacent residential, industrial, and urban areas. Its large inland lake, diverse ecosystems, and links to Lake Michigan, the Grand River, and regional trails create a rich visitor experience. The plan introduces an accessible day-use trailhead, an accessible lake trail loop, a barrier-free non-motorized watercraft launch, consolidated camping areas, and connected recreation zones—all designed to preserve ecological integrity while enhancing visitor engagement.

The Idema Explorer's Campground redefines public camping in Michigan, offering year-round immersive, comfortable accommodations integrated within the unique dunal landscape. The intent of the campground is to cater to

a different audience, specifically non-motorized users of the Grand River Greenway bike and water trail system, making Ottawa Sands County Park a truly unique destination in West Michigan.

3. COASTAL CONNECTION: Enhance Access to Water and Trail Networks.

Ottawa Sands County Park serves as a critical link within the expanding Grand River Greenway. The design supports regional connectivity for paddlers, bikers, runners, and walkers of all abilities.

4. EDUCATION & AWARENESS: Create Welcoming, Accessible Facilities that Foster Environmental Understanding.

Equity, accessibility, and environmental education are central to Ottawa Sands County Park's vision. The landscape architects incorporated universal design to create inclusive experiences for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, while also promoting the landscape as a living classroom. Interpretive and educational elements throughout the park promote awareness of its unique ecosystems, history, and restoration efforts.

LEGACY AND IMPACT

Since opening, the Idema Explorer's Campground has received enthusiastic reviews from visitors and stakeholders, boosting park visitation and public interest in the broader master plan. The campground exemplifies how landscape architecture can unite ecological restoration with design innovation and inclusive recreation. Ottawa Sands County Park is a model for post-industrial reclamation—grounded in ecological principles and responsive to community needs—showcasing the power of collaboration among public agencies, designers, and communities committed to restoration, access, and long-term stewardship.

The Ottawa Sands County Park Master Plan and the Idema Explorer's Campground represent a forward-thinking approach to landscape architecture grounded in regenerative design, inclusive community input, and a commitment to reconnecting people with a once-industrial landscape. The master plan sparked enthusiasm and built momentum, raising public awareness and serving as a powerful catalyst for attracting philanthropic, State, and Federal funding to realize the vision for Phase 1. The result is an extraordinary built landscape that honors ecological systems, redefines the camping experience, and demonstrates how thoughtful design can lead to lasting transformation. •

GENERAL DESIGN - LARGE PROJECT - MERIT

THE RINK AT STINE COMMUNITY PARK

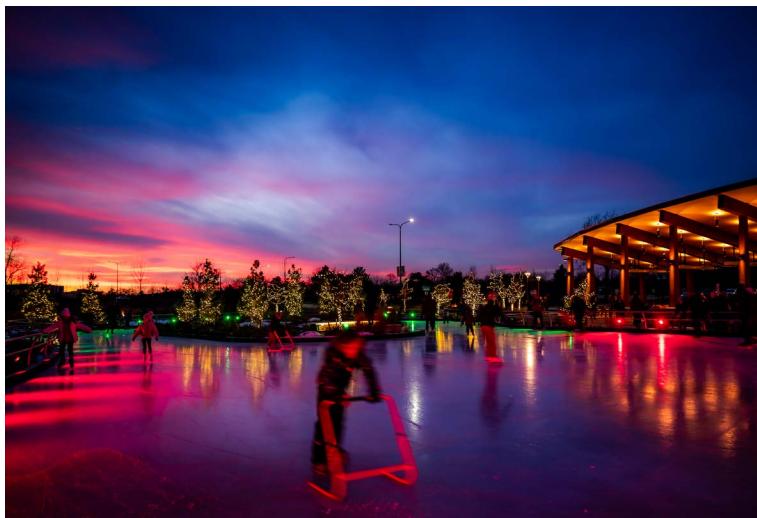
TROY, MICHIGAN

OHM Advisors

The concept for the Pavilion and Skating Ribbon at Jeanne Stine Community Park was born out of a multi-year collaborative design process that started by re-imagining an underutilized parking lot in a prime location within the City of Troy's municipal district. After transforming the lot into a flexible space for events and activities, the city was able to secure a \$1.5M Community Project Funding Grant to further its vision for the district by transforming the adjacent land into a year-round play destination for the community. The new park, completed in 2024, centers around a 7,850 SF mass timber pavilion, an 11,000 SF refrigerated skating ribbon, 670 SF Zamboni storage building, 1,000 SF music pavilion, and ample seating and gathering areas. Carefully selected landscaping throughout the park complements the surrounding environment, including a watercourse and county drain, while numerous pathways enhance site connectivity and outside connections to recreational opportunities within the city's municipal district.

The theme “Consistency Through Nature” was the concept developed for the project, elevating the use of naturally and locally occurring materials and plantings, emphasizing the beauty of the State of Michigan materials. The design approach emphasized the following:

- Native and drought-tolerant plant selection
- Habitat creation
- Stormwater conveyance, management, filtering, and infiltration
- Regionally sourced material selection
- Invasive species treatment and eradication
- Creek riparian buffer restoration and creek water temperature reduction
- Minimizing use of fertilizers and herbicides, limiting turfgrass
- Mindful lighting element selection and dark sky programming.





Images courtesy of OHM Advisors



Images courtesy of Smith Group

GENERAL DESIGN - MEDIUM PROJECT - MERIT

DOWNTOWN ANN ARBOR BIKE LOOP

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

SmithGroup

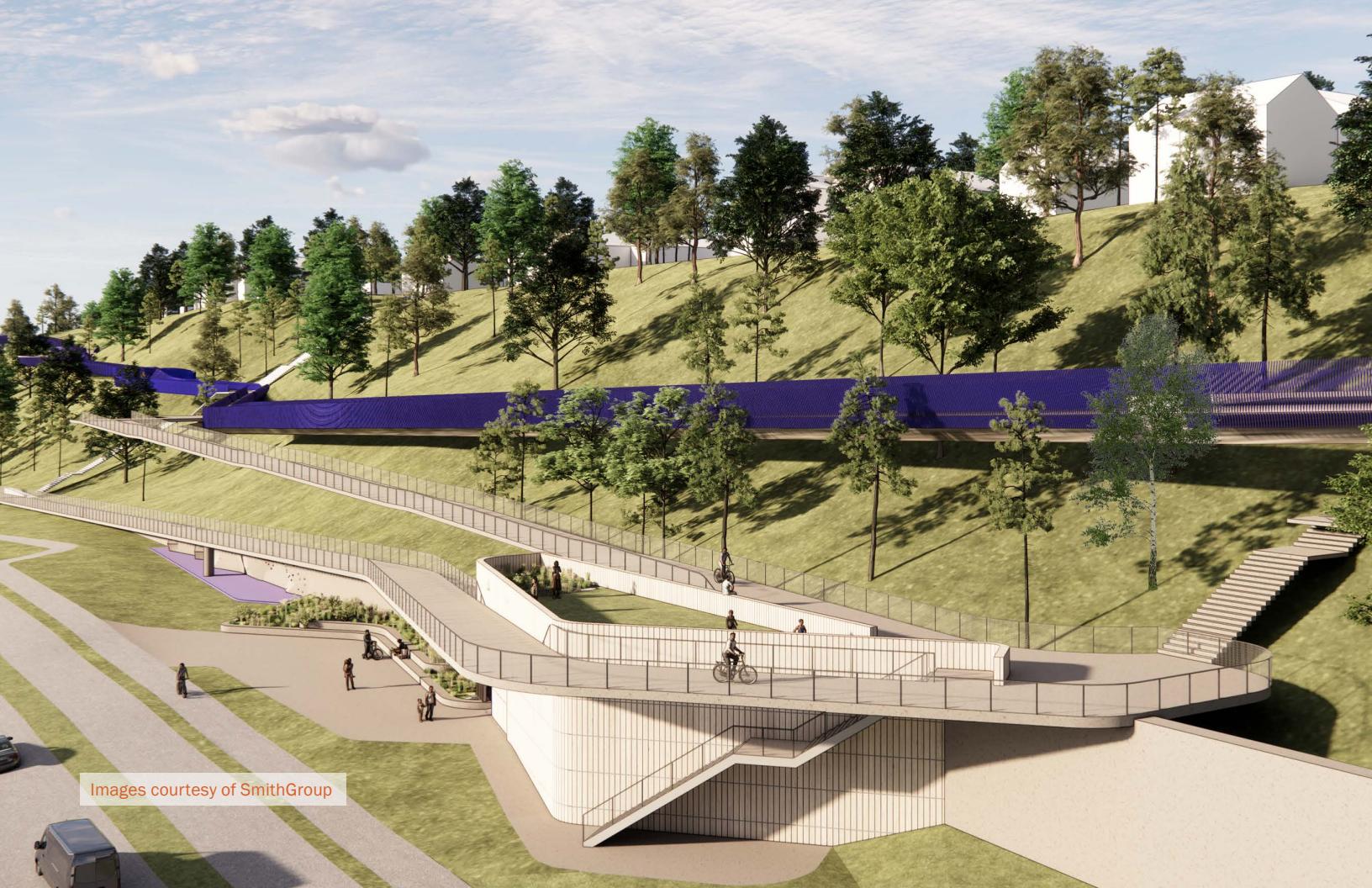
Downtown Ann Arbor is a vibrant and thriving part of the community that hosts a range of commercial uses, businesses, civic institutions (including the University of Michigan), and a growing resident population. As downtown uses intensify, the importance of sustainability, affordability, and equity has heightened, as has the desire to provide a range of mobility options for all people.

The City of Ann Arbor, led by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), initiated the People-Friendly Street program to plan, design, build, and maintain downtown streets in a manner that supports access and safety for all people, regardless of their mode of travel. This program required assembling a coherent vision for how to manage all modes of travel through the downtown, identifying priority projects, and guiding the eventual implementation to improve safety and access.

A central element of the People-Friendly Street program was planning and constructing a downtown “bikeway loop” of separated two-way bicycle facilities. This loop was planned so nearly every block within the DDA district was within 1-2 blocks of the bikeways. Implementation of the bikeway loop required a significant re-imagining of the downtown transportation network, including roadway “right-sizing”, restoring one-way pairs back to two-way traffic, adjustments to curbside lanes (parking and loading), signals, and wayfinding.

Since construction completed, usage and safety data has shown a significant increase in the number of bicycle trips into the downtown (supporting the City’s mode-shift goals) and improved safety outcomes for all users of the street. •





Images courtesy of SmithGroup

UNBUILT WORKS - MERIT

DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS HILL & RIVER GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

SmithGroup

The Downtown Grand Rapids Hill and River Network is a 14.6-acre urban design initiative launched in 2021 to enhance non-vehicular connectivity between the riverfront, Belknap Hill, and surrounding neighborhoods. Led by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., the project emphasizes equity, safety, and community engagement, translating decades of public input into three key projects.

The Division Street Improvements (5.8 acres) reimagine a half-mile corridor by merging Division Street and Ionia Avenue into a multimodal route. This redesign prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists with protected lanes, green infrastructure, and public amenities, transforming the northern gateway into a vibrant, inclusive space. Belknap Hillside Park (8.2 acres) reconnects the Belknap neighborhood atop a 100-foot bluff with the Grand River below. The centerpiece is “The Ribbon,” a gently sloped, elevated ramp designed for accessibility and environmental sensitivity. It offers a nature-immersive experience with rest areas and playful, wildlife-inspired features, promoting active living and community connection. The Underpass (0.6 acres) transforms a neglected space beneath I-196 into a dynamic pedestrian and bike corridor. Featuring murals, sculptures, programmable lighting, and soundscapes, the underpass becomes a sensory-rich public art experience. Forest-inspired artwork and native plantings create a strong connection to nature, while accessible design elements ensure the space is immersive and welcoming to all. Together, these projects redefine the infrastructure as inclusive, artful, and ecologically responsible public space that fosters connectivity, creativity, and community in downtown Grand Rapids. •



PLANNING & ANALYSIS - MERIT

BELLE ISLE PARK MULTIMODAL PLAN

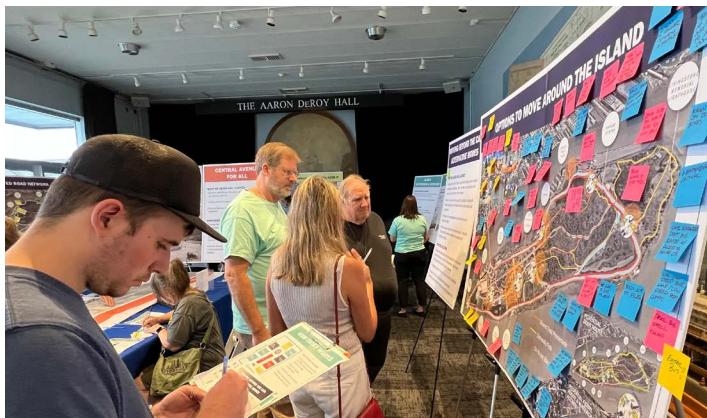
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Wade Trim

The historic Belle Isle Park, a 982-acre island in the Detroit River, has seen a significant rise in visitors since becoming a state park in 2014. Congestion at the lone entry and exit point, MacArthur Bridge, combined with confusing road networks and multimodal facilities, hinder access and travel for over 5 million annual visitors. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation and Belle Isle Conservancy, initiated a study to develop the Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Plan to improve safety and mobility throughout the park. The project team shepherded the study and plan development, coordinating priorities with state agencies, local organizations, and the public.

The study that began the effort acquired thousands of data points to understand the extent of activity on Belle Isle. Hundreds of cameras placed at popular park destinations, aerial photography used to create orthomosaic image maps, traffic modeling, and other methods identified improvement needs. Stakeholder and community engagement were crucial to establish clear communication, gather input, and align project goals with vendors, agencies, over 100 stakeholder groups, and the community.

The resulting 10-year phased plan features major actions that include addressing nonmotorized network gaps, improving wayfinding, and prioritizing pedestrian safety. Focus was also placed on optimizing parking; enhancing bike lanes and pedestrian pathways; and exploring shuttle and ferry services. The visionary, obtainable plan aims to keep this iconic park accessible, sustainable, and enjoyable for future generations. •





Images courtesy of Wade Trim



Images courtesy of SmithGroup

PLANNING & ANALYSIS - MERIT

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY PHYSICAL MASTER PLAN

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

SmithGroup

Since its founding in 1887, NC State has grown into the largest university in the Carolinas with an expansive reach across five campuses and two field labs. With an initial planning goal to create 'One Campus' with centralized programs and services, it became clear through stakeholder feedback that a paradigm shift was needed to more effectively support an equitable approach to success. In response, a polycentric campus framework was established to create a series of Neighborhood Hubs to foster vibrancy, improve interdisciplinary collaboration, increase cross-campus connectivity, and enhance alignment with the university's 'think and do' mission.

To ensure successful implementation, the Plan introduces a bold, actionable decision-making framework. This framework was the result of extensive campus-wide input to identify a more effective process to prioritize and implement projects. The new process will help NC State achieve the following goals: 1) ensure the most transformative projects are prioritized, 2) promote an inclusive process, encompassing input from diverse perspectives, 3) ensure strategic criteria is used for prioritization, and 4) report results in a transparent way so campus stakeholders understand the status of all potential projects.

Over a year after the Plan's completion, it is a guiding force for campus development, both through the Plan's guiding principles and the formation of the new Campus Development Committee that offers a transparent process to guide the high-impact construction, renovation, and infrastructure projects with budgets over \$4 million. •



BOOTH PARK

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

Dul Design

With the passage of a multimillion-dollar recreational bond issue and identified in the city of Birmingham's Recreational Master Plan, the underutilized Booth Park was targeted for a major redevelopment. The site sits on a 5-acre parcel adjacent to Birmingham's Central Business District on the east and bordered by the Holy Name neighborhood to the west. Since its use as an interurban railroad station at the turn of the century, this site sat empty and underutilized for decades.

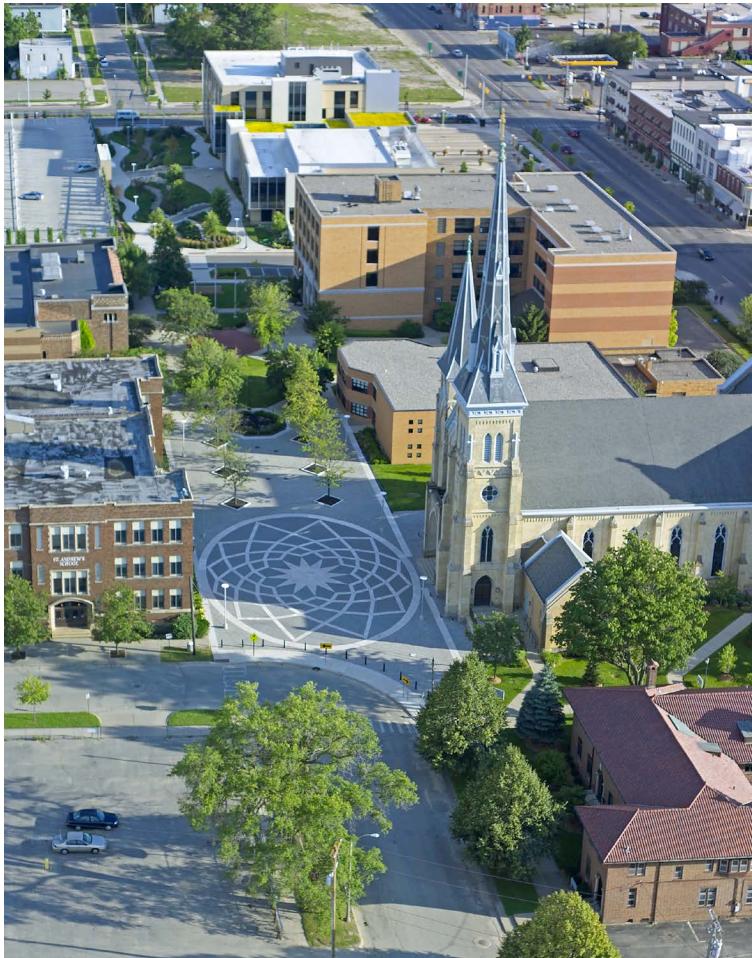
The landscape architect led the dynamic transformation with a bold and creative grading concept that made way for integrated play areas with grade-level changes, an open lawn sledding hill/amphitheater, and a riverbank treatment/trail system. Tunnels, footbridges, rolling lawn waves, undulating retaining walls, an artificial turf hill, and various playscapes were sculpted in the earth in a way that excites children and encourages year-round activity. A labyrinth garden features granite monoliths, promoting imaginative play and connection with nature. The landscape architect utilized excess fill for the construction of a sledding hill that doubles as an amphitheater for summer movies and concerts. A porous gravel path system connects the park with the trailhead along the river's edge, while a rain garden and coir fiber rolls stabilize the riverbank.

After over 15 years of use this largest Birmingham Park has proved itself to be a community favorite and is an important community landmark that is a magnet for play, recreation, concerts, and a respite from the stresses of life. Equally important is the community interface with its natural resources including the open space, river, vegetation, and the Rouge River Greenway system. •





Images courtesy of Dul Design



LEGACY - MERIT

CATHEDRAL SQUARE GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Dul Design

Cathedral Square is a transformative urban redevelopment project in the Heartside District of downtown Grand Rapids. It unifies three cornerstone Catholic institutions—Catholic Central High School, St. Andrew Grade School, and the historic St. Andrew Cathedral—into a thoughtfully integrated, walkable campus that enhances both accessibility and community connection. The design ensures the campus blends naturally into the existing surrounding urban landscape of the downtown area.

Inspired by the vision of the Bishop of Grand Rapids, the project centers on a new 100,000 square foot Diocesan Center. This modern facility brings together a wide range of diocesan services, including administrative offices, a community pharmacy, meeting and conference areas, and various ministries and outreach programs. By housing these functions in one centralized location, the Diocese aims to increase efficiency and collaboration while also strengthening its service to the broader public.

Beyond consolidation, the project serves a greater purpose: to stimulate the revitalization and connection of the downtown neighborhood. Cathedral Square was designed not only as a religious and educational hub, but as a vibrant, sustainable destination that promotes cultural engagement, social services, and community well-being. Through thoughtful planning and inclusive design, the development aspires to create a positive lasting impact year over year.

For years, Cathedral Square has continued to demonstrate the lasting power of visionary planning. It has matured into a thriving campus that anchors faith, education, and service, nurturing a sense of place, that continues to shape the community today and for years to come. •



Images courtesy of Dul Design

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS



This award recognizes people other than landscape architects whose achievements or influence have provided notable service to the profession of landscape architecture.

JOHN IACOANGELI

CHAPTER HONOR AWARD

This year's honor award goes to Planner John Iacoangeli of Beckett & Raeder, Inc. Because John's contributions to the landscape architecture profession have been so fundamental, many assume he's a landscape architect—but he's a professional planner through and through. He leads his firm in advising communities on growth, development, and revitalization, guiding transformative projects that blend strategic vision with a deep commitment to place. In the dance between urban planning and landscape architecture, collaboration is essential to harmonize vision—and John does this effortlessly, bridging disciplines to shape resilient, vibrant spaces. His knack for fostering partnerships, navigating complex challenges, and championing innovative solutions has left an indelible mark on our profession. Please join me in celebrating John Iacoangeli's outstanding achievement and this well-deserved honor.



This award recognizes a significant current or past chapter member that makes contributions to the Society and to our profession through volunteerism and education. This individual gives time and resources year after year and encourages others to volunteer within the Society and the community to spread the profession of landscape architecture.

CLARE JAGENOW

CHAPTER DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD

This year's award goes to Past President Clare Jagenow of SmithGroup. Clare is being honored for her tireless leadership on the Fellows Committee, which this year yielded two honorees from our chapter. Serving as Committee Chair demands exceptional organization, outstanding writing and verbal skills, and an in-depth understanding of the Fellows application and review process—qualities Clare brings to every task. Her dedication, expertise, and commitment to excellence have not only elevated our chapter's profile but also inspired all who work alongside her. Please join me in congratulating Clare Jagenow on this well-deserved recognition.



This award will honor a landscape architect in the first ten years of their career for significant contributions or significant works of design.

BOYU ZHAO

CHAPTER EMERGING PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

This year's volunteer award goes to Boyu Zhao, Associate with OHM Advisors. Boyu partnered with both the Conference Committee and the Executive Committee to reimagine our event graphics. Moving away from the traditional look, he delivered edgy, fun, and eye-catching designs that seemed effortless. His creativity elevated the conference experience and set a new standard for our chapter's visual identity.

At OHM Advisors, Boyu brings his design expertise and collaborative spirit to every project. He routinely makes time to mentor colleagues and share tips that help others sharpen their own skills. We're confident his passion and talent will continue to benefit our chapter and the profession at large. Please join me in congratulating Boyu Zhao on this well-deserved recognition.



This award will be given to a firm selected for continued outstanding design and support of our profession.

OCBA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

CHAPTER OUTSTANDING FIRM OF THE YEAR

Since 1964, OCBA Landscape Architects has delivered award-winning projects that conserve resources while creating beauty and a strong sense of place. Their innovative designs enhance connectivity to natural areas, fostering both mental well-being and physical health for the communities they serve. As a woman-owned and -run firm, OCBA builds enduring partnerships with clients and stakeholders, championing sustainable stewardship and inclusive collaboration at every scale. Please join me in celebrating OCBA.

The Michigan Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects has established an annual tradition of presenting professional honors. These awards recognize Chapter members who have shown dedication and made significant contributions to the profession or to the Chapter in the past year.

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STUDENT AWARDS - GENERAL DESIGN - HONOR

THE FUTURE FAIRWAY

ROCHESTER HILLS, MICHIGAN

Alice Finlan, Michigan State University

Since its beginning, golf has steadily increased in popularity, ranking as one of the top 10 most played sports in the world with nearly 40,000 golf courses globally, 16,000 located in the United States. Despite this abundance of courses, many, including Black Heath Golf Course in Rochester Hills, Michigan, have fallen behind modern expectations, both in sustainability and player engagement.

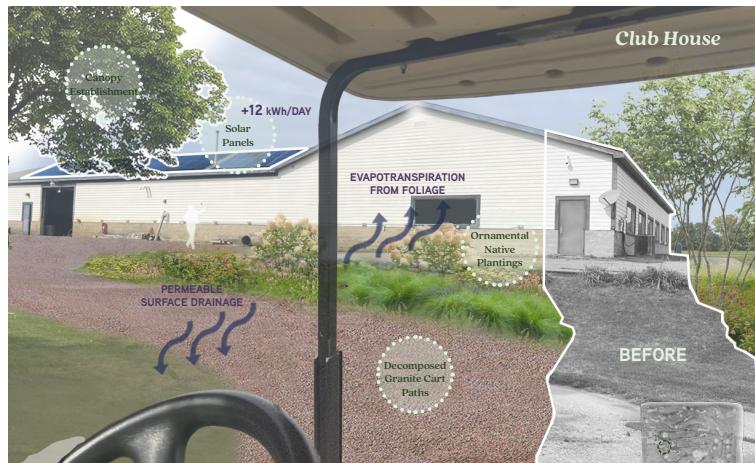
Today, golfers have started to place value not just on playability, but immersive, meaningful experiences connected to place, history, and ecology. This project reimagines Black Heath as a course that honors the game's rich legacy while looking toward a more resilient future. Inspired by golf's evolution through time, this redesign features a historical timeline-themed layout, with each hole representing a different era in golf's development, from its Scottish origins to modern innovations. Interpretive design elements, native planting palettes, and era-specific features create a narrative journey that engages players physically and intellectually.

Beyond storytelling, the course addresses outdated ecological practices with sustainable solutions: reduced-maintenance, native habitat restoration, efficient irrigation, and low-emission operations. These strategies lower environmental impacts while enhancing course aesthetics, diversity, and long-term viability.

This proposal stands out for its fusion of experimental design and ecological responsibility, offering players a game enriched with history, context, and environmental awareness. It elevates the golf experience from routine recreation to immersive education. •



Fairway Design

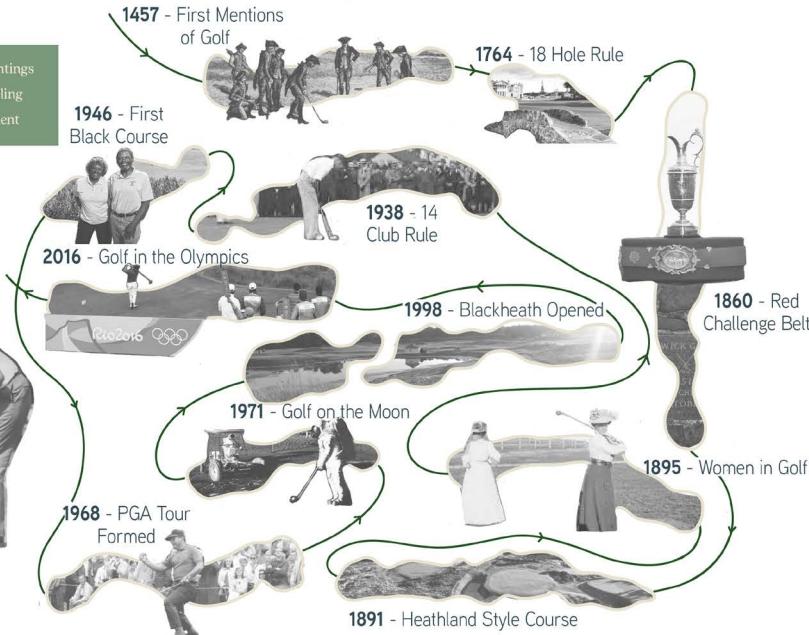


Club House

Goals



Influence



Design

1457 - Commemorative state of King James II
1764 - St. Andrews bridge replica
1860 - Red themed planting beds
1891 - English style gazebo & plants
1895 - Native grass plantings
1938 - 14 native plant varieties
1946 - Bill Powell memorial bench
1968 - Elevated 'Crows Nest' viewing deck
1971 - White planting beds & flag assembly
1998 - Heathland style grass plantings
2016 - Olympic color themed planting

Stepping Through Time

1457 King James 11 Commerative Statue (H1)

1764 Bridge Replica (H2)

1860 Red Themed Planting (H4)

1891 English Gazebo & Plantings (H5)

1895 Native Grass Plantings (H6)

1938 14 Plant Varieties (H8)

1946 Powell Memorial Bench (H10)

1968 "Crows Nest" Viewing Deck (H13)

1971 White Plantings & Flag Assemb. (H14)

1998 Heathland Grass Plantings (H17)

2016 Olympic Color Plantings (H18)





LANDSCAPE FORMS CAMPUS RENEWAL

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Jess Le, Ava Yon, and Ryan Patterson,
Michigan State University

This project for Landscape Forms' campus expansion in Kalamazoo, Michigan, reflects a thoughtful balance between environmental responsibility and the creation of meaningful spaces for people. Our objective was to design a workplace that not only supports the company's continued growth but enhances the everyday experience of its employees. Through outdoor spaces that encourage connection with the landscape, we designed to elevate Landscape Forms' values of "design, culture, craft." The design introduces a variety of spaces that support wellness and interaction, including a boardwalk trail system, a terraced mound lounge, a flexible event plaza, and recreational features like a basketball court.

BREAK DECK



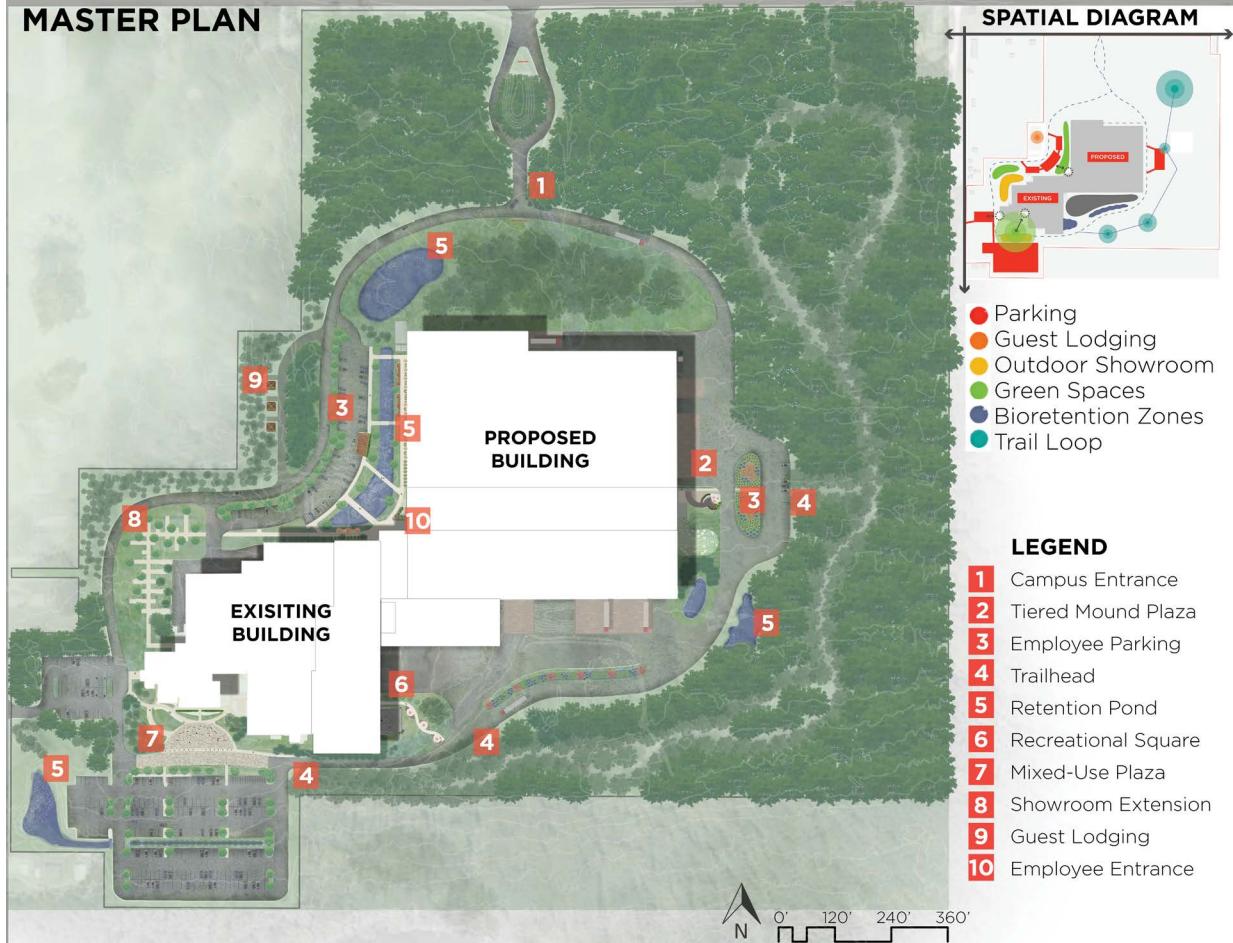
These areas were developed in direct response to conversations with employees and reflect the company's values of innovation, care, and community. At the same time, sustainability guided every major design decision. We addressed stormwater on-site through a series of retention and detention ponds that align with the site's natural topography, reduce runoff, and create moments of natural beauty. Native plantings throughout the site promote biodiversity and reduce maintenance needs, while materials salvaged during construction, such as fallen trees and excavated soil, were reused to minimize environmental impact.

By integrating environmental systems with spaces that invite people to gather, relax, and explore, this project exemplifies the kind of forward-thinking, sustainable landscape that supports both ecological health and human well-being. It aligns with the mission of ASLA by demonstrating how landscape architecture can elevate the workplace and strengthen the relationship between people and the environment. •

BIORETENTION POND



MASTER PLAN



UNDER THE SURFACE

FLINT, MICHIGAN

John Benedetto, Anna Barry, Macy Compson, Josh Kuhowski, Michigan State University

Chevy Commons County Park, once a General Motors manufacturing site, has long since been a landscape full of potential. Efforts from stakeholders restored the land seen as damaged and forgotten—reclaiming it for the community as a symbol of renewal. By analyzing what is on, above, and Under the Surface at Chevy Commons, this project recognizes resiliency and highlights shared purpose for a stronger Flint, Michigan.

Now a growing green space along the Flint River, our design digs into the site's industrial past and erects historic monuments creative materials and educational opportunities, honoring Flint's labor history while turning the page toward an ever-evolving community.

After exploring what is Under the Surface at the site, our team implemented a diverse landscape which invites residents to move, interact, and express themselves throughout an essential urban corridor. Made possible by bringing the site's history to the surface alongside accessible event space, and multimodal recreation.

People of all abilities and backgrounds discover for themselves what is Under the Surface at Chevy Commons with the help of storytelling through art, architecture, and the natural environment. Understanding of what is beneath where we live, work, and play strengthens culture and sense of place. Once a place of separation, Under the Surface shows what is possible when history is acknowledged, nature is restored, and community comes together. •



- MOVEMENT** 4 ACTIVITY INSTALLATIONS
- EXPRESSION** 3 ADDITIONAL ART AREAS
- CORRIDOR** OVER 3/4 MILE LONG CENTRAL CORRIDOR
- INTERACTION** 12 NEW GATHERING SPACES
- ECO IMMERSION** STRONG FOCUS ON NATIVE SPECIES
- HISTORY** ENHANCED HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



ENVISIONING SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS GARDENS

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

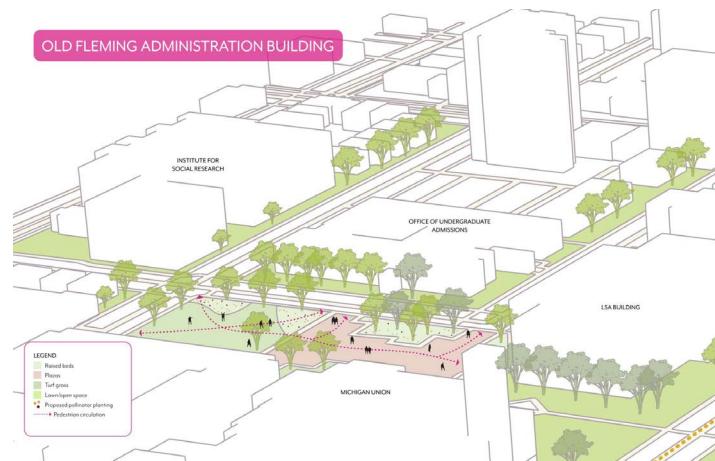
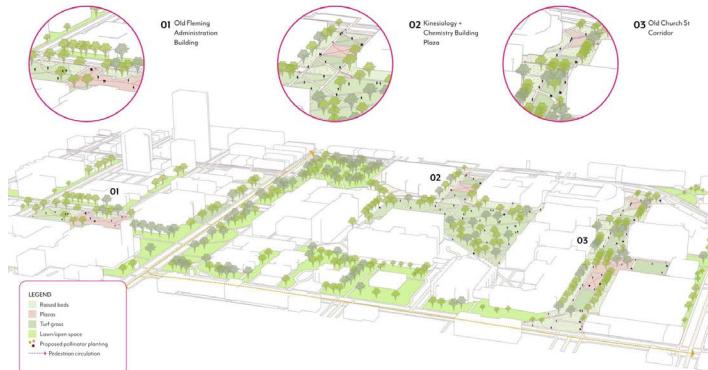
Kaia McKenney, University of Michigan

Design proposals for this project re-envision key landscapes and places on the University of Michigan Ann Arbor campus. These proposals seek to remake the campus environment in a manner that respects the culture and history of the university while elevating its ecological function and educational value. Recognizing that there are currently green “deserts” on campus that are covered in English Ivy, unused areas of turf, or impermeable surfaces, this project identifies these areas and provides new designs that respond to climate change, respect the local ecology of, and impacts of microclimates on campus. The project scope also seeks to illustrate how the landscape itself could function as an educational component at the university, exposing

thousands of students, staff, faculty and visitors to an aesthetic that is vastly more sustainable, ecological, visually interesting, and less energy intensive.

This project also extends to suggesting ways in which buildings may be incorporated into the campus plan, such as green roofs to address stormwater and adjacent plantings to reduce heat gain in buildings. The design incorporates a respect for U-M’s campus environment as a place of gathering, heightened social and educational expression, and how the aesthetics of a college campus send messages about the place, its mission, and what is important to the institution. •

GREEN + CAMPUS COMMUNITY NODES | CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS



FLEMING PLAZA | RE-IMAGINED

- A. Proposed planter bed w/ seat wall
- B. Side lawn
- C. Main lawn
- D. Side lawn
- E. Proposed planter bed w/ seat wall
- F. Street planters
- G. Existing planter bed
- H. Existing planter bed
- I. Existing planter bed
- J. Proposed seating area



STUDENT HONOR AWARDS

GRACE DENSHAM *

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, BLA '25, MED '26



Grace is committed to a community-driven, sustainable, empathetic, and delicious future through foodscapes. She will graduate with a specialization in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Spring 2026. Post-graduation, Grace aims to work alongside historically marginalized and curious communities exploring foodscape design. Guided by community experts, she strives for gardens that focus on native plant palettes and ecological design while balancing the needs of people and wildlife.

DANIEL LIM

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, MLA '25



Daniel earned his degree in 2025. His favorite projects as a student were designing floating breakwaters as coastal resilience infrastructure for South Portland, Maine and designing an agroecological farm and food hub on the island of Molokai, Hawai'i. Daniel is passionate about plant-forward designs that heal degraded landscapes, particularly projects that partner with Indigenous communities and center their traditional ecological knowledge. Daniel is excited to start his new career as a landscape designer at Anthropopolis, a New Mexico-based landscape architecture and urban planning firm.

KAMMER OFFENHAUSER

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, MLA '25



Kammer is a former community organizer, permaculture practitioner and organic farmer turned multidisciplinary ecological designer. He uses drones and other field-data collection methodologies to support design and decision making. He is continuing his design career with Perimeter Landscape Architecture while remaining dedicated to discover opportunities at the intersection of broad acre productive landscapes, ecological restoration and conservation.

ANNABELLA BARRY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, BLA '25



Annabella is graduating in 2025 and is passionate about naturalistic planting design and creative approaches to spatial design challenges. She has enjoyed working for MCSA Group and Drost Landscape throughout college as well as leading the design and install of a new public butterfly garden in Dearborn. She is extremely grateful to the Landscape Architecture program at MSU for challenging her to grow every semester. Annabella is hoping to start her career off in lakefront residential design. Her dream job is to own a botanical wedding venue.

NOT SHOWN: MACY COMPSON, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT MERIT AWARDS

JOHN BENEDETTO

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, MLA '25, MURP '26



With one semester left, John is excited to graduate from Michigan State University's Landscape Architecture program and continue studies in Urban and Regional Planning. This summer he is gaining valuable professional experience at Nederveld Inc. as a Land Planning Intern. His favorite thing about being a landscape architecture student is the travel opportunities including study abroad and trips to the ASLA conferences. He believes that exploring and experiencing life in diverse places is the best way to learn how to design for sustainable futures.

CHRISTINA CONTRERAS *

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, MLA '25, MSEJ '25, MSESMS '25



Christina earned an MLA and a M.S. in Environmental Justice and Ecosystem Science & Management in 2025. She also holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado Denver and a B.S. in Geological and Environmental Sciences from Stanford University. Her studies have deepened her understanding of what it means to be from and of a place. Christina is currently focused on her project, Growing a Piro Indigenous Kinship Garden, which intertwines Indigenous memories, stories, research, art, and ecology to grow a living expression of Indigenous kinship.

KATE WILLARD

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, BLA '25



Kate is passionate about designing spaces that foster community, sustainability, and creativity, with favorite projects exploring the intersection of public space and cultural identity. She is proud of her work activating underutilized sites with inclusive, experience-driven concepts. She plans to pursue a career in experiential landscape design and creative placemaking within urban cities. Her experiences with community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration have shaped how she approaches design—with empathy, innovation, and a deep respect for people and place.

RACHEL KERR

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, MLA '25, MS '26



Growing up in Michigan, Rachel has a strong passion and love for the native plants in the Great Lakes States. This led her to explore how to combine her masters degrees in environmental planning and policy and landscape architecture to create ecologically sound and aesthetically pleasing designs for humans and wildlife. Since graduating, Rachel will continue to explore this intersection of humans and nature at Wade Trim in Detroit where she will be an incoming landscape architect. Her goal for her career is to improve the everyday landscape experiences for people, plants, and animals.

* DENOTES 2025 OLMSTED SCHOLAR

MICHIGAN CHAPTER ASLA FOUNDATION

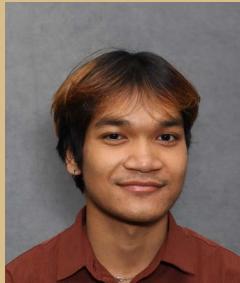
The MIASLA DEI scholarship was created to support students from historically under-represented demographics to aid in the development of a more diverse and inclusive generation of future leaders in the profession of landscape architecture. Student applications are open December to March. Awardees are selected on the basis of involvement in ASLA, resume, and their essay.

JAKOBI JOHNSON



Jakobi is a senior at MSU, pursuing a BLA with a minor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies. She is also a first-year MED student, focusing on the impact of blue spaces on public health. Her passion stems from an appreciation and an understanding of the essential role communities play in shaping landscapes through their daily activities and interaction. Her goal is to work at the intersection of public health and design, designing landscapes that support resilience, well-being, and environmental restoration.

THUN KSOR



Thun is a first-generation college student from Charlotte, North Carolina, and has roots that trace back to the highlands of Vietnam. A sophomore at MSU, Thun is pursuing a BLA degree and aspiring to continue through the Master of Arts in Environmental Design dual degree program. Thun is passionate about creating sustainable outdoor spaces that enhance the quality of life for communities, ensuring that these environments are not only functional but also enjoyable for all who use them.

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