MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1



F+S

# Cyrca Bollard

A design-forward barrier that elevates the everyday.

#### Chris Thomas Senior Territory M

Senior Territory Manager, Michigan chris.thomas@forms-surfaces.com 574.250.8030

forms-surfaces.com



THE MILAN COLLECTION Dine alfresco on the roof terrace or along the avenue.





VICTORSTANLEY.COM

Contact Jamie McArdle at jamiem@victorstanley.com



2025: VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings! This quarter has been quite busy, and I want to share some updates. We remain dedicated to assisting our members and the profession in navigating the impacts of the new administration, both at the national and local levels.

On a local note, many of you may have heard that our professional license was explicitly mentioned in a LARA Strategic Plan for potential review aimed at elimination based on a survey they conducted. Several of our members participated in this survey, and there is no evident correlation between the findings and the proposed elimination of our license, raising questions about the origin of this idea. The plan included minimal discussion beyond a single statement, and we are collaborating with our lobbyist and the National ASLA to closely monitor this potential regulatory reform. As many of you know, this year's Chapter Annual Conference, "Stories from the Soil," will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, starting **on September 10**. Our team diligently works to provide members with high-quality learning and networking opportunities. I want to put out a special invite to members to attend, as we will be using this forum to develop the chapter's strategic plan. Chapter leaders will solicit ideas and brainstorm with our membership to provide the foundation for an updated strategic plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you again. The Michigan Chapter is strong and has passionate, intelligent members, and I am honored to represent you. I hope to see you all at this year's conference. Kind regards,

Vanessa V. Warren, PLA, ASLA President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 LAF Deb Mitchell Research Grant: Visualizing Thermal Disparities
- 11 National ASLA Response to Current Issues
- 14 Playscapes Through the Years: Adapting Outdoor Spaces for Growth and Learning
- 16 Promoting Landscape Architecture to Young Black People and People of Color
- 20 Michigan ASLA Governmental Affairs Report

### LOOKING FOR CEUs?

Email education@michiganasla.org for resources and consider attending the 2025 Michigan ASLA Annual Conference.



# LAF DEB MITCHELL RESEARCH GRANT: VISUALIZING THERMAL DISPARITIES Keenan Gibbons, ASLA, LEED GA, FAA Part 107 | SmithGroup, University of Michigan

Extreme heat is the leading cause of natural disaster-related deaths in the US, more than all other categories combined (Berko, 2014). In summer 2024, the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) released our new <u>Thermal Toolkit</u> for the LAF and their sacred <u>Deb Mitchell Research Grant</u> which is aimed at the innovation and advancement of landscape architecture. The toolkit is comprehensive at 150 pages. In the following truncated article, I highlight two critical components therein: the foundational geospatial analysis produced by my LAF research partner and friend, Salvador Lindquist, combined with the novel drone methodology I developed to study heat islands back in 2018. We are an open book when it comes to idea sharing. The goal is to generate scalable tools and raise awareness that leverages more resilient cities and reduces heat-induced mortality.



#### GIS / LANDSAT CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

To posture this study, Professor Salvador Lindquist of the University of Nebraska, collaborated with the City of Omaha to develop maps that reveal and analyze thermal disparities across the city. The project used Landsat 8 satellite imagery and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data, beginning in two undergraduate design studios before being further developed independently by Lindquist.

The research was part of a larger effort with the City of Omaha Planning Department to create a Heat Resilience Plan, which complemented their ongoing Climate Action Plan. The plan included identifying the "heat archipelago," a concept used to assess vulnerability within the city.

#### MAPPING THE HEAT ARCHIPELAGO

The research aims to find new ways to evaluate heat vulnerability by mapping the archipelago of urban heat islands in Omaha. By exploring how mapping and visualization techniques can show thermal disparities in cities, the study seeks to improve our understanding of heat vulnerability and guide interventions to boost urban heat resilience.

In recent heat research, urban heat islands are seen as an archipelago, with hot spots spread unevenly across a city, often in areas with lots of pavement. Cooler areas are typically found near green spaces, trees, and shaded open areas (Borunda, 2021). To map these hot and cool spots, the study used Landsat 8 satellite imagery from August 3rd, 2022, focusing on thermal bands 4, 5, and 10. The data, downloaded from the USGS Earth Explorer website, was processed using GIS to calculate key parameters like top of atmosphere (TOA) radiance, brightness temperature (BT), normalized difference vegetation

### C1: DOWNTOWN



### 12: I-80 CORRIDOR



### R1: 75 NORTH



C2: DODGE CORRIDOR



M1: SOUTHSIDE TERRACE



R2: LAKE FOREST



### **11: OMA AIRPORT**



### M2: OFFUTT AIRBASE



R3: BELLEVUE WEST



index (NDVI), vegetation cover, emissivity, and land surface temperature (LST) (Avdan & Jovanovska, 2016). Surface temperature data was categorized and vectorized to create analysis-ready maps.

#### RESULTS

The GIS study compared metrics like average surface temperature, population density, minority population percentage, poverty rate, household income, and health indicators to city-wide averages, revealing significant spatial disparities in heat vulnerability within Omaha. Across all heat islands, average surface temperatures and poverty rates were notably higher than the city-wide averages, indicating greater heat exposure and socio-economic vulnerability in these areas. The study also found higher minority populations and unemployment rates in these heat islands. Addressing these disparities is crucial for building heat resilience and promoting equitable health outcomes in vulnerable communities.

### **UAV THERMOGRAPHY**

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

UAV Thermography refers to the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones) equipped with thermal imaging cameras to capture and analyze heat patterns from an aerial perspective. These specialized cameras detect infrared radiation emitted by surfaces, converting this data into visual images that represent temperature. By analyzing thermal data, UAV thermography can reveal how heat is distributed across different areas, highlighting hot and cool zones with high precision.

The process of UAV thermography involves flying the drone over a specified area, where it captures thermal images that are processed into detailed maps. I covered this process in-depth in the <u>August 1, 2020 publication of MiSITES</u>. This visual representation of heat helps identify hotspots or areas of interest that may require further investigation or intervention. In the field of landscape architecture, UAV thermography is a powerful tool for understanding microclimates within urban environments.



#### CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

In the past, planners and design professionals have relied on GIS to map surface temperatures. For example, the USGS provides georeferenced Landsat surface temperature maps available at a 30m x 30m spatial resolution. These data work well at a large scale (county or state), but lack the fidelity and resolution required to make targeted site-based landscape interventions.

In this study, we applied commercially available thermal visualization tools, from drones to Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) cameras, to develop a toolkit for landscape planners and policymakers to make better-informed decisions. We are at a unique moment in time in which the democratization of drones has enabled access to a suite of imaging tools that were previously out of reach.

#### **VISUALIZING THERMAL DISPARITIES**

Three corridors from the heat vulnerability assessment were selected in the application of high-resolution thermographic technology: 75 North, Regency, and the Gene Leahy Mall (Figure 1). The 75 North corridor is characterized by low household income with higher rates of Black populations. The land use is predominantly low-density residential, adjacent to a major interstate (I-75) with discontinuous tree canopy and large areas of land vacancy. Regency is a high-income, predominantly white residential community, with a curvilinear suburban street grid. The street network includes a boulevard with a planted central median and regularly spaced street trees. Lastly, Gene Leahy Mall is a recently completed urban green space in Downtown Omaha with a variety of landscape typologies. The extent of the corridors was determined by optimizing data capture limitations of the drone within an acceptable range of solar noon. We used UAV thermography and a handheld FLIR thermal camera, with images captured simultaneously from roughly 1 pm - 2:30 pm during the scheduled fieldwork (August 3rd - 5th, 2023). Solar noon is when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky.





SPOT	MATERIAL	TEMP.
01	Concrete (Sidewalk; Sun)	108.0° F
02	Bituminous Roof (Black; Sun)	150.4° F
03	Tree Canopy	82.9° F
04	Concrete (Road; Sun)	113.0° F
05	Tree Canopy	82.2° F
06	Concrete (Road; Shade)	90.5° F
07	Bituminous Roof (White; Sun)	119.3° F
08	Lawn (Sun)	97.5° F
09	Concrete (Sidewalk; Shade)	85.6° F
10	Automobile (Black; Sun)	138.4° F
n	Asphalt (Sun)	107.2° F

#### METHODS

I scanned the corridors with the DJI Mavic 3 Enterprise Thermal. Drone settings across all scans were set to a slow velocity of 5 mph, no more than 200 feet above ground level (AGL), with 90% image overlap. Five scans were completed, each with duration of +/-80 minutes, repeating the Gene Leahy Mall and Regency corridors subsequent days due to cloud cover.

Flight paths were preset and saved as georeferenced KMZ files. Each flight path captured high-resolution RGB images and corresponding infrared thermography

simultaneously. The ground sample distance (GSD), which varies based

on altitude, camera, and flight velocity, was just under 1.5 cm per pixel—a much higher resolution compared to the 30m per pixel produced by Landsat imagery. Each image group was post-processed in various software such as Pix4D to generate companion standard and thermal models. Pix4D can generate thermal indexes that isolate and quantify temperature by surface area of the model.

I generated two thermal data sets for each corridor. The first set indexed 22 equal thermal classes spanning a temperature range of  $10^{\circ}$ C to  $65^{\circ}$ C (~ $50^{\circ}$ F to  $150^{\circ}$ F). The second set indexed five thermal classes using NOAA heat index classifications for each scan (NOAA, 2023). These datasets allowed for more direct comparison in surface area between the scans. NOAA heat index classifications are calculated by air temperature and humidity, whereas UAV thermography captures material surface temperatures. This distinction is important, as we simply used the color data index maps to reduce the classes and produce a legible comparison rather than imply that these areas represent certain heat indices.

At the micro scale, individual thermal images were analyzed in DJI Thermal Analysis Tool 3 to apply spot temperatures, adjust visual spectrum, and toggle for emissivity. The georeferenced thermal models at the macro scale, combined with spot temperatures analyses from the micro scale, were stacked to draw comparisons between various material temperature readings (Fig. 2)(Table1).

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The original research goal was to identify holistic ways to test implications of available thermal visualization technologies to better understand and design for more equitable urban heat resilience. Thermal conditions in urban environments exhibit significant spatial variability, necessitating micro scale evaluation. Relying solely on air temperature is not necessarily sufficient to comprehensively represent the diverse range of thermal conditions encountered (Middel, 2019). UAV and handheld thermography in tandem are just pieces of a broader toolkit for assessing thermal comfort but provide compelling ways to visualize heat.

- Extreme Danger [125°F or higher]
  Danger [103°F 124°F]
  Extreme Caution [90°F 102°F]
  Caution [80°F 90°F]
  Mild Caution [79°F or lower]





75 NORTH





REGENCY





GENE LEAHY MALL

To scan several corridors comparatively, we needed to operate the drone on separate days. This presented challenges by way of weather limitations and variability. The days on which flights occurred were similar in temperature and UV index, though not exact. Due to time limitations, we could only scan a 1/2 mile by 1/8 mile corridor. We selected for maximum variability of land use conditions, but due to the small sample, macro-scale data (Fig. 3) should not be used to generalize for a broader area unless the land use is similarly configured.

In the 75 North corridor, over 53% of surfaces are above 90°F, which is considerably higher than in Regency, which shows 39% of surfaces over 90°F. This can be attributed to the significantly higher amounts of canopy coverage in Regency. Additionally, UAV thermography can produce both RGB and infrared digital surface models. The drone flight can be optimized to produce 3D thermography on oblique surfaces, which could be beneficial.

#### CONCLUSION

In the era of climate issues and increasing urbanization, understanding how heat is distributed is paramount. The selected corridors in Omaha serve as transects of broader urban challenges. The combination of UAV thermography and handheld thermal imaging allowed us to better understand urban heat dynamics, rendering legible the various landscapes and material selections that contribute to the urban heat island effect.

By flying drones equipped with thermal sensors over cities, researchers and planners can gather critical data on surface temperatures, heat distribution, and thermal anomalies. This data can be used to identify heat islands, assess the effectiveness of urban heat mitigation strategies, and make informed decisions regarding urban planning and design. UAV thermography offers an efficient way to monitor and manage the effects of urban heat, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and comfortable urban environments.

#### REFERENCES

- Avdan, U., & Jovanovska, G. (2016). Algorithm for automated mapping of land surface temperature using Landsat 8 satellite data. Journal of Sensors, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1155/2016/1480307
- Berko, Jeffrey, et al. 30 July 2014. "Deaths Attributed to Heat, Cold, and Other Weather Events in the United States, 2006-2010." US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.
- Blank, Rebecca M. Sept. 2012. "United States Summary: 2010, Population and Housing Unit Counts." Retrieved January 12, 2022 from <u>https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/2010/cph-2/cph-2-1.pdf</u>
- Middel, A., & Krayenhoff, E. S. (2019). Micrometeorological determinants of pedestrian thermal exposure during record-breaking heat in Tempe, Arizona: Introducing the MaRTy observational platform. Science of The Total Environment, 687, 137–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. scitotenv.2019.06.085
- NOAA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 20 Sept. 2023. "Heat Index." <u>https://www.noaa.gov/jetstream/synoptic/heat-index</u>

.....

Image 1: Isolated Heat Islands in Omaha, NE delineated by the top 20% (Landsat-8) hottest areas in the city.

Image 2: Delineated heat islands (Landsat Data) coded by land use typ.

Image 3: Streestcape thermal enlargement of the Regency corridor scan.

Figure 1: Normalized UAV scans of high-resolution RGB and corresponding thermal orthoimagery.

Figure 2: Micro scale drone scan (75 North) of high-res RGB and corresponding thermal images.

Table 1: Associated spot temperature readings (Fig. 1) measured using FLIR Tools with thermal data captured by drone.

Figure. 3: UAV thermography organized into five heat classifications (NOAA) by surface area.

Images and Figures provided by Keenan Gibbons, Salvador Lindquist, and the LAF ThermalToolkit.

# NATIONAL ASLA RESPONSE TO CURRENT ISSUES

Vanessa Warren, Michigan Chapter President

The National ASLA is committed to responding strategically and purposefully to executive orders and other administrative actions to maximize its impact on issues critical to the profession. Recently, the National ASLA surveyed its members to identify the most pressing issues. The following topics were ranked as the most important by ASLA members: the freeze on IRA and IIJA funding, the reduction of federal landscape architects, tariffs, the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, federal design standards, and DEI directives. Some of the highlights are:

#### **PROTECTING FEDERAL FUNDING:**

Many landscape architecture projects rely on federal funding. <u>Unleashing</u> <u>American Energy</u> contains directives to immediately pause the disbursement of some funds appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Many disbursements remain paused, in effect. In response,

- Published <u>Managing the Federal Funding Freeze Next Steps for</u> Landscape Architects (Members Only)
- Urged lawmakers to get funding flowing again, read the letter to Congress

#### **REAFFIRMING CLIMATE ACTION:**

In response to the January 20 Executive Order to withdraw from the Paris Agreement:

- ASLA issued a press release and statement affirming our commitment to <u>helping communities achieve their climate and biodiversity goals</u>.
- ASLA stands by our commitment to the goals of the Paris Agreement as a member of the <u>America Is All In Coalition</u>.

#### STRENGTHENING BUSINESS:

ASLA is researching tariffs, taxes, and federal workforce reduction. A few items of note:

- An excellent article on the effect of tariffs on LA firms: <u>Tariff Threats</u> <u>Cause Uncertainty for Landscape Architecture Product Manufacturers</u>
- There is a federal employee resources page for ASLA members.

#### CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY & REPRESENTATION:

We believe great landscapes reflect the people who use them, respect the history of a place, and serve all communities. That only happens when all voices are part of the design process. Landscape architects understand that including diverse perspectives isn't just a principle—it's essential for better outcomes. We continue our focus on diversity, equity and inclusion throughout all our work.

National ASLA held a forum for chapter presidents, PR chairs, and DEI chairs to walk through the executive orders and to hear their questions. We continue to work with legal counsel to provide the best guidance to our chapters and members on these issues. Once all the questions are gathered, ASLA will provide talking points to the chapters, and start meeting more frequently with the PR and DEI chairs.



# Stories from the Soil September 10-11, 2025

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Annual Conference of Landscape Architecture

# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL SPRING 2025 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE GRADUATES!

Congratulations on your graduation and accomplishments. Welcome to the next chapter! We at Michigan ASLA hope you stay in touch and get involved as you step into professional positions. As always, don't be a stranger.



Alongside our Annual Conference, we're thrilled to offer even more opportunities to celebrate outstanding projects, recognize our members, and provide additional CEUs. Be sure to register for the conference—and don't forget to register for these exciting events as well:

#### Wednesday September 10th

SKETCH WALK- 12pm at Frederick Meijer Gardens WALKING RAPIDS TOUR with Progressive AE & DGRI- 3:45pm at Embassy Suites Lobby AWARDS CELEBRATION- 6pm at Midtown Studios

#### Friday September 12th

LA RIDE- 10th Anniversary of Education in Motion







# Style your surroundings with timeless and appealing streetscape products



Learn more at **ejco.com/tree-grate** or call 800 626 4653 Made in the USA



# PLAYSCAPES THROUGH THE YEARS: ADAPTING OUTDOOR SPACES FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING

Dana Hernalsteen, ASLA, CPSI, PLA | Chris Markham, PLA | GMB

Outdoor play is about more than just having fun – it provides kids with physical exercise, encourages relationship building, and provides ample learning opportunities. Spending time outdoors, whether structured or unstructured, can blur the lines between play and learning for children of all ages.

There are numerous benefits for kids who regularly engage with outdoor and nature-based play activities as they grow. Beyond just physical exercise, outdoor play can <u>teach students the skills</u> they need to succeed in adulthood, such as autonomy through unstructured play, cooperation through working together, and risk assessment from testing out new environments. While preschool and early childhood programs are leading the charge in including nature-based elements into traditional learning, students at each developmental stage can benefit. Whether we are bringing structured activity into nature, or nature into structured activity, there are outdoor driven strategies any K-12 district can adopt.



#### EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ELEMENTARY

Playscapes designed to address the unique needs of early childhood and elementary-age students require multiple areas for physical play that are inclusive yet challenging. Early elementary play can be more focused on motion and spinning, which provided positive, vestibular stimulation for brain development. "Spinning is an important form of sensory input that the brain takes in and processes that can help with balance, decision-making, and even attention span," says GMB landscape architect Dana Hernalsteen. "Incorporating different areas of play also gives students a choice in how they want to explore and engage with their surroundings." For example, pavement activities can take many shapes and promote different types of play, from group games like foursquare, to active learning from painted maps or solar systems, and social emotional needs like peace paths and buddy circles.

Ludington's new elementary school aimed to create meaningful connections to the outdoors, an important initiative for the district. All the classroom wings connect outside through covered outdoor learning areas to playgrounds that encourage both outdoor learning and play. Multiple playgrounds address the needs of students from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade on one campus. Broken down into distinct age categories, each playscape was designed to create meaningful play as students grow. For the youngest learners, areas that promote balance, like spinners and climbers, and creativity, like chalk and sandboxes, were included. For the oldest group, more challenging spaces for parkour and rope climbing encourage strength building, teamwork, and competition.





#### **UPPER ELEMENTARY**

As kids grow, creating physical challenges that are flexible and promote problem-solving keeps them involved. Playscapes at this age are designed with more diverse play opportunities, like larger structures with multiple heights, varied learning elements, seating, and games. Kids naturally want a challenge, but everyone's challenge is different. Offering multiple areas for discovery is key.

Hudsonville 's new intermediate school was designed with the specific needs of students in the 5th and 6th grades in mind. Their unique playscape area was designed to encourage physical activity and socialization at this transitional stage. The multi-tier playscape offers different opportunities and zones for students to play, learn, and observe. The outdoor space includes a climbing obstacle course with turf that encourages agility and competitive play, a running track, basketball hoops and pavement games area, multiple seating zones, and a play wall with creative graphics. Academic instruction can also take place in the outdoor area, with enough seating and tables for a full classroom. Each section of the play area is accessible and is enhanced by shade cover and natural landscaping.Marsh and Bog Science

The book further drills down on wetland science, explaining how most inland wetlands evolved from glacial lake basins that are now filling in due to "eutrophication." Depending on soil acidity, this process wanders in one of two directions—a bog or marsh, which display distinctly different plant communities. Phosphorus accelerates the process, and humans have wastefully let this element invade many waterbodies, prematurely degrading them for recreational purposes. Worse yet, bogs have become targets for peat mining—another source of carbon fuel, further overloading our atmosphere with CO2 when burned. Supporting notations express how wetlands in the continental United States are estimated to store 13.5 billion metric tons of carbon. Worldwide, peat bogs sequester more than 200 billion tons of carbon, mostly trapped in semi-frozen tundra and boreal forests. As these lands thaw and catch fire, millions of tons of carbon and other greenhouse gases will escape into the atmosphere.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL OR JUNIOR HIGH

Middle school and junior high students enjoy more time spent on building emotional relationships and their outdoor spaces reflect that shift away from mostly physical. These playscapes have more gathering spaces, observing areas, competition, and games. Intentional organization between structured and free play with adjacent sitting elements allows everyone the opportunity to be involved. Schools may choose to incorporate basketball courts, turf areas, bleachers, and sports equipment for these students.

Multiple athletics spaces designed for <u>Grandville's new 7/8 school</u> give students plenty of opportunity to increase their physical activity and competitive sport pursuits. Outside, middle school-aged students can participate in recreation time on the basketball courts, 40-meter sprint turf, or athletic fields. An outdoor tiered seating area near the adjacent wetlands also gives students a chance to learn in an outdoor setting.





#### UNIQUE PLAYSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES

The needs of each district are unique and can be influenced by the needs of the curriculum, the local community, budget constraints, or student experience.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Creating an inclusive and accessible playscape presents students with many opportunities. Completely barrier-free design, with compliance for national standards, can be just as fun, intentional, and creative as traditional play areas. Incorporating the necessary signage, railings, fencing, and transitions into the natural surroundings where possible makes the accessibility requirements feel like just another part of the design.

At Hamilton Community Schools, a special education wing's new playground provides accessible play for all students. An ADA accessible ramp into the rubberized surface area for wheelchairs is the first impression of accessible use. The playground also includes equipment that can accommodate wheelchair users plus their adult paraprofessionals. "Incorporating different kinds of sensory elements from texture, sound, height levels, spinning, and signage gives the playscape something for everyone," said GMB landscape architect Chris Markham. "Multiple zones throughout the area and the new equipment allow kids of different abilities to interact and play together without physical constraints."

#### SERVING MULTIPLE AGE GROUPS

At schools where multiple age groups share a single campus or facility, outdoor spaces can be creatively utilized to address the needs of multiple age groups. By blending programs together in flexible spaces that promote both play and learning on a smaller footprint, yet intentionally separating age group activities, districts can accommodate outdoor play for any age group.

Potterville Public Schools is utilizing their shared campus to create outdoor areas that fit students from kindergarten through high school. Similar age zones are placed near each other to create the appropriate separation of activities while maximizing their square footage. The youngest group's play area is enclosed in a courtyard and requires the least amount of space, while



the middle school group will have play structures of varying scale and opportunity for free play. High schoolers will be able to physically exert themselves on play fields if they choose or can utilize seating with shade to read, study, and converse.

Overall, outdoor play improves children's sensory skills, cognitive and social/ emotional development, and increases attention spans, which creates a positive environment for successful learning.•

Image 1: A child climbs on a structure at the Sally Smoly Nature Playscape in Holland. Credit: M-Buck Studio.

Cover Image: Students gather in an outdoor learning area at Saugatuck Public Schools' Douglas Elementary. Credit: John D'Angelo Photo.

Image 2: Ludington Elementary School. Credit: Jason Keen.

Image 3: Rendering of multi-tier playscapes designed for 5th and 6th grade students. Credit: GMB.

Image 4: Rendering of Grandville Public Schools' outdoor sports area. Credit: GMB.



Michigan ASLA 2025 CALL FOR JURORS

The Michigan Chapter is seeking interested MiASLA Members to jury the Colorado-Wyoming Awards. This is a virtual event with a 2-week preview time.

Date and time for virtual jury TBD by interested participants. Please sign up via QR code by June 18, 2025.



# MICHIGAN ASLA GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Matt Solak, Executive Director

#### 2024 ELECTION SHAKES UP LANSING

At the end of 2024, Republicans picked up four seats, taking them to a 58-52 majority by ousting third-term Rep. Jim Haadsma ( $44^{th}$  District/D- Battle Creek), first-term Rep. Jamie Churches ( $27^{th}$  District/D-Wyandotte), first-term Rep. Jenn Hill (D-Marquette), and third-term Rep. Nate Shannon (D-Sterling Heights). This ended the slim-majority Democratic trifecta that lasted just two years.

This shift has had serious implications for public policy as 2025 has brought a state of divided government. Because Republicans won back the majority in the Michigan House of Representatives this past November, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Legislature has started off more slowly than recent past sessions. Newly elected House Speaker Matt Hall was very methodical in naming new committees, chairs, and committee members who certainly will have different priorities from their predecessors. Even late into this first quarter, some committees are now just beginning to meet.

#### LAST MINUTE CHANGES TO EARNED SICK TIME ACT

In the summer of 2024, two Michigan Supreme Court rulings had a major impact on Michiganders with the implementation of the Earned Sick Time Act. While the changes are extensive, at the most basic level, businesses with more than 10 employees must provide 72 hours of paid sick leave, however, those 72 hours now can be front loaded immediately. Employers with 10 or less employees must provide 40 hours of paid sick time. Changes to the law allowed businesses more flexibility in their implementation and eliminated employees' ability to no call, no show for three days without an employer being able to take disciplinary action against them.

#### **ROAD FUNDING FIX DOMINATES POLICY CONVERSATION**

Governor Whitmer and House Speaker Matt Hall have made a comprehensive road and transportation funding plan a top, bi-partisan, priority of conversation. Both the Governor and the Speaker have outlined road funding frameworks although a compromised solution will take a lot of work to iron out the differences.

Speaker Hall's includes a \$1.2 billion repurposing of Michigan's corporate income tax, a \$950 million redirect of the sales tax on motor fuel and canceling Michigan's "MEGA" tax credit program, which were largely expanded during the Great Recession to keep major automakers from relocating.

Meanwhile, Whitmer's proposal is centered on ensuring all state taxes paid at the gas pump go to roads, \$470 million generated from a new marijuana tax and \$1.6 billion coming from unrevealed, new business taxes.

#### LARA RELEASES A "CUTTING RED TAPE REPORT"

In February, LARA published a document based on a survey they conducted to help them "cut red tape" and simplify procedures for licensed professions. Surprisingly, the merit of the landscape architecture license is questioned in this document, and landscape architecture is the only professional license specifically called out in this manner. Chapter leaders, National ASLA and KDA have put together an active strategy to push back against any attempt to delicense the profession.

# **IRRIGATE RESPONSIBLY** WITH NO WATER WASTE





Hunter

For more information, contact: Eric Simmons at 630-200-7581 hunterirrigation.com



www.thomas-steele.com 800.448.7931

# PLACEMAKING THROUGH LANDSCAPE

DESIGN

#### Sign up by June 1st!

Registration Cost: \$100



For more information Visit Itu.edu/marburger-stem-

center/summer-programs/

Experience the power of landscape design at Lawrence Tech University's summer program. In this five-day, hands-on course, you'll explore design, art, and placemaking while creating your own public space with guidance from landscape architects from all across Michigan.



**City of Southfield JHLE Studio** 

> Sarah Mulally Deputy Director for Economic Development City of Southfield

Special Guests

Terry Croad

irector of Planning

Chet Hill

Landscape

Architect

Stephanie Onwenu andscape Designe **JIMA Studio** 

Jack Hill Landscape Architec Michigan State University

**Bob** Ford Landscape Archited Spalding DeDecker

Mark Hieber Landscape Architec HED Design

> Souzan Yousif Sustainability Planner City of Southfield

Stacy Tobar andscape Architect **OHM Advisors** 

Jamie McArdle Landscape Architec Victor Stanley

> Alex Rollin **City Planner City of Southfield**

Joane Slusky Landscape Architec Juno Solutions

Tom Paison Deputy City Planne **City of Southfield** 

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

AMERICAN SOCIETY O LANDSCAPE ARCHITEC



Lawrence Techno

Southfield

# JULY 14-18, 2025 LAWRENCE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY







# Trusted designs, simplified ordering

shop.tournesol.com

# **PERMEABLE ()** Without Compromise







CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SAMPLES TODAY



Born in Lansing, MI, Bill Johnson left an indelible impact on the landscape architecture profession and education through his leadership roles at Johnson, Johnson & Roy, Inc. (now SmithGroup) and the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources (now SEAS), among many others. Framework Thinking: Lessons in Community Planning & **Design** (2025) distills key 'difference makers' in Bill's career. It is also his final encouragement to planning and design professionals to cultivate mindsets for more effective community shaping and bridge building.

### WILLIAM ("BILL") J. JOHNSON, FASLA

Landscape Architect, Educator, Professional Leader, Community Builder

(1931 - 2024)

## A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

#### FRAMEWORK THINKING Lessons in Community Planning and Design



WILLIAM J. JOHNSON HAR YE KAN

ORO

## 2025 MICHIGAN ASLA OFFICERS AND STAFF

President Vanessa Warren, ASLA

President Elect Dana Hernalsteen, ASLA

Immediate Past President Patrick Judd, ASLA

Trustee Ben Baker, ASLA

VP of Marketing Arianna Zannetti, ASLA

VP of Education Lisa DuRussel, ASLA

VP of Government Affairs Bob Doyle, ASLA

VP of Membership Scott Black, ASLA

VP of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Naomi Bailey, Associate ASLA Treasurer Brad Hornburg, ASLA

Secretary Deborah Dawe, ASLA

Member at Large Daniel Prostak, ASLA

Associate at Large Boyu Zhao, Associate ASLA

Executive Director Matt Solak

MSU Student Representative Coryn Brinks, Student ASLA

U of M Student Representative Grace Carbeck, Student ASLA

MiSITES Editorial Board Deborah Dawe, ASLA Devyn Quick, ASLA

Michigan Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (517) 485-4116 www.michiganasla.org linkedin | facebook | twitter | instagram



Michigan ASLA 629 W. Hillside Street Lansing, MI 48933

www.michiganasla.org