

A woman and two children are riding scooters on a paved path in a park. The woman, wearing a purple shirt and blue jeans, is walking alongside the children. One child, a boy in a blue shirt and dark pants, is riding a black scooter. The other child, a girl in a grey shirt and pink and blue striped pants, is riding a red scooter. The path is bordered by large, light-colored rocks in the foreground. The background is filled with tall green grass and dense trees.

MiSITES

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Theory

landscapeforms®

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Michigan Chapter ASLA members:

Happy World Landscape Architecture Month! On behalf of the Michigan Chapter ASLA Executive Committee and our Editorial Team, we are excited to bring you this latest issue of MiSites, featuring the 2023 Award Winners.

Have you ever wondered: **What does the Michigan Chapter ASLA actually do?** I will confess that I had asked that question myself prior to getting involved with the chapter. I had been a member for years and I thought all the Michigan Chapter ASLA actually did was host the annual golf outing and the annual conference. It wasn't until I accepted a nomination to become the Member-at-Large in 2018 that I discovered the many ways our Chapter volunteers are working to promote the profession:

- Staying current with state government affairs (licensure, legislation, etc.) and attending lobby days at the state and federal level
- Identifying and promoting chapter members for the National ASLA Council of Fellows
- Communicating with National ASLA as well as other state chapters regarding state and national ASLA initiatives
- Organizing professional development opportunities such as LARE workshops
- Planning and organizing social events such as the annual golf outing or chapter happy hours
- Reviewing chapter ASLA design award submissions
- Hosting portfolio workshops with students in the

Landscape Architecture programs at University of Michigan and Michigan State University

- Attending the National ASLA Conference (Chapter President's Council, Board of Trustees, etc.)
- Communicating with members (social media, website)
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives including webinars, fundraising and partnerships
- Planning and organizing the annual state Conference on Landscape Architecture

The call for nominations for the Michigan ASLA Executive Committee is open until April 30.

There are a variety of opportunities to serve the chapter. We welcome diverse skill sets, so you can play to your personal strengths, whatever they are. We currently have seven positions open for 2024. Are you interested in serving on the Executive Committee? Do you know someone who might be a good candidate to serve? This is an excellent opportunity to expand your network, make new friends, and contribute to the profession. Visit our website at michiganasla.org to learn more or to nominate someone.

I hope you enjoy this issue of MiSITES. As always, please reach out to me or any member of our Executive Committee if there is anything we can do for you. You can reach us at excom@michiganasla.org.

Kyle Verseman, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter ASLA

ON THE COVER: The universally accessible path at Roberto Clemente Park addresses the 50-foot grade change between the elementary school and the park below. Image Credit: VIRIDIS Design Group.

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SHARE AN IDEA!

We're currently filling our 2023 and 2024 MiSITES editorial calendar. If you would like to contribute or suggest a topic or project to cover, please email: SITESpublication@michiganasla.org.

STUDYING FOR THE LARE?

To sign up for our LARE study groups, please email education@michiganasla.org.



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MI ASLA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
ENDS APRIL 30**

Do you know someone who would be a good candidate for one of our open positions? Nominate them!

President-Elect (3 year term)

VP of Marketing (2 year term)

VP of Governmental Affairs

(2 year term)

Secretary (1 year term)

Treasurer (2 year term)

Member-At-Large (1 year term)

Associate-At-Large (1 year term)

Visit www.michiganasla.org to learn more or make a nomination!

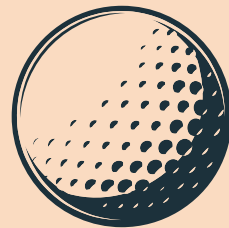


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Honor Award [general design]
Award of Excellence [social equity]

ROBERTO CLEMENTE PARK

Grand Rapids, Michigan | VIRIDIS DESIGN GROUP

Roberto Clemente Park is a 12-acre community park on Grand Rapids' southwest side, situated between the Roosevelt Park and Black Hills neighborhoods and less than a mile from the Grand River. The community has the highest concentration Latinx population in the City. Adjacent to the park is Southwest Community Campus, a K-8 public school that offers a dual English-Spanish immersion experience, often using the park for school events or classes. As with many low-income communities in urban centers, the Roosevelt Park and Black Hills neighborhoods are within a part of the City that has been historically neglected in terms of infrastructure and socio-economic improvements. Sandwiched between an industrial waterfront and a major highway, the community suffers from poor air quality, soil contamination, and water quality degradation.

VIRIDIS Design Group was retained by the Grand Rapids Parks Department to provide design services to revitalize a large portion of the park with a focus on green infrastructure and cultural identity. Prior to these improvements, the park was home to a well-loved full-size soccer field, a deteriorating picnic shelter with public restrooms, a small parking lot, and a DIY skatepark. Southwest Community Campus sits on top of a 50-foot bluff east of the park, connected by a single set of failing concrete stairs accessible only to ambulatory visitors.

The design team facilitated a robust community engagement process through a series of focus groups, community input sessions held at the park, and virtual surveys. Given the predominately Latinx population, the design team produced visual aids that were Spanish-forward and translated to English. Bilingual translators were available at each event to help participants feel comfortable and heard.





Photo credits: VIRIDIS Design Group

This vital component of the project resulted in a clear set of community priorities and program elements to guide the design team. VIRIDIS' final design amplifies these priorities, which focused on green infrastructure, play and discovery, and universal access and inclusivity.

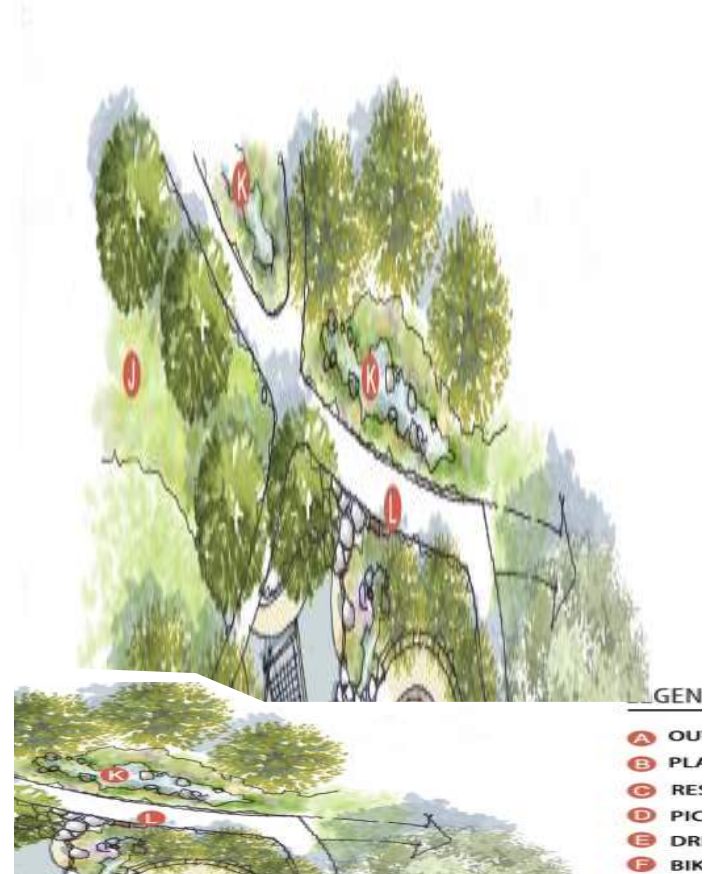
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Focusing on stormwater sustainability, the design highlights the complexity of sensitive native micro-ecosystems. Treating parts of a watershed as distinct elements of original natural systems, rather than piping stormwater to one central pipe or holding facility, allowed for many on-site treatment improvements. Bio-swales and rain gardens significantly reduce current pollutant loads being discharged to the Grand River. Additionally, removal of invasive species and restoration of native meadows has increased biodiversity and reduced run-off and traditional mowing practices.

PLAY AND DISCOVERY

The bioswales and rain gardens at Roberto Clemente Park go beyond functionality—they are an invitation to learn and explore. People of all ages and abilities can cross timber bridges, logs, and outcropping boulders within the bioswales, exposing the public to the sights and sounds of the natural processes. Additionally, a spiraled outdoor classroom includes bilingual interpretive signage that tells the story of the local Plaster Creek Watershed and patterns found in nature. By learning about the ways that plants, animals, and other living things are interdependent, community members are inspired to consider the role of interconnectedness within their communities and see the value in strengthening those relationships by thinking and acting cooperatively.

The play area, a previously missing aspect of the park, offers parallel play opportunities using the repeated materiality of natural materials such as logs and boulders. New domino tables and seating, which are of particular significance to the Puerto Rican as well as the Hispanic community at large, were requested by the West Michigan Puerto Rican Cultural Committee. These new components encourage park visitors to stretch their physical and mental boundaries while building relationships with one another.



UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY

The design team worked together to design a new restroom that is universally accessible and inclusive for all genders. The facility has now become a design standard for new restrooms in the Grand Rapids Parks system. Three separate sections of men, women, and all gender (which also works well for families) use partition-like doors at the entrances and lock into place to maintain privacy and security with observation of feet and sound from outside. Recessed frames in each exterior wall of the restroom creates space to showcase public art.

Spaces for large family and community gatherings were requested consistently through community outreach, and therefore the picnic shelter became the focal point of design. It was intentionally placed with views of the soccer field and playground and near the restroom building. Grills were provided for family events and reunions, as community members expressed the cultural importance to commune over food. Additionally, the pavilion design functionally integrates with the landscape—the sloped roof captures rainwater and directs it into the adjacent rain garden that separates the pavilion and restroom building.

Universal accessibility is prevalent throughout the park space. A new foot and bike path with a running slope under 5% and energy efficient lighting connects the neighborhood and school to the park. New furnishings, including entry signage, bike racks, benches, drinking fountain, and waste receptacles enhance visitor experience and aid in creating a welcoming sense of place.

Merging green infrastructure techniques, universal design standards, and contemporary aesthetics, Roberto Clemente Park was designed using a regenerative ecological approach that integrates the cultural fabric of the surrounding community through art, language, and programming. The park serves as a multi-functional community greenspace that meets the needs and desires of neighbors while supporting the health of natural systems. The design generates resilience in the face of inevitable environmental disturbances and equity within a historically neglected community, lending dynamic stability to both neighboring residents and wildlife, quickly becoming a beloved greenspace asset within the neighborhood. •



Image 1 (page 5, top)

Bio-swales are integrated within the park space.

Image 2 (page 5, bottom)

A spiraled outdoor gathering space allows flexibility for individual explorative play or space for outdoor classes, near a nature-based play structure.

Image 3 (page 6)

Families often reserve the space for reunions and birthday parties, utilizing the grills and picnic tables.

Image 4 (page 7)

Site Plan. Improvements at the heart of the 12-acre park included a gathering space, nature-based play, outdoor classroom, and restroom facility.

Image 5 (above)

A new foot and bike path connects the neighborhood and school to the park, and traditional lawn was replaced with native meadow plantings.

Image 6 (opposite page)

Neighbors and school staff celebrate the park opening with music and dance. Community members were central to the design process.





Merit Award [general design]

MIDTOWN DETROIT SELDEN COURTYARD

Detroit, Michigan | SMITHGROUP

A small space can have immeasurable community impact, and Selden Courtyard is much more than meets the eye. The 13,000 square foot courtyard is a complex arrangement of layered systems, facilitating social and cultural engagement, entrepreneurial opportunities, and access to nature while mitigating flooding, improving storm water quality, and offering up high-speed internet access. The courtyard is a haven in a once-blighted, transforming neighborhood — and the newest public space activated by Midtown Detroit, Inc., a non-profit community and economic development organization. The courtyard reclaims an industrial loading area in Detroit's Midtown neighborhood formerly known as the Cass Corridor. Historically renowned for its crime and drug issues,

as well as for the artists and creatives who have driven its revitalization, the corridor is emerging as a center for entrepreneurship and innovation. Adjacent structures, once home to industrial uses, have been redeveloped into mixed use buildings including residential, office, and food and beverage, as well as a craft brewery with a workforce development program.

AN ADAPTABLE FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN LIFE

The courtyard's flexibility is inherent in the overall organization, with an elevated platform flanked on each side by transitional spaces. This flexibility is expanded with dynamic spatial elements, modular seating components that move along

sliding tracks within permeable pavement. These are carefully detailed to withstand heavy use and activity and to minimize debris and water collection within the tracks, resulting in a framework where community life can play out, fostering conversational rooms as well as auditorium seating. The site is a blend of public and private uses. Outdoor dining spills out along the edges in casual zones defined by planters and railings. Residents of adjacent buildings can work outdoors or gather around the fire circle. The broader community can arrange the space to enjoy an intimate conversation or host a larger event.

INTRODUCING LANDSCAPE AND PERMEABILITY

The design breaks up the hardscape with trees and planters and also incorporates permeable concrete pavement that percolates a 24-hour five-year storm event in a drainage layer below. The planters are geometric modules with varied Corten steel curb heights. Plants create formal masses scaled to match the varied planter heights, exaggerating the variation. The hardy and drought tolerant species add color and interest throughout the year while attracting pollinators. Sycamore trees create a ceiling and their canopy maximizes carbon sequestration. This modern planting approach adds structure while introducing an urban habitat.

SmithGroup's collaboration with Midtown Detroit, Inc., a trusted advocate for the community, and bioLINIA, a local art and design collaborative, lends authenticity and playfulness to the design. The Selden Courtyard is a welcome, cheerful, and safe place to come together. The design respects the industrial history and fosters the next generation of innovation in industries, serving as a template for how public and private uses can co-exist. •

Image 1

Selden Courtyard is a complex arrangement of layered systems and an active haven in a once blighted, continually transforming urban neighborhood.

Image 2-3

The courtyard is a space where community life can play out in a blend of public and private uses, exemplified in "scatter" and "celebrate" arrangements.



ZEISS MICHIGAN QUALITY EXCELLENCE CENTER

Wixom, Michigan | SMITHGROUP

ZEISS's vision for its new regional headquarters was grounded in sustainability, making the property's existing 35-acre natural landscapes a great inspiration to the design team. The landscape architect, architect, and civil engineering team worked together to find the ideal building placement, elevation and orientation, site and building access, and locations for stormwater features and other outdoor amenities. However, with most of the property covered in existing wetlands and some areas maintaining a high-water table, the challenge was fitting nine acres of program within limited bounds.

A complex jurisdictional stormwater specification presented an additional challenge to stormwater outlet design and release rate. However, this became an opportunity for a high-performing landscape. The design visually demonstrates stormwater runoff through a series of four above-ground bioretention ponds in addition to underground storage, which are used to manage excess stormwater during heavy rain events. The system provides a treatment train approach to slow runoff, capture volume while maximizing infiltration and evapotranspiration, all while increasing and improving plant and animal diversity.

The symbiotic relationship between the building and the site brings expanded naturalized landscape areas closer to the building while leaving the existing wetlands untouched. The building is placed between two of the major bioretention areas, embracing the concept of the building acting as a bridge and visual connector between both storm collection areas. This ensures an enriched arrival experience as employees and visitors approach the main entry on the south side of the building. Expansive interior views enable visual and physical access to the west side outdoor amenities. This proximity provides a strong link for employees and visitors to the outdoors. These enhanced natural areas have walking trails for local bird watching enthusiasts



Photo credits: SmithGroup

and ZEISS has binoculars and rifle scopes for use by visitors and employees alike, allowing them to fully engage with the surrounding landscape. There are two outside terraces which provide a choice in seating typologies ideal for collaborative working, individual respite, and socialization. One of the driving principles of the landscape design was to provide a more formal, mass-planted approach in the public arrival areas on the east side of the building which still would blend into the existing site environment, while providing a high variety of seasonal color, texture, and neatness. The west side favors a more informal and matrix design approach of planting selections based on the inspiration and the adjacency to the existing wetlands. Throughout the interior of the site, a low mow fescue lawn outside of landscape bed zones blurs the boundaries between the installed landscape and existing naturalized areas, and resulting in less mowing frequency, fertilization, and irrigation dependency after establishment. Approximately 80 different plant species on the project, only seven species are considered non-invasive exotics, and in the grand total of the approximately 7,100 individual plants placed, less than 8% of that quantity are non-native. •



Image 1

Shaped by site constraints, the building is comprised of two wings formed into a shallow U-shape, embracing a large inner courtyard. Workspaces are oriented along this inner courtyard, which is framed by exterior terraces containing seating areas and richly planted bioretention areas beyond.

Image 2

The centralized connection between the two larger wings is flanked by windows allowing light to permeate the interior.

Image 3

The west terrace offers a variety of seating options for employee and client respite, social and collaborative gathering – providing wide views to the new bioretention area. By ringing the office environment around the terrace on both levels, ample daylight and views are abundant for all.



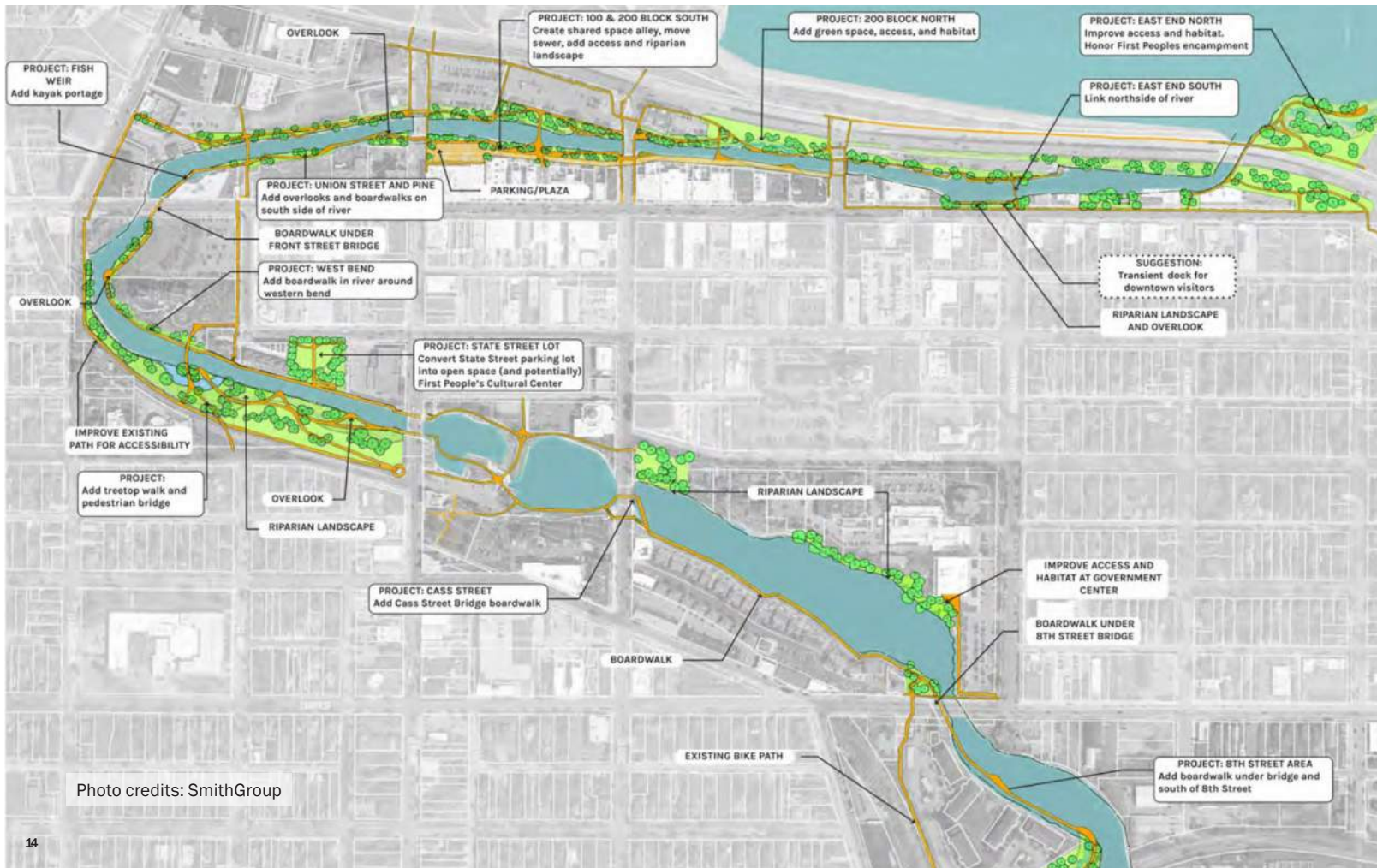


Photo credits: SmithGroup



Honor Award [planning and analysis]

TRAVERSE CITY LOWER BOARDMAN RIVER STRATEGIC PLAN

Traverse City, Michigan | SMITHGROUP

The Boardman River is an incredible asset from an ecologic, economic, recreational, and cultural perspective, and is a significant contributor to the sense of place in downtown Traverse City. Recognizing the value of the river, the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority launched a process for developing a Unified Plan for the Lower Boardman River, guided by a Leadership Team that represented diverse community stakeholders and interests.

The planning area is the 1.6-mile-long segment of the Boardman River running through downtown Traverse City, from northern Boardman Lake to the Grand Traverse Bay. This reach of the river is heavily altered from its natural condition,

through industrialization, fill and channelization, damming, and urban development, which have impacted habitat and water quality. Investigation of the project area included researching historical and cultural context and an existing conditions assessment that evaluated river conditions and habitat; access, open space and recreation; and land use and development systems.

In the summers of 2019 and 2021, the planning team lead a variety of civic engagement approaches to gather public input into the plan, first to gain understanding of the key issues and concerns the community held about the river and then to gain feedback on recommendations. The team used a broad

range of in-person and remote/online feedback tools. All told, nearly 1,000 community members were engaged in the development of the plan, leading to broad public support and rapid adoption.

Based on feedback from the community and the Leadership Team, final recommendations and alternatives were developed around proposed policy changes, the physical plan, and implementation and management. The Illustrative Unified Plan (page 15) provides a framework for future improvements to the Lower Boardman River. The primary themes of the plan are:

- CULTURE-focused learning and art to educate and inspire people through development of a cultural center and arts and interpretive program.
- CONNECTIVITY for people to recreate along, celebrate the value of, and learn about the river. This includes a clear, legible, and universally accessible path system with linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and existing recreation, as well as creation of new open space and amenities.
- HABITAT preservation and creation for aquatic, riparian, and avian communities through bank restoration, habitat preservation, increased greenspace and in-stream and riparian habitat creation.

Learn more at dda.downtownc.com/lower-boardman-river-unified-plan.

Image 1 (page 14)

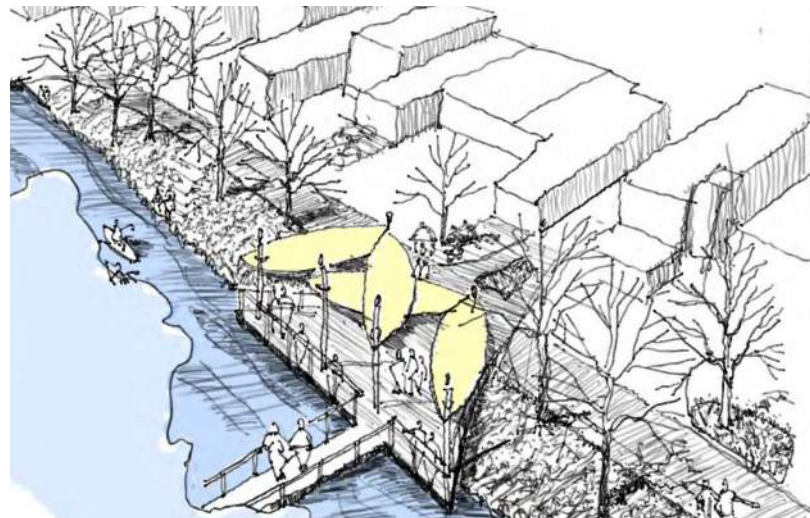
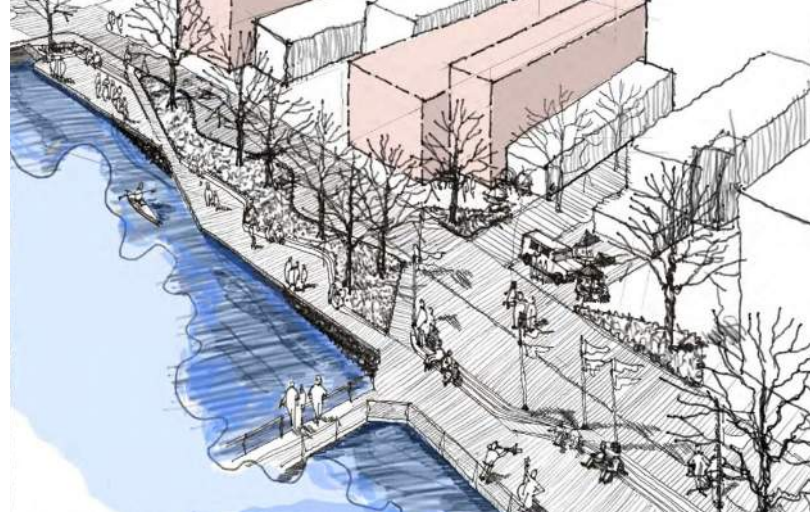
The Illustrative Unified Plan is based on extensive community engagement.

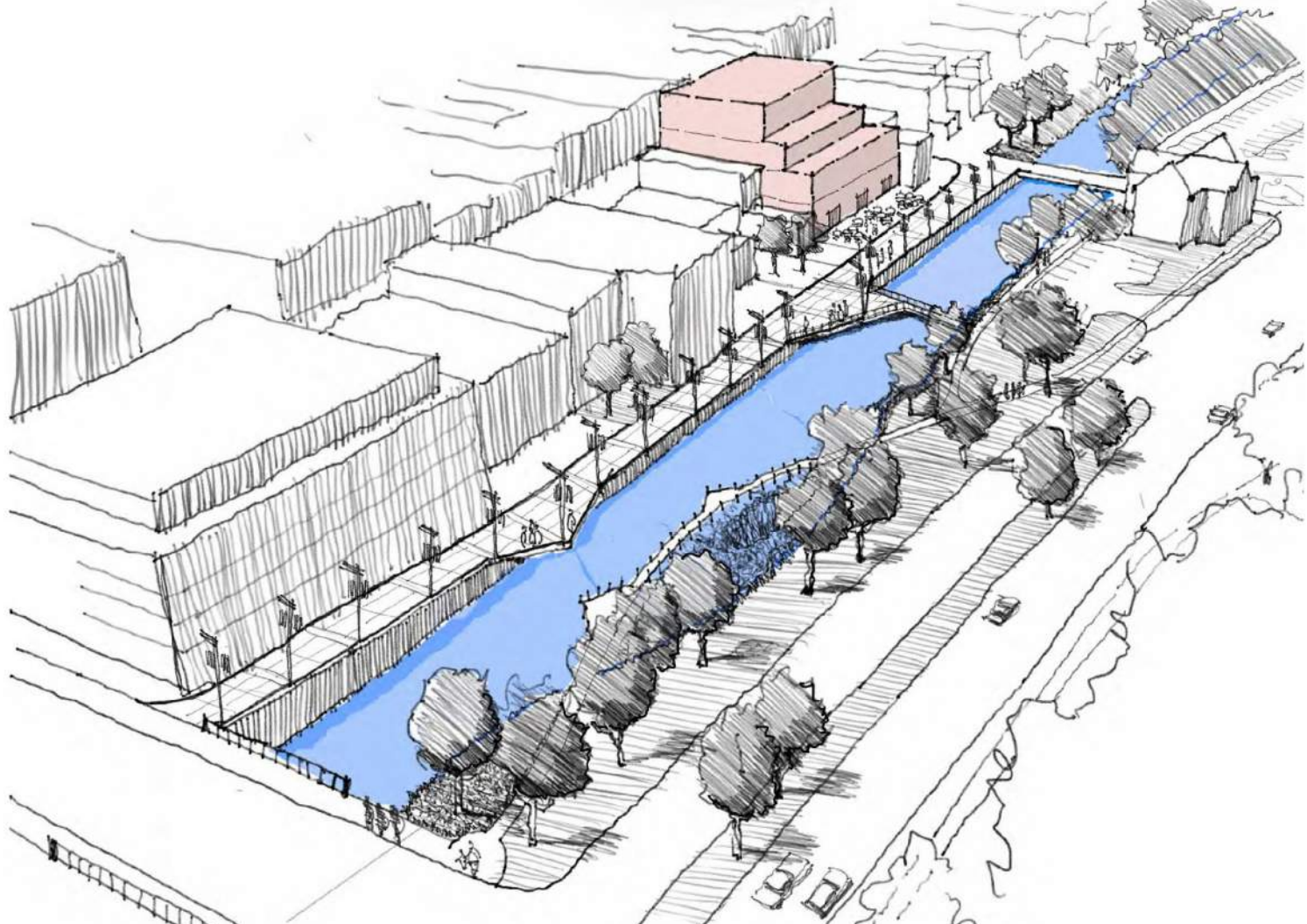
Image 2-5 (page 15)

The Lower Boardman River corridor includes a diverse existing conditions, activity levels, development context, and environmental degradation.

Image 6-8 (right)

Alternatives were presented to the community to gauge support for conversion of parking lots and alleys into shared use spaces and identify the desired balance of activity and bank restoration.







Honor Award [planning and analysis]

GRAND CIRCUS PARK MASTER PLAN

Detroit, Michigan | SMITH GROUP

Built in 1867, Grand Circus Park is an anchoring landmark in downtown Detroit. It serves as a quiet, green respite from the city and a retreat for residents and downtown workers. Over time, reconstruction and modifications to the park have caused it to fragment, reduced entrance points and circulation paths, obscured views into and out of the park, and disconnection its main plazas from the informal lawns. The lack of people passing through and restricted access to the informal lawns led to a park that feels unused and unsafe.

The design team collaborated with the Grand Circus Park Conservancy, Downtown Detroit Partnership, and the Detroit Theatre District Association to

accomplish three main objectives: reflect the park's history, reconnect to the surrounding context, and improve flexibility for neighborhood programming. As a historical landmark, Grand Circus Park will be restored to harken back to its historic vibrancy, and once again serve as a people's park in the city.

The park distinguishes itself by the significant presence open lawns and mature trees. To maintain this legacy, the design preserves most existing trees, some as large as 24" caliper, and makes green spaces more accessible, tracing direct paths and placing plazas and lawns in between. The design goes beyond preserving historical fountains and statues but also revisits the historic



Photo credits: Smith Group



framework featuring multiple points of entry and clear paths across the park to nearby destinations. The design is based on a simple parti – identify the intuitive points of entry and connect them with direct travel paths, thus framing the central fountains rather than aiming straight toward them. This creates strong visible connections to surrounding destinations, redefines the sense of arrival, and opens clear views outward.

Woodward Avenue is the central spine through the entire city and splits the park in two. The perimeter streets operate as an enlarged roundabout with oversized, high-speed streets on all sides and four access ramps to underground parking that create barriers between the park and surrounding buildings. The planned road diet eliminates parking lanes, reduces lane widths, and introduces a new median to replace the existing turn lane on Woodward Avenue. This allows for safer pedestrian crossings and connections to the restored perimeter walks. Landscaped street edges with shade trees and multiple park entries create a more comfortable and dynamic experience along the park perimeter.

Grand Circus Park plays a balanced role in the downtown park network, emphasizing community-based programming for year-round daily activities rather than the high-frequency event programming found at other downtown parks and plazas. The design arranges various daily experiences – a new cafe, civic plazas, flexible lawns, dog park, gardens, family spaces, and casual outdoor rooms – to improve the quality of life in and around the park. Smaller occasional events will foster regular community use and engage the nearby entertainment and sports venues. The design incorporates accommodations for event power and audio, lighting, water, waste management, snow removal.

As a people’s park, Grand Circus stands out as a landmark in the city without compromising its neighborhood quality. The Grand Circus Park Master Plan re-visions the park to reflect its historic role in the city while enabling it to better serve the needs of today’s downtown community. With simple elegance it reconnects the park to its edges and context and restores vibrancy through a wealth of opportunities for intimate, quiet use, social engagement, and neighborhood programming. •

Image 1 (page 18)

The design creates strong visible connections to surrounding destinations. A cafe serves as the front porch, enlivening the space with active daily uses.

Image 2 (page 19)

The overall plan creates direct physical and visual connections across the park to encourage users to pass through rather than around.

Image 3 (opposite)

The new median in Woodward, enabled by a road diet, helps to connect the two sides of the park together and make crossing safer.

Image 4 (below)

Lush gardens are intimate areas for quiet reading or conversation just outside the more active central plaza.



OLD MISSION PENINSULA AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT

Old Mission, Michigan | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan is widely known for the auto-industry, but it is also the second most diverse farm economy in the United States. In an age where urban development may occur almost anywhere across the landscape (especially highly scenic areas), preserving large contiguous and productive agricultural/forestry environments can be a challenge. In the early 1990s, this was true for the cherry production area of the Old Mission Peninsula Township, adjacent to the growing Traverse City metropolitan area. Farmers often desired to remain farming but economic pressures and opportunities to sell the land for housing meant that many were considering to quit farming. It became an economic sustainability issue and in part an issue about social equity for rural populations. In addition, the configuration of the landscape is truly unique, ideally suited for fruit crops: lake temperature mitigation in winter and summer, well-draining aerated soils, slopes for cold air drainage, and unlike the drought prone and wildfire prone American West, the region has an abundance of water to support plant growth and far less susceptible to wildfires. The area also does not require large federal infrastructure programs to support agriculture.

An innovative solution was proposed in cooperation with landscape architects, township planners, and local residents. The idea was to identify the prime farmland area, have a local millage, and then use the millage to purchase development rights (PDR) from willing participating farmers. This idea was highly studied by landscape architects and economists in the 1990s, with the millage vote moving forward. Landscape architects supplied high quality planning/research studies to illustrate the pending urban sprawl, the identification of key agricultural productivity settings, locations where affordable housing could be located, and scenic quality investigations. This was accomplished in association with the local government and citizens in a transparent and collaborative manner, providing reassurance that the planning

and design intentions were legitimate and thoughtful. After the first millage was approved and expired, a second millage was later approved by voters. This unique landscape has been often visited by academics, farmers, and government officials from around the world.

There's a reason they put the Peninsula on postcards. The same qualities that make the Peninsula so desirable for fruit farming also make it extremely attractive for residential development. The rolling hills and sweeping view sheds, as well as the proximity to water on both sides, are what makes the Peninsula as well-suited to fruit production as any location on the planet—and as attractive for high priced home sites.

This globally unique piece of the Lake Michigan Fruit Belt was in high demand, and agricultural uses had a hard time competing with the high prices being paid to develop these irreplaceable land resources. Agriculture, and the tourism it encouraged, was the Peninsula's economic driver (shoreline property sold for \$30,000.00 per linear foot). Beautiful home sites could be found elsewhere, but this kind of farmland and landscape configuration could not. If the rural character of the Peninsula was lost, the economic benefit to the people who farmed the land—and to everyone on the Peninsula—would be lost too.

Protecting farm and scenic lands was a part of the mission, but in a place like the Peninsula, it had to be about more than just pretty views. It had to make economic sense for everyone involved—the farmers and the Peninsula residents. It had to make financial sense for farmers to keep farming, rather than sell their land for development, and the non-farming Peninsula residents had to see a benefit too. In addition, while creating the agricultural preservation district, the community developed an area for affordable housing. The township

has revised/developed their land-use/zoning plan to accommodate this future need for housing in settings identified by landscape architects.

Peninsula Township's nearly 18,000 acres contains approximately 10,000 acres of this prime agricultural land, which is located, for the most part, in the interior of the Peninsula. These 10,000 acres of prime orchard and vineyard landscapes form the Agricultural Preservation Zone, which is where the farmland protection efforts are concentrated.

Today, one can see the success of farmland and scenic protection efforts everywhere one looks in the Peninsula, and the economic benefits are clear as well. Since 1994, the number of Peninsula wineries has grown from 2 to 9; agritourism is booming; farmers are making capital investments in infrastructure and equipment; farmers have the resources to diversify their crops to include: Honeycrisp apples, wine grapes, and hops; living wage jobs are being created; and there is a stable and steadily increasing tax base.

These stellar achievements have not gone unnoticed, and in 2004, Acme Township voters approved their own PDR program, sharing the Old Mission Peninsula's success with neighbors across East Bay. These efforts serve as a promise to the people of the Peninsula that rural character will remain unspoiled far into the future and one can all continue to marvel at this place some call home. An effort that is a part of preserving a unique landscape, environmental sustainability, and rural social equity. Landscape architects were key players in this process. •



Image 1

A view of the Old Mission Peninsula as it exists today and the preserved landscape setting.

Image 1

Peninsula township residents in a workshop (1990s) envisioning the elements of the planned community for area 6.





Student Honor Award

ZUG ISLAND: REDEFINED

River Rouge, Michigan | SHARNI SMITH, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

As we enter an age where carbon neutrality is at the forefront of all major climate policy decisions, we look to our major industries to lead the way in the fight against climate change. One of these major industries is iron and steel. Responsible for 24% of total industry emissions, the production of iron and steel releases more than 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide each year, making it the industrial material with the biggest climate impact. This breaks down to about two tons of carbon emitted for every one ton of steel created. Most of this carbon is created through the use of coke plants and blast furnaces in the production process.

We cannot, however, simply stop producing these materials. It is forecasted that by 2050, steel demand will almost double from 1,600 metric Tonnes to 2,800 metric Tonnes. This is largely due to how much steel is needed for future infrastructure. Renewable energy including solar, wind, geothermal, and others, is at the center of the transition to a less carbon-intensive society, which also puts steel at the center of the conversation. Steel is required by each of these renewable energy sources and without steel, none would be possible. In the US, BP Is Financing the World's First Solar-Powered Steel Mill. Companies in Germany, France, and Sweden are all gradually converting their steel production

to direct reduction with climate-neutral hydrogen. In Austria, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries will soon complete the world's largest steel plant capable of attaining net-zero carbon dioxide emissions through hydrogen. It is clear that steel players across the globe, and especially in Europe, are increasingly looking to green hydrogen for the future of their steel production.

In contrast to the traditional methods of steelmaking, which involve converting coal to coke in a process that releases mass amounts of carbon – Hydrogen-based steelmaking neither requires a cove oven, nor a blast furnace or converter. The raw materials – iron ore and hydrogen – go into the direct reduction furnace and come out as DRI, which is then made into molten steel through an electric furnace to create steel products, with the only by-product being water vapor. When the hydrogen is derived from renewable or decarbonized sources, the process can become completely emission-free, creating 'green steel.'

In order to make this a more attainable feat worldwide, the cost of production must be comparable to the traditional process. Experts agree that Hydrogen steel will be cost competitive between 2030 and 2050.

As a case study for the green steel initiative, Zug Island was chosen due to its intrinsic history with the industry of steelmaking. Located just south of Detroit, Michigan, the island was historically a marsh/wetland peninsula but became heavily industrialized in 1901 when iron making was brought to the island. Zug Island is located in, and contributed to, what is known as Michigan's most polluted zip code until it idled all operations in 2020 – resulting in the loss of approximately 2,000 jobs to the adjacent community.

Despite the pollution and blackened appearance of the island, there are still a number of species that call it home. These include various foxes, lake sturgeon, and falcons. Converting Zug Island to hydrogen-based steel production will allow for the removal of the coal piles that dominate the island, resulting in a 300% increase of habitat from 40 acres to 160. This increase in habitat will allow for more trees to be planted across the island, resulting in over one



Photo credits: Sharni Smith

thousand tons of carbon sequestered per year. Although most of the energy needed to power the steel plant will come from larger solar and wind energy systems across Michigan, the island has the capacity to produce up to 25% of the energy needed to power the facility. This would be produced through the use of a solar farm, solar train tracks, solar trees, floating solar in parts of the surrounding river, and solar carports. Finally, although Zug Island will never support the amount of jobs it once did due to increased production efficiencies in the industry, the move to hydrogen-based steelmaking will provide around 300 permanent jobs and 500 temporary construction jobs for the surrounding community.

Zug Island: Redefined has retained most of the existing rail system excluding a few superfluous lines closest to the expanded habitat. The rail system is used to bring materials onto the island as well as transport finished green steel products. A portion of the existing system to the south of the site will be placed in a tunnel under an earth mound in order to connect the nature trail and the two halves of the island.

Of the buildings existing on site, the three blast furnaces, coke plant, conveyors, cranes, and cargo dock were all retained and will be converted to aid in the hydrogen-based steelmaking process. The new buildings on site include a



materials warehouse to the south in addition to multiple new facilities that can be used by new green industries.

The site circulation retains a northern portion of road in addition to three bridges that connect to the mainland. These include a truss bridge that is used solely by the train in addition to two vehicle bridges. The proposed road system through the renovated industrial park is more linear in order to increase efficiencies in transportation. Proposed trails are utilized to connect the more natural aspects of the site with the solar field and industry buildings in order to create one integrated system. The proposed trails also move through the site's

multiple restored nature spaces including restored forest, wet prairie, and wetland. The most toxic soils on site will be placed in large piles and capped in the creation of earth mounds to aid in the detoxifying of the land. Incorporating hydrogen into the process of steelmaking is necessary for wide scale decarbonization and worldwide emissions reduction. As hydrogen continues to become readily available, so will the opportunities to make industries, and places like Zug Island, green. Through the introduction of hydrogen steel, Zug Island is able to redefine the fields of energy, industry, and restoration as we look towards a carbon neutral future. •



2022 PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

Emerging Professional of the Year



KIM DIETZEL

This award recognizes individuals who have achieved excellence and demonstrated exceptional leadership and contribution to the profession within the first ten years of their careers.

Kim Dietzel, a licensed landscape architect with PEA Group, has been an active member of the Michigan ASLA and will serve on the 2023 Executive Committee as Member-at-large. She has also guest lectured at Michigan State University, worked with the founding members to establish the Michigan Chapter ASLA Foundation 501(c)(3), and has served as its board secretary ever since. She is also a member of the Outreach & Partnership Committee where she helps plan the annual Lawrence Technological University Landscape Architecture Summer Camp for high school students by coordinating with local K-12 schools to advocate and work to diversify the profession's future.

Honor Award



DETROIT COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CENTER

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) received the Honor Award due to their work with neighborhood partners on high-quality community-engaged design projects across Detroit.

The DCDC is a multidisciplinary, nonprofit design center based in the University of Detroit Mercy's School of Architecture and Community Development (SACD). DCDC exists to bring high-quality and community-engaged design to all neighborhoods in Detroit. They do this by engaging, educating and promoting equity in design processes and outcomes. They work with community partners citywide on a range of projects at different scales, prioritizing participation in the planning and design process with the belief that local expertise leads to the best ideas. Over the last 25 years we have worked with nearly 300 partners on almost 200 projects.

Distinguished Member of the Year



CHET HILL

Chet Hill received the Distinguished Member Award for his great work with MIASLA's DEI Committee and other volunteer efforts.

A principal at Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio in Ann Arbor, his expertise spans the areas of park and recreation planning, streetscape design, trail planning and design, public workshop facilitation, community revitalization, urban design, and campus planning. Hill is also a longtime lecturer at University of Michigan SEAS.

Firm of the Year



OHM ADVISORS

OHM Advisors was recognized as Firm of the Year due to their continued outstanding design and support of the landscape architecture profession. Founded in 1962, OHM Advisors delivers award-winning work across the architecture, engineering, and planning spheres. With offices in multiple states, their 650+ person team partners with leaders at all government levels, school districts, developers, universities, and private companies to create great places.

This recognition follows two Miasla Professional Award wins for the firm in 2021 for projects with people-centric design approaches to community improvement: the Auburn Road Reconstruction & Streetscape and the East Warren / Cadieux Neighborhood Framework Plan.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:

Landscape Architecture Summer Camp

The number-one suggestion high schoolers made at the conclusion of the inaugural 2022 Landscape Architecture Summer Camp was this: Expand the camp to a full week. The organizers – Lawrence Technological University and City of Southfield Planning Department – listened. The camp, which aims to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the landscape architecture field, will be a full week this summer, July 17-21. To prioritize accessibility for students from all income levels, organizers are maintaining the previous year's \$100 registration fee.

Last summer, the three-day camp welcomed a diverse group of students from seven area high schools, most of whom admitted at the start they knew little about the field. By the conclusion, their perspectives had changed. "I was surprised how broad the scope of landscape architecture is," explained Rachael Andree, a student at Adlai E. Stevenson High School. "It's basically everything that's not buildings."

Students were instantly immersed in the practice of landscape architecture with a charge to create a teen park at Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve off 10 Mile Road in Southfield. This involved analyzing the site, including assessing opportunities and constraints; developing a schematic design to illustrate the concept or "big idea;" and creating a design development plan necessary for construction. The goal? To enhance community wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The camp was sponsored by the Michigan Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, MiASLA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and Southfield City Centre. Professionals from area firms eagerly participated, including Bob Ford, Landscape Architects & Planners; Mark Hieber, HED; Joane Slusky, Juno Solutions; Kyle Verseman, Landscape Forms; Chad Brintnall,

Lauren Leighty and Tom Mroz all of SmithGroup; Architect Beverly Hannah Jones, Artist Hubert Massey, and Delores Flagg, chair of Southfield Arts Commission. Leading the effort were members of Southfield's Planning Department: Terry Croad, director of planning; Souzan Hanna, sustainability planner; and Sarah Mulally, assistant city planner.

The 2023 camp will follow a curriculum similar to last year – hands-on learning by exposure. Instructors led walking tours of LTU, Southfield City Centre and downtown Detroit. In Detroit, students were exposed to large-scale landscape architecture projects, including Detroit RiverWalk and Capitol Park. These designs "gave me inspiration for our presentation boards and widened my scope, my perception of landscape architecture," said Jacob Akinbode, a student at University High School.

Students were divided into two "design firms." They named their firms and, on the final day, pitched their plans to several instructors who served as their client audience. The complexity of design revealed their new-found knowledge. Students incorporated vegetated buffer zones to reduce flooding and green roofs to prevent buildings from overheating; bike paths, wheel chair-accessible sidewalks and bus stops to encourage widespread park usage; and a shade pavilion with seating. "I'm amazed at how well you did in such a short amount of time," commented Joane Slusky. Katelyn Fletcher, a student at South Lyon High School summed up the student experience: "I was surprised how much time and effort it takes to make a park. Everything is thought out and designed."

For more information on the summer camp and to register for Placemaking through Landscape Design, July 17-21, please visit <https://www.ltu.edu/summer-camps/> or contact City of Southfield Planning Department at 248-796-4150. •



Placemaking Through LANDSCAPE DESIGN

July 17th - July 21, 2023



Landscape design is all around us, whether you realize it or not.

Landscape Architects help design parks, campuses, plazas, and most of your favorite outdoor spaces.

Come join us and other Landscape Architects in this hands-on design studio! You will have the opportunity to design your own unique teen space, with guidance from industry professionals. Additionally, you will be shown a variety of existing projects as we visit various sites within the Southfield City Centre, downtown Detroit, and surrounding areas. Participants will learn about landscape design with other students and be able to leave with a unique experience and greater understanding of the built environment that surrounds us.



Day Camp Registration is **\$100**

Includes registration for all camp activities, materials, lunch, transportation, certificate of completion, and a custom T-shirt.



For more information please visit

ltu.edu/summer-camps



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