



CANADIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

# Strategic Plan 2023-26

**DRAFT for approval at 2023 CSLA Annual General Meeting**  
Note: This draft does not represent the final graphic layout.



**CSLA | AAPC**

Canadian Society of Landscape Architects  
Association des architectes paysagistes du Canada

# Acknowledgement

We gather, work and live, from coast to coast to coast, on the lands of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people and their government. We acknowledge that the head office of the CSLA is in unceded Algonquin, Anishinabe territory.

Let us reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between nations, and to improving our own understanding of Indigenous peoples and their cultures and consider how we can each move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

## **This is the Time for Landscape Architecture**

Landscape architects promote multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to the creation of meaningful, enjoyable human environments, and the sustainability of natural ecosystems and special places. Combining art with science, the profession provides insight and creative design to development and planning processes.

The issues facing humanity, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, urbanization, health, and equity require a multidisciplinary and comprehensive understanding through planning, design, and a stewardship ethos. Landscape architects must be part of the solutions for these global challenges – bringing their skills, knowledge and inter-disciplinary, cross-cutting strategies to develop innovative responses and solutions. The landscape architecture profession’s leadership is essential now, as we are increasingly serving as leaders of multi-disciplinary teams to tackle complex challenges.

### **Our Plan**

The CSLA’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan (the plan) will support the profession in providing solutions for these societal issues, and equip the profession with tools, systems, and resources to face the future. The plan will empower landscape architects to create accessible, equitable public spaces, enhance citizen’s health and well-being, protect, and enhance cultural landscapes, and contribute to nature-based solutions. We will achieve this in collaboration with the 9 component associations. We will continue to support landscape architects and the schools of landscape architecture that are preparing the next generation of leaders in our profession.

### **Our Foundation**

The principle of good governance remains a hallmark of the CSLA. A strong, ethical, and solid governance structure will allow us to achieve our objectives - the strength of our outcomes is only as strong as the foundation that we place under it.

The principles of reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental and central to this plan. The CSLA will continue to incorporate these principles into every aspect of its operations.

### **Our Legacy of Success**

The first 90 years of the CSLA, to be celebrated in 2024, have seen excellence realized in landscape architecture projects, the elevation of our professionals to hold a presence in all provinces and territories, growth of our professional scope, an increase in schools of landscape architecture, growing diversity among our membership, and countless other achievements.

By building on previous strategic plans, we have identified two keys to our success. The professional partnerships between the CSLA, the Landscape Architecture Canada Foundation (LACF), the component associations, and our members; and advocacy that will advance our principles and strengthen the leadership role for landscape architecture in Canada that recognizes landscapes as vital, is inclusive for all people, and inspires stewardship. The CSLA is committed, now more than ever, to its role as the voice of the profession.

### **Professional Partnership**

The CSLA and components exist to develop, educate, promote, and advocate the benefits of the practice and profession of landscape architecture. The CSLA and components operate under a Letter of Understanding following the main principles of:

- cooperating by mutual benefit in the advancement of the profession of landscape architecture and protecting the public interest;
- collaborating where possible in initiatives to take advantage of opportunities to further the objectives of the associations, such as providing services to members;
- avoiding duplication of efforts where such duplication leads to inefficiencies;
- encouraging cross-pollination of resources and ideas with a goal to streamline the delivery of member services; and
- providing a forum for components to share their unique concerns and perspectives at the CSLA Board of Directors, thus strengthening understanding, reciprocal communication, and collaboration at a national level.

### **Advocacy**

We are living in a time of unprecedented global change, and over the next three years we will: oexpand and share our knowledge of the positive impacts of landscape architecture in the public and private realms;

- demonstrate the value of the profession of landscape architecture during the recovery from the global pandemic and economic uncertainty;
- address resiliency and mitigation efforts in the face of the climate crisis;
- act on our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and continue to act for reconciliation with Indigenous communities; and
- increase our capacity through partnerships, staffing, committee work and volunteer efforts.

The plan is designed to allow the CSLA to be both proactive and reactive to a changing landscape. As such, during the next three years, the CSLA will focus on the following strategic priorities:

- governing to support national strength;
- supporting the future of the profession; and
- advocating for landscape architecture.

## About the CSLA

The CSLA is a non-profit, national members-based professional organization. It is dedicated to advancing the art, the science and the practice of landscape architecture. On behalf of over 3,200 landscape architects and landscape architecture students, the CSLA:

- promotes and increases awareness of the profession in Canada;
- advocates for issues which affect the profession, such as urban design and renewal, sustainable development, natural and cultural heritage, reconciliation, equity, restoration of healthy landscapes, health and climate change;
- elevates the profession of landscape architecture by celebrating the achievements of landscape architects;
- upholds the integrity of landscape architecture by providing professional development opportunities and professional tools and resources; and
- encourages the growth of the profession by accrediting landscape architecture programs and supporting research and education.

## Component Associations

The CSLA works in conjunction with the provincial, territorial and regional component associations who are principally responsible for licensure and regulation of the profession. They are:

NWTALA – Northwest Territories Association of Landscape Architects;

NuALA – Nunavut Association of Landscape Architects;

BCSLA – British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects;

AALA – Alberta Association of Landscape Architects;

SALA – Saskatchewan Association of Landscape Architects;

MALA – Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects;

OALA – Ontario Association of Landscape Architects;

AAPQ – Association des architectes paysagistes du Québec; and

APALA – Atlantic Provinces Association of Landscape Architects.



\* Landscape architects residing or working in the Yukon are not currently represented by a territorial component association.

## Our Vision, Mission & Values

### **VISION**

A highly performing landscape architecture profession that is valued at all levels of government and society, with enhanced abilities to transform landscapes for our common future and build linkages between a healthy and sustainable environment and thriving communities.

### **MISSION**

To provide support and resources to our members, advocate for the profession, to provide solutions facing current and future challenges, and demonstrate the value of landscape architecture.

### **VALUES**

Advance the Profession: The CSLA is committed to building professional stature, and promoting innovation through creative expertise, design ingenuity and research advancement. The CSLA identifies opportunities to advance the profession and develops strategies to respond to contemporary challenges facing our rich natural environment and public realm. The CSLA seeks opportunities to work with components and partner organizations in the fulfillment of its role.

Lead by Example: The CSLA operates in a manner which promotes stewardship and environmental sustainability through its advocacy, internal operations, programs, and activities. The CSLA recognizes the importance of applying an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) perspective in all aspects of our work.

Govern in a Fiscally Responsible Manner: The CSLA is accountable to its membership for the programs it provides, their effectiveness and costs. It operates with honesty and integrity in a manner which is fiscally responsible and maintains a long-term view of its financial obligations.

## Principles of the CSLA and Landscape Architecture

The following Principles are fundamental to the CSLA and the profession and infuse every priority of this Strategic Plan.

### THE CANADIAN LANDSCAPE CHARTER:

The CSLA and all the component associations have adopted the Canadian Landscape Charter (CLC). The CLC expresses the following overarching principles for the profession:

- recognize landscapes as vital;
- consider all people;
- inspire stewardship;
- expand knowledge; and
- show leadership.



### Excellence in the Practice of Landscape Architecture

The CSLA recognizes, celebrates, and communicates excellence in the design of the urban environment and in cultural and natural landscapes through its awards program and magazine, and promotes the highest levels of practice through its educational and practice tools, like the Canadian Landscape Standard.

### Strong Governance

The CSLA is committed to operational excellence, and to continued improvement of our governance structures and systems. Our operations must evolve and respond to the needs of the profession. Furthermore, we must ensure that we operate in an ethical, equitable, honest, professional and collaborative environment.

### Collaboration

The CSLA will continue to enhance the relationship with components, LACF, universities, related professions, and international organizations such as IFLA and IUCN. Only through continued and increased collaboration will we achieve our objectives.

### Reconciliation

The CSLA will contribute to the national effort towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

## Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The CSLA is committed to raising professional awareness, to outreach, to community inclusion, to building equitable practices, to providing tools and training and to being accountable for justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in the profession.

## Resiliency

The CSLA advances advocacy and strategic actions for Canadian landscapes in the mission areas of climate change, nature-based solutions, urban canopy, human health and well-being, and cultural landscapes.

### Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026

The Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026 are guided by the idea that outcomes should benefit the CSLA, component associations and members. Evidence that our work is being achieved and that the CSLA is making a difference is described through the measures of success for each priority of this strategic plan. During the implementation of this plan:

- the CSLA Executive Director, board and committees will operationalize the strategic priorities through annual action plans;
- the CSLA will release annual report cards on our progress; and
- CSLA communications will drive awareness of topics of importance and celebrate excellence in landscape architecture.

### The Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026 are:

#### #1: GOVERN TO SUPPORT NATIONAL STRENGTH

##### 1.1 Staff Up

###### What we will do:

To enhance the capacity of the CSLA we will increase our staff resources to enhance the work of our committees, increase our professional visibility at all levels, and to research and address issues directly related to the practice.

###### How we will do it:

The CSLA will raise dues incrementally and review its operations budget to bring on additional staff/consultants as required.



What our success will look like:-

A full-time Manager of Advocacy and Strategic Affairs in place by mid 2023 to lead our issues-based advocacy initiatives, research, and political engagement activities.

Deadline: Second quarter of 2023

## **1.2 Support Component Associations' Advocacy and Enhance Partnerships**

What we will do:-

In conjunction with components, determine how to best support advocacy, promotion, and member services. Develop supportive partnerships to advance advocacy interests and accommodate future changes in professional governance at the component level.

How we will do it:-

The CSLA will work in conjunction with components to evaluate the need for additional member services at a provincial, territorial and regional level, and how they might best be delivered. This includes supporting provincial and territorial issues, developing resources, enhancing the component grant program, collaborating with staff, updating a letter of agreement between the CSLA and components, and building a strong dialogue through our boards and committees.

What our success will look like:-

Advocacy initiatives successfully maintained in jurisdictions with a modified governance model, integrated into CSLA systems but with regionality preserved, and the ability to provide resources which can be applied by other components.

Deadline: Ongoing

## **1.3 Become Carbon Neutral as an Organization and Support Carbon Neutral Goals of the Profession**

What we will do:-

The CSLA will establish an action plan with a goal of becoming carbon neutral.

How we will do it:-

The CSLA will calculate, track, and monitor its carbon footprint and develop strategies to become carbon neutral. In addition, a guide will be developed to be voluntarily applied by landscape architects and their firms.

What our success will look like:

The CSLA will be carbon neutral and have accompanying corporate policies in place, and a resource guide will be developed for the profession.

Deadline: End of 2026

## **#2: SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION**

### **2.1. Enhance Partnerships with Landscape Architecture Students and Schools**

What we will do:

Support education and the landscape architects of the future to ensure they are equipped with the tools to face the challenges of the profession. The CSLA will foster closer and mutually beneficial working relationships with the schools of landscape architecture, educators, academics, and students.

How we will do it:

The CSLA, along with the LACF and all component associations, will encourage student participation to nurture a lifelong relationship between our future professionals and components. We will develop opportunities to engage in regular dialogue with academics and the program's administration, highlight the profession's research ingenuity, its relationship to the practice, investigate practice-related research and contribute to attracting diverse students into the programs. The CSLA will review its accreditation standards to ensure that they align with the practice. In addition, the CSLA will develop tools to promote the profession at the high school and undergraduate levels to encourage entry in the profession.

What our success will look like:

Enhanced relationship and greater collaboration between the schools, students and the CSLA, collaboration on research and communications related to landscape architecture, communication tools to promote the profession to high school students and a manual of accreditation standards which reflects the requirements of a relevant, ever-changing practice.

Deadline: Accreditation standard review: by end of 2023, other initiatives by 2026.

## **2.2 Operationalize the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and Enhance Reconciliation Goals**

### What we will do:

The CSLA will operationalize the national Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) action plan, which, along with the LACF and all components will address awareness, education, resources and actions. The JEDI plan also supports the CSLA's goals for reconciliation, and the actions called for in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.

### How we will do it:

The CSLA, along with the LACF and component associations, will operationalize the JEDI action plan, with a focus on raising professional awareness, and providing outreach initiatives. We will be accountable through collecting data, building equitable practices in the profession, encouraging greater diversity in Canada's landscape architecture programs and creating tools and offering training. The Reconciliation Advisory Committee will renew the Reconciliation Action Plan.

### What our success will look like:

The CSLA will promote tools and resources coordinated by a JEDI Committee and the Reconciliation Advisory Committee, yearly data and statistics allowing for monitoring of the profession, spaces for open communication and discussion on equity issues and established systems and policies to ensure a JEDI lens for all components.

Deadline: End of 2025, and ongoing

## **2.3 Celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the CSLA in 2024**

### What we will do:

With the celebration of the 90th anniversary of our founding, the CSLA will demonstrate the impact of the profession, both from a historic and future perspective, and show pride in our profession's accomplishments.

### How we will do it:

The CSLA will operationalize the 90th Anniversary action plan, which includes the themes of celebrating the past and imagining the future, culminating in celebrations at the 2024 CSLA-MALA Congress in Winnipeg.

What our success will look like:

We will prepare updated interactive historic information on the CSLA, promote landscape architects approved as People of National Historic Significance, develop a database of significant cultural landscapes, and the celebrate contemporary landscape architects of the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s, with tools, experiences, and events to highlight the impact and the scope of the profession.

Deadline: mid 2024

### **#3: ADVOCATING FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

#### **3.1 Prioritize the Implementation of the Action Plans Developed by CSLA Committees**

What we will do:

The CSLA will implement the approved committee action plans, including research, white papers, position papers, tool kits and other resources.

How we will do it:

With the hiring of a Manager of Advocacy and Strategic Affairs (see Strategic Priority #1.1), and delegating timely work to contractors, the CSLA will remove the burden of ‘producing’ tools and resources from our volunteers and engaging our volunteers in an advisory capacity. The CSLA will also build systems for ad hoc/advisory “scrums” and communities of practice to engage members with timely issues, such as nature-based solutions and coastal workgroups, and provide CSLA with subject-matter expertise when responding to government briefs, roundtables, and consultations.

What our success will look like:

The CSLA will promote an array of pertinent, timely and concise tools and resources in each of our mission areas which will advance the issues related to the profession, and communities of practice where members can engage with, inform on, and contribute to issues.

Deadline: 2026 and ongoing

### 3.2 Engage with Government and Showcase the Value of the Profession

#### What we will do:

The CSLA will build a communications strategy with the federal government, targeting directors of agencies, ADMs, and senior bureaucrats to advocate for improved engagement of landscape architects on policy development, funding, and the inclusion of landscape architectural services. The CSLA will develop communications, data, and case studies demonstrating the value of the profession to all levels of government (federal, provincial/territorial, Indigenous, and municipal) and organizations and make these tools applicable and available to members and components to support their advocacy objectives.

#### How we will do it:

The CSLA will undertake a research study on the value of the profession, evaluating both quantitative and qualitative data points and demonstrating the economic and societal impact of the profession. We will research and publish case studies to demonstrate the models for improved communities through landscape architecture and the result of federal investments in landscape architecture. We will monitor the federal standing committees, participate in strategic consultations, establish mechanisms to communicate the profession's views and advice on issues of national concern and advocate for landscape architects to be listed on federal rosters. The CSLA will develop case studies that demonstrate the value and scope of the profession. Furthermore, this objective will be integrated into the Board-approved CSLA committee action plans.

#### What our success will look like:

The CSLA will coordinate opportunities for landscape architects to write and speak on issues and contribute to policy discussions at all levels of government and be equipped with useful advocacy tools to do so.

Deadline: 2026 and ongoing

## CSLA's Mission Areas

To learn more about the objectives of the CSLA's mission areas and how the committees are advancing in these areas, select the logo to link to the website:



Urban Canopy



Climate Change



Reconciliation



Diversity & Equity



Cultural & Historic  
Landscapes



Human Health  
and Well-Being

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