



RESILIENT, TRANSFORMATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE: A POSITIVE APPROACH TO A CHANGING FUTURE

A position paper of the
Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA)
www.csla-aapc.ca/climate-change

THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continue to increase, the atmosphere and the oceans are warming, glaciers are melting, and sea levels throughout the world are rising. It is certain that the world's climate is changing and that weather patterns have become more erratic and extreme. However, there are ongoing challenges to accurately predict how our weather will change, when changes will occur, and where the impacts on environments and societies will be first and hardest felt.

The CSLA Board of Directors accepts that the global climate is changing, that local weather patterns are becoming more extreme, and that the collective actions of humans have had a significant influence on these changes. Effective planning for risks related to climate change will require making decisions in a world characterized by uncertainty about the severity and timing of environmental changes. The CSLA believes that by working across environmental and cultural systems, landscape architects are uniquely positioned to engage professions, industries and governments in new alliances better equipped to innovatively address complex social and ecological problems and to fully express the opportunities inherent in principles of equity, sustainability, resiliency and democracy.



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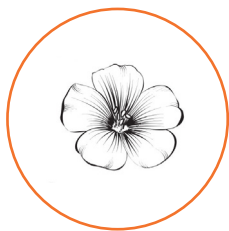
CSLA POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The CSLA believes that to ensure a prosperous future within a changing climate we must create a society which has: an enhanced capacity for resilience, a willingness to transform to a better state, and a commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of environments, cultures and well-being.



Resilient Societies

Resilient societies are those with the capacity to absorb the stresses of small scale or temporary changes, those that can rapidly recover from the impacts of stresses, and those that will not be detrimentally affected in the long term by changing environmental conditions. Resilience can be a function of individual and collective diversity and strength, which together offer the greatest potential for creativity and innovation to both meet hardship and to seize opportunity.



Transformative Societies

Transformative societies embrace change. They are characterized by a philosophical, practical and strategic shift in the way people think, feel, and act. Transformative change continually moves towards a better state of being. In these next few decades, society must work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We must conserve and enhance the natural environment. We must build understanding that the world of today will not be the world of tomorrow, to ensure that cultures as well as economies continue to thrive.



Sustainable Societies

Sustainable societies ensure that the decisions they make today to meet their needs, do not compromise the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. In a sustainable and prosperous society, people rely on a healthy environment for the provision of food and resources, safe drinking water, clean air and shelter for all citizens. Healthy environments increasingly rely on humans for the protection, conservation and wise use of resources to ensure their continued viability, especially under increasingly trying conditions.

The human brain now holds the key to our future. We have to recall the image of the planet from outer space: a single entity in which air, water, and continents are interconnected. That is our home. David Suzuki



Cover: Stanley Park Seawall (est. 1917), Vancouver BC. Photo Credit: Vancouver Park Board.

Left: Bow Riverwalk (2015), Calgary, AB Stantec Consulting Ltd.

HARNESSING INNOVATION

To slow the pace of changes to our environment, and to reduce the severity of the impacts, society must move swiftly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance the capacity of the natural environment to sequester carbon (mitigation), and to prepare now for existing and further anticipated changes (adaptation). Planning for climate change will rely on a combination of short and long term policies and activities that address both the risks and opportunities posed by environmental change.

Care is needed to maximize the contribution of natural systems to shelter individuals and communities from impacts, and to ensure a positive transformation of our communities into resilient bioregional landscapes capable of resisting disaster and responding well to emerging opportunities.

Moving Forward

Through the collective work of CSLA members, we will continue to:

Lead

The CSLA will encourage its members to lead by example by enhancing resilience, encouraging positive transformation and promoting sustainability in all projects and activities.

The CSLA will lead by example by adopting sustainable practices in how the society operates and conducts business.

Advocate

The CSLA will advocate with all levels of government for needed change in design policy, regulations and standards.

Communicate

The CSLA will assist government in improving understanding of national, regional and local risks associated with current and anticipated changes to climate.

The CSLA will assist in the exchange of scientific knowledge among the academic community, allied professions and landscape architects to ensure accessibility to the best available information on the status of climate change, impending impacts, and horizon issues facing human and natural environments.

Listen

The CSLA will respect traditional knowledge and local understanding of the escalating changes in the environment.

The CSLA will value and apply this information in its communications on climate change and on anticipated and experienced local impacts, and will continue to advocate for its inclusion in practice.

Collaborate

The CSLA will work collaboratively with allied professions and the sciences in Canada to promote interdisciplinary approaches, to encourage creativity and to capture innovation.

Educate

The CSLA will work with universities to ensure that accredited programs of study utilize emerging science on changing environments and that ingenuity in planning and design is promoted throughout all course work.

The CSLA will disseminate information to members on the latest science on environmental change and updated codes and practices, and will facilitate access to specially tailored professional education programs.

The CSLA, in partnership with the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA), will integrate new standards of practice and design in the Canadian Landscape Standards.

Support

The CSLA will encourage members to integrate options to mitigate and/or to adapt to climate change within their design projects, and will provide members with the tools needed to inform their clients.

Outreach

The CSLA will extend our influence both nationally and internationally to advance resiliency, positive transformation and sustainability in environments and in societies.

... this global challenge of our time also brings opportunity—the opportunity to ensure a more sustainable and prosperous future for our planet, and for our children and grandchildren.

Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Nov, 2016)

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects is the voice of the profession and an advocate for its members on issues such as urban revitalization, cultural heritage and sustainable development. Landscape architects promote multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to the creation of meaningful, enjoyable human environments, and to the sustainability of natural ecosystems and special places. Combining art with science, the profession provides insight and creative design to development and planning processes, responding to the needs of society, promoting respect for the values of the broader landscape, and minimizing impacts to natural systems.