



design matters

A VISUAL GUIDE INTO THE LIFE OF EDSA

_ FROM ME TO WE
EMBRACING COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

_ STAKEHOLDER EARTH
DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

_ REVISITING THE AMERICAN DREAM
FROM TRADITIONS TO TRANSFORMATION

_ PURPOSE AND PERCEPTIONS
A SPOTLIGHT ON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**Design is more than just
aesthetics. It's about crafting
experiences that resonate
with who we are and where
we aspire to be.**



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WHAT'S INSIDE

driving progress



EDWARD STONE, JR. RIVERWALK DEDICATION | FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Progress is more than striving toward targets or checking off milestones. It is about stepping beyond the familiar to open up new possibilities. This creative mindset is woven into everything we do – sparking imagination and driving us forward.

At EDSA, we are more than just a practice, workplace, or a brand. We are a team of peers, friends, and leaders united by a shared desire to shape a future filled with purpose and meaning. As collaborators, we foster relationships and connections that sustain our creative drive – and together, we are privileged to create landscapes that connect people to places and the broader world.

We strive to make progress with every opportunity and every project that we take on – this is our inspiration. But, in today’s fast-moving world, change happens swiftly.

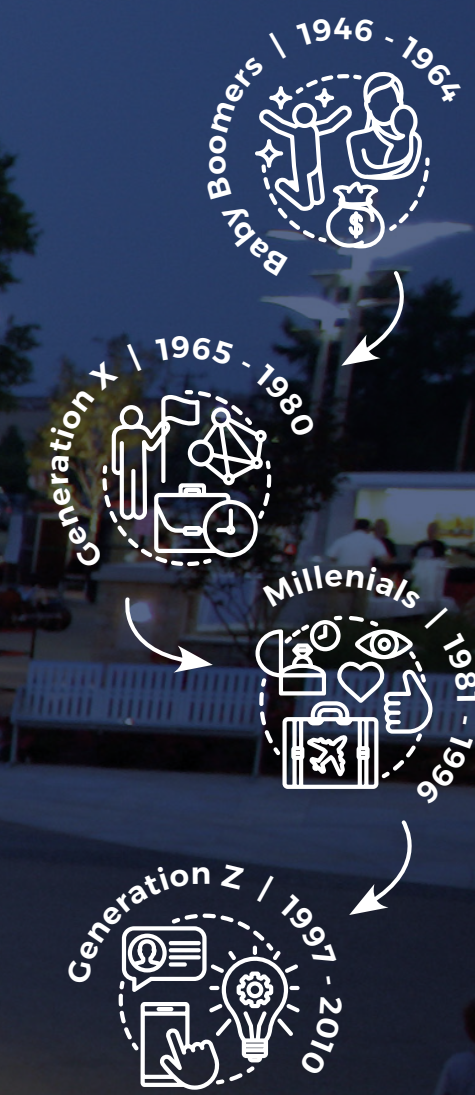
Rapid advancements in technology have accelerated our world, but it has also provided us with tools to improve – streamlining workflows, igniting creativity, and pushing the boundaries of design. More importantly, it has allowed us to embrace a more thoughtful, data-driven approach that begins to lay the groundwork for a resilient future. Moving forward and continually challenging our creative process, we empower our team to innovate and deliver better design outcomes.

These advancements have also deepened our connections with our teams, clients, and colleagues around the world – collaborating seamlessly across geographies and integrating diverse perspectives into our projects. With new offices in Denver and Dallas, we are stepping into exciting new markets and building friendships that strengthen our foundation.

Our 10th issue of *desiGn matters* magazine is a testament to our team’s creative drive. It offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse into our world, as we move beyond the familiar, pushing toward a future filled with purpose and meaning – where relationships, imagination, and innovation converge, and the possibilities are endless.

To the future,

B. Scott LaMont, PLA, ASLA
CEO & Principal



From ME to WE

Embracing Collective Consciousness

Dominating media discussions everywhere – generational influence is all the rage. Countless articles dive into the highs, lows, and opportunities tied to varying attitudes, behaviors, and traits. While the dialogue can be overwhelming, understanding preferences and commonalities is crucial for developers set on tailoring projects that resonate with specific target markets and demographics.

To truly leverage generational insights, it's essential to explore the nuanced realities that shape each group's identity and their market impact. **Baby Boomers** are often characterized by their dedication to financial stability and traditional values, while **Gen Xers** are seen as balanced, placing significant value on personal time. **Millennials**, with their purpose-driven and entrepreneurial spirit, contrast with the younger **Gen Zers**, who are frequently criticized for their dependency on technology and preference for instant gratification. However, these perceptions capture only part of the picture.

According to Peter Dunne, EDSA Vice President, "Generational lines are becoming increasingly blurred. Although each demographic certainly has defining characteristics, shaped by their respective experiences and time periods, there are also likenesses that transcend generational boundaries." In considering these stereotypical classifications, identified norms and situational realities have reached an interesting intersection.

Every generation faces unique challenges, historical events, and lifestyle adaptations that shape their collective consciousness. Debunking the notion of age, overcoming adversity, and embracing new circumstances are common threads that tie people together. This sentiment is echoed by Doug Smith, EDSA Principal, who shares, "Regardless of age, everyone values human connections and meaningful relationships. Whether among family, friends, or within one's community, these bonds play a vital role in enhancing our sense of well-being."

“The result of **timeless design** is an assurance that as one progresses through **stages of their life**, they continue to feel a **sense of ownership and belonging** within their community.”

- Xiaoyuan Du



CORPUS CHRISTI MUNICIPAL MARINA | CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS ▲▶

Shifting Paradigm

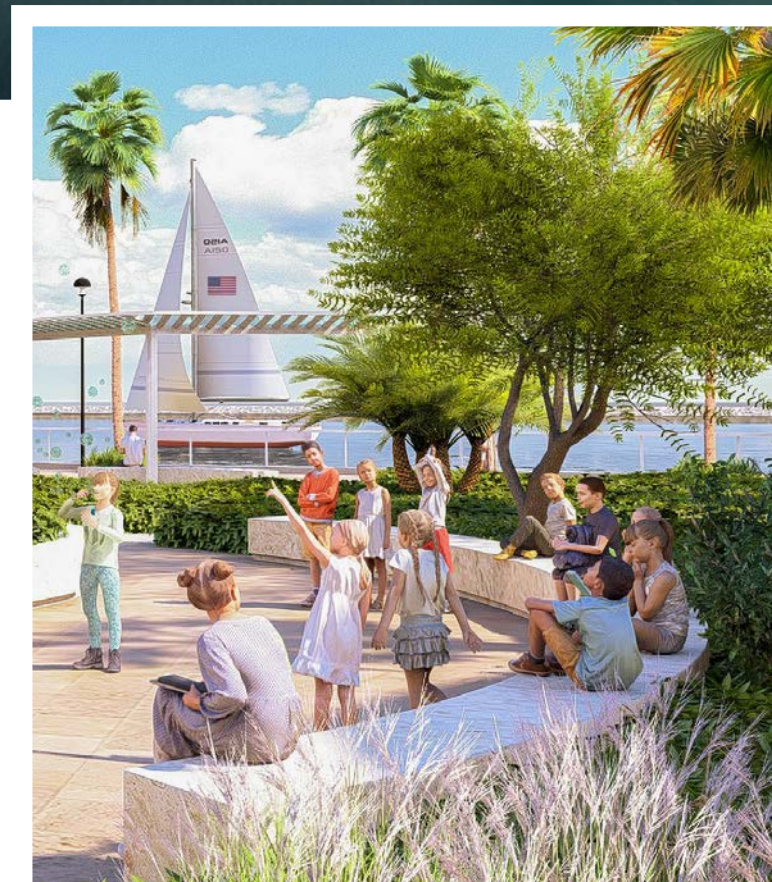
With societal values leaning towards more sustainable, inclusive, and connected communities, the real estate industry is aligning itself with community-oriented and socially responsible development. “By understanding cross-generational needs, developers can tailor their strategies accordingly,” explains Xiaoyuan Du, EDSA Senior Associate. “Developers, investors, and policymakers are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering a holistic sense of community with shared spaces, communal gathering spots, and co-living concepts that facilitate collective responsibility and social collaboration.”

At the heart of this movement is the ‘Me to We’ concept, a philosophy that refocuses self-centered perspectives (me) to community-oriented ones (we). Initially popularized by social activists Craig and Marc Kielburger, the ideals promote global citizenship by inspiring individuals to embrace their interconnectedness with others and take actions that contribute to universal positive change and public well-being.

“Similar in philosophy, engagement with local populations often guides our projects and helps shape design directives,” says Smith. “If we are working on a public waterfront, for example, we bring our knowledge, and experience in responsible placemaking to the table, but there are always specific ideas the local community needs or wants that are unique. As designers, we must listen to and understand all possible user groups, and then translate that intel into environments that are enticing for everybody – regardless of age or cultural background.”

Du elaborates, “Throughout the design process, ‘we’ is a collective that involves multiple stakeholders, not just individuals, but also organizations that have varying goals and objectives.” City leaders typically prioritize positive economic impact and community safety. Business owners may be concerned with parking and accessibility while individual citizens often spotlight activities, programming, amenities, and pedestrian connectivity. “As such, we must meet the needs and expectations of each of these ‘we’ groups in our designs with spaces that resonate with every individual.”

Inviting community and constituent input through consensus building workshops, stakeholder interviews, and interactive web-based platforms allows designers to gather opinions, verify research, and respond to aspirations. As a result, informed design solutions ensure that the site program and context reflects the local personality and culture. More importantly, communities can leverage such support and enthusiasm into catalyst initiatives that serve as positive reflections of the needs and wants of the residents.



Such was the case with the Corpus Christi Municipal Marina in Texas. Attracting over 5 million visitors a year, the premier marina had evolved over 80 years, but was in need of a forward-thinking master plan. In collaboration with other consultants, EDSA crafted a vision to elevate this key city asset – aiming to bolster community well-being, foster economic vitality, and strengthen environmental resilience while improving connections throughout the waterfront district and downtown.

A series of stakeholder feedback sessions laid the foundation for decisions regarding upgrades to the marina district experience. The team’s recommendations address programmatic offerings, public realm enhancements, and coastal resilience in creating a distinct sense of place. Waterfront promenades, shade elements, kiosks, street enhancements, gathering spaces, and mixed-use nodes will be incorporated to meet the community’s request for a tightly woven social fabric that serves as a regional economic generator.



HISTORIC GAS PLANT DISTRICT | ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Adapting for the ‘We’ of Today and Tomorrow

Along with creating spaces that provide community-wide benefits, ‘we-centric’ design also prioritizes flexibility. This reflects a global trend toward connecting with others, in varying degrees, across social settings, rather than leading isolated lifestyles. Smart city technologies, green infrastructure, and versatile spaces are big contributors to this shift. However, it also underscores the increased need for spaces that cater equally to and provide offerings for multiple age groups.

In designing for the future, environments must be adaptable and foster interactions, where individuals of all demographics find value and engagement in shared experiences. “This shift moves us from gated enclaves toward interconnected spaces that unite diverse groups. It extends beyond recreational amenities to healthcare, local businesses, and social service offerings – fostering a mosaic of experiences that binds together all who live and work there,” says Du.

In example, the Historic Gas Plant District in St. Petersburg, Florida, will be a culturally vibrant, mixed-use village as a surround to the new Tampa Bay Rays Ballpark. Anchored by community-centric values and local history, the redevelopment plan is rooted in creative programming, access to green space,

and enduring neighborhoods that serve the needs of multiple generations. The urban realm will include signature open spaces and community facing amenities that extend the gameday experience beyond the ballpark walls. Honoring the District’s legacy through stories and activities, more than 50 percent of the land mass is dedicated for public benefit, with lively street-level experiences, pedestrian routes, bicycle connections, and accommodations for future regional transit. In collaboration with the development and consultant teams, EDSA prepared a master plan framework for City and County approval of the overall district development, which has now progressed into the detailed design for the stadium plaza and public realm within the district.

“As designers, we are increasingly challenged to create spaces that not only reflect cultural identity but also prioritize lifestyle elements for multi-user experiences,” say Dunne. As an example, a park may host a farmers’ market one week, followed by a concert the next, and in between provide intimacy for locals to sit and relax outdoors. “Designing in a way that provides comfort and accessibility for all those opportunities requires alignment in programming and human scaled detailing with versatile site furnishings, electrical and Wi-Fi connections, ample ingress/egress, and climate comfort considerations.”

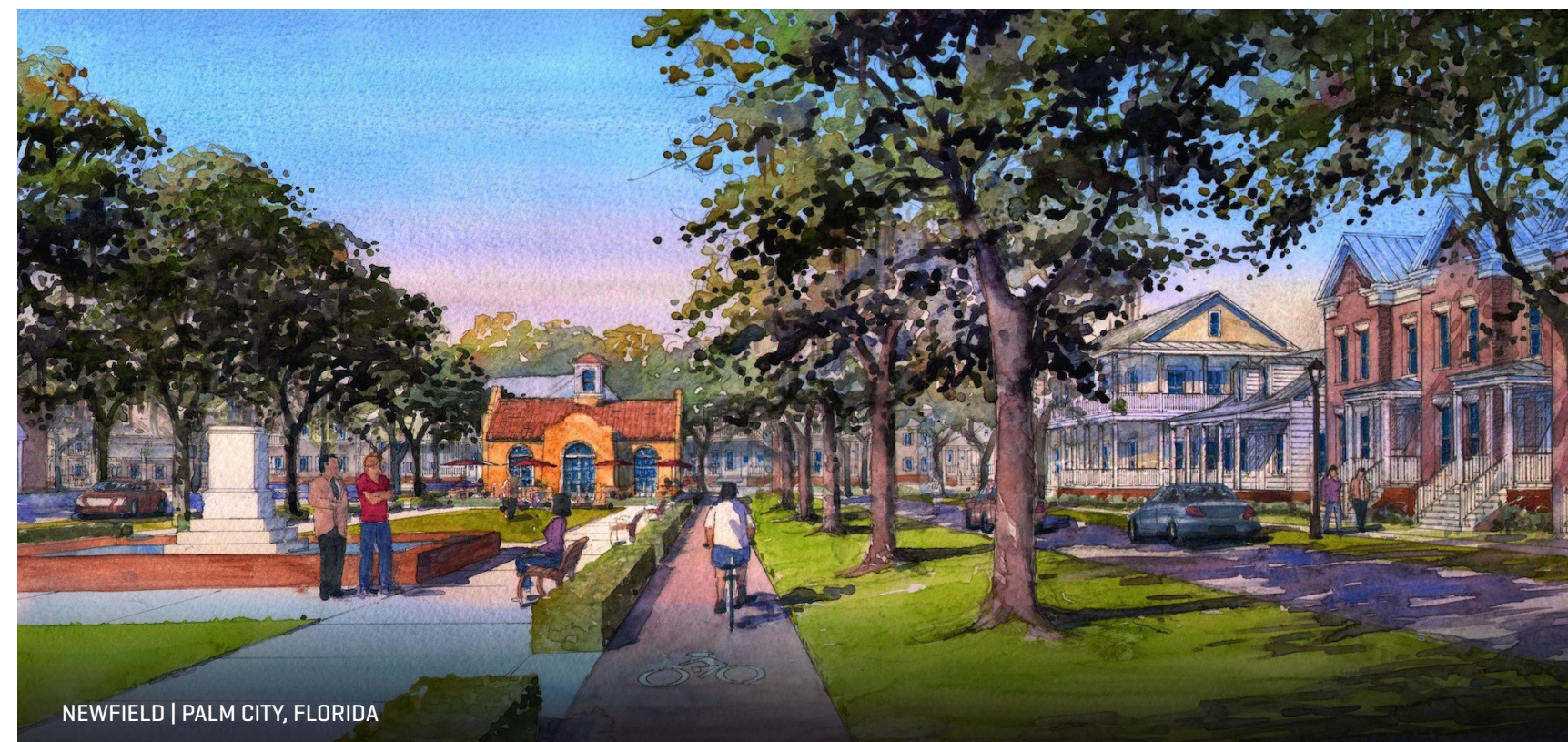


“When creating opportunities for people to connect, we orchestrate occasions for **spontaneous interactions** – where social engagement and neighborly communication happens naturally.”

- Doug Smith

Smith adds, “When creating opportunities for people to connect, we orchestrate occasions for spontaneous interactions – where social engagement and neighborly communication happens naturally. Whether in the form of two people crossing paths and stopping to have a conversation or an impromptu gathering of people, design can facilitate these interactions.” Good design involves simple moves like quality pedestrian systems and properly sized sidewalks. Shade trees, lighting, and materiality add a visual aesthetic that encourages people to meet their neighbors and exchange information. “It’s the little things that contribute to a sense of community and a sense of belonging that fosters generationally aware experiences.”

Consider the Newfield community in Martin County, Florida. Introducing high standards for Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) and open-space preservation, Mattamy Homes is developing this multi-generational, pedestrian-friendly community. An array of villages, with varying home sizes and styles are mixed with civic spaces such as parks, community gardens, and schools, along with retail and office space. To promote walkability and community connection, neighborhoods include alley-access garages so residents can greet neighbors from their front porches. And with more than 70 percent of the total property remaining a preserve – a mix of wooded hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, as well as the county’s first gopher tortoise preserve will enhance quality of life for residents.



NEWFIELD | PALM CITY, FLORIDA



VINHOMES CENTRAL PARK | HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM



JUBAIL ISLAND | ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

“The basics of life have not changed much, and we can only make it better through **thoughtful, inclusive design**. Generations are not that different – **we are all human.**”

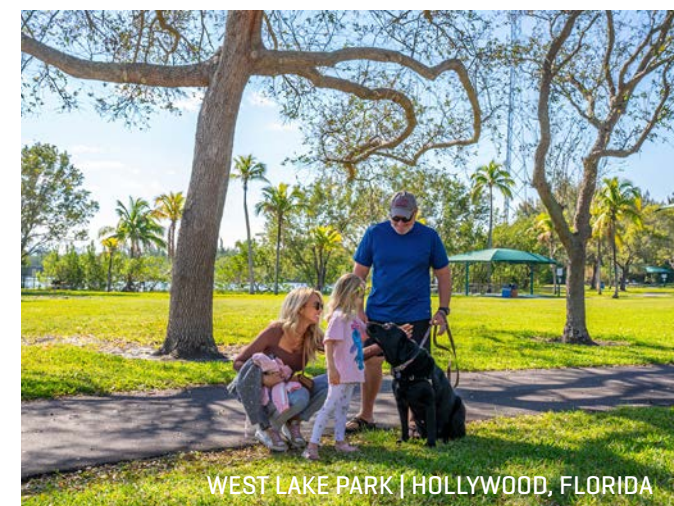
- Peter Dunne

The Journey of ‘Us’

In creating multi-generational ‘flex’ spaces, the storytelling aspect of design resembles a woven tapestry of overlapping themes and patterns rather than a single thread. “The result of timeless design is an assurance that as one progresses through different stages of their life, they continue to feel a sense of ownership and belonging within their community,” expresses Du. “Our goal is for people to want to return to the same destination yet experience it differently each time. It’s about providing a range of settings and experiences with varying intensities related to light, sound, and other elements. Likewise, programming is important, but there must also be one social underpinning that connects everything.” For example, a community garden is more than a place to plant vegetables. It is also a place to learn, exchange stories, and inspire community good will.

“Our loftiest goal is to create places that people of all backgrounds and profiles want to be part of,” asserts Dunne. “Having versatility and flexibility in the design of space provides longevity and opportunity for a variety of things to happen.” Many times, good, functional design is simply a matter of uniquely pairings elements in strategic or thoughtful way, such as locating shaded seating for adults adjacent to a children’s playground. Dunne believes, “This concept of ‘adjacencies’ helps the exchange between people, regardless of current phase of life. This holds true for urban, suburban, and rural spaces alike – with thoughtful consideration for every person.”

Relationships between generations are less compartmentalized than they used to be. The timeline of people’s lives are what individuals choose to make them. “We provide the hardware – the ‘stage set’ for things to happen, and then help cities, private developer and/or landowners to develop the software, which is the programming of those places and spaces,” says Smith.



WEST LAKE PARK | HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA

For instance, most community parks offer trails, exercise equipment, playgrounds, and dog parks. These same areas can serve as venues for varying celebrations – those training for a marathon or a couple out for an evening stroll. In addition, layering these experiences with technology, such as QR codes that can track progress on a trail, detail historic aspects of a building, or even provide wait times at your favorite restaurant can bring a ‘smart’ and immersive aspect to design.

“The basics of life have not changed much over time and we can only make it better through thoughtful, inclusive design. Generations are not that different – we are all human. So, whether you grew up listening to the Beatles or Taylor Swift, everyone appreciates a shaded spot in a park rather than sitting in the sun,” concludes Dunne. □



STAKEHOLDER EARTH

According to the Smithsonian Institution, Homo sapiens first inhabited earth around 550,000 to 750,000 years ago. Relying on the terrain to survive, our indigenous ancestors hunted and fished with spears made of stone and sticks while using fire for cooking and warmth. They protected the land, always replenishing its resources – while cherishing what they borrowed. But as humans evolved, so did our methods of utilizing Earth’s assets.

Eventually, handmade gear was replaced by mass-produced factory goods, and the quest for food turned into a drive to the nearest grocery store. Small huts grew into villages, then towns, and eventually cities, each day becoming more advanced and developed. However, this remarkable progress brought new challenges, such as resource degradation, climate change influences, and loss of critical habitats and environmental systems that support our planet’s health. Today, we are more aware than ever of the importance in addressing these issues to ensure a sustainable future.

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

For over 77 years, the Doomsday Clock has metaphorically symbolized moments, such as nuclear war and climate-related events, that threaten our planet's habitability. Now set at 90 seconds to midnight, the closest to the hour yet, it serves as a stark reminder of our planetary health and how the well-being of nature must remain paramount for society to continue to thrive. It is for this reason that Saifee Kazi, a Senior Associate at EDSA, views our ecosystem through a holistic lens. "It's known that the natural systems around us directly affect our physical and mental health," she shares passionately. "So, if we neglect the Earth and its resources, we can't possibly hope to be the happiest, healthiest versions of ourselves."

A concept further studied by the World Economic Forum, a recent survey reports that the impacts of climate change are projected to cause 14.5 million deaths and \$12.5 trillion in economic losses worldwide by 2050. And while conversations surrounding our ecosystem often lean towards the negative, Ivan Donoso, a Vice President at EDSA, offers a more optimistic view – making it clear that damage to the land is always reversible, but only if we are committed to making it so. "The most amazing thing about Mother Nature is her ability to heal," explains Donoso. "But for that to happen, we must provide her with the necessary tools. That means promoting biodiversity, using systems-based thinking, and designing with, rather than against, nature for affected lands to flourish."



"THE MOST AMAZING THING ABOUT MOTHER NATURE IS HER ABILITY TO HEAL. BUT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, WE MUST PROVIDE HER WITH THE NECESSARY TOOLS."

- IVAN DONOSO

◀ ▲ WEST LAKE PARK | HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA



Take West Lake Park, a 1,500-acre coastal estuary nestled within Southeast Florida's urban fabric. Located within a populated region, the park endured negative impacts from natural disasters and dredging initiatives throughout the 1900's, which led to severe exotic plant infestations, diminished natural hydrology, and destroyed endangered mangroves. But rather than viewing the park as irreparable, EDSA, in collaboration with county officials, engineers, and ecological experts, set forth to bring it back to life. Starting restoration efforts in 1989, the team spent the next decade mitigating and removing over 35-acres of invasive plants, implementing tidal creeks to reestablish natural hydrology, and developing a nature center and boardwalk, both designed with minimal impact on existing habitats. Today, West Lake Park stands as the largest urban park in Florida

and is home to the biggest mangrove forest in an 85-mile coastal zone. Demonstrating the power of ecological restoration, it now supports over 140 bird types and 65 plus fish species, many of which are endangered.

"This project was well ahead of its time, exemplifying what can be achieved when we prioritize the environment and resiliency," says Brent Lloyd, EDSA Principal. "Historically, developers and municipalities have been hesitant to plan and design with nature due to higher initial costs. But there is now growing recognition for the long-term benefits to communities, businesses, and the environment. As a result, decision-makers are increasingly viewing ecological design solutions as essential rather than something that's nice to have."

WELLNESS:

Integrating physical wellness features like ergonomic design, access to fitness amenities, and spaces for movement and relaxation enhances health and encourages an active lifestyle.

ECOLOGY:

Prioritizing the integration of natural systems and processes into projects enhances environmental balance, supports biodiversity, and creates sustainable, harmonious spaces that stand the test of time.

CHAMPIONING CHANGE

With the climate change conversation now at the forefront, the world is taking action. The Presidential Administration, for instance, allocated over \$610 million through the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program to enhance the energy efficiency, sustainability, and resilience of public housing. Additionally, organizations like the American Climate Corps are deploying young adults nationwide to assist with energy efficiency and wildfire risk mitigation. Not to mention the thousands of new builds that are set to achieve SITES and LEED certifications, as many seeking capital must demonstrate their capacity to implement eco-friendly solutions.

There is no doubt that we are amidst a green revolution, fueled by millions of activists, scientists, policymakers, community leaders, and everyday people – all united in pursuit of the same climate-related goals. Among those leading the charge for change are landscape architects, who are well-trained to understand the land and how to best enhance and preserve its assets. “Every place and project has its own targets for sustainability,” Kazi explains. “But it is up to us, as stewards of the land, to exceed these objectives in a way that not only protects the Earth but maintains the site history and welfare of the existing community through place-based design.”



▼ ▲ CONFIDENTIAL WELLNESS RETREAT | MOAB, UTAH

“WHILE THE CONDITION OF EVERY SITE VARIES, THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PREMIUM PUT ON STEWARDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.”

-BRENT LLOYD

MATERIALS:

Selecting sustainable and aesthetically pleasing landscape materials, such as native plants and permeable pavement, enhances environmental harmony and promotes long-term ecological health.

RESILIENCE:

Designing and implementing solutions and systems that adapt to and recover from environmental challenges, such as green infrastructure or defensible space planning, ensure long-term durability and sustainability.

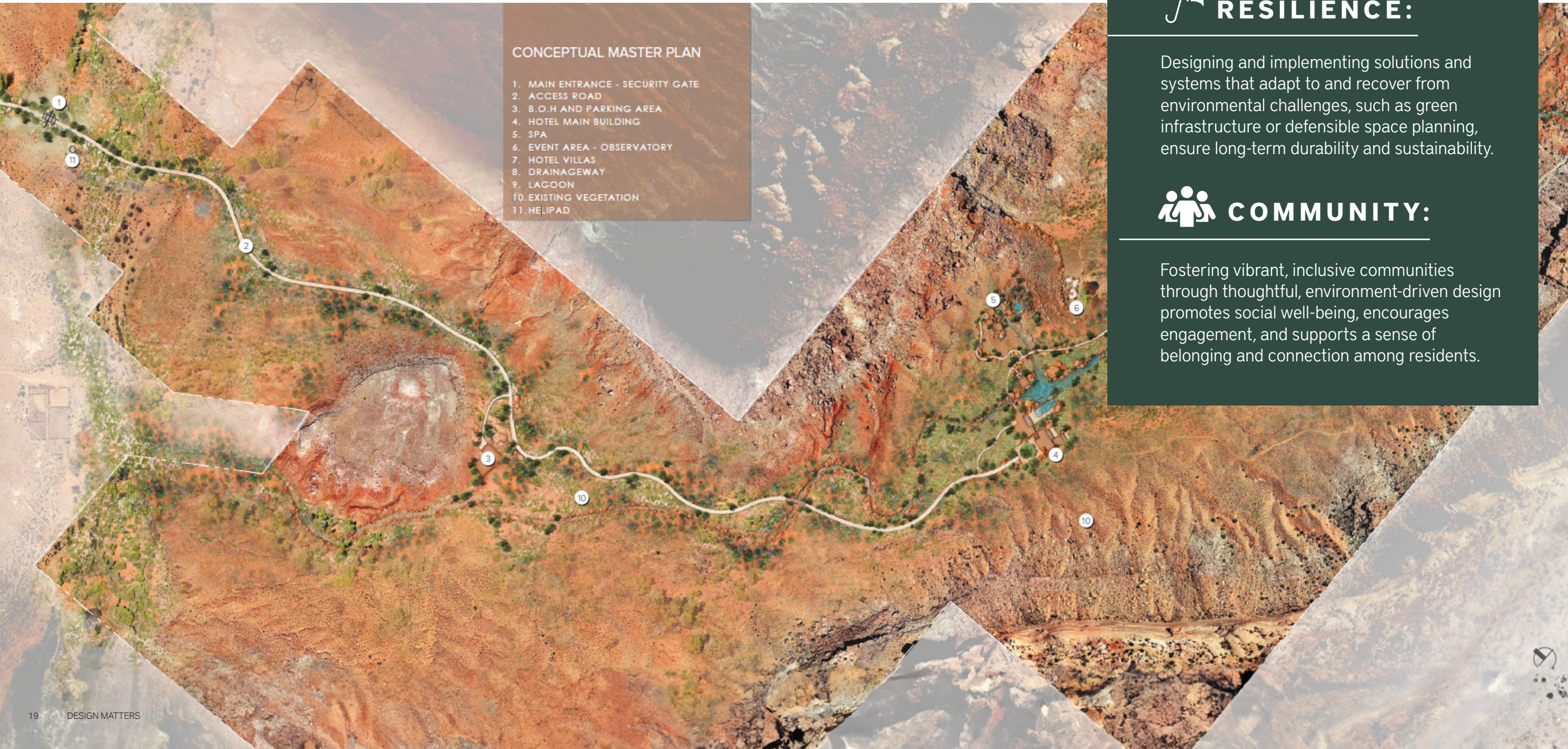
COMMUNITY:

Fostering vibrant, inclusive communities through thoughtful, environment-driven design promotes social well-being, encourages engagement, and supports a sense of belonging and connection among residents.

These ideals are showcased in EDSA’s master plan for a new wellness retreat located in Moab, Utah. Spanning 544 acres, the sanctuary’s elements are lightly nestled within a ‘bowl’ formed by existing natural rock formations and red sandstone landscapes. Inspired by the indigenous Anasazi people and their profound connection to the night sky, the design aligns roads, the main arrival, villas, and amenities to the shape of constellation Orion, honoring the harmony between humanity and Earth. Deeply rooted in sustainability and a connection to the land, the team remains dedicated to working with the region’s unique, pristine beauty – leaving a majority of the site completely untouched while incorporating regenerative design solutions as the project advances to its next phase.

As such, to achieve a final output that is ecologically sound, yet still functional, aesthetically pleasing, and profitable, a project must be set up for success from the start. That is why landscape architects begin every assignment with an in-depth site and capacity analysis. This process involves examining the local topography and climate, assessing environmental factors, learning about the culture, and understanding historic context. “Each of these factors result in a vast amount of data that is then used to inform our design decisions,” shares Donoso. “This way, the land has the biggest say. And, if we listen to it and examine it closely enough, it will always guide us towards holistic development that is sustainable and deeply rooted in the sense of place.”

Lloyd agrees, weighing in on the conversation with a system performance point of view. “While the condition of every site varies, there should always be a premium put on stewardship and understanding responsible natural resource management,” he explains. “Landscape architects are often the translators between built and natural systems. So, we need to ensure our designs are not only waterwise and firewise, but also contribute to energy efficiencies, carbon offsetting, and the overall health and wellness of communities.”



CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

1. MAIN ENTRANCE - SECURITY GATE
2. ACCESS ROAD
3. B.O.H AND PARKING AREA
4. HOTEL MAIN BUILDING
5. SPA
6. EVENT AREA - OBSERVATORY
7. HOTEL VILLAS
8. DRAINAGEWAY
9. LAGOON
10. EXISTING VEGETATION
11. HELIPAD



LEVEL 1

MINIMUM

1.0 liters per m² per day
(10 m³ per ha per day)

- 95% Open Desert*
- 0% Shrub Cover
- 0% Groundcover Coverage
- 0% Turf Coverage
- (1) Tree / Palm per 100m²



LEVEL 2

LOW

4.8 liters per m² per day
(48 m³ per ha per day)

- 75% Open Desert*
- 25% Shrub Cover @ 150cm o.c.
- 0% Groundcover Coverage
- 0% Turf Coverage
- (1) Tree / Palm per 100m²

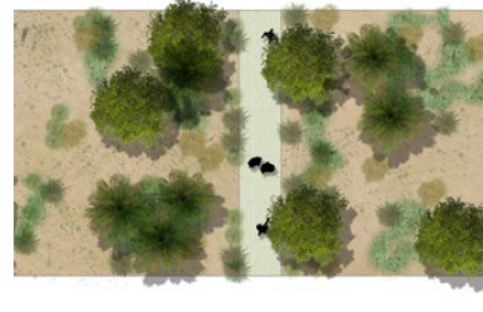


LEVEL 3

MEDIUM

9.0 liters per m² per day
(90 m³ per ha per day)

- 60% Open Desert*
- 25% Shrub Cover @ 120cm o.c.
- 15% Groundcover @ 45cm o.c.
- 0% Turf Coverage
- (3.5) Trees / Palms per 100m²

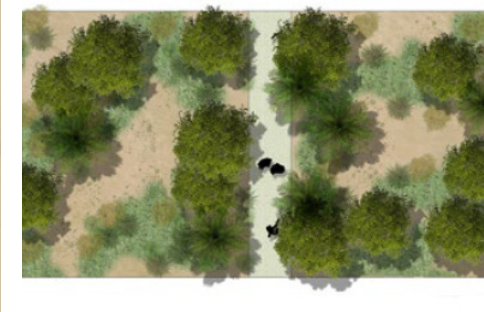


LEVEL 4

HIGH

14 liters per m² per day
(140 m³ per ha per day)

- 35% Open Desert*
- 40% Shrub Cover @ 100cm o.c.
- 25% Groundcover @ 45cm o.c.
- 0% Turf Coverage
- (5) Trees / Palms per 100m²

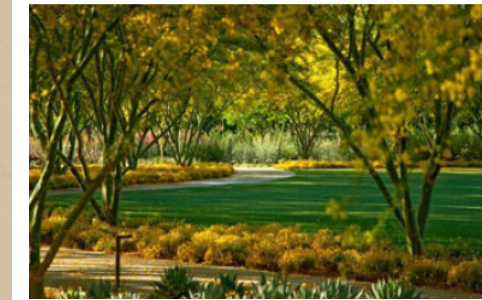


LEVEL 5

MAXIMUM

18.9 liters per m² per day
(189 m³ per ha per day)

- 10% Open Desert*
- 45% Shrub Cover @ 75cm o.c.
- 20% Groundcover @ 30cm o.c.
- 25% Turf Coverage
- (6) Trees / Palms per 100m² (not including turf area)



ENERGY:

Positive energy performance reduces environmental impact by lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Examples include green roofs, wind turbines, energy storage systems, and smart building technologies, among others.

WATER:

Effective water management solutions, such as rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, and efficient irrigation systems are crucial for enhancing sustainability and reducing negative environmental impacts.

CONFIDENTIAL GIGA DEVELOPMENT

STEWARDSHIP 3.0

While landscape architects have always taken a performance-based design approach to projects, this focus is now mirrored across corporate business models and real estate as the world is increasingly guided by an ecological compass. Developers are now investing their time and resources to assess climate risk, while brands are publicly committing to sustainability goals. Additionally, 51 percent of Americans are now willing to pay more for products and services that are environmentally friendly – making the decision for companies to go-green a no-brainer.

Donoso explains, “We finally understand how vulnerable we’ve become when faced with climate-related challenges that are out of our control.” And in the midst of witnessing the loss of endangered species, melting ice caps, natural disasters and more, he shares that, “Society has learned two things: (1) Our Earth is fragile, and (2) our knowledge gained from past mistakes is the only way we can create a better future.”

Now, with designers, developers, and associated consultants aligning on an eco-conscious approach that prioritizes nature-based design solutions, significant strides are being made toward responsible land development in a more collaborative and innovative manner. “New technologies and collective strategies are emerging that allow us to measure critical factors such as water consumption, carbon sequestration, and thermal comfort – essentially any data needed to ensure a resilient design,” shares Kazi. “Human and climate wellbeing are always our top priorities, and the ability to support both through advanced information makes all the difference.”

Certainly, leveraging data, technology, and a collaborative approach to achieve green goals has become a hallmark of new projects in the Middle East, as the region underscores its commitment to sustainability and strives for net positive development. In example, EDSA recently collaborated with a hydrologist to protect, celebrate, and activate natural drainage corridors across a giga development site. By analyzing natural water flow, storm event conditions, and post development runoff, the team formulated a large-scale, open-space framework plan that provides residents and visitors safe access to these systems while seamlessly integrating them as community-oriented public spaces.

“HUMAN AND CLIMATE WELLBEING ARE ALWAYS OUR TOP PRIORITIES, AND THE ABILITY TO SUPPORT BOTH THROUGH ADVANCED INFORMATION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.”

-SAIFEE KAZI

In addressing the project’s programming, EDSA also formulated a landscape intensity application approach, which was critical to analyzing irrigation demand and establishing best practices for water conservation. Xeric planting associations were established to align water demands and environmental conditions. By harnessing 100 percent treated sewage effluent for landscape uses, the open space framework ensures budget-consciousness with a commitment to responsible water resource management for a vibrant and sustainable softscape.

Lloyd reflects, “We’re in a position where we’re able to take various opportunities and constraints gathered through data and use them to articulate a vision, look, style, and feel. At the same time, we’re balancing environmental performance and expectations, whether that’s water, energy, carbon, green infrastructure – the list goes on. That’s the amazing part about being a landscape architect. We’re able to meld design thinking, creativity, and innovation to achieve a beautiful, profitable end-product that is just as good for people as it is for the environment.”

So, as society continues its pursuit toward a faster, smarter, bigger, and better world – it is crucial that we not lose sight of its origins. We must remember that we are part of something bigger than just ourselves. Humanity has, and always will be, intricately tied to the land. And, to sustain our harmonious relationship with nature, we must conscientiously look at our environmental footprint on both a personal and collective scale. By doing so, we will be able to continue leading lives that are not only prosperous but balanced, healthy, and fulfilling. □

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

HOW BOLD EXPANSION STRATEGIES REDEFINE COMPANY SUCCESS

Vibrant hubs within the Super Sun Belt and among 18-Hour Cities are attracting residents, businesses, and investors with their dynamic economies and rich cultural landscapes. These markets, characterized by their unique blend of livability, are reshaping where and how businesses thrive.

While major metropolises like New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Chicago still command attention, the shift is underway. Tech firms, for instance, are eyeing South Florida as a burgeoning area due to its business-friendly climate, skilled workforce, and strategic location. Similarly, Dallas is progressing as gateway to Latin America with its robust infrastructure and strong economic ties that make it an ideal base for companies expanding their operations southward.

This reflects a broader trend where top talent is increasingly drawn to cities that align with their personal values over traditional career hierarchy. "It's about choosing smaller, yet desirable markets for quality-of-life advantages," says Cara Critchlow, EDSA Chief Human Resources Officer. "Whether it's affordability, proximity to family, access to better schools, or a number of other motivators, employees are seeking places that offer balanced and fulfilling lifestyles." As a result, these growth cities are not only experiencing lower turnover rates but also attracting people from neighboring regions.

For many, the bright lights of the big city are not enough to overcome its drawbacks. As such, businesses and employers must rethink their expansion strategies to coincide with the mindsets and expectations of current and future team members rather than relying solely on the allure of urban centers. “The onus is on us to find where the best talent wants to be, and then evaluate our appetite for a presence in those locations. Great talent has the ability to draw companies toward new markets, and great companies embrace the journey,” shares Critchlow.

By strategically planning and executing domestic expansions, EDSA has unlocked new potential. “With our recent office openings in Raleigh, Dallas, and Denver, we’re not just accessing new talent pools and client bases, we’re bringing our creativity closer to communities that can benefit from them,” explains Michael Batts, EDSA Principal and Co-Lead of the Raleigh team. “Each new location is a step forward in fostering organic connections, building local partnerships, and contributing to sustainable development.”

FROM SHIFT TO STAY

While financial gains motivate some, it takes much more to inspire them to put down roots. Underscoring this evolution has been a growing desire for work-life balance. According to Critchlow, “Work life integration is not just about the number of hours worked. It encompasses the level of stress one is experiencing. When work is emotionally consuming, it follows you home, making it difficult to disengage, and truly rest.”



UNCG - JACKSON LIBRARY | GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Critchlow expands, “Although we’ve much to still achieve, we’re setting people up with the fundamentals for success. Our vacation policy, formalized training, and mentorship programs, along with a cadence for performance conversations and goal setting, help our people understand how to move the needle and where they need to focus.” These initiatives foster a greater sense of connection, and when the mystery is removed, everyone is far less stressed, more comfortable, and better aligned.”

In the 1980s, many grappled with balancing family, friendships, and community with professional ambition. Then like now, workers at all levels chose, and keep choosing, in favor of interpersonal needs as opposed to planting a flag atop the professional mountain. As individuals redefine success on their own terms, second- and third-tier cities are thriving – offering a strong sense of community and welcoming neighborhoods that are attracting diverse newcomers.

“When we look at building the best possible team,” says Critchlow, “we know that people perform their best work when they’re happy and personally fulfilled. Creatives also tend to work better together, in person, feeding off each other’s ideas for improved overall results. This can’t happen when people are unhappy with their commutes or feel disconnected.”

Such was the case when opening EDSA’s Raleigh-Durham location. The region has experienced a 29.95% population growth since 2010, and the ‘surban’ areas surrounding the downtown have expanded rapidly. “If development is happening at a tremendous rate, then that’s a place EDSA needs and wants to be,” asserts Batts.

“THE ONUS IS ON US TO FIND WHERE THE BEST TALENT WANTS TO BE, AND THEN EVALUATE OUR APPETITE FOR A PRESENCE IN THOSE LOCATIONS. GREAT TALENT HAS THE ABILITY TO DRAW COMPANIES TOWARD NEW MARKETS, AND GREAT COMPANIES EMBRACE THE JOURNEY.”

— CARA CRITCHLOW

With a robust job market, multitude of activities, and mild climate, the Research Triangle boasts the quality of life that attracts talented people. “Expanding into new regions means more than just growing our business footprint,” notes Batts. “It’s about connecting with people, serving communities, building relationships, and making a meaningful difference in people’s lives.”

Likewise, EDSA employees have a sense of ownership and belonging by contributing to projects in their own communities. “Seeing is believing,” says Tyler Wallace, a Vice President in EDSA’s Denver office. “It’s rewarding to see the realities of our designs come to life around us. The thought that our work directly shapes the way my neighbors, friends, and family live is incredibly inspiring.”



PULL OF PROSPERITY

Knowing whether or not to relocate offices or open a new one is not a choice to be taken lightly. It takes considerable research into what a potential market offers besides a different view. Wallace believes in not only asking the business ready questions but those tied to company culture and legacy. “How will this market expand our practice? Will this office allow us to develop new relationships and partnering opportunities? Will the location open doors to untapped talent? And maybe most importantly, how will we carry forth EDSA’s core values, history, and culture in this new environment?”

As with any flourishing market, the fundamentals of job growth, population dynamics, local economies, and the potential for reasonable housing set the stage for development. Cities like Dallas offer a pace and quality of life distinct from the hustle and bustle of global capitals, yet it abounds in educational, cultural, and occupational opportunities. “A strong economy, robust design community, and affordability were key factors that made the city the right fit for us,” remarks Critchlow about the new Texas location.

In Dallas, the team is excited to leverage their experience on an array of projects that integrate residential, commercial, healthcare, and retail offerings. With regional reach beyond Texas to cities previously thought of as small-town America, EDSA is extending its design ethos into Oklahoma, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas. With transforming skylines and historic district revitalization, the focus is on enhanced quality of life, tranquility, community connections, and an affordable cost of living.



NATIONAL JUNETEENTH MUSEUM | FORT WORTH, TEXAS

“IT’S REWARDING TO SEE THE REALITIES OF OUR DESIGN COME TO LIFE. THE THOUGHT THAT OUR WORK DIRECTLY SHAPES THE WAY MY NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY LIVE THEIR LIVES IS INCREDIBLY INSPIRING.”

— TYLER WALLACE

Small towns offer a slower pace of life with greater proximity to nature, cleaner air, and expansive recreational opportunities. Beyond these physical attributes, their appeal lies in a tight-knit community fabric and sense of belonging. Residents cherish Main Street businesses, heritage festivals, and genuine relationships that develop. And, as more individuals and families prioritize holistic well-being and work-life balance, small-town America becomes a compelling choice.

The mountain west holds tight to some of the same ideals. For Wallace who relocated to Denver in 2019 as a remote worker – ‘livability’ is how he describes the city’s appeal. “A market that actively promotes the outdoors and embodies the very elements we aim to achieve in our design work becomes a place with synergy at its core.” EDSA opened a brick-and-mortar location earlier this year to capitalize on Denver’s entrepreneurial spirit and location as a hub for commercial real estate investment and regional development.

The growing team is engaged in dynamic projects and eco-conscious design initiatives that reinforce the firm’s commitment to enriching communities and preserving natural beauty. With more convenient access to assignments in California, Utah and Hawaii, the team’s expanding portfolio includes urban infill projects, hospitality properties, localized parks, and regional recreation works. With strategic hires, the firm has also strengthened its focus on sustainable design, specifically related to water conservation and firewise landscapes.

The firm’s adaptable and resourceful design approach champions systems-based thinking and early decision-making to yield value-added benefits and meaningful project outcomes. Part of the transformation, Wallace is inspired. “Each project becomes more than just a job. We have the opportunity to not only create beautiful, functional spaces that enhance daily life but also offer our clients and the communities where our projects reside resilient, aesthetically pleasing, well-performing outdoor environments.”

* INSIDE PERSPECTIVES *

DENVER

“The city’s vibrant outdoor culture, community spirit, and close connection to nature provides a unique canvas for our environmentally resilient designs.”

Courtney DuChene | Senior Associate



BALTIMORE

“The team atmosphere is so positive. With colleagues always willing to share knowledge, I have the encouragement I need to take on new challenges.”

Terri Wu | Senior Associate



DALLAS

“Apart from the great BBQ, Dallas is home to world-class design firms and serves as a hub for quick access to our projects across the globe.”

Jagger Javenes | Senior Associate



RALEIGH

“Contributing to regional growth through project design is exciting, especially with the added perks of nearby breweries and easy access to both the beach and the mountains.”

Matt Armstrong | Associate



SHANGHAI

“With this being my hometown, I get to spend time with my family while also working with a creative group of people that continue to inspire me each day.”

Jocelyn Zhao | Office Manager



FORT LAUDERDALE

“There are endless sites and places to explore in South Florida. And, seeing projects constructed in our own backyard – well, that never gets old!”

Amy Harbert | Vice President



ORLANDO

“While many think of theme parks first, the city surprises with a vibrant food scene, distinctive neighborhoods, and outdoor recreation just minutes away.”

Jeff Sugar | Principal



NEW YORK

“Living in the heart of NYC is so inspiring with its diversely rich culture. We get to bring that energy into the office every day. Great pizza is also a plus!”

John Ty | Designer



When looking to expand, Batts encourages companies to assess their strengths and identify areas for growth. “By refocusing on resiliency and pinpointing markets at the forefront of this evolution, we were able to strengthen a very important aspect of our practice. This openness has served us well and challenged us beyond our comfort zones – helping us become more knowledgeable and insightful design professionals as we now draw from a vast well of talent that is united in purpose.”

PRIORITIZING CLIENT CARE

In the heart of bustling cities like Shanghai, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Baltimore, Dallas, Denver, New York and Raleigh, EDSA is redefining how they serve their clients with dedicated teams of creativity. With roots firmly planted in the community, each location is more than just a workspace. They have become a nucleus for collaboration.

Designers are immersed in the local culture – understanding the pulse of the region and its unique vernaculars. “Our strong ties to the places we call home help us translate clients’ aspirations into site-specific designs that really connect and authentically resonate with people in that region,” remarks Wallace, noting his recent work at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center. “The client has really appreciated our ability to be on-site during the critical construction phase which leads to more productive interactions and proper project implementation.”

Working regionally on projects that enhance quality of life is a transformative endeavor. “Our offices are incubators of innovation, where designers immerse themselves in the unique fabric of each community,” notes Critchlow. However, she emphasizes leadership’s role for instilling the firm’s values of creativity, innovation, and client-centric service. “When opening new offices, we look toward individuals familiar with our culture to ensure alignment from the outset. Facilitating smoother adaptation for new and existing employees, they are entrusted to foster a culture where everyone feels empowered and trusted – strengthening our identity while cultivating a workplace where innovation thrives and meaningful contributions are recognized and celebrated,” explains Critchlow.

Batts, who launched his career with the firm in 2002 and later returned to co-lead the Raleigh office has spent much of his life in North Carolina, with a strong portfolio of built work throughout the Mid and South Atlantic. With a nuanced understanding of regional culture and environmental context, his practical knowledge and that of his team, help guide clients to decision on everything from sustainable design practices to navigating local regulations and zoning laws.

“Expanding the firm’s footprint has brought more than just a logistical change. It’s has been an opportunity to enhance client experiences in meaningful ways,” shares Batts. So, while the increased accessibility affords clients the opportunity to drop in for face-to-face meetings to discuss new opportunities or review progress on existing works, Batts assert that the closeness isn’t just about convenience.

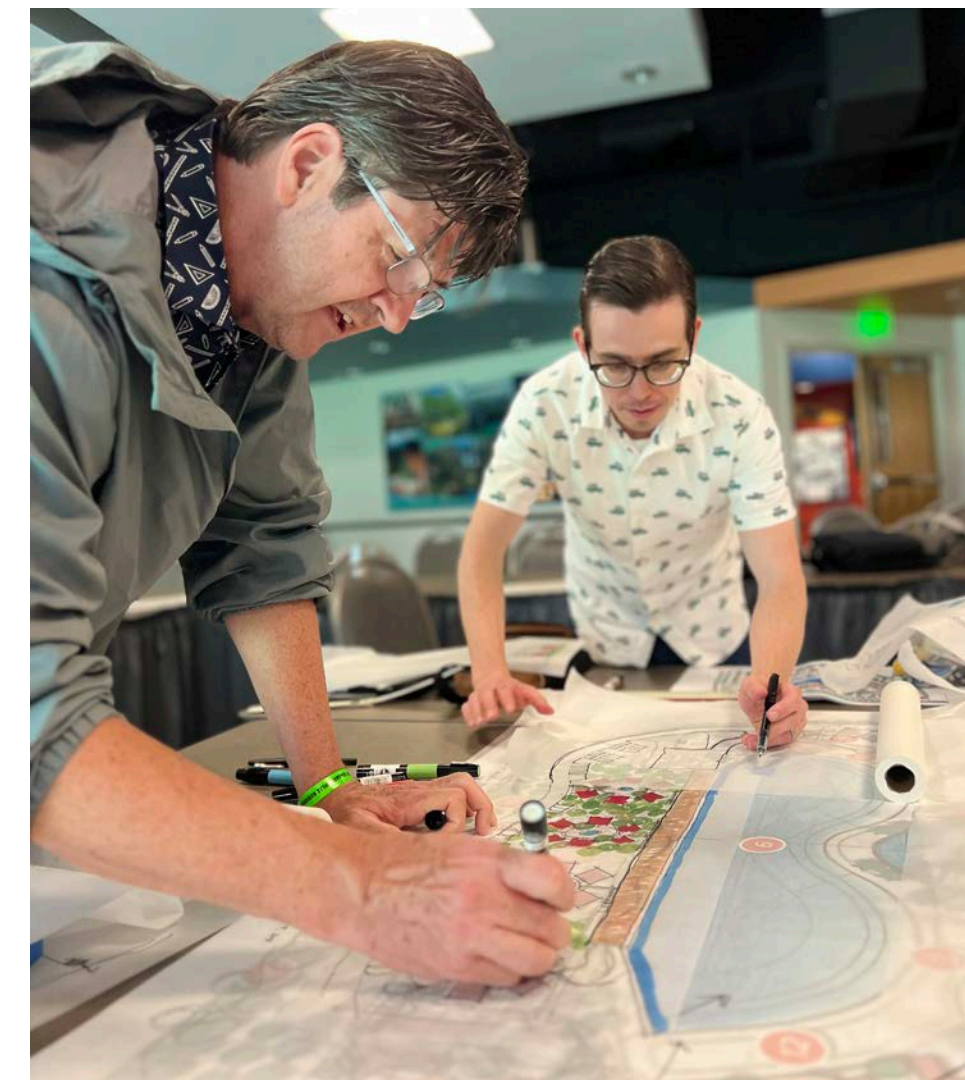


“THE FIRM’S EXPANDING FOOTPRINT HAS BROUGHT MORE THAN JUST LOGISTICAL CHANGE. EACH NEW LOCATION IS A STEP FORWARD IN FOSTERING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, ENHANCING CLIENT EXPERIENCES, AND POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTING TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.”

— MICHAEL BATTIS

“It’s about building trust and forging lasting partnerships and quite frankly, customizing services so that solutions are not only effective but culturally and regionally relevant. Together, we are weaving a tapestry – where every corner tells a story of resilience, creativity, and a shared vision for a better future.”

As the dynamics of work and life evolve, magnet markets are emerging as the new frontier – attracting individuals and businesses looking for a balanced lifestyle without sacrificing professional opportunities. With local offices as their anchor, EDSA is not only designing for communities but growing with them – and in doing so, creating lasting legacies that embody the essence of community, creativity, and collaboration. 



GAYLORD ROCKIES RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER | AURORA, COLORADO

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The DETAIL EFFECT

A stone pathway meanders through a tapestry of vibrant flora. Tree draped canopies shade a breezeway. Cascading water emits a rhythmic calm. This is the world of landscape architecture – where each element is akin to a living, breathing masterpiece.

Nourished by a designer's passion and imagination, every project has a story – a meaningful narrative and transformative process that begins with a blank canvas. The baselines of such creations are built upon strong visionary concepts with relevance that shines through every design decision. Notwithstanding the value of crafted details, memorable projects are brought to fruition by a well-executed, constructible, and sound project program and implementation strategy that ensures foundational ideals translate into tangible realities.

“We begin every project with ‘the end in mind’ and that entails collaboration among stakeholders and consultants at the project onset to determine a sense for visual tone and overall design moves,” states Betsy Suiter, EDSA Design Director & Vice President. “Regardless of stage, every decision must be linked in form and function. Not as an afterthought, but as a generator, so that anticipated outcomes and user interface expectations align, and the integrity of the design is protected.”

Consider the dialogue between nature and creatives, where design choices not only shape a space but evoke emotions in an environmentally respectful way. It is within this deeper design conversation that placemaking takes hold. According to Rob Hutcheson, EDSA Principal,

“Designers must share an understanding and curate experiences with people they have yet to, or may never, meet. In the absence of explanation, the choices we make in process, program, and materiality need to convey meaning and relevance for years, decades, maybe even centuries to come. Ultimately, our designs are an interchange between the creator, the space, and its future users.”

- Rob Hutcheson

1. Site Context

Cognitive Experience

Referencing history, local culture, and ecological importance enriches a space, fostering a deeper connection between people and place.



PEPSICO WORLD HEADQUARTERS | PURCHASE, NEW YORK

A hallmark of EDSA is their ability to bring unquities to each assignment. Reliant upon cultural associations, historical contexts, environmental and social cues, the exploration and practicality of a design comes from asking questions and responding in ways sympathetic to the land, people, and place. “With each project we push the boundaries of what we know, embracing the natural palette we have at our disposal along with amazing technological advances,” shares Craig Stoner, EDSA Principal. “Determining the what, knowing the how, and understanding the why allows us to make informed decisions for suitability, aesthetics, spatial, and experiential concerns.”

Big Moves, Small Details.

Great design emerges from solid planning with found moments and anticipated experiences that just make sense. It is all about how the grand vision seamlessly integrates with intricate details. “By balancing macro and micro concerns, we create spaces that are well-integrated, functional, and aesthetically harmonious – ensuring that the design works effectively as a whole and in its finer details,” suggests Stoner.

To create spaces that are both functionally robust and richly immersive to the broader context of the site – climate, topography, and adjacent land uses must be considered in relationship to major components such as circulation networks, green infrastructure systems, and environmental factors like watershed management and biodiversity preservation. Centered on human scale and comfort, macro perspectives not only emphasize the big picture but uncover the hidden beauty that often goes unnoticed – allowing for the reveal of miniature masterpieces within the larger canvas.

Hutcheson speaks to the flip-side. “Design detailing is about creating a hierarchy of overall experiences, ensuring there is an exploratory sequence that draws people to and through spaces. Balancing large- and small-scale elements in hardscape, landscape, lighting, and ornamental features, brings personality and life of a space can be seen, felt, and understood.” For example, the selected texture of pathway materials, durability of seating, or the interplay of light and shadow can make a space feel special and inviting.

Designers not only draw the big strokes, they also form intimate connections. The deliberate arrangement of natural and built elements, such as the curvature of a pathway or scale of a pocket park, guides users’ experiences while anchoring us to a place.

“The artistry lies in choosing and positioning materials to do more than occupy a space. Details are not just details; they make the design. They add depth and character, transforming a space into something truly special. Every design decision is a carefully chosen contributor to a larger narrative that reflects the site’s inherent characteristics and the intended human engagement.”

- Betsy Suiter

This importance is not lost on the arrival experience. In working with Royal Caribbean for a new beach club, the journey from ship to shuttle and island disembarking needed to be about the beach and sea. “Your feet need to land on the sand,” says Stoner. “We moved the arrival pavilion closer to

the water so you immediately hear and see the waves.” Guests are then led by natural trails with ‘cookie crumbs’ to a restaurant here, bar there, play area to the left and relaxation cove to the right. Similarly, at Nekajui, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, in Costa Rica, found moments uncover special spaces that maybe one didn’t see at first glance – a little tree house sitting area with views to the ocean, a grotto pool that’s secluded and provides tranquility, or a hand bridge where the monkeys hang out every morning.

Hutcheson suggests creating portals to frame a space – narrow passages that lead to ‘off the beaten path’ treasures like a living room environment within an outdoor mall. “It’s about intimacy and scale,” says Hutcheson. He uses a pool deck with 2,000 chairs as an example. “Why would anyone want to hang out there? There’s nothing special about it, besides its grandness. By changing the pool shape, offering more ‘edge’ and pockets to gather – a totally different experience is created. And by softening the space with layers of foliage, special moments can be found.”

2. Hierarchy + Flow

Spatial Experience

The organization of pathways, open areas, and focal points influence the user journey, creating a balance between discovery, relaxation, and movement.

3. Aesthetic Appeal

Visual Experience

Thoughtful aesthetics guide the eye, evoke emotions, and create surprising or contemplative moments to amplify a space’s memory making ability.



NEKAJUI, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE | GUANACASTE, COSTA RICA



4. Hardscape Tactical Experience

Diversity of textures and finishes afforded by materiality not only ensure lasting appeal but enhance user interface and environmental value.



EDSA was recently involved in the expansion of the Beaches® Turks and Caicos, which is currently under construction. A comprehensive property audit revealed that the pools were not leveraging their connectivity to the ocean. Hutcheson explains, “As part of the re-imagination process, we raised the lobby so that when you enter the porte-cochère you discover the ocean. We then connected all the water bodies through terracing – a fountain to a family pool, to an adult pool, to the ocean. They all connect in a tight vista. It’s an organic plan that formed a sequence of discoverable experiences that are not too vast or predictable.”

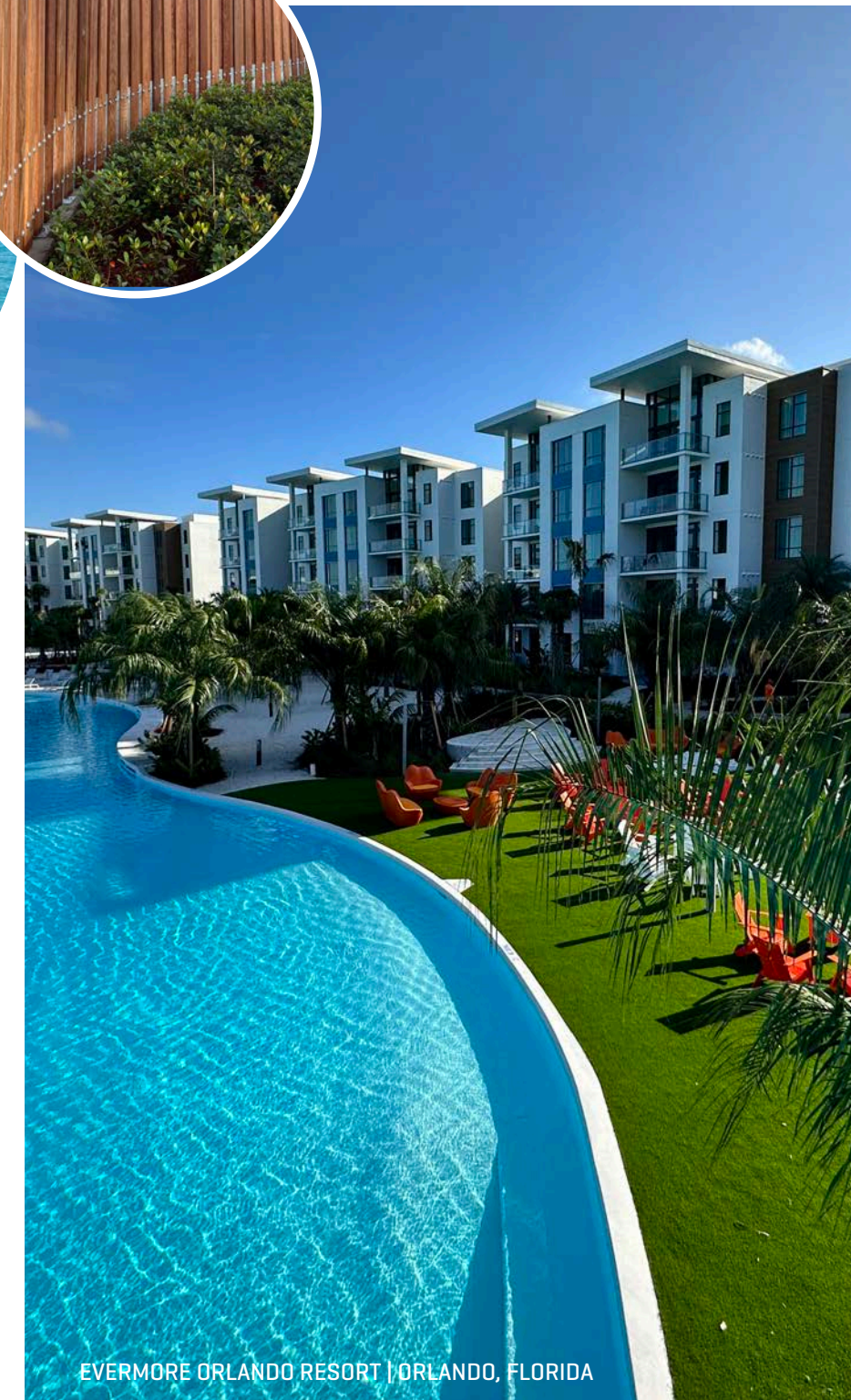
Choice Decisions

Finding the right balance of how much to design versus working with nature to make a space feel natural and authentic is crucial for creating environments that are aesthetically pleasing, functionally appropriate, and harmonious with its surroundings. “The choices we make, their treatment, and their performance in a space significantly impacts our senses,” shares Suiter. “It’s about selecting the right materials to weave a tapestry that embodies the context of a site, respects the land’s history, embraces sustainability, and anticipates the evolving needs of user interactions.”

She continues, “Materiality has the ability to breathe life into a design – transforming outdoor spaces into immersive experiences.” Consider the roughness of stone, the softness of moss, or the vibrant hues of seasonal flowers. A proponent of layering colors and textures for quality design compositions, Suiter often relies on wood, fabrics, or metals to create surface effects while she prefers repetitive patterns for visual flow. “While project dependent, a baseline palette sets the overall aesthetic but the tactility of materials and colors, working together, add emphasis and interest within a development.”

5. Vegetation Sensory Experience

Flora brings life, texture, and seasonality to a spaces affecting not only the senses but also temperature, shade, biodiversity, and how people interact with nature.



EVERMORE ORLANDO RESORT | ORLANDO, FLORIDA

At Acqualina Resort & Residences in Sunny Isles, Florida a combination of formal paths, axial views, and a series of moments lead guests through exterior rooms while the formality of Mediterranean gardens surround the residential towers and support connectivity to adjacent properties. Intimate human-scale moments blend with an overlay of amenities, while animated water features, intricate edge treatments, and surface textures are a testament to the quality of craftsmanship.

Hutcheson emphasizes that design decisions must be grounded in facts, justified in cause, and driven by purpose – especially when cost comes into play. For example, a raised planter that does double time as a retaining wall for transitioning is much more meaningful than a raised planter as an accent. He recommends that when it comes to value engineering, the spend should be on vertical elements rather than the ground plane. “If you can do it all, great. If not, prioritize columns, trellises, cabanas, and site walls. You don’t want people to look down, you want them to keep looking up.”

6. Human Comfort Functional Experience

Well-scaled spaces that adapt to climate conditions, enhance comfort and engagement, create a more inviting and immersive design experience.



SOBRO PEABODY & 2ND | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Designing for the future entails choosing hardscape, landscape, and site furnishings that endure and flourish over time. This involves assessing lifecycle maintenance costs and environmental impacts. Likewise, respecting local traditions, using indigenous plants, and considering the ecological impact of design choices helps create places with relevance and meaning. This might involve preserving historical features, reflecting cultural narratives, or integrating local traditions. For instance, by selecting indigenous flora, the landscape not only mirrors the local ecology but fosters a deeper connection to the region's identity. "By choosing materials that are locally sourced and well-suited to the environment, we can minimize the environmental impact, reduce construction costs, and support local economies," explains Stoner.



Designer Intuition

At times, design emerges from instinctive DNA. "When you get into a design, whether it's early sketching or choosing materials, sometimes it just feels right. It becomes a marriage between the interior, the exterior, the architecture, the vision of the client, and the inspiration of place and culture – having it all come together for that 'aha!' moment," says Suiter.

"There's value in starting with the big picture and backing into the finer details. While design decisions may lead us a certain way, we still must execute it. Vet everything. Let the placemaking happen. Allow spaces to take shape, create the scales, forms, and functions. Then, overlay that with details, materials, textures, and softscape elements."

- Craig Stoner



7. Ambiance Emotional Experience

Lighting, water features, and other design elements create a mood enriching atmosphere with layered sensory experiences that add purpose to the space.



8. Programming Social Experience

Designing spaces that accommodate various activities, whether for social gatherings, relaxation, or recreation — they engage users and keep a space dynamic.



"Often, we choose to use certain materials because we know how they are going to perform," adds Hutcheson. "We rely heavily on vendors, suppliers, and our own experiences to ensure a formidable and lasting design. Where have we done it before? What is working where? We conduct research, test alternatives, and compare products — staying abreast of developing products to source the most appropriate materials for our clients."

Crafted with a vision of the final built environment, its intended beneficiaries, and the lasting memories it will inspire, EDSA designers are shaping projects that blend beauty with functionality. In doing so, each phase — from initial planning and conceptual design through to construction administration, is meticulously orchestrated to deliver cohesive, purposeful, and efficient designs that fulfill user needs and integrate harmoniously with its surroundings, for today, tomorrow and in the years to come. □



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REVISITING THE AMERICAN DREAM



IT'S ABOUT CHASING THE POSSIBILITIES – NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, HAVING THE FREEDOM TO LIVE LIFE ON MY OWN TERMS, AND CREATING A LIFESTYLE THAT FITS MY VALUES AND GIVES ME THE FLEXIBILITY TO GROW, ADAPT, AND ENJOY LIFE ALONG THE WAY.

We've come a long way from the symbiotic white picket fences and cookie-cutter homes. What was the definition of 'making it' is now one of several different lifestyle versions of the American Dream. What is even more fascinating is that these newer visions can vary from region to region, state to state, and even within cities and towns.

"As places grow and evolve, it is reasonable to expect that what matters to people will also change," suggests Pablo Massari, EDSA Principal. "The path towards happiness, sought by so many US immigrants in the early 1900's no longer applies to most. Their ideals of life's successes have morphed beyond the definitive milestones of getting married, buying a home, and having children. While early immigrants focused on adoption and assimilation, we have made a 180-degree societal turn on what we value and expect from others."

Whereas home ownership was proof of 'having made it' in the 1950's, today's happiness is both a destination and a journey in its own right. So, what does the American Dream mean to generations raised in the more challenging – but arguably somewhat more open, diverse, and egalitarian circumstances of the late 20th and early 21st centuries?

DARING TO DREAM DIFFERENTLY

Today's American Dream reflects changes in societal values, economic conditions, and cultural dynamics. More diverse and individualized, contemporary values include sustainability, community, health, resilience, cultural expression, economic viability, and technological integration.

Economic prosperity has been redefined from upward mobility to financial stability. Material wealth has been replaced with holistic well-being. "The American Dream is more inclusive, reflecting the diverse makeup of our country and the unique aspirations of different ethnic, racial, and social groups," shares Li Xiang, EDSA Principal. "While upward mobility remains a goal, there is a growing emphasis on community, social justice, and equal opportunities for all. In addition, increased awareness for environmental issues and the rights of our natural ecosystems has led some to incorporate eco-friendly living into their vision of the American Dream."

Likewise, homeownership in a safe, suburban neighborhood, while still valued, has an extended appreciation for diverse living arrangements. The new model of holistic happiness is more about freedom to explore as opposed to putting down permanent roots. The flexibility to travel, to chase new and exciting opportunities wherever they may be, and not be tied down to a mortgage or long-term lease are all features that real estate is rushing to deliver. "Think of it as a 2.0 version of classic home-buying," says Massari. "Except instead of owning individual dwellings, people are pursuing fractional ownership, short term leases, co-living arrangements, and even membership models that allow for nomadism within a collection of properties."

With a range of housing products and neighborhoods, communities like Flying Horse in Colorado Springs are planning to accommodate a share of the growing global 40-million-person digital workforce. Centered on flexibility, geographic dispersion, and adventurous experiences, the one-of-a-kind residential resort complex is nestled at the gateway to the Colorado Rockies. Inspiring original thought and creativity, the stunning scenery serves as a co-working backdrop to golf casitas, branded residences, and hillside flats supported by a resort core, mixed-use marketplace, outdoor trails, and recreational amenities. Catering to all seasons, the property offers a collection of experiences such as golfing, ice skating, shopping, spa treatments, and skiing – when guests are not working.



"THE HUSTLE AND GRIND CONCEPT IS NEARLY OBSOLETE AS PEOPLE ARE SEEKING A HEALTHIER WORK-LIFE BALANCE WITH SPACES FOR MENTAL RECHARGE, PROPER DOWNTIME, AND LIFE-ENRICHING EXPERIENCES."

- DANNY BULEMORE



The 9 to 5 workday in an urban setting is no longer the standard as evidenced by the rise of micro-units, co-working spaces, and hybrid concepts like banks + coffee shops. "The hustle and grind concept is nearly obsolete as people seek a healthier work-life balance," shares Danny Bulemore, EDSA Vice President. He encourages employers to create opportunistic spaces for mental recharges and underlines the value of proper downtime for more meaningful, life-enriching experiences.

"In our line of work, we're not just designing places for people to simply occupy," offers Bulemore. "We must create every day 'forums', where ideas can be exchanged and our relationships with nature and each other can be replenished. Spaces that people can make their own and share in each other's laughter. In a world that is increasingly replacing human interactions with technology, well-designed outdoor living rooms, plazas, parks, and gardens – where people freely exchange feelings and social currency are a necessity."

In these scenarios, the touchpoints in a space that make people feel like they belong are critical. It is up to the natural surroundings, cultural highlights, and communal personalities to reflect those who live there in the moment. 'Ownership' in this realm is a matter of emotional investment in which people feel they can contribute to the fabric of a society on their own terms. They are neither excluded nor obligated in either direction – a sharp contrast from homeowner's associations with approved mailbox paint colors.



“AT ITS PUREST, THE AMERICAN DREAM IS A MINDSET OF HOPE THAT THINGS WILL BE BETTER. AS INTERPRETERS OF INSPIRATION, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE DESIGN FROM A PLACE THAT SHARES THIS TIMELESS SENSE OF OPTIMISM AND FUTURE PROSPERITY FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS.”

– PABLO MASSARI

For EDSA, one of the primary challenges of this new reality is making sure that nature remains a stakeholder in current and future development. Cluster development which looks to increase residential density while also maintaining as much of the existing landscape as possible is one approach EDSA has been incorporating with greater frequency. Massari explains, “There is an immediate satisfaction that comes with having a landscape that is already mature in appearance but that you also know, as a designer, has environmental benefit in reducing global warming and mitigating climate change.”

Such is the foundation upon which Esencia in Puerto Rico is being created. Spanning 2,000 acres, the 500-key, 1,000-unit integrated community is being developed by Reuben Brothers and Three Rules Capital. The program calls for two Reese Jones golf courses, hiking and biking trails, spa and wellness, sports and racket clubs, an equestrian center, a bilingual K-12 school, health and emergency care facility, and a town center, as well as two places for worship.

According to Massari, “The land has incredible topography and our design lightly touches it. We’re protecting the wetlands, keeping natural drainage corridors, and enhancing the natural landscape with coastal setbacks and carefully respected public access.” Additionally, buildings will occupy only 25 percent of the land with the remainder dedicated to open space, active and passive recreation, public use, and conservation. Esencia is also expected to significantly contribute to the improvement and modernization of the area’s infrastructure and clean energy systems.

“The general mindset of most is that nature belongs to all of us,” says Bulemore. “So, the expectation for developers, municipalities, and those with control over a given piece of land is to add to, rather than take away elements of nature.” Some cities have enacted building codes with this in mind – requiring a percentage of land to remain underdeveloped or earmarked as open space. Likewise, some projects require the addition of natural components such as green roofs, living walls, retention ponds, or bioswales. “Just as the small lawn encased by a white picket fence once symbolized the American Dream, so too is a desire to preserve pieces of nature. What’s different is that the scale is much larger and serves a bigger audience.”



OUTSIDE IN: THE GLOBAL DREAM

Adding more complexity to the shifting Dream is the percentage of Americans who are either 1st or 2nd generation immigrants, which now exceeds 25 percent of the population – more than any other time since the 1930s and 1940s.

With this globalized diversity comes the need to assimilate different cultural ideas of what it means to live well. Multi-generational living in a single dwelling is common among Asian-Americans, while Latin Americans enjoy large extended family gatherings as everyone typically lives separately. And, in much of Europe the idea of ‘aging in place’ is central to their social experience regardless of locale. The traditions of these culturally enriched family structures, and others like them, demand much of the planned environments around them. Will people have accessibility to healthcare? To schools? How can everyone gather in a centralized, convenient location? Is there suitable equity for all income levels, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds?

Xiang’s insight reveals the sharp contrast between the origins of the American Dream, a nuclear family with traditional roles, to today’s varied family structures and support for community. “There’s greater exposure now to multiple cultures across all corners of the globe,” Xiang explains. “And obviously, travel has gotten a lot easier too. So, as we experience other places and people of different nationalities and lifestyles, we understand that maybe there’s better, more-fulfilling ways to live.”

This movement can often be seen in urban redevelopment of abandoned or forgotten neighborhoods. ROW DTLA in Los Angeles, Wynwood and the Design District in Miami, and East Williamsburg in Brooklyn are all success stories – where independent thinkers, with their own visions of the American Dream, reframed the character and future of a community destination.



HAIG POINT | DAUFUSKIE ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

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A DREAM FOR EVERY DREAMER

“To know where the American Dream is headed,” offers Bulemore, “you need to recognize that everyone wants better for their kids than what they themselves had. How can we ensure that the meaningful values of the past continue to resonate in the future? Can we create spaces that honor traditions while also welcoming new ones?”

Massari suggests we look to how it all started. “At its purest, the American Dream is a mindset of hope that things will be better. As interpreters of inspiration, it is essential that

we design from a place that shares this timeless sense of optimism and future prosperity for ourselves and for others.”

“The American Dream is unique to everyone, and the ‘real’ land of opportunity is the chance to design environments that hold meaning and memory for as many families as possible, from as many backgrounds as possible, and for as many generations as possible,” concludes Xiang. ▣

“It’s about creating the types of environments that support people emotionally and socially,” says Xiang. “Especially for younger generations or those coming from outside the U.S., where the American Dream used to mean working hard and making money. There’s an intentional directive towards a holistic, healthy, meaningful life, that’s less tied to money.” This shift can be seen in the movement to design more socially connected spaces – ranging from public parks to resorts, theme parks, and other places that help people feel a sense of belonging with opportunities to collectively share memories.

Named the Best Master Planned Community at the Southeast Building Conference, Bexley Ranch in Land O’Lakes, Florida unites nearly 1,200 diverse home offerings with multi-generational amenities, schools, a town center, resort-style pools, hotel, and recreational offerings. There are spaces for all ages to play – with seven parks and 13 miles of multi-terrain trails that loop around fitness stations, dog parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and the Bexley Club. Providing a homegrown town identity, The Hub™ – a commercial area with restaurants, retailers, co-working spaces, and fun experiences, is connected to the community by walking and biking trails. Whether residents choose to unwind under tree-lined spaces or energize their senses in one of the eateries, logical development patterns set forth by EDSA provide for pedestrian connectivity and diverse programming for a strong community fabric.

Reinforcing the concept, Bulemore shares, “A huge portion of our work is helping people balance basic wants and needs in ways that satisfies their ambitions.” The enduring symbolism behind the American Dream is the ability of a place to inspire people to set goals, give them confidence to pursue those goals, and provide tangible and

“AS WE EXPERIENCE OTHER PLACES AND PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES AND LIFESTYLES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT MAYBE THERE’S BETTER, MORE-FULFILLING WAYS TO LIVE.”

– LI XIANG

intangible resources towards meeting them. “The challenge,” he highlights, “is that the target is slightly different for everyone.” When we think about the outdoor world, it is an escape for some, exercise for others, playtime for younger children, and a place to re-energize and avoid burnout. “As society continues to blend and overlap, we must find ways to deliver layered experiences so that all users can appreciate a multitude of possibilities within a single space.”



DIAMOND DISTRICT | RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

PURPOSE AND PERCEPTIONS

A Spotlight on Landscape Architecture

“The human side of our profession has always brought me the greatest reward. Working closely with colleagues, clients, and communities while helping projects take shape evokes emotions of immense joy and honor.”

- Edward D. Stone, Jr., EDSA Founder

The dawn of the 19th century brought a handful of advancements in thought, technology, and development, with movers and shakers transforming the world as we know it. While Thomas Edison was paving the way with inventions like the light bulb, Charles Darwin was busy publishing his *Theory of Evolution*. Not to mention Alexander Graham Bell, who was developing the first telephone, as Vincent Van Gogh challenged the norm of Dutch post-impressionism with the creation of *The Starry Night*. But as such artful and scientific progressions continued to breach the surface, another life-altering commodity began to gain momentum as an impactful force in design and development: that being the profession of **Landscape Architecture**.

More Than What Meets the Eye

A practice that can be traced back to 5,000 BC with civilization's first gardens and agricultural towns, landscape architecture did not fully establish professional credibility until the mid-1800s, as Frederick Law Olmsted submitted his plans for New York City's Central Park. And, while many cultures, such as those found in China, Egypt, and India, have long coveted the skills of what would become the modern-day land planner, much of the western hemisphere has been playing catch-up to fully understand the range of expertise the vocation brings to the world's communities.

No stranger to the shifting nuances surrounding his occupation, EDSA Principal and American Society of Landscape Architects Fellow (FASLA), Richard Centolella, has endured many misconceptions about the profession over the course of his 35+ year career. “When people hear the word, ‘landscape’, they automatically think that all we do is planting plans or design gardens,” he explains. “While we’re sometimes integrated into such efforts, we’re essentially the brains behind a much more extensive operation, one that involves **creating places that help people live more fulfilling lives.**”

Broward Architect On U.S. Council



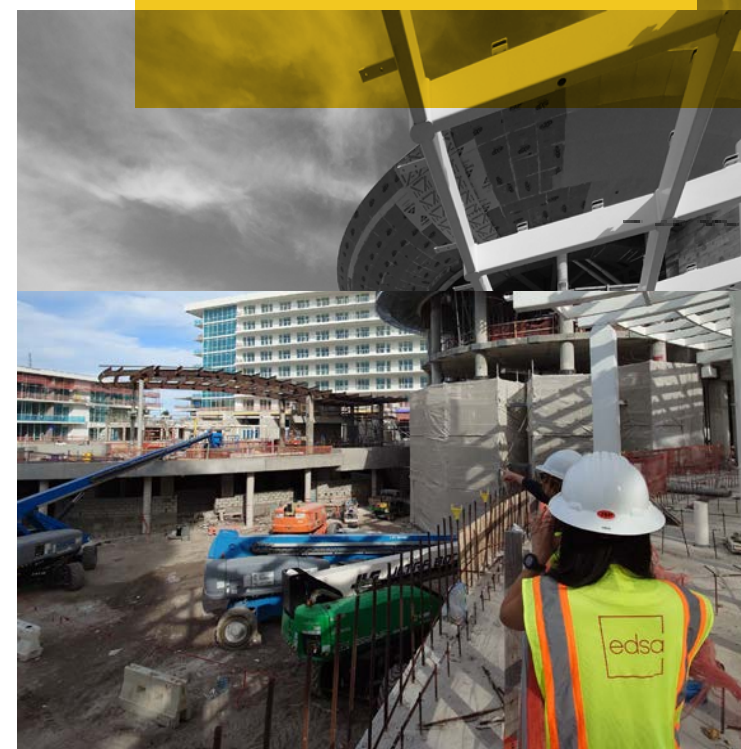
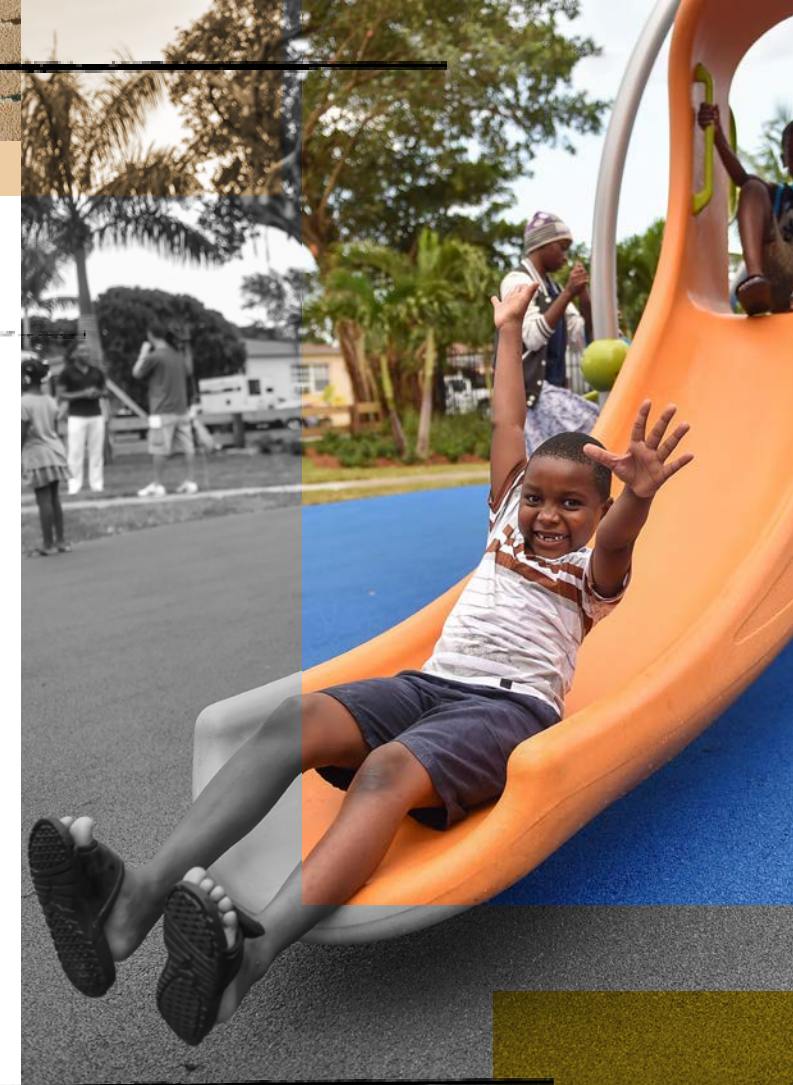
EDWARD D. STONE
... fine arts board

WASHINGTON — President Nixon has named prominent Fort Lauderdale architect Edward D. Stone to the Commission on Fine Arts.

Stone, who landscaped the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts here and drew up the master plan for the headquarters of the Organization of American States, operates an architectural and site planning firm in Fort Lauderdale.

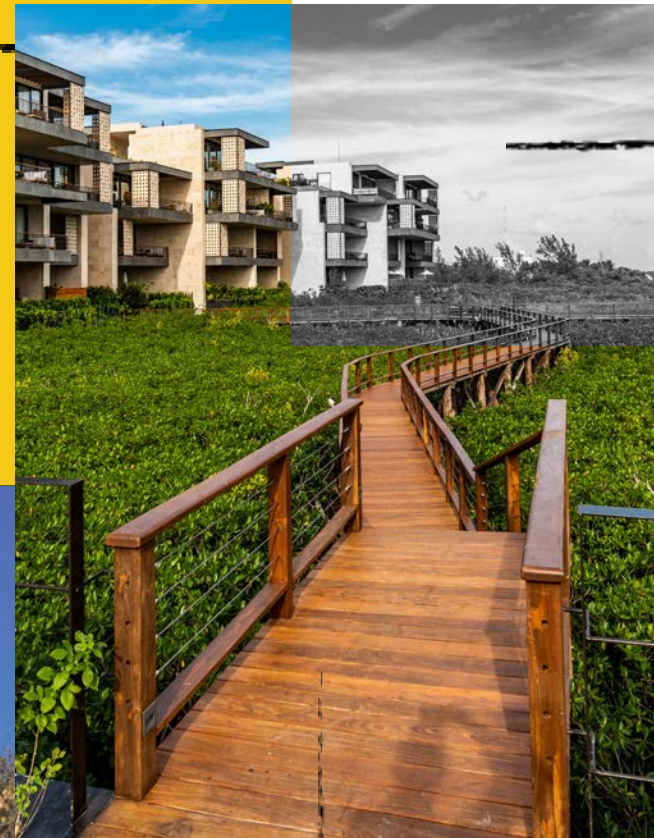
The Commission on Fine Arts advises the President on location of statues, fountains and monuments in the nation's capital, and also passes on the design for federal buildings and has a say on the selection of the appointment of people who will do the work.

The job is non-salaried, but members receive expenses for the meetings, about once a month. They serve four-year terms.



“It’s up to us to teach the public, spreading the word about our role as stewards of the land and what we bring to the table as a niche design profession.”

- Richard Centolella



Educating and Advocating

And through such lens, the momentum towards helping others understand **the value of landscape architecture**, throughout academia, within the design industry, and across the development sector at large, presses on. But such efforts do not come without a handful of challenges.

As it stands, around 5,300 students are currently enrolled in 100 accredited landscape architecture programs across 74 universities in the United States. Compare that to the approximately 30,000 students participating in traditional architecture programs across 139 higher learning institutions. Though both career paths lead students down the path of contributing to the world’s future prosperity, there remains a stark difference in the numbers – why?

A variety of details speak to such statistics, examples being the duration of time both professions have been formally established, along with a general lack of professional awareness. “Most people have no direct contact with us, so they don’t have a clear vision about who we are or what we do,” offers Centolella. “Though, oddly enough, society continues to enjoy the spaces and amenities we create every day. That means it’s up to us, as organizations and practicing professionals, to teach the public, spreading the word about our role as **stewards of the land** and what we bring to the table as a niche design profession.”

Such thoughts have resonated with fellow landscape architects and associated disciplines over the years, with the assembly of over 250 professional organizations now working to advance the profession through knowledge sharing, financial backing, and mentorship. For

As such, **landscape architects possess a unique skillset that integrates imagination, science, art, and technology**. Bringing a deep rational and creative outlook to varied-sector assignments across the globe, professionals are making significant, intuitive connections between people, places, and ideas that may sometimes seem unrelated. So, from large-scale land planning and open space design to community consensus building, historic preservation, and resilient solutions – along with hundreds of services beyond and between – landscape architects continue to be **the harmonizers among conservation and development, clients and consumers, and built and native lands**. Through their knowledge, and input, the profession not only informs, but transforms, how society lives, works, and plays.

“When someone asks me what I do for a living, I tell them that I help beautify everyday life,” shares EDSA Vice President and 25-year landscape architecture veteran, Mihaela Zaharescu. “But that sentiment goes far beyond just a pretty design. It also relates to our ability to take a holistic approach to projects, looking at more than just the site itself, but the community at large, to ensure each design decision reflects the existing culture and surrounding environment.”

EDSA Principal, FASLA, and American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) National President for 2024 – 2025, Kona Gray, could not agree more, as he explains how landscape architecture is something society often takes for granted. “**What we do is fundamental to human survival**,” says Gray. “When you look at our capability to design with nature – for spontaneous interactions to occur – for memories and connections to form – our work really starts to tee up the future of humanity.”

instance, non-profits like the **Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF)** have provided research, scholarships, and leadership opportunities for students and professionals pursuing advanced knowledge of the discipline since 1966. In addition, more minority-focused organizations, such as **Women in Landscape Architecture (WILA)** and the **Black Landscape Architects Network (BlackLAN)**, strive to make the profession more diverse and accessible to all. Not to mention the additional 75+ organizations associated with the **International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)**, which includes member groups forwarding and advocating for everything from policy and professional practice to finance and business planning.

But it goes beyond academics and peer-to-peer support. Efforts have transcended their way into the public realm, with groups like **ASLA** working to re-shape the narrative surrounding landscape architecture. By teaming with the FrameWorks Institute, a social science consultant focused on cultivating effective communication, the organization recently published a 20-page report on how to convey the importance of the practice to those unfamiliar. In addition, ASLA continues to spread awareness through various speaking engagements, public forums, and even radio advertisements on NPR.

Finally, one must not fail to recognize a recent win for the profession, that being when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designated landscape architecture as an official **STEM discipline**. In a proposal brought forward by ASLA, the team showcased various research, patents, and documentation that displayed the profession's use of science, technology, engineering, and math methodologies in the planning and design of sites around the world. Now officially added to the STEM-designated degree program list, landscape architecture continues to gain credibility while becoming more visible and accessible to a broader audience at a younger age.

“The strides we’ve made in recent years prove that we must remain bold in our thoughts, actions, and choices as we continue to advocate,” exclaims Gray. “In the past, we’ve been too humble, trying to figure out ways to simplify what we do so it could be more palatable for others. This approach no longer serves us. **We are Landscape Architects, and what we do is a big deal.** It’s time we start celebrating that.”

“We have a deep understanding of economics, analyzing the environmental, social, and financial components before even laying pen to paper.”

- Mihaela Zaharescu



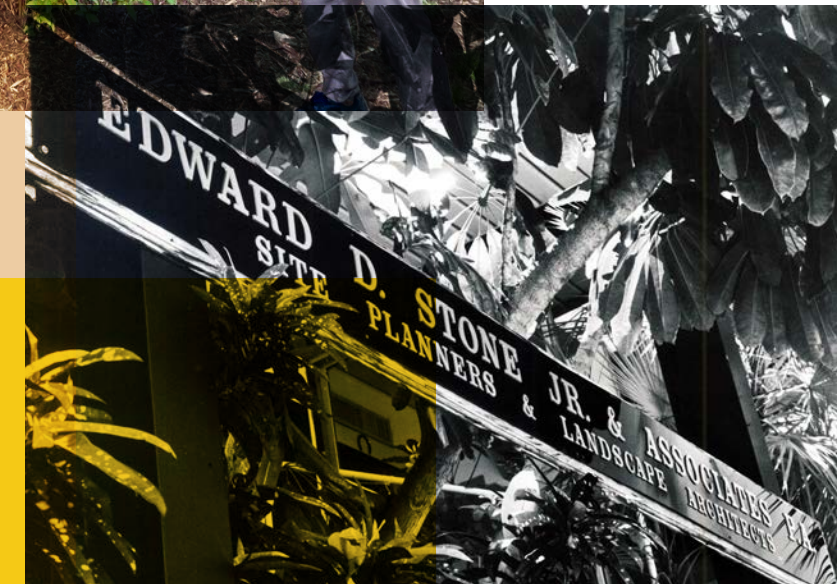
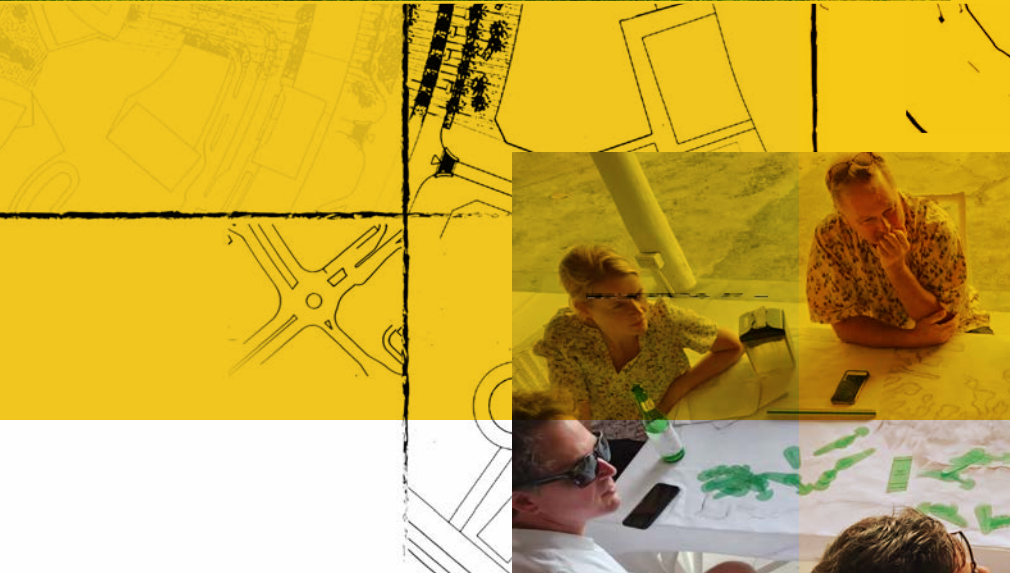
Transcending the Development Sphere

Just as the public continues to understand the profession more in-depth, landowners, developers, and investors are looking to landscape architects and their unique competencies as an integral part of creating a well-rounded, revenue-generating project.

Managing environmental curve-balls while ensuring an assignment sustains the ebbs and flows of a fluctuating market, Zaharescu speaks into **the extended role landscape architects play within the realms of design and development.** “We are always focused on the health and preservation of nature – that is and will always be at the core of what we do,” she shares. “But we also have a deep understanding of economics, analyzing the environmental, social, and financial components before even laying pen to paper. From there, we work to depict a client’s vision, and get that concept built in a way that is both community-conscious and ecologically sensitive.”

And when it comes to real estate development of any type, size, or location, there is a universal progression that includes getting things designed, funded, constructed, operational, and profitable within a set time-frame, with the least number of hiccups as possible. But as the world’s purchasing power transfers into the hands of Gen Zs and Millennials, who now account for roughly 50 percent of the population, there adds another layer to this process that must respond the lean towards more sustainable investment choices.

Centolella, who is an involved member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), one of the world’s largest networks of experts across real estate and planning, has discussed such topics during his time on various design councils and at Spring and Fall meetings. “As it relates to design and development, the subject of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), has been top-of-mind across the industry for some time now,” he shares. “But for landscape architects, it’s been fundamental to our practice since the beginning of time. This has made us the **go-to experts and strategic design consultants for people and properties looking to adhere to certain environmental standards,** as they seek to achieve an eco-conscious equilibrium that will draw in the next generation.”



“People are listening to what we have to say, so, let’s take advantage of this moment and use our influences, knowledge, and expertise to change the world.”

- Kona Gray

So, while landscape architecture teams are sought out to select resilient materials, design for natural disasters, and calculate climate-related variances such as water consumption and carbon sequestration, the addition of certain professional certifications takes environmental stewardship to an even higher level. Becoming a **licensed Professional Landscape Architect (PLA)**, for instance, gives individuals an understanding of ethical standards that ensure the creation of an integral design solution, reflecting public health, safety and welfare. In addition, obtaining a **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)** certification demonstrates expertise in green building practices, while **SITES Accredited Professionals (SITES AP)** are recognized for being proficient in sustainable land design and development. And though each accreditation involves learning hours and assessments, it is well worth it as landscape architects continue to contribute to the world’s welfare.

A PLA, LEED and SITES AP herself, Zaharescu is excited to see such certifications becoming a requirement for many new projects in the queue. “Just a few years ago, many decision makers weren’t in the mindset of implementing ecological solutions, as that meant a higher spend,” she explains. “Now that climate adaptation and mitigation remain at the forefront of the conversation, developers are seeing the **value of investing in their property in a way that benefits their business, people, and the planet.** It’s a win for all parties involved.”

A Bright Future

Ultimately, the profession is about more than just boosting revenue and designing something aesthetically pleasing. It is about **enhancing quality of life and strengthening the connection between people and nature in a meaningful, healthy way.** “I’m so delighted to be a landscape architect,” shares Gray. “After the trials our society has endured in recent years, the future hinges on the understanding that our work matters, and what we do has life-altering impacts.”

So, contrary to the viral Super Bowl LVII ad for Booking.com, where the actor refers to himself as a landscape architect while clipping hedges, the purpose of the profession far exceeds its initial perceptions. Landscape architecture is a career driven by problem-solvers, collaborators, storytellers, technical experts, climate activists, experience curators, creative visionaries, and much, much more – with **a goal of positively contributing to tomorrow.** “People are finally listening to what we have to say,” continues Gray. “So, let’s take advantage of this moment and use our influences, knowledge, and expertise to change the world.” □



Scan the QR code to join the conversation!

Apitourist icna

An Apitourism Adventure

avantur a



Over a decade ago, TIME Magazine ran a memorable cover story titled *A World Without Bees*, painting a scenario of what could happen to our ecosystem and economy if bee populations continued to rapidly regress. And while the exact causes of their decline – whether climate change, pesticides, or other factors – remained uncertain, consensus among experts was clear: one of our planet’s most vital pollinators was at risk, prompting widespread concern for their future survival.

But in an unexpected, yet positive, twist of events, the world’s worries have subsided as bees continue to show impressive growth and adaptability surpassing previous expectations. In just one of many reassuring developments, the U.S. Census of Agriculture had recently identified over 3.8 million existing bee colonies, which is an increase of one million in the last five years alone. Devon King, an EDSA Principal and recent recipient of the Joseph J. Lalli Design Fellowship, sees the resilience of these organisms, along with their contributions to humanity, a topic worthy of deeper exploration.

“My knowledge was admittedly naïve before I listened to a podcast that discussed the dynamics of bees and the benefits they bring to people and the planet,” shares King. “But after learning more, I became extremely intrigued and passionate about these remarkable creatures... their life cycles, the art of beekeeping... all of it.” And though she had been aware of the role the organisms play as important pollinators, King didn’t realize how much they influenced things like food security, biodiversity, the economy, and [her] everyday life. Inspired by her newfound understanding and desire to gain deeper knowledge, King embarked on a 15-day trip to Slovenia to fully immerse herself into the culture of bees and beekeeping.

Devon King, a recent recipient of the Joseph J. Lalli Design Fellowship, explores the world of bees.



THE JOSEPH J. LALLI DESIGN FELLOWSHIP is an annual designation granted to an EDSA employee who presents a compelling proposal to travel and immerse themselves in a new environment to better understand its unique attributes and influence on design.

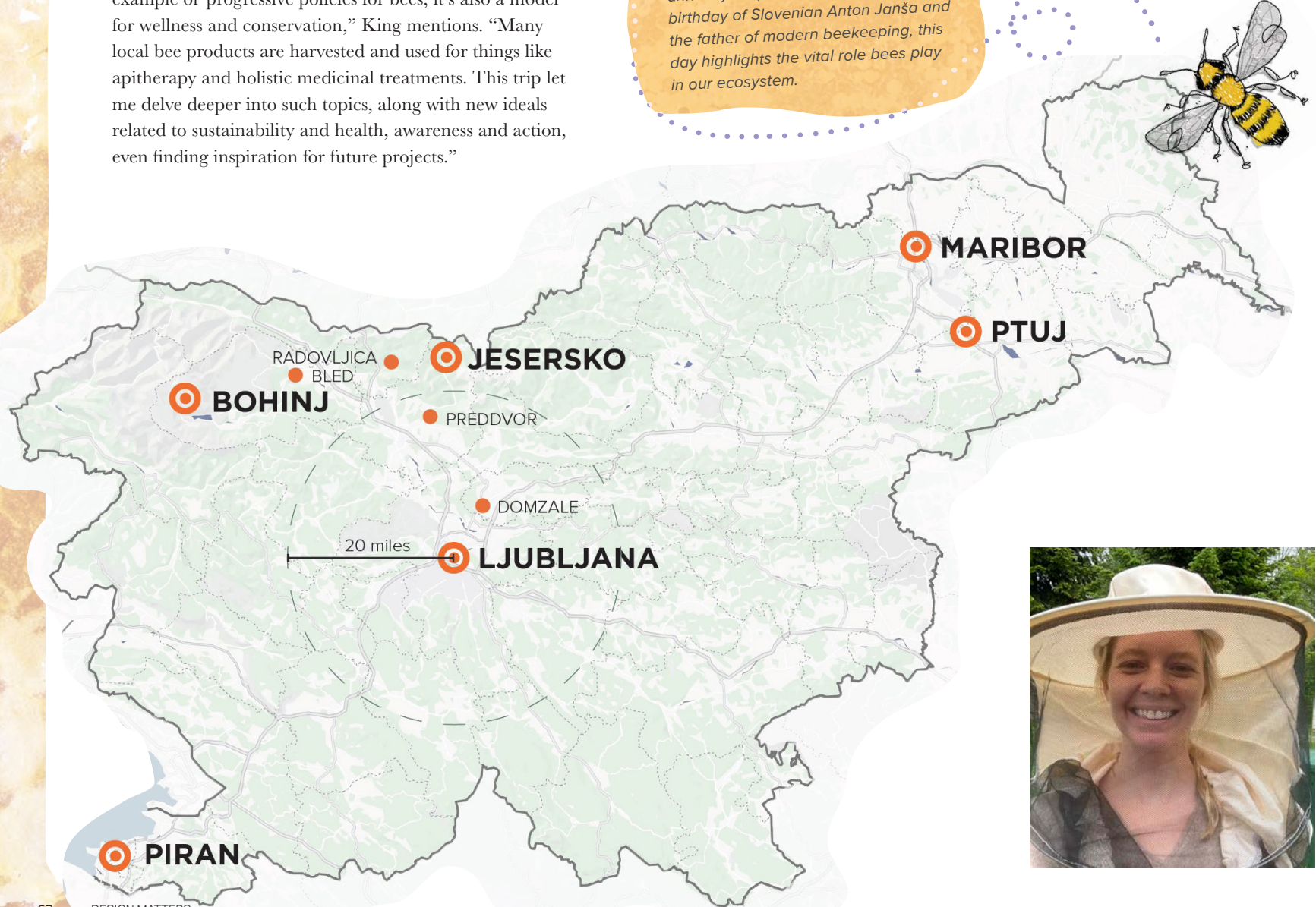
Zakaj Why Slovenia? Slovenija?

Known as the 'Heart and Soul of Beekeeping', Slovenia has been deeply influenced by this traditional craft since the sixth century. Not only does the country boast the highest number of beekeepers per capita – one for every 250 residents, but it was also home to the world's first beekeeping instructor, making it an ideal destination for King to expand her understanding. "Slovenia is considered the place to discover all things bees and beekeeping," she explains. "Residents and local officials promote and celebrate bees through festivals, museums, cuisine, policy, and more, providing endless opportunities for learning and exploration."

As such, the Slovenian Government is recognized as one of the world's foremost advocates for the organism. In fact, it is the only European country that protects its native species, the Carniolan bee, after placing it under conservation status back in 2002. They also support beekeepers by enforcing regulations on nectar-producing plants, disease control, and pesticide use. "While the country is a great example of progressive policies for bees, it's also a model for wellness and conservation," King mentions. "Many local bee products are harvested and used for things like apitherapy and holistic medicinal treatments. This trip let me delve deeper into such topics, along with new ideals related to sustainability and health, awareness and action, even finding inspiration for future projects."

A National Holiday

Slovenia pioneered the establishment of World Bee Day, now recognized by the United Nations. Celebrated annually on (or around) May 20, the birthday of Slovenian Anton Janša and the father of modern beekeeping, this day highlights the vital role bees play in our ecosystem.



A Spotlight on Apitourism

Apitourism, or bee tourism, is a growing eco-tourism niche that offers experiences related to beekeeping and honey production. Not only does it help boost local economies but raises awareness about the challenges facing bee populations. Popular places for Apitourism include Slovenia, France, and Italy.

Cilji in Goals and Objectives namenji

While in Slovenia, King had a variety of learning objectives fueled by her own interest, along with a desire to become a better bee advocate. Discovering more about nectar-producing plant species, maintaining a backyard hive, properly extracting honey, and understanding the medical benefits of bee products were all high priorities. "Most importantly, I wanted to gain deeper insight and appreciation for the organism so I could factor it into the way I design for everyday life," exclaims King.

In preparation, she dedicated countless hours to researching Slovenia, meticulously planning her travels to include meet-ups with beekeepers and bee-related sightseeing. Journeying across eight different cities, King made various pit stops, where each tour, tasting, exhibit, and excursion provided her with a unique perspective on beekeeping and perks associated with the world's most vital pollinators. "I wanted to ensure my trip was as well-rounded as possible," King shares. "That meant doing what landscape architects do best: starting with a thorough site analysis, then getting my boots on the ground to explore each space and place for the most authentic, intuitive experience."

Učenje o Learning to Bee Čebelarah

King began her tour of Slovenia at the Museum of Apiculture, located northwest of the country's capital city in Radovljica. Diving into the region's unique cultural heritage, each display showcased information about apiculture pioneers and traditional beekeeping tools and techniques, along with background on the organism's symbolism, habitation, and life cycle. "It was a great start to my trip, as it provided me with some background on things I would later see and experience," says King. "I was then able to take the information gathered and apply it to my first hands-on beekeeping excursion at the Kokl Beekeeping Farm."

Nestled in the picturesque mountain village of Jesersko, the farm embodies the Kokl family's passion for bees and their commitment to educating younger generations about the crucial creatures. Now run by the founders' son, Čebelarstvo Kokl, the farm continues to be fueled by the knowledge and insights he gains from professional lectures, expert literature, and his own hands-on beekeeping experience. During her visit, King met with an exceptional bee enthusiast and tour guide, Stephan, who led her through the unique apiary. "This specific farm really showcased authentic Slovenian beekeeping," she comments. "One of my favorite things to see were the frames of the hives, which were decorated with traditional (and hilarious) Slovenian Paintings."

As it related to documenting beekeeping history, the preserved art was just the start. King was also able to explore a small museum located on site, which housed traditional apiculture tools that had been passed down for generations. "They had an impressive collection of equipment and extractors that were used by the founder's great, great grandfather," remarks King. "And while some of the techniques may have changed over the years, the Kokl family has been able to preserve tradition while teaching the next generation. All of it really is an artform."

Beehive 101

While most beekeepers utilize the LR (Langstroth/Richardson) Hive, as it is viewed as less cumbersome, those in Slovenia historically use the AZ (Ash) Hive to honor their traditional roots. The difference? The LR Hive requires frames to be pulled out vertically, while AZ frames are pulled out horizontally.



"Two Females Smoke From Men's Pants"



"A Snail Chasing Tailors"



Okus gospoda A Taste of Mr. Bee Čebele

Making her way to the next 'hive', this time located in the city of Maribor, King had a visit with Mr. Bee – a corporate businessman turned beekeeper who has made the selling of bee products his full-time career. While Mr. Bee tends to the apiary to collect honey, his daughter, Nika Poslek, uses the liquid gold to develop various flavors of her award-winning Žlahtna Izabela cream honey. "Nika pairs dried fruit from their garden with different honey types collected by her dad from forests across the region," adds King. She then leaves the honey to churn for about two weeks, creating a delicious flavored cream. King continues, "I was lucky enough to do a tasting and there is no questioning how her creams earned the title of European Gift of the Year! Additionally, I was amazed by the countless ways bee products could be incorporated into safe, edible, and delicious items."



Nature's Complete Food

Bee pollen boasts a higher protein content per weight than any other animal source and is also rich in essential minerals like calcium, potassium, and magnesium. For these reasons, along with its labor-intensive collection process, it remains a costly delicacy, comparable to high-end foods such as caviar.



Samooskrbno A Self-Sustaining Sanctuary Začocisce

At her second stop in Maribor, King was greeted by a whimsical, fairyland landscape, and the home of Jože Kolarič Family Beekeeping. A member of the Slovenian National Beekeepers' Association, herbalist and landowner Jože, along with his wife Danica, live their life off the land – with a lot of help from bees. “The garden is super impressive with hundreds, if not thousands, of edible plants, all harvested through pollination,” remarks King. “This really put things in perspective, as it showed the large impact bees can have on people and the environment when we embrace biodiversity and provide them with the tools needed to thrive. When we give to nature, it will always give back.”

In addition to touring the vast gardens and fantasy-like ‘hobbit house’ located under a rolling hill, the Kolarič’s apiary remains a main attraction for visitors with a knack for plants, beekeeping – even therapy. “At this specific site, the owner allows individuals to experience a specific form of apitherapy by breathing in bee air,” notes King. Through her observation, the experience consists of participants resting their face into a mouthpiece connected to the hive by a long tube. This allows them to breath in air that has been activated by the movement of bees within the hive. She continues, “This is just one of many types of bee-related, alternative medicine techniques that are proven to be extremely healthy and effective. And, during my trip, I was fortunate enough to experience plenty more.”



The Power Pollinators

Honeybees alone support approximately \$15 billion worth of agricultural crops in the U.S. each year. In addition, these organisms are responsible for 70 of the top 100 harvested foods that feed 90 percent of the world. Without bees, many fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds would be non-existent.



Medicinski Medicinal Bee Benefits koristi čebel

With physical and mental wellness top-of-mind, King was excited to end her trip with Nika Pengal, a certified Apitherapist, professional beekeeper, and the author of *The Secrets of Miss Honeybee*, a book written on how to best utilize and incorporate bee products into day-to-day life. King explains that her experience with Nika was extremely inspiring. “She told me stories of bee venom allowing a man with multiple sclerosis to walk again, and how using her bees for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) helped lessen the burden for patients living with anxiety and depression. Her practice really transforms people’s lives.”

After experiencing some wellness-related services herself, such as a sticky honey massage and hive therapy, which consisted of laying on a bed over an active beehive, King was able to find her Zen, along with a newfound appreciation for the organism. “What I thought about bees and beekeeping prior to exploring Slovenia was just the start of how truly incredible all of it is,” affirms King. “From financial and environmental benefits, to physical and intellectual, they really touch every part of the wellness spectrum. There’s not many other species out there that can do the same.”



Nature's Miracle Cure

Considered the medicine and immune system of the hive, Propolis is used by bees to sanitize cell walls. Later collected by beekeepers and packaged as a spray, powder, capsule or cream, it has the ability to cure a sore throat, heal wounds, and even help a toothache or inflamed gums.



Prispevanje Doing Our Part svojega dela

While we live in a more optimistic situation compared to that of 10 years ago, bees still face several significant risks related to pollution, climate change, habitat loss, disease, and more. And though not everyone can be a beekeeper, King shares how important it is for humanity to become bee facilitators. “Small steps like implementing pollinator gardens, limiting pesticide use, planting clean, local landscapes, and opting for all things organic can make a huge difference when it comes the protection and preservation of bees,” passionately states King. “By taking these actions, and pairing them with consistent education and awareness, we can create a healthier ecosystem while ensuring that future generations continue to enjoy the vital role bees play in our world.”



Scan the QR code to join the conversation!

FUN!

- EDSA - Games

In the spirit of fostering fun, we're excited to share a selection of games that we hope will add a little extra joy to your day. Whether you're taking a quick break or fully winding down, each puzzle is a great way to recharge, connect with your colleagues, and keep the positive energy flowing. Dive in, have fun, and let these moments inspire you.

Word Search:

Answer the questions to find the correct words within the puzzle.

W	P	G	S	N	A	T	D	L	M	A	S	D	I	S	Y	A
T	B	R	S	L	O	B	N	A	I	P	L	I	N	T	O	P
G	E	A	E	L	H	T	G	H	L	M	G	A	I	J	W	H
B	D	L	N	E	A	Z	L	V	N	L	J	L	N	J	H	I
A	M	L	L	H	N	R	A	J	L	P	A	D	G	L	Y	N
L	V	O	L	I	D	H	P	N	W	T	G	S	V	F	B	O
S	I	T	E	S	G	T	B	N	I	T	H	N	A	E	T	I
S	N	V	W	B	R	B	S	P	E	M	A	E	S	L	Z	T
N	R	A	J	A	A	T	S	B	R	Z	G	K	M	L	S	A
H	T	E	M	L	P	O	M	A	I	N	R	P	S	O	S	R
M	U	Y	D	Z	H	S	D	L	M	A	S	B	D	W	V	O
S	T	E	M	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	I	N	E	S	H	B
F	R	T	G	U	C	A	D	R	S	N	J	L	P	H	I	A
O	J	L	P	Z	S	L	E	N	A	I	H	X	M	I	C	L
A	W	D	F	T	R	T	G	T	F	R	D	W	A	P	O	L
E	U	E	Z	M	A	E	D	S	T	O	N	E	J	R	R	O
R	H	R	S	W	R	G	P	V	X	Y	C	A	Y	J	F	C

1. STEM Discipline 2. Ed Stone Jr 3. Hand Graphics 4. Dallas 5. SITES 6. Wellness 7. Waterparks 8. Collaboration 9. JLL Fellowship 10. Hospitality

- Landscape Architecture recently received this educational designation from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- The founder of EDSA.
- While technology is key in design, this method remains foundational to EDSA's creative process.
- Development experts recognize this city as an emerging gateway to Latin America and home to one of EDSA's newest offices.
- This certification system provides a framework for resilient building and guarantees sustainable landscape design and development.
- Encompassing spiritual, emotional, social, and environmental aspects, this holistic concept is essential for successful design and development.
- A pivotal feature for many hospitality and entertainment properties, these aquatic-based amenities significantly boost revenue and visitor appeal.
- Foundational to EDSA's success, this attribute involves teamwork among disciplines, clients, and communities.
- An annual designation awarded to an EDSA employee who submits a compelling proposal to experience a new culture.
- A development sector close to the heart of EDSA, designs focus on creating spaces that provide guests with the comfort of home and opportunities to make memories.



I-Spy

Find the objects described below hidden within the graphic.



- SPEEDBOAT:** In the early days, EDSA received some unconventional payments - including a speedboat.
- ASLA AWARD:** The Boca Raton was awarded a 2024 Award of Excellence by ASLA Florida.
- ALOHA VAN:** All the way from Hawaii, Vice President Amy Harbert's van has become a firm staple.
- ELF (IN REAL LIFE):** Senior Associate Misha Ponomarenko became NYC's favorite elf during retreat.
- CHINESE DRAGON:** EDSA rung in the Chinese New Year by performing a traditional dragon dance.
- CONSTRUCTION VEST:** With a large handful of projects under construction, these vests are getting a lot of use!
- RIVERWALK MEMORIAL:** Ed Stone Jr. was recently honored by Fort Lauderdale for his contributions to the city.
- RECRUITMENT POSTER:** The Creative Revolution disrupted the status quo, pushing designers to think boldly.
- ROLLING WRITER:** Out of all drawing utensils, the Rolling Writer is the highest in demand by our staff.
- EDSA LOGO:** Because it wouldn't be 'EDSA I-Spy' without it!

Port Ghalib-Maze



Port Ghalib City | Marsa Alam, Egypt

• ED STONE JR. •

Spot the 10 differences between the images.



We're thankful you've journeyed alongside us on this path of exploration and hope the stories and ideas within these pages captivate and inspire you!

— The EDSA Marketing Team



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