Simple in form and highly versatile in function, Pixel gives you the building blocks to design your ideal space.
Greetings members and friends!

As I review this past year as president of this great organization I propose we say farewell to 2020 and embrace the remarkable opportunities that have revealed themselves during this turbulent year.

Outdoor environments are at the forefront of the design world as a result of the contagious pandemic. The importance of our work is breaking new ground turning everyone’s attention to the places we create. Landscapes, plazas, and ‘porchscapes’ allow us to enjoy the company of others safely.

Landscape architects have responded with unprecedented vigor. We have accommodated social distancing measures by working remotely. It is quite remarkable that we have embraced working in this new way. At the Michigan Chapter we continue to conduct remote meetings which is convenient, saves gas and reduces travel time.

In this issue please enjoy the award worthy outdoor places designed and submitted by our members. Recipients of the awards were all deserving as each project was unique and added value to the landscape. They were quite diverse in design. Highlights include a neglected space along a highway in Southfield transformed through the use of red poles, while another project entailed bringing to life an underutilized space along the river now used for entertainment and leisure as shown at the Rotary Park Project in Lansing. It is nice to see our landscape architecture students submitting projects for our chapter awards. Congratulations to all our award winners.

We are happy to announce that our new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is working hard to establish the bylaws for our newly formed Michigan Chapter ASLA Foundation. We are expecting a formal IRS acceptance of this 501c3 non-profit, charitable organization in early 2021. We are currently accepting donations thanks to the hard work of foundation board members Kyle Verseman, Stephanie Onwenu, Wendy Fry, SuLin Kotowicz, Kim Dietzel, Chet Hill, and dozens of other volunteers that helped produce this program. If you are interested in joining the committee or donating to the Michigan Chapter ASLA Foundation, please contact our Michigan ASLA board member, Stephanie Onwenu, Vice-President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at dei@michiganasla.org.

I am grateful for our incredible national leadership, the Michigan Chapter executive committee, foundation volunteers, our many committee volunteers and most of all our members who exhibited tremendous dedication and persistence as we navigated through a rough year.

Joane Slusky, PLA, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

SHARE AN IDEA!
We’re currently filling our 2021 editorial calendar. If you would like to contribute to MiSITES or suggest a topic or project to cover, please email: SITESpublication@michiganasla.org.

STUDYING FOR THE LARE?
To sign up for our LARE study groups, please email Arianna at associate@michiganasla.org.

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Editor’s Note: All images in this publication are used with permission of the author or advertiser.
Having successfully completed the Global Dow Center World Headquarters in 2016, Dow Chemical Company turned its focus to the development of a new visitor center and museum. The goal was to create a centerpiece for the 300-acre campus showcasing Dow’s scientific achievements over its 120-year history. Grissim Metz Andriese (GMA) lead the master planning efforts. A strong emphasis on visibility and identity, coupled with site security, guided the design. As a result, the new facility was located between the World Headquarters and an existing R&D building, creating a dynamic edge for the south campus. This architectural statement provides a welcoming and attractive ‘front door’ for visitors, while also providing a secure barrier between public and corporate spaces.

The landscape design approach used large tree massings, ground plane plantings, and earth landforms to create a sustainable, manageable, and cost-effective landscape. Along the east side of the entry drive, a grove of mixed maple tree varieties directs the eye towards the visitor center while a large native wildflower meadow and evergreen tree massing provides an attractive physical and visual barrier into the secure corporate areas. The design of the west side of the site utilizes the existing naturalized woodland. Tree massings of various oak, ginkgo, and tulip trees expand the woodline eastward with lower understory dogwood and serviceberry trees adding accent. In total, over 700 new trees were planted to reduce the massive scale of the 34-acre site.

Through collaboration with Dow and the design team, the new H. H. Dow Visitors and Heritage Center Museum has created a unified vision for the campus resulting in an improved employee and visitor experience.
Stretching over 800 feet along the Grand River, Rotary Park has revitalized Lansing’s downtown riverfront. Such notable improvements include:

• **The Beach**: Made of pure Lake Michigan sand and furnished with moveable Adirondack chairs, the beach is separated from the river by a 15-foot wide native landscape and helps filter surface runoff.

• **The Plaza**: 6,500 square feet of rentable space for entertaining, partially covered by an array of blue and gray shade sails and strung with Edison lights for evening activation.

• **The Lighted Forest**: With custom changing lights hung 16 feet above the ground, it illuminates the site’s pre-existing honey locust forest.

• **The Grand Staircase**: Connects the plaza down to the water and features boat cleats for temporary mooring for vessels on the river. Lights embedded within the tiers of the seating illuminate the space at night.

• **The Happening Under the Bridge (HUB)**: A flexible entertainment space wired with long-throw color changing LED lights that are programmable to music, and enough plug-ins and power for speakers or other electronic devices. Both abutment walls have been painted by local artists with colorful murals.

While the park provides a variety of opportunities for recreation, its impact doesn’t stop there. Being on the Grand River, the environmental impact of the site was a big part of the design process. None of the new amenities impede the flow of the river, and the site work resulted in a net cut within the floodplain. Not only does the park expand the flood storage but the beach also acts as a storm water filtration system. A large portion of the site’s water flows through the sand, filtering it, before entering the Grand River.
Constructed in the 1960’s, the Ford Motor Credit Company building is located at the Ford Motor Headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan. The building was designed to include four courtyards with office and corridor views into each, yet none of the courtyards could be physically accessed by staff. As part of this project, Ford requested an accessible outdoor space to be designed that would be comfortable for both small, intimate groups as well as large gatherings capable of accommodating up to 250 people at a time.

Two main challenges steered the design. First, surrounded by glass-clad offices and corridors, the courtyard felt like a fishbowl and was therefore perceived as uncomfortable for people to use. Yet, at the same time, it was important for it the end result to be visually accessible and inviting. Secondly, because it is surrounded by buildings, all materials would need to be carted through the office spaces or hoisted over the rooftop which affected many decisions about materials and earthwork.

The design concept sought to juxtapose the strict orthogonal shape of the courtyard and flanking office buildings with soft, curvilinear areas of pavement and lush vegetation to create maximum contrast. A main space was created for the larger, programmed event gatherings, while adjacent smaller lobes allowed for more intimate seating. Near these lobes, abruptly rising landforms planted lushly with perennials, ornamental grasses, and understory trees were designed to create comfortable seating spaces and to provide all-season interest. The end result has been very popular with staff and has received robust use, and pollinators such as butterflies and honeybees are now prevalent where few visited the space before.
Red Pole Park is the first in a series of “landscape moments” to be implemented along the City of Southfield’s non-motorized pathway in order to heighten the pedestrian experience and driver awareness. Based on the developed design concept, the poles symbolize a conscious choice to embrace civic values in the community, and to uphold sustainability, stewardship, and education. The various heights of the poles represent the past histories, present goals and accomplishments, and future growth that will be nurtured in the generations to come. The bright red color was selected not only for being highly visible, but as a symbol of strength, energy, love, and passion, that inspires citizens to action.

The site presented significant challenges as the City had allowed numerous easements and utilities to be placed in the corridor with no apparent organizing plan. As a result, the designed grid could not be fully completed with poles as it would place them over, or too close to, the existing utilities. In order to strengthen the sense of the grid, bench-height stumps from diseased and dying trees within the City were harvested and placed instead. Then, where the pathway interrupted the grid, red dots were designed and applied to the asphalt. As an enhancement to visibility and awareness at night, blue solar-powered marine navigation lights were placed on top of the poles, which come on every night and blink like fireflies.

The pathway and Red Pole Park have been well-received by the community. Pedestrian and bicycle use is increasing, and freeway passersby now recognize it as a landmark, increasing awareness of the forward-looking community that Southfield represents. The project has set the standard for ensuing extensions of the path to create a more walkable community.
PROJECT: Little Caesars Arena, Detroit, MI
DESIGN: SmithGroup
PRODUCT: Artline™ with Series™ and Smooth Premier finishes

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Upfit: designed by KEM Studio in partnership with StruXure Outdoor.
The Virginia Tech Innovation Campus sits within a constellation of critical cultural and technological assets in the National Capital Region. To leverage these relationships and attract top talent, the plan anchors the campus within a walkable, vibrant, mixed-use district, extending a welcome to the community and an inspiration for the next generation.

The campus will include three buildings totaling 600,000 square feet that will frame open spaces and enclose the campus into a recognizable destination, yet open up to meet Potomac Yard Park and the new mixed-use pedestrian street to the south. The south plaza then flows out into the curbless district streets, welcoming in the community. It is a place for gathering and collaboration, where students and professionals can come together, and where future computer scientists can brush up against current students and faculty.

Building 1 will be the first to be constructed, and it will also be the tallest building, stepping down in height from south to north. Buildings 1 and 2 will share an entry plaza where the buildings converge at their narrowest point; it replicates the Blacksburg campus experience of narrowing before opening into a larger common green. The building first floors will be visually permeable and animated at night by activity within. The campus green emulates the traditional campus lawn, framed by buildings and landscape and shaded by canopy trees. It supports larger tented events and gatherings to live stream Virginia Tech sporting events. Beneath the green sits the stormwater cistern that collects water from the three surrounding buildings. Site stormwater is conveyed to a bioretention area which is bridged over to serve as the west gateway to the campus.
Starting in 2015, The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History engaged the Detroit community in conversations about water. The people in Detroit have profound ties to the history of water, especially as it relates to the African American diaspora - the mass dispersion of Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade from 1500s-1800s. These discussions revealed the duality of water and its deep relationship with African Americans. Positive aspects of water include spiritual, cultural, and life-sustaining qualities, while negative factors include quality and flooding.

One of The Wright's missions as a historical and educational institution is to showcase water stories in the context of the African Americans' experience. To accomplish this, The Green Initiatives Plan was developed as a framework focused on sustainability and becoming an institutional leader on African American history, culture, and traditions. The plan focuses on water, energy, and waste. The water vision creates spaces for visitors - keeping water at the heart of the design. The vision builds upon a legacy of water as sacred and sustainable, one that connects African American history and culture to their environment, future and past generations, and community. The Wright’s goal for green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is to integrate water management into the site experience, transcending beyond the status quo treatment of stormwater. Water provides learning exhibits through expressive art and sculptural interpretations of cultural stories and values.

The museum’s focus on sustainability commenced after the floods of August 2014, with its first program called “Ripple of Impact.” The goal was to also obtain the highest amount of stormwater drainage credits possible. As a reference, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) charged $661/acre monthly in 2019. The Wright’s annual DWSD runoff charge was $19,433 for 2.45 impervious acres. The runoff reduction strategy provides $13,750 in credits after fully implemented.
Augustana University’s campus lacks hierarchy, consistency, and connectivity, and an aging and undersized infrastructure, combined with climate change, has led to problematic flooding. Developed over a six-month period, the master plan followed four over-arching guiding principles: 1) partner with the community on and off campus, 2) connect the campus, 3) integrate living, learning, and recreation, and 4) develop clear visitor experiences and campus thresholds.

The historic quadrangle remains an iconic formal landscape, while the Central Green is transformed into a mix of functional landscapes to accommodate events and daily activities. The master plan maintains the overlap of living and learning by reinforcing the north and south student residence hall neighborhoods and introduces flexible educational and meeting spaces. The Student Center is in the geographic center of campus, creating a strong social hub which spills out onto a south-facing terrace overlooking the new Central Green. The cultural front door is created along Grange Avenue, which directs patrons to the new black box theater, the recital hall, the arts center, and the campus sculpture park. A new mixed-use development with a recreation center, wellness clinic, retail, food service, office, and potential housing anchors this district by creating a new gateway to the campus for the community. The proposed landscape typology will transform the campus with a distinct identity, improved connections, and a new purpose which reflects the mission of the university.

By 2030, the campus will be reimagined with a stronger identity, improved connections, and a reinvigorated purpose which reinforces its core mission as the master plan develops a strong implementable framework which supports the long-term sustainability, identity, and mission of Augustana University.
The 2030 Campus Master Plan was developed to create a campus that physically reflects the diversity of its student body and to support Chico State’s goal for a more inclusive and sustainable future. It establishes a flexible framework for coordinating physical change across the institution. The plan embraces both campus and community input and is reflective of the goals and objectives of a multitude of diverse stakeholders.

The planning process was designed to serve as a tool for building consensus. In order to do so, the process included numerous workshops, open forums, focus group meetings, committee meetings, and design charrettes. The 18-month timeline was strategically designed to allow for input during every major decision point. The planning team also understood that not everyone has the flexibility or capability to participate in person; therefore, an interactive online engagement platform was established to solicit input at any time during the day, throughout the entirety of the process. This process represented the most inclusive outreach effort in the history of the University by gathering input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. Efforts elicited a very diverse set of perspectives which directly shaped the plan’s recommendations.

The Guiding Frameworks and Goals focus on student success, campus enhancement, inclusion, resilience, and community connectivity. Throughout the process, these influenced the direction of alternative concepts and drove evolution of the final plan. The Guiding Framework was focused on inclusivity, experiential, learning, connectivity, mobility, and sustainability.

The campus is inherently an asset for all who work and learn on its grounds. In addition, Chico State understands the larger impact of being an active community member. The 2030 Campus Master Plan identifies strategies to recognize and advance the University’s role in mitigating the effects of climate change, better serve its community, and also begin to address the many inequities in higher education.
Davey is the world’s largest full-service tree care company with operations throughout the United States and Canada. To ensure the company retains its edge, continued research and development of new approaches is necessary. This means having adequate space and facilities to support the training mission of today’s and tomorrow’s workforce. Fortunately, a unique opportunity arose with the acquisition of a former 174-acre golf course located across the road from the existing Davey headquarters. The property allows for expansion of Davey’s service units, with a focus on education, training, and research to be the main drivers of building and site development on the new East Campus property.

The East Campus is endowed with vast open space, an impressive collection of mature trees, rolling topography, and tremendous visual and physical access to natural resources. To optimize these assets and thoughtfully arrange site and building program to facilitate learning and discovery, site design principles were developed to provide minimal impact and enforce the East Campus Vision. These principles are described in four categories: property, program, natural features, and circulation.

The plan will be viewed from a 10-year lens to identify projects that can be implemented as timing and funding permits. These projects ensure Davey remains a leader in innovation and quality. Aimed at supporting the continued growth and prosperity of Davey well into the future, the plan also organizes the site and building program to benefit from existing topography and abundant natural systems which aid in the support of training, education, and research programs.

The resulting 58,000 GSF Training Complex collects the training and research requirements into a single building including classrooms, indoor climbing, food service, archives, laboratory, and office support spaces. The building is designed with a floor plan capable of flexible layouts to accommodate educational session needs, public use, and industry events. A main circulation corridor links each of the uses into a cohesive complex while providing an opportunity to separate public and employee areas.
DEVELOPING A REVITALIZATION PLANNING AND DESIGN GUIDE FOR ENHANCING LAND USE PERFORMANCE OF A SHRINKING CITY
Flint, Michigan | SHU YANG AND TEAM
Land vacancy is a persistent issue in most urban areas in the United States, yet few case studies have examined how vacant lots are used and the functions they serve in local communities. The goal of this study was to propose a comprehensive master plan for optimizing revitalization of the target area, providing different development scenarios with a design guideline, and quantitatively measuring the expected benefits via landscape performance metrics.

Located at the edge of downtown, the Durant-Tuuri-Mott (DTM) target area is a 161.4-acre neighborhood in Flint, Michigan with over 30 percent of its lots vacant. To develop the master plan, three themes based on land use were determined: 1) enhancing vacant lots in residential areas, 2) creating public open spaces, and 3) implementing mixed-use development. While Theme 1 focuses on small-scale vacant lots, Theme 2 considers the development of larger-scale vacant lots with more comprehensive amenities for surrounding residents. For Theme 3, this study identified several sites in commercial areas.

For each theme, two phases were developed to illustrate the site status during different periods. The first phase applies a cost-benefit or tactical urbanism approach, including site cleaning and affordable amenities. Once the proposed idea for each initial site phase gathers community consensus regarding permanent development, the site enters the second phase of design which seeks to enhance a sense of place and ownership, promoting social interaction through community gatherings and events and encouraging careful stewardship. The phasing plans for Theme 3 were determined based on development density and the characteristics of available lots that might make them a good fit for future mixed-use development.

Next, to assess design impact, this project developed three development scenarios: 100%, 75%, and 50% site development. This serves to respect the community’s future financial and social status and existing site conditions. Lastly, to quantify the benefits of the propose design, landscape performance research was conducted focusing on three primary dimensions: environmental, social, and economic benefits.
Like Detroit, the historic zoo on Belle Isle had a boom in activity, lost funding, and has laid locked in abandonment for over a decade. Meanwhile in the city, urban graffiti, murals, and up-cycled sculptures express hidden voices while abandoned land creates negative perceptions of plants, animals, and nature for families surrounded by urban blight. The proposed Nature Zoo blends these ecological, cultural, and social layers of Detroit’s past with its modern reality, offering creative recreation immersed in ecology, spaces to showcase local artists and vendors, small conferences with cabin lodging, and nature education for all ages. The Nature Zoo demands user equity by delivering inspiring experiences to the public and ultimately reignites Belle Isle’s modern sense of place for Michiganders and tourists alike.

While there are already several nature programs in Detroit, the proposed Nature Zoo brings the learning outside into a native Michigan playspace, and would exhibit the inverse of exotic animal themes by instead showcasing the native plant communities, animals, and ecological processes endemic to the state of Michigan. Families will get to experience “Up North Downtown” by exploring three native landscapes on the ground or an elevated boardwalk, a confidence-building play-space with materials that weather and change over time, cabins and tent areas for overnight stays, and through hands-on education.

Belle Isle has the historical context to become a beacon for Detroit’s diverse community and natural recreation opportunities. With over 4 million annual visitors, from families and nature enthusiasts, to urbanists and tourists, Belle Isle has the sustainable numbers to rationalize implementation of modern, exciting features to engage generations to come.
The restoration and design for the Saginaw Forest Eco-Lab emphasizes the importance of understanding a place through research-based ecological design, both at site and landscape scale. This project looks to conserve pivotal wildlife species and their native habitats in response to biodiversity loss in the Huron River watershed using the Blanding’s turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) as the target species. This project also translates biotic inter-relationships into spatial configurations of plant communities based on the understanding of the ecosystem’s structure. With adaptive management strategies and detail designs as complements, the site-scale design intends to connect people with nature by offering gathering space, observing areas and recreation amenities.

To create suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitats for Blanding’s turtle, the design reintroduces the wet prairie community to the site as well as sandy mounds to add variation to the landforms. Surrounding these earthworks with shrub plantings ensures a safer environment to prevent road mortality for the targeted turtle species. The firepit gathering area, a metaphor of the pebble along this kettle lake at the end moraine, is the stage for the social events, outdoor teaching, and experiments. A pedestrian boardwalk connects people with the restored habitat for observing and monitoring the wildlife at a distance while overhang decks invite visitors to the stunning view.

Like pebbles along the creek, this project recalls the memory of closeness with water and nature. The preservation of rare species is not in direct conflict with the active use of this space. This place is not further destroyed but instead flourishes as the design weaves together ecological and social benefits evoking the love and stewardship of nature for a sustainable future.
Ujjii is a leader at SmithGroup’s Urban Design Studio where her work focuses on design and planning efforts based in Detroit. She earned her degrees from Cornell University and University of Michigan, and prior to SmithGroup, she worked with the Central Park Conservancy in New York on playground and park design.

As a landscape architect, Ujjii has also made significant contributions to the field through her research on anti-displacement, the relationship between arts and the economic success of cities, vernacular landscapes, and advancing equitable community engagement.

Emma is a native Swede with degrees from the University of Umea and UCLA. She joined Victor Stanley in 2007, where she is currently the Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Through her work, Emma has built close relationships with landscape architects throughout the world, and she truly cares about breaking down borders to create a broader dialogue about design.

Emma has also been actively involved with The Cultural Landscape Foundation for many years, and in 2016, was elevated to a position on the Board of Directors where she brings a knowledge for and a passion of landscape architecture.

As co-founder of Victor Stanley, Stan has led his company to become one of the world’s leading manufacturers of park and street furniture since 1962 which was only two years after graduating from Carnegie Mellon University with a Bachelor of Science in Metallurgical Engineering.

Throughout his many years in the manufacturing industry, Stan has shown a deep respect and admiration for landscape architecture and was inducted into the ASLA as an honorary member in 2011 in recognition of his work helping landscape architects meet their counterparts from other communities, countries, and cultures.
Firm of the Year

LAP+Creative is a consulting firm dedicated to creating places and environments with rich experiences and enduring character. Based in Lansing, Michigan, their team of professionals includes a unique blend of design perspectives and talent. They are owned by Bob Ford, a founder of the Landscape Architecture Alumni Advisory Board from Michigan State University and former Trustee of ASLA. Bob has 40 years of experience as a landscape architect, and in 1989 started Ford and Associates and then formed LAP in 1994.

LAP+Creative has also been greatly involved in ASLA. Over the last year, in particular, Bob and his staff poured hundreds of hours into planning and organizing events for the 2020 MiASLA Conference with the main feature being the LA Ride. They pulled together a great team of volunteers, identified eight noteworthy landscapes in Detroit, calculated bike route, and coordinated nine professionals to speak about the constraints and value of each site.

Distinguished Member of the Year

CHET HILL

Founder and principal of Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio, Chet has been practicing in Michigan and throughout the Midwest since the early 1970s. In addition to this work, he enjoys teaching and working with young professionals. He has been an adjunct professor and lecturer at the University of Michigan since 1993 and has been a guest lecturer and guest critic at Michigan State, Eastern Michigan University, and Lawrence Tech.

Chet is well deserving of this award for his many years of service to MIASLA as a chapter Trustee as well as his dedication and contributions to the profession and future landscape architects.
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**Thank you for your year of service!**

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Visit michiganals.org/executive-committee to learn more about our incoming MiASLA officers and meet the new team!

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