



2025 Pre-Budget Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

Submitted by:

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The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) calls on the federal government to:

#1: Prioritize funding and establish criteria for housing policies and projects that foster resilient, healthy and complete communities.

#2: Require that all civil and public works projects that receive funding from Infrastructure Canada fully explore the feasibility of nature-based solution alternatives.

#3: Increase investment and support for ecosystem conservation and restoration.

#4: Invest in policies and initiatives that promote reconciliation, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the built environment to ensure that all communities have access to high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive public spaces.

About the CSLA and Landscape Architecture

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) is a non-profit, professional organization dedicated to advancing the art, the science, and the practice of landscape architecture in Canada.

Landscape Architecture is the profession concerned with the design, planning, management and stewardship of the land and is recognized as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) discipline. As stewards of both natural and built environments, landscape architects employ an extensive understanding of ecological systems, sustainability, and spatial analytics to design spaces that bolster community well-being, enhance biodiversity, promote equity and inclusion, and meet the challenges posed by climate change. Landscape architects promote multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to the creation of meaningful, enjoyable environments that accommodate both the needs of society and the natural environment, respecting the cultural landscapes of the past and planning for a sustainable future.

Representing over 3,200 landscape architects, associates/interns and students, the CSLA is committed to promoting and increasing awareness of our profession and advocating for issues such as urban design and renewal, sustainable and socially just communities, and adaptation to climate change and the biodiversity crisis. On behalf of our membership, the CSLA is pleased to submit the following recommendations as part of the 2025 federal pre-budget consultations. **We believe that these recommendations will provide a blueprint for sustainable development, prioritizing equity and well-being for Canadian communities.**

Recommendations

#1. Prioritize funding and establish criteria for housing policies and projects that foster resilient, healthy and complete communities

The CSLA acknowledges the current housing crisis in Canada and is encouraged by the government's commitments to support policies that will increase density and provide funding to accelerate housing developments. Every Canadian has the right to affordable, safe housing. However, while increasing the housing supply is imperative, it is equally crucial to ensure that the location and design of new housing projects contribute to community health, well-being, and long-term sustainability.

Urban green spaces are critical elements of resilient and healthy communities. They play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, enhancing air and water quality, recharging aquifers, mitigating urban heat islands, reducing flood risks, and providing recreational opportunities that improve mental and physical health. Ensuring that our housing needs are balanced with environmental and society needs requires innovative approaches to ensure that we do not perpetuate harm or create a crisis for future generations. As such, critical urban green spaces must be protected when identifying underutilized lands for future development.

The liveability of housing projects depends on their proximity to services such as transit, schools, parks, recreation opportunities, and centres of employment. By supporting mixed-use and high-density development, in key locations, we can create vibrant, walkable communities that not only provide housing, but also support community health and well-being, enhancing liveability for residents.

New housing projects should not be permitted in hazardous areas, including floodplains and coastal zones subject to storm surge impacts and sea level rise projections. To date, many provincial and local governments have failed to make the difficult decisions necessary to

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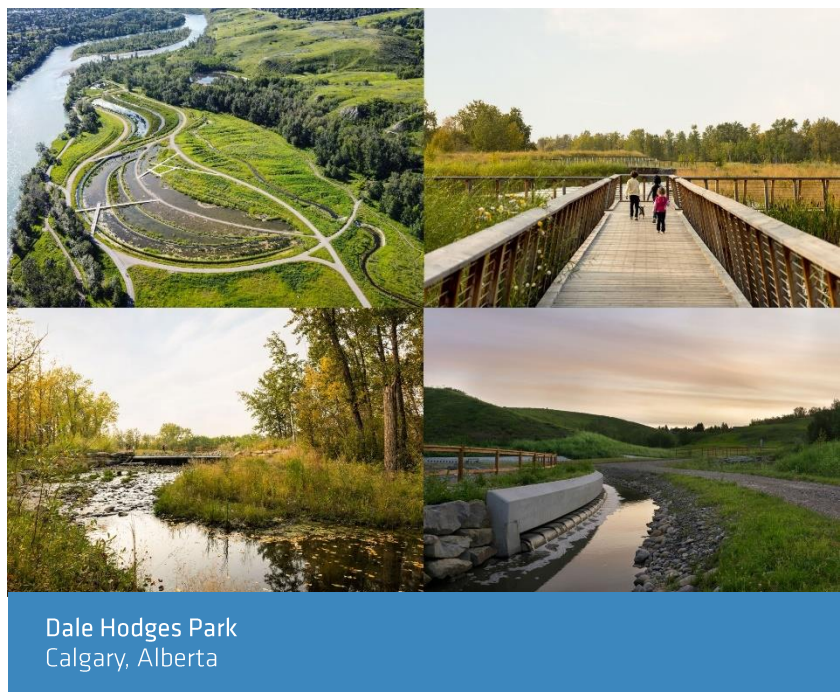
regulate ongoing floodplain development. Unfortunately, the true costs of these projects will eventually be passed on to the federal government through claims for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) and to homeowners in increased insurance costs. The Federal government can play a critical role in proactive climate adaptation by establishing the necessary criteria to ensure that all new housing and residential infrastructure projects that are supported by federal funding are located appropriately to address known hazards.

By incorporating these recommendations into the federal housing strategy, we can build more than just homes—we can create sustainable, resilient communities that support the well-being of all Canadians.

#2: Require that all civil and public works projects supported by federal funding fully explore the feasibility of nature-based solution alternatives.

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore naturally functioning or modified ecosystems to provide benefits for people and the environment. NbS features are designed to work with natural processes, mimicking conditions that would occur without built alterations or changes to the landscape.

Examples of infrastructure projects incorporating NbS strategies involving Canadian landscape architects include: Bring Back the Don / [Don Mouth Naturalization](#) and the [Port Lands Flood Protection Project](#), Toronto; [Dale Hodges Park](#) on the Bow River, Calgary; and the [Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant and Regional Park Project](#), Vancouver.



The CSLA believes that NbS offers innovative opportunities to meaningfully address multiple sustainability crises (e.g., climate change, food and water security, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and human well-being) and increase the resilience of Canadian communities facing extreme weather events and natural disasters. However, provincial and local governments that rely on federally funded programs for their civil and public infrastructure projects are currently not required, or sufficiently motivated, to explore NbS options as alternatives to traditional approaches.

If Canadian communities are to progress towards transformative adaptation and societal change, we must require that NbS alternatives be fully explored to the same level of rigor and detail as traditional engineering solutions. We must also prioritize funding for NbS infrastructure projects where they are feasible, and where a fully NbS solution isn't possible, efforts need to be made to integrate NbS features with traditional grey infrastructure solutions (i.e., hybrid options).

By incorporating these requirements into all federally funded infrastructure projects, we can achieve more sustainable, cost-effective, and resilient infrastructure outcomes. This approach aligns with global

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best practices (see, [memorandum](#) released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and will demonstrate Canada's commitment to innovative and environmentally responsible

development. Furthermore, integrating nature-based solutions will promote interdisciplinary collaboration, leveraging expertise from landscape architects, ecologists, and engineers, and ensure that our infrastructure projects meet the highest standards of environmental stewardship and community resilience.

#3: Increase investment and support for ecosystems conservation and biodiversity.

The CSLA is deeply concerned about the ongoing deterioration in Canadian ecosystems, exacerbated by the escalating threats from global warming. Unless transformative changes are made by society, we will continue to erode the foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health, and quality of life worldwide.

We are proud of Canada's commitment to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to conserve at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas. However, to reach this goal, Canada must increase investment and support for ecosystem conservation and restoration over the next decade.



Agguttinni Uumajunut Pimmariuninginnut (Territorial Park)
Clyde River, Nunavut

Landscape architects work to protect natural areas and to promote planning and design that benefits and sustains both ecosystems and society. We recognize the economic, ecological and social services that natural assets contribute to our communities, and we are uniquely positioned to lead conservation and restoration efforts.

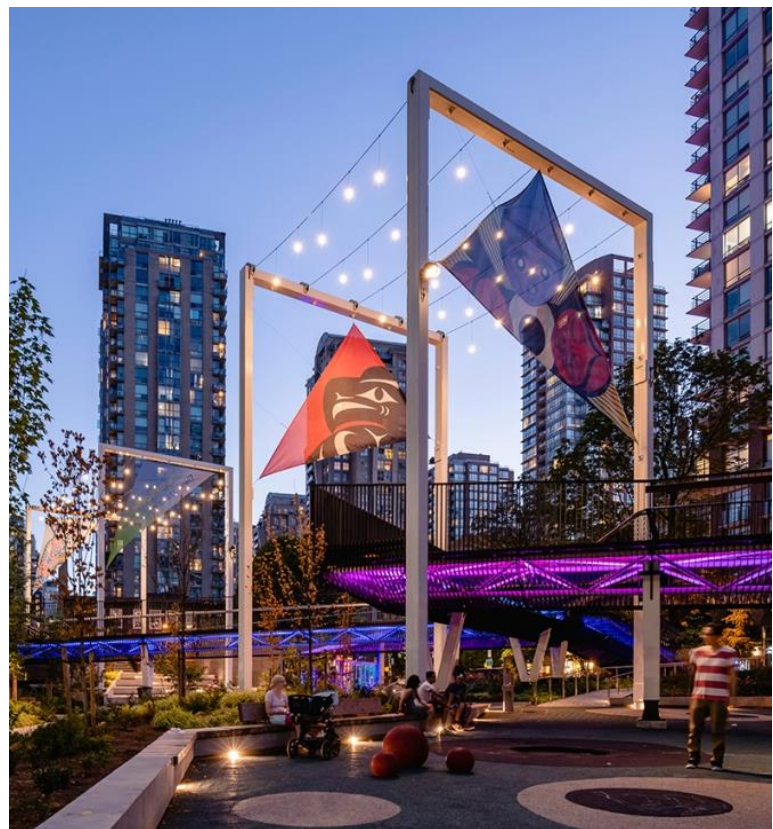
A few well-known examples of conservation projects involving Canadian landscape architects include: the creation of [Agguttinni Uumajunut Pimmariuninginnut](#) (Territorial Park), recipient of

the Canada Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge; the [Environmental Master Plan for Parkland County](#), Alberta; and the [Ecological Restoration Plan of Roper Regional Westland](#), Edmonton.

#4: Invest in policies and initiatives that promote reconciliation, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the built environment to ensure that all communities have access to high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive public spaces.

Systemic racism in the built environment has taken many forms, including discrimination, gentrification, and disinvestment. Environmental injustices, such as lack of equitable access to clean air and water, prevalence of urban heat islands, and greater concentrations of pollution, continue to plague many communities.

Landscape architects have the power to design places that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and we recognize that design that ignores those values can bring harm to Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people in Canada.



səəqəlxenəm ts'əxwts'áxwi7 (Rainbow Park)
Vancouver, British Columbia

Incorporation and consideration of Indigenous peoples, their values, their voices, and their knowledge in the planning, design and management of the Canadian landscape is an important goal for our membership, and is essential to achieving reconciliation. The government must provide financial support to Indigenous communities and governments for habitat management and restoration, land and ocean management, and carbon stewardship through environmental programs. Many of these conservation initiatives have incorporated landscape architecture expertise and facilitation.

Landscape architects create inclusive spaces that reflect and celebrate the diverse cultures and histories of our communities and respect the rights and cultures of all people. Investment in policies and initiatives that promote justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the built environment is necessary. This includes supporting the development of inclusive and culturally sensitive design guidelines and ensuring that all communities have access to high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive public spaces.

A few well-known examples of projects involving Canadian landscape architects include: [The Indigenous Peoples Garden at Assiniboine Park](#), Winnipeg; [Rainbow Park](#) (sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7), Vancouver; [Top of the World Highway](#) connecting Dawson, Yukon and Alaska across Traditional Territory of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in; and, [18 Shades of Gay](#), Montreal.

Additional Information

For further information on these and other issues, read our statements and positions on:

1. Sustainable Housing: CSLA urges our nation's governments to address Canada's housing crisis without impairing natural environments or encroaching on greenspace. [Read the Statement on Sustainable Housing](#)
2. Biodiversity: CSLA encourages stronger action on the biodiversity crisis. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework commits to conserving at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water and coastal and marine areas, and especially areas of importance for biodiversity, through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. [Read the statement on biodiversity](#)
3. Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Racism, injustice, and intolerance must come to an end. The CSLA commits to taking action to change, no matter how long it takes. [Read the statement on Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
4. Truth and Reconciliation: Incorporation and consideration of Indigenous peoples, their values, their voices, and their knowledge in the planning, design and management of the Canadian landscape should be the goal of all landscape architects. [Read the statement on reconciliation](#)
5. Climate Adaptation: The CSLA believes that to ensure a prosperous future within a changing climate we must create a society which has: an enhanced capacity for resilience, a willingness to transform to a better state, and a commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of environments, cultures and well-being. [Read the Climate Adaptation Position Paper](#)