

## **Annette Wilkus, ASLA**

Principal, SiteWorks Landscape Architecture LLC

### **ASLA Council of Fellows Nomination: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT**

#### **EDUCATION**

New York University, Certificate of Construction Management-May 2004

University of Pennsylvania, Master of Landscape Architecture – May 1983

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Bachelor of Science – Landscape Architecture – May 1980

#### **EXPERIENCE**

**2005 to Present**  
SiteWorks, LLC

**2002 to 2005**  
Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architecture, New York, NY

**2001 to 2002**  
Mark K. Morrison Associates, New York, NY

**1998 to 2001**  
SmithGroup JJR, Madison, WI

**1994 to 1998**  
The Office of William B. Kuhl, New York, NY

**1990 to 1994**  
Vitetta Group, Philadelphia, PA

**1987 to 1990**  
F. Daniel Cathers & Associates, Malvern, PA

**1985 to 1987**  
R. Douglas Stewart & Associates, Philadelphia, PA

**1984 to 1985**  
National Park Service, Philadelphia, PA

**1983 to 1984**  
City of Rochester, MN

**1980 to 1981**  
City of Newport News, VA

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the NY Chapter ASLA, it is my privilege to nominate Annette Wilkus ASLA, for your consideration.

Annette Wilkus deserves elevation to the Council of Fellows in recognition of her leadership in managing the construction of many of the world's most recognized, beloved and often technically challenging landscape initiatives. Over the last 30 years, Annette has worked side by side with the world's leading landscape architects, architects and engineers as the landscape construction specialist who has brought their designs to life and in so doing, has heightened the public's awareness of these landscapes in particular and the profession at large.

#### **Leadership in Craftsmanship**

Annette's career has evolved from her passion for the technical aspects of landscape architecture to a recognized expert in the construction management and implementation of complex landscapes. The wide knowledge base that she possesses with regard to site related issues includes design, documentation, implementation, construction and life-cycle cost analysis and construction sequencing. Prior to starting her own firm, Annette worked for several prestigious projects both in the Midwest and New York City.

Working for the City of Rochester, in 1985 Annette was part of an award winning design team for Rochester River Walkway. She was an early advocate for the livable cities movement and the creation of green corridors in our cities by integrating physical activity into the daily life of a city's inhabitants.

While at JJR in Madison, Wisconsin, she led the community-consensus team on the award-winning Root River Pathway project. Through stakeholder meetings and several community outreach meetings, Annette helped the city of Racine, Wisconsin come to consensus on the design of a five mile river walkway winding through the city. Also while at JJR, Annette was the lead designer and project manager for the Onalaska Streetscape Implementation, part of an award-winning Redevelopment Plan. By educating the company about the merits of sustainable practices and third-party certification of sustainably harvested wood for use in their product line, she helped a major company to integrate sustainable practices into their design, manufacturing, marketing and distribution processes. This effort received a Wisconsin Chapter American Planning Association award in 2003.

At Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architecture, Annette took a quality assurance/quality control leadership role on Hudson River Park Segment 3 an in-house design and a construction management leadership role on Teardrop Park, whose lead designer was Michael Van Valkenburgh & Associates (MVVA). In 2002, working closely with MVVA principal Laura Solano, Annette took a leadership role as part of the construction management team. Back then it was an unusual role for a landscape architect, but the complexity of the project and its sustainable initiatives made her an integral team member who brought considerable experience in construction, a sharp understanding of construction documentation, a thoroughness for project administration, and a dedication to the realization of MVVA's design ideas. Laura Solano acknowledges that Annette's involvement directly contributed to the enduring success of Teardrop Park North.

*I have had the pleasure to witness Annette's professional development in New York over the last two decades. Annette distinguished herself as a young professional with a passion for construction and supporting designers – always an asset which numerous firms were lacking. I cannot think of a better candidate for Fellowship in Leadership and Management than Annette as her career has been spent in the pursuit of advancing the visibility and intrinsic value of Landscape Architecture.*

Thomas Balsley, FASLA  
Principal  
Thomas Balsley Associates

## Annette Wilkus, ASLA

### SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

2009

National Honor Award, Teardrop Park, Battery Park City, NY, ASLA

2009

Diamond Award for Construction Management, The High Line, ASCE (American Society of Civil Engineers)

2009

Outstanding Women Award, Women Builders Council

2008

ASLA Honor Award, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York

2008

New York ASLA Honor Award, Hudson River Park Segment 3

2005

Racine Root River Pathway, Wisconsin Chapter ASLA

2004

Onalaska Downtown Plan, Wisconsin Chapter American Planning Association

2004

American Society of Landscape Architects, Wisconsin Chapter, Design Merit Award: Public Open Space/Environmental; Racine Sam Johnson Parkway, Racine, WI

2003

Wisconsin Chapter American Planning Association, Plan Implementation- City of Onalaska Downtown Redevelopment Plan

2003

American Planning Association, Wisconsin Chapter, Planning Award: Plan Implementation; City of Onalaska Downtown Redevelopment, Onalaska, Wisconsin

1985

ASLA National Merit Award, Rochester River Walkway

These award winning projects are a testament to Annette's ability to manage a diverse league of professionals and complex urban initiatives by thoroughly understanding the factors at play whether they are technical, financial, or political. During her tenure at Mathews Nielsen, Annette chose to move in the direction of construction management, a role that is marvelously suited to her technical and interpersonal skills. As principal of the firm, Signe Nielsen, FASLA has said, too often our profession is viewed as either "decorators" or "hopeless visionaries". Annette has been instrumental in changing this view.

Concurrently with Annette's new venture into landscape construction management, she became a tireless advocate for the profession of Landscape Architecture through her work with ASLA. She knew that for the public to grasp the importance of the built environment, she needed to make a meaningful contribution to public's awareness of our profession. As Trustee for the New York Chapter, she served on many national committees working toward this goal.

### Success Stories

Starting her firm in 2005 after recognizing the need for on-site construction services that encompass both site and landscape implementation expertise, Annette focused on her technical proficiency. She led the way into a new specialization within the profession: construction management and peer oversight by teaming with both local and international firms. As an integral partner in construction management on some of New York City's largest urban projects, Annette brings her depth of understanding of landscape issues to these multidisciplinary teams. These projects include the High Line Sections I & II, The Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park City, the Upland Development associated with the New Yankee Stadium, Queens Plaza, Hunters Point South, Hudson Park and Boulevard, and Governors Island. Design professionals in prime consultant positions pursue Annette for her leadership skills and expertise in construction management for these complex urban projects. Likewise, construction management firms such as Turner Construction, The LiRo Group, LiRo/STV and HDR have done the same.

Acting as a liaison between design and construction professionals, Annette bridges the gap to ensure the integrity of the design is realized all the while maintaining the projects' schedule and budget. Through her experience and leadership, the worlds of design and construction intersect to provide sustainable, enduring landscapes.

The High Line Sections I and II have been heralded as components of a truly visionary new urban park, and in turn it has received worldwide acclaim. Noted architectural critic Paul Goldberger stated "New York is a city in which good things rarely happen easily and where good designs are often compromised if they are built at all. The High Line is a happy exception, that rare New York situation in which a wonderful idea was not only realized but turned out better than anyone expected." Annette was instrumental to the success of this "happy exception" She emphasized the need to contract grow the perennials and grasses, consequently, well in advance of the construction start date plant procurement was underway. Annette also took the initiative to educate the engineers and young design team on site with regard to the nuances of designed soils and the careful sequencing of construction necessary to avoid over compaction and soil contamination that could occur through standard construction practices. Once winter set in, issues with snow and ice provided yet another opportunity to help contractors and designers understand acceptable methods for snow removal which would not harm the soil or plants over time. Annette led the inspection of the specialized precast planking system across the site; and also documented damage and irregularities of the planks shipped from Canada. In order to bring Piet

*As director of Field Operations, I can attest to Annette's invaluable construction management input and dedication to ensuring the integrity of our design. The High Line has benefited immeasurably from her expertise and in turn the profession has received a considerable amount of long overdue visibility and respect. I commend Annette on her 30 year career in which she has focused on construction of high quality landscape architecture and in support of professional practice in New York.*

James Corner, ASLA  
Principal  
James Corner Field Operations

## Annette Wilkus, ASLA

### PUBLICATIONS/RESEARCH

#### ARTICLES

**August 2011**

"The Price of Changes." *Landscape Architecture Magazine*: 34:38

**September 2010**

"Worth the Weight." *Landscape Architecture*: 78-83

#### LECTURES

**January 2012**

*Building New York's Next Generation of Parks*, NJASLA Annual Meeting

**September 2012**

*Soil Busters: Bringing Soils Back to Reality*, ASLA National Conference

*Working Outside the Box: New Trends in Employment and LA Business Models*, ASLA National Conference

**October 2011**

*Construction Management as a Business Model*, ASLA Annual Meeting

**October 2011**

*Multi Model Done Right Sustainable Transportation Planning in Minneapolis & New York*, ASLA Annual Meeting

**January 2011**

*Using Manufactured Soils for Sustainable and High Performance Landscapes*, NJASLA Annual Meeting

**June 2008**

*Considerations for Designing, Specifying and Installing Soils*, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

**October 2007**

*The Dirt on Dirt-Soils for Sustainable Parks and Recreation Facilities*-American Society of Landscape Architects Annual Meeting

Oudolf's ground-breaking horticultural vision to reality, Annette was responsible for coordinating and conducting all tree tagging trips, as well as trips to the herbaceous contract grower to inspect all plants for quality control prior to delivery.

Currently New York is experiencing a renaissance in public open space initiatives including Hunter's Point South, an important new waterfront designed by Thomas Balsley Associates in collaboration with Weiss/Manfredi. At Hunter's Point South, a multi-use project with an eleven acre waterfront park on the East River, Annette is an integral part of the construction management team that has been shepherding this design through construction including salt water infiltration due to Hurricane Sandy.

At WRT's Queens Plaza Bicycle Pedestrian Landscape Improvement, Annette was responsible for coordinating the landscape improvements for the 1.3 mile pedestrian and bicycle transportation corridor which was an early success for the Department of City Planning and the Economic Development Corporations High Performance Infrastructure Guidelines including the filtering of all site stormwater through subsurface wetlands and median plantings.

The Bloomberg Administration is investing more than \$250 million on Governor's Island to build an extraordinary new public park while bringing the island's infrastructure into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Phase 1 of West 8's design creates 30 new acres of parkland at the island's heart. Working closely with Turner Construction, LiRo/STV and West 8, Annette is intrinsically involved in the project as an advocate for the designer and ensuring a practical, technically sound, constructible solution.

As a testament to the important contributions Annette has forged in the construction of sustainable public open space, Michael Van Valkenburgh, LiRo Engineering and the NY Economic Development Corporation have enlisted SiteWorks as part of the Resident Engineering team to ensure the success of one of New York's largest mixed development projects Hudson Park and Boulevard.

As Annette has stayed true to her professional path she has positioned herself as an authority on site constructability and has been embraced by the design community as an advocate for their work. By performing peer review of design development and construction documents for landscape architecture firms in New York City, Annette has provided leadership in Quality Assurance/Quality Control. As an associate in various firms prior to starting SiteWorks, she was the "go-to person" for reviewing construction documents for completeness and accuracy. Now SiteWorks acts in the same capacity for several New York City firms such as Thomas Balsley Associates, James Corner Field Operations, Nancy Owens Studio, West 8, and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. Her invaluable knowledge of construction helps firms strengthen their documentation procedures to avoid pitfalls to those with less experience in the field. By working as an outside consultant with firm project managers, she has the fresh independent perspective to highlight concerns regarding coordination inconsistencies, trade standards, drafting errors and communication inefficiencies.

In addition to the landscape architectural community, Annette has proven to be an invaluable resource to some of the largest construction management firms in the city. More often than not, it is solely the engineering community which has been responsible for the construction of major landscape projects. Through her leadership and management skills, Annette has broken down this barrier and paved the way for new and meaningful opportunities for landscape architects.

*Turner Construction applauds Annette's dedication and willingness to work with, be a resource to and educate our superintendents, engineers and project stakeholders about the essential role a Landscape Architect plays in the construction process. Annette renews focus daily on the details that are necessary to bring well constructed open space to the public. Her level of expertise has been instrumental in the construction of a world class park on Governor's Island.*

Douglas W. Cooper  
Senior Project Manager  
Turner Construction Company

## Annette Wilkus, ASLA

### PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

**2012**

Vice President for Professional Practice, National American Society of Landscape Architects

Registered Landscape Architect – States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania

LEED® Accredited Professional Member

**1980 – present**

Member, American Society of Landscape Architects

**2009 – Present**

Member, Construction Management Association of America

**1999 – 2007**

Participant in grading the Landscape Registration Exam –

**1995 to 1998 and 2004 to 2008**

Board, New York Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects

**2005 to 2009**

Dinner Committee for Chapter President's Award

**2005 to 2008**

Trustee, New York Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects

**1996 to 1997**

President, New York Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects

**1995**

Co-Chair, New York ASLA Conference on Historic Preservation

### Commitment to the Profession

Annette has served the New York Chapter of ASLA for 20 years in many capacities, including roles on the Executive Committee, as leader of several committees, and Chapter President and Chapter Trustee. During New York State's recent change to its continuing education requirements, Annette was at the forefront working with National ASLA and the New York State Department of Education to understand and communicate the requirements set forth for all registered landscape architects in the State. Through her leadership the Chapter was able to provide acceptable programs within a month of being notified of the new requirements. Interpreting the requirements was an arduous task, as the State Office of the Professions lacked an understanding of the many areas of expertise in which landscape architects are trained. She also worked closely with Ron Leighton at National ASLA to ensure that the annual conference provided programs acceptable to the State Education Department for those registered in the New York but living elsewhere.

Her early endeavors on the New York ASLA's Executive Committee led her to co-chair the New York Chapter's 1995 conference at Planting Fields Arboretum. The conference focused on Historic Preservation and was a huge success for the Chapter in terms of academic rigor, visibility and revenue generation. Later, as a seasoned member of the Board, she recognized and recruited future leaders to participate in the Chapter on the Executive Board, two of whom have since become Chapter Presidents.

In 2012, Annette was elected to the Executive Committee of the National Association, where she now serves as Vice President for Professional Practice. With this national platform, she is now poised to elevate the discussion of the issues she holds dear to an even broader audience. First and foremost Annette is working to keep the National Executive Committee attuned to what professionals require and need for their practice. She is a champion of ASLA Sustainable Sites Initiative and keeping its momentum going so that sustainability does not lie only in materials of a building and how those materials got on site but how exactly is the land being addressed to sustain the earth for future generations. She is working toward expanding ASLA's awards categories to include "community based initiatives" Even though these projects may not be as provocative as those with larger budgets they are none the less important. They can expand our exposure to a different segment of society which can lead to a larger diversity of graduating landscape architects, practitioners and members.

By example, Annette is encouraging the younger generation to expand beyond traditional landscape architecture if their individual talents do not lie in design. Technical proficiency and landscape construction management are equally as important as design. She is reaching out to the professional practice courses in universities to teach beyond the design world and into other areas where landscape architects should and can excel.

As part of her active interest in leading the profession toward stronger construction communication skills, Annette spoke at the ASLA National Conference in 2007 and to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in 2008. Annette has consistently presented at the ASLA National Conferences since 2007 and several state chapter conferences including New Jersey in 2012 and Wisconsin in 2013. Her presentations have focused on general construction management as well as specification writing and the design, manufacture, testing and placement of soil during construction.

*What differentiates Annette is the unique direction of her career, one that has expanded the practice arena for landscape architects to include landscape construction management, combined with her active participation in ASLA on a Chapter and National level. Through her leadership as Chapter President, Trustee and now as National Vice President of Professional Practice, Annette continues to play a major role in raising the visibility and impact of our professional organizations.*

Thomas R. Tavella, FASLA  
Director of Design  
Fuss & O'Neil, Inc.

## Annette Wilkus, ASLA

It is with great enthusiasm that the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects nominates Annette Wilkus, RLA to be a fellow in the category of Leadership /Management. Annette has mastered and is leading landscape architects into the field of construction management. We are proud to have her as one of our most active Chapter members and we cannot stress enough how significant her role is on some of New York's most prestigious and ambitious projects.

While working at Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, Annette applied her over twenty years of technical knowledge and proficiency in landscape architecture to the role of construction manager. One of her accomplishments was working with the Battery Park City Authority to develop a soil specification that would greatly improve the health and extend the life of the plants and trees. These engineered soil specifications are now standards for tree and planting throughout the city.

It was through these early construction management experiences that Annette decided to start her own women-owned construction management company in New York City. This was a bold and risky move. One, there was no precedent of a construction management company for landscape projects in New York City and two, essentially all the construction management companies in NYC are run by men. However, firm heads like Laura Solano, Michael Van Valkenburgh, and Signe Nielsen encouraged Annette as they were impressed with the quality of the construction on their projects, notable Hudson River Park, Segment 3 and Teardrop Park and could see the value and need for a construction manager that is also a licensed landscape architect.

And, right they were. Annette's business has grown steadily, even through a weak economy, as a valuable and active firm member for The High Line Sections I and II; Hunters Point South, Queens Plaza Bicycle Pedestrian Landscape Improvement, Governor's Island, and Hudson Park and Boulevard. These are some of the City's most ambitious and costly landscape projects to date.

The rumor out there is that SiteWorks is the cool new place to work. This may come as a surprise to many landscape architects, but to some of us this makes perfect sense. There is a movement towards a more "hands on" approach to design; young practitioners are looking for design/build models and ways to learn in an office how projects get built. Annette has created a business model that provides an opportunity for her employees to learn the necessary skills of a landscape architect, under the direction of a licensed landscape architect, through construction management. And, luckily for many of us, Annette is on the lecture circuit sharing her knowledge so that other firms can do the same.

Annette's commitment to the practice of landscape architecture is well known – she is acclaimed within the National and New York Chapter scenes – serving as Chair on various committees over the years and is currently Vice President for Professional Practice for National ASLA. We hope that the Council of Fellows will recognize, as we do, that Annette is a leader through example – pioneering a new and important direction for the field of landscape architecture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laura Starr', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Laura Starr, RLA; President of the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects  
Tricia Martin, ASLA; Chair of Fellows Committee, NYASLA

# Craig Churchward, ASLA

Principal, Avenue Design Partners

Council of Fellows Nomination: Leadership and Management Category

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, it is my privilege to nominate Craig Allan Churchward, ASLA, for your consideration as a Fellow under the category of Leadership and Management.

## EMPLOYMENT

- Principal, Avenue Design Partners, 2009-2013
- National Director of Context Sensitive Solutions, HNTB, 2006-2009
- Great Lakes Division Director of Context Sensitive Solutions and Transportation Enhancements, HNTB, 2002-2006
- Director of Landscape Architecture, SEH, 1997-2002
- Senior Project Landscape Architect, Parsons Transportation Group, 1994-1997
- Project Landscape Architect, Minnesota Department of Transportation, 1984-1994
- Adjunct Faculty, Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota, 1980-1999.
- Contract Employee, Intern Landscape Architect, Various Offices, 1979-1984.

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

American Society of Landscape Architecture:

- ASLA Professional Practice Network, Co-Chair, Landscape Architecture and Transportation, 2007-2013.
- ASLA-Minnesota, Executive Committee Member. 1990-1993.
- ASLA-Minnesota, Chapter President. 1991-1992.
- ASLA-Minnesota, Awards Coordinator, 1988-1990.

For nearly thirty years, Craig Churchward has been changing the way America plans and designs its highways and streets. In public agencies and in private practice Craig has been instrumental in the movement to create new complete street, visual quality, and context sensitivity policies and programs in dozens of states and on hundreds of projects across the country. Though these ideals are well recognized today, this was not the case when Craig began his career. For decades he negotiated the entrenched hierarchy and staid systems of state transportation departments, always with an eye to using transportation to promote health, conserve and restore natural and cultural communities, and spur economic vitality. He has become a trusted expert nationwide, invited regularly to present his work and ideas at professional conferences or directly to officials within state departments of transportation.

Craig has helped move transportation planning toward a more ecologically and culturally sustainable paradigm. Nationally, he is a recognized leader in incorporating landscape architects and the principles of landscape architecture into the planning and design of our nation's transportation system. Specifically, his work on the federal scenic byways program, visual quality management, context sensitive solutions, and integrated project management has improved the policies, programs, and practices of state departments of transportation, tollway authorities, and even the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He has consistently pushed for plans and designs that are multi-modal, insisting on the integration of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit into a project's layout. More than a decade ago, he began advocating for pedestrian and bicycle inclusion in transportation corridors as a matter of public health.

As a consultant, teacher, and frequent lecturer at conventions of planning and design professionals, Craig has continuously promoted expansion of landscape architects' roles within transportation agencies. In addition, he reintroduced the practice of putting economists, biologists, artists, and other non-traditional professionals on the planning and design teams he orchestrated, generating more sensitive solutions to the problems transportation projects often create in communities.

Craig has been a prime contributor to the radical alteration of our country's surface transportation system over the past three decades. Gone are the days when highways were just means of moving cars and ignored the landscape and the towns through which they passed. Craig has proven the worth of landscape architects in transportation projects and has helped to enhance the lives of millions of daily roadway users.

*Craig Churchward has had a national impact in advancing the profession and the role of the transportation landscape architect through his dedication and decades of work influencing the policies and practices of state and federal departments of transportation. His efforts to develop and implement cutting edge training has expanded and solidified the role of the landscape architect in the development of policies and procedures for the delivery of transportation programs and projects.*

Keith Robinson, ASLA  
Principal Landscape Architect  
Caltrans  
Sacramento, California

# Craig Churchward, ASLA

- ASLA-Minnesota, Meetings Committee, 1982-1988.
- ASLA-Minnesota, Newsletter Columnist, 1980-1982.

Transportation Research Board, Committee of Landscape and Environmental Design:

- Member of the Executive Committee as Chair of Domestic Outreach, 2005-2013; as Chair of Peer-Reviewed Research Paper Committee, 2003-2004.
- Member, 2002-2013.
- Friend, 1997-2002.

## INSTRUCTION

Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Training Program, California Department of Transportation, 2008-2010.

Context Sensitive Design Training Program, Michigan Department of Transportation, 2005-2008.

Adjunct Faculty, University of Minnesota, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 1980-1999.

## RESEARCH

*Guidebook for Designing and Managing Rights-of-Way for Carbon Sequestration and Biomass Generation*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Oversight Panel Member, 2011-2013.

*Evaluating Methodologies for Visual Impact Assessment*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Principal Investigator, 2010-2013.

## Visual Quality

In 1990, while working for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Craig developed the agency's innovative Visual Impact Assessment (VIA). This six-step process dramatically changed how MnDOT assesses impacts to visual quality. It requires not only an understanding of the environment and people, but also of the interaction between the two. Craig's VIA is based in the science of perception, and sets forth a clear step-by-step method that anyone can use. This results in an easy-to-follow, practical, yet ecologically deep and sociologically sustainable means of locating and designing large-scale infrastructure projects. In addition to Minnesota, departments of transportation in Wisconsin and Ohio and planners in the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service have used Craig's process to evaluate the visual impacts of proposed projects ranging from roads to dams to pipelines. In the mid-1990s, the Federal Highway Administration embraced the MnDOT VIA and distributed a training video to every state department of transportation as supplemental guidance.

Because of his sustained national expertise, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) asked Craig to develop and teach a 3-day course on how to conduct visual impact assessments. In 2009 and 2010 he traveled around California and taught more than 240 Caltrans employees and consultants (mostly landscape architects). The training, supporting documents, and templates for three different levels of assessment—all developed by Craig—are now available on-line from Caltrans and are resources currently used by several other state departments of transportation.

Craig has endeavored to ensure landscape architects are included in the development of every transportation project. To accomplish this, in 2004 he created the concept of Visual Quality Management (VQM). VQM merges the VIA process, quality assurance and quality control systems emerging from the manufacturing sector, and functional reforms generated by the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) movement. This process, originally created for MnDOT's Design-Build program, fully integrates the visual character of the natural and cultural landscape and the aesthetic values of an affected community into the design and construction of transportation projects. It transforms a process usually equated with cost effective utilitarian solutions into one that is responsive to community values and environmental concerns.

After the introduction of VQM as part of MnDOT's design-build program, in 2007 Craig brought the process to the North Texas Tollway Authority in Dallas. There, he created a Visual Quality Management Unit whose landscape architects drive the aesthetic design of the largest toll system in Texas. During construction, these landscape architects are responsible for inspecting conformance to those standards. In north Texas, Craig's VQM system has dramatically improved quality control and substantially reduced costs while increasing work for landscape architects. It has also helped to create what is considered one of the most aesthetically pleasing urban freeway systems in the nation. VQM is currently being studied for adoption by transportation agencies in Maine and North Carolina.

Craig's ongoing national credibility in highway visual quality led to his recent role as Principal Investigator on a research project for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program.

*"The influence that Mr. Churchward had on the Legacy Parkway was second to none, This was the finest project team I have ever had the privilege of working with, and so much of the credit belongs with Mr. Churchward's exceptional leadership, vision, and creativity. Mr. Churchward's professional leadership and vision are impeccable."*

Angelo Papastamos  
Legacy Parkway CSS Director  
and John Thomas  
Legacy Parkway Project Manger  
Utah Department of Transportation  
Salt Lake City, Utah

# Craig Churchward, ASLA

*Creating Complete Roadway Corridors: Landscape Architecture and Roadway Design*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Researcher, 2006-2008.

## **AWARD-WINNING PROJECTS**

**Visual Impact Assessment Process**, MnDOT. Honor Award, ASLA-Minnesota, 1994.

**TH 33 St. Louis River Bridge**, MnDOT. Cloquet, MN. FHWA Excellence in Highway Design, Honorable Mention-Structures, 2002.

**TH 57 Zumbro River Bridge**, MnDOT. Mantorville, MN. Award of Excellence, Biennial Concrete Bridge Awards, Portland Cement Association, 1998.

**Triangle Expressway Aesthetic Design Guidelines**, NCTA. Charlotte, NC. Outstanding Planning Award, APA-North Carolina, 2008.

**Legacy Parkway and Preserve Context Sensitive Solutions**, UDOT, Salt Lake City, UT. FHWA Environmental Excellence Award – Excellence in Ecosystem Habitat and Wildlife, 2007; 10 Best U.S. Highway Projects, *Roads and Bridges*, 2008.

**Accelerate I-465 Context Sensitive Solutions Design Guidelines**, INDOT. Indianapolis, IN. Award of Excellence, ASLA-Indiana, 2005; Merit Award, ASLA-Texas, 2005.

Beginning in 2010, he managed an international research team of landscape architects to discover how to best assess visual impacts caused by highway projects. The resulting *NCHRP Report 741: Evaluation of Methodologies for Visual Impact Assessment* (2013) outlines a set of best practices for conducting these assessments. Based on the findings of that study, the FHWA has begun a project, with Craig as the principal advisor, to re-write and streamline their 1981 guidance on the subject. It is anticipated that the new guidance will be provided to states later in 2013 and will require each state to conduct a visual impact assessment for any transportation project receiving federal support. Since less than ten states currently conduct visual impact assessments on a regular basis, Craig's work will transform the process nationwide and significantly increase work for landscape architects across the country.

## **Context Sensitivity**

Even as a young practitioner, Craig recognized that fitting a transportation project to its environmental and social context while providing a safe, efficient, and pleasant route for the traveler is essential in developing a sustainable transportation system. He also realized that a project-by-project approach could never accomplish that goal: the variables of personnel, funding, and politics would always lead to differences in implementation. Therefore, Craig began to develop an appropriate highway design method that could be established as an agency's policy, not just the lucky fate of a few projects.

He started with a Visual Impact Assessment that had been developed for a single project (a complex and controversial bridge project crossing a national wild and scenic river) and modified that VIA's principles into an overarching MnDOT policy requiring a VIA for all MnDOT projects regardless of project type, location, or scale. VIAs became more than just means of maintaining scenic attributes; their regular use began to change the way MnDOT approached its work. The agency began to think more holistically about roadway design—not merely about the roadway itself but also the roadway's surroundings and effects, both positive and negative. This change in thinking, brought about by Craig's insistence on regular use of the VIA, led to the idea of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS).

Leveraging new requirements and funding opportunities in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Craig nurtured the advancement of CSS in MnDOT and across the nation. He has been instrumental in the evolution of CSS policy over the past two decades. In 2002, Craig was named the Director of Context Sensitive Solutions for the large national transportation engineering firm HNTB's Great Lakes Division, then became that firm's National CSS Director in 2006. In both roles, he participated in the development of major transportation projects throughout the United States. He was also responsible for training staff and clients on the value of a CSS approach to transportation projects. Notably, he developed the CSS training program for the Wisconsin and Michigan DOTs and frequently participated in the training conducted by the Minnesota DOT. The Michigan program alone reached more than 1,200 transportation planners, designers, and policy-makers. Craig developed the training materials and subsequently taught the course for two years. Due to his expertise, the FHWA invited Craig to participate in their National CSS Dialog on Earth Day in April 2009.

As an executive member of the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Committee on Landscape and Environmental Design, Craig has continued to push the concepts of CSS into

*"No landscape architect in the country has ever exceeded my expectations to a greater degree or had a more profound influence in provoking and shaping the way I think and practice!"*

Scott Bradley, FASLA  
Director of Context Sensitive Solutions  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

# Craig Churchward, ASLA

**I-35W Access Project Mitigation and Enhancement**, Hennepin County. Minneapolis, MN. Merit Award ASLA-Minnesota, 2004.

**Crosstown Commons Aesthetic Design Guidelines**, MnDOT. Minneapolis and Richfield, MN. Honor Award, ASLA-Minnesota, 2002.

**TH 197 Reconstruction and Urban Design**, MnDOT. Bemidji, MN. FHWA Environmental Excellence Award, Excellence in Livable Communities, 2001.

**TH 38 Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan**, MnDOT and the United States Forest Service. Itasca County, MN. First Place, AASHTO Best CSS Project, 2005; FHWA Excellence in Highway Design, 2006.

**Great River Road Development Study**, MnDOT. International Falls to Iowa Border, MN. Merit Award, ASLA-Minnesota, 2001.

**Historic US Route 66 Operational Guidelines and Tourism Opportunities**, Illinois DOT. Chicago to East Saint Louis, Illinois. Merit Award, ASLA-Minnesota, 1997.

**Wildlife in the City**, Landscape Architecture Foundation. Honorable Mention, Palo Alto Film Festival, 1986.

new domains. In 2011, he organized a panel session for TRB's annual meeting in Washington to discuss the effects highways and streets have on public health. The session included presentations from vice-presidents of the country's largest HMO (Kaiser Permanente), the Urban Land Institute, and the Landscape Architecture Foundation. He is a major contributor to a proposed new manual on landscape and environmental design currently being produced for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which is documenting a method for applying the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions to "complete" streets and highways.

Craig has also been a prolific proponent of CSS within the profession of landscape architecture. He co-authored the chapter on Context Sensitive Solutions in one of our profession's most authoritative reference manuals: *Landscape Architectural Graphic Standards*. As an adjunct faculty member at the University of Minnesota, he has taught landscape architecture design and theory for nineteen years, and has also lectured at universities throughout the United States. He has introduced the principles of CSS to countless undergraduate and graduate students and has been a frequent speaker on CSS principles at professional meetings and workshops for transportation planners, landscape architects, and engineers. For the past five years he has served as co-chair of ASLA's Landscape Architecture and Transportation Professional Practice Network.

## Integrated Project Management

Craig's distinctive approach to visual quality and context sensitivity has significantly influenced the way the national scenic byway program identifies and manages routes. In the early 1990s, Craig was asked by the FHWA to assist them in establishing criteria for identifying "scenic intrinsic resources" for the nation's emerging network of scenic byways. One of the key features Craig brought to that process was the idea that it was not merely the landscape that mattered but also the visual experience of the traveler in that landscape. This suggested that the roads themselves needed to become part of the landscape, rather than simply passing through as sensitively as possible. This idea has fundamentally changed which routes are designated and how those routes are managed.

As a first test case for these principles, in 1993 Craig developed, while at MnDOT, the corridor management plan (CMP) for one of the first national scenic byways in the country: the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway in northern Minnesota. Working with the US Forest Service and other federal and state agencies, Craig developed a cooperative and interdisciplinary approach to corridor planning that linked the design of a highway to its surrounding landscape. As project manager—the first time a landscape architect led the design of a highway in MnDOT's history—Craig organized more than two dozen working groups to focus on topics like air quality, forestry, wildlife, fisheries, traffic safety, and freight movement. These groups were composed of experts from multiple agencies. They considered how to best integrate their own mandated interests into the design of the road and adjacent landscape. Craig turned regulators into designers. He pushed each group to define the nature of their "resource," how it affected or was affected by transportation, and how specifically the resource could be maintained or enhanced by improving the road or developing the corridor. Simultaneously, he initiated a public advisory committee to steer the development of the corridor management plan. This model quickly became a template for other byways nationwide. It is also credited as being the origin of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) in Minnesota. In 2005, as part of a National Best Practices in CSS competition, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recognized the *Edge of the Wilderness CMP* and the reconstruction projects it

## Craig Churchward, ASLA

facilitated as the Best CSS Project in the United States. Similarly, in 2006, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) honored the *Edge of the Wilderness* corridor with its prestigious biennial national Excellence in Highway Design Award for Rural Highways.

This pattern of leadership and innovative management continued even after Craig left MnDOT for private practice, as he went on to assemble similar teams on even more difficult projects elsewhere in the country. Legacy Parkway in Salt Lake City had been stalled in court for three years when the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) asked Craig to form a team and use the CSS approach he had performed elsewhere to quickly create a new design for the road. Developing a plan in less than four months, Craig orchestrated the work of four offices of engineers and landscape architects in Salt Lake City, Dallas, Minneapolis, and Indianapolis to complete the project. During the development of final plans and during construction, he orchestrated reviews for UDOT to ensure that the CSS concepts were fully implemented. Not only did the project receive subsequent awards, the original litigants, including a prominent national environmental group, became advocates for the project, citing how the construction of the highway project—as a CSS project—would actually enhance the environment.

Craig has managed other CSS design projects, including major freeways and arterial roadways in Minnesota, Toledo, Indianapolis, Dallas, Charlotte, Port Huron, and Detroit. In all cases, he gave landscape architects substantial roles in establishing the characters of these regionally and nationally significant highways. His innovative guidelines have helped him produce award-winning guides and manuals for several other scenic byways and historic roads, including a Tourist Development Guide, an Operation Manual, and an Historic Route Map for the Illinois DOT; the Great River Road Development Study and the Great River Road Interpretive Plan for MnDOT; the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet; and the Ladyslipper Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for the U.S. Forest Service.

### Conclusion

Craig Allan Churchward has been a strong and steady voice for positive change in our nation's transportation system. He has taken on leadership and management roles within public agencies, private corporations, and in academia, vigorously challenging everyone to think more deeply about transportation solutions that respect all constituencies. He has promoted the capabilities of landscape architects and their unique integrated approach to problem solving. He is a recognized national voice in promoting the visual quality, context sensitivity, and multi-modality of roadways. His innovative management processes engage the public and regulatory agencies in arriving at solutions that benefit communities, the natural environment, and the traveling public.

For his decades of leadership and management in forward-thinking roadway planning and design, and for his advocacy of landscape architecture as a necessary component of all transportation projects, Craig Churchward is deserving of inclusion in ASLA's Council of Fellows.

Sincerely,



Bryan Carlson, FASLA  
President, ASLA-Minnesota

*I had the privilege of working with Craig Churchward to develop a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Training Program for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Craig demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of complex transportation issues and a commitment to stakeholder engagement, which became the cornerstone of MDOT's CSS training. The success of this training allowed MDOT to embed the principles of CSS across the department, from program development, to project scoping through design, construction and maintenance.*

Lynn Lynwood, LLA  
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Program  
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