

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (B205, 206, R2001, R2007, R2021)



Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes environmental sustainability is the stable coexistence of natural and built ecosystems and human activity, and that environmental sustainability is a necessary component of the long-term viability of society's health, safety, and welfare. ASLA encourages design principles that support and enhance the prosperity of natural ecosystems. ASLA recommends that natural ecosystems and human activity be accounted for in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance phases of a project.

Therefore, ASLA encourages implementing sustainable design policies and practices that:

- Maximize quantifiable environmental benefits
- Maintain and enhance ecosystem processes
- Conserve resources

Justification

Landscape Architects are educated and trained in the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices, including responses to climate change. Landscape architecture skillsets are used to develop and improve policies, practices, and services that affect environmental sustainability and enhance the understanding of the integral relationship between natural and manmade systems.

Issue

The environment is at risk from many factors including development, water scarcity and surplus, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and pollution. Human health and well-being depends on stable natural resources and ecosystem services. Environmentally sustainable practices are necessary to conserve and sustain natural resources and ecosystems. Sustainable design strives to mitigate human impacts to the environment by protecting ecosystems, conserving energy use, reducing pollution, minimizing waste, and preserving visual and cultural resources for future generations.

Human activity and development often negatively impact the environment. Incorporating sustainable design principles and practices into landscape planning, design, construction, and management processes can mitigate these impacts in three general categories:

1. Environmental: preserving and enhancing the integrity of environmental systems and improving environmental stewardship.
2. Social: promoting patterns of human behavior that achieve net-zero and/or positive impacts to the environment, and increase equitable connections to the environment that improve human health and well-being
3. Economic: encourage businesses and organizations to balance fiscal profitability with efficient use of resources.

Climate change is increasing the risk to our environment and amplifying the need for environmental sustainability. Prioritizing sustainable and environmentally conscious

design practices are critical to addressing increasing impacts of climate change on our environment, society, and economy.



Resources

Designing Our Future: Sustainable Landscapes

What are Sustainable Landscapes?

<https://www.asla.org/sustainablelandscapes/about.html>

Environmental Models: Sustainable Landscapes

<https://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=31830>

What is environmental sustainability? Small business

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-sustainability-3157876>

Building Design & Construction white paper, EPA

<https://archive.epa.gov/greenbu3/greenbuilding/web/pdf/bdcwhitepaperr2.pdf>

Sustainability, EPA

<https://www.epa.gov/sustainability>

Planning for Environmental Sustainability, USGBC

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299251812_Planning_for_Environmental_Sustainability_Learning_from_LEED_and_the_USGBC

Interrelated Policies

Agriculture

Air Quality

Climate Change and Resilience

Coastal Zones

Environmental Education

Environmental Justice

Human Health and Well-Being

Invasive Species

Livable Communities

National Parks

Open Space

Public Lands

Rural Landscapes

State, Regional, and Local Parks, and Trail Systems

Transgenic Plants and the Environment

Vegetation and the Built Environment

Urban and Local Agriculture

Urban Growth and Development

Water Quality and Conservation

Waterways

Wetlands

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat