

**2019 Pre-Budget Submission to the
House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**

***Ensuring Canada's Competitiveness by
Building Resilient Communities***

submitted on July 27, 2018
by Nastaran Moradinejad, President, CSLA

Recommendation # 1 — That the federal government include the provision of landscape architecture services across all government departments including transportation, infrastructure, public works, environment, health, agriculture, among others.

Recommendation #2 — That the federal procurement process encourage the use of qualifications-based selection as opposed to low-bid selection when sourcing professionals in the field of landscape architecture.

Recommendation #3 — That federal infrastructure moneys invested in communities across the country include criteria that recognizes the key role that landscape architects play on project teams working to mitigate climate change through adaptation and resilience.

Summary

“When landscape architects are employed appropriately at the beginning of the planning process, development can achieve a far better return on the investment. But more significantly, properly supported by enlightened clients and systems, landscape architects can ensure the development of more sustainable and resilient towns and cities, urban realm, transport systems, parks, squares, agriculture, forestry, energy and water system solutions as well as creating a greater sense of place and community. All of this is vital for health, wealth and well-being of communities in every country.”

— Kathryn Moore, President, International Federation of Landscape Architects, excerpt IFLA Bulletin (June 2018)

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) is pleased to submit this brief and recommendations as part of the 2019 federal pre-budget consultations.

The CSLA was founded in 1934 and is the voice of more than 2,000 landscape architects across Canada. As the voice of the profession in Canada, the CSLA is an advocate for its members on issues such as urban design, urban renewal, sustainable communities, climate change, and cultural heritage.

The scope of the landscape architecture profession encompasses the design of anything imaginable in the space around, between, or even on top of buildings. The CSLA’s Canadian Landscape Charter identifies the values of the landscape architecture profession:

- Recognize landscapes as vital
- Consider all people
- Inspire stewardship
- Expand knowledge
- Show leadership

The CSLA believes that these values are in keeping with the theme set by the Standing Committee and, as such, this brief focuses on three recommendations directly related to “Economic Growth: Ensuring Canada’s Competitiveness”. By implementing the recommendations related to government planning, procurement, and infrastructure investment, the contribution made by landscape architects both in Canada and internationally, will mean a stronger and more competitive Canadian economy.

The work of landscape architects touches many aspects of the Canadian economy and its growth. Nationally, the estimated GDP contribution from landscape architecture in 2014 was over \$1Billion, and has typically grown by over 10% annually. Economic activity in the landscape architecture industry has a multiplier effect nationally of 2.1, meaning that every dollar input into Landscape Architecture generates \$2.10 of economic activity. Every \$1Million in Landscape Architecture project expenditures creates 12.83 jobs nationally. As of June 2015, there were 851 Landscape Architectural firms in Canada. All are categorized as small businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

To build a strong, competitive, and productive economy, this brief emphasizes the important role that landscape architects have in supporting a climate ready economy. Landscape architects are uniquely positioned to help prepare Canadian society and ecosystems for short- and long-term environmental change associated with changing weather and changing climates.

Our common future depends on building an economy that is resilient — an economy that is functional because it works to mitigate and adapt to climate change. If Canada does not purposefully work toward climate-change readiness, our businesses, our jobs, our economy and productivity will falter. Meanwhile, if we invest in climate-change readiness, we could well become world leaders sharing our expertise not just in Canada, but also globally, at the same time as buffering our productivity and economy from the inevitable calamities of climate change.

Lead by example - Landscape architecture as a cross-cutting profession in government departments

Recommendation # 1 — Include the provision of landscape architecture services across all government departments including transportation, infrastructure, public works, environment, health, agriculture, among others.

Rationale

Whether mitigating climate change, or creating landscapes that work to build healthy, productive communities, or encouraging ground-breaking projects through designs that promote new urbanism and environmentally friendly habits, landscape architects are on the forefront of visioning and re-visioning our urban and rural communities, their economies, and sustainable growth.

The profession of landscape architecture is relevant in all departments from health, through to transportation and infrastructure and beyond. Therefore, landscape architecture services should be included in all projects that include engineers and planners.

While landscape architects are currently involved in some government departments, it is important that landscape architecture be recognized as a profession which cuts across the traditional borders of departments and is included as a cross-cutting profession in projects related to Indigenous People, women, and seniors, as well as on issues as diverse as agriculture, health and public safety.

Landscape architects are a self-regulated profession whose services are key to design and to designing the spaces between buildings and, at times, within buildings. These services should not be an after thought. Given the wide range of cross-cutting services provided by the profession of landscape architecture, it is key that federal government departments include landscape architects on projects and in consultancies to ensure federal government undertakings are well-informed and effectively executed. For these reasons the federal government should encourage the participation of landscape architects across government departments.

To help grow our economy and competitiveness, landscape architects can:

- lead interdisciplinary teams on adaptation
- promote resilience and sustainability in environments, systems and structures
- employ greener approaches to stormwater management through low impact development, infiltration systems, treated disposal
- value urban tree canopies and urban natural areas as a component of urban infrastructure and as carbon sequestering/sheltering assets
- assist with needed changes to environmental assessment, policies and regulatory instruments
- integrate planning and design for climate change into existing university programs
- and provide continuing training and tools for practitioners

Procurement and qualifications-based selection

Recommendation #2 — That the federal procurement process encourage the use of qualifications-based selection as opposed to low-bid selection when sourcing professionals in the field of landscape architecture.

Rationale

Qualifications-based selection, or QBS, provides an incentive for consultants to add value through innovation, sustainable design, and associated life-cycle savings. The current low-bid process penalizes consultants wanting to innovate, commit more resources, or anticipate complexities. This recommendation calls upon the federal government to change its process regarding the writing and judging of RFPs.

Limiting the contribution of landscape architects to the lowest-bid restricts the professions autonomy to find the best solutions to improve infrastructure, climate resilience and protect public safety and welfare. Basing bids on qualifications helps to ensure innovative alternatives can be explored based on their life cycle costs — as opposed to simply costs upfront. Often, it is during the initial phases of a project that cost savings are most easily integrated and achieved. QBS would allow for this type of thinking and action.

Qualifications-based procurement can maximize the contribution of landscape architects. This approach emphasizes quality, but does not preclude price as a factor. It means that the standard used for selection is not restricted to the lowest-bid and that qualifications are a priority, while scope of work, budget, and price can be negotiated.

If we are to build communities that are resilient, and based on sustainable growth, then qualifications-based selection and life-cycle costs need to be integral to all procurement processes undertaken by the federal government.

Building collaborative teams and smart cities

Recommendation #3 — That federal infrastructure moneys invested across the country include criteria that recognizes the key role that landscape architects play on project teams, and the role of landscape architects in ensuring sustainable growth and competitiveness by mitigating climate change through adaptation and resilience.

Rationale

The productivity of our society, the competitiveness of our businesses, and the health of our communities are all intertwined and demand that we move quickly to address our common future. For these reasons the profession of landscape architecture should be integral to the criteria used to determine how federal infrastructure moneys will be invested.

The CSLA lauds the inclusion of a climate lens requirement to be applied to Canada's infrastructure investments via the *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)*, *Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF)* and *Smart Cities Challenge*. Meanwhile, the CSLA believes that the climate lens requirement should include the participation of landscape architects within its guidance document alongside the assessments by "licensed engineers, registered planners, biologists or hydrologists."(page 19 — Climate Lens General Guidance, June 1, 2018)

Furthermore, the CSLA would encourage the extension of the Smart Cities Community Support Program over the next 5 years as this will provide communities with a longer timeframe to engage and apply the supports they have accessed.

The CSLA believes that the profession of landscape architecture is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in planning for the stresses of a changing climate and its impact on our economy, our competitiveness, our productivity, and our communities.

Through its Committee on Climate Adaptation, established in 2014, the CSLA is providing leadership and supporting policy for members undertaking projects that proactively anticipate the alterations needed to meet future needs. The CSLA encourages its members to integrate options so as to:

- minimize risks associated with extreme events and environmental changes
- reduce the potential for adverse effects to human health and safety
- sustain species, habitats, and ecosystems
- protect cultural landscapes
- enhance resilience in natural systems and human communities

In keeping with these principles, the CSLA works to initiate collaborative action amongst the related planning and design professions of Canada to:

- disseminate the latest science on environmental change
- develop and disseminate information on best practices
- integrate climate change into planning and design education
- advocate with government for needed changes to design policy, regulations and standards

Landscape architects help to counteract the effects of climate change through smart design by practicing evidence-based landscape architecture and by setting climate goals appropriate to

the scale of the project, to its geographic location, and to the season in which the landscape will be most used.

Landscape architects work across disciplines and are skilled in the planning and design of sustainable societies and environments, and productive economies.

Sustainable societies ensure that the decisions made to meet today's economic needs do not compromise the capacity of future generations. In a sustainable and prosperous economy and society, people rely on a healthy environment for:

- the provision of food and resources
- safe drinking water
- clean air
- shelter for all citizens.

In conclusion

The CSLA firmly believes that in cooperation with the federal government, the profession of landscape architecture will contribute to a competitive Canadian economy that is resilient, productive, and internationally recognized for its examples of community building and climate readiness.

Additional resources for consideration:

Climate Change position paper:

<http://www.csla-aapc.ca/climate-change/climate-change>

Canadian Landscape Charter:

<http://www.csla-aapc.ca/charter>