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Sent: December 6, 2022 10:07 AM
To: Corrina Giles <cgiles@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Letter to council re: A Landscape Architect for The Blue Mountains!

To The mayor and town council, Town of the Blue Mountains.....

I am a long term resident & business owner in Thornbury. I lived on Bruce St. and ran my Landscape Architecture practice from there for twenty years. I am retired now. I thank the luck that landed me & my family in the most beautiful spot in the world; The bay, the escarpment, the orchards & our valley, providing outdoor living second to none.

How do we preserve these precious resources and still grow? This is the issue facing us now!

-  Livable communities
-  Green infrastructure
-  'Sustainability'

These words are in our minds and on our lips. However, thinking and talking are not all there is to it. We also need to Do it!

As a landscape architect I can see the need to establish a 'Parks and Forests' department within the Town, and enter the next phase; the one that follows the thinking and talking phase. And as part of our official plan we need a Parks Master Plan that considers


- streetscapes
- parks, trails and open spaces
- wildlife habitats and corridors
- drainage and flood management
- community hubs
- density pressures
- climate change

and so many others too numerous to mention!

Within the 'Leisure Activities Plan' there are over 100 recommended actions (starting on page 318),and following those are a further 8 strategies (pg 318)

I suggest to council that the professional to undertake this task is a landscape architect. This is what they are trained for. Before I arrived in Thornbury in 1990, I spent my early career as the Senior Landscape Architect

for the Parks Department, the Town of Brampton. Brampton faced the same growth pressures we are facing now. The job entailed working with developers, designing parks & valleyland links, as well as upgrading parks within the town. There was ongoing liason with Planning, Park maintenance, and Works departments. I had three staff and together we oversaw hundreds of projects throughout the town.

 I would like to recommend that council include in the upcoming budget, the funds to hire a seasoned and senior municipal focused landscape architect to take on this essential task.

🌿 As well, I recommend that a committee of individuals be established to help guide this process. I would like to be considered for this committee and as a member of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) I would enlist as much help from them as possible.

As Bill 23 looms over us I suggest that the need is urgent!

Thanks for hearing me out!

Jan Pratt Landscape Architect OALA

What Landscape Architects can do for Municipalities



Bloor-Annex BIA Parkettes - DTAH, Toronto, ON
2022 CSLA Award Winner

What is landscape architecture?

Landscape architecture is the profession that applies design and scientific principles, to create outdoor private and public spaces for people, while protecting and enhancing the environment.

Landscape architects utilize ecology-based design to create innovative places for people, while designing for the health and safety of the public.



The Fraser River Delta Collaborative: Advancing Design for Sea Level Rise in the Fraser River Delta - UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (SALA), Hapa Collaborative, PFS Studio, PWL Partnership, space2place (2022 CSLA Award Winner)

How does landscape architecture benefit municipalities?

Landscape architects lead the design and creation of public parks, sports fields, trails, bicycle corridors, recreational areas, and streetscapes for the enjoyment of the public.

Master planning communities and the site plan development process are further municipal elements which landscape architects serve.

What is the role of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects?

The OALA's mission is: To advance the profession of landscape architecture, maintain standards of professional practice and conduct, consistent with the need to serve and protect the public interest.

The OALA currently has approximately 950 full members and is currently seeking a provincial practice act, to protect the public's safety in the design and execution of public projects.

Why should municipalities hire landscape architects?

Landscape architects can help municipalities with challenges such as climate change, resilience to weather events including flooding and urban heat island effects.

Flooding can be controlled by proper grading, storm water management ponds, use of rain gardens, using trees for erosion protection and water retention.

Trees also aid in carbon sequestering and providing a cooling shade in summer months.

Vandalism and crime can be reduced through the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Property limits can be defined using open fencing forms which defines property boundaries yet allows visual surveillance. Maintaining clear views of one's property discourages crime, along with proper lighting for evening hours.

Landscape architects create communities supporting active living, mobility, accessibility, urban plazas for gatherings and streetscapes for people, using design solutions which protect the public's health and safety.

Adding a landscape architect to your professional team, creates balanced environmental solutions for the challenges, which your community faces.



Ontario Association of
Landscape Architects

A component organization of the
Canadian Society of Landscape Architects

Parks as Health and Wellness Infrastructure

Prepared by OALA Municipal Outreach Committee, Summer 2022

Landscape architects are the designers of outdoor spaces, with a particular knowledge of how to incorporate nature into non-natural settings such as cities. This paper outlines why nature in populated areas is critical health and wellness infrastructure.

Nature has long been understood to provide stress relief benefits, and research has concluded that measurable positive medical outcomes can be a result of even looking at nature through a window (Sherer, P.M., *The Benefits of Parks*). But recently, world events have brought new light to the importance of nature in towns and cities and parks should now be understood to be critical to Public Health strategies for healthy communities.

Research shows connections between low income neighbourhoods, lower rates of greenspace, and residents that were hardest hit by the pandemic ([Parks and an equitable recovery | Trust for Public Land \(tpl.org\)](#)), and more often impacted by increasing heat alert days and flooding (Sandifer, P., Sutton-Grier, A.E., and Ward, B.P., 2015). Those residents that had parks and trails near them could safely get outside to cool off in summer heat, keep active while safely distanced, and maintain social networks with friends in greenspaces, were shown to fare better through the worst waves of the pandemic. Anecdotally across Canada, managers of parks are seeing more engagement and priority by residents on improvements to their parks, huge increases in use, and Public Health officials have long advocated for equitable access to free recreation because it leads to better overall health for residents.

Cities across Canada are grappling with how to increase resilience against climate change, and the negative outcomes of extreme storms, extreme heat, and flooding in urbanized watersheds across Canada. Neighbourhoods with street trees and parks are considerably cooler, more absorptive, and has less polluted air than those without natural infrastructure (TD Economics, "Urban Forests: The Value of Trees in the City of Toronto, 2014). Health Day magazine reports that areas with lots of trees have residents with lower medical costs and better overall health ([Want a Healthier Neighborhood? Plant a Tree - Consumer Health News | HealthDay](#)). Ontario research published in 2018 linked 143 studies to conclude that people with regular exposure to green spaces had lower stress, blood pressure, HDL cholesterol, and other negative health outcomes. Not to mention the role that vegetation, particularly trees, play in sequestering carbon and therefore additionally combatting climate change.

Considering the overwhelming costs of the medical system, including hospital care and managing negative health outcomes brought on or exacerbated by heat events, pollution, or disease, the investment in preventative care should be considered a necessity for all levels of government in Canada. The lack of greenspace including parks and tree canopy poses a significant, immediate, and deathly Public Health threat to all Canadians, and almost all solutions can be found in the investment in greenspaces.

The prioritization of creating new, and enhancing existing greenspaces, particularly in urban areas across Canada, will have direct impact on positive health outcomes for Canadians. The health and wellness benefits of access to parkland, trees and nature, are well documented with both Canadian and world-based research.