



# A FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITY

## FROM PROCESS TO PRODUCT

### FRI-D02

PANELISTS: RHIANNON SINCLAIR, DIANA FERNANDEZ, JOY KUEBLER

MODERATOR: COURTNEY LANDOLL

#### SESSION OVERVIEW

Equity has been around since the sustainability movement, as one of the three E's, but remains ill-defined and is often poorly executed. This panel explores a framework that addresses process to product, to elevate our understanding of equity, how to design for it and how to get paid for it?!

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

The audience will:

- Develop a framework for defining equity on a project-by-project basis,
- Learn how to plan for an equitable project,
- Discover new tools to engage and inspire the community,
- Consider and critique landscape architecture's cultural relevance, and
- Learn from the panelists' own project successes and lessons learned.



### RHIANNON SINCLAIR, AICP

Engagement in the planning process is no longer developed in a vacuum, where practitioners rely on their expertise and schooling to develop what they think is best for their stakeholders and their personal goals for the project. Instead, planning and design are increasingly reliant on the diverse perspectives of non-traditional voices such as artists, psychologists, sociologists, educators, historians, community organizers and leaders, and other typically underrepresented stakeholders. Strong projects rely on this diversity of talent to ensure the process and products are as equitable as the voices that came together to create it.

“There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.”

— Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*



### DIANA FERNANDEZ PLA, ASLA

From philosopher Michel Foucault to geographer Edward Relph, extensive writing has informed our human struggle to find balance (equity) in spatial creation. From universal design strategies, to ecological practice frameworks, the profession of landscape architecture has continually evolved to meet the needs of society. As practitioners in the 21st century, we are well equipped and poised to shape the physical manifestation of space to deliver more equitable design solutions to the people we serve. I propose a deliberate shift towards landscapes that are both ecologically and anthropologically diverse, where a network of landscapes can provide new opportunities to engage with public space, but more importantly, create spaces in which we can all find our place.

“To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and know your place.” (Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 1976).



### JOY KUEBLER PLA, ASLA

As a landscape architect, I have been intrigued with the “Power of Play” for more than two decades. As humans, play is our first language, both from an evolutionary perspective as well as an individual perspective. This language is hard-wired into our DNA; it is how we learn, explore and adapt in our environment, but it is also how we learn trust, empathy, and compromise with our fellow humans.

Community engagement in design is an enormously powerful tool, one that has not been valued or facilitated well over the last 20 years. We see the outcome in designs that more often reflect the style and fashion of the times, rather than the diversity of cultures, values, or the actual landscapes that we occupy.

Following the work of Dr. Stuart Brown, and examining the social science profession of Organizational Development, I started to see where play could significantly change how the design professions use and value community engagement. There is no person on the planet that doesn’t know how to play or who is incapable of playing, making it an engagement tool that is universally accessible regardless of age, ethnicity, language, values, or abilities. I believe play is a doorway, and through it engagement is able to support more authentic and empowering design and planning at every scale.



### COURTNEY LANDOLL PLA, ASLA

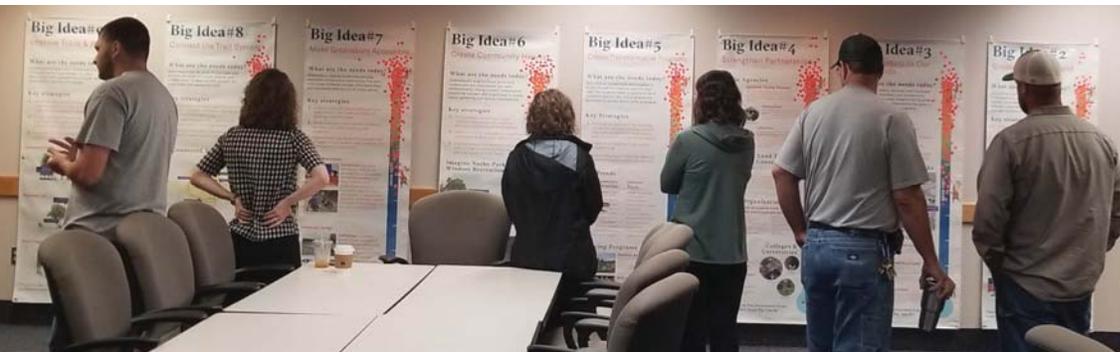
I experienced the feeling of being a minority while serving in the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa. Obviously, I am white, and like many of you, grew up in the suburbs surrounded by people just like me. In Africa, however, for the first time in my life, people noticed me because of the color of my skin. I was seen as both object of privilege, and therefore a desirable acquaintance, as well as an object of ridicule. The anonymity and invisibility I had become accustomed to was gone. The experience opened up my eyes to ethnic stereotyping and the meaning of white privilege and my own personal blindness to it. Ever since, I have sought opportunities to further expand my understanding of these issues and engage in social and environmental justice causes.

As landscape architects, I believe we need to understand the impact of our work on not only the built environment, but the people it serves, or in many cases, doesn’t serve. We have the opportunity and responsibility to be community builders and to provide equal access to space, amenities, and economic progress. To do that, we need to step outside our cubes and engage in broader multidisciplinary and community discussions about development and social justice with people from all walks of life, especially those who do not look like us.

## RESOURCES

- [The Aesthetics of Equity](#), Craig L. Wilkens
- [Whistling Vivaldi](#), Claude M. Steel
- [Between the World and Me](#), Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [Dear White America: A Letter to a New Minority](#), Tim Wise
- [Daring Greatly](#), Brene Brown
- Pod Save the People (podcast)
- Third Wave Urbanism (podcast)

## CASE STUDY: AGENCY LANDSCAPE + PLANNING



# GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The City of Greensboro, NC is home to an award-winning park and recreation system, featuring an extensive network of greenways and trails, a robust collection of neighborhood parks, and several regionally significant parks. The focus of the 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to ensure the longevity of this system and encourage access to all residents and visitors.

### EQUITY CHALLENGE

Since the previous plan in 1998 and the 2005 update, Greensboro has been experiencing city-wide growth, demographic changes, and significant deferred maintenance and funding shifts, making now an important moment to plan for the future. The parks and recreation amenities Greensboro provides not only benefit the social health and physical well-being of its residents and visitors – the Parks and Recreation department also serves as a community convener – providing access to health and wellness support, disaster emergency response, and healthy food options for low-income families.

### EQUITY SOLUTION

The complexities of the department's organization, mission to the community, and popularity as a city resource beyond its mission, paired with a need for more rich discourse with the community, required a strong, multidisciplinary team with experience beyond typical recreation planning. Agency organized a diverse team of local and national experts to envision the next era of Greensboro's park and recreation system.

Agency partnered with a local landscape architecture firm, Revington Reaves, to facilitate regular, on-the-ground contact with stakeholders throughout the process. Revington Reaves also developed a holistic strategy for connectivity within the city to ensure access for all residents, especially those living in high-need neighborhoods.

Former National Park Service Deputy Director, Mickey Fearn, reviewed the city's outreach to its staff and stakeholders to understand how services are delivered and ensure mission alignment in all programs. Fearn facilitated several staff workshops to improve the relationship between the organization and the community it serves and to align community needs with the amenities the city provides.



## CASE STUDY: AGENCY LANDSCAPE + PLANNING



# WHITE RIVER MASTER PLAN

The White River, a major tributary of the Wabash River, flows through Indianapolis, Noblesville and Fishers, and other surrounding communities, as it meanders from east to west across Indiana. In recent years, the region around the state capital has experienced a renaissance. Development in local downtowns and other districts is accelerating, arts and cultural institutions are expanding their visions, and investments in parks and open spaces have contributed to a flourishing public realm and quality of life.

### EQUITY CHALLENGE

Embarking on a plan of this range and magnitude requires the guidance, input, and support of many. The planning process is guided by the Department of Metropolitan Development, Hamilton County Tourism, and Visit Indy. In addition to guidance and input from this partnership, the client team engaged a project Steering Committee and several Advisory Committees to represent the diversity of the expertise with the White River. Most importantly, community input drove the focus of the plan.

### EQUITY SOLUTION

The White River is the next frontier. Long invisible, the river is awakening from a period of underutilization and ecological degradation. Agency has been engaged by a multi-county partnership to lead an interdisciplinary team to examine the complex and interconnected issues of human activity and ecological systems along the White River corridor. The team has expertise across a spectrum of topical areas, all of which contribute to this incredible opportunity to address this wonderful, underestimated asset that is shared by many. Local professional engagement in outreach efforts has pushed our process and feedback from the community to thousands of people from a range of backgrounds.



## CASE STUDY: SASAKI



# WILMINGTON WATERFRONT PARK AND PROMENADE

Once well-connected to the natural beauty of the Pacific Ocean, Los Angeles' Wilmington neighborhood had slowly been separated from the coast by the expansion of the Port of Los Angeles—a major maritime industry powerhouse. As the busiest container port in North America, and a major source of economic vitality for the neighborhood and region, the port committed to enhancing public access to the waterfront for the local harbor community, in order to expand its role as both key attraction and economic driver for the area.

### EQUITY CHALLENGE

The value of an interdisciplinary design intervention in creating a world class waterfront and economic driver for the area was unmistakable. Sasaki first collaborated with the Port of Los Angeles and its staff, members of the community and all affected agencies to craft a master plan that both created a natural buffer between Wilmington and the Port's operations, and identified ways in which equal access to natural resources for Wilmington's primarily Hispanic residents could co-exist with industry. At the conclusion of the master plan, Sasaki identified three open spaces for implementation: the Wilmington Waterfront Park, the Avalon North Streetscape, and the Wilmington Waterfront Promenade.

### EQUITY SOLUTION

The port has implemented the waterfront master plan in two primary phases. The first phase opened in 2011: the Wilmington Waterfront Park transformed a brownfield site into a 30-acre park that runs parallel to the coast and provides a buffer between the community and the port's operations.

The second phase, currently under development, is connecting the park and the community to the ocean. The new L-shaped ribbon of green development will connect the Industrial District and Avalon Corridor with the new Waterfront Promenade. A future land-bridge connection will carry Angelinos and visitors over the industrial port sites to arrive in the space of the promenade—a grand entrance, opening to a sweeping view of LA harbor from the top of a sculpted landform, which cleverly nests the restrooms and services underneath the dome of earth.

What had previously been inaccessible—a place for machines, less for people—is transformed through design intervention into a place where a community can meet the water's edge.



## CASE STUDY: SASAKI



# BONNET SPRINGS PARK

Bonnet Springs Park will be comprised of approximately two hundred acres located west of the central downtown core of Lakeland Florida. The park is envisioned to be the largest local park in the city and will feature a Florida landscape highlighted by existing old oak trees.

### EQUITY CHALLENGE

Given the complexity of the site — a brownfield, lakefront, and wetland — the design team was challenged to create an inclusive park that is representative of the ecological and anthropological history of the site. From the citrus cultivation history, to the site's use as a homeless encampment, the design must negotiate the current demands of the site with its rich history.

### EQUITY SOLUTION

To date, Sasaki has taken input from the public during a six-month period and incorporated ideas and desires from more than 400 people. Planned park amenities include, among other features:

- The main entrance welcome center, reached by walking from downtown through a planned tunnel or by driving and parking, that will house a café, gift shop, exhibition gallery, covered patio, and meeting room,
- A nature center situated along the shore of Lake Bonnet that will feature a café, gift shop and deck, covered patio, classrooms, and a boardwalk along the lake-shore,
- The event center that will house a space for 300 people along with an outdoor trellis area for extra entertaining space, a botanical and sculpture garden, and a café,
- The great lawn, considered the ceremonial front porch of the park, that will border the event space and will be a place for outdoor concerts for as many as 7,500 spectators,
- A two-mile “circulator” walking and biking path, and
- An elevated walking path through the tree canopy.



## CASE STUDY: JOY KUEBLER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PC



# LACKAWANNA BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA STUDY

JKLA was part of a multi-disciplinary team leading the City of Lackawanna, NY's Brownfield Master Plan. In 1901, Bethlehem Steel's Lackawanna location was the world's largest independent steel manufacturer. Today the community struggles with the fallout from the manufacturing process as well as the loss of industry and jobs. The Lackawanna Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) includes the original steelworker neighborhood created by Bethlehem Steel, some of the surrounding neighborhoods, and a portion of the former manufacturing site. The brownfield plan calls for stabilization and reinvestment into the steelworker neighborhood by reinvigorating the existing neighborhood grid with new housing, a new community center, and a commercial district within the walkable core of the neighborhood. Waterfront access, currently not possible through the highly contaminated former steel manufacturing site, shoreline naturalization, and access upgrades along an adjacent creek are suggestions of the plan.

## EQUITY CHALLENGE

The study area contains a mixture of established African-American neighborhoods and newer Muslim immigrant neighborhoods with residents from places such as Puerto Rico, Yemen, and Jordan. The average household members walk up to 3 miles each way for access to food, shopping, and medical care. Conversations during the BOA process ranged from reinvesting in the neighborhood grid with shopping, education, and medical resources, to the risks of the residents choosing isolation if all their needs could be met within their neighborhood.

## EQUITY SOLUTION

We saw an opportunity for a very diverse project steering committee including members representing the diverse cultures in the neighborhoods, as well as new families to the area, musicians, artists, clean tech industry leaders, medical industry innovators, and community environmental activists. Team building games were used throughout the process to build trust and empathy, as well as to form the basis for creative problem solving.

A tactical urbanism event rooted in neighborhood scale commercial development and neighborhood recreation was held to explore building scale, types of uses, historical architectural context, walkability, and ease of access to neighborhood as a one-day experiment.



## CASE STUDY: JOY KUEBLER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PC



# CHADAKOIN RIVER BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA STUDY

JKLA was part of a multi-disciplinary team leading the City of Jamestown, NY's Brownfield masterplan. The area includes 400 acres of wetlands adjacent to the Chadakoin River to the west and a highly marginalized neighborhood to the east. The brownfield plan calls for bridging the truck route between the neighborhood and the park by pulling the park out onto the truck route, greening the street, providing traffic calming, gateways, dedicated crossings, signage, and other streetscape improvements. Park improvements call for the creation of several satellite nature preserve locations along the river and in strategic wetland locations. Traditional park improvements are called for where soil capacity is stronger.

## EQUITY CHALLENGE

This is a predominantly African-American neighborhood with a heavily trafficked truck route separating the neighborhood from the park and river edge. The park itself is predominantly wetland with very unstable soils, with one section being the former municipal landfill. Many park improvements such as playgrounds and ballfields have simply been abandoned when maintaining them in wetland conditions proved to be costly and difficult. Yet this greenspace is the only nearby greenspace for the Washington Street neighborhood and is much beloved by residents. Washington Street separates the neighborhood from the park, and in addition to being a truck route, it is also home to numerous car dealers, other "box" style commercial developments, and significant vacancies. Over the past decade, several tragedies and the loss of young lives have resulted from the lack of dedicated signalized crossings and clear park entries.

## EQUITY SOLUTION

As part of a community-wide kickoff, we hosted an evening of team-building activities focused on finding commonalities. Neighborhood residents, business owners, and environmental activists found they had significantly more in common than they did not and were able to begin the brainstorming and collaborative problem-solving process from a different position. Team building games continued to be an important part of the project process. Two site analysis tours were created for the project. The first invited participants to meet in the neighborhood and walk to the park together, along the truck route of Washington Street and then to cross the busy street as residents do each day, without a crosswalk or signal. The second tour was from a boat along the Chadakoin River itself, allowing an opportunity to see and discuss the opportunities and constraints of the special and diverse landscape of the River edge.



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## CASE STUDY: STEWART

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# HISTORIC BROUGHTON HOSPITAL ADAPTIVE REUSE MASTER PLAN

Stewart was the prime consultant for this visionary master planning project for the adaptive reuse of the Historic Broughton Psychiatric Hospital Campus and the surrounding 800-acre property. We led a multidisciplinary team of architects, engineers, and finance consultants to craft a creative adaptive re-use plan to re-open the 800-acre property to the public.

### EQUITY CHALLENGE

The project site currently consists of the Historic Broughton Hospital (soon to be closed), the new Broughton Hospital (soon to be open), the NC School for the Deaf, Western Piedmont Community College, and an Emergency Training Center. The primary challenge was to develop a strategy to ensure the closure of the one million square feet of Historic Hospital facilities would not become a burden for the City of Morganton, NC and its residents. The scale of renovating the existing facilities would require a substantial financial investment causing overwhelming pressure on the financial health of the City and County.

### EQUITY SOLUTION

A strategy was developed to re-energize the district by opening it up to the public with new amenities and creating new public/private development opportunities including:

- New greenways and educational trails connecting the district to the City and surrounding recreational and educational assets,
- New public open spaces for passive activities to supplement the needs of the existing Park systems,
- A new public high school that will be integrated to further increase the public education assets within the district,
- A western North Carolina history museum,
- Market-rate housing to bolster the declining housing inventory for the City,
- Conversion of over 1M square feet of existing historic buildings to a new senior living facility for the region,
- Local artisan village to support the regional economy, and
- Preservation of over 200 acres of sustainable agriculture managed by the adjacent Western Piedmont Community College, which will provide farm-to-table agriculture for residents of the district and the region.



## CASE STUDY: STEWART



# DURHAM BELT LINE TRAIL MASTER PLAN

Stewart worked with the City of Durham and the Conservation Fund to develop a multi-disciplinary master plan for a 1.75-mile greenway and linear park through the heart of Downtown Durham, NC. The Master Plan included the development of a vision and goals for the project, cross-section and structure evaluation, roadway analysis, park concept plans, furnishing recommendations, and a design and planting palette.

## EQUITY CHALLENGE

Downtown Durham has been shaped by government policies, private investment, and demographic trends. Residents in the eastern and southern parts of downtown have lower-than-average annual incomes and higher crime rates. Based on a health analysis, areas on the eastern end of the trail have higher rates of obesity, heart disease, and mental health issues than the rest of Durham. The Master Plan included a social equity analysis that noted concern over future development demand induced by the Durham Belt Line Trail and potential impacts increases in property values may have on the most vulnerable, especially those needing affordable housing and access to regional employment.

## EQUITY SOLUTION

Concerns over equitable access, affordable housing and displacement led the design team to modify its approach to public engagement and breadth of recommendations to include neighborhood stabilization and affordable housing strategies. The Master Plan contains recommendations for addressing existing safety issues including dangerous road crossings, reconnecting neighborhoods severed over 120 years ago and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to address concerns raised during the public involvement process. The Master Plan also deals with topics not typically covered by a greenway master plan by including redevelopment and land use strategies, recommendations for restoration of natural systems, as well as recommendations for affordable housing and open space equity. The plan includes graphics, and preliminary designs create a framework for the final design of the trail and associated public spaces, but even more importantly, the recommendations on housing and equity in the plan create a foundation with which the City can move forward, and build relationships and partnerships to address larger equity issues in the City.

