

2024 LANDSCAPE X SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, 8/24

Landscape X Ecology X Restoration

NCC24-011 OUSD The Center: Seeding Urban Resilience through Collaborative Design
(1.25 PDH, LA CES/HSW)

Event Type: Field Session
Time: 1:00 pm - 2:45 pm
Capacity: 35

Join us for a discussion about how to increase access through collaborative design to healthy and safe environments and food in a neighborhood that faces a history of industrial pollution, urban blight, and food insecurity.



(Google Earth)

Panelists



Jennifer Ivanovich | Studio Director, BASE Landscape Architecture | Session Moderator

Jennifer is a licensed landscape architect who has practiced in the Bay Area for over 20 years. She came into the profession of landscape architecture with a desire to integrate art and ecology in the urban environment. She has worked on a wide range of scales and project types from large master plans to small private residences. She is not afraid to try new things and challenge herself. As studio director, Jennifer reviews BASE's projects.



MaFe Gonzalez | Botanist and Landscape Designer, BASE Landscape Architecture

MaFe is a botanist with a strong interest in ecology and conservation of plants. Her journey into landscape architecture started when from botany she felt the need to participate in the world-making and to propose, through design, spaces to re-establish reciprocal relationships between people and the environment. Her current work makes her have different roles, like: practitioner, supporting and initiating projects and visions aligned with her interests and passions; lecturer in USA and Colombia; and leader and researcher of academic and pro-bono projects.



Dilan Roe, PE | Chief, Land and Water Protection Division, Alameda County Environmental Health Department

Programs in the Land Water Division include the regulatory oversight of hazardous materials releases and onsite wastewater treatment systems. Dilan joined the County in 2012 after spending 10 years as an environmental consultant. She has a MS in Environmental Engineering from the University of California Berkeley and a BS in Civil Engineering from San Jose State University. Dilan is a California Registered Civil Engineer.

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Lisa Howard | Principal and Founding Principal of Bay Tree Design

Bay Tree Design (BTD) is a design and research-oriented practice with a reputation for advancing climate ready and child-centered landscapes. Lisa's passion for spaces that foster healthy communities and environments is the driving force behind her leadership at the firm. She focuses her energy on the design of projects that restore ecological systems, give children places to blossom, capture the community's vision, and create a memorable and beautiful place. From planning level work to site design projects, she enjoys collaborating with the community, other professionals, and working closely with her team at BTD. She speaks regularly at conferences, webinars, college courses, and schools and community groups. She is active with International School Grounds Alliance and the ASLA Children's Outdoor Environment PPN and has taught at UC Berkeley. Lisa was the Principal and head of the studio for the design and construction for Phase 1 at the Foster Center which started in 2013 and was completed in 2020.



Šárka Volejníková | Director, Bay Area Parks for People, Trust for Public Land

Šárka is a California registered landscape architect, professional leader, educator and mentor. In over two decades of her career, she has left a mark of social and environmental justice, and preservation of natural assets through design of public parks, elementary schools, college campuses, family and senior housing and street improvements. She leads TPL's Bay Area Green Schoolyards program, and her team manages multiple park and urban trail improvement projects in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, and Hayward. Šárka is a Rescape and Firescape qualified professional and LEED trained practitioner. She is a former instructor and guest lecturer at UC Berkeley Extension and Academy of Art University. She has served as executive committee member and president of the Northern California Chapter ASLA, and as steering committee member of the Organization of Women Architects and Design Professionals.



Kat Romo, M.S. | School Gardens and Living Schoolyards Program Manager, The Center Education and Community Programming Team

Working for OUSD for over 20 years, Kat has held many positions including teacher, instructional coach, and principal in early ed. As a young teacher she was particularly interested in bringing education outdoors for students. She spearheaded a movement to build a garden at her school at a time when school gardens were rare. This passion has been a throughline in her career. She is deeply committed to live her passion on a daily basis through her work coordinating school gardens and living schoolyards on a District level. In her work she initiates programs, partnerships, and systems so that all schools have access to the benefits of living schoolyards and green spaces.

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Session Outline

The spirit of the place (Jennifer Ivanovich)

Site Context. The concept design for the expansion of The Center's landscape area is the result of extensive outreach and research. Input and ideas from a range of stakeholders -including the land- and site users have been incorporated in the design of the site. The final design strikes a balance between the diverse desires of the different constituents, the existing environmental challenges on site, and the needs of The Center's Nutrition Services and Education departments. This field session will address how the site's environmental challenges were utilized as remediation opportunities that blend ecology, restoration and landscape architecture; and how urban agriculture was a key concept in the design process, increasing access to healthy food in a neighborhood with a history of industrial pollution and food insecurity.

The first design for The Center (Lisa Howard)

Site planning. The design process for Phase 1 began in 2013 after OUSD and Center for Ecoliteracy had developed the goals for the project and selected this site. OUSD and CEL developed a vision to make The Center the first place in the country that would combine nutrition services, a central commissary, and education center (with an urban farm) into one location. The Phase 1 plan was developed working extensively with an OUSD committee including the Executive Director of Nutrition Services, OUSD Garden Educators, the Sustainability Manager, and multiple Facilities representatives as well as the local community to define the site program and layout. This Phase completed construction in 2020 and included many elements asked for by the committee and community including an outdoor oven / classroom, green house and associated work area, central gathering space, raised beds, and orchard and perennial planting areas. This built design was used to engage conversation for Phase 2 with diverse stakeholder groups and identify what needs an expanded Center could fulfill, collaborating on a shared vision for a reimagined greenspace.

The Center programming, needs, and desires (Kat Romo)

Site programs. The Center is the hub of the district-wide school food program network that connects nutrition, education, and community programs at OUSD's schools, kitchens, and gardens. Kat will provide current context for how The Center uses the spaces, the Center programming and their joint work with BASE and TPL to vision and develop a clear and robust concept map for the development of phase 2 of the project.

Environmental needs and concerns (Dilan Roe)

Site needs. The Center site faces challenges from a several environmental concerns - groundwater and soil contamination, and air pollution. Dilan will talk about the specific issues facing this site, the environmental justice impacts of contamination, and . The way it relates to/exemplifies issues throughout Alameda County. Access to Funding for remediation. Potential pilot for OUSD for site remediation - learning opportunity for OUSD. Addressing the contamination on site rather than shifting off site to be dealt with elsewhere.

Seeding urban resilience through urban agriculture and remediation (MaFe Gonzalez)

Design process. Outreach and research informed every aspect of the concept design for Phase 2. In an effort to learn from existing models of urban agriculture in the area, the design team built relationships with several urban farms and urban agricultural programs to learn about scale, food production strategies, educational programs, funding, and how produce grown on site could be best incorporated into OUSD's Nutrition Services Program. To aid in the understanding of different management models for urban agriculture and garden spaces, the design team distilled a list of local

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Session Outline (Cont.)

urban agricultural organizations and farm spaces, and interviewed several of the most relevant, providing key data to aid in the development of management and programming. As part of our research into the soils on site, the team worked with the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health to better understand the potential source of pollutants in the soils and groundwater. With their encouragement, BASE researched the benefits of using phytotechnological strategies on the existing and potential pollutants in the soils, groundwater, and air at The Center. The design team aspires that the Center will be a pilot project for OUSD for the remediation of other urban school sites.

The germination of seeds (Šárka Volejníková)

Next steps. With the Concept Design created, beautifully capturing the community's vision for the expanded farm, nature play area, interpretive trail, and community garden at the Center- the next critical need is to identify and capture funding for completing soil remediation, design, and construction. Beyond supporting the initial concept phase, TPL has been continuing to add capacity to the project by seeking public dollars for implementation. TPL has managed the application to 3 public grant programs since the completion of the concept design; 1 for further investigation into the soil contamination and pilot remediation, and 2 for implementing various components of the concept plan. Assessing the overlapping timelines of various funding opportunities and maximizing private dollars donated to keep the project moving forward without wasting resources is a delicate balance, especially as the State of California faces a budget deficit that puts many funding opportunities in question.

A forest of urban resilience (Jennifer Ivanovich)

Conclusion. Collaborative design allowed us to identify and balance the needs of all stakeholders, to envision the possibility of using landscape architecture to give back to the land, and to educate and empower the West Oakland community through the healing and restoration of the land.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand how to develop a collaborative design strategy.
- Learn about the collaborative design process and how to identify and synthesize the needs and desires of different stakeholder groups
- Learn about the potential of urban agriculture and remediation strategies as key elements for environmental and social justice
- Learn how to work with AHJs to push on the envelope of code compliance to integrate agricultural literacy opportunities.
- Understand the role of Landscape Architects in giving back to the land, and educating and empowering vulnerable communities through healing and restoration.

Guided Questions

- Collaborative design: with whom do we collaborate? For Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- How to use urban agriculture as a strategy for social and environmental justice?
- How to turn environmental challenges into design opportunities to seed urban resilience?
- How to work with other disciplines and AHJs to make landscapes valued for the benefit of climate resilience and student opportunities (connection to nature and outdoor hands-on learning).