



# MiSITES

2016: VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY  
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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow landscape architects and friends!

We are off to a very busy start this year as the Executive Committee has been setting up events for the remainder of 2016. I am always amazed by the dedication and time the board provides to landscape architects in our great state of Michigan.

As many of you know, April was World Landscape Architecture Month (WLAM). I applaud all of Michigan's landscape architects who celebrated our profession, either by attending one of the Chapter's many events around the state, promoting our profession through social media, or telling your family and friends about your latest project. We all have so much to be proud of!

On Tuesday, April 12, we hosted a live viewing party for the PBS documentary "10 Parks that Changed America", at Conor O'Neill's in Ann Arbor. The documentary focused on several influential American urban parks, old and new, and our chapter underwrote a portion of the airing on WTVS Channel 56, out of the Detroit viewing area. We hope you saw our chapter logo and promo during the broadcast! The fun continued on Saturday, April 16, as we partnered with Michigan State University's Global Day of Service in Ann Arbor. This year, we worked with the National Area Preservation group to remove invasive species in

city parks. Additional events were also held with the Greening of Detroit and Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids. Remember to always check back at [www.michiganasla.org](http://www.michiganasla.org) on events, locations, and timing.

For all of you introverts out there, visit [asla.org/wlam](http://asla.org/wlam) to discover ways in which you can interact on social media throughout the year. Our friends at national ASLA have set up a great way to tweet, post, and show off your latest work by using #WLAM2016 and the "This is Landscape Architecture" card. Using the card, I challenge all of our members and non-members to tweet or post at least one image of your favorite designed space. Let's show off all of the places we have come to love around Michigan (and beyond), while promoting the value of spaces designed by a licensed landscape architect.

Thank you to all of our current members who continue to support the chapter through your renewed membership and dedication of time to chapter activities and events. ■

**Clare Jagenow, PLA, ASLA**  
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

For more information, please visit our website at [www.michiganasla.org](http://www.michiganasla.org), or find us on Facebook or LinkedIn.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- 2 Evergreen Road Enhancements**  
By Terry Croad, AICP, ASLA  
The City of Southfield
- 7 The Case for Greening your Office**  
By Ben Baker, ASLA, LEED AP  
Wightman and Associates, Inc.
- 11 Citizens as Stewards: Guide to Transforming Vacant Land in Detroit**  
By Christopher Riggert, Associate ASLA  
Hamilton Anderson Associates

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**LA Ride**, May 5th at 3 pm  
Broad Art Museum, MSU Campus, East Lansing

**Bowling Social**, May 26th at 5:30 pm  
Revel and Roll Bowling Alley, Ann Arbor

**MiASLA/Contractors 29th Annual Golf Classic**,  
July 27th at 9 am  
Coyote Preserve Golf Course, Fenton

**MSU LA Alumni Golf Outing**, Sept. 16th  
East Lansing, MI

**2016 MiASLA Annual Meeting**, Sept. 29th  
Thousand Oaks Golf Club, Grand Rapids

If you would like to contribute to MiSITES or have a topic of interest, please email: [SITESpublications@michiganasla.org](mailto:SITESpublications@michiganasla.org)

# EVERGREEN ROAD ENHANCEMENTS

By Terry Croad  
The City of Southfield

The City of Southfield held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Evergreen Road Improvement Project on October 19, 2015. The project represents a \$12 million investment, which is part of an overall \$100 million infrastructure investment in roads and bridges throughout the City over the next ten years. After much initial ground work securing funding and developing plans, the Evergreen Road Improvement Project officially began construction in June of 2014. The Project involved the total reconstruction of a one-mile segment of Evergreen Road between 10 and 11 Mile from the previous six and seven-lane road into a four-lane boulevard with a roundabout at Evergreen and Civic Center Drive and a roundabout at Evergreen and the north Municipal Campus driveway.

## PROJECT IMPACT AND IMPROVEMENTS

On average, approximately 21,500 motorists travel daily through this important section of roadway. The Evergreen Road Improvement Project incorporated many new amenities that have made the corridor more pedestrian-friendly and attractive. The project has improved Evergreen Road and the surrounding area in numerous ways, including: the complete replacement of deteriorated pavement; correction of storm water system inadequacies; improved traffic flow and safety; enhanced pedestrian amenities; connectivity of the pedestrian pathway network; creation of a strong link between east and west sides of Evergreen; and overall beautification of the corridor and City. The fit and finish of these improvements truly help to promote a more walkable and sustainable community for the future.

## INNOVATIVE STORMWATER CONTROL

Innovative stormwater features were incorporated into the project to provide water quality improvements before discharge to storm sewers. The stormwater drains and water mains were completely replaced and upgraded — improving the functionality of the storm sewer system and helping to maximize the

lifespan of the City's infrastructure. The aged and deficient drainage system had often resulted in street flooding during most significant rain events. During large storms, the flooding would often extend to adjacent areas, including the green belt in front of City Hall. The City constructed a rain garden and installed pervious pavers behind the curb between the roundabouts that will greatly reduce environmental impact. These features were designed and constructed utilizing new technology and materials that make it environmentally-friendly, reducing storm water runoff by one-third (32,000 cu. ft.) and filtering it before it reaches streams and other waterways. This approach not only helps to protect the environment, but also to reduce the impact upon the immediate habitat.

Storm water quality is a goal of every project for the City of Southfield. Several design concepts were considered to improve storm water quality without impacting the use or maintenance of the roadway. Permeable pavers were used behind the curbs to allow storm water infiltration and the City designated a portion of the City's property as a bio-retention pond to facilitate best management practices for much of the project's storm water facilities.

The project incorporated a number of new innovative and sustainable stormwater features, including:

- Improved stormwater quality through the use of permeable pavers, a bio-retention pond, and native plant materials;
- Acquisition of an easement for 60" storm sewer connecting to the Rummell Drain off-site to improve the drainage;
- Relocation of the City's unsightly electrical gear from the front lawn of the City Campus to a secluded area on the site;
- Replacing the City's 12" water main along the roadway which improved the water system reliability.

### **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM THE TOP LEFT:**

*Historic Mary Thompson signage along sidewalk and road improvements.*

*Rain garden detail.*

*Evergreen Road improvements and roundabout bird's eye view.*

*Images courtesy of the City of Southfield.*





## EVERGREEN ROAD ENHANCEMENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

### UTILIZING ROUNDABOUTS

The incorporation of roundabouts will greatly improve traffic flow in the corridor while also reducing the number of serious accidents. The many benefits of roundabouts include improved safety resulting in a 90 percent reduction in fatalities; 76 percent reduction in injuries; and a 35 percent reduction in all crashes. Studies have also shown that accidents that do occur are typically less serious and that roundabouts are safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Roundabouts have also been proven to greatly improve traffic flow by reducing congestion, decreasing traffic delays and increasing traffic capacity. They are also more environmentally friendly – reducing pollution with fewer stops and hard accelerations – resulting in less vehicle emissions, fuel consumption, and noise. Roundabouts are also generally considered to be more aesthetically pleasing than traditional intersections – enhancing and defining corridors and cities. Finally, the roundabouts give the City a focal point for the installation of art.

### PEDESTRIAN FOCUS

The completion of streetscape improvements, such as extensive landscaping & irrigation, bollards, planters and decorative LED street lighting with banner arms, electrical outlets (for holiday displays) and flower hangers, and pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, bus shelters, mid-block crossings, way finding signage, historic interpretative panels, multi-use pathways, and sidewalks, has made the updated corridors inviting, safe, and engaging for pedestrians.

A 10' wide multi use path was installed along the east side of the road way to provide for nonmotorized traffic and to reduce automobile emissions. A 350-foot segment of 8' wide sidewalk was installed on the west side of Evergreen Road to complete connectivity of pedestrian routes and to encourage more heart healthy activity. The two roundabouts on the project allow traffic to flow without the delays of traffic signals, which in turn provides better pedestrian flow due to the lack of automobile congestion.

*LEFT: Sidewalk and landscape improvements along the updated corridor. Image courtesy of the City of Southfield.*

## PROJECT COST

The total project cost was approximately \$12 million, with \$4.8 million in federal transportation funding for the road reconstruction and \$450,000 from a Michigan Transportation Alternatives Program grant for the pedestrian amenities and stormwater mitigation features. The City's Water & Sewer Fund contributed \$3.5 million and the Major Street Fund contributed \$700,000. The Metro Act Fund provided \$1 million, the City Centre Advisory Board contributed \$100,000 toward the pedestrian amenities, and the Local Improvement Revolving Fund funded the remaining \$1.5 million.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The City selected Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc. to provide design and construction engineering services for the project. Michael J. Dul & Associates Inc. were the landscape architects. The stakeholders in the project included the City of Southfield, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Road Commission for Oakland County, and the Southfield City Centre. The project was viewed as the gateway to the City of Southfield and was given the tag line "The Magnificent Mile" by City officials. The project was bid through the MDOT Local Agency Program with a spring 2014 start of construction and an October 2015 completion. Dan's Excavating, Inc. was the construction contractor. It was necessary to maintain two-way traffic throughout most of the construction. Utility coordination had been completed during design and most of the conflicts were resolved and relocated prior to the project bidding and award. ■

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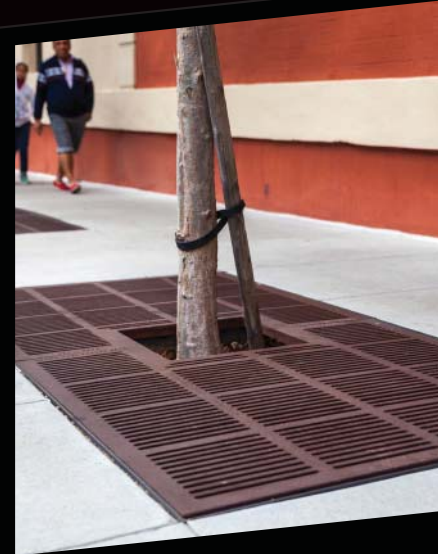
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# THE CASE FOR GREENING YOUR OFFICE

By Ben Baker, ASLA, LEED AP  
Wightman and Associates, Inc.

As landscape architects, we are uniquely in a “green” profession where we can bring people and nature together. The last decade has seen significant strides in using design practices that reduce negative impacts on our environment. Yet much work remains.

Popular sustainable landscaping practices focus directly on the environment through increased site permeability, the use of native plantings, expanded areas of shade, denser development, and the addition of green roofs and bioswales. While these are important, they don’t directly address the need people have to connect with the outdoors.

One way to take a fresh look at eco-friendly design is to create a more personal connection, one that focuses on individual well-being, especially in the office.

## THE TROUBLE WITH OFFICE WORK

The average worker can spend 8 to 10 hours each day at the office. Additionally, the average American sits for more than 10 hours per day -- not including sleep time. Experts have determined these sedentary lifestyle practices increase the chances of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and a host of other life-shortening ailments.

Offsetting measures such as standing desks, treadmill desks, and stand-up meetings can help, but they are an incomplete answer to creating healthy office settings. It’s staggering to realize that a person has to exercise for 20 minutes to offset each hour of sitting. This means many of the benefits of that one-hour morning workout are erased before lunch.

As landscape architects, we must ask how we can influence healthful office planning.

*RIGHT: Office plants.  
Image courtesy of Landon Landscape Architecture, LLC.*

## TRENDS TOWARD HEALTH AND LANDSCAPE

The Biophilia Hypothesis suggests there is an instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems, and an urge to affiliate with other forms of life. Some suggest this is why people have pets and houseplants.

Studies dating back 30 years show the connection between green environments and healing. Hospital patients with a view of the outdoors recovered faster and needed less pain medication than those without the view. Other studies reveal that the presence of foliage and flowering plants in the hospital room decreases recovery time and improves psychological, emotional, and cognitive health. It is not uncommon for landscape architects to work directly with doctors to design healing gardens as part of healthcare facilities.

Pediatricians in Washington DC are taking this a step further. To combat childhood obesity and chronic disease they are prescribing the outdoors for



at-risk children. DC Park RX includes a searchable database of parks and amenities near a child's home and allows the doctor to place this into the patient's chart, just as he or she would any other prescription.

The practice of forest bathing was introduced in Japan in 1982 to encourage healthful living and reductions in stress levels. Forest bathing is the act of simply being in the forest. It has become a recognized relaxation and stress management activity in Japan. Now, recent studies indicate it also increases a component of the immune system that fights cancer.

### **THE EFFECT OF NATURE ON THE WORKPLACE**

Recent studies show numerous benefits to having access to nature-based features in the workplace. Improved attention spans and retention of information result when office workers can simply see the outdoors through a window or have plants throughout the office. Other benefits include improved employee morale, decreased absenteeism, increased work efficiency, and reduced tension and anxiety. Additionally, when workers have access to green spaces, physical activity levels increase and opportunities for social connections and collaboration improve.

As landscape architects, we can take cues from this information to incorporate flexible indoor and outdoor workspaces, places for relaxation, and areas of respite into office environments. Courtyards, patios, and rooftop gardens are ways to take the workspace outdoors. Living walls and atriums can bring the outdoors to the workspace. Another concept for consideration is the workplace garden.

### **PUTTING THE WORKPLACE GARDEN CONCEPT INTO PRACTICE**

As part of the Green Team at Wightman & Associates, my colleagues and I wanted to actively share sustainability practices with co-workers. What emerged was the idea of an employee garden.

After a presentation about how an office garden would benefit the staff and support our company's strategic plan, management agreed to purchase the

materials and dedicate space for it on the property. The plan included eight 4' x 8' raised garden beds to be shared by sixteen employees. The team members would tend the gardens before or after work, over lunch, or on breaks.

On a spring evening, we rallied the troops and their families, cut out a portion of our front lawn, created the beds, filled them with soil, and placed mulch paths around them. We completed our task in one evening, which was a surprise to us all. This was just the beginning of the surprises.

Tending the beds over the course of the summer created a sense of camaraderie between the participants. Experienced gardeners shared knowledge with beginners. The gardeners shared produce with each other and with employees not involved in the garden. Being outdoors to tend the garden was a welcome respite from phone calls, emails, and hours of sitting. It was our own bit of forest bathing in the midst of a suburban-style development in a commercial corridor.

When we started this project I thought the main benefits would be removing a little lawn, learning more about where food comes from, and having access to some delicious vegetables.

However, the social benefits between co-workers and the magic of what a little fresh air and sunshine can do to lift your mood and increase your productivity in the middle of the day were the main takeaways. After a successful inaugural year, there is growing interest in the garden and plans to expand this spring.

As landscape architects, let's continue to think about how we can keep people active and engaged not only during recreational activities, but at home and at the office. ■

---

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*Constructing the employee garden.  
Image courtesy of Wightman and Associates, Inc.*



*Working in the garden.  
Image courtesy of Wightman and Associates, Inc.*



*The Wightman and Associates team enjoying the 'fruits' of their labor.  
Image courtesy of Wightman and Associates, Inc.*



*Organic produce from the employee garden!  
Image courtesy of Wightman and Associates, Inc.*



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# CITIZENS AS STEWARDS: GUIDE TO TRANSFORMING VACANT LAND IN DETROIT

By Chris Riggert, Associate ASLA  
Hamilton Anderson Associates

Among the many problems facing Detroit, vacant and abandoned land has become a dangerous nuisance, burden, and constant portrayal of the blight facing the city. 23.4 square miles of Detroit's 149 square miles of occupiable land are left vacant, a level unprecedented among large American cities. The Detroit Future City (DFC) Implementation Office is tasked with creating innovative and feasible solutions to address these problems; their 2012 DFC Strategic Framework plan provides recommendations to transition Detroit's economy, infrastructure and policy from disjointed and broken to resilient and stable.

The DFC Implementation Office, in the summer of 2015, launched the Field Guide to Working with Lots (Field Guide) made possible through contributions from over 50 Detroit-based businesses, organizations, city departments and experts. Many of these local groups are active in transforming Detroit's urban landscape and contributed their collective experience and knowledge through workshops and advisory panels. The pairing of design resources with the practical insight of Detroit's land-leaders led to the creation of an innovative yet feasible product.

The Field Guide aims to activate vacant and abandoned land by connecting Detroit citizens and organizations with the resources they need to transform properties into community assets. It consists of 34 vacant lot designs that range in design complexity, installation intensity, cost, maintenance and function. This tool implements large scale city transforming principles at a neighborhood scale, allowing citizens to become agents of change within their community, transforming one of the city's biggest liabilities into an asset. "Neighbors, residents, and institutions (including businesses) were considered as potential users (or clients) of the Field Guide to Working with Lots" says Erin Kelly, project lead from the DFC Implementation Office. "...Our emphasis was on expanding an understanding of what is possible with vacant land in Detroit, while providing the practical information and resources required to take action."



*Detroit Future City handbook.  
Image courtesy of Hamilton Anderson Associates.*



*Plantings in a vacant lot.  
Image courtesy of Hamilton Anderson Associates.*

“The Field Guide is the most thorough program for vacant lot activation in the country. “We surveyed many vacant land transformation programs from across the country,” says designer Melissa Hollingsworth, previously of Hamilton Anderson Associates, “We found publications were either too technical for residents to use or too ambiguous and lacking step-by-step instruction. Our goal was to empower residents in completing neighborhood-transforming projects using our design packages from start to finish.”

The Field Guide prioritizes completeness of information and resources with a highly legible graphic and written vocabulary created for people of all backgrounds and experience levels. Citizens, groups and organizations can use these design packages from the early planning stages through installation and ongoing maintenance. Each package educates readers about design attributes; provides resources for testing soil or acquiring a contractor if required; furnishes a shopping list with tools and materials; provides step-by-step instructions for installation and upkeep; includes a plant palette with species suitable to the region, noting where plants can be purchased; illustrates a site plan and graphic section with instructions on how to layout plants. In addition to this “Civic” package, each lot design includes a “Construction” package with streamlined information for experienced installers or contractors.

Users are encouraged to complete the printed companion, a Field Guide workbook before beginning projects. This book includes a series of exercises intended to help users understand their property’s opportunities and limitations. Users then use this information to select a lot design. Because they are meant to be installed throughout the city, lot designs are tailored to fit a typical Detroit lot at 30 feet by 100 feet. With these dimensions standardized, users can choose from all 34 designs for their lot, depending on what is determined most suitable.

Each lot design approaches problems in a creative way, resulting in an eclectic catalogue of transformational installations. The designs move beyond simply beautifying the lot; they address function such as stormwater management, remediation of in-situ soil, active use by the adjacent community, habitat

## Mix 'N Match Meadow

### Examples of Hedges with Meadow Plantings



1 - Boxwood



2 - Hedge Around Meadow

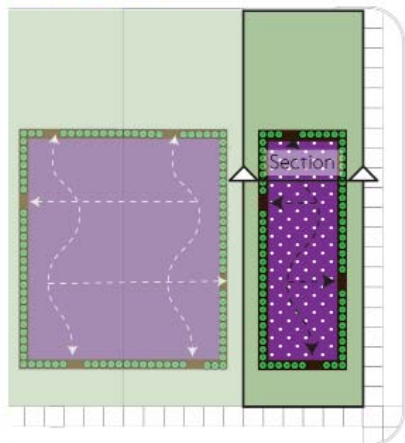


3 - Hedge Around Perennials

### Section



### Where Do I Grow?



The Mix 'N Match Meadow can be constructed on a single lot or multiple lots and is suitable for a corner property. The images below show examples of wildflowers included in the purple meadow option.



4 - Blazing Star



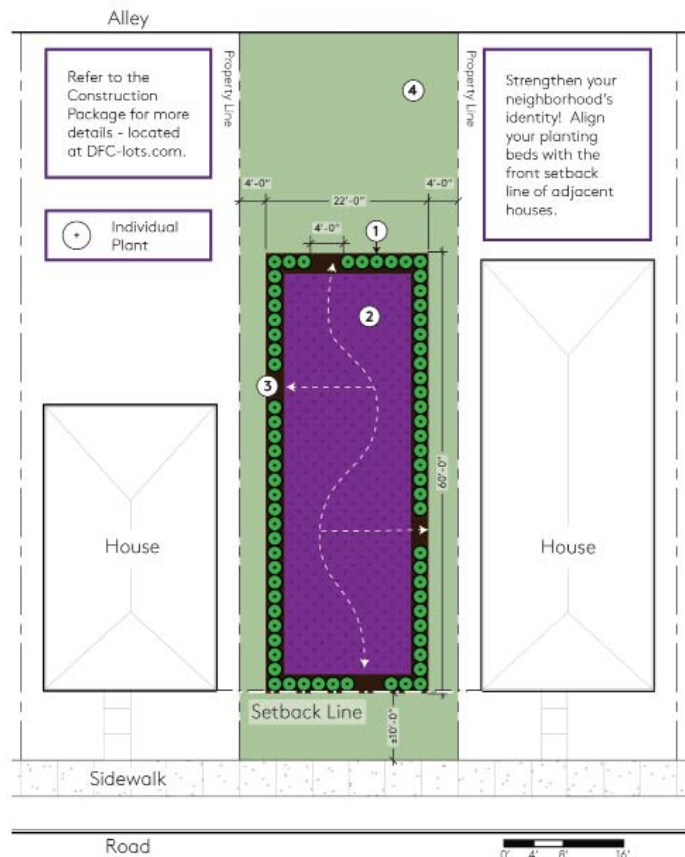
5 - Aster



6 - Purple Cone Flower

- Evergreen Hedge
- Mix 'N Match Meadow
- Mulch
- Grass or Optional Groundcover

## Mix 'N Match Meadow Lot Design



- 1 Hedge (Boxwood)
- 2 Mix 'N Match Meadow
- 3 Mulch
- 4 Grass or Optional Groundcover



## Planting Option 1: Full Sun to Part Sun



**Common Milkweed<sup>1</sup>**  
*Asclepias syriaca*\*



**Smooth Aster<sup>2</sup>**  
*Aster laevis*\*



**Rough Blazing Star<sup>3</sup>**  
*Liatris aspera*\*



**Bee Balm<sup>4</sup>**  
*Monarda fistulosa*\*



**New England Aster<sup>5</sup>**  
*Aster novae-angliae*\*



**Purple Coneflower<sup>6</sup>**  
*Echinacea purpurea*\*



**Little Bluestem<sup>7</sup>**  
*Schizachyrium scoparium*\*



**Green Gem Boxwood<sup>8</sup>**  
*Buxus 'Green Gem'*  
24" Height x 24" Width  
Quantity: 68 pots

### Purple Meadow

Mixing seven ounces of Purple Meadow seed mix with ten ounces of Annual Cover Crop seed mix is recommended for the Purple Meadow lot design.

The Purple Meadow is not a standard seed mix but can be assembled by Michigan Wildflower Farms.

**Common Milkweed**, *Asclepias syriaca* (5% of mix)

**Smooth Aster**, *Aster laevis* (15% of mix)

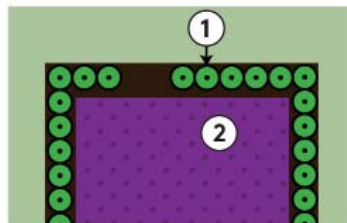
**New England Aster**, *Aster novae-angliae* (15% of mix)

**Purple Coneflower**, *Echinacea purpurea* (20% of mix)

**Rough Blazing Star**, *Liatris aspera* (10% of mix)

**Bergamot**, *Monarda fistulosa* (15% of mix)

**Little Bluestem**, *Schizachyrium scoparium* (20% of mix)



### Key

1

**Green Gem Boxwood**  
(Space approximately two feet apart.)

2

**Purple Meadow**  
(Seven ounces of Purple Meadow seed mix with ten ounces of Annual Cover Crop seed mix.)

### Plant Sizes



**Seeds:** All plants (except Boxwood) can be purchased in seed farm.



**Pots:** Boxwood can be purchased in one to five gallon pots. The size of pots can change based on availability.

## CITIZENS AS STEWARDS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

creation, management of exiting woodlands and small scale commercial tree growth. The “Turbo Till” lot design calls for importing over 80,000 earthworms to enrich soil with valuable nutrients; “Quiet Remediator” uses hydrangeas to measure the pH of the site’s soil over an extended time; Four Seasons includes four rain moats, each planted for one of the four seasons; “Mounds of Fun” creates three play mounds by using excess soil fill from designs requiring excavation, such as the “Snowmelter”, a depression designed to accommodate plowed snow during the winter months.

The Field Guide’s website ([www.DFC-Lots.com](http://www.DFC-Lots.com)) plays an important role to the program’s success; it hosts all the lot design resources and features other projects completed in Detroit and a few outside the city, thus creating a platform for shared learning in which the Field Guide functions in collaboration, not opposition to prior efforts in Detroit.

The DFC Implementation Office is currently focusing on implementation of the Field Guide. Says Kelly, “[We are] working with a range of partners and organizations to broadcast the availability of the Field Guide and to provide technical assistance where it does not duplicate the efforts or services of many of the other established and experienced organizations working in Detroit to advance the agenda of land stewardship.” The DFC Implementation Office recently awarded \$60,000 in minigrants shared by 15 recipients across Detroit to fund installation of lot designs.

“Land in Detroit is a vehicle for strengthening relationships between neighbors, residents, and business owners,” says Kelly. “It is something that we can only approach collaboratively.” ■

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Want to get involved? MiASLA is always looking for chapter members to participate at a greater level. Please feel free to reach out to the Executive Committee or staff members: [manager@michiganasla.org](mailto:manager@michiganasla.org)

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