Advocacy:

Georgia Alternative, Sustainable Transportation Act (GASTA)

Please allow me to introduce you to a recently-drafted bill called the Georgia Alternative, Sustainable Transportation Act (GASTA). In Spanish, “gasta” means to spend. Over the last century, the USA has done a great deal of “gasta,” when it comes to road building. Now is the time to “gasta sabiamente,” meaning spend wisely.

Two Billion Cars is the title of an excellent book I finished reading over the holidays. Published in 2009 by the Oxford University Press and ...

ASLA GA Advocacy Update

2011-2012 promise to be an active year for promoting the Landscape Architecture profession. As the Advocacy Chairperson for our chapter, my goal is to keep our members aware of issues affecting our profession as well as promoting the practice of Landscape Architecture throughout the state. Below is an update on a range of issues I am following and/or addressing:

National ASLA Advocacy Program

Many of you remember 2011’s National Advocacy Day for Landscape Architects.

Charity Event:

2012 Annual Charity Golf Tournament

It is time. The winter (let’s be honest, it was just an extension of the fall) has released it’s icy grip (more like a cool clutch) and spring is in the air (you can tell because of the yellow “smoke” that is blowing around the Atlanta Metro Area). This is the time of year when we all participate in our annual charity golf tournament. So dust off those clubs, hit a few buckets of balls on the practice range, replace the lost spikes on your golf shoes and lets get this party started. Oh, and don’t forget to sharpen those math scores, some of us are going to need it.

Industry Partners:

Building Momentum

The Executive Committee is honored to recognize our Annual Industry Partners for 2012. With their financial support the Chapter remains sustainable and offers continuing education events for professional growth to our members. Without our Industry Partners, all of the events, socials, and programming that we enjoy throughout the calendar year would simply not be possible. Although it sometimes seems like a small gesture, be sure and say a sincere “Thanks” the next time your paths cross. Many of our Industry Partners will be at the next
ranks near the top in national rankings of working family household income percentage devoted to transportation, at 32%. Rising oil prices will only make these figures grow. In order to break oil's monopolistic grip on our transportation systems, we need alternatives. We need alternative propulsion systems, fuels and alternatives modes of travel.

Rising transportation costs and environmental awareness are perhaps beginning to impact our American lifestyle in a big way. Here in the USA, the housing industry remains in crisis.

Nationwide research reveals that the decline of housing values 12 miles away from the central business district are 4% higher than those within 2 miles away (Pittsburgh BusinessTimes, 2008). A growing number of homeowners and renters prefer mixed-use, walkable and transit oriented developments. These choices reduce the importance of auto-oriented suburban living, and reduce carbon footprints. The millennial generations are easily drawn to walkable neighborhoods, and even baby boomers are increasingly attracted to such developments. For many, the American dream of large lot single-family home has become an economic and environmental nightmare.

This dynamic should also factor into the equation used to plan transportation projects. Pedestrian-scaled, walkable communities are well-suited to the use of low-speed, sustainable transportation.

Baby boomers may remember a time when students could safely walk or ride bikes to school. Today, we mostly live in subdivisions designed during an era of cheap oil and modest transportation costs. They are highly automobile-dependent, lacking healthy transportation options. In many cases, there actually are ways to mitigate that modern malady.

As some of you may know, Georgia is a global leader in production of low speed electric vehicles (golf cars, PTV’s and LSV’s). Should the State of Georgia not also be leaders in the utilization of these vehicles, which are affordable, environmentally-benign, and can reduce oil prices and our dependence on foreign oil? Couple these vehicles with other sustainable forms of transportation, such as bicycles and transit, and Georgia could become a global leader in sustainable transportation.

If successful state-wide, the upcoming, July transportation sales tax votes are expected to raise over $15 billion in revenue for transportation projects. GASTA is not a substitute for those projects, but does call for feasibility studies and cost-benefit analysis to be performed on select, identified, alternative transportation strategies and corridors. In other words, let’s not tax ourselves to the tune of $15B without looking at some alternatives that would grow jobs for Georgia, likely cost less, lead to healthier lifestyles, reduce our exposure to oil price volatility, and reduce our collective carbon footprint.

Imagine, for instance, a greenway running along a creek-side green space corridor, linking multiple subdivisions to a school. Like Peachtree City, Georgia, high school students and fitness enthusiasts could utilize the Greenway for jogging, biking, golf car transportation or recreation. Owners of low speed electric vehicles could shorten their travel distances and save transportation dollars. The route might even enable the school system to reduce expenditures on school busing.

Imagine repurposing underutilized, urban roads into “green roads,” with dedicated facilities for sustainable transport. In some cases, all that is needed is a municipal ordinance permitting the use of the vehicles, along with slight reductions in speed limits. Imagine the traffic calming effect of such a road diet. Imagine the reduced demand for parking, as the vehicles are significantly smaller than typical internal combustion vehicles.

There are likely scores of such opportunities across the state. Sustainable transportation is natural fit...
for urban areas and college campuses, to relieve traffic congestion, air pollution and parking space. Many such areas already have a network of low speed roads, needing only dedicated parking facilities to encourage their proliferation. Recharging facilities for EV’s would be a nice bonus, to relieve “range anxiety. Multi-modal, sustainable transportation can also boost transit ridership very cost-effectively, if planned correctly.

Changes of this magnitude won’t happen in Georgia without solid grassroots support. A good first step is a feasibility and cost/benefit study.

Bob Munger, AIA, CCM, LEED AP
President, Augusta Greenway Alliance, Inc.
www.augustagreenway.org

Bob Munger is a Georgia-licensed architect, LEED-accredited professional and certified construction manager. He is founder of the Augusta Greenway Alliance and Co-chair of the Augusta Branch, Georgia Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The Augusta Greenway Alliance is author of GASTA, and also advocates an alternative transportation corridor connecting Downtown Augusta to the Medical District and Paine College.

ASLA GA Advocacy Update
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ASLA is building off the success of this nationwide event by identifying quarterly themes for which each chapter is to promote. Upcoming themes include:

• Q1 2012 Green Infrastructure
• Q2 2012 Public Health (NLAM)
• Q3 2012 Historic Preservation
• Q4 2012 Re-Discovering Your Landscapes

ASLA GA Advocacy Program
In response to ASLA National’s challenge to local chapters, members of our Executive Committee are working to develop the most effective strategy for promoting Landscape Architecture and the themes listed above. We want to reach a larger audience especially those who are policy and decision makers throughout the state. By the end of the first quarter, our goal is to have a system in place to implement this program.

NPDES and Stormwater Management Issues
We continue to monitor this issue and build the legal defense fund should resistance arise. We maintain our opposition of any agency’s policy unwilling to allow Landscape Architects to stamp Erosion and Sediment Control drawings.

Illegal Stamping of Drawings
Periodically, we hear of landscape designers or installers having Civil Engineers stamp drawings for irrigation and landscape plans. This is illegal and unethical and we are interacting with other professional organizations to encourage their members to have plans drawn, designed, and stamped by Landscape Architects when it is appropriate.

HALS Update
The Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS), which is overseen by the National Park Service, has a very active history in Georgia. Since 2002, collaborative efforts from Landscape Architects, the NPS, Georgia SHPO, and the Cherokee Garden Library, have led to the documentation of over 140 historic designed landscapes. This is a grassroots effort with survey information housed at the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta His-
tory Center. Efforts are underway to ultimately begin placing the collected survey information into a HALS/Library of Congress format.

National Legislation
National legislation continues to be a hot button issue for Landscape Architects. Currently, the greatest threat/change to our practice is the removal or reconfiguration of the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program. Attempts to repeal the TE program have failed however it is planned to be reallocated in the new proposed transportation bill. Other programs such as TIGER or Complete Streets policies continue to gain momentum nationally, which is a boon for our profession.

Final Thoughts
In this difficult economic climate, it can be challenging to the think long-term about your personal job prospects much less our profession. However, I would continue to encourage you to make yourself visible with local lawmakers, public planning officials, state officials, developers, architects, civil engineers, etc. We must continue to pound the pavement and promote what we do as a profession. This will yield long-term benefits to you personally and to the profession.

Should you have any questions or issues you would like to bring to my attention, please email me at adkohr@gmail.com.

Andrew Kohr, PLA, ASLA

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2012 Annual Charity Golf Tournament
from p.1...

2012 ASLA-GA Golf Tournament
Monday, April 9, 2012, 12:00PM
River Pines Golf Club
4775 Old Alabama Road
Johns Creek, GA 30022
770.442.5960

Please join your fellow peers for a little healthy competition as we raise funds towards the Chapter’s Endowment for a Landscape Architecture Undergraduate Scholarship at the College. The Chapter has allocated all net proceeds from this tournament towards our endowment.

Tournament format will be a four player scramble. Prizes for winning foursome, runner-up foursome, longest drive, and closest to the pin. Mulligans and raffle tickets will be for sale at the registration table. Please arrange your own lunch prior to arriving at the course. No boxed lunch will be provided in lieu of dinner after the event.

Early Bird Registration Deadline: March 30, 2012
Directions:
Driving north on GA400 - Take Exit 7A, Holcomb Bridge Road. Merge onto Holcomb Bridge Road heading East at top of ramp. Make LEFT onto Old Alabama Road. Continue straight on Old Alabama Road passing Haynes Bridge Road and Jones Bridge Road. The River Pines Golf Club entrance is on the RIGHT just after passing the Country Club of the South. Please proceed to bag drop and registration.

Questions?
Please contact Charles Sears @ c.sears@rhf.net or 770.394.8313 ext. 27 and check out our new webpage for more details.

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Building Momentum
from p.1...

Atlanta Social coming up in just a few days at Twain’s (See our new website for more details). We are honored to have the following Industry Partners for 2012.

Belgard Hardscapes as our premium Gold Industry Partner for 2012. Pavestone once again joined ASLA GA as our Silver Industry Partner. We are happy to welcome back SESCO Lighting as a Bronze level Partner. This year we welcome several new Industry Partners at the Bronze level; ASD/Landscape Forms, John Deere Landscape, Visionscapes Landscape, and Ruppert Landscapes.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to our Industry Partners. Please make sure you show your appreciation whenever possible.

Scott Jones, President GA|ASLA
Merrill Lynch and INVESCO host Atlanta Section for an Industry Update

Merrill Lynch and INVESCO hosted the Atlanta Section on Thursday, January 26th to mingle and hear Mr. W. Lindsay Davidson, Managing Director, INVESCO Global Strategies, speak on ‘A 3-D View of the Markets: an Update on the U.S. Commercial Real Estate Markets”. Mr. Charles A. Smith, CSNA, Financial Advisor, HMS Group, Merrill Lynch Global Wealth and Investment Management put together a great event for the Section. Guests enjoyed a lovely view of the Atlanta skyline from the 18th floor of the INVESCO Building on Peachtree Street. Merrill Lynch and INVESCO hosts mingled with Atlanta Section ASLA members and guests before sharing a gourmet dinner.
Laying the groundwork for greener building.

Belgard Environmental is committed to helping you bring sustainable solutions to life with the largest collection of permeable hardscapes in the industry. Our dedication to quality, innovation, and creativity is second-to-none. Simply put, when you’re ready to lay the groundwork for project success, Belgard Environmental is the natural choice.

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THE 2ND ANNUAL

TWAIN'S SOCIAL

(BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ATLANTA SECTION ASLA-GA)

MARCH 22nd, 2012

@

TWAIN'S

Billiards and Tap

(EST. 1996)

WHERE:

TWAIN'S BILLIARDS & TAP

211 East Trinity Place, Decatur

WHEN:

THURSDAY, MARCH 22nd

6:30PM - 9:00PM

WHY????????

1 FREE PINT PER PERSON*

(Not to mention free off-street parking, billiards, darts, shuffleboard, and tasty appetizers)

*Never refuse doing a good deed unless it will come as great harm to you or to others and never, ever, refuse a drink.

MARK TWAIN

PLEASE RSVP TO RESERVE

YOUR TASTY ADULT BEVERAGE:

(joined in moderation, of course)

jonipyoung@gmail.com

*Mr. Twain says any guest under 21 may enjoy a tasty pint of Coca-Cola Classic
Yeah pollen!

mar
3.22.12 2nd annual Twain’s Social, from 6:30-9:00 p.m. with Atlanta Section ASLA GA and SEGD - Society of Environmental Graphic Design.

 apr
4.09.12 GA|ASLA Charity Golf Tournament. Go on-line to gaasla.org for more information
4.18.12 GA|ASLA Executive Committee monthly conference call.
4.20.12 GA|ASLA Executive Committee Face to Face Meeting
4.26.12 Frederick Law Olmstead’s Birthday. Happy Birthday FLO
4.26.12 ASLA National PR Day
4.28.12 FLO Luncheon and Tour

may
5.16.12 GA|ASLA Executive Committee monthly conference call.