

Our Vision for 2040

All landscape architecture projects will simultaneously:

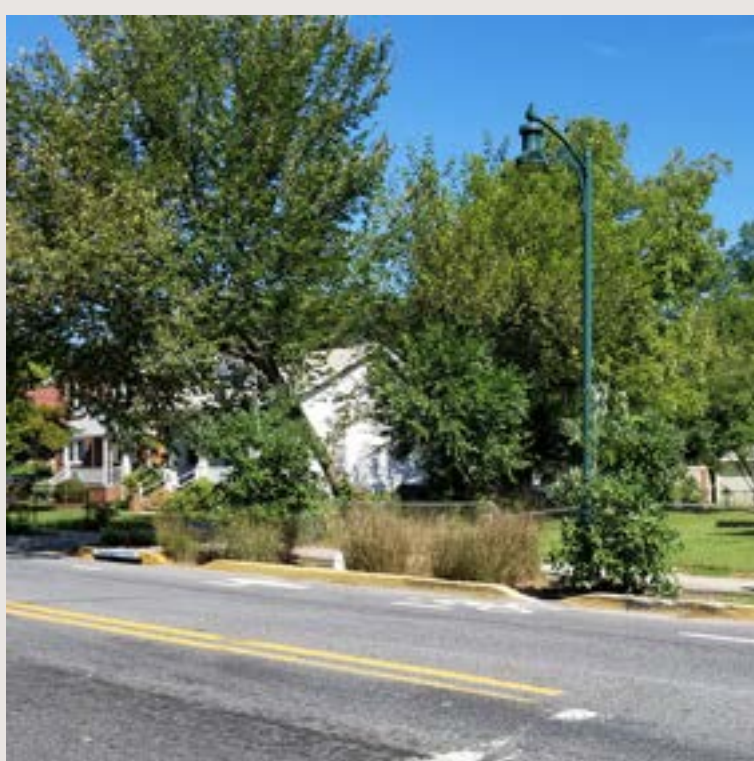
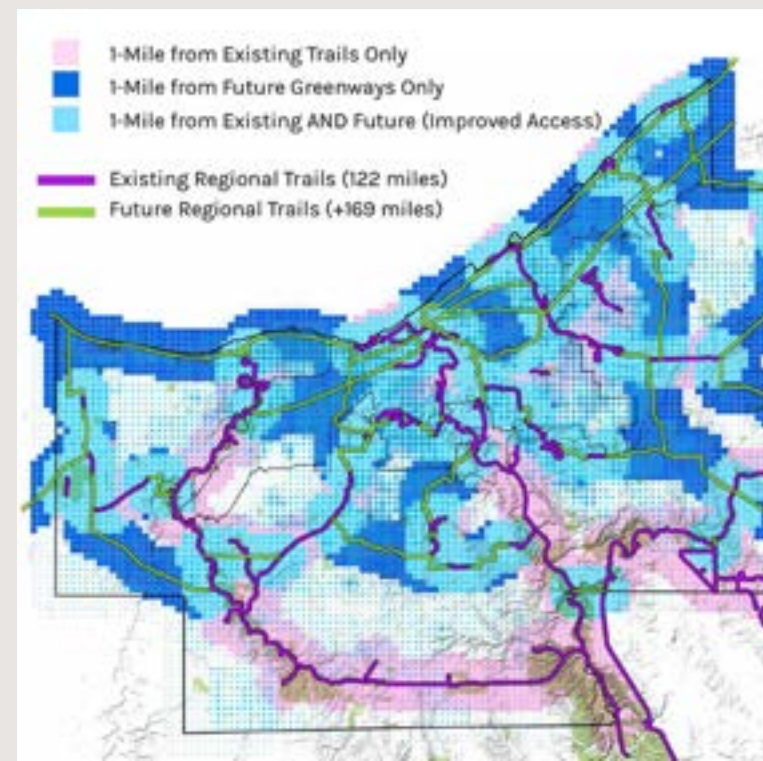
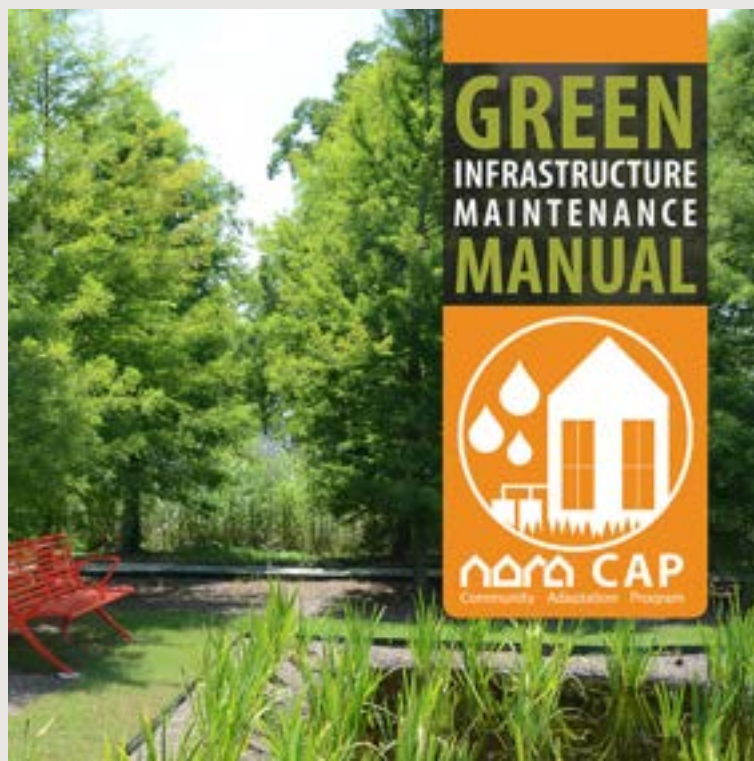
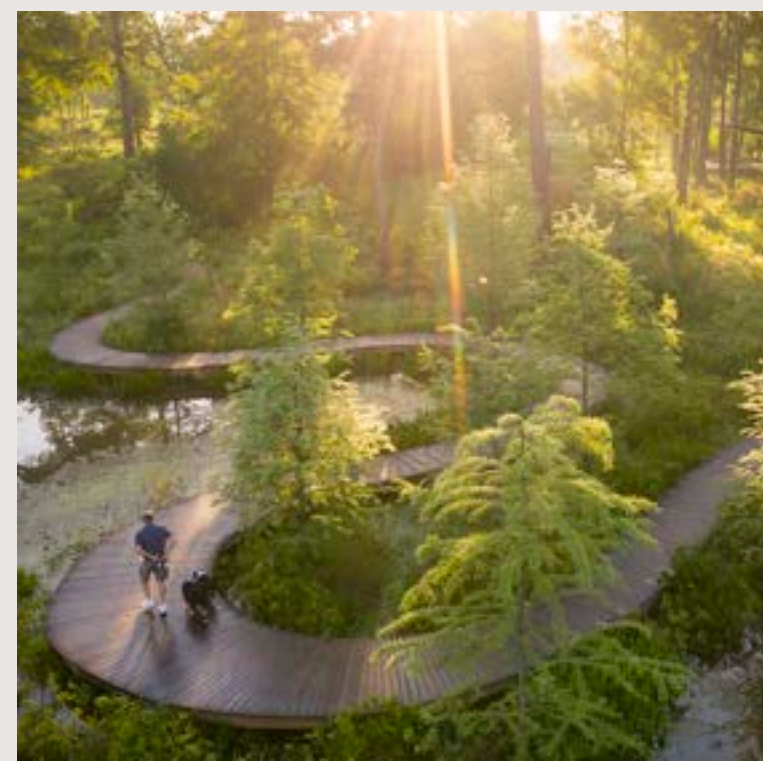
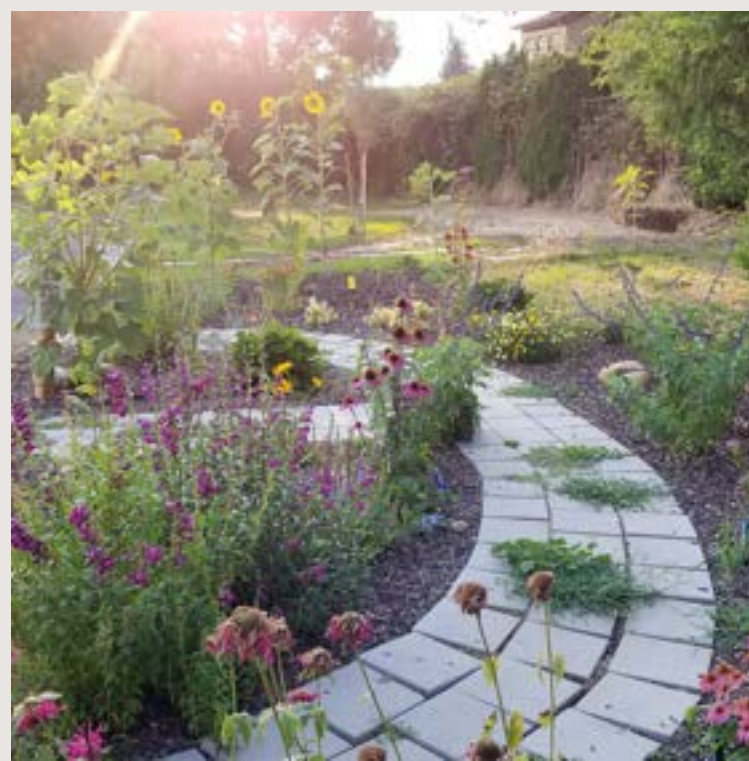
- Achieve zero embodied and operational emissions and increase carbon sequestration
- Provide significant economic benefits in the form of measurable ecosystem services, health co-benefits, sequestration, and green jobs
- Address climate injustices, empower communities, and increase equitable distribution of climate investments
- Restore ecosystems and increase and protect biodiversity

To achieve this vision, ASLA's Climate Action Plan Task Force and Advisory Group have developed a comprehensive Plan and Field Guide for Members.

Explore 30 climate action case studies.

[Visit the ASLA Climate Action Plan Exhibition](#)

ASLA has suspended open public access to the exhibition as our staff continue to work from home. [Learn more.](#)



Landscapes	Read the Plan	Field Guide for Members	Get Involved
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ASLA 2010 Professional Honor Award in General Design, Gary Comer Youth Center Roof Garden, Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects/John Ronan Architects/Scott Shigley.

AGRICULTURE

Gary Comer Youth Center Roof Garden

Chicago, Illinois | [Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects](#)

The [Gary Comer Youth Center](#) is located in Grand Crossing on Chicago’s South Side, a neighborhood with little access to safe outdoor environments or fresh produce. On the roof of the center, [Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects](#) designed an 8,160-square-foot, 24-inch-deep educational garden that produces 1,000 pounds of organic fruit and vegetables each year and teaches children how to grow their own healthy food. Organic produce grown on the roof is also served to 175 students each day in the youth center’s café. In addition to its educational and civic benefits, the roof garden absorbs stormwater, reduces the urban heat island effect, and lowers energy costs for the youth center.

Background:

Located in Chicago's Grand Crossing neighborhood, a predominantly African American community, the Gary Comer Youth Center offers a safe, welcoming after-school space. Its 8,160-square-foot green roof is a model for how to transform a traditionally underused rooftop into a productive space for urban agriculture.

Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects worked closely with the architect and donor to develop a green roof where organic fruits, vegetables, and flowers could be grown. The firm suggested the center employ a full-time garden manager to enhance educational programs and

manage maintenance. The result is a garden used in creative ways to educate the community about healthy foods, horticulture, and the environment.

The green roof can withstand enthusiastic children digging for potatoes and carrots with garden tools. Soils 18 to 24 inches deep allow gardeners to grow cabbage, sunflowers, carrots, lettuces, and strawberries.

The green roof absorbs stormwater rather than diverting it to combined sewer systems, which can overflow and flood in heavy storms.

In the summer, the plants create a cooler microclimate that makes the roof a haven. The landscape architect’s minimal use of concrete and other heat-conducting building materials helps keep temperatures down. Given the space is surrounded by classrooms, in winter it’s also insulated from the wind and therefore warmer than street-level temperatures.

Located on the second floor over the center's gymnasium, the garden is surrounded by a circulation corridor and classrooms on the third floor. Floor-to-ceiling windows transform the garden into a highly visible space as students move from one classroom to another.

Resources:

- [Rooftop Haven for Urban Agriculture](#), 2010 ASLA Professional Awards
- [Rooftop Haven for Urban Agriculture](#), ASLA, Designing Our Future: Sustainable Landscapes
- [Gary Comer Youth Center](#), Hoerr Schaudt
- [The 312: Watering the food desert: Still work to do, but we're close](#), *Chicago Sun-Times*, 2018
- [Gary Comer Youth Center-Rooftop Haven for Urban Agriculture](#), South Chicago, Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture, 2016

Demonstrates these solutions:

- Maximize use of green (vegetated) roofs for stormwater capture and air cooling/cleaning benefits.
- Proactively address equitable access to transportation options, affordable housing, jobs, recreation, and open space.
- Address food deserts and equitable access to healthy food in community and transportation planning and zoning.
- Include opportunities for urban and suburban agriculture in community planning.



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