



# design matters

A VISUAL GUIDE INTO THE LIFE OF **EDSA**


**\_ MOVE THIS WAY**  
HEALTHY LIVING DEVELOPMENT

**\_ BETWEEN THE LINES**  
EXPLORING THE DESIGN CHARRETTE

**\_ TOGETHER WE SEE**  
STEWARDS OF CREATIVITY

**\_ HOSPITALITY JOURNEY**  
THE ROAD TO BUILDING VALUE





**TRUE BRILLIANCE  
DOESN'T RESULT FROM  
ONE TRANSCENDENT  
EVENT, BUT RATHER THE  
COLLABORATION OF AN  
INCREDIBLE GROUP OF  
INDIVIDUALS WORKING  
IN TANDEM.**

design  
**matters**  
A VISUAL GUIDE INTO THE LIFE OF EDSA





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letter from the president

# economies of courage

**I**t is said the only constant in life is change. Looking at the world today, that adage seems profoundly true. Across the globe, we are witnessing numerous evolutions – in politics, the environment, social perspectives, international awareness, education, and contemporary society as a whole. Each of these changes contributes to the foundations of our conversations and impacts our popular culture. Through exposure to these fundamentals, we all have an expanded knowledge that certainly influences the imprint each of us leaves on the world around us.

I find this is particularly relevant to the work we do every day as landscape architects engaged in planning and design assignments around the globe. Our work has the ability to create cultural, environmental, and economic connections that can leave an indelible impression on the land and people for generations to come. Central to our mission is the need to discover and understand other people's imprints.

As problem solvers working in the complex global dynamics of today, it would be easy to respond only with ideas that have been tested; ones that we are comfortable with, and that seem low risk. However, the earth's future literally depends on our ability to resist the urge to settle in during 'good times' and instead have the courage to look forward towards new opportunities that exist beyond the horizons of our comfort zones. This requires being aware of, and staying open to, the changing perspectives of the global community.

We must not sequester ourselves within our own ideas and expertise, but instead let the world inform some of our decisions. Part of accomplishing things that benefit everyone is actively pursuing compromise and cooperation. Not compromise of our principles, or ethical boundaries, but in our willingness to listen to all sides objectively, and harness our collective innovation to devise acceptable solutions.

To move forward positively, we must each do our part within our fields of work and in our communities. Individuals may make imprints, but communities make impact. We must continue to act collectively and collaboratively – integrating diverse perspectives, bringing in ideas from outside of our comfortable sphere, and implementing goals and concepts that stretch us. The innovation that could emerge is more than worth the discomfort of change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas C. Smith'.

Douglas C. Smith, PLA, ASLA  
President & Principal





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Walking out your door and leaving your car at home on a more frequent basis is great for your wallet, health, and quality of life. Across the globe, communities are embracing this trifecta – improving pedestrian environments as a strategy for revitalizing commerce, increasing walkability, enhancing resident wellness, and positively impacting the environment.

“A healthy community matters,” says Douglas Smith, EDSA President and Principal. “People are more health conscious and in turn, health awareness is influencing smart development. By integrating a series of wellness standards into a project’s design, we can contribute to the equation of ‘place’ in a more meaningful and holistic way.” Regardless of scale, scope, and size – whether a large master planned community or a small mixed-use urban parcel – the goal is the same, design projects that help people remain healthy, live longer, and connect with others.

“Healthy design must address the ‘why’ with a series of experiences formulated around it,” shares Betsy Suiter, EDSA Vice President. “Programming is key in getting people to gather and catalyze a space.” This may include sculpture gardens for reflection and pause, plazas with elongated and shallow steps, experiential nodes, and large greenways that support health and social wellness. Additionally, Suiter emphasizes walkability as an essential layer in tapping into the natural resources and authenticity of a site. “Physically being present in an outdoor space affords visitors the opportunity to connect with the ecosystem, culture, and environmental assets of an area – an outward look inward. We must consider the intensity and volume of people – understanding how they will physically flow from one place to another in a very intuitive way. In the end, the user experience, whether alone or in a large group, must impact every aspect of design.”

“As designers and planners, we want to make it easier for individuals to lead healthier lifestyles and that means creating outdoor spaces that are functional, accessible, inviting, and engaging. It’s about incorporating subtleties within a design framework that encourage people to not only interact with their inner fitness guru, but with each other,” shares Smith. Actively planning developments that get people moving towards physical and social well-being, albeit sometimes surreptitiously, requires specific site planning strategies. Design schemes that address street widths, lighting, trail networks, block sizes, neighborhood scale, and multi-generational recreation areas help reclaim walkable characteristics and create greater access, safety, and climatic comfort for pedestrians.

Robert Dugan, EDSA Principal agrees, “Establishing a cohesive design palette that extends throughout all visual elements such as street trees, curb extensions, mass transit pullouts, well-defined crosswalks, and pedestrian signals, provides for improved circulation and allows the user to fully experience a space in the best possible way.” Beyond that, land use planning must include a series of destinations to which residents want or need to travel to. These ¼-mile or 5-minute walks from housing or work should serve as connectors to retail, recreation, and entertainment pockets with sidewalks and street buffers that add pedestrian comfort. “By focusing on the safety and functionality of pedestrians over automobiles, neighborhoods will naturally become more walkable – incorporating beautiful strolling pathways, jogging trails with visual interest, and easily accessible bikeways with alcoves for people to explore.”

As designers and planners, we want to make it easier for individuals to lead healthier lifestyles and that means creating outdoor spaces that are functional, accessible, inviting, and engaging.

Doug Smith, President & Principal

“In La Chorrera, Panama, the design for a healthier lifestyle and increased mobility is being used as a sales tool,” says Dugan. EDSA is master planning the 3,700-acre Costa Verde development, one of the largest privately funded community development projects in Panama with housing, commercial areas, a town center, schools, medical facilities, sports venues, and park spaces, as well as regional transportation hubs. The site’s forested hills, retired fields, streams, and coastal mangroves are being incorporated into an open-space network that includes health-conscious amenities connected by a network buffered from urban expansion.

There is a growing mobility movement in Panama and the trails and biking paths at Costa Verde will create an active and enjoyable fitness component. “No other community in Panama can claim what Costa Verde has – thousands of meters of trail that traverses through the forest and grazing pastures,” Dugan emphasizes. The 5K-trail system has rest stops, solar lighting, and massive tropical trees, as well as various grades including a more adventurous portion featuring a hill climb. The design also adds bike lanes and right-of-ways for more pronounced pedestrian paths.

At nearby Panama Pacifico, a mixed-use real estate development on the western bank of the Panama Canal, EDSA designers are also seeking to encourage residents to become more active. “People who live and work in Panama credit a more enjoyable lifestyle with having little or no commute,” shares Dugan. “Traffic in the area is as bad as it is in Miami on a good day. So, people want to get out of their automobiles and walk.” Panama Pacifico will host some 2,000 residential units, offices, hotels, and retail with all elements located near the heart of the development. “The town center will have mid-level buildings with residential and offices on the upper floors and commercial offerings on the bottom with rain sheltered, shaded connections,” says Dugan. “A central plaza will be the core of the development, with numerous trees, shading structures, and a ‘Plaza of Lights.’ We want to attract people to the space with a sense of community and opportunities for physical activity.”

COSTA VERDE - LA CHORRERA, PANAMA

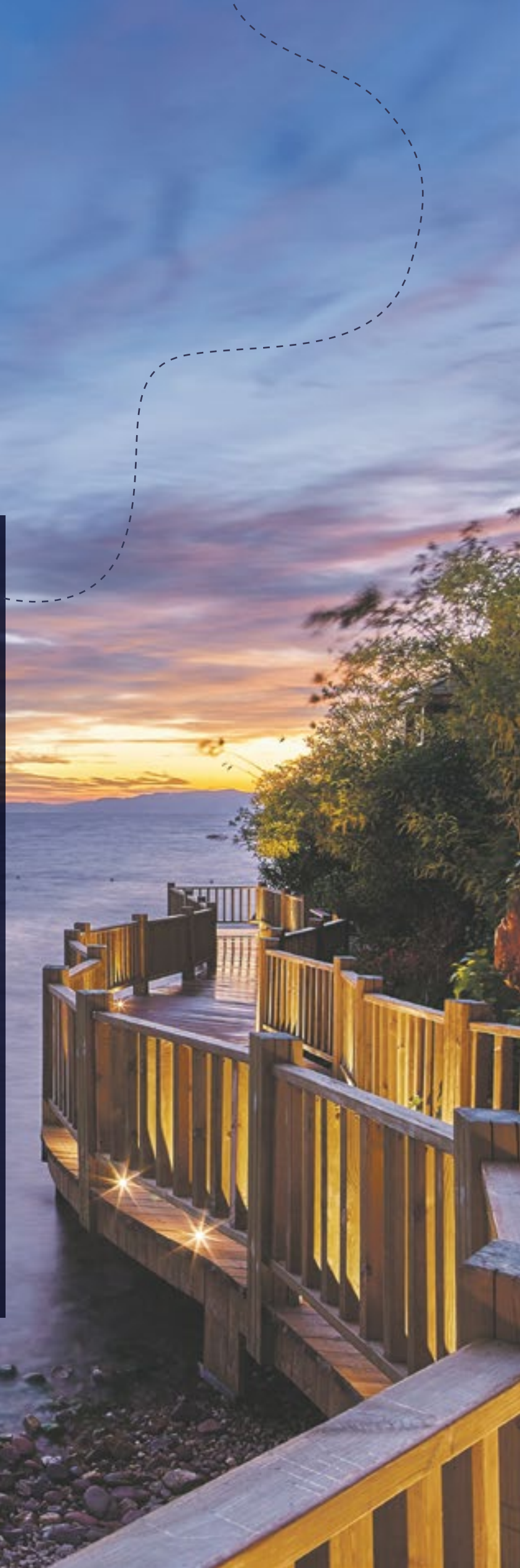




Many studies suggest that this kind of mixed-use development can increase physical activity by allowing residents to make walking part of their daily routines, since shops and services are located nearby. “Panamanians are very social and they like group activities so we designed a lot of open spaces, including a stage area for activities such as children’s parties, weddings, and reunions,” Dugan continues. “Such interaction is a key component of new developments today. We try to provide strong connectivity through design – with open lawns, architectural pauses, and areas for different types of activities – creating unprompted social interaction.”

The drive to design more healthy environments isn’t just a designer’s whim. It’s backed by scientific data. Medical researchers are discovering ‘hidden’ benefits from physical activity, especially when that activity is set into regular routines. Spending more time moving throughout the day is more beneficial to our health than previously thought. One study, published in the U.S. National Library of Medicine, found that walking every day helps manage the symptoms of Type II diabetes by decreasing blood glucose levels, amongst other benefits.

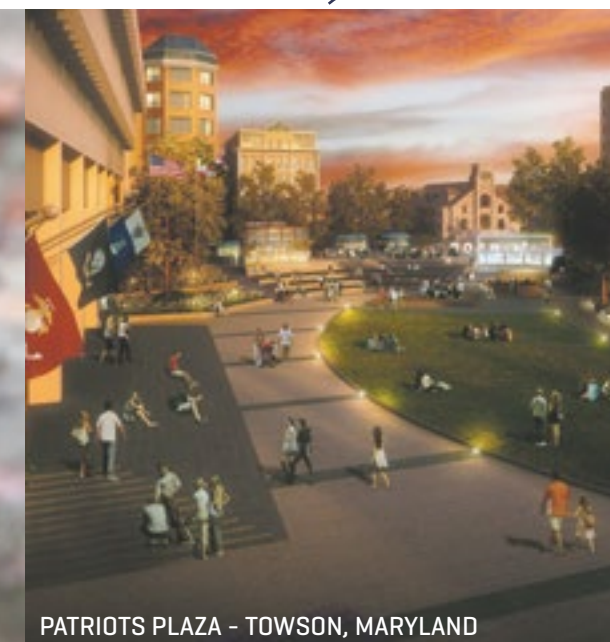
“The proof is there,” says Smith. “Designers now have the opportunity and the responsibility to change the world in ways that we hadn’t thought of before – all the more reason to incorporate opportunities for more active mobility in a project’s design – a sharp departure from previous years.” Decades ago, the explosion of suburban development made the car a requirement for nearly everything and walkability literally took a back seat. “Now, that’s changed, with neo-urbanism gaining greater traction and land consumption being replaced with more approachable, usable green space. Making a complete 180, today’s designers are once again referencing Pre-World War II patterns and forms – placing emphasis on holistic offerings with walkability and human-scale center stage.”



HILTON YUXI FUXIAN LAKE - YUXI, CHINA



POMPANO BEACH REVITALIZATION -  
POMPANO BEACH, FLORIDA



PATRIOTS PLAZA - TOWSON, MARYLAND



FAIRMONT MAYAKOBA - RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO



FOUR SEASONS RESORT ORLANDO AT WALT DISNEY  
WORLD RESORT - ORLANDO, FLORIDA

With more people utilizing alternative, active-lifestyle transportation methods, bike share programs have become an important amenity in many developments. “We’re working on the five-star Wyndham Grand Resort in Barbados, which is on the site of historic Sam Lord’s Castle, a spot renowned for pirates in the 19th century,” says Smith. “We’re designing a bicycle shop for the resort, where guests can buy a bicycle, rent one, or even have their own repaired. We’re sizing all the pathways around the resort for safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic and placing bike-parking stations in several nodes for greater access to many resort amenities like the swimming pool.”

**We try to provide strong connectivity through design, with open lawns, architectural pauses, and areas for different types of activities – creating unprompted social interaction.**

Robert Dugan, Principal





SAVANNAH HISTORIC STREETSCAPES -  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The public sector is also getting on the increased mobility and social interaction train. In Delray Beach, Florida, EDSA is overseeing a \$3 million project that will create a 12-foot-wide promenade with gateway portals on the west side of the dunes to enable more interaction and human-scaled movement. Greater usability enhancements include bike-sharing racks, water fountains with refillable water bottle stations, surfboard and paddleboard racks. “We are rebuilding a mile and a half of the pedestrian zone and want to give people areas for activity,” says Dugan. “Municipalities are attempting to motivate people to venture from their living room couches by offering more amenities, close by – so residents don’t have to drive.”

“Not only that, but designers are also recognizing the need for human connectivity and are implementing ways to engage people in the social aspects of the community,” explains Suiter. “We are integrating this concept into our master plans by setting aside large greenways and public spaces where individuals can stop and enjoy the view or pull-off a walking trail to relax and mingle. Socializing with others is almost as important as physical activity because human connectivity contributes to positive mental health.”

“We call it orchestrating spontaneous collisions,” jokes Smith. “Through the physical plan and the relationship of amenities, we are creating ‘spur-of-the-moment’ intersections where people bump into each other. It might be where they go to pick up the mail, on a walking or hiking trail, or at the area restaurant. We’re setting the stage for things to happen.”

Throughout the world, the impresarios at EDSA are creating communities that not only promote a healthier lifestyle but also encourage social interaction. Whether they’re incorporating differing land uses into a development, designing pedestrian-scaled street and greenspace networks, providing active-transportation infrastructure, or multigenerational leisure spaces, today’s designers are planning with holistic health in mind. The days of an isolation or an automobile-centric living has given way to a new trend – active lifestyles that happen naturally, effortlessly, often without residents and guests even noticing them – yet surely experiencing their benefits.



DELRAY BEACH BEACH REVITALIZATION -  
DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA

Physically being present in an outdoor space affords visitors the opportunity to connect with the ecosystem, culture, and environmental assets of an area – an outward look inward.

Betsy Suiter, Vice President



RUYI ISLAND - HAIKOU, CHINA



# Timeless Design

**Places are places  
because they have an  
identity and sensibility  
that is defined by  
users’ attitudes and  
experiences.**

**Dave Armbruster, Retired Principal & Chairman**

A 1965 Mustang, an Eames chair, the chignon, the Golden Gate Bridge, Coca-Cola, a yellow #2 pencil, aviator sunglasses – timeless design has staying power. Rather than follow trends, timeless design is set within a sensible balance of function and aesthetics.

The same holds true for landscape architecture, in which timeless design enriches lives and leaves impressions that inspire generations. Rooted in serving the needs of people, legacy projects are those that have proven – over time – to be adaptable, usable, and possess a strong sense of belonging to the environment and communities in which they are located and serve.

According to David Armbruster, Retired EDSA Principal & Chairman, “Places are places because they have an identity and a sensibility that is defined by users’ attitudes and experiences. While size, style, materials, and details change, our philosophy towards design has not changed much since Ed Stone started EDSA nearly 60 years ago. When a project outwardly respects its cultural, historical, geographical, environmental, social, and economic context – a unique, appropriate, and timeless design results.”

Consider one of EDSA’s early projects – the Bal Harbour Shoppes in Florida. Opened in 1965 on what had previously been the site of a World War II Army barracks, the destination retail environment challenged commercial trends of the time. While development of enclosed malls was booming across the US, EDSA’s design sought inspiration from nature and pedestrian usage patterns to create a pleasant, open-air lifestyle experience that showcased Florida’s climate and brought the entire project within human scale. Armbruster explains, “Distinctiveness began with arrangement of the buildings – allowing for a landscaped oasis throughout and within the entire site and structures.”



## Bal Harbour Shoppes Bal Harbour, Florida

The internationally-renowned, open-air shopping destination has operated at 100% occupancy for several decades.

Completed: 1965



Foliage and fountains, rather than air-conditioning, cool and aerate the open corridors while black olive and sour orange trees, seagrapes, and laurel shrubs were selected for their fragrant appeal and ability to withstand the wind and salt spray of South Florida. Uncommon at the time, the use of trees, in the vast but necessary parking areas, effectively softened the extensive lots and surrounding thoroughfares providing pleasing views for outward-facing retailers and restaurants, as well as pedestrians exiting or entering the areas.

“Proper organization never goes out of style,” says Armbruster. A strong hierarchy, harmony, and flow always provides for a solid design. Alterations to the Bal Harbour Shoppes have naturally been implemented since its opening, but as one walks through its open corridors you are amazed at how similar everything has remained. Each change has served to enhance and expertly maximize the original vision and experience.” Whether installing glass elevators doors to capitalize on garden views, or removing stairwells to provide more open space for events and exhibits, every modification has undeniably served to ensure continued success for the lifestyle destination – fortifying patrons linger longer and spend more time exploring and enjoying the lush ambiance.

“Timeless design is about making choices that are balanced, logical, and fit within the context of a site,” shares Richard Centolella, a Principal at EDSA. “While trendy can be cool for a time, we need to know what happens in a space, how people behave, how they live, what they like – it all contributes to a design aesthetic that is meaningful and lasting. Our design process requires we dig deep enough to uncover a location’s underlying message and learn its nuances. We listen, absorb, research, and learn – setting our feet on the ground before we start to draw.” In turn, this provides designers and the client group with the courage, capacity, and confidence to clearly imprint the right personality on a property. “When design is grounded in a sense of place and does not follow trends – it evolves alongside people, and never becomes or appears as obsolete.”



An excellent example of this adaptive, enduring design can be seen at Atlantis, where EDSA has been intimately involved in the brand experience since 1992. Contributing significantly to an unprecedented increase in the GDP of the Bahamas, Atlantis is not only credited with highly successful design in terms of innovative development, entertaining attractions, and environmental preservation, but also significantly reversing tourism decline, drastically improving employment opportunities, and enhancing quality of life through its operations in the region. A watershed opportunity for the Bahamas to reinvent itself, the large-scale assignment entailed three phases, spanned over 15 years, and included over \$2 billion investment. “Garnering knowledge of consumer behavior, understanding vacationing patterns, and mindful of what it takes to make a resort operationally successful required our efforts extend beyond the formal boundaries of the resort. We looked at the island as a whole, visualizing relationships between land, architecture, and people – to bring out the location’s full potential in the most original way possible,” shares Centolella.

As the first mega-destination of its kind, Atlantis created a new market niche with over 3,500 hotel rooms and 100 acres of amenities. “Recognizing that outdoor activities are a large tourism draw, a major innovation was the grand scale and high caliber of amenities and attractions that anticipated and responded to the changing expectations of traveling families,” explains Centolella. “We focused on preserving and celebrating the region’s natural beauty by carefully integrating marine habitats, water features, and activity areas.” EDSA’s design created a home for 50,000 sea creatures living in 11 million gallons of water, led to the restoration of a polluted internal lagoon, and the reconstruction of previously damaged and eroded primary dunes fronting the resort. Lush tropical and indigenous plantings bring larger-than-life design elements to a more human scale and wherever possible, local products and resources were utilized. “Atlantis truly exists in harmony with its surroundings – forever changing the face of the island, and standing as a benchmark among hospitality projects to this day.”

**We must always benchmark our design against the user experience. Have we created adequate connections, visual clues and interesting site lines? Does everything make logical sense? Design must be intuitive and make sense.**

Scott LaMont, Principal



## Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas

Elevated the themed resort prototype to soaring new level and drastically improved the Bahamian economy.

Completed: 1998

The influence an iconic project can have on its locale is often quite dramatic. Apart from becoming a magnet for activity and development, legacy projects have an ability to change the value of nearby real estate and instill a sense of pride for local residents. For example, flagship projects like the Opera House in Downtown Dubai or the Highline in New York create demand and momentum for entire districts. The caveat is that big projects need to be more than just big to make a sizeable difference. “The foundation of building a legacy is a deep sense of knowing – not just what’s important – but what’s non-negotiable,” says Centolella. “Having a set of environmental considerations and functional needs already in place from which design decisions are made, leads to projects with great aesthetic integrity, elegance, and distinction.”

Scott LaMont, EDSA Principal agrees, “In design, as anything else, the possibilities for progression are never exhausted. There is always room for improvement – a means by which to create those Instagram-able moments that make places memorable and recognizable. However, aesthetics should never outweigh function. And, as designers of high quality environments, it is our responsibility to provide solutions for both issues. You need to look at the character and qualities of a site for spaces to be meaningful – learn what makes sense and know what not to do.” Additionally, developments should accentuate the features that people inherently use to navigate their way through their surroundings including paths, nodes, landmarks, and edges. LaMont explains, “We must always benchmark our design against the users’ experience. Have we adequately created connections between places? Are there interesting site lines and visual clues? Does everything fit in a logical manner? Will people feel comfortable in the space? Design must be intuitive, and make sense.”



**When original design is grounded in a sense of place and does not follow trends - it evolves alongside people, and never becomes or appears as obsolete.**

Richard Centolella, Principal



In the late 1980’s EDSA looked toward a new generation of live, work, play design before it was popular with Treyburn, a planned community in Durham County, North Carolina. Taking in the view from Treyburn’s second story Country Club veranda, one can easily imagine the land’s past life as a prosperous antebellum plantation and historic origins as a thriving mercantile and milling community. Today, the rolling hills and hardwoods that cradle the 5,300 acres provide a project identity that speaks to the rich history and context inside the community’s boundaries.

Positioned as an alternative to sprawling, suburban subdivision development, Treyburn is a quality lifestyle community in a rural setting. With housing and recreation as well as commercial, research, and industrial facilities – the cumulative design results in a unified community plan. “By creating mixed land-uses, changing zoning, and establishing future land-use patterns, we were able to establish walkable destinations within the community to which residents wanted or needed to travel to,” shares LaMont. The cohesive design vernacular incorporates native fieldstone, existing vegetation, and formalized plantings anchored by large willow oaks, winged elms, and other native trees juxtaposed beside the preserved forests and large naturalized areas, making it a unique market offering that has held tight to its value.

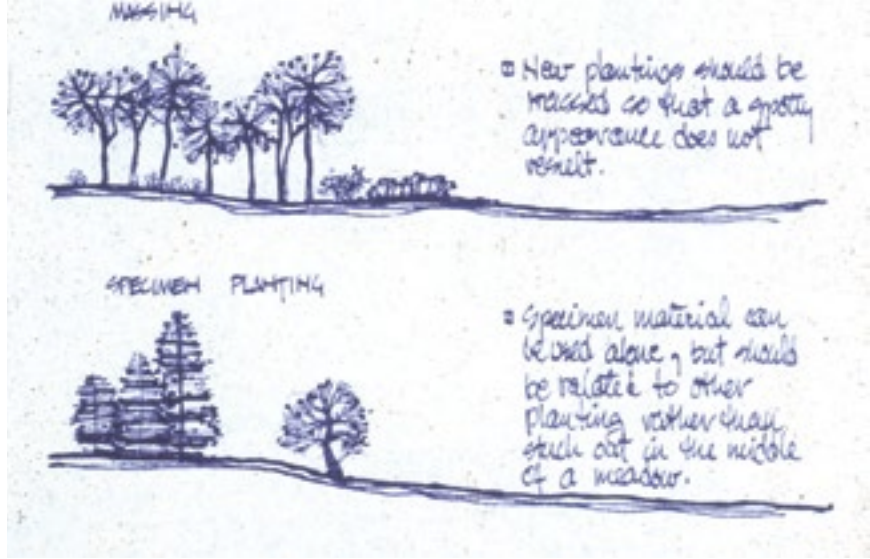
Within Treyburn, varied residential development, oriented toward golf course, waterfront, or open space views, encompasses approximately one third of the total area while light industry, commercial, and office offerings occupy approximately one-half of the site. Nestled against the Little River Reservoir, a large portion of remaining land is dedicated to open space and recreation with more than 1,600 acres of its natural beauty preserved. This conservancy land secures forever important wildlife corridors with significant upland hardwood forest. EDSA provided master planning, zoning, site design, signage, lighting, and design guidelines to ensure a consistent aesthetic would timelessly enhance the ownership experience and maximize property values.

## Treyburn

### Durham, North Carolina

Designed for life, the mixed-use community continues to receive accolades being recently recognized as “The best neighborhood in Durham”.

Completed: 1988



Timeless design aims to retain its original design integrity and contributes significantly to the public realm of the community in which it is located. “Being user focused – while living in the background – design can have a profound effect on people and their well-being as long as it continues to be relevant in its design expression,” articulates Armbruster. In 1970, EDSA was working closely with Edward Durrell Stone, Sr. on a number of high profile commission including the Standard Oil Building in Chicago, Kennedy Center in DC, and the Eisenhower Medical Center in California. Another was the relocation of PepsiCo World Headquarters from New York City to the 114-acre, slightly-used polo grounds and forested land in Purchase, New York. Stone Sr. was focused on the building complex which would occupy 10 acres and consists of seven, three-story buildings representing the seven divisions of PepsiCo at the time. The building complex was set on mounds for prominence and allowed for access by employees through an underground connection with pedestrian corridors to the dining and gym facilities. “Our role was to blend the major building complex into the natural landscape. Spaces were designed with open, accessibility to nature, formal landscapes, and sculptures, which in turn, created a unique environment that enhanced the workplace and spawned creativity.”



## PepsiCo World Headquarters

### Purchase, New York

Resounding example of how blended landscapes, sculpture gardens and fountains transform an environment and enhance employees’ attitudes and performance.

Completed: 1970

Armbruster continues, “We were able to draw upon the environmental movement that was beginning to gain momentum around that time by making it a priority to create quality, healthy work environments.” To protect the water quality of the adjacent brook, a lake was created with the perimeter road serving as a dam. Water drainage from rooftops and surface water flowed into the lake and was filtered out before exiting to the brook. The supporting planting palette not only included native shrubs, and grasses, but materials from different geographies and biomes. Trees were added to the grounds complete with placards designating their names and origins, while existing greenhouses were maintained to grow annuals used on the property. Parking was sited beyond the forest to obscure cars from view as well as to permit employees to walk/exercise before arriving at their desks and then again in the evening as a way to decompress. “It was always our intent to create a sustainable, quality environment for employees to work – knowing that a person’s physical surroundings has a real and profound impact on their attitude and productivity.” Carpooling was encouraged and the whole experience from arriving at the site, to parking one’s car, to walking through park-like surroundings, set a positive tone for the day.

In working with Pepsico leadership, EDSA was able to integrate a sculpture park named after the organization’s CEO at the time, Donald M. Kendall. Focused on twentieth century art, the Sculpture Garden has been a great attraction and draws people from all over the country and local community. Expanded over the years, it now includes 45 large-scale sculptures of bronze, marble, steel, nickel, resin, granite, and spruce. With more than 100,000 annual visitors, the Sculpture Gardens serve the greater good of the community.

“We stayed involved with PepsiCo for fourteen years after the construction was complete and still look back on this project with both a fondness and a sense of pride at having been involved with a landmark undertaking – giving so much to visitors and its thriving employees. The quality environment created at PepsiCo resulted in decreased turnover, less absenteeism, shorter lunch hours, and greater productivity,” says Armbruster.

“Our practice continues to evolve in the way work is produced. The tools we use to represent our vision, bring ideas to life, and the speed and time by which projects move forward has compressed. With that comes an obligation to remain nimble as design should be self-explanatory. There must be logic behind the process and an ability to test our design against budgets to ensure implementation,” expresses LaMont.



“As landscape architects, we must be cognizant of our total responsibility – ensuring that our vision and designs are grounded in reality – that we stay with a project through implementation,” shares Centolella. “It’s not about one project or one person, our legacy is a reputation and responsibility that outlast us. It suggests projects we can point to years from now and have more than just recollections to show for it. In other words, we are creating tangible and livable places for people – places where they can make memories and have experiences – today, tomorrow, and far into the future.”

Throughout the last six decades, EDSA has made an indelible mark on the built world. “We have always listened carefully to our clients, emphasized friendships, and remained aware of the lifestyles and perceptions of those that interact with our designs. Timeless design is about bringing happiness to people – accommodating for pleasurable and embracing experiences – and respectfully reflecting the attitude of a country and its people. That is Ed Stone’s legacy – and every designer at EDSA embraces it as a way of life,” concludes Armbruster.





# Timeless: Through The Years

## Fort Lauderdale Beach Revitalization

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Completed: 1989

The Fort Lauderdale Beach Revitalization is a prime example of how private-public partnerships effectively responded to consumer demand and capitalized on the beautiful Florida climate. As a high-profile, public, open space project, it served as a catalyst in the City's ability to reach its illustrious goal of becoming the best city of its size in the United States. Over the last 25 years, the revitalization project has stimulated \$1 billion worth of private sector development and the City's image has been enhanced as the beach has once again become a popular destination for family entertainment, living, and dining.



## Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort

Orlando, Florida

Completed: 1984

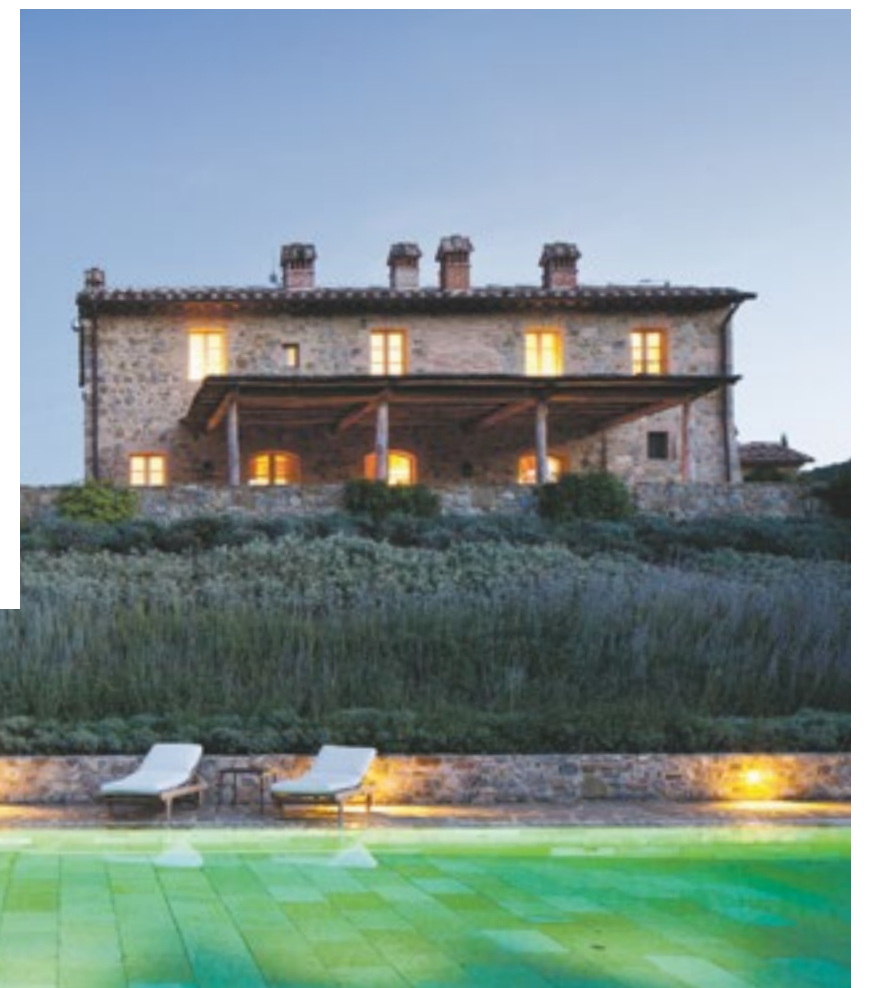
The Grand Cypress Resort marked the first premier inland resort property built in Central Florida and set the standard in fantasy pool design – opening the door for interactive resort pools. An interpretive boardwalk through the wetlands helped transform the awkwardly shaped property into a world-class destination – meeting the growing need of tourists and improving environmental conditions.

## Rosewood Castiglion Del Bosco

Tuscany, Italy

Completed: 2008

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the property's restoration significantly contributed to the cultural landscape that is at the core of Tuscany's identity. The once neglected 800-year-old, 4,500 acre estate has had lasting economic, environmental, communal, and cultural impact. The 'sense of place' embedded at Castiglion Del Bosco is an authentic tribute to the land, its wine, and the people as the benchmarked design outcomes brought the site's distinctive agriculture element full circle.





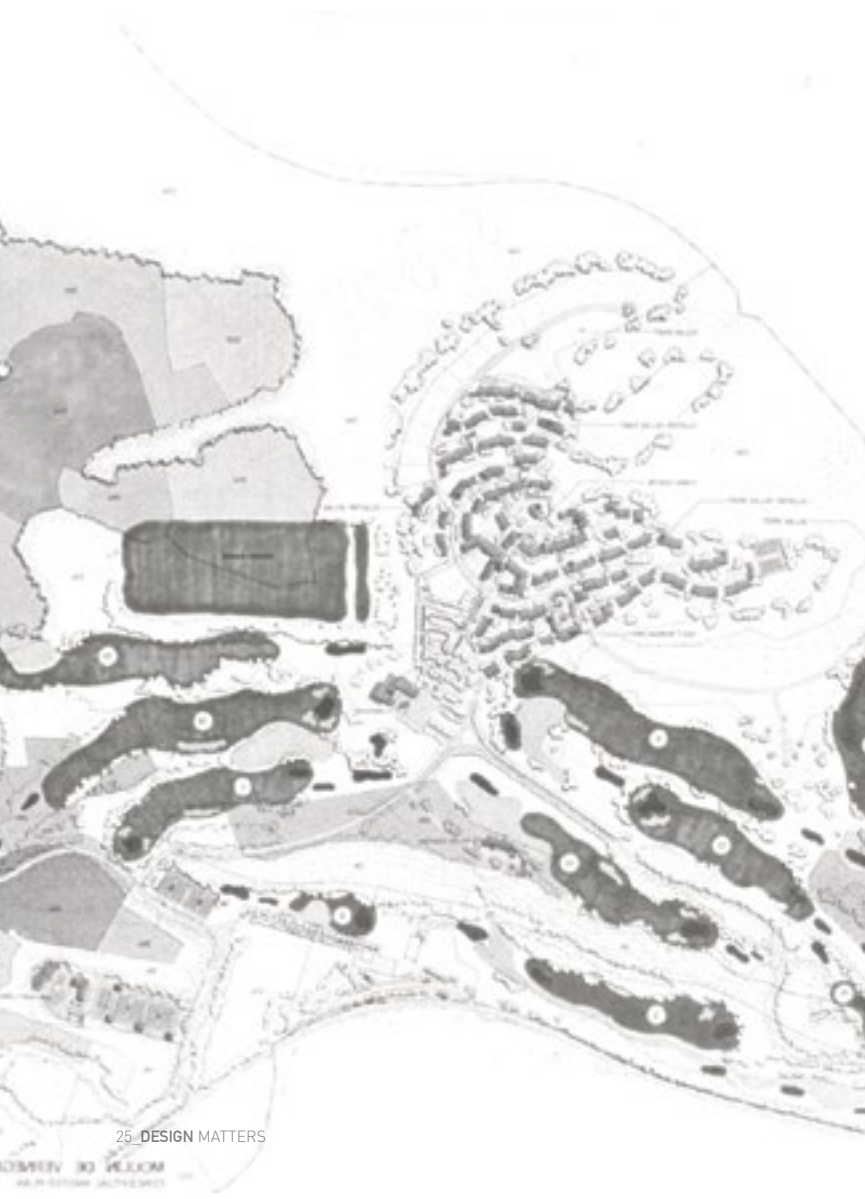


## Pont Royal

Aix-en-Provence, France

Completed: 1992

Design and development of the stylish cultural tourism property respects the architectural language of the region as a picturesque town with cobblestone squares, garden courtyards, and narrow pedestrian streets flanked with flower filled terraces. The project set new standards for its spatial distribution and contextual sensitivity in celebrating the geography and heritage of the region.

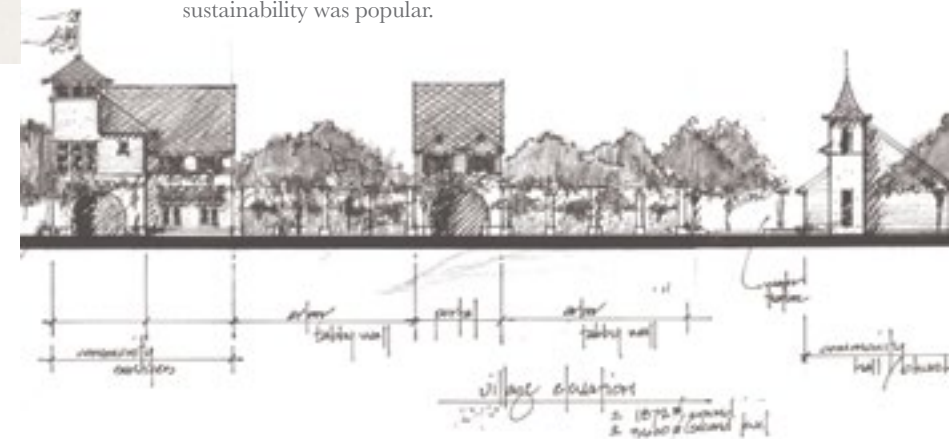


## Haig Point

Daufuskie Island, South Carolina

Completed: 1984

The concept of Haig Point was established on the inherent remoteness and graceful pace of the island requiring a change to South Carolina Coastal Codes to ensure preservation of the recreation, resort residences before sustainability was popular.



## John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Washington, D.C.

Completed: 1971

With a stately entrance, raised planters and pools that define a formal plaza, marble terraces overlooking the Potomac, and a promenade with islands of willows accented by fountains, this iconic facility remains one of national prominence.







# LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

Encompassing more than 22 countries and 15 million square kilometers, the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) is much more diverse than the deserts typically depicted in movies and novels. With its rapidly increasing middle class, MENA has become one of the fastest growing global real estate markets. Foreign developers have infused billions of dollars into Oman, Qatar, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and other countries – helping to push continued and further growth. Additionally, the region accounts for approximately 6% of the world’s population, 60% of the world’s oil reserves, and 45% of the world’s natural gas reserves, making it an important source for global economic stability.

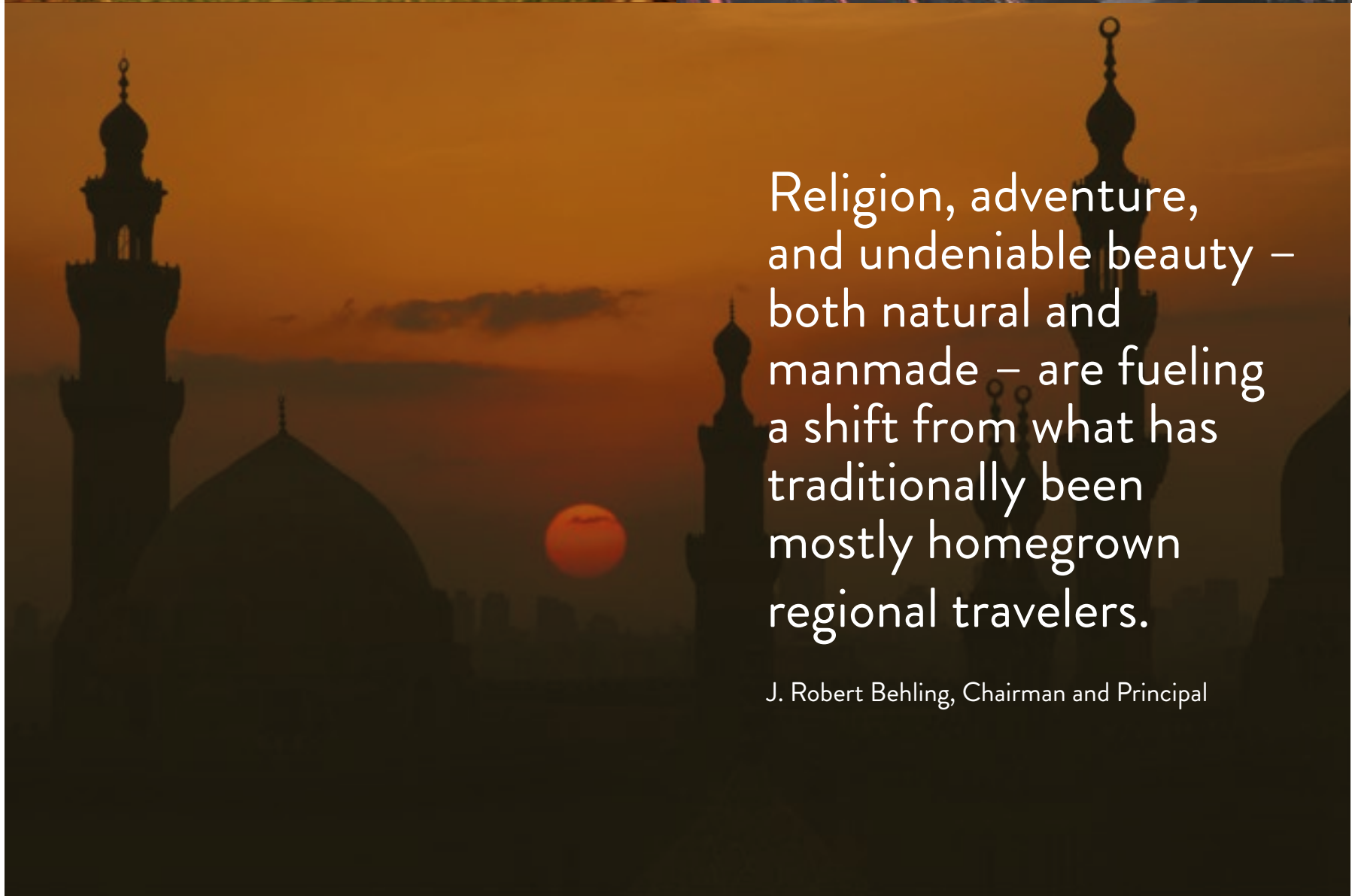




BLUEWATERS ISLAND - DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



AL MARYAH CENTRAL - ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Religion, adventure,  
and undeniable beauty –  
both natural and  
manmade – are fueling  
a shift from what has  
traditionally been  
mostly homegrown  
regional travelers.

J. Robert Behling, Chairman and Principal

After a brief lull from the 2008 global financial crisis, development in the Middle East and Northern Africa is picking up, albeit somewhat more slowly than the giddy days of the early 2000s. Economic activity accelerated slightly last year, according to FocusEconomics, a leading provider of economic analysis and forecasts. One reason for the stronger financial footing – recovery of ‘black gold’ prices. An agreement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other key producers in 2016, to reduce petroleum production, is bringing welcome economic relief to many MENA countries. However, various challenges still exist – including staying the course with policy adjustment, diversifying away from oil, developing more dynamic private sectors, and harnessing the potential benefits of demographics.

“In an effort to reduce their dependence on oil revenues, many MENA states are making major efforts to develop alternative economic activities – concentrating on tourism, light manufacturing, and agriculture,” shares J. Robert Behling, EDSA Chairman and Principal. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Middle East was visited by 52 million international tourists last year, and travel is forecast to grow strongly over the next 10 years. “Religion, adventure, and undeniable beauty – both natural and manmade – are fueling this shift from what has traditionally been mostly travelers from within the region.”

An improving economic and travel backdrop, partnered with future mega events like the Dubai 2020 World Expo and the Qatar World Cup 2022, are reshaping the hospitality sector. “We are extremely busy in this part of the world,” Behling notes. “EDSA has been active in the MENA region for nearly 30 years, and we continue to engage in not only tourism-based projects, but efforts that respond to accelerated urbanism and concerns for sustainability.”

Dubai, for example, has undergone a rapid transformation – from a pearl-diving destination to one of the fastest growing cities on earth. “Dubai is a tourism, trade, and logistics hub, recognized as one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world,” says Behling. With a number of new projects announced, such as the Mohammed Bin Rashid City, and other previously delayed developments coming back, Dubai is forecasted to achieve impressive economic growth. “The United Arab Emirates, in general, has many incredible places to live and visit,” Behling adds, “and newly designed EDSA projects such as the Dubai Opera House District, Bluewaters, and Al Mayrah Central are contributing to the visitor draw.”

Located off the Jumeirah Beach coastline, near Dubai Marina, Bluewaters Island is poised to become one of the world’s largest tourism hotspots. The \$1.6 billion, man-made, mixed-use destination features a unique and highly anticipated centerpiece, The Ain Dubai, a 210-meter observation wheel. “With fierce competition and high visibility for the project, EDSA was able to create a unifying thread between the site’s four quadrants – retail, residential, hospitality, and entertainment,” explains Behling. “Drawing from a contemporary design aesthetic, the overarching character is modern and clean with a strong use of straight lines and simple forms. A series of interconnected boulevards and promenades creates a walkable flow between well-appointed amusement avenues, dining/shopping choices, and smart living and leisure options.” Linked to the mainland with a direct roadway, the island will operate a monorail system, along with a pedestrian bridge for alternative transport to the nearby beachfront. An innovative new autonomous vehicle transport system will connect the island and the metro – becoming the largest network of its kind in the world.

“Creating new concepts that combine cultural traditions with modern elements in an area that has been known to be over-the-top comes with challenges,” shares Gregg Sutton, EDSA Principal. “With a focus on lifestyle integration and environmental responsibility, design in the Middle East and North Africa continues to experience a metamorphosis as owners, developers, and the public sector realize the strength authenticity brings.” Also underlying new development is adherence to Estidama mandates. Changes here are more apparent in the public realm and city planning where EDSA sees a focus on parks, circulation, and infrastructure. And, while cultural significance is now mainstream, climatic conditions and land forms also remain crucial for human comfort and usage within the overall design.





KING ABDULLAH FINANCIAL DISTRICT, GEO-CLIMATE CENTRE - RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

Sutton explains, “The region isn’t just barren flatlands. There are incredible natural resources, restored green areas, wildlife, and bird habitats. Water has also become an integral part of development in the Middle East, and the clear liquid has changed the face of the region almost as much as ‘black gold’. Certain parts of Dubai and Abu Dhabi now remind me of Miami, where recent development has led to unbelievable marinas within resort and commercial environments.”

Located just northeast of Abu Dhabi at the center of Al Maryah Island, EDSA is working on a master plan for the iconic Al Maryah Central, a one billion dollar, retail-led, lifestyle-oriented development. Its 3.1 million square-feet of mixed-use space will be fixed within a stunning architectural setting, comprised of a complete set of amenity offerings for total lifestyle convenience. Program elements include an open-air, rooftop food hall and more than 145 dining options, a multi-screen cinema, health club, food market, children’s entertainment playground area, and outdoor amphitheater. The precinct will also feature two, 400,000 square-foot, integrated towers comprised of hotel-serviced residential apartments and villas. “With its urban location, we wanted to be sure the user experience was paramount and made a conscious effort to foster a nature-centric entertainment atmosphere with energetic streetscapes, and podium parks seamlessly merging indoor and out.” All connected by climate controlled, user-friendly, and landscaped open spaces, the hub is expected to receive between 20 and 25 million visitors annually.

In the western part of the region, Jeddah has emerged as one of the key business destinations and arguably the most important leisure destination in Saudi Arabia. Advantaged by the availability of hotel demand generators, the city is now undergoing massive infrastructure improvements including expansions to the King Abdulaziz International Airport and the King Abdullah Economic City. Investment in large-scale railway development supports the potential of this global hub – helping to boost development across other industries.



With a focus on lifestyle integration and environmental responsibility, design in the Middle East and North Africa – continues to witness a metamorphosis as owners, developers, and the public sector realize the strength authenticity brings.

Gregg Sutton, Principal

FOUR SEASONS - BAHRAIN BAY, BAHRAIN

However, with over 60% of all KSA households in the middle income segment, there is a huge demand for affordable housing. The current shortfall has both social and economic costs, and requires a collaborative effort from the government and private developers. “The government is taking significant steps in addressing the shortage of affordable housing with revenues from the White Land Tax and the Ministry of Housing’s ‘ESKAN’ project, which should add 500,000 units to the total stock of affordable housing,” mentions Behling. EDSA continues to assist in the effort with several regional housing assignments such as the Saudi Aramco Residential Camp in Dhahran, Salboukh Residential Compound in Riyadh, and the Red Sea Village in Jeddah – addressing the housing needs of residents and expats alike.

The Red Sea Village seaside site is approximately 315 hectares with a preliminary development program that includes a marina village, arts and cultural district, resort island, luxury residential offerings, and an urban park district. “The public realm for the Red Sea Village is a key ingredient to the project’s overall success. By creating a cohesive, connected, and comfortable experience, the open space network not only enhances housing alternatives and amenities, but unifies the community – giving the project a real sense of identity and a place,” explains Sutton. From roadways to bike and pedestrian pathways, waterfront promenades, and parks and plazas, the public realm evolves through the various districts with subtle commonalities. These intuitive connections are realized through various elements such as plant materials, hardscape, structures, lighting, and scale of spaces, as well as a sense of security, programming, and the contextual relationships found in details.

“Egypt is another focus of activity for development,” says Mihaela Zaharescu, EDSA Vice President. Africa’s third largest country is expected grow by about 3.4% over the next fiscal year, barring any unforeseen, adverse global events. “Because Egypt’s economy is performing at a steady strength, the population is more confident and residents are investing in real estate – particularly vacation and second homes,” she adds. Real estate is one of the few sectors that has benefitted from the uncertainty of post-revolutionary Egypt, as the government has introduced capital controls which are likely to indirectly channel more money into the sector.



LEVANA UPTOWN CAIRO - MOKATTAM, EGYPT







ANCIENT SANDS GOLF RESORT AND RESIDENCES - EL GOUNA, HURGHADA, EGYPT

EDSA has a long-standing history in Egypt. The company played a significant role with the revitalization and upgrading of the central zone of Khedive's Cairo, generating design solutions to stimulate tourism, encourage urban revitalization, and transform the downtown zone into a more pedestrian-friendly environment. EDSA also designed Port Ghalib, a \$2 billion waterfront integrated resort community situated on 11 miles of virgin shoreline along the Red Sea Riviera in Marsa Alam. The master plan includes luxury beachfront villas, golf estates, an expansive marina, apartments, and other amenities. The design embraces the culture and history of the region and complements the existing coastal development, while at the same time differentiating the properties from other destinations. "We wanted to create a unique experience that is innovative, sustainable, eco-friendly, inspiring, and pedestrian-oriented," shares Zaharescu.

Today, the firm is working in the heart of Cairo – creating Uptown Cairo, the first and only integrated development in the center of the capital. "Set within and among the natural, mountainous scenery, the assignment was a challenge from the beginning, because the topography is like a moonscape with steep hills, bluffs, and precipitous valleys," says Zaharescu. "Emaar Misr made a huge investment in the infrastructure to ensure every villa has a view, while keeping the topography as natural as possible to maintain the feeling of a mountainous village," she explains. "We designed a series of terraces that are connected by winding, landscaped roads, and pedestrian corridors with steps, ramps, walls, and slopes, offering ever-changing perspectives and accentuating the mountain village atmosphere."

Within the walls of Uptown Cairo, several thousand low and high-rise residential units line the hills and valleys, creating an equilibrium of architecture. Emaar Misr's master plan also provides a variety of shopping, entertainment, dining, hospitality, and office offerings – allowing people to live according to their own style and hobbies. "By enclosing amenities and services, this tranquil archipelago isolates itself from the crowded streets and busy vibe of downtown Cairo," explains Zaharescu. Amenities include a golf course, several pools, a children's play area, community centers, golf clubhouse, international school, and Emaar Square – a pedestrian friendly, public space intended to knit the community together. "In the end, we were able to celebrate Cairo – the old and the new – creating an integrated development that offers a work, live, and play neighborhood with social interaction and leisure as key drivers."

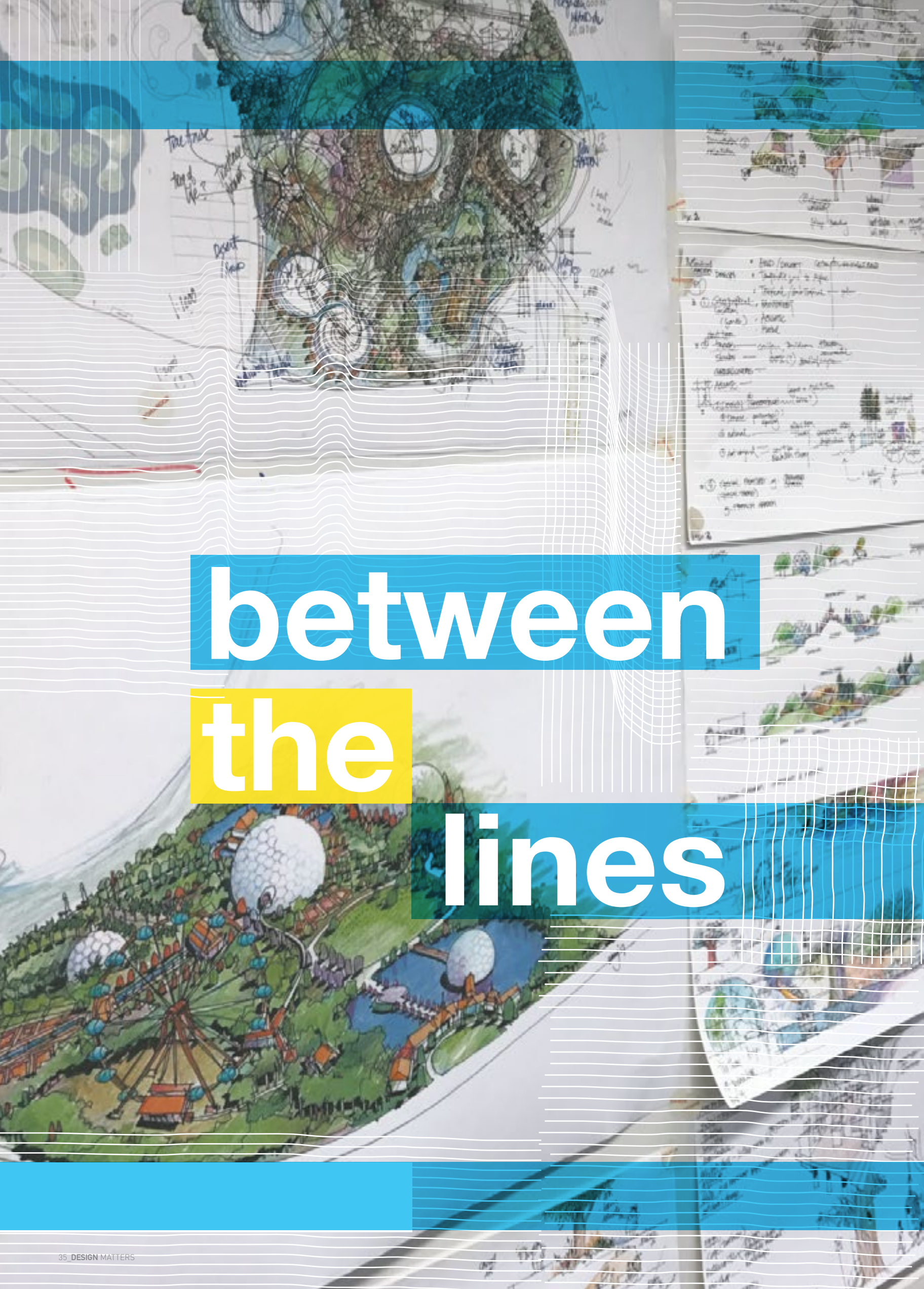
For more than five decades, EDSA has helped shape communities around the globe with spectacular results in the Middle East and North Africa. The company has worked on more than 200 developments in the region and currently has 25 active projects in Egypt, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. "Economists say the Middle East and Northern Africa are poised for future growth, and as the economic outlook improves for most countries in the area, additional development is expected. We will continue to dedicate the resources and people necessary to help this amazing region grow and prosper," Behling concludes.



Because Egypt's economy is performing at a steadied strength, the population is more confident, and residents are investing in real estate – particularly vacation and second homes.

Mihaela Zaharescu, Vice President





# between the lines



A project's success can only be charted when its 'beginning' is clearly defined. Through observation, investigation, and application, an integrated design charrette can provide the creative burst of energy necessary to kick-off and build momentum for a project – and keep it on course. Simply put, it's an opportunity to explore the goals, values, and desired future state of a project to best determine its guiding principles and vision.

By definition, a charrette is an intense period of design or planning activity – a collaborative session in which a group of designers, stakeholders, citizens, and clients draft a direction for development. According to Pablo Massari, EDSA Associate Principal, "It provides a forum to exchange ideas and offers a unique advantage to garner insights. More importantly, it affords everyone who participates the opportunity to be co-authors in creating the story of a place." A collective sense of understanding and investment amongst the group carries through to project implementation, making even the early stages more than lines on paper, but an adventure in which all participate.

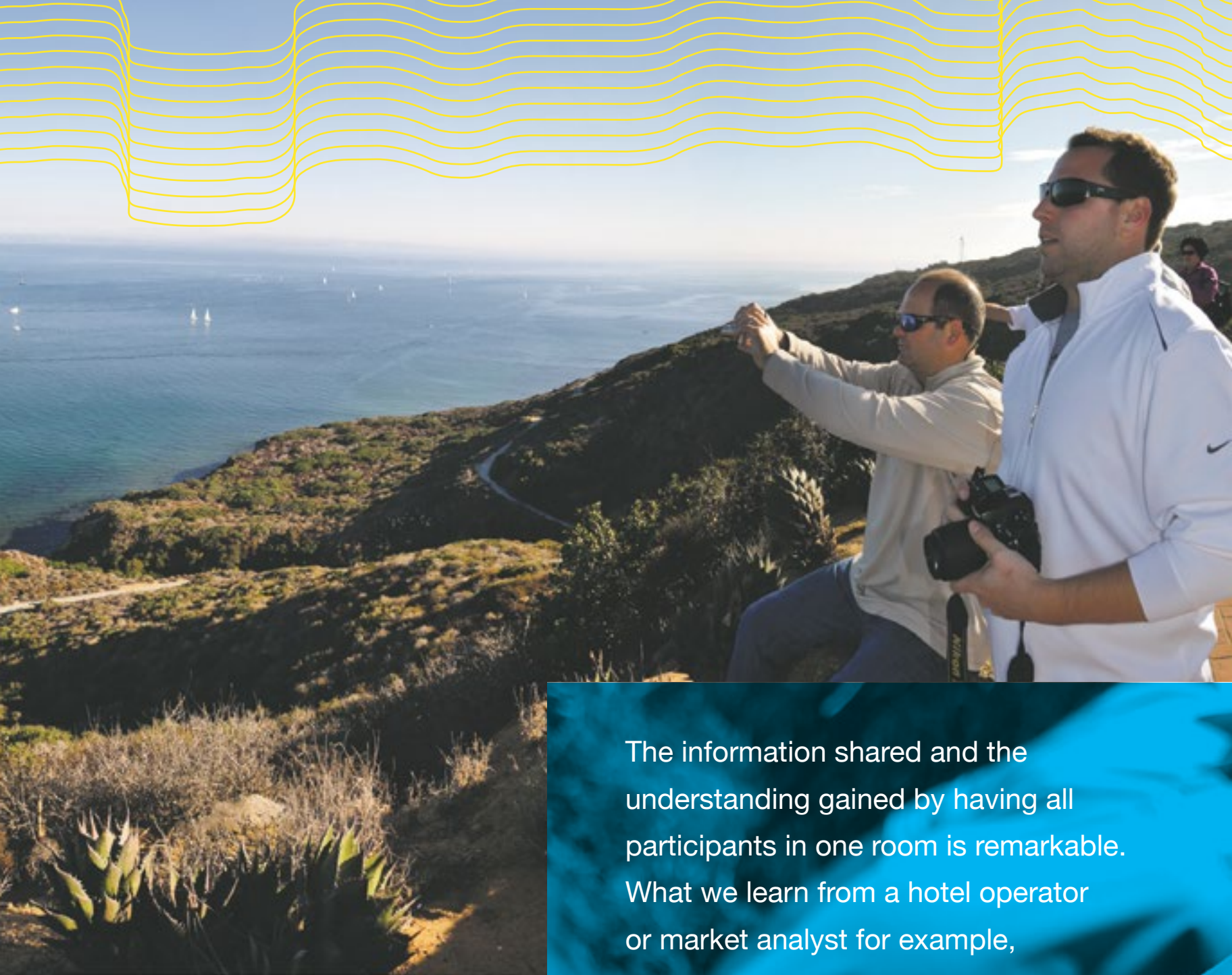
The soul of a charrette is found in bringing together design expertise across broad and diverse segments to collaboratively address challenges and map solutions. The process can include anyone who is interested in the project's success – the developer, business interests, government officials, residents, activists, and design consultants. "A roadmap for how to proceed, the charrette allows us to bring a visual depiction of how the project is envisioned to the client and invested constituents," shares Massari. Whether creating a community master plan, designing a park, or solving housing challenges in urban neighborhoods, the charrette provides a framework for client groups and/or communities to implement their ideas and engage citizens.

A roadmap for how to proceed, the charrette creates a visual depiction of the project's vision and affords participants the opportunity to be mutual authors in creating the story of a place.

Pablo Massari, Associate Principal

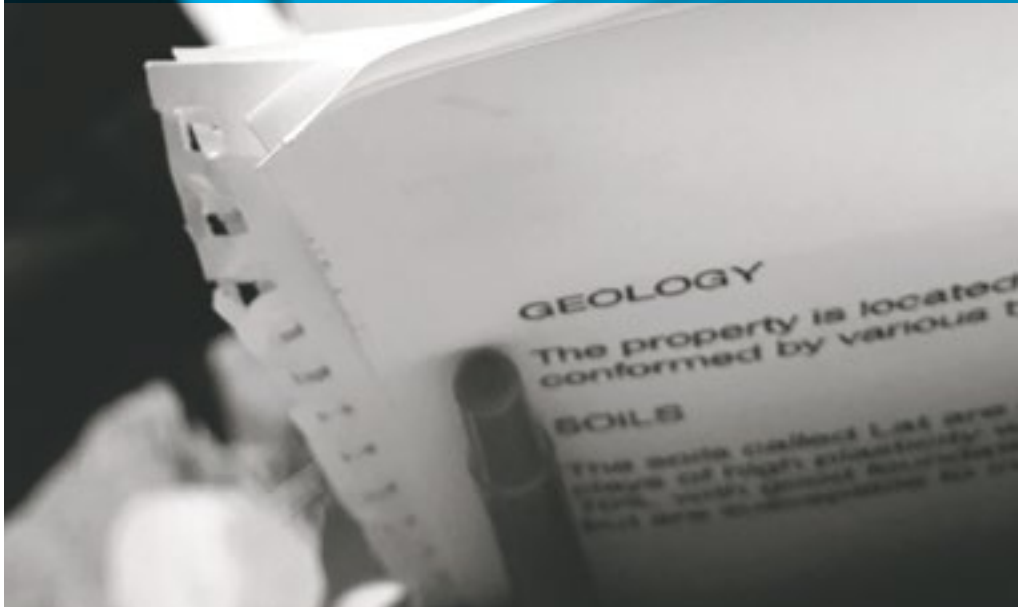
"The key is to bring people together into one forum – to move thinking forward – with the outcome being a visual summary that guides progress," explains Derek Gagne, EDSA Associate Principal. Reaching beyond design, charrettes also include financing, operations, and programming considerations with client groups, professionals, and stakeholders all sharing information in a transparent manner. "The information shared and the understanding gained by having all participants in one room is remarkable. What we learn from a hotel operator or market analyst for example, is key in setting design constraints and direction – ultimately influencing project implementation strategies. Having a collaborative discussion from day one, sets the tone for the quality of the work, care, and thought that permeates the entire process. So while we eagerly unroll trace paper to sketch physical design solutions, the goal is to leave this collaborative session with a document that outlines a clear direction. This can only be accomplished when all expertise is shared openly."





The information shared and the understanding gained by having all participants in one room is remarkable. What we learn from a hotel operator or market analyst for example, is key in setting design constraints and direction – ultimately influencing project implementation strategies.

Derek Gagne, Associate Principal



## outlining the creative process

The first step in the charrette process is assembling a multi-disciplinary, cross-functional team that is best suited to study and resolve the planning and design issues at hand. The team may include strategists, economists, land planners, architects, engineers, and other professionals. “We set out to build strong teams based on mutual respect, shared passions, and a reliable framework for communication where like-minded and opposing opinions provide valuable insights. Without preconceived ideas and a fresh set of eyes, we collectively view the site and begin to sense what feels right. It’s also important to keep each other in check by asking the tough questions related to viability,” suggests Massari. An active dialogue is significant, and as a result, the design team can strategize methods to effectively introduce innovative concepts that are a fit for a particular site, parcel, and property.

Prior to the on-site workshop, the team reviews all available data such as aerial photographs, regional conditions, environmentally sensitive zones, topography and soils maps, and existing infrastructure, as well as any environmental reports and applicable market studies – anything that offers a view toward the intrinsic features of a site. “We then use the digital topo to prepare slope and elevation analysis drawings, which are printed to scale and form the foundation for our site analysis and concepts produced on location,” shares Allyn. Conducting this analysis prior to visiting the site allows the design team to synthesize data and develop composite mapping that is useful during the on-site phase of the workshop.

Gagne adds, “We also do a bit of ‘web hopping’ to understand the client and investors, their portfolios, and the community in which the project will reside. We reference our work history, case studies, and lessons learned to inform the process. With this initial research and base information collected, we begin to understand the site from a broad context down to the specifics of the location.” Scaled site base plans, surveys, and CAD drawings are best, but even Google Earth helps in selecting proper precedents and case studies. “It’s about preparing a knowledge base of information to move the design conversation along.”

This pre-workshop analysis is followed by an on-site session, during which team members work directly with the client group to conduct site reconnaissance, verify preliminary analyses, and initiate the design strategy. The team considers alternative approaches to program elements and collectively gains consensus on the best combination of alternatives. “The charrette approach affords us the ability to quickly align design strategies with the client’s philosophy and test the ‘fit’ of a design solution in the field. We mull through a multitude of images that the team can speak to – what they like and don’t like. It’s all about agreeing and disagreeing. In turn, we absorb the information quickly and then sketch alternatives with regional character and purpose,” explains Allyn.

“While a charrette is not a place where all innovative ideas are discussed and vetted, it is the proper forum to establish the tone and narrative for a project. This cannot be done without a complete understanding of the site’s context – its history, culture, traditions, people, and surrounding community. It’s about getting to know the audience and bringing value to the assignment by crafting a sense of place that best suits the land and the people,” says Gagne.

Lasting agreement is based on a fully informed dialogue, which can only be accomplished by looking at the details and the big picture concurrently. “We visit the site, walk the land, set up tables, and sketch on the fly. We become fully acquainted with the environment – its physical, social, and cultural being – absorbing all clues reflective in its physical aesthetics, as well as building an intuitive sense for what belongs. Only when we fully understand the user experience can we start to design,” shares Massari. This process not only provides the design team with a better understanding of its client and the site, but helps the client grapple with identifying its own culture and aspirations for the property.



moving from vision to reality

The charrette process is effective because it marries local knowledge, concerns, and values with outside expertise. “Understanding the people for whom we design, the atmospheres they seek, and the experiences they crave enables us to step into their shoes at any time and view our design decisions through their eyes,” notes Massari. In the public realm, this is extremely important. “We encourage residents to be actively involved, because the process promises immediate feedback.” It allows the desires, attitudes, and preferences of special interest groups to be heard so that conflicting issues can be resolved by consensus. This holistic design strategy stimulates community momentum.

The number of days needed for an effective charrette varies based on scope and deliverables. There is a fine balance between keeping the process moving at a quick, fresh pace and ensuring that a high-quality and thorough summary is provided. A site and program may be small and relatively straight-forward, allowing for a quick charrette, or the evaluation of a huge site with complex parameters may be required, necessitating a number of specialists. Gagne explains, “Typically, a charrette lasts three to five days. Through a series of sessions, we help lead the group through a process that assesses building use, community image, and issues related to potential growth. This introspective process results in ‘design drivers’ that become the foundation for all design work. During the charrette, we recommend frequent visits to the site and trips to other projects to better inform the design. These comparable properties might have the same character, size, or market offerings – shedding light on the client’s preferred feel and style. With all the information gathered, we prepare a series of diagrams and alternatives that are then tested in real time, on-site.”

Typically, the client walks away with a collection of hand-drawn plan alternatives, sketches and/or vignettes, along with a more refined, preferred option based on feedback from the team’s final review. This summary report of the charrette process – from inception to completion, and cumulatively – serves as the starting point for all future discussions on the project amongst the team members. “It is a valuable springboard for continued reviews, dialogue, and evaluation of the design before committing to future phases in the development process,” shares Allyn. “In turn, the client emerges from the charrette with viable designs and alternatives in hand, which can be used immediately to gain initial consents, generate further internal dialogue, pursue investment options, or build community consensus. Ultimately, the purpose of the charrette is to give all participants the necessary information to make good design decisions.”



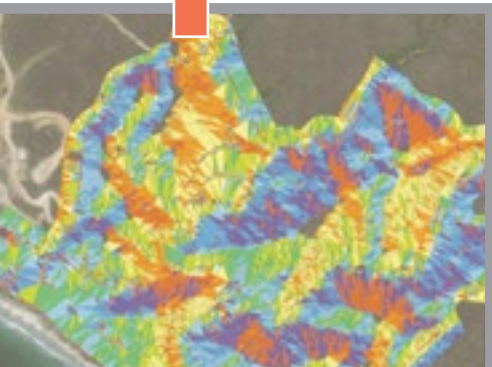
Uncovering the unexplored starts with an unbridled creative freedom - that initial blue sky phase where no ideas are off the table - that’s what a successful charrette feels like.

John Allyn, Vice President

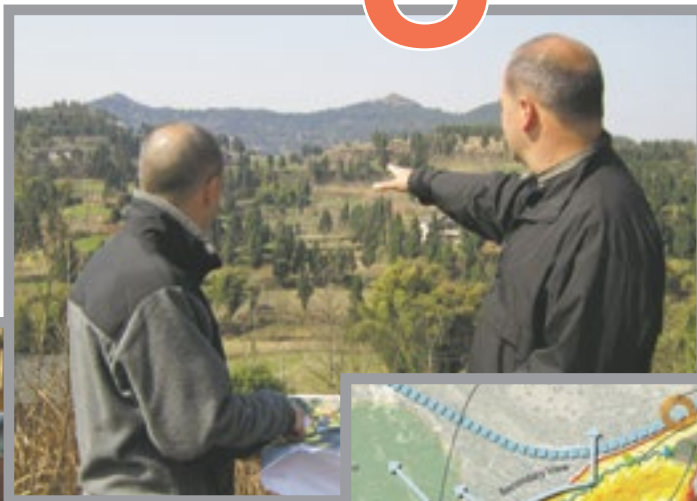


# the charrette teprocess

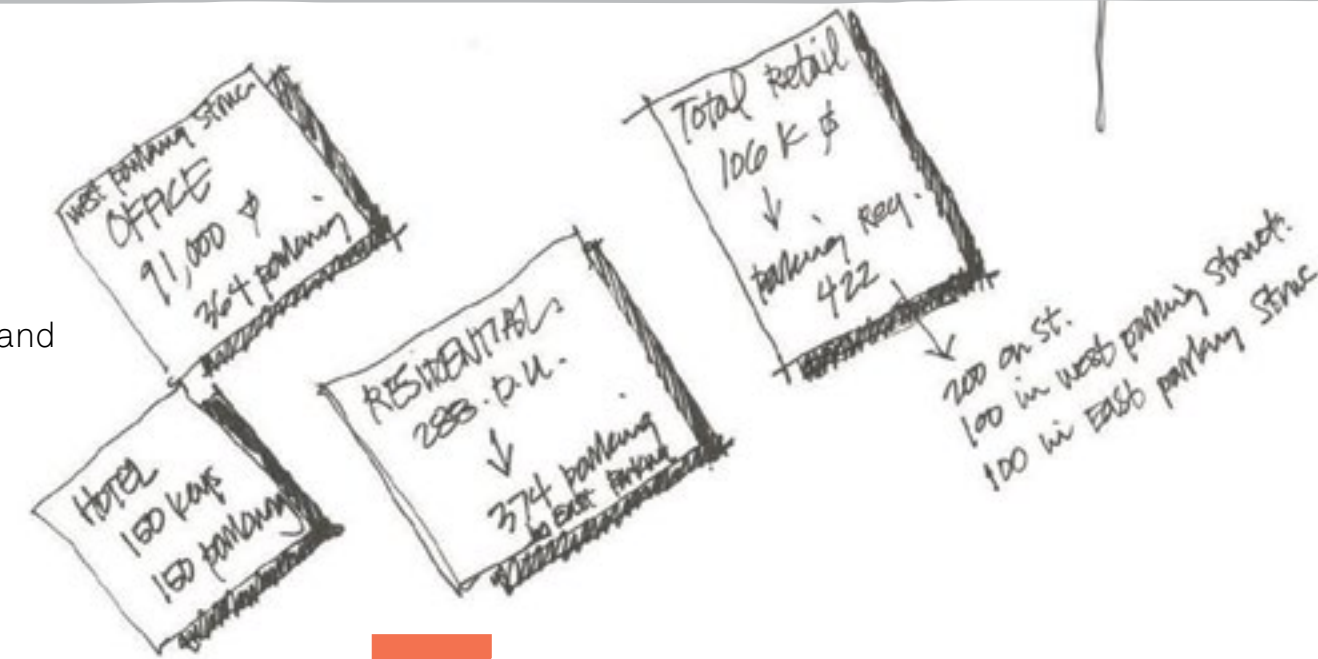
**1 Pre-Charrette**  
Inventory mapping, research  
and team assembly



**3 Site Reconnaissance**  
Reconnaissance of the project  
location and surrounding context

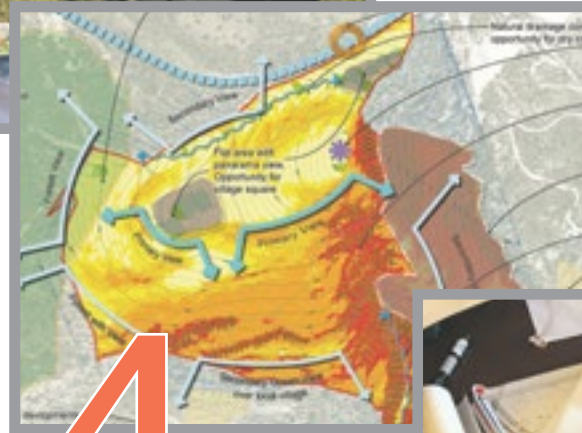


**6 Ideation**  
Initial planning and  
design ideation



**2 Kick-Off**  
Kick-off discussion  
with client and team

**4 Analysis**  
Summary analysis of  
opportunities and constraints



**5 Strategy**  
Facilitate discussion  
on project vision,  
character and program

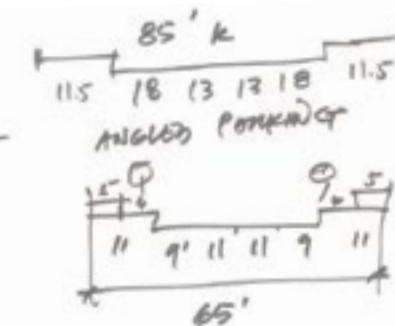
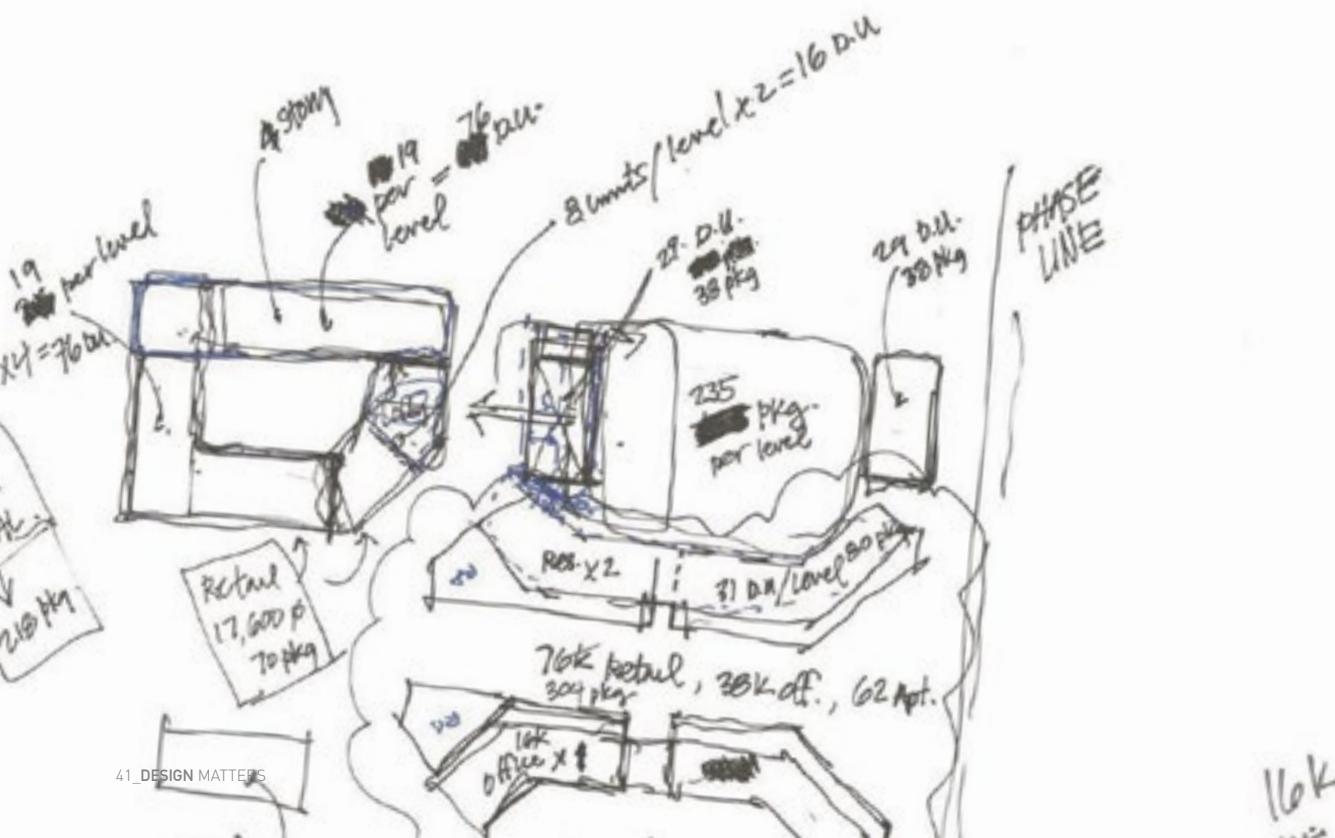
**7 Presentation**  
Presentation of early  
ideas and alternatives



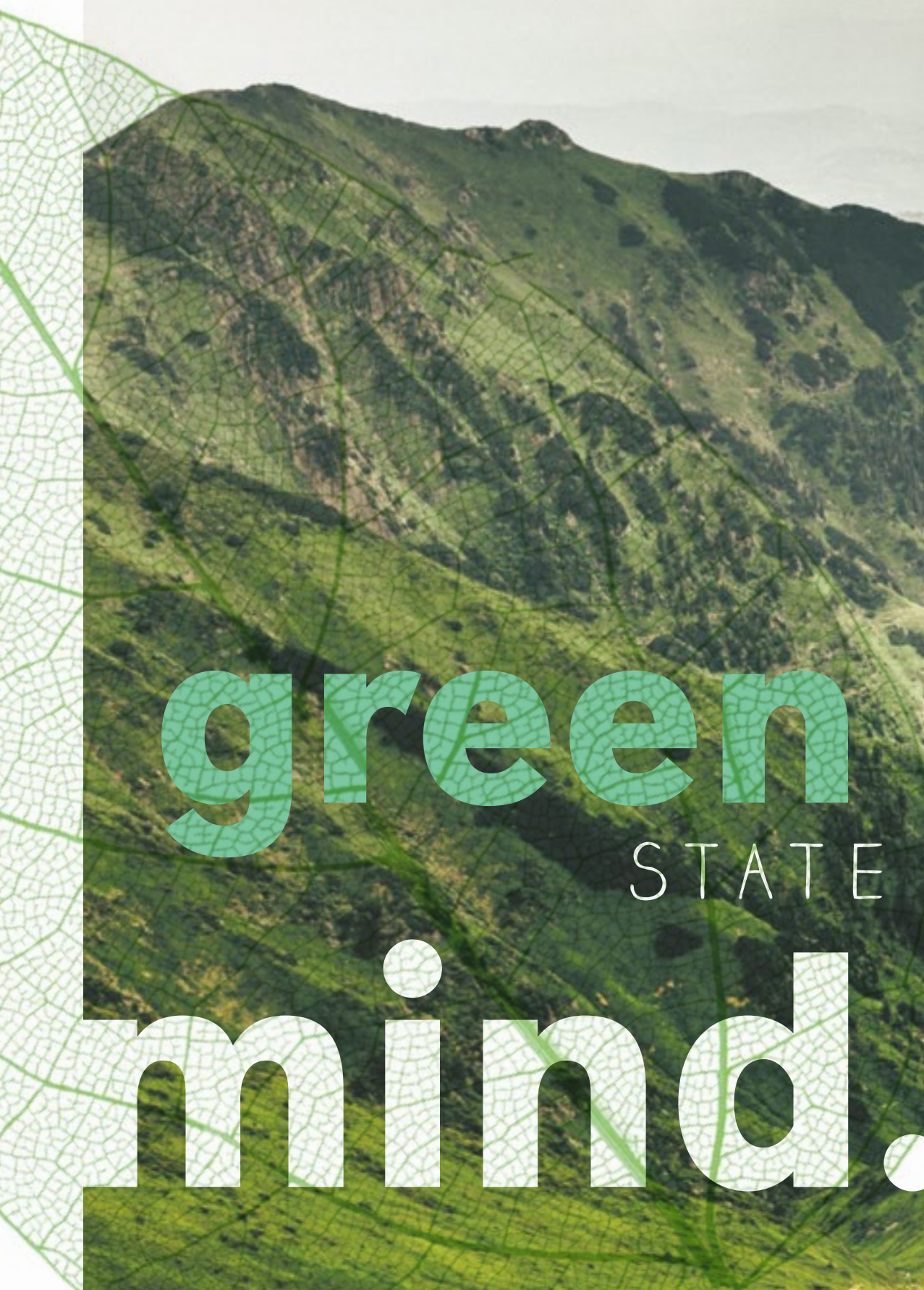
**8 Refinement**  
Evolve and refine initial  
concepts towards consensus  
design solutions.



**9 Post-Charrette**  
Summary report establishes conceptual  
foundation for the continuing design process







# green STATE OF mind.

“THOSE WHO CONTEMPLATE  
THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH  
FIND RESERVES OF STRENGTH  
THAT WILL ENDURE AS LONG  
AS LIFE LASTS. THERE IS  
SOMETHING INFINITELY  
HEALING IN THE REPEATED  
REFRAINS OF NATURE –  
THE ASSURANCE THAT DAWN  
COMES AFTER NIGHT, AND  
SPRING AFTER WINTER.”

- RACHEL CARSON, SILENT SPRING

Increasingly, people are spending more time immersed in a digital reality and less time experiencing the natural world around them. Today's three to five year olds are more likely to know how to play a computer game or navigate a smartphone than how to swim or ride a bike – activities that should be mainstays in every child's life. In response, children and adults often find themselves dealing with what American author Richard Louv describes as 'nature-deficit disorder' – a reduced awareness and diminished ability to find meaning in the life around us. Louv links the current 'wired' generation's lack of exposure to nature with troubling conditions such as obesity and depression.





SMOTHERS PARK - OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

“Rapid urbanization, reliance on automobiles, and quite frankly, busy schedules are causing us to lose connection to our pastoral roots,” says EDSA Associate Principal, Eric Propes. “This is a global issue of today, as more than half of the world’s population lives in urban environments. Our natural instincts drive us to want to connect with nature and enjoy its numerous benefits.” For example, the growing popularity of Shinrin-yoku – the Japanese practice of ‘soaking up nature’s sights, smells, and sounds in a forest setting to promote physiological and psychological health – supports the growing desire for greater interaction with the outdoors. “Designers and developers alike are responding to this trend by increasing natural components in project design and utilizing contact with nature as a draw.”

A recent study in Scientific Reports, led by University of Chicago psychology professor Marc Berman, concluded that individuals are healthier, happier, and perhaps, even smarter and more creatively connected when they are exposed to nature. Likewise, adults who work in spaces that incorporate nature into the design are more productive, healthy, and inventive. Even hospital patients with views outdoors are said to heal faster. “But, for a variety of reasons, people lack opportunities to play freely and fully engage their senses – simply because of availability and access to natural options,” suggests Propes.

“Nature appeals to all of us,” says Katy Hallgren, EDSA Vice President. “It reinforces the knowledge that we are part of a larger system, and although it changes with the seasons, its rhythms are constant. We look to nature for clues and need to be in tune with its movements to design spaces that offer accessibility, awareness, and connectivity to the natural world.”

Renowned biologist Edward O. Wilson believes that humans are hard-wired with an innate affinity for nature – a hypothesis he calls ‘biophilia.’ This biological connection with nature helps explain why the smell of fresh flowers and sounds of crashing waves enthrall us; why the shadows of falling snow or echoes of a cascading waterfall instill fascination; and why human-animal camaraderie or hiking through woodlands have curative, restorative effects. The compilation of history, human intuition, and neural sciences illustrates that connections with nature are imperative to preserving a healthful and vibrant existence.



WEST LAKE PARK - HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA



KPMG LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION FACILITY  
- LAKE NONA, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

“WE LOOK TO NATURE FOR CLUES AND NEED TO BE IN TUNE WITH ITS MOVEMENTS TO DESIGN SPACES THAT OFFER ACCESSIBILITY, AWARENESS, AND CONNECTIVITY TO THE NATURAL WORLD.”

- KATY HALLGREN, VICE PRESIDENT

A survey by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that, on average, Americans spend 87% of their time indoors and 6% in an enclosed vehicle. Propes adds, “That doesn’t leave much time for Mother Nature. The linkage between psychological benefits and connecting with nature must inform development decisions during the planning and design process. Preserving land and creating nature-based occurrences, with something as simple as repositioning amenity programs, allows the natural world to be the experience – and that cannot be replicated.”

“Nature creates great memories because it engages all the senses,” says Rob Hutcheson, EDSA Associate Principal. “Part of why I’m a landscape architect is because of my eco-engaged childhood. We had massive woods to explore, expansive trails to ride our bikes, and plenty of green space to build forts and play outside. Things weren’t over-programmed – we figured-out what to do, and the outdoors served as our imagination canvas. As designers, we need to provide environmental connections but let people decide how, when, and why they engage – creating their own nostalgic moments.”

This human connection with nature could be the best medicine for people of all ages – improving health, happiness, and wellbeing, while acting as a method for environmental engagement. When people feel connected to nature, they are more likely to live sustainable lifestyles and support environmental causes that educate and engage others with the natural world. “As stewards of the land, landscape architects must promote land preservation and design in balance with the earth’s fragile ecosystems,” Hallgren adds. “From early conceptual planning through design implementation, we must prioritize the land’s resources and carrying capacity.”

“We advocate for the incorporation of nature into every project – constantly looking for ways to integrate environmental connections into a cohesive design aesthetic,” shares Hutcheson. “This means finding sustainable solutions that address climatic conditions, safety, and pollution, as well as social and environmental justice, while balancing authenticity of a design. The sustainability of a development is reliant on its ability to withstand the test of time and seamlessly blend into its surroundings – where buildings and spaces are organically juxtaposed into the landscape, and you couldn’t imagine it any other way.”

one of the goals of  
any landscape  
design is preserving  
a site’s NATURAL  
features and  
cultural UNIQUENESS







**individuals are** HEALTHIER,  
**happier, and perhaps**  
**even smarter and more**  
**creatively connected**  
**when they are** EXPOSED TO NATURE

“AS DESIGNERS, WE NEED TO  
PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL  
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THEY ENGAGE – CREATING THEIR  
OWN NOSTALGIC MOMENTS.”

— ROB HUTCHESON, ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

Many major metropolitan areas are actively seeking to provide a taste of nature and its benefits for residents. Public greenspace offerings like the High Line, a mile and a half park built on an elevated freight rail line along Manhattan’s West Side, have paved the way for new additions. “There’s a movement towards more elevated parks, pocket parks, and open spaces in urban areas around the country,” says Hutcheson. “In several large cities, buildings are incorporating rooftop gardens to introduce natural landscape elements, soften architecture, and provide areas for respite and creativity.”

Properly scaled incorporation of nature is a realistic option in regions and places where scenic backdrops and undeveloped lands are not readily available, or established infrastructure and architecture guide the design vernacular. Each situation needs to be considered individually with research and a performance-based look at materials, feasibility, and locale. “Simple elements can make a huge difference,” says Propes. “Whether we’re utilizing green buffers to block out noise and pollution or integrating water features for acoustic camouflage and organic movement, creating a natural feel in an urban setting comes down to the cohesion of small details.” In these instances, added environmental features, textures, and elements mirror the performance of nature and draw people outdoors.



VINHOMES CENTRAL PARK – HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM



ROSEWOOD CASTIGLION DEL BOSCO – MONTALCINO, ITALY



BAHIA BEACH RESORT & GOLF CLUB – RÍO GRANDE, PUERTO RICO

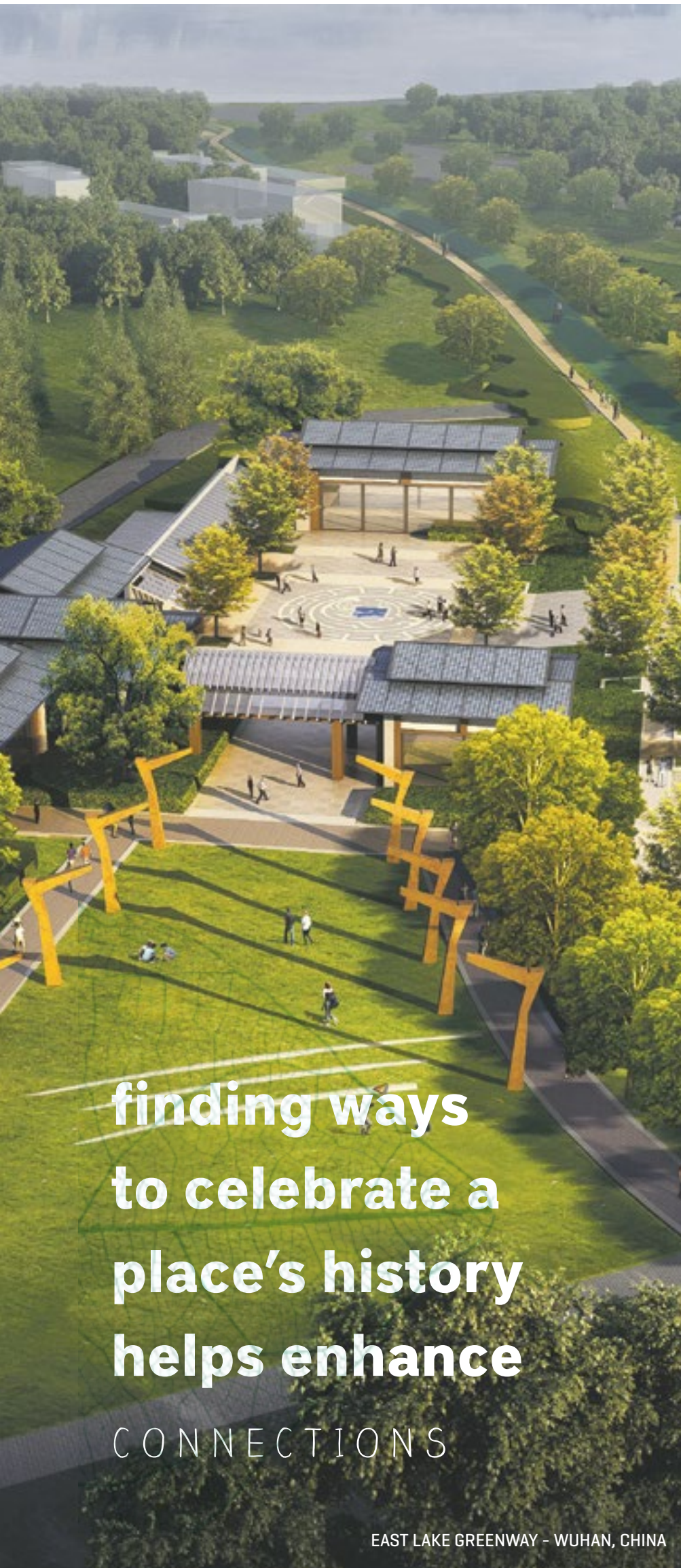
Reaching beyond urban centers, this ‘move-to-green’ is reaching corporate campuses, mixed-use hubs, resort destinations, and planned communities, where designers are allocating more space for natural meadows, park lands, and other open-air amenities. “Lawns are definitely a great back-to-nature attraction,” says Hutcheson. “We’re finding the more we offer grassy areas, the more people take advantage of them.” Hallgren agrees, “Large green areas are a functional and diverse design element that can be activated with a variety of uses – yoga in the morning, soccer in the afternoon, movies in the evening, and a farmers’ market on the weekend. Designing with programing in mind is extremely important for the realization of a space. You can put a large green area in a mixed-use project, for example, but if nothing is happening in it, people won’t want to be there.”

If people can’t access nature easily, then landscape architects can use their unique skill sets to bring nature to the people. KPMG LLP, one of the Big Four accounting firms, is building a state-of-the-art learning, development, and innovation center in Orlando’s Lake Nona community. “It’s a perfect example of bringing nature to people,” Hutcheson explains. “It’s next to a lake with a wetlands backdrop, so future development won’t have an adverse effect on the setting. The original plan was to clear out several groves of scrub oaks and saw palmettos, but we suggested nestling the east side of the development into the existing landscape. It will be a beautiful, nature-centric location.”

In the hospitality realm, this environmental inclusion translates into the design and placement of amenities with natural integration. “Some destinations are choosing green settings for amenity anchors like pool placement next to wooded areas,” Hutcheson explains. “Marriott’s Ocean Watch Villas at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach is a good example. The project would typically call for the removal of several trees to allow for the resort amenities, but we were able to carefully examine the site to find a way to achieve the program and save over 200 mature trees – minimizing any changes to the existing grades which included a tertiary dune.”

From private to public, ‘giving nature back’ is a sentiment felt across marketspace and geography. Local governments in many nations are taking up the torch – making changes in their cities to bring residents closer to nature. In Wuhan, China, EDSA designed the East Lake Greenway, a progressive project that includes construction of a six-lane roadway beneath a lake – China’s longest tunnel under an inland body of water – and a transformation of the greenway. “East Lake is one of the most popular tourist spots in Wuhan with over a million visitors each year. And, it is also the largest lake within a city in the country,” Hallgren says. “We wanted to bring residents closer to the natural environment. To make walking by the lake, swimming in the water, visiting the forests, and hiking in the mountains accessible activities. Relocating the highway underneath the lake and providing a varied and diverse greenspace network above has helped bring people back to nature, giving them a sense of place.”





finding ways  
to celebrate a  
place's history  
helps enhance  
CONNECTIONS

EAST LAKE GREENWAY - WUHAN, CHINA

“INCORPORATING NATURE  
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TO THE BETTERMENT OF  
SOCIETY’S WELL-BEING.”

- ERIC PROPES, ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

One of the goals of any landscape design is preserving a site's natural features and cultural uniqueness. “Every place should have a story. Finding ways to celebrate a place's history helps enhance connections. If it's a public area, it should engage its citizens, ensuring the design represents the various needs of the community, embraces local culture, and celebrates the natural environment,” says Propes.

EDSA is planning a major, 2,500-acre eco-park mountain resort in Wonju, South Korea and is recommending turning some of the acreage, that can't be used for development, into a nature area. “Part of the terrain is very steep but comprises a wealth of amazing natural features, so we are studying how to best preserve the land while incorporating world-class amenities,” describes Propes. “We want to truly immerse visitors and residents in the natural environment. It's isolated yet accessible from other areas and is a true departure from nearby urban development.” A high-speed rail will transport people directly from Seoul to a conveyance center within the site where a gondola is planned to complete the visitors' journey into this natural destination. “It's an opportunity for a different type of development,” says Propes. “It's not only about the non-replicated experience, but the convenience and availability of these natural environments to those living in large urban centers,” says Propes. “We would be providing a unique experience for people while preserving almost 80% of that natural land.”

Embracing nature isn't always at thousand-acre sites either. EDSA is designing University Village, an 80-acre, mixed-use, urban development in Boca Raton, Florida. “It's an urban type development but has natural buffers like lake edges and large contiguous greenspaces,” says Propes. “The developer wants us to help program the outdoor experience which will include trail systems, a yoga lawn, amenity spaces surrounding the lake, and more. University Village provides a unique offering, as it is tied to the El Rio Trail, a nearly five-mile-long, shared-use trail that parallels a canal and connects urban greenspaces throughout Palm Beach County. It provides a direct connection to an exciting outdoor experience by offering a great opportunity to view wildlife and experience a true departure from the adjacent urban environment.”

“We're designing areas so people have a greater relationship with their surroundings, where they can pause and benefit from what the outdoors has to offer,” adds Propes. “We need to interact with nature in a profound and meaningful way. Incorporating nature into design is essential for providing people opportunities to live, work, play, heal, and learn in healthy environments and spaces – contributing to the betterment of society's overall health and well-being.”



W HOTEL SOUTH BEACH - MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA



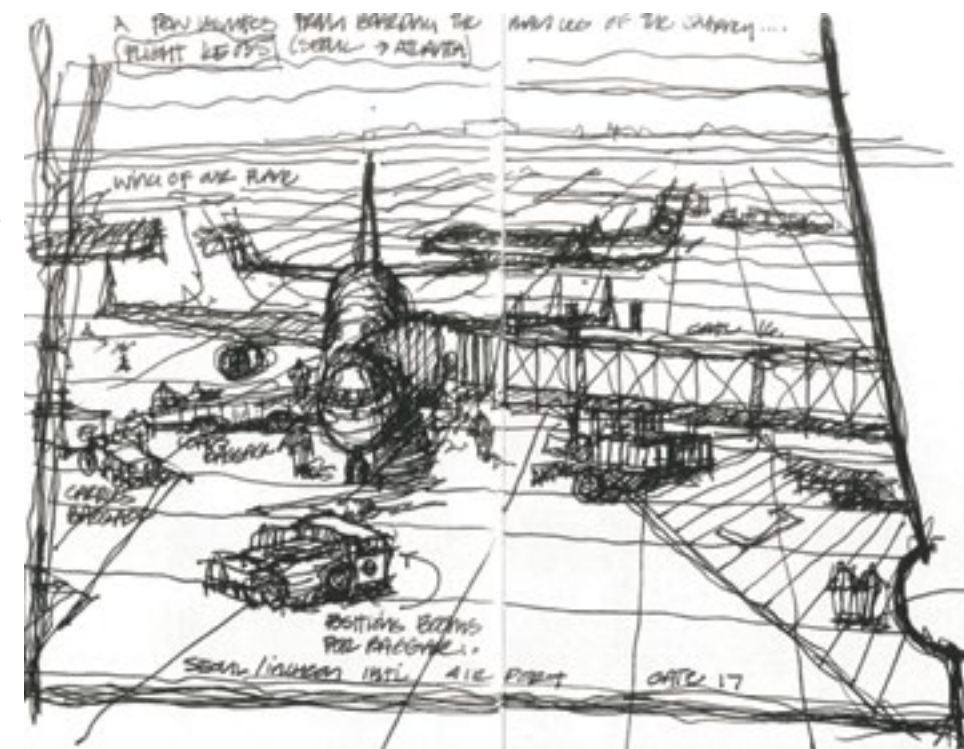
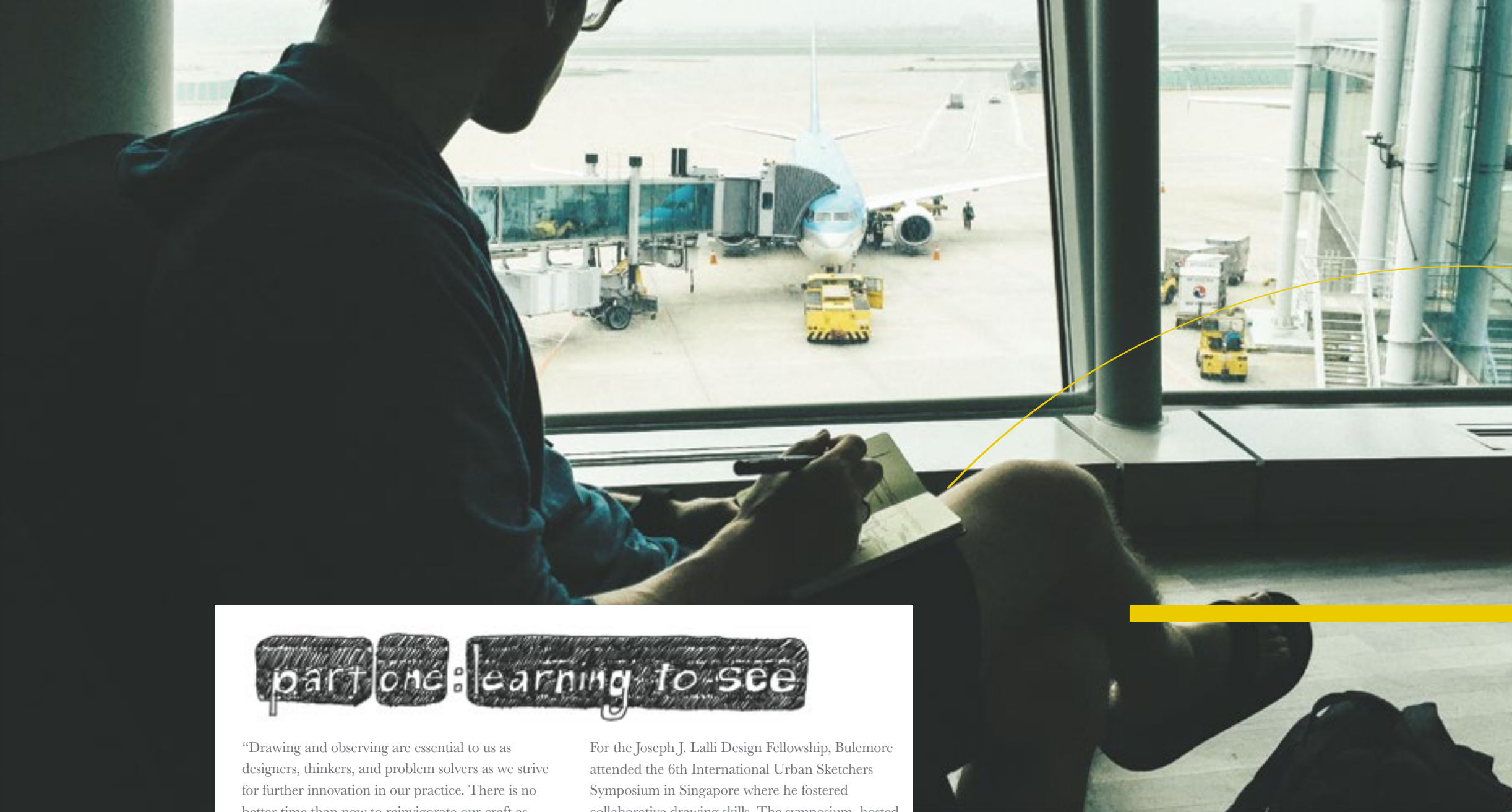




Danny Bulemore, the 2016 Joseph J. Lalli Fellowship Recipient explores the art of sketching.

Drawing moments inspires our work and informs what we do. It's putting pen to paper to put our dreams in motion. There is no greater lens than our own eyes, no richer resource than our own minds.





## part one: learning to see

“Drawing and observing are essential to us as designers, thinkers, and problem solvers as we strive for further innovation in our practice. There is no better time than now to reinvigorate our craft as stewards of creativity by considering a new approach to some of our most well-known talents – including design observation through cooperative group drawing,” offers Danny Bulemore, a Senior Associate at EDSA and recent recipient of the Joseph J. Lalli Design Fellowship. His insight, shared by many at EDSA, reflects the entire organization’s belief that the practices of drawing, observing, and, ultimately, designing are all strengthened by collaboration.

For the Joseph J. Lalli Design Fellowship, Bulemore attended the 6th International Urban Sketchers Symposium in Singapore where he fostered collaborative drawing skills. The symposium, hosted by the non-profit group Urban Sketchers, advocates the benefits of bringing architects, designers, poets, and journalists, among others, together to refine their skills in a synergistic movement focused on improving design observation through sketching.

During a summer at Michigan State, Bulemore exchanged several iterations of sketches with one of his professors, Dr. Jon Burley. Upon making progress, Dr. Burley commented that Bulemore was “learning to see” – developing a keen ability to look beyond the obvious and express the essence of what he was drawing. That message resonated with Bulemore and has fueled his continued interest in artistic growth – encouraging him to carry a sketchbook where ever he goes.



**Drawing and observing are essential to us as designers, thinkers, and problem solvers. There is no better time than now to reinvigorate our craft as stewards of creativity by considering a new approach to some of our most well-known talents.**

Bulemore transferred the skill set obtained from the Symposium to other EDSA team members – inspiring a new generation of design observers. “Being innovative means rethinking our approach to what we see and how we interpret it.” In looking at a photo, one can miss the particular way in which an arch is formed, why people walk along a certain path, or which painting people stare at most in a gallery. Drawing life’s realities, in real time, fosters greater observation and a better understanding of things. “It is the best way we can, and should, respond to and respect our professional craft,” Bulemore says.

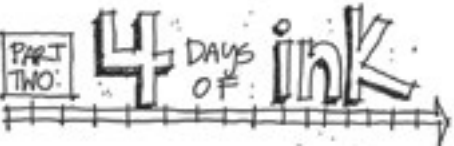
Bulemore identified three focused objectives for his journey. The first was to enhance his drawing and writing skills as an observant designer. The second was to record his experiences in an ‘observation pattern book’ – a collection of drawings, techniques, journaling, and graphic notes as a shareable resource. And lastly, he wanted to initiate a similar group sketching movement within EDSA called SketchEDSA – an informal collection of peers interested in growing their design observation skills in a collaborative manner.

“Embedded within EDSA’s design DNA is the notion of hand graphics and creative expression,” says Bulemore. “Even before joining the firm, I was inspired by their artistry. It is unbelievable to look at our body of work, and revel at the mastery for capturing and expressing ideas on paper so quickly. These talents, regardless of the rise in our dependence on technology, are more valuable than ever,” Bulemore asserts.

Capturing the spirit of time through quintessential moments helps form perspective, influence memories, and create history. Bulemore recalls the simple journal of his late grandfather, Art Marquis. As a brilliant engineer for more than 40 years, Marquis logged content daily, from meeting notes to what he had for lunch. “This collection has been incredible to look back through,” says Bulemore. “It’s an effort I hope to duplicate with a similar cadence in a graphic format.”

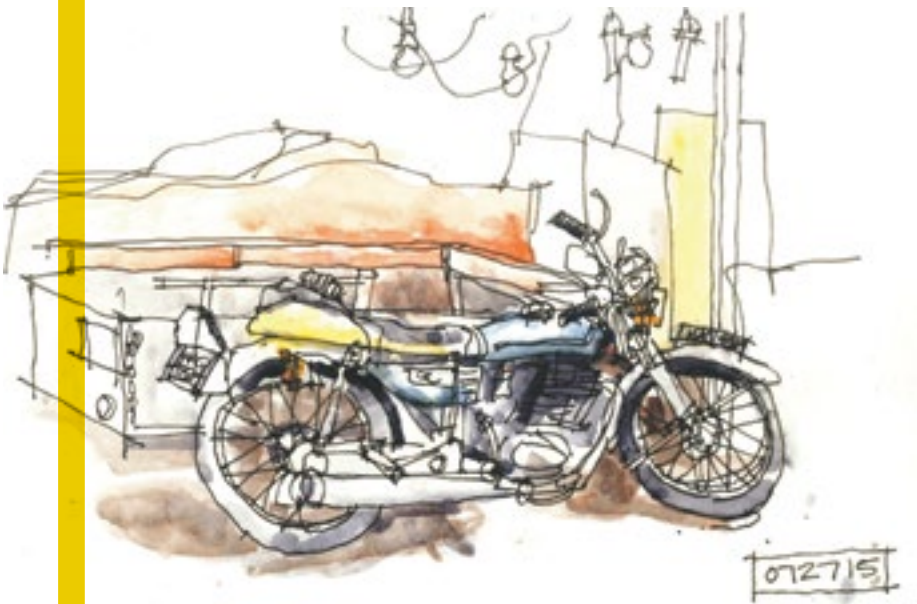


Routine sketching really helps deepen a cultural appreciation of a place while allowing us to memorialize, in ink, the favorites we encounter.



Nervous. Excited. Motivated. Ready. On a sunny Wednesday afternoon, the Symposium began, and Bulemore was immediately immersed in a culture of creative observation. People from six continents, 35 countries, and countless professional backgrounds gathered – all with a common interest and passion for drawing. “I distinctly remember the powerfully positive buzz in the room, many people already set-up with their tools, drawing anything and everything in their line of sight – an unmatched collection of thinkers and doodlers,” Bulemore recalls.

The greatest aspect of the Symposium beyond the actual sketching, was the camaraderie and friendship shared amongst the sketchers. “It was amazing to see the focus, commitment, interest, and drive of participants. People were there to DRAW!” Bulemore exclaims. “Not everyone was an expert, not everyone was fluent in the same language, but we were all there to draw – and draw we did! Some, like me, were first-timers; some there for a second time; and others their sixth; but for everyone it was a catalyst for creative expression and growth.”



“In preparing my schedule, instinct led me towards sessions with my favorites like Frank Ching, Jim Richards, and other pillars of the architectural graphics community. If I remember correctly, it was Jim who told me, ‘Why would you take my course? You’ve already learned what I will teach.’ His advice gave me a fresh perspective on course selection and helped me reset,” Bulemore says.

The first workshop Bulemore attended was ‘Actors on Stage’ with Marc Holmes, an artist who has worked as a director and designer at Electronic Arts, Microsoft, and Disney. “As a character artist, Marc’s ability to capture people and entourage in a sketchy yet realistic fashion is incredible. I was not familiar with his style and it encouraged a new avenue of growth for my sketching abilities,” Bulemore shares. After reviewing some of the fundamentals Marc used for building a character, the group headed to busy Waterloo Street to practice. “Throughout the morning, we had three or four breakout sessions where we would choose people we saw, study, and draw. Marc suggested we begin with the heads of our subjects to identify a basic silhouette shape on which to drape features such as hair. From there, we were instructed to add more heads and moving limbs, and break it up with darks.”

Bulemore attended several other workshops including ‘Capturing Chaos – Drawing a Crowd’ led by Suhita Shirodkar, Liz Steel’s workshop ‘Pointless Perspective’, a mini-activity on sketching food hosted by Anita Ryanto, and ‘Urban Sketcher’s Cookbook’ with Veronica Lawlor. Lawlor broke down the drawing method into a collection of ingredients – sweet, sour, bitter, salty, spicy – collectively making up a recipe for a great drawing. “Veronica helped us capture the components and characteristics that most strongly defined a scene. I initially struggled to find the right ‘ingredients’, but with Veronica’s informative critiques, I was able to break the urge to draw lines and find other ways to express shapes, objects, and forms.”





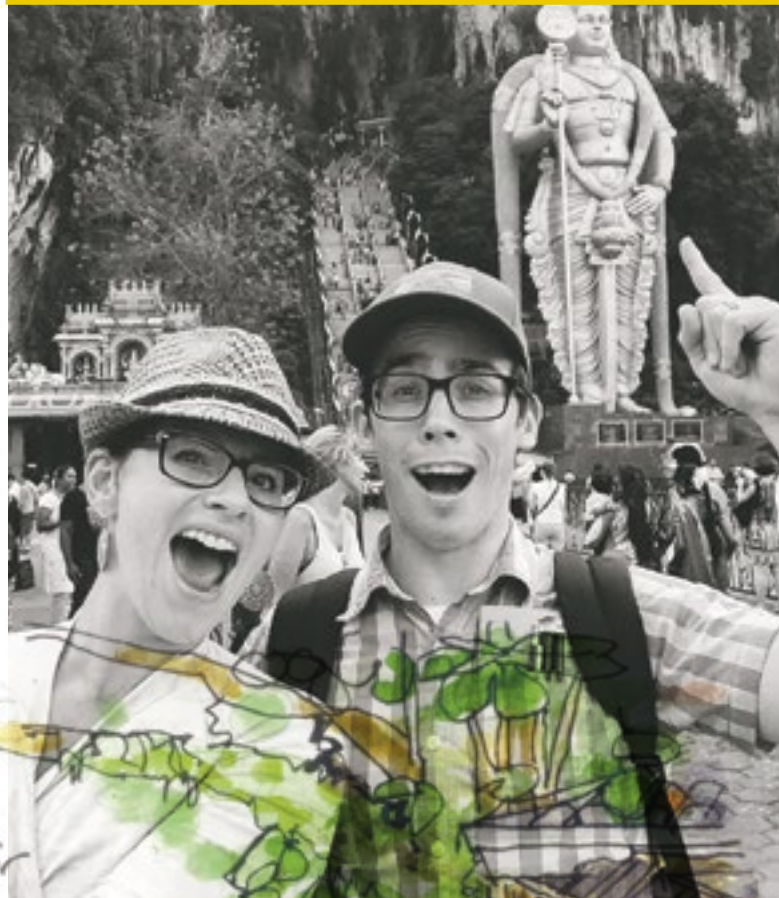




## PART THREE FELLOWSHIP TRAVEL DOODLES

After departing Singapore, Bulemore and his wife arrived Sunday morning in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They quickly took a taxi to Batu Caves, a series of caves and Hindu temples in nearby Selangor. “I was excited to get out and explore this renowned tourist attraction that held such strong significance to the locals. The visit gave me the opportunity to hone my newly acquired skills,” says Bulemore. While in Kuala Lumpur, they also visited the Museum of Islamic Art and the National Mosque to learn more about the local heritage and history. “We moved quickly through many exhibits of models, artwork, painting, fabrics, and wardrobes. Having a small ‘diary’-size notebook was a great tool to collect quick scribbles of interesting things we observed. And, when we needed to move on, I simply put it in my front pocket and continued onward,” Bulemore says.

Despite some intense rain and lightning, they were able to visit LangKawi Sky Bridge, a precedent case study for a recent EDSA project. “The first-hand experience was awe inspiring – providing me with the opportunity to finish my journal, enjoy the beach, and reflect on a powerful adventure,” Bulemore recalls.



Our last full day in Langkawi was filled with rain. Fortunately, the Bon Tan resort has a terrific open air common house, perfect for lunch, drinks, or general observation of the grounds. We grabbed the end table closest to the marsh where we found a unique view of relaxation – something that is difficult NOT to find at this tranquil getaway.



A primary goal of Bulemore's Fellowship was to reignite interest in team sketching and group observation. After returning from his travels abroad, he contacted mentors Jim Richards and Bob Chipman to help get things rolling. “As committed Landscape Architects, Richards and Chipman have been at the forefront of a ‘sketching renaissance’ within the professional community. Inviting them to lead an EDSA workshop on the relevance and importance of drawing to enhance our design vocabulary was extremely motivating,” shares Bulemore.

The next day, Bulemore led the first official SketchEDSA. From a visit to Fort Lauderdale's Bonnet House, to group sketching at Lauderdale-by-the-Sea's recently upgraded retail streetscape environment, to stopping by Miami's famous Lincoln Road and St. Bernard de Clairvaux Church, SketchEDSA has certainly gained momentum. “We're fortunate to have so many incredibly talented individuals working together,” Bulemore states. “It's important to me to share my insights and contribute what I can to SketchEDSA. It has become a movement that provides for process improvement, exchange of knowledge, and a forum to continuously improve and advance our craft.”

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The most compelling influences come from personal observations, experiences, and memories. Exploring place sparks reconnaissance – an absorption of tastes, sights, sounds, smells, textures, scale, colors, faces, and people. These types of experiences are crucial to designers. They offer an intimate collection of references and contribute to a memory bank – the most powerful design tool.

“I tried to capture by sketchbook, journal, photograph, and conversation as diverse and well-rounded an experience as possible from which we all can grow. If nothing more, I hope my experience provides proof that the practice of drawing, observing, and ultimately designing is rooted in collaboration – contagious and achievable by anyone,” concludes Bulemore.

Bulemore continues to be influenced by his experiences at the Urban Sketchers Symposium. He hopes to participate in future symposiums and has elevated the SketchEDSA legacy with many more sketch crawls!





## The Hospitality

# JOURNEY

As the global hospitality industry continues to thrive and optimism prevails, most major industry players are seeking to strategically deploy and optimize their capital investments. Responding to a fueling demand for diversification, mid-level hospitality brands are upgrading their services and amenities in an effort to increase their bottom lines while driving guest satisfaction and capturing additional market share.

## A SHIFTING marketplace

In the past decade, the hospitality market has seen new segmentation and a realignment between traditional hospitality drivers such as luxury, and emerging trends such as authenticity, value, and enriching experiences. One of the most prominent of these trends is the new presence of the sharing economy.

The history of hostels provides a glimpse into the beginning of this movement. Dating back to 1912, hostels largely catered to students and backpackers with a need for budget-aware accommodations – for which they were willing to accept no-frills lodging and shared communal spaces. Today, with the emergence of Airbnb, VRBO.com, and other travel accommodations not managed through traditional hotel brands, the ability to secure high-end, residential-style lodging at value prices has become more attainable.

Tracking alongside this emerging market is a renewed focus on social experiences – which is now becoming an essential part of the hospitality offering for brands wishing to stay competitive. According to Marco Larrea, EDSA Principal, “Substantially aligned with the desires of today’s travelers, lower-cost, amenity-rich, lifestyle hotel concepts are becoming highly viable in major markets. This is especially true when traditional hotel rates are prohibitively expensive and unique atmospheres, architecture, and cultural elements create greater demand.”

Additionally, millennial travelers are dramatically shifting global trends – calling into question products and offerings that have for decades been mainstays. More and more vacationers, even those who can afford conventional luxury, are opting to stay in affordable hotels. The reason for this shift includes a growing middle class, which has opened up new opportunities for hotel investors. “For countries with a high reliance on tourism, it is imperative that brands widen their accommodation choices beyond ultra-luxury hotels,” suggests Edwin Linquist, EDSA Principal. “Concerned more with quantity of travel and time spent exploring a destination, and less with the fixtures, finishes, and thread count in a hotel room, today’s tourists are more cost-conscious and experience-focused than ever before – for business and leisure travel alike. And when it comes to quality – quality doesn’t necessarily mean luxury. Demand is dictating a shift towards well-located and tech-savvy hotels regardless of star category rating.”



## Moving from exclusive to ENGAGING

In response to the call for more memorable experiences, new brands are departing from the ‘home away from home’ philosophy of hospitality – favoring smaller guestrooms, emphasizing functional design, and creating public spaces that stimulate social interaction. Congruent with the architecture and overall persona of a property, amenity programs in these no-fuss destinations support wholesome and healthy lifestyles, while enhanced technology and integration of local cultural elements support design, the guest experience, and levels of service.

With a focus on added conveniences, affordable luxury decreases costs by removing unnecessary finishes and service offerings. “The most important requirement in a hotel for today’s travelers is a well-connected location with clean rooms. As such, large guestrooms and full-service restaurants are being replaced with more practical alternatives such as smaller rooms, grab-and-go food and beverage outlets, and free Wi-Fi usage,” explains Linquist.

“Affordable luxe requires brands to remain steadfast to the non-negotiable details – for without them the brand would be diluted,” shares Craig Stoner, EDSA Vice President. Case in point is Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants Group, who recently opened their first project in the Caribbean. Typically representative of smaller, urban boutique properties, Kimpton focused on the design, technology, and food and beverage outlets that define their brand essence. “Known for its engaging and fun properties that attract legions of loyal travelers, the company wanted to diversify its guest base, while at the same time generate additional corporate business from meetings and conventions,” explains Stoner.

‘Memorable’ was one of the mantras for the 266-room Kimpton Seafire Resort & Spa, the first development along the Seven Mile Beach stretch in over a decade. “Kimpton is recognized as a four-star, urban hotel group that caters to the mid-level market but provides guests with five-star service and luxury amenities,” says Stoner. “While the design depicts a sense of place consistent with their boutique styling, Kimpton was deliberate to include offerings that appealed to leisure and corporate group segments.” Catering to hotel guests, conference/meeting clientele, and the locals, the luxury exterior package emphasizes common areas, restaurants, and amenities as focal points. “These communal spaces seamlessly blend with the lobby, while their concepts and designs focus on attracting local demand and inviting guests to spend more time congregating in revenue-generating areas of the hotel.”



DREAMS LAS MAREAS - GUANACASTE, COSTA RICA



KIMPTON SEAFIRE RESORT & SPA - GRAND CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS

EDSA created an open-air, contemporary design with numerous amenities including a 1,300-square-foot event lawn, a communal fire pit, interconnected biking and walking paths, a 5,000-square-foot pool, as well as native botanical gardens. Wine hours, bike fleets, and larger al fresco dining tables support Kimpton’s desire for a highly-social, active resort environment. “Spaces are simple and elegant with varied ‘pockets of found seating’, so guests can get away or have privacy,” says Stoner. “The entire site has Wi-Fi connectivity, which is available whether a guest is enjoying the pool, dining in one of the four restaurants, or sitting in a cabana beside the curvilinear spilling pools.”




ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT - ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Substantially aligned with the desires of today’s travelers, lower-cost, amenity-rich, lifestyle hotel concepts are becoming highly viable in major markets.

Marco Larrea, Principal





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requires brands to  
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Craig Stoner, Vice President

Larrea continues, “We succeeded in creating several destinations within the property rather than just one or two buildings.” Instead of large dining venues, EDSA designed seven alternatives for Las Mareas that are dispersed throughout the property. On the way to a restaurant, guests walk among the lush vegetation – connecting with nature. They may encounter a Central American squirrel monkey or mantled howler – two of the four species of monkeys that are native to the forests of Costa Rica. “Not something you expect at an all-inclusive resort,” comments Larrea.

Other resort amenities were also refined. Rather than one enormous pool where all guests gather, EDSA created a free form organic water area set within the existing tree canopy. Walkways lead guests away from the hotel where they can explore the outdoors on foot, bicycle, or horseback. “We wanted to site experiences in the right places and in ways that stress responsible tourism. Our design efforts and programming helped build a loyal and skilled local workforce, reduce energy usage and waste, source fresh local produce, and offer an exciting range of sensitively-planned excursions,” adds Larrea.

Hospitality companies don’t simply change their direction or offerings on a whim. It’s about understanding who your client is, who you want to attract in the future, and making sure you have the right amenities and offerings for them. Linquist explains, “It’s about understanding what you need to fill the hotel or resort in the downtimes or to shoulder the season.” By becoming more attuned to the preferences of current and potential guests in defined segments, hospitality companies can more accurately target and build meaningful, lasting relationships.

## Redefining All-INCLUSIVE

“As lodging products enter today’s competitive global market, new contenders must understand the most important aspects for developing, successfully launching, and positioning themselves for growth. Understanding your target customer segments and staying relevant is essential,” suggests Larrea. “Customers do not buy ‘stays’ – they buy ‘feelings’, and the design must ensure the concept translates into unique guest experiences.”

AMResorts, a collection of all-inclusive, international resort destinations, each with its own unique personality, was also seeking to enter a different segment of the hospitality market. “All-inclusives are one of the most rapidly growing segments in the marketplace, and AMResorts is not only one of the most recognized brands in the world but one of the fastest growing companies in Mexico and Latin America,” says Larrea.

Guests at all-inclusives typically pay one price for lodging, meals, drinks, and activities. Visitors usually stay in one or two large, dormitory-like structures, and meals are typically served in cafeteria-styled rooms that can resemble the size of a football field. “AMResorts wanted us to be creative, and the Dreams Las Mareas site in Costa Rica was ideal,” says Larrea. “We held several discussions and walked the property before any design development started. They were open to new ideas, because they wanted to grow the brand. We shared some preliminary thoughts, and they showed us their research.” The result – an all-inclusive, 32-acre resort located on an expansive palm-studded beach, surrounded by lush green mountains and jungles.



JW MARRIOTT SAN ANTONIO HILL COUNTRY RESORT & SPA • SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

THE HOSPITALITY JOURNEY 66





The most important requirement in a hotel for today’s travelers is a well-connected location with clean rooms. As such, large guest rooms and full-service restaurants are being replaced with more practical alternatives.

Ed Linquist, Principal

NAPA VALLEY MARIOTT HOTEL & SPA - NAPA, CALIFORNIA

# Generating REVENUE

The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino brand, recognized for more than a decade for its music theme and hip crowd, was seeking a change for its Hollywood, Florida destination. “The Hard Rock organization is no longer just about rock ‘n’ roll,” explains Stoner. “Wanting to be viewed as family-oriented, they sought to refresh and expand amenities as a means to heighten interest among new market groups.”

Water activities oftentimes can reposition a property seeking additional business. EDSA’s amenity design at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood includes 3 acres of water features, differing themed pools and swimming lagoons, as well as overwater cabanas. “The design intent was to create activities and zoned exterior spaces that appeal to multiple audiences.” Stoner adds, “There are distinct offerings and niche attractions for various groups including places for guests to swim, paddleboard, or simply relax at either family areas or adult pools.

Also trending is the need to welcome locals and stay-cationers. While ‘heads in beds’ is critical and typically the most profitable revenue stream, mid-tier hospitality brands are broadening their scope and taking other areas of the hotel into consideration. Public event spaces, function terraces, great lawns, food and beverage outlets, and day spas can lead to greater capital gains.

“If an owner is trying to grow the meeting business, they need to make sure they have sufficient breakout space,” Linquist explains. “Properties need to have event lawns and flexible outdoor spaces that can accommodate varying group sizes. Does a resort want to schedule parties around the pool or host a large group on the pool deck for a cocktail event? They have to be designed with the capacity and space to do so.” At Hilton Marco Island Beach Resort & Spa, EDSA adapted the pool area for events, created pre-function terraces and an event lawn, and enhanced the guest experience with a lobby courtyard, porte cochere island, and landscape treatments. This ultimately improved usage rates by business and leisure travelers.

## Shaping Guests’ Experiences

Travelers are seeking personal experiences and flexible amenities that encourage collaborative consumption.

### Passive Recreation

### Community Interaction

### Experiential Alternatives

### Family Entertainment

Similarly, at the Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa, renovations modernized the resort’s look to be more consistent with brand standards and expanded the destination’s reach with a strategy that fits the location. The design concept created a series of spaces along a strong axial line, respectful of the hotel geometry. The axial line is enforced by vertical forms including a sunken lounge space, formal pool, and function lawn – culminating in an outdoor lounge fireplace at the terminus. While the axial approach is bold and dominating, spaces supporting this spine are quaint and relaxing – creating outdoors rooms that serve as an extension of the hotel’s interior. Additionally, mid-tier hotels are differentiating themselves by showcasing local art, offering locally-sourced foods, and creating onsite programming that highlights regional culture. At select Renaissance Hotels, for instance, travelers can get a taste for the local music scene with concerts co-produced by a local entertainment company.

## What Lies AHEAD

While brands are repositioning themselves throughout the world, many are not reacting to the latest wave to hit the industry – the sharing economy. Although the topic creates constant discussion, hospitality brands believe the trend to be fleeting – but change is on the horizon. Companies like YouRent.com offer residential-style lodging in buildings corporately owned and centrally managed. They’ve taken the Airbnb concept one step further to be able to deliver consistent design, reliable features and amenities, social interaction and camaraderie, and advantageous locations in the heart of the cities they operate in – and they’re expanding. Similarly, many rental apartment communities are considering a broader interpretation of leasing that would allow for shorter-term stays and even residual income for residents who wish to sublet. As these choices continue to grow and develop, it is likely to have a tremendous impact on resort design. “Once it becomes possible to replicate the comforts of home, plus the amenities and services of a resort, all at a price point below traditional hospitality, the paradigm is going to change dramatically for hotels,” says Stoner.

“It’s been said that the journey toward creating a customer for life begins with a guest’s first stay,” says Larrea. “It must be memorable. The value EDSA can bring to our clients is the ability to stay ahead of trends by adding enriching moments that go beyond just the availability of a pool or on-site tennis court – instead, we create tailored guest experiences that are immediate and lasting.”



# GOOD [ THE *greater* ]

Winston Churchill once asked, “What is the use of living, if not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?”

At EDSA, we too believe in embracing our grander purpose for the greater good of our communities, profession, and society. Whether that be in small kindnesses or impressive gestures, there are more ways than one to make a difference in the lives of those around us.



This spirit of giving lies at the very heart of what EDSA represents. The firm’s founder, Ed Stone, was the ideal gentleman – a rare combination of charisma, warmth, and infinite wisdom, with a yearning desire to give back. His philanthropic efforts created an enduring atmosphere of social responsibility amongst EDSA employees, resulting in a multitude of physical, monetary, and time-related donations that bring much-needed help to those less fortunate. “Contributing to our communities by actively supporting local and national charities is woven into the fabric of our firm. We work hard to infuse a philanthropic and ‘others-minded’ ideology that is consistent with our core values,” shares EDSA Chief Financial Officer, Joaquin Vendrell.

Despite altruistic intentions, fostering a community of giving at work can seem daunting and without reciprocity. As it turns out, encouraging corporate giving and volunteerism actually increases the bottom line and leads to a happier and more engaged workforce. A recent Harvard Business School study suggests that volunteerism directly correlates with an increased sense of happiness – suggesting a positive feedback loop between employee morale, engagement, and retention. According to the Corporate Leadership Council, employees who are most engaged with their employers perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization. What’s more, in a survey completed by YouGov, employee volunteerism can drive benefit straight to the bottom line. Employees actively engaged in community programs are more satisfied in their work, with 85% saying their perception of their company had improved and 71% of employees citing volunteering programs as key to improving personal well-being.





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Source: YouGov

“In our experience, employee retention improves as team members realize their altruistic needs can be met through EDSA and it’s protocol to make a difference and give back to the social and professional causes they care about,” says Vendrell. “Anytime an outreach event occurs, there is always a residual effect of courtesy and patience toward one another. But, with a corporate citizenship and leadership model that places the needs of others before its own, a sustained improvement in morale develops throughout the entire team.”

Prosperous businesses know that defining a core value based on community service, charitable giving, and volunteerism will benefit their bottom line beyond increasing employee engagement and retention. It also promotes team building, strengthens community appreciation, and aligns company goals with employee values. “Maintaining an unselfish way of life brings exponential returns to yourself, your employees, and others. The greatest joys are found in helping others, encouraging their next steps, and nurturing the people around you,” shares EDSA Principal, Kona Gray. “Fostering an environment of giving means encouraging and supporting time away from the office for special service projects and

organized group efforts. It also means that as leaders, we need to take the initiative and get the ball rolling, if it isn’t already happening organically.”

Encouraging employees to reach beyond their everyday work responsibilities does more than just help the community – it provides the individual with a greater sense of fulfillment and creates a bond of partnership between employers and their employees. The end result is a cohesive, inspired team that is passionate about coming to work. This definitely holds true for EDSA, where firm-wide, organized projects have turned into a tradition of giving.

From the simple deed of ‘paying it forward’ with free parking, holding doors, and planting herb gardens for local restaurateurs; to packaging meal kits with Stop Hunger Now; partnering with industry organizations like the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF), and Urban Land Institute (ULI); and participating in United Way’s ‘Day of Caring’ and Habitat for Humanity efforts, EDSA has supported employee outreach for a multitude of charitable and professional entities across the globe.



**“Fostering an environment of giving means encouraging and supporting time away from the office for special service projects and organized group efforts.”**

Kona Gray, Principal







Gray explains, “It all starts with someone saying ‘Let’s do it!’ Last year, my team and I embarked on a mission to increase our physical contribution to our community. Our first effort was a beach clean-up, where our activity aligned with the influx of collegiate tourists to Fort Lauderdale. Armed with plastic bags, gloves, and buckets, we made our way down to the shoreline and spring break tailgaters. At first we encountered a bit of annoyance from our sudden disruption, but the vacationers soon began thanking us and, little by little, joined in picking up garbage. There was a total shift in the attitudes around us.” This small effort instigated a tradition of regular volunteerism. “Our next environmental improvement effort involved paddleboards and the intra-coastal waterway.”

As a profession, landscape architects serve as stewards of the land and activists for social justice. EDSA has made this their mission, supported by a strategic business strategy that encourages and supports efforts with pro-bono work – so that all users of the world’s landscape can thrive in inspiring outdoor spaces. “There is a social profitability in this kind of work that cannot be measured on a balance sheet,” expresses Gray. “It means having the capacity to serve – knowing that what you’re doing for a community is changing how people live.”



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**“Our goal is for every employee to contribute to the greater good and proudly say ‘I have made a difference in my profession, community, and the world – and I am a better person because of it.’”**

Paul Kissinger, Principal

“We chose to be landscape architects to improve places for people, and luckily for me, I have had the opportunity to do just that on a daily basis,” remarks EDSA Principal, Paul Kissinger. Early in his career, Kissinger assisted with pro-bono projects like designing a playground at the Children’s Diagnostic Center, supporting community events, and participating in Leadership Broward. “EDSA gave me the initial push toward civic servitude and community outreach that has led to a sustained enthusiasm for giving back – certainly shaping the person I am today. Our goal is for every employee to contribute to the greater good and proudly say ‘I have made a difference in my profession, community, and the world – and I am a better person because of it,’” Kissinger says.

This kind of giving is a clandestine type of professional development. “While writing a check is important, the opportunity to grow as a person comes from the act of volunteering and the ability to bring value to another,” expresses Kissinger. “Actively inviting or tasking junior team members to participate from the start of their careers, and then leading by example, cultivates an environment of giving back. This translates into strengthened community connections, fulfilled and engaged employees, and most importantly, a mitigation of the many issues that are affecting humanity and our environment.”





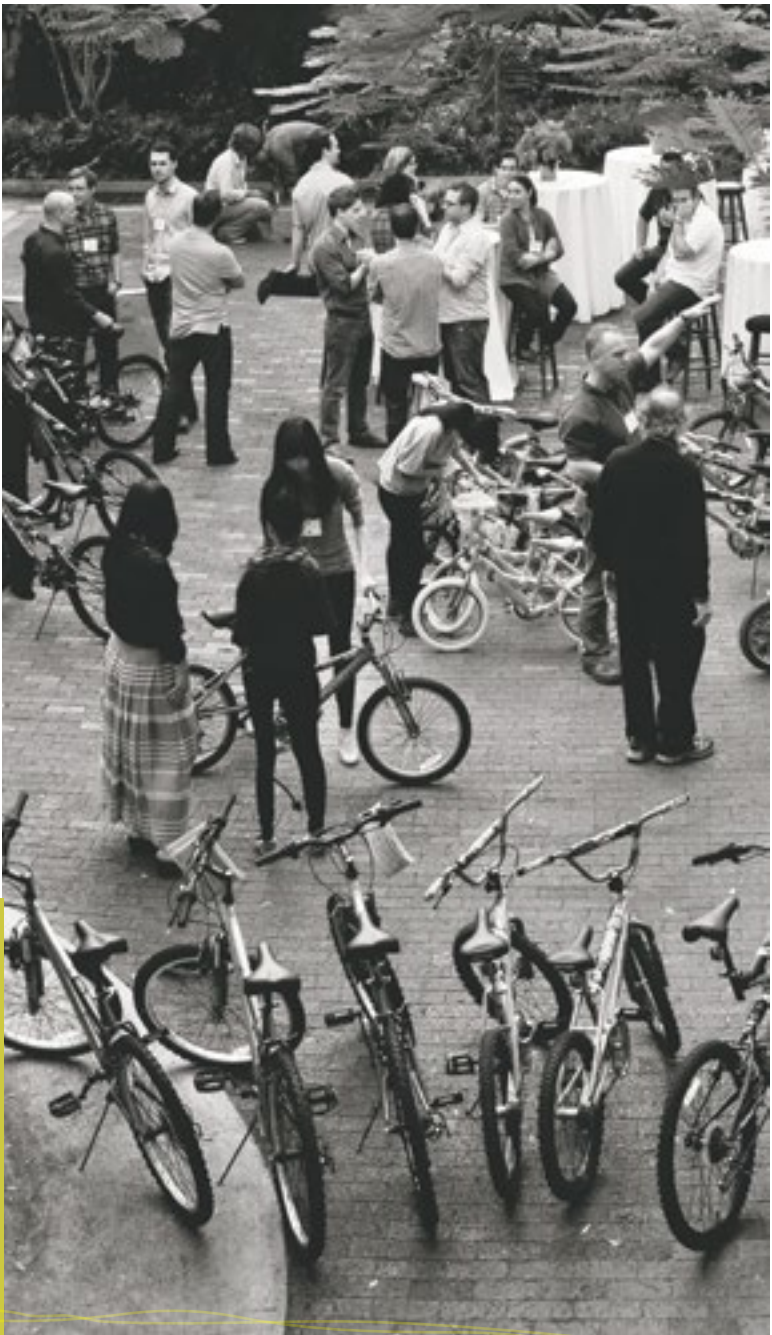
these endeavors and discuss every venture internally with our leadership. Additionally, each non-profit partner provides an in-kind statement of activities that allows us to place numerical value to the outcome of ‘giving.’ In this way, we can celebrate our successes and empower employees toward future acts of volunteerism. We are also able to properly quantify and justify our efforts,” Vendrell explains.

So, how much time is too much time spent outside the office? And, how do you balance professional outreach with work requirements? “It’s simple,” says Gray. “You have to focus on the essential things in life, and once you’ve done those you can work on helping others. It’s not about a lot of time – it’s about quality time.” For most companies, proper time management and a focus on priorities can eliminate the risk of ‘too much time’. “Being smart about how you give and volunteer your time for efficiency and effectiveness matters,” says Kissinger. By using non-profits with full-bodied volunteer programs or social enterprises that specialize in servicing large groups, employees can spend more time volunteering, not planning.

One of EDSA’s core values is to *Embrace your greater purpose – Act with accountability. Positively influence lives. Leave your mark, and do it responsibly – on society, in your community, and around the globe.* “At a leadership level, we strive to build a healthy triple bottom line: increase

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Joaquin Vendrell, Chief Financial Officer



Numerous EDSA alumni were mentored by their leaders in this manner, and this has instigated a lifelong passion – turning philosophy into philanthropy. “My pro-bono career started early,” remembers Gray. “Joe Lalli selected me to join him for work at the Bonnet House, a beloved historic landmark in downtown Fort Lauderdale. That experience was a catalyst leading to my involvement in several organizations and other pro-bono assignments.” One of the most recognizable efforts was Gratigny Plateau Park in Miami-Dade County. EDSA was able to dramatically reimagine a dilapidated, abandoned track of community land that had become a breeding ground for drugs and crime, and turn it into a beautiful park and social space – giving new life to a neighborhood in need. “It took a lot of effort but was worth every second. This is the good stuff that inspires employees – a simple feeling of human connection that is just magic. People want to know, not just believe, that what they’re doing is making a difference.”

This memorable park design reinvigorated a blighted district, and with all in-kind donations, the design and construction were secured at no cost to the community. This humbling experience reinforces the role of landscape architecture as a vehicle for improving quality of life. Today, the park serves as an amenity for the people, with walking paths, fitness stations, a playground, and butterfly garden.

When it comes to pro-bono design, tracking efforts and employee support are incredibly important to success. “At EDSA, we carefully monitor

financial and shareholder value, contribute to permanent environmental solutions, and move the needle of society toward the advancement and betterment of our communities and our nation,” says Vendrell. “I’d like to believe we all desire to make positive social change a priority.”

“In the end, we all share the collective responsibility of helping those less fortunate, and Corporate America should be leading that charge,” remarks Vendrell. “Time is our current commodity, and although monetary gifts can provide both practical and tangible benefits – time spent is priceless. Think about the last time someone went out of their way and broke their stride for you. You can never out-give compassionate acts – they always return tenfold.”

“It is a privilege and an honor to be able to do what we do,” adds Kissinger. “We are making a conscious effort to embrace our greater purpose and improve the fabric of our communities. You can tie yourself to the redwood tree to save the tree, or you can work within the system and save the forest. The latter is our goal at EDSA – to make a difference by volunteering our expertise, passion, and commitment – both traditionally and non-traditionally – through our work as landscape architects and in our external outreach.”

As Margaret Mead so perfectly stated, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

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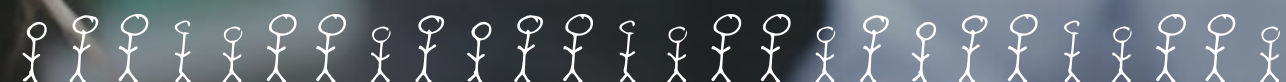
- Margaret Mead



FIVE LOCATIONS

BALTIMORE FT. LAUDERDALE NEW YORK ORLANDO SHANGHAI

122 PEOPLE



1 BUCKET LIST



### The bucket list:

A list of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime.

## what's in your bucket?

More than just drops in a bucket, this collection of 122 unique and diverse thoughts and perspectives helps define EDSA as part of a greater whole.





Time  
SPENT WITH  
**FAMILY**  
IS WORTH EVERY  
*Second*

10

friends and family

10 people shared familial sentiments.

**Cara Critchlow:** See my son's children grow up

**Scott Lamont:** Watching a game with my wife in every NFL Stadium

10

dream it  
design it  
build it

10 people described building, designing or creating something.

**Jill Martinez:** Write a children's book

**Derick Cissel:** Design my own home from scratch

22

other cool  
buckets

22 people had other cool buckets with out of the box ideas that didn't fit neatly into a category.

**Andrew Schmidt:** Put soap in a public fountain

**Carson Lindley:** Fly in a wing suit

**Sandra MacDonald:** SpaceX Red Dragon Mission

14

#liveyouradventure

14 people expressed some kind of non-water related adventure bucket items.

HIKE

FLY


EXTREME SPORTS

**Jon Champlin:** Hike the Pacific Crest Trail while growing a beard

**Jose Jaguan:** Sky dive by Angel Falls

**James Palmer:** Heli-Ski in Alaska





OUR WILLINGNESS TO  
EVOLVE, EMBRACE AND  
INTEGRATE CHANGE INTO  
OUR WORK MAKES THE  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
STAGNATION AND TRUE  
DESIGN INNOVATION.



