

Landscape Architecture Practice in a Time of Physical Distancing

Live webinar 03/27/20 at 1pm ET

Transcript

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Alright. Hi everyone. I'm Barbara Deutsch the CEO of the Landscape Architecture Foundation, your beloved LAF, and we're so glad that you could be here today for this candid conversation to share perspectives ideas and strategies about landscape architecture practice in a time of physical distancing.

You've got many landscape architects, planners, city leaders, students, faculty, and many others from the many ways to practice this wonderful profession from all over the continent on this webinar. So I thank you for all being here. We appreciate you sharing your interests when you registered which ranged from the immediate and tactical. How do we keep projects moving?

How do we serve our clients, work at home, how to collaborate, what are other firms doing to keep employees engaged and upbeat? To the longer-term strategic foresight and thinking such as what does this epidemic mean to create- to creation of exterior spaces? What does our future work environment look like? How is COVID changing the way society operates? So we've also got industry leaders on the call and I'd like to start by thanking our sponsors of this webinar for their support and convening this important opportunity to come together: Coldspring, Landscape Forms, and Permaloc.

In addition to sponsoring this webinar, its been so heartwarming to hear how these three companies have, not only have they invested in LAF across multiple initiatives and their cumulative support is instrumental in a successful delivery of of all our annual programs, but like your organizations and like we will hear from the presenters on this webinar, each of their businesses have been impacted in unique ways resulting in unique responses.

As a courier and fabricator of all types of natural stone and a manufacturing leader supporting the construction and death care industries, Coldspring will maintain its and continued support of customers and these industries during this time while upholding a strong commitment to providing exceptional service and taking measures to ensure the health and safety of employees and partners.

As a result of the executive order to stay home and stay safe in Michigan, and with the desire to keep customers, employees, and local communities safe, Permaloc postponed normal business operations on March 24th, but during the shutdown staff for working from home and with the ability to provide project consultations, quotes, and order-taking designated by a national distributor as a key supplier for critical infrastructure projects limited number of shipping agents are able to work to ensure product is making it to project construction sites on time, and Permalocs thoughts are with you and your families during these uncertain times.

Also in Michigan and in compliance with the shelter in place order in their state, Landscape Forms has made the decision to temporarily close manufacturing facilities.

They're looking forward to being up and operational in two weeks and continuing to exceed customers' expectations. With the paint and finishing areas of their manufacturing process requiring the use of personal protective equipment, Landscape Forms has donated their inventory of masks and gloves to a local hospital serving the needs of their local community. This donation included over 20,000 masks.

Create- Amazing. Additionally their manufacturing leadership team has volunteered their time to utilize equipment and their manufacturing facility to partner with the other local businesses to fabricate protective shields that will be donated to First Responders and other healthcare workers. So Landscape Forms is eagerly awaiting the near future when they can continue to support each of you your organizations your clients and all those who strive to spend more time outdoors.

So I commend these efforts. They're very inspiring to support our discipline and your work and do their part to fight this pandemic and now more than ever we can all appreciate just how small the world truly is and the importance of coming together to protect our global community in times of great need. So, please know that you're not alone and I thank you for coming together today to learn and to also share for the good of the whole.

We hope to provide insight on all these issues but recognize that this webinar today is just the start of an ongoing conversation to help understand the rapidly changing situation and context as we provide ideas and perspective about how to deal with the now. We will convene- LAF will look to convene future conversations as a situation involves as webinars are just one of the many ways that LAF provides resources to share thought leadership, build your capacity, and foster innovation in the profession and we're working to increase your influence and impact as landscape architects to create a healthier more equitable and sustainable world.

And we do that by investing in research, scholarships, and transformational leadership initiatives. So in addition to this webinar, I encourage you to visit our website to check out our scholarships, fellowships, research grants, and other findings- other offerings before we get started. I again, I just have a couple of housekeeping announcements.

Our format today will be a conversation with our three panelists using questions that we've prepared. The final 10 to 15 minutes will be for audience questions and for that you'll use the questions panel to type in your questions or comments and feel free to use that panel on any time throughout this webinar to send an items that you'd like us to respond to at the end.

Okay, so let's get to it today. We're delighted and appreciative to have three members of the LAF Board of Directors with us to talk about their experiences as Principals in a small, midsize, and global interdisciplinary firm. Brian Jencek is the Global Director of HOK's planning practice. He's based in San Francisco and leads 75 city planners, urban designers, landscape architects and environmental scientists, and studios around the world.

Brian, as a such, has a global perspective and we look forward to hearing things you've learned from other country's and cultures way of doing things that you can draw on for this panel. Thanks so much. Brian for joining us. Signe Nelson is founding principle of MNLA, a firm of 30 landscape architects and designers in New York City.

Signe has- you've sustained your practice through four disruptions at least in the last 20 years: 9/11, the 2008 economic crisis, Hurricane Sandy, and now this. They're all different in nature, but we look forward to hearing what you can draw from these previous disruptions and crises to help with this one.

And finally Rebecca Bradley is Co-Founder and Design Principal at Cadence in Fort Lauderdale are Fort Lauderdale Florida where she leads strategic development for the firm, directs the day-to-day operations, and performs as a project design lead Cadence was born out of the 2008 economic crisis and Rebecca.

We look forward to learning from your experience and journey there to help us at this time. So we'll start with Rebecca then moved to Signe and Brian for each of the questions. For opening it up for your questions in the audience.

And I want to just start by acknowledging that this is certainly an unprecedented time of disruption in speed scale and uncertainty requiring the ingenuity, creativity, resourcefulness, vision, persistence, civic-mindedness, and all the skills and experiences and systems thinking of landscape architects to manage and adapt in a short term. So Rebecca, could you start by sharing with us? What are the changes that you are seeing now? From your standpoint as a principal at your design firm.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Sure. Good afternoon everybody. So from our standpoint, locally, we're located in Broward County in South Florida, at this moment our city and county review processes are halted for the next month. That's what we've been informed so far.

So that is going to delay some active projects that we have at the moment and we of course don't know how long those will be delayed for. However for us specifically, for Cadence, as of today, we have still had no communication from any client or project to stop work immediately or any discussion of not wanting to move forward.

I know things are changing day by day, but for the moment our team is of course feeling good that we have had no communication of that as of yet some other changes that you know, we're seeing and dealing with of course is just dealing with our day-to-day workflow. We've had a few minor hiccups with our small team just getting set up remotely but nothing that is, you know, something that we can't calmly overcome.

So for the moment, obviously we have the smallest team of the panelists gathered here today, but we are slowing but still doing work and trying to remain as positive as possible. So that's our standpoint as far as changes at the moment. Signe.

SIGNE NIELSEN: Well as you mention a good afternoon everyone, so I'm in New York City, which is now tragically at the epicenter of this pandemic. But you know, this isn't the first crisis that's ever crossed my horizon as a firm Principal. As Barbara mentioned for both 9/11 and Sandy, in the case of 9/11 we had exactly two hours to evacuate our office which was only five blocks north of the World Trade Center. And Sandy, we are one inch below the flood zone of the time.

And so we- both of those instances. We lost all power communication cell towers were down power stations were down and so and in each of those instances, we had no idea when we might be back up in business which you know is kind of like where we are today.

I do think we can project a little bit further out. And so today we had a staff meeting and I mentioned that I think we're looking at two months, but it is very difficult in the absence of you know, Federal leadership to figure out what is the right approach here. So what were- what I've directed my staff to do and my two other partners is really to follow the words of our governor, who has his boots on the ground here in New York City.

So anyway, the take away from from those two events as well as a 2008 but I actually have lived through two three other recessions prior to that is to have a broad distribution of projects and clients so that if one leg falls off your stool, so to speak, you still got a few others to rely on. I will also say that one of the change I've noticed is that the private sector, as Rebecca kind of just said, we seem to be a lot more nimble than the public sector in being able to work remotely.

And of some of this is because we set up these systems years ago based on other incidents that occurred and and we're finding it now that the public sector is just just paralyzed. And that is very distressing for us with about 50% of our work in the in the public sector.

And then the last thing I wanted to say is that I feel as if I'm sensing that our younger staff in particular is experiencing a level of stress partly related to the unknowns in the future, being housebound, and with little of their normal social interaction, and I think we'll get to later on, you know, some of the things that we're trying to do to provide leadership and some joy, if you will, in all of this.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thank you Signe. Brian.

BRIAN JENCEK: Hey, thanks Signe. Say- thanks Barbara. Yeah, you know changes are- changes are happening fast. I'm sitting out here in San Francisco this morning, as you know, one of our first cities in the nation to shelter in place. And just before that HOK as a firm sent, you know about 800 people home to begin working from home. Just prior to that.

So where we are now, we're you know, we're only really sort of at the end of two weeks into this and it feels think like an eternity for some I think for others. It's been you know, quite refreshing and an awakening in a lot of positive ways to the changes. You know that we're seeing are on the positive side in terms of studio culture and just within HOK and our teams, there's been a real rallying effect the almost overnight sort of transformation from kind of me-centric to we-centric has been really refreshing. I think we'll talk more about that a little bit later.

People really rallied around each other. We know that design studios really are defined by and only as good as our culture, and maintaining those cultures and customs remotely has been a fantastic challenge these last last few weeks.

On the business side, I think I want everyone to really hear what Rebecca and Signe just said and and really take it home for those who haven't been through recessions before this is a really, really important. And a piece of advice that Signe just offered, which is to diversify not just our skill sets to be good technically to be good design be good in front of clients be good with those competition boards be good with your plant knowledge, you know be well-rounded, but also take that to heart in your business too.

What I've seen so far at HOK around the world is our public projects are continuing but as this as my panelists just said our clients simply do not have time to to work on projects very much. This hasn't meant that they've stopped.

It just means that the way we present has to be far more succinct. Our design collateral has to be all the more sharper because we're asking our clients and the public sector to take precious, precious time to work on future hospitals, future public facilities, things that are essential, but now they may be only have 15 minutes for you for us to make a decision, not an hour-long PowerPoint was 60 slides.

Well, that's interesting. It kind of takes us back to school where our professors, remember how they tell us, Edit edit edit, home, home, reduce, reduce, reduce, get to the point. Well, that lessons being taught to us in a big way right now at HOK. on the private sector, its interesting our corporate commercial clients that in that second bucket.

There's a certainly a nervousness. Private projects, as you know, are tied to capital streams. And those capital streams are often publicly-traded companies or pension funds and those sources of capital or right now under a magnifying glass. People are nervous.

So corporate commercial or private projects aren't stopping but they're definitely a question mark right now. When will they start back up and how much will they slow? But so far nothing has stopped. And then the stalwarts, of course, are your institutional, so the third bucket. And that is anything from airports to hospitals to universities.

Institutional clients are generally marching ahead which is incredible in some cases because universities are often medical centers, and they're the ones on the front lines.

Yet the university arms of those institutions have, right now, the bandwidth to carry forth. So I think about it in those three buckets and the more that you have experience in those three buckets, the more your firm works and across those three buckets. That's what Signe was getting at when she said the three legs of the stool.

Make sure that you're diversified. That's- that's what we're seeing right now, Barbara, in the market.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: That's great. Well, yeah, that's a good strategy. Those are some good strategies there in terms of diversification that you've learned from prior disruptions and crises both with your clients and the type of work you're doing.

But also, Brian, you just mentioned the communications to sharpen them to make them more succinct because the clients have the projects are still going but they have less time to make a decision.

So thank you. Recognizing these changes, and you started to talk about some strategies here to adapt, could you expand a little bit further on what your firm has done to adapt to this current situation? Rebecca, please start.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Sure. So I think one thing that's been nice for our firm to see and experience is many of the values and kind of ethos that we started the business with in 2010, you know of focusing on a triple bottom line, what does that mean when dealing with our own employees, with our projects, with our clients, that that's a mantra that we keep in a constant calm rhythm here within our business.

And we're seeing that the focus on that from the beginning and keeping that always in our view is turning out to be a really important kind of foundation that we all have to return to as a team here. We're not having to scramble and put some things in place for a culture that cares about clients and cares deeply about employees.

This is who we authentically are, so that's one thing that has been of course wonderful to see because we worked very hard on that and it's gratifying to feel that you know, the patient focus on something like that for our business is turning out to be something very calming in these days right now.

But some of the things we are, you know having to adapt to- me personally, I'm a mother of a four-year-old. I am the only person in our firm currently with a child. So, personally, I'm having to adapt to feeling like I can be as productive.

That's not as smooth, for me personally. That's all that's a hard position for me to feel to be in than my other teammates seem to be finding remote work to be smooth and productive and for me it's a little bit more to juggle. However, I'm super, you know, lucky to have a business partner and then also a husband as well who can be helpful and caring for the child with me at home.

So that's helpful to have a team in place and an ecosystem to help me there at the house. One thing that, you know, we're trying to also do is randomly- this is our 10 year anniversary- we do Monday morning meetings always and now they're going to have to be remote, but we randomly started my idea to do Meditation Mondays. And so this couldn't have been a more great little ditty that we started doing this year.

So we really are trying to adapt and focus on the well-being of the psyche of each of us and really trying to encourage people to meditate and to limit their social media intake and news intake, to get out and walk. So I think we're also adapting and finding that while some of the production and things that, you know, setup for the company to work smoothly technically is actually working alright.

You know it really is this end of the human capital and taking care of each other personally that through this were really having to make sure that we uphold that part so that you know, our team can stay together through all of this. Signe.

SIGNE NIELSEN: I was going to speak to a couple of things that we had in place that we've sort of revived and a couple things that are new.

So every week on Fridays are marketing director puts out what we call a weekly update and it usually is kind of images of construction and upcoming lectures that somebody's giving or something like that.

Anyway, it's now it's now changed to putting out images of people's home offices and their pets and their kids and so it's very- we feel as if now we can communicate with each other knowing sort of what place they're in physically and that- that's really been a lovely thing where we're now that we're looking at probably another couple months of this, we're trying to decide on some themes.

To keep these weekly updates fun and and cheerful another thing that we already had in place. But as has become even more important is what we call our team leaders and these individuals are responsible for making sure that the staff is properly allocated for the coming week.

I know lots of firms have that but it's now even more important that those folks really understand people's needs and also accommodation for those people who are parents- my case actually grandparent of three and so my days have changed where I'm taking care of my three grandkids in the late afternoon to my poor daughter can get something done.

And then the two new things, I would say, is that, blissfully, I have a managing partner who is really taken on speaking with a number of our human resource professionals like health insurance advisors, attorneys, IT folks, just to make sure that you stay abreast of upcoming changes and opportunities, even for both firm support as well as staff support.

So that's- and then I'd say the other thing is that certainly the inter- intra- communication between myself and my two partners has become all the more important because things literally are changing on a daily basis over which we have no control.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Great. Brian. Thank you, Signe are helpful suggestions. Brian.

BRIAN JENCEK: Yeah, I hope everybody's taking notes of what Rebecca and Signe are saying is as fast as I am here, I think you know, it's um, it should be noted that how amazing is it that our profession of landscape architecture and all the allied professions and organizations around us, we spend so much time and so much of our lives and our passion and our talent focusing on adaptation.

Not just in the sea level rise resilience macro adaptation, but also just the day-to-day adaptation of gardens and landscapes and various natural systems in which we work. And now, lo and behold, here we are. In our own firms, in our own realities, having to adapt and it's no surprise to me that I'm finding around our studios around the world and listening to so many of my peers and partners at other firms like ours in all of you, just how able to adapt we are. We're pretty resilient critters us landscape architects.

So that gives me a lot of hope too. I think on the communication front, you know for me what's been really refreshing, I grew up in the Midwest and the South and it's not to say that's the only place where there's kind and courteous people but you know, I grew up in that sort of world.

And in that culture it's a culture of patience and kindness and one of respect and it's been really refreshing to see how it- COVID has shifted our day-to-day communication to one that I find personally much more courteous.

Maybe I'm just more attuned to that or maybe it just matters more to me. But I was sharing with the panelists just just before we went on, this week marked my first interview for a new project since we all went into this new reality in our lives, which is refreshing to go back to some sense of normalcy.

And it was with a state agency that, at times, can be a little procedural, a little dry, won't shake your hand, tries not to, you know, talk to you too much because they want to stay neutral and objective. And suddenly Senators, suddenly State leaders were asking me about my family, my health, what life's like in San Francisco? What are we doing to adapt? What do we things next making sure that we were in a good place on a personal level before then commencing with the interview. And it created an environment of comfort of calm it leveled the playing field and it reminded me of our shared humanity and the net result of all that goodness was the interview I think was more valuable for the client.

There was far more conversation than any I've been in when it's face-to-face. Isn't that great, the way it all just sort of breaks down and we all are just people again? On a sort of more micro note, one of my designers in San Francisco mentioned to me recently that one of our cultures and customs in the office that was valuable to her was the fact that I just like to say good morning to people.

I'm one of those weirdos if I don't get to you I'll get to you before lunch and you know, just spend some time together. I think landscape architects like people. We're People people. So, um, she reminded me that now that we're all remote that that was something that the studio valued and so now what does that mean? Does that mean I text everyone good morning.

Well, what we decided to do was we have our dailies team- daily teams call, we use that Microsoft team software thing, and so whether it's a text, whether it's a video chat, or whether it's our project teams starting the day together, we make sure that we do that because it was something that we did before in a part of our ethos and we want that to continue.

So the lesson I received there was while you can certainly invent new ways to build culture and custom make sure that you find ways to maintain the ones you already have. We didn't do a lot of happy hours before so now doing video happy hours would be a little strange.

We are doing them, but don't feel like you have to invent something new on the client side. I think I already talked about the speed and the pace at which clients now have to make decisions.

So I won't go through that again. And then on the morale side, I think that daily touchpoint is really key. So each one of our projects begins the day with its teams call and it's not like a roll call like an elementary school. Instead, it's a moment where a team can come together and say, Here's what we achieved yesterday. Here are the goals for today. Are we all on the same page so we can march forward together?

And then one last note, I didn't I didn't fully appreciate the difference between written communication versus verbal until this crisis is much as I do now.

Now when we give design feedback, it's almost always critical right sometimes when we all need as designers. We say, "Good job everybody. It's perfect". But let's face it design is built on criticism. That's what makes us strong. And so now to deliver criticism in written form far more than verbal or sketch is a very scary thing.

We're finding too especially to a lot of junior staff who can read emails and feel like it's yelling or disappointment or anger when in fact, it's the same criticism. That one would have received over a shared design table in.

So that's the other thing that I'm personally trying to work on better how to communicate design criticism which is key to our profession but through these digital tools in a way that's really helpful and personal that's how we're adapting and we're we're adapting every second.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thanks so much Brian, and all of you. That- those are really helpful perspectives as well as tactics and I too I'm writing them all down as well as I'm sure the LAF staff and I think we could to synthesize them at the end of this webinar and make them available to all of you who registered if you're interested as a summary.

But I do hope that out of this, you know, during this I appreciate the greater courteousness and civic-mindedness and, hopefully coming out of that, a greater civic-mindedness as well, in terms of the world around us in our health and public health and public realm and public education and and the public world.

So that's good to hear. All right, moving on to the next question: Please also share your perspective, and we talked a little bit about this in the beginning, but how have past disruptions prepared you to deal with this situation? How is it unique? How are the broad lessons learned that can be applied. So Rebecca, please start us off here.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Sure. So for me personally all, you know, past disruptions as a professional started with September 11th, the market crash prior to that, Katrina and Wilma. Being someone that lives in Florida who is from Louisiana dealing with natural disasters and places that have either lived or have families in those situations and also deciding to invest and have a business in a region that deal. Seasonally with natural disasters and disruptions, you know, we find ourselves maybe slightly a little more prepared for this disruption.

Of course, there's things about this disruption that are completely different. Its global, you know that the unknowns about health are, you know, really scary for everybody to deal with. But anytime these disruptions happen, you know, your instant reaction is to react and is to be super emotional, and I think over the years I've learned that it is okay to have those feelings and those emotions, but to very soon turn that panic and pivot that panic into calm.

And realizing that it is in these moments when we are given the chance to catch our breath, to slow, we're being forced to be slowed down, to really use that as a gift and not only view it as something that's negative, and to think personally and professionally about how we're performing how we're contributing and what can we initiate and not just, you know be a person who stays in a flailing moment of reaction, but comes back down to earth and thinks about okay, how can I now do my best work?

What can I initiate? Who can I help? And I feel like, you know, in the past those different disruptions have allowed me to handle this hopefully and then in a calmer way and to also not find complete despair in this moment because I know that this has occurred before in different ways.

And you have to always be reminded that things are not as planners as designers- we want to plan for everything, we want to, you know, problem solve immediately, But we have to remember that we have to take time and pace ourselves and sometimes listen and slow down.

And these moments are usually giving us a chance to recalibrate and so that's what these past situation and destructions have allowed me to find myself being able to keep moving all of this forward.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Wow. Thanks so much, Rebecca. Signe. Signe.

SIGNE NIELSEN: Well, it's interesting. I was going to say the same thing as Rebecca, which is, first off, don't panic and, second off, stay calm. But I think that one of the big differences in how this is unique, I don't need to go over 9/11 and Sandy again, but in both 9/11 and Sandy I personally was able to do something.

I could, you know, give food to the fire department. I could take coffee to the FEMA guys. I could do something. I even volunteered the day of the collapse since I lived so close with my shovels and I was ready to start digging. Nobody had any idea that you know, that was not going to work. In Sandy, same thing. I could I could bring food to people. But now with social distancing we- I kind of can't reach out in the same way.

And so what I'm finding is that I'm reaching out through words to, you know, friends, college roommates, obviously staff. But unlike what Rebecca said I honestly feel that I don't have any time at all and I feel that I'm spending a tremendous amount of time communicating with people and maybe too much and so there's very little time left for myself.

And I also have to add that this business of being a part-time grandmother on a regular basis has taken more time than I had honestly planned, but the- I guess there's a for me there's a sense of helplessness here in the short-term with regard to- I mean that was so touched by what you said Barbara about Landscape Forms.

You know, I wish that we could do something that that in the short term could make a difference. But I think we just have to bide our time and think forward to you know, what are the what are the broader lessons that can be learned and I think you know we were talking earlier Brian made a great point, not to take the wind out of his sails, but about real healthcare, will people's help rise to a much higher level in terms of the breadth of work that landscape architects are doing?

As as opposed to let's just say after Sandy or Katrina where all of a sudden resiliency projects, you know, where the sort of flavor of the month and not to belittle them.

But but it's it was obviously reactive. We're so often reactive as people and as a country and so if we had some time to think more deeply what does this really mean for these lessons. But but I too share this feeling that we've gone from me to we and it's a very weird that you can't hug each other but I feel like we're hugging each other remotely.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thanks. Yeah, that's great. Thank you. And hopefully on the next question will after this. We'll look a little to the future. But in the meantime Brian, yes, please share with us how past disruptions have helped you to deal with this situation, and your thoughts.

BRIAN JENCEK: You got it. And by the way, I'm hugging you all remotely right now.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: I know, I can feel it.

BRIAN JENCEK: I don't know if HR allows that by the way. I'll have to check.

You know, so we're not talking about adaptation as landscape architects, were talking about disruption. Because we live in a kinetic world. Our practice is never static. You design a landscape the second you think you're done with it, it's already something else. And so again, I think we're really well-suited for disruptions and we're very adaptive. To shed some light on that I graduated, it sounds like, like Rebecca, and to the dotcom recession. So like 2000.

Then you know of course 9/11 came soon thereafter and I came out to San Francisco. I was pretty hell-bent on working in a firm called Hargreaves Associates. I had a professor, a mentor of mine who still my mentor Chris Bannon, and who turned me on to them he had worked there before so I came out to San Francisco.

I'm a Country Boy from the middle, went to school in the East and then came out west walked right up to the office. Didn't know anything about applying, went in there. And of course in the midst of the recession, you know, there were a few questions. Like who are you? Why are you here? And and my mentor Tim Anderson said, you know come back in six months. Maybe by then. We'll start hiring again. Who knows?

So that's what I wanted to do and I was focused singularly on a particular firm for better or worse, but I had to bide my time. So what do I do? I'm kind of a big boy. So I got a job working at the docks in Oakland, which actually paid really well, and frankly, I think my first like five years of landscape architecture. I think the Oakland dock would still be better. So maybe they should still be working there, frankly.

Um, and that was my first time so I lived in Berkeley and I worked at the um, Berkeley Nursery if you've been to North Berkeley, you know the nursery I'm talking about by Monterey Market and so they're only reason I share that with you is you do what you do to put food on the table.

Of course, we're very resilient landscape architects, but also we know how to use our skills. In other ways plant training skills training and so forth.

Emeryville is a city just down the street from Berkeley. And they have this company called Pixar, and you probably know it because they make all those cute like Disney animated films and, at that time, I'm going to date myself, but this is when Monsters Inc was coming out and so when I couldn't work at the Berkeley Nursery anymore because I got laid off.

I went to Pixar and if you seen Monsters Inc, remember the scene where there's like a warehouse that stores all the doors the children and the Monsters go through apparently the logistics. It's like Amazon, but doors. Well, someone had to 3D model that in 3D Max and so I did the inverse kinetics

for that because I happen to have that skill from school. Well hot damn if when Hargraves called me back up one of their questions, of course now, this was right when clay modeling was becoming 3D modeling.

Do you happen to have 3D skills? And I said, well I do I know this this this program called 3D Max and I know 3D Max is gone by the wayside now, I think Rhino is king, but that enabled me to get a job at a firm and I only have an undergraduate degree firms like Hargreaves everybody went to well, you know, the 3 Ivy League colleges I'm talking about.

So it meant that I had an ability to open a door and to make myself valuable because I kept my skills sharp. So I think the point of anything and all that diatribe was focus on your vision Landscape Architects. I mean, it's an amazing field that we're in I love our field. I can't imagine doing anything else with that in mind keeping that tunnel vision is really key and then just being flexible and resilient roll with the punches and I promise you it will work out.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: That's great. Yeah, thank you all while keeping the wheels- you gave us some good ideas to keep the wheels on the bus, but also to make the most of it and that's what the next question is about is what you think might be some of the longer-term impacts of this period and what how it might affect the future how to plan for it like because things that you mentioned weren't things that to you know, you've already either diversified your clients, you know more or less you've gone and done other jobs or you know, or you're waiting by so these are things we want to also think about moving forward. So I didn't know if you had any final thoughts that weren't covered before we open it up for the QA real quickly. So maybe spend just a quick minute or two. So, Rebecca.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Okay, so I mean I think that the long-term impacts are going to be hopefully that landscape architects are reinventing how they can serve as landscape architects when I had the moment to go through the crisis in 2008 -9, -10, is when we started this business. All we wanted to do was completely re-evaluate how we can serve as landscape architects. So I hope that this will again push us to know that not all of us will need to work

in a traditional firm setting. Some of us can start, you know, different types of firms, begin to infiltrate ourselves and other industries, the healthcare industry, nonprofits, to be and allow us to perform as Global Citizens, which we know we can but I often feel like the way in which our hands are tied in a traditional design firm setting doesn't allow us to, you know, kind of our wings to spend to the places we want them to go.

I hope that that's one of the long-term impacts of this and I really do believe the other one will be just like Signe mentioned the reaction after Sandy or Katrina and, you know, resilient design, you know, we know the impact that landscape architecture can have on public health, but is that going to just be thrust into a much more, or we will be thrust into having to communicate that, I believe.

And show that connection in a way that might be more complex than we ever have had to do that before.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Good insights. Thank you. Signe.

SIGNE NIELSEN: So quick thing I'd like to say is that I'm beginning to realize that this this event is having a significant financial impact on governments and institutions. Governments having to redirect where their budgets go and there, you know, whether it's building hospitals or bringing on people who have retired from the medical professions to bail out the city.

I'm also hearing from institutions that they've had to divert a lot of their budgets now to helping students in ways that they had not imagined, or keeping their facilities open, or doing different things. So the point is that they that when this is over some of these entities may not have the capital that they did even two months ago.

And that as as landscape architects, I think one of the things we can do is to help our clients reformulate how a project can move forward but maybe obviously not a project in construction, but a project that may be at master plan or at schematic design where now they want to just sort of knee-jerk scale back, but we can help we re-jigger that budget perhaps, whatever that new budget is and think about what are the best priorities for that more constrained view of a project?

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thanks. And Brian.

BRIAN JENCEK: I think I'm- just simply add two things. I think that I think Public Health, you know human health and well-being, which may have been ranked, let's say number 8 or number 10 on your scorecard for whether a client should go with this design scenario A or B or C.

I'm expecting in the future as we emerge from this that's going to be a much more important criteria and skill. So if I were doing it all over again, if I were fresh coming out of school or still in school, I would be

focusing on how do I pitch a case for a particular design solution or a planning solution in the context of human health and well-being. I want folks to take this really seriously. I think the way in which we measure success of design in the future is going to shift and so now is the time to think about public health in a much more meaningful way.

And then the cities/nature divide is going to be really interesting. Maybe during- this will come up during Q&A, but there has always been a sort of push and pull between cities and nature. And we know the concentration of life and resource and the cities has consequences for resilience, and we see it born in the form of Sandy or Katrina and we now see it born in the form of COVID.

At the same time decentralization and suburban flight and garden cities have, let's say, less visible consequences for public health and well-being: social isolation, fitness, long commute times.

And so I think we're going to have to be moderate as the world knee-jerks and reacts to a sort of de-urbanization as a result of COVID, which is likely to be a discourse in the media. I expect to see that emerge pretty soon remember as cities decentralize, that's the landscape that they will consume and that is our canvas. So we play a critical role in that.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thank you. That's great insight. All right, at this time we have time for some questions if you hadn't already typed them in then please do but otherwise your LAF behind-the-scenes team has been monitoring the questions and we'll read a few questions now this time.

HEATHER WHITLOW: Thanks one that a couple people had asked was about public engagement strategies during this time. Have you developed any new strategies for conducting public planning meetings virtually to ensure equitable opportunities for input and access? And another variation on that question asked if there's any silver lining to this if through those new techniques were managing to reach audiences that we haven't before.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Are we going in the same order to answer? This is Rebecca.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: We don't have to have everyone answer every question. So if you would like to answer that particular question, then we'll start with Rebecca and give you the option. Yes.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Okay, just a quick response to this. No, we haven't, here, figured out any- we've had the discussion about what will this do to public input. We currently- and I was emailing with a colleague of mine and Michigan about this particular topic. No, we have not had to figure that out yet. Yes. I think it's going to be something we will have to devise a plan for and of course have to figure out you know, if technology is what's the portal for us to connect?

We know the inequity of technology and access to that in some of the neighborhoods that we really need to be having public input from so, you know, I don't think it's going to- it's totally overcome-able, but I don't know how you know how we're going to do that and we have not figured that out just yet.

SIGNE NIELSEN: I only have a couple of examples but they're not really of the scale of public that you're talking about. I mean this president of the public design commission. We have to keep the project moving forward through the process. And so we figured out a way to do this in a through YouTube so that the public is aware of what the design commission is approving and reviewing but it's not a it's not a methodology that allows for the kind of input that you normally get. And, on another project, they've actually just postponed all of the public stakeholder outreach. And then on another project, it's a much smaller group. It's only like 12 people we come up with a way to do it remotely. So I think it's partly a scale issue and I think it's also access to technology issue and an equity issue.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Thank you. Brian have anything to add or so we go to the next question.

BRIAN JENCEK: I think they've covered it. Let's go on to the next.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: All right. Heather, do we have the next question?

HEATHER WHITLOW: Oh yeah! I guess a common theme that is coming up is emerging professionals who are trying to find employment, folks looking for internships, folks who've been laid off or furloughed, and I think in particular a few of them have reference Brian and your remarks about your work on the docks and the nursery and Pixar. So if anyone has any additional advice or input for folks who find themselves in those situations of looking for employment or looking for alternative employment.

REBECCA BRADLEY: This is Rebecca- Oh go ahead, Signe.

SIGNE NIELSEN: I would just echo what Brian said which is you may get you may get deflected in the short-term from your desired immediate hire at a firm of your aspiration. But, you know don't give up there are many other skills and I would dare say writing, teaching, there many- there are many things you can do to keep yourself sharp, depending on what you feel are your inherent strengths. So yes, they are you may meet some roadblocks, but they are short term. This will- this will change.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Rebecca did you have something to add?

REBECCA BRADLEY: No, that was well said.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Great. That was well said. Thank you, Signe. Heather, next question.

HEATHER WHITLOW: Yeah, I guess this one is a very specific one looking at tools that you're using for collaboration and in particular marking up drawings and providing feedback.

REBECCA BRADLEY: Sure, this is Rebecca. We use- obvious, I know lots of people do- Slack. And then we are marking up just with our iPads and posting drawings that way doing Red Lines virtually and then utilizing Slack through video chat components to you know, something is confusing. We still, you know, know that sometimes the best way is to just get on the phone with one another and talk through something. So right now that seems to be working for us.

BRIAN JENCEK: I'm using these as our primary vehicle for communication. It doesn't allow markup though very well. And that's been an interesting one. I think we've all kind of gotten used to the back-and-forth with design principals and with your team's where you sketch something out, take a photo with your phone and send it to them. So, thankfully, I think we're all kind of prepared for this because we were already kind of doing that.

The challenge is when we're having a design charrette everyone brings their best to the table, on teams, and we all present it but now we have to synthesize and oh my goodness trying to cook one dish, you know making stew remotely is so hard. So we're coming up with all kinds of creative ways.

We've laid grids on drawing so we can play Bingo. Move the land form at B3 to the left by 20 feet. Absent that- absent that grid like if I were to say, the curvy landform on the west to the right, I mean, like, no one can even tell what I'm talking about.

So we are evolving tools like that to help us communicate. Normally I would have just used my hands in a meeting, but I don't have hands. So now I've got to do it in other ways. Be creative. Have fun with it too. And no one has the answer.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: Signe, anything to add there?

SIGNE NIELSEN: Oh, no, I'm the dinosaur here. No.

BARBARA DEUTSCH: That still works, right? Yes, don't worry. All right, we're nearing the end of our time. We have so many more questions, which I think lets us know that the conversation definitely needs to continue and we will do that.

I also want to let you know that ASLA is hosting a webinar next Tuesday from 1 to 2 that will also carry on the conversation. I think in- I want to thank you so much for attending today. I want to thank our panelists.

I know it's how- this conversation, I hope it's been helpful to give you tips and ideas and perspectives on how to stay creative and productive and healthy.

Stay healthy, take care of these unprecedented times. Disruption is the new normal. We know this is a moment right now in our world and a moment for our profession with- and then overlaid with this pandemic, it's even more acute. We've faced challenges before. We've heard some key strategies here today about communication and collaboration about adaptability about leadership and strategic planning, that time will move on and well emerge one way or another from this. So hopefully this has helped you emerge in a stronger way. And yeah, because I think there is an opportunity to come out of this stronger than when we came into it. So I thank you for being part of this moment here and now and know that you're in the right place in the right time to to figure it out and make it happen and that we're here with you.

So please, I want to thank our sponsors again for us giving us this opportunity to have this conversation. Thank you Coldspring. Thank you Permaloc. And thank you Landscape Forms for all you're doing for our community as well as our non-landscape architecture community and I ask you all to please take care, stay tuned, and keep in touch. Thanks so much.

ALL: Thanks everybody. Bye. Thank you. Thank you.