



British Columbia  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

110 - 355 Burrard St. Vancouver, BC V6C 2G8

T 604.682.5610 F 604.681.3394  
W www.bcsla.org E admin@bcsla.org  
www.sitelines.org

PRESIDENT	Katherine Dunster
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**SITELINES GROUP**

EDITOR	Brett Hitchins	604.682.5610
ADVERTISING	Tara Culham	604.682.5610
EDITOR	fax	604.681.3394
GRAPHIC DESIGN	Gravity Inc.	604.738.2768
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# President's Message

By Mark van der Zalm, BCSLA, LEED AP



**It is my honour to be serving as the president-elect of the BCSLA.**

During the past year I have collaborated with some enthusiastic and capable directors and volunteers that make up our Board. In accepting the position as society president I was not fully aware of all of the worthy initiatives our professional society undertakes on our behalf. I feel both enlightened and thankful to have such an active and effective professional organization serving our membership. Many thanks to our executive, and our current president Dr. Kathy Dunster, for tireless work in support of our collective careers.

Events over the past year have given me pause to consider what is important to our membership and how our society can continue to build our stature and relevance. We as landscape architects have a responsibility to continue providing leadership to our clients, projects, and allied professionals. Too often we look for our profile to be raised through marketing and media outreach. Although these initiatives are important, we as practitioners have the means within our grasp to seize opportunities to improve our communities and environment and to make a significant impact. This reality alone is critical to raising our profile amongst the general public. We as consulting professionals, public servants, and those practicing in academia, can signal our own importance and value through our actions. Respect is always earned and one must only peruse back issues of *Sitelines*, *LAND*, and *Landscape Architecture*, to find that we are indeed leading.

Economics on a world scale have dealt the design consulting professions a significant blow over the past fiscal year. Although somewhat insulated in British Columbia, we need only look to pre-stimulus Ontario and many professional bodies south of the 49th parallel to know that our economy and marketplace remain somewhat fragile. Signs of life in the housing market combined with significant infrastructure improvements and public projects bolstered by Federal grants, are keeping many of our consulting practices very busy. With one eye on 2011, let this be the year that we allow for greater collaboration and support of one another. Although competitors in some sectors, we are also a family of professionals linked through our membership in BCSLA. Wherever possible, let us support and encourage our growing network of landscape architects and interns throughout the province. ►

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The Woodward's building central plaza.

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The BCSLA will be undertaking some important tasks through 2010-2011. An extraordinary meeting will be held this summer to ratify our agreement to align our membership categories with professional societies in Ontario and Alberta. Our membership must also face the pending establishment of the HST and its impact on our consulting work. The BCSLA will assess how best to support our members through this process and a workshop may be held to address specific concerns. On November 14th through December 4th a landscape architecture exhibit will be on display at the Pendulum Gallery space on West Georgia Street. This will be an exciting venue for displaying current work and raising awareness of landscape architects practicing in our province. We hope to garner widespread participation in these events and keep our society a lively, relevant, and central part of our professional practice.

A sign of our success is our continued growth in new membership. Through reciprocity, internship, and new student members our ranks are swelling. In June our board of examiners will have a very healthy crop of prospective members applying for full membership. Looking ahead, we must establish a strategic vision for the BCSLA for the next five years. This process will include workshops and brainstorming sessions. How do we see ourselves today and how shall we approach our future? I look forward to working with our current group of dedicated volunteers and welcome all members who wish to participate more fully in our professional society. Volunteerism is a rewarding experience and is an important means by which we thrive and grow. I'm looking forward to a strong program at this year's conference "Urban Interventions" April 22-24th, and a successful Annual General Meeting. **SL**

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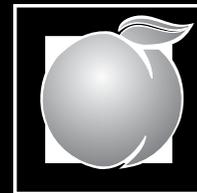
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