

## **ASLA Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative**

Nominee: Zachary Chrisco, PE

Nominee's Address: 64 Pleasant Street

City/State/Zip: Watertown, Massachusetts, 02472

Phone: (617) 926-3300

Nominator: Michael Grove, PLA, ASLA; with the full support of James Miner, CEO;

Joshua Brooks, ASLA; Anna Cawrse, ASLA; and Kate Tooke, ASLA

Dear Selection Committee,

At Sasaki, disciplinary lines are often blurred. Being a truly cross-disciplinary practice in which no discipline is subordinate to another creates an atmosphere in which all opinions are valued about all aspects of a project. Zachary Chrisco has used his position as a principal leading our civil engineering team at Sasaki to provide invaluable and unparalleled leadership and guidance on some of the most complex, impactful, and high profile landscape architectural projects across the country. This list includes the Chicago Riverwalk, Raleigh's Moore Square, Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park in Council Bluffs, the Nord Family Greenway in Cleveland, the Cedar Rapids Riverfront Park, the Smale Riverfront Park in Cincinnati, and Gulf State Park in Alabama, to name just a few. Each of these celebrated built urban landscapes represent Zach's direct impact, not only on diverse communities they serve, but also on the landscape architecture practice at Sasaki. These are our legacy projects—representations of what we do best. Not only has Zach served as the “lead civil engineer” on many of these efforts, but he served as *the* leader on so many as well. On many of Sasaki's most exciting current landscapes such as Greenwood Park and the Baton Rouge Zoo in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Bonnet Springs Park in Lakeland, Florida; and the Wilmington Waterfront Park at the Port of Los Angeles, Zach serves as the principal-in-charge, guiding large multi-disciplinary teams to implement these amazing landscapes. In this role, he advocates for a sustainable and ecologically informed landscape, campaigns for creative solutions to complex challenges, and places the profession of landscape architecture at the center of the process. As an engineer, he can often convince the most skeptical of clients or stakeholders that an elegant and beautiful solution is also pragmatic. When pushing the boundaries of our collective profession, this type of ally is invaluable.

In his work, Zach offers a subtle passion, often the level-headed one in a room full of spinning minds. Resilience and sustainability, social equity, community use, habitat protection, and material beauty— all things that you would expect to be coming from a landscape architect— are so often driven by Zach. He has the big picture thinking needed to work with clients on strategy for master planning parks and resilient districts, and the attention to detail to execute the most complex construction efforts like the floating wetlands along the Chicago River (which, remarkably, was entirely built from a barge). He asks the questions that no one else thinks of, challenges assumptions, and offers unwavering support for the profession of landscape architecture at every step of the way. Zach doesn't see his job as simply as a support role to Sasaki's landscape

architects, but positions himself as an extension of our work, simultaneously extra while always necessary. Zach did not create this collaborative role by happenstance– it is derived from his core values. These values align precisely with the core values of our profession and the values that the American Society of Landscape Architects advocates for on a daily basis.

Outside of project work, Zach serves as an office leader, mentoring not only the civil engineering staff at Sasaki but also many of our landscape architects. His relationship to the profession often makes even his closest friends sometimes forget that he isn't actually trained as a landscape architect. For years he guided office-wide staffing, bringing in new talented individuals and guiding them to projects that they are excited about. He mediates issues within the office, brings incredible opportunities to the studio, and inspires a practice of over 75 landscape architects and landscape designers on a day-to-day basis. The simplest way to put it is that Zach helps the landscape architecture practice at Sasaki be the amazing studio that it is. In addition to these internal activities, Zach is active externally through presentations at both regional and national ASLA conferences and others including the American Society of Civil Engineers, where he is often advocating for the critical role that landscape architects play.

What makes Zach deserving of this honor is both his contribution to the legacy of Sasaki's landscape practice, as well as his specific project achievements. If this honor is about people who have elevated the profession of landscape architecture and pushed the impacts of it across communities, we cannot think of a better candidate than Zach. His passion is noble. He seeks no credit. His reward is a satisfied client and the smiles on the face of the public that walks through the world that he has helped create. Most importantly, his reward is continuously pushing the boundaries of what is possible from our profession. Sasaki would not be the firm that it is today without Zach.

Sincerely,



Michael Grove, ASLA



Mark Dawson, FASLA

cc: James Miner, CEO; Joshua Brooks, ASLA; Anna Cawrse, ASLA; Kate Tooke, ASLA;



RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION  
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

January 29, 2020  
ASLA Selection Committee  
RE: Zachary Chrisco for Honorary ASLA

Dear Colleagues and Selection Committee Members,

It is with strong belief that I would like to recommend Zachary Chrisco, be made an Honorary Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Zach is a Partner at Sasaki Associates, a world-renowned interdisciplinary design firm where he is the firm's lead Civil Engineer. I've had the pleasure of working with Zach over the past 13 months on a comprehensive master plan for our park agency's largest open space – the 660-acre Greenwood Park and Baton Rouge Zoo. Zach is the Principle-in-charge of the project who has led a talented team of landscape architects, engineers, planners, environmental planners, market economists, and other disciplines to a very successful visionary master plan for this amazing public space. The master plan process started out politically and publicly controversial but ended with celebratory acclaim with the public, media, community leaders, and elected officials. Currently and over the next few years, Zach and his team are moving into the next chapter of this project by leading an even larger multi-discipline team into the design development and phased implementation of the park and zoo master plan.

Having worked with him throughout the past year, I can attest to the fact that he is a great supporter and spokesperson for the discipline. He is very knowledgeable of and appreciates the importance of the field of landscape architecture and its rightful place in taking the lead role in public realm projects. I've been impressed by his ability to articulate the language and nuances of landscape architecture when speaking to the public and stakeholders.

At Sasaki, he oversees, manages and collaborates with highly respected and talented landscape architects daily. He understands the complexity of and the need for holistic integration of natural systems, architecture, landscape architecture and engineering. He is a champion of innovative resilient engineering, environmental sustainability and the importance of our broad-based profession's ability in finding solutions in these areas. He strongly believes that integrated planning and thoughtful design greatly contributes to our quality of life and his large project portfolio at Sasaki reflects this.

I've not worked with many professionals outside the field of landscape architecture or planning who should earn this distinguished recognition by ASLA. I sincerely encourage you to bestow the Honorary ASLA membership to Zach.

Sincerely,

Reed Richard, ASLA, AICP, CPRP  
BREC Assistant Superintendent of System Planning



Honorary Membership Nominations  
c/o Honors and Awards  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

February 1, 2020

To the Honors and Awards Committee Members:

It is my honor to endorse Zachary Chrisco's nomination for recognition as Honorary ASLA. Zach is an extraordinary engineer – one knows how to collaborate, lead and lend his technical skills and creativity to enable world-class landscape architecture. Having worked closely with Zach for over a decade at Sasaki, I whole-heartedly support this nomination.

There are many notable accomplishments that support the assertion that Zach's leadership has resulted in world-class design. Zach served as the project manager and principal-in-charge (in part) to the Chicago Riverwalk project. That project alone received recognition by the ASLA, the AIA, The Rudy Bruner Award of Urban Excellence and the ULI, among others. The work at the Port of Los Angeles – another award-winning community park in an underserved and predominantly minority neighborhood – graced the cover of Landscape Architecture Magazine in April of 2012. Other award-winning work includes a resilient floodplain park called Hanafan Rivers Edge Park in Council Bluffs, Iowa, a SITES certified and Living Building Challenge compliant body of recent work at Gulf State Park in Orange Beach, Alabama, and the recently completed Moore Square in Raleigh.

Zach's role as a civil engineer, project manager and managing principal is unique in his profession and ours. It is rare to work with a civil engineer that is fully committed to sustainable strategies, design excellence and rigorous technical execution – and even rarer to find those traits in service of predominantly public works of landscape architecture.

Lastly, Zach has played and continues to play an integral role in the management and operations of one of the great legacy practices in landscape architecture: Sasaki. It cannot be understated how important his leadership is to that practice's capacity to build work, but also the critical role he plays as a mentor and sponsor to the professionals in the site practice.

The title of Honorary ASLA is a powerful tool to hold high the models worthy of emulation as our collaborators and partners. It recognizes those non-landscape architects that give their best to make us better. In his role leading the delivery of exceptional works of landscape architecture and his commitment to innovation engineering in service of that work, Zach is exactly the kind of professional the Society should recognize with this honor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gina Ford, FASLA  
Co-Founder, Principal and Landscape Architect

Agency  
Landscape + Planning

www.agencylp.com  
617-512-8702

91 Harvey Street, Suite 2  
Cambridge, MA 02140

January 28, 2020



**To whom it may concern:**

As Sasaki's lead Civil Engineer, Zach has influenced the design of Bonnet Springs Park in Lakeland Florida, a 160 Acre Park in Central Florida that will have tremendous social and economic impacts on the region. Located near the I-4 corridor between Orlando and Tampa, Lakeland is realizing unprecedented growth. A local group of citizens, forming a non-profit, Bonnet Springs Park, have joined forces with the award-winning team Sasaki to transform a former CSX rail yard into one of the Cities greatest assets. Under Zach's leadership creative solutions are being applied to remediate this former industrial site that has been abandoned by redevelopment due to the challenges. Working closely with local, state, and federal agencies, and interdisciplinary teams to execute, strengthen, and innovate resilient engineering solutions. Clearly one of Sasaki's most complex challenging projects which closely integrated architecture, landscape, and civil engineering Zach's vision and positive attitude provided impetus and unity to the team's efforts.

He is driven to find integrated civil engineering solutions to site design by means of sustainable and long-lasting products. Zach's greatest motivation is creating built work that is both durable and well-loved by the client and users. To integrate sustainable strategy and ecology into Bonnet Springs Park design, each of the environmental challenges has an applied solution that creates quality spaces, is environmentally sustainable, and always accessible. It is my honor to recommend Zach Chrisco for this much deserved award. His tireless efforts and leadership have resulted in a product for our community that is un-paralleled. The citizens of Lakeland will always be in his debt as future generations benefit from his kind and gentle approach to saving our planet, one solution at a time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Tinsley  
CEO Bonnet Springs Park



CITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF ASSETS, INFORMATION & SERVICES

January 27, 2019

ASLA Executive Committee  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Honorary Member ASLA, Candidate Zachery Chrisco

Dear Executive Committee Members:

The Chicago Riverwalk is a 1.25-mile pedestrian trail that runs along the main stem of the Chicago River in the heart of our city's Central Business District. It has been my great pleasure to work with Zachary Chrisco as a critical member of the design team for Phases 2 and 3.

We worked very closely on the strategic planning and overall design of this extremely popular public amenity. The Chicago Riverwalk has received +20 planning and design awards from various organizations including ASLA, as well as AIA and ULI. The project is well loved and used by the public and a popular downtown destination for residents, workers and tourists alike.

Every project has challenges and issues that arises. This project had a significant scope change in the middle of design related to unanticipated funding sources. Zach and members of the design team rose to the occasion to address the changes and exceeded expectations to resolve in an efficient and time sensitive manner.

Zach is a great engineer who is also sensitive to the importance of the engineering supporting the overall aesthetic and landscaping. Many engineering challenges were included in the Riverwalk project, building land in an active body of water isn't easy! Zach was instrumental in the design solutions that were developed to allow for the floating gardens of the Jetty which rise and fall with the water level of the Chicago River. In fact, during extreme rain events the Chicago River has flooded portions of the Riverwalk. One such event occurred within two weeks of Phase 2 being opened to the public. Zach stated "The Riverwalk functioned as designed during the flood condition" a phrase I've used during flood events that have happened since!

I'm honored to be asked to write a letter of recommendation for Zach's nomination to become Honorary ASLA, he is an engineer who supports good design for public use! Please contact me at (312) 744-4834 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Michelle Woods  
Bureau of Asset Management

5 February 2020

Honorary Membership Nominations  
c/o Honors and Awards  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

re: Zachary Chrisco Honorary Membership Nomination

Dear Committee Members:

I am honored to support Zachary Chrisco's nomination for Honorary Membership in ASLA. I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Zach for over 16 years and can honestly say he is a unique leader in our field. I first worked with Zach when he was a civil engineering intern from Tufts University, and his potential, not only as an engineer but also as a leader, was apparent. His passion lies in collaboration and the design and implementation of many of our most complex urban projects, which require a tremendous amount of design details, rigor, and technical solutions: his strengths.

I have seen Zach evolve professionally to the point where he is leading many of our most complex projects. Zach has worked on several important award-winning projects throughout his career, such as the Chicago Riverwalk, Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park in Council Bluffs, IA, the Nord Family Greenway in Cleveland, OH, Cincinnati's Smale Riverfront Park, and Gulf State Park Master Plan in Alabama. Zach, having matured professionally in a highly collaborative, interdisciplinary, design-first environment, has become a very good translator and landscape architect. Conversely, any landscape architect who has the pleasure to work with Zach will quickly gain appreciation for his allied profession of civil engineering. Zach brings his enthusiasm and passion to solve complex urban design problems in the most open and collaborative manner.

Zach believes there is nothing that cannot be solved technically—it is simply a matter of cost. As a close friend and colleague, I cannot think of another professional of whom our profession could use more. Zach cares about every aspect of the project and is willing to put in the hard work and effort to see our collective plans come together.

I enthusiastically endorse Zach for your consideration and appreciate the opportunity to express my support on his behalf.

Sincerely,



Mark O. Dawson FASLA  
Principal