

## Why Ontario Needs a Practice Act for Landscape Architects



Berczy Park  
Claude Cormier et Associés - Toronto, ON

The images in this document are all examples of award – winning projects across Ontario that have been recognized by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

Attorney General **Doug Downey**, MPP (Barrie – Springwater – Oro Medonte) asked the OALA what problem they were trying to solve

### A PRACTICE ACT WOULD REDUCE RED TAPE

Here are **three reasons** why:

- It would allow landscape architects to **regulate themselves** in a similar manner **as over 30 other professions** in Ontario
- It would allow the **profession to regulate in the public interest** for increased public safety
- It would provide **better value** to the public expediting delivery of quality-built form

### A PRACTICE ACT WOULD REDUCE RISK OF LITIGATION

Here's why:

- Landscape architects carry out their profession upholding a **code of ethics** where **public health, safety** and well-being is absolutely paramount
- Additionally, they make **critical recommendations and decisions** affecting the feasibility of projects to meet public health and safety standards
- The contribution landscape architects make on a region wide level (e.g. a ravine strategy) adds to communities' **economic, social and environmental well-being**
- Landscape architects **reduce the risk of litigation** to the consumer and the province by reducing exposure for liability rising from hazardous and **defective design that has caused death, injury and/or property damage**

### A PRACTICE ACT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Here are the facts:

- The Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) was **founded in 1968**
- In **1984**, the Bill Davis PC government established a **Title Act** for Landscape Architects
- In **2016**, the OALA launched a campaign to enhance legislation to a **Practice Act**
- In the United States, **47 of the 50 states** already have a Practice Act

### A PRACTICE ACT WOULD ENSURE ETHICAL PRACTICES

Here's how:

- A **full governing Council** with public representation
- A **fully functioning office** with a separate Executive Director and Registrar
- A **Continuing Professional Development** Program with mandatory credit reporting
- Public interest committees such as **Professional Practice & Ethics and Discipline**

## Why Ontario Needs a Practice Act for Landscape Architects



A Practice Act would allow landscape architects to better ensure public health, safety and well-being by:

<p>Utilizing their specialized knowledge and experience with green infrastructure to address <b>public health and safety</b> concerns in the built environment resulting from <b>climate change</b>. This would provide solutions to reduce flooding, urban heat island effect and air pollution, as examples, which are known to cause illness or death.</p>	<p>Designing public features such as sidewalks, trails and plazas to meet safety and accessibility standards, ensuring <b>adequate lighting, appropriate surfacing and the design and siting of public space elements</b>, including circulation management devices and site amenity, such as seating, bollards, signage, bike racks, planters and waste receptacles; all ensuring safe, appropriate clearances to minimize conflicts and hazards.</p>	<p><b>Employing unique knowledge in plant characteristics to design spaces</b> that reduce environmental hazards (solar radiation, air pollution) and discomforts to people (heat, wind) while increasing the ecological services and wellness opportunities in public spaces.</p>
<p>Employing <b>specialized technical knowledge to design site elements</b>, increasing accessibility, experiential satisfaction and wellness, including stairs, ramps, guardrails, boardwalks, and viewing platforms, with compliance to the Ontario Building Code.</p>	<p>Specifying the design &amp; layout of playground equipment to <b>ensure standards for fall zones are met</b>, encourage wellness benefits of exposing children to nature and ensure appropriate materials and surfacing are used to reduce injury.</p>	<p>Design of site grading, drainage conveyance and erosion mitigation to ensure slope stability and dissipation of stormwater, grading design to <b>minimize 'slip and fall' hazards</b> maximizing protection to public and private property.</p>
<p>Creating equity and inclusion for all people by <b>designing supportive accessible spaces</b>, for users requiring mobility aids, such as scooters, wheelchairs and strollers and others having sensory challenges, such as the visually impaired.</p>	<p>Designing recreational, leisure, and open space facilities including parks, sports fields and courts, trail systems and tracks and courses, with <b>layout and orientation that reduces conflicts</b>, and materials and finishes that mitigate risk and harm to the public.</p>	<p>Designing safe and efficient streetscapes that <b>accommodate multi-modal traffic, increases healthful opportunities through active transportation</b>, and adheres to road safety standards; minimizing conflicts between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.</p>

The OALA is a member of the [Construction Design and Alliance of Ontario](#). Members include:

- Association of Registered
- Interior Designers of Ontario
- Concrete Ontario
- Consulting Engineers of Ontario
- Heavy Construction Association of Toronto
- Mechanical Contractors Association of Ontario
- Ontario Association of Architects
- Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists
- **Ontario Association of Landscape Architects**
- Ontario Electrical League
- Ontario General Contractors Association
- Ontario Home Builders Association
- Ontario Road Builders Association
- Ontario Sewer & Watermain Contractors Association
- Ontario Society of Professional Engineers
- Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario
- Residential Construction Council of Ontario
- Surety Association of Canada



TOcore Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan  
PUBLIC WORK - Toronto, ON

For more information, contact:

**Angie Anselmo, OALA Member Services**  
[memberservices@oala.ca](mailto:memberservices@oala.ca)