



MEETING MINUTES

CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS BOARD

The Landscape Architects Technical Committee Meeting

Department of Consumer Affairs

HQ 2 Hearing Room (Room #186)

1747 North Market Blvd.

Sacramento, CA 95834

May 16, 2025

Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC/Committee)

Members Present

Pamela S. Brief, Chair

Patricia M. Trauth, Vice Chair

Martin "Marty" Armstrong

Susan M. Landry

Jon Wreschinsky

Staff Present

Laura Zuniga, Executive Officer

Jesse Laxton, Assistant Executive Officer

Kim McDaniel, Program Manager

Gloria Padilla-Todd, Enforcement Analyst

Heather Davis, Special Projects Analyst

Bethany Butori, Public Information Technician

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Staff Present

Luke Fitzgerald, Budget Analyst

Suzanne Balkis, Budget Manager

Helen Geoffroy, Legal Affairs Attorney III

Bryce Penney, Television Specialist, Office of Public Affairs

Ann Fisher, Administrative Analyst, SOLID

Guests Present

Stephanie Landregan (University of California, Los Angeles)

Diane Mihara

Ron Jones

G.V. Ayers, Gentle Rivers Consulting LLC

A. Call to Order / Roll Call / Establishment of a Quorum

LATC Chair Pamela Brief called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and Vice Chair Patricia Trauth called roll. Four members of LATC were present, thus a quorum was established.

B. Chair's Procedural Remarks and Committee Member Introductory Comments

Ms. Brief explained that all motions and seconds will be repeated for the record and votes on all motions will be taken by roll call.

C. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Brief invited members of the public to address LATC.

The Committee may not discuss or act on any item raised during this public comment section, except to decide whether to refer the item to the Committee's next Strategic Planning session and/or place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting (Government Code sections 11125 and 11125.7(a)).

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

D. Update from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), Board and Bureau Relations, DCA, Leslie Barmby, Associate Government Program Analyst

Leslie Barmby, of DCA Board and Bureau Relations, reported on Governor Newsom's 2025-2026 State Budget proposal to split the agency into two: the California Housing and Homelessness Agency and the Business Consumer Services Agency, which would include DCA. The reorganization plan was submitted to the Little Hoover Commission on April 4, 2025, starting a 90-day review, with public hearings held on April 23-24. DCA leadership testified in support of the Governor's reorganization plan. The Little Hoover Commission is preparing a report with recommendations. If not rejected by the Legislature within 60 days, the plan takes effect and the new Business and Consumer Services Agency will launch in July 2025, becoming fully operative by July 1, 2026. More details are available on the Business Consumer Services Housing Agency website.

Governor Newsom issued an executive order on March 3, 2025, requiring state employees to increase in-office work from 2 to 4 days per week starting July 1, 2025. CalHR provided implementation guidance on March 13, and DCA has been holding bi-weekly meetings with Board and Bureau leadership to support the transition.

Levi Hull began his role as DCA's Compliance and Equity Officer. In this position, he

leads department-wide quality improvement initiatives to ensure regulatory compliance. He oversees SOLID Planning and Training Solutions, the Organizational Improvement Offices, the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, and the Internal Audit Office. He also serves as the liaison to the department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee. Board members are reminded to complete Board Member Orientation Training within one year of their appointment or re-appointment. The training will be offered virtually on June 18, 2025, and October 22, 2025, with registration available through the Learning Management System. In recognition of Public Service Recognition Week in the first week of May, Leslie Barmby expressed appreciation for the Board, the Executive Officer, and Board staff for their hard work and dedication to advancing the mission of consumer protection. Leslie Barmby responded to questions from the Committee. Committee Member Jon Wreschinsky inquired whether the DCA reorganization would have any fiscal impacts on the Boards and Bureaus, Ms. Barmby stated she would follow up with her management and provide an update to the Committee. Chair Brief inquired about potential fiscal impacts related to the need for increased office space in response to the executive order requiring four days a week in-office attendance. Laura Zuniga responded that both LATC and the Board currently have sufficient space to accommodate this requirement.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

E. Budget Update from DCA Budget Office, Luke Fitzgerald, Budget Analyst

Budget Analyst Luke Fitzgerald reviewed LATC's Expenditure Projection Report, Fund Analysis of Fund Condition, and Revenue Projection Report included in the meeting materials handouts. Mr. Fitzgerald informed that the Committee reported a 2023/2024 base budget of \$1,153,000 (including May Revise adjustments), with projected expenditures of \$266,000 (23.05%) back to the fund. For 2024/2025, Mr. Fitzgerald reported projected revenues are \$1,455,000, expenditures are projected at \$958,000, and the projected ending reserve is approximately \$1,150,000 (10.2 months). The Budget Office will continue to monitor the Committee's revenue and expenditures and report back to the Committee with expenditure projections as fiscal months are closed in the current year.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

F. Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) California Supplemental Exam (CSE) Presentation, Brian Knox, Research Data Analyst II, and Karen Okicich, Research Data

Karen Okicich and Brian Knox presented on the behalf of the Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES). The presentation provided an overview of OPES's role in supporting licensure programs through examination validation and development, with a focus on compliance with legal requirements, professional guidelines, and technical standards as mandated by Business and Professional Code §139. Ms. Okicich and Mr. Knox emphasized the importance of using occupational analyses and examination validation studies to ensure licensure exams assess entry-level competence and support public protection.

Ms. Okicich and Mr. Knox reviewed key policies guiding their work, including DCA Policy OPES-22-01 on licensure examination validation, DCA Policy OPES 20-01 on participation in exam development workshops, and DCA DPM OPES 22-01 on examination security. The critical role of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in all phases of exam development, was highlighted. The exam development cycle was described in detail, beginning with research and SME interviews, followed by the development of task and knowledge statements, survey administration, data analysis, and the creation of exam content outlines.

The review of national examinations was also discussed, noting that these exams must meet psychometric and legal standards, include California practitioner input, and be reviewed for California-specific content. Psychometric evaluations include reviewing development procedures, setting passing scores, assessing candidate data, and ensuring the reliability and security of scoring processes.

Ms. Okicich and Mr. Knox opened for questions, and discussions occurred. Chair Brief asked how regulatory changes affecting exam content are addressed between scheduled review periods. Ms. Okicich explained that such changes must be brought to the committee's attention. If the change is critical, OPES works with the committee to gather necessary information and will make every effort to incorporate the change into the exam as soon as possible. When asked if it is the committee's responsibility to inform OPES of regulatory updates, Ms. Okicich confirmed that it is.

Mr. Wreschinsky inquired about the process for setting passing scores. Ms. Okicich stated that OPES uses a criterion-referenced standard, typically the modified Angoff method for licensure exams. He also asked whether OPES tracks fail rates for repeat exam takers. Ms. Okicich responded that while such analyses can be conducted, this information is not tracked by school and is generally maintained by the boards. OPES focuses on exam item performance and maintaining assessments of entry-level competency, rather than industry or educational variables.

Ms. Trauth requested more information on OPES's review of the national exam and the selection of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Ms. Okicich explained that OPES conducts a psychometric review and evaluates all components of the national exam development process in coordination with the committee. Mr. Knox added that SMEs are selected by LATC staff in collaboration with OPES. When asked whether other states follow the same national exam review process, Ms. Okicich noted that not all states are mandated to do so like California, and she could not speak for others.

Chair Brief also asked about the possibility of offering a practice exam to support candidates who experience test anxiety. Ms. Okicich shared that OPES is currently exploring this option and is working to include sample questions in the candidate manual. She noted, however, that practice exams are typically not provided at the state level.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

G. Review and Possible Action on January 31, 2025, LATC Meeting Minutes

Patricia M. Trauth moved to approve the January 31, 2025; Meeting Minutes as presented.

Susan Landry seconded the motion.

Members Trauth, Landry, Wreschinsky, and Chair Brief voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

H. Legislation Update

H.1 (AB 667): Ms. Zuniga provided an overview of AB 667, which would allow applicants who cannot read, write, or speak English to use an interpreter, at no cost, for both written and oral portions of state- administered exams. Chair Brief and Ms. Trauth inquired whether LATC would be responsible for covering the cost; Ms. Zuniga stated that it is currently unclear as the bill has not yet been approved. Mr. Wreschinsky asked whether safeguards would be in place for interpreters and about disability accommodations. Ms. Zuniga confirmed that candidates can submit requests for disability accommodations.

H.2 (AB 742): Ms. Zuniga reported that AB 742 would require DCA boards to prioritize licensure applicants who are descendants of slaves. Helen Geoffroy noted concerns from DCA regarding potential litigation and constitutional issues.

H.3 (SB 470): Ms. Zuniga shared that SB 470 would continue changes to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. In response to Mr. Wreschinsky's question about whether a committee member would need to be physically present, Ms. Zuniga stated that LATC would provide a public meeting location at either the DCA headquarters or the LATC meeting room.

H.4 (SB 641) Ms. Zuniga reported that SB 641 would authorize DCA and Department of Real Estate to grant waivers and exemptions during emergencies, such as waiving licensing fees during a state of emergency. The bill is intended to provide regulatory flexibility and support for licensees impacted by unforeseen crises. Ms. Zuniga noted that the implementation details would be determined based on the specific nature and scope of the emergency.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

I. Program Manager's Report

Ms. Zuniga presented highlights from the Program Manager Report, noting that the LATC Strategic Plan was approved earlier in the year. She reviewed updates including AI-focused research, a completed outreach presentation for UC Berkeley, and welcomed Bethany Butori as the new Licensing and Examination Coordinator. Social media activity was highlighted, with a reminder for members to follow the LATC online. Ms. Zuniga reported that the LATC newsletter is in progress and expected by mid-June, with a re-vote on the newsletter name planned due to low participation in the initial round. Chair Brief inquired about cases pending the Attorney General. Ms. Zuniga clarified that only serious cases are referred for formal disciplinary action.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

J. Discuss Upcoming University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Extension

Chair Brief recused herself due to her roles at UCLA Extension and on the UCLA Guidance Committee. Committee member Trauth assumed the chair position temporarily. Ms. Zuniga provided an update on the UCLA Extension Certification Review, noting that the review is part of LATC's oversight duties. She reported that the visiting team has been selected, UCLA Extension has submitted the Site Evaluation Report (SER), and the site visit is scheduled for June or July. The review results will be evaluated in late summer, with a final recommendation to be presented at the October LATC meeting. Mr. Wreschinsky expressed full support for the effort and shared an update from the recent ASLA trustee meeting. Mr. Wreschinsky shared he introduced a request for ASLA and the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) to consider accrediting certificate and associate degree programs. He reported that LAAB plans to begin discussions on this topic, with the goal of potentially certifying extension certificate programs in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Stephanie Landregan, Director of the Landscape Architecture Program at UCLA Extension, shared that she prepared the Site Evaluation Report (SER) for LATC's review. She expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming review, noting that the program is small but strong and academically sound. She looks forward to the review process and to finalizing the site visit dates soon. Ms. Landry thanked Stephanie Landregan and inquired about student enrollment. Ms. Landregan responded that the program has approximately 100 students across the three years, with a flexible structure and students from various part of the U.S. When asked about licensure outcomes, Ms. Landregan noted that while it is difficult to track annually due to the required two years of experience post-exams, most graduates from the past three years have become licensed. She added that recent graduates are not yet eligible and mentioned that the program offers discounted LARE prep courses to support students in pursuing licensure.

K. Discuss and Take Action on the Possibility of Establishing a “Retired License” Option for Landscape Architects

Ms. Zuniga opened a discussion on the potential for LATC to establish a “Retired License” option for landscape architects. She shared that CAB previously went through a similar process, conducting studies to determine the appropriate fee levels. Initially, there was no regulation setting the retired license fee, and after analysis, the fee was reduced from \$300 to \$40, resulting in approximately \$1 million in lost revenue. Ms. Landry inquired whether a retired landscape architect could still perform any work or use the title. Ms. Zuniga clarified that retired individuals would not be permitted to perform any work requiring a license or advertise as a landscape architect. Ms. Landry expressed concern about potential financial losses to LATC and stated her opposition due to budget implications. Ms. Trauth also formally stated her opposition.

PUBLIC COMMENT: G.V. Ayers of Gentle Rivers Consulting LLC stated that, while he has not discussed the matter with CCASLA members, he personally agrees with the committee’s consensus. He expressed uncertainty about the value of the retired license option and suggested it requires further consideration.

L. Update and Discuss Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB):

Mr. Wreschinsky provided an update on the CLARB Experience Committee. He reported that a new document approved by the CLARB board this spring has been incorporated into exam qualification requirements. CLARB has also expanded its acceptance of international qualification requirements. Additionally, CLARB is considering bylaw amendments that would eliminate the regional structure, including regional elections and mandatory meetings, though regional activities may still be included in other scheduled events. Mr. Wreschinsky shares changes are also anticipated in finance roles and the Finance Committee to enhance functionality. CLARB proposes ending contested officer elections by allowing the nominating committee to present a single candidate per position. Mr. Wreschinsky informed CLARB is increasing outreach efforts to K-12 students.

Ms. Trauth thanked Mr. Wreschinsky for the update and expressed support for the inclusion of international candidates. She inquired about the nature of the election process if only one candidate is presented per position. Mr. Wreschinsky clarified that elections would still take place, and that the Leadership Advisory Council (LAC) Committee will vet, propose, and send to CLARB for approval, noting that the CLARB board makes the final decision.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

M. Review of Future Committee Meeting Dates

Board meetings have been scheduled for June 5, 2025, in Sacramento, with a Webex option available; Chair Brief plans to attend. The next meeting will be held on August 21, 2025, in Berkeley, with Ms. Landry planning to attend. The final Board meeting of the year is set for November 6, 2025, in Sacramento, also with a Webex option, Mr. Wreschinsky plans to attend.

LATC meetings are scheduled for July 24, 2025, and October 17, 2025. The July 24, 2025, meeting will be held via Webex due to the university summer break. LATC is still working toward holding a future meeting at a university, with the location yet to be determined.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

N. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.