

**CLARB**

ADVANCING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



LEADERSHIP  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
PROGRAM

# Transitioning from Practitioner to Board Volunteer Leader

May 19, 2026

# Webinar Tech Tips and Reminders



Please mute your microphone unless presenting.



Chat function on bottom of screen is available – and presenters will see questions posted.



This event is being recorded. Recordings and slides will be emailed out within a week of the event.



Closed captioning is available. To enable this feature on a computer, click “Live Transcript” and “Show Subtitle.” For users on a phone or tablet, captioning will be enabled automatically.

# Today's presenters



**Brian Verardo**

CLARB President



**Lea Ann Macknally**

CLARB Past President



**Katie Wilson**

Wyoming Board Member

# Agenda

## 01

Understanding the role of board leadership

- Key responsibilities of board members
- Shifting from practice to governance

## 02

What makes a strong board leader?

- Effective leadership characteristics
- Shifting from practice to governance

## 03

Leadership at CLARB

- Key governance elements
- What to expect
- Opportunities

The background of the slide is a photograph of a park or campus walkway, overlaid with a dark teal semi-transparent filter. The image shows a paved path curving through a green lawn, with trees and bushes in the background. The overall tone is professional and serene.

# **Understanding the role of board leadership**

# Types of boards

## Operational

- **Focus:** Day-to-day management and task execution
- **Decisions:** Tactical, short-term problem solving
- **Involvement:** Hands-on with staff activities and processes
- **Metrics:** Tracks activity and output-based measures
- **Risk:** Can blur governance and management roles

## Strategic

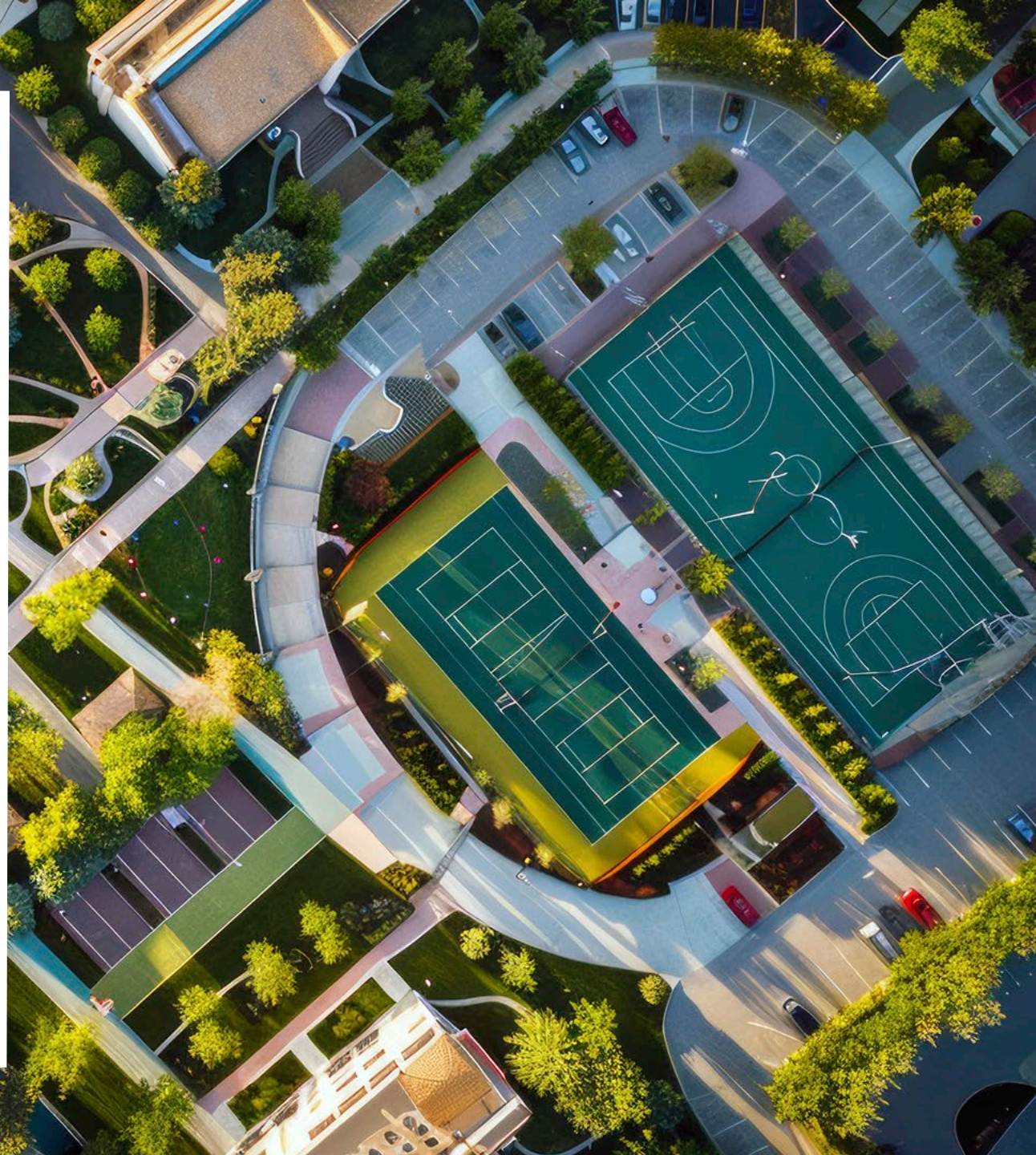
- **Focus:** Long-term vision and organizational direction
- **Decisions:** High-level policy and direction-setting
- **Involvement:** Delegates to staff; focuses on oversight
- **Metrics:** Evaluates outcomes and long-term impact
- **Strength:** Clear separation of governance and operations

# Key responsibilities of board members

Strategic direction  
Fiduciary responsibility  
Vision alignment

# Strategic direction

- Board members think critically about long-term impacts and navigate complex issues, using sound reasoning to guide decisions.
  - Set direction
  - Allocate resources
  - Provide oversight

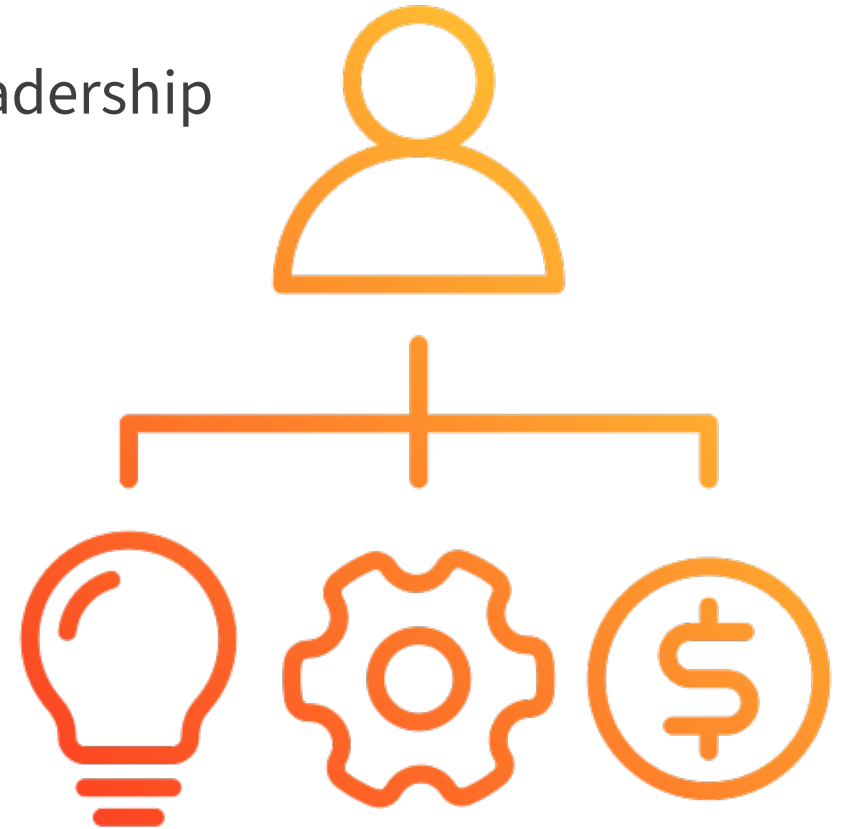


# Set direction

- Set the organization's mission, vision and values
- Engage in strategic thinking and planning
- Practice foresight
- Develop, monitor, and adjust strategy
- Approve annual work plans and budget that aligns with the strategic plan

## Allocate resources

- Hire and support capable and effective executive leadership
- Ensure capable and effective elected leadership
- Provide adequate financial resources



# Provide oversight



Ensuring progress



Observing boundaries



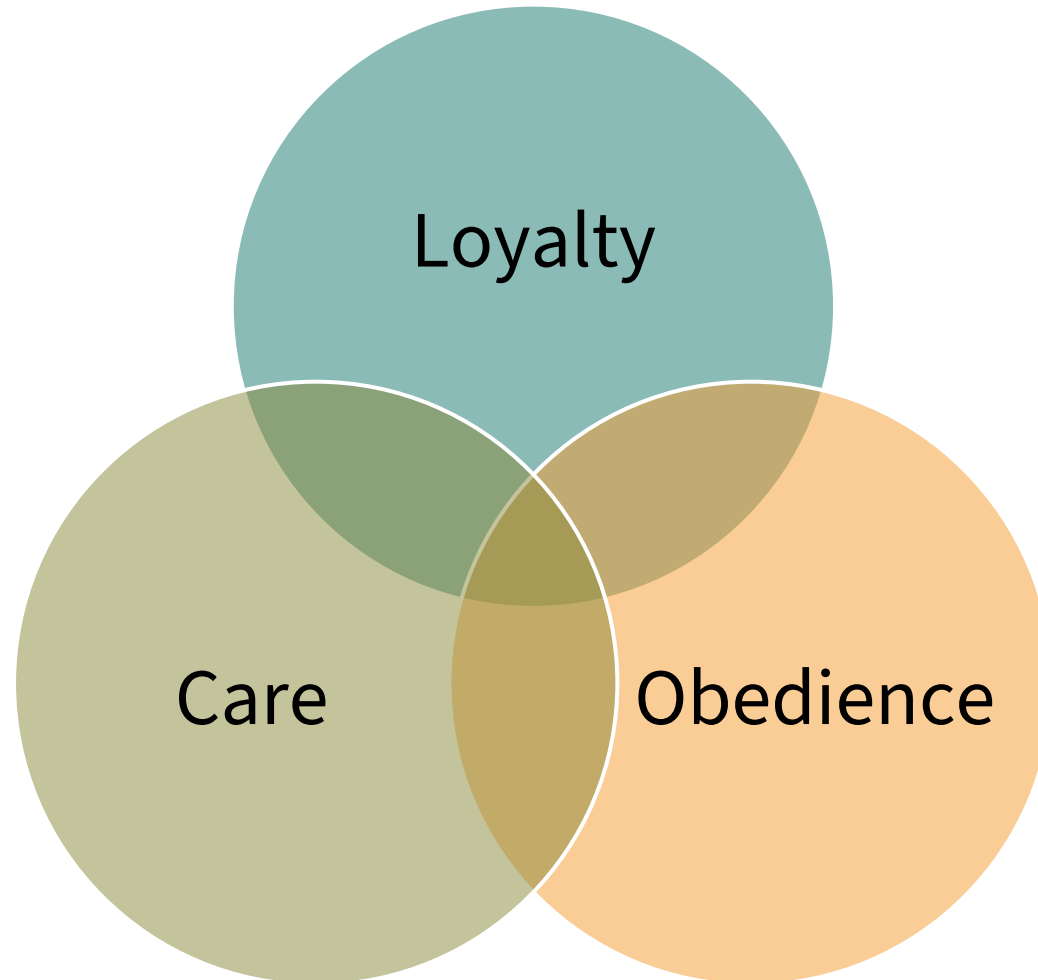
Asking the right questions

## **Fiduciary responsibility**

- Uphold fiduciary duties by making decisions that prioritize the organization's best interests and ensure sound governance.



# Legal duties of a board member



# Fiduciary responsibilities in action

**Oversight vs. supervision:** Focus on strategy and high-level guidance, not day-to-day operations/management.

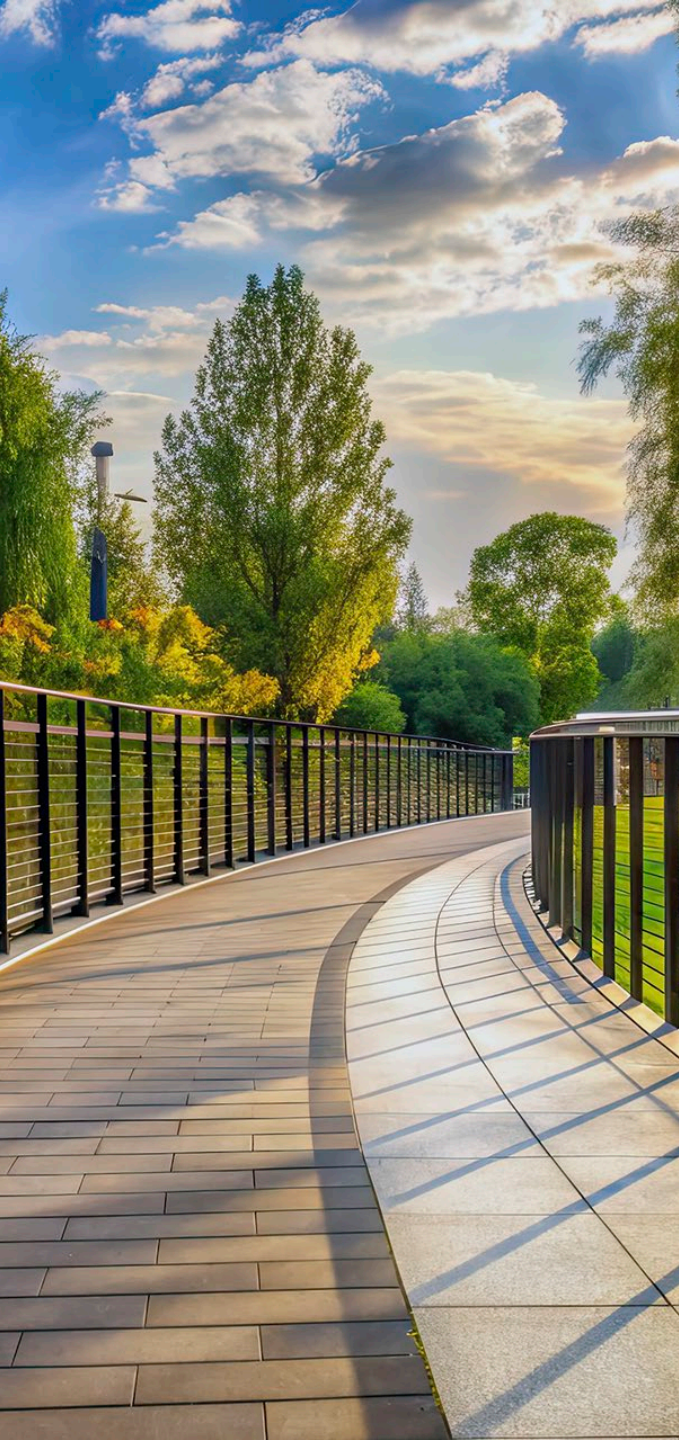
**Questions to ask:** Ensure key decisions align with the organization's mission and long-term strategy.

**Avoiding conflicts of interest:** Identify and disclose any personal interests that may impact decision-making.

## Vision alignment

- Board members clearly articulate a vision that unites the group and sets a clear path to achieving organizational goals.





# Aligning with the organization's vision

- **Setting the long-term direction:** Board members ensure that all decisions support the organization's mission and future goals.
- **Communicate the vision:** Clearly articulate the vision to align the board, staff, and stakeholders.
- **Mission-driven decisions:** Every action taken by the board should reinforce the organization's core mission.

# Shifting from practice to governance

Responsibilities of board members

# Shifting your mindset

- Transition from operational decision-making to strategic oversight
- Embrace a “big picture” perspective rather than a hands-on management approach
- Adapt to different leadership “hats” and responsibilities

# Common pitfalls to avoid

- Not asking the right questions to better understand the organization, your role and responsibilities, and rules
- Not recognizing the time and engagement commitment required
- Not preparing for and actively participating in meetings
- Prioritizing personal agendas over the organization's mission
- Not respecting confidentiality and governance boundaries



**Questions?**

**CLARB**

**What makes a strong board leader?**

# Effective leadership characteristics

Inclusive collaboration

Trust and respect

Effective ambassador

Agility in leadership

Self-awareness and effective contribution

# Inclusive collaboration

Foster a collaborative environment by actively listening and integrating diverse perspectives into the decision-making process.

- **Listen actively:** Seek to understand before being understood.
- **Value diverse perspectives:** Encourage contributions from all members, recognizing that different viewpoints lead to better decisions.
- **Foster a collaborative culture:** Build an environment where members feel comfortable sharing their ideas openly.

# Best practices



**Create space for all voices:** Ensure everyone has a chance to speak, particularly those who may be more reserved.



**Encourage open dialogue:** Facilitate respectful conversations, even when opinions differ.



**Align on common goals:** Keep discussions focused on the shared objectives and outcomes of the Board.

## **Trust and respect**

**Through emotional maturity and integrity, Board members build trust and earn the respect of stakeholders and colleagues.**

- Consistency in actions
- Emotional maturity
- Integrity and transparency
- Following through on promises



# Effective ambassador

Advocating for the  
mission and  
decisions of the  
organization.

- **Champion the mission:** Use your leadership position to promote the organization's mission, and rally changes when necessary.
- **Support board decisions:** Support and defend the message and decisions publicly.
- **Represent stakeholder perspectives:** Bring issues to the organization (representative for).

“As ambassadors, you represent the board outside the boardroom. This can range from talking with colleagues and friends about the good work the organization does to attending meetings with legislators. Board members serve as a link between the organization and its members, stakeholders, constituents, and clients and are responsible for educating influencers and the community about the importance of the organization’s work.”

*Board Source*

<https://boardsource.org/>



# Support decisions publicly

- In the Board/work room, bring your perspective to the discussions.
- Outside of the work room, support the final decision of the organization.
- Stay on message; understand what is and isn't ok to share publicly.
- Public comments, especially on social media can be perceived as a public statement from the organization.

**While it is important to discuss the organization's work outside of the boardroom, board members must be careful not to gossip about confidential matters. No matter how informal the situation might seem, internal matters of the organization should remain just that — internal.**

***Board Source***

<https://boardsource.org/>

## Agility in leadership

**Adapt quickly to change, turning challenges into opportunities and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.**

- **Embrace change:** Be open to evolving circumstances and adapt swiftly to new challenges.
- **Turn challenges into opportunities:** View obstacles as potential stepping stones for innovation and growth.
- **Foster a learning culture:** Encourage continuous learning and improvement within the board and the organization.

# Best practices for agile leadership



Be proactive,  
not reactive

Learn from  
mistakes

Encourage  
flexibility

## Self-awareness and effective contribution

Leverage strengths while recognizing areas for growth, contributing effectively to board discussions and decisions.

- **Know your strengths:** Understand your unique skills and how they contribute to the board's overall success.
- **Identify growth areas:** Recognize areas where improvement is needed and seek opportunities to develop them.
- **Enhance board collaboration: Balance confidence and humility:** Be confident in your abilities while remaining open to feedback and learning.

# Shifting from practice to governance

Effective leadership characteristics

## Shifting your mindset

- Prioritizing organizational success over personal viewpoints
- Speaking as part of a collective leadership body
- Adapting communication and leadership style for governance



# Common pitfalls to avoid

- Failing to actively seek and value diverse perspectives
- Undermining trust through micromanagement, lack of professionalism or not respecting confidentiality and governance boundaries
- Resisting change or struggling to adapt to evolving leadership needs
- Missing opportunities to effectively advocate for the organization
- Lacking self-awareness in communication, participation, or leadership style
- Overcontributing, under contributing, or failing to collaborate effectively



**Questions?**

**CLARB**

# Leadership at CLARB

# Key governance elements

Knowledge-based  
strategic  
governance

Outcome  
orientation

Partnership model

Strategy focus

# Core CLARB leadership criteria

Lead with vision

Act with integrity

Demonstrate thought leadership

Aspire to excellence

Engage as stewards

Work collaboratively

Foster inclusive community



# What to expect for your first meeting and beyond

Best practices for effective leaders

# What to expect

## From the team

- Thoughtful and respectful dialogue
- Insights, information, and analysis
- Expression of views and reasons for them
- Responsiveness to questions and inquiries
- Supportive, learning environment

## From you

- Come prepared
- Speak up and tell us “why”
- Keep it at the “right level”
- Stay informed between meetings
- Be an advocate for decisions and the team
- Work hard at learning

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Board of Directors

- Help set the direction of the organization and impact the future of regulation

## Leadership Advisory Council

- Ensure that CLARB has the most effective, qualified individuals to lead the organization toward its goals

## Exam Committee

- Help develop fair, comprehensive exams that reflect the breadth of landscape architecture practice.

## MBE Committee

- Provide board executive input to the organization's goals, strategy and scope of work.

## LA CES Committees

- Represent CLARB and help maintain standards for evaluating professional development and continuing education programs

## Work Groups

- Provide input to specific strategic initiatives



**Questions?**

**CLARB**

# Thank you for attending

**We value your feedback.**  
Please complete the short survey.



Scan the QR code to  
complete the evaluation

**Thank You!**



# Upcoming events

## **MBE Exchange**

- June 3
- 3 p.m. ET
- Member board executives

## **Nonprofit Finance 101**

- June 10
- 3 p.m. ET

## **ASLA+CLARB Licensure Summit**

- June 17
- 3 p.m. ET
- CLARB members and Record Holders, ASLA members

## **ProSeries: Spec for Success: The Benefits of Structural Soil**

- June 24
- 3 p.m. ET
- CLARB Record Holders

## **Exam Basics and Q&A**

- July 21
- 3 p.m. ET
- Emerging professionals