



**DESIGN
CONCEPTS**

Community + Landscape Architects

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Robby Layton, Co-founder of Design Concepts, Receives Doctorate from North Carolina State University

His Research Examines Factors that Affect Greenspace Use and Satisfaction: Key Ingredients for a Healthy Community

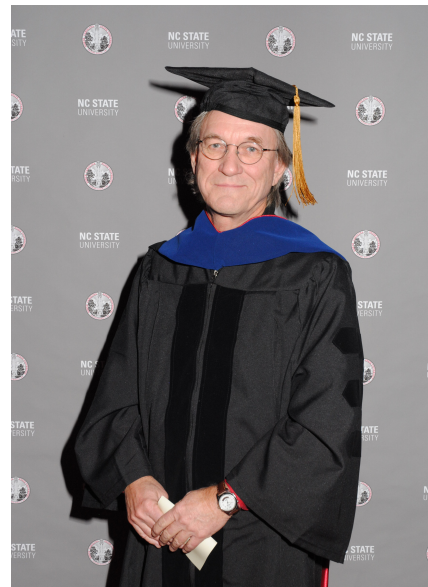
Lafayette, Colorado (January 10, 2017) — Design Concepts, a community and landscape architecture firm, announces co-founder Robby Layton's highest academic achievement in the discipline of landscape architecture: a Ph.D. in Design from North Carolina State University's College of Design, received in December 2016.

At the core of Layton's studies and dissertation was research on parks and other greenspace located near people's homes. Sophisticated methods were applied to determine which factors matter most for people's opinion of how well greenspace meets public needs, and which ones play the greatest role in the frequency of park visits. Layton studied community-wide parks and recreation systems in four communities:

- Cary, North Carolina
- Montgomery County, Maryland
- Prince George's County, Maryland
- Tulsa, Oklahoma

Determining What Matters to Park Visitors

His findings show that traditional strategies of increasing available park acreage near homes, and reducing the distance from home to a park, are not reliable ways to improve residents' opinions of the adequacy of the park system to meet needs. They also are not reliable ways to increase the frequency of park visits. Improving the *quality* of parks and assuring that parks respond to the characteristics of the people that live near them are more likely to achieve the desired results. New ways to measure park quality are needed to inform further research and lead to more effective planning guidelines and policies, such as the measurement of:

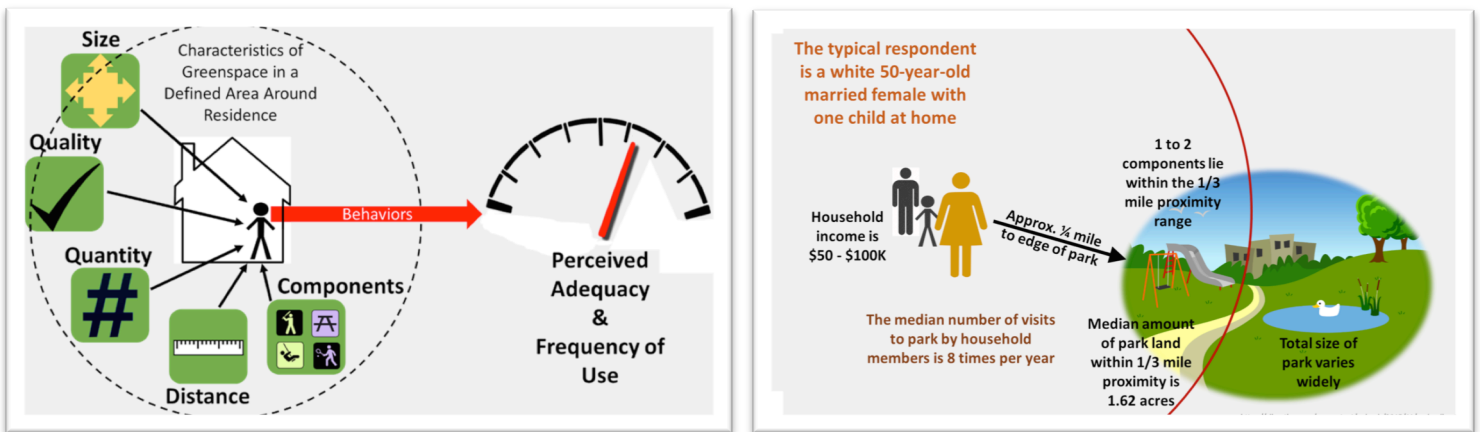


Robby Layton, PhD, FASLA, PLA, CLARB, CPRP

- Comfort
- Convenience
- Safety and security
- Aesthetics and beauty
- Enjoyment

“With better measures of park quality, systems of greenspace can be planned to help achieve many public health and well-being goals including physical health, mental health, social health, environmental health, and economic health,” says Layton.

Design Concepts co-founder [Axel Bishop](#) commented on Layton’s doctorate that, “Introducing this highest level of design, research, and thought to landscape architecture and our firm’s practice will open new doors in planning and design applications. Applying new thought processes and study of people in their environment is a trademark of our firm’s founding philosophy. With Robby’s scholarly approach, we can build on this philosophy with the highest level of evidence-based design.”



Sample Summary Images from Robby Layton’s Dissertation Findings on “[Greenspace and Public Health: Potential Performance Indicators](#)”

About [Robby Layton](#), PhD, FASLA, PLA, CLARB, CPRP

Robby Layton is a founding principal of Design Concepts, CLA, Inc., an award-winning landscape architecture and planning firm. His projects span four decades and address a wide range of challenges, but all of them converge on the theme of creating community. His recent work has focused on strategic planning for systems of parks, greenways, open space and other public amenities. He has just received his doctorate from North Carolina State University, where he investigated level of service (LOS) models for the allocation of public greenspace. In addition to his design practice, Robby has taught a number of courses at the

undergraduate and graduate levels. He writes for a variety of publications in the landscape architecture field and presents regularly at academic and trade conferences on a range of topics related to his areas of interest.

About Design Concepts

Founded in 1981, Design Concepts is in its 35th year providing thoughtful, innovative and dynamic designs for public and private spaces. Design Concepts is nationally recognized as a leader creating and re-imagining spaces that embrace community gathering, recreation and play, connections to nature, and a focus on the environment. They continue to innovate healthy communities, learning landscapes and entertaining outdoor community places. The firm's current work includes a variety of learning landscapes, destination parks, projects plugging 'nature into play,' inclusive playgrounds, new recreation amenities, and planning for communities. To learn more about the firm visit: www.dcla.net.

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