

PRESS RELEASE
27TH JUNE 2023

MINDFUL MASTERPLANNING: OSD BREAKS GROUND ON A NEW PARADIGM FOR INCLUSIVITY AND NEURODIVERSITY IN FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

OSD DESIGNS A 230 ACRE MASTER PLAN FOR SOUTH CATO SPRINGS, A DEVELOPMENT GROUNDED IN THE HEALTH, WELLNESS AND LIFELONG SUCCESS OF NEURODIVERGENT ADULTS AND OTHER RESIDENTS OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS



South Cato Springs Master Plan, Aerial View | Image by OSD

Together with the SLS Community and South Cato Springs Holdings, LLC, OSD celebrates the groundbreaking for South Cato Springs, a master plan for a transformative neighborhood that empowers the neurodivergent community and honors the region's stunning Ozarks.

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS (June 27, 2023) — Today at Kessler Mountain Regional Park, OSD, SLS Community, South Cato Springs Holdings, LLC and the City of Fayetteville proudly come together to commemorate the groundbreaking for infrastructure at South Cato Springs.

The project began with the goal of creating a home for SLS Community, a Fayetteville 501(c)(3) established to provide neurodivergent adults with the essential resources to thrive—however,

through a collaborative process, the plan has evolved into a neighborhood that will enhance the quality of life for not only neurodivergent adults but also the broader community in Northwest Arkansas.

OSD's plan for the new mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood includes much-needed workforce housing, a town square, a center for the University of Arkansas Medical School (UAMS), urban agricultural areas and open recreational spaces that tie into the region's bike paths. The project commences with a \$3 million Community Project Funding award from the federal government secured by Congressman Steve Womack (AR-3), and a matching \$3.48 million grant from the City of Fayetteville, to kick off initial sewer and road infrastructure.



Micro-Villages for SLS Community | Image by OSD

OSD's 'outside-in' approach for designing the architecture, mobility and landscape is deeply rooted in the innate beauty of the Ozarkian environment; nature informs the layout of buildings, streets and recreational spaces, while also providing a rich resource for local and sustainable building materials. The design embraces principles of accessibility and inclusivity, supports the growth of fresh food, and prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle networks over cars—the master plan for South Cato Springs unfolds as OSD's testament to mindful urbanism.

“As Northwest Arkansas undergoes significant growth, we believe new development must find a way to enhance the quality of both the human experience and the natural environment. South Cato Springs presents an exceptional opportunity to create a new paradigm for inclusive living where

neurodivergent adults can live and thrive in harmony with nature and the broader community, while honoring and revealing the beauty of the Ozarks.

From Fayetteville to Bentonville, Northwest Arkansas is a rich constellation of human-scaled cities that combines to become a national powerhouse of culture, economy and innovation. With South Cato Springs underway, the region is set to gain a new star in this constellation that will set a world-class standard for how people and nature, biodiversity and neurodiversity, can co-exist and thrive," said **Simon David, Founding Principal and Creative Director, OSD.**



Urban Agrihoods | Image by OSD

The mission for the SLS community in South Cato Springs is to create an innovative “live, work, play” community with specialized housing and services alongside vocational training, educational programs, and recreational activities that make it accessible and affordable for neurodiverse adults to reach their full potential. In this way, the SLS Community is highly integrated within the overall master plan as a means to cultivate a sense of home, well-being and connection for SLS residents within the larger social and natural communities.

"We've actively sought input from community stakeholders to understand the needs of the region, and with OSD's design and planning expertise, their feedback has been mindfully integrated into a neighborhood that will provide workforce housing to Northwest Arkansas and serve as a platform for SLS Community," said **Matt Zakaras from South Cato Springs Holdings, LLC.**

Ashton McCombs, Executive Director of SLS Community added, *"our hope is that the service, employment, housing, and community resources holistically brought together throughout the OSD design will help address the disparity of opportunity that too often exists for neurodivergent adults."*



Town Square Creek | Image by OSD

OSD's master plan prioritizes diversity in both building typology and landscape topography, from the new mixed-use town square to urban farming and viticulture. The variety and vibrancy of the built environment create a thriving experience for neurodiverse assisted living communities, single family and multi unit housing, hospitality programs, event spaces and community parks.



Woodland Recreation | Image by OSD

Pedestrians and bicyclists can also enjoy easy accessibility and an intimate connection with nature through the extensive network of walking paths and bike trails that meander through woodlands and creeks. Designed with nature as the underlying priority, OSD's approach to circulation, minimized vehicular traffic and direct connection to major regional arteries is a harmonious blend of urban and natural environments.



Site Plan | Image by OSD

OSD's involvement in this landmark project highlights the studio's multidisciplinary expertise in architectural design and planning, landscape design and planning, as well as urban design. Prior to South Cato Springs, OSD recently celebrated two groundbreakings: [326 Rockaway Avenue](#), an affordable housing project in Brooklyn, New York and the [Alice Walton School of Medicine](#), a medical education facility in Bentonville, Arkansas.

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Download OSD's press kit [here](#).

For more information, please contact:

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SOUTH CATO SPRINGS FACTS

Name: South Cato Springs

Size: 230 acres

Location: Fayetteville, Arkansas

Client: South Cato Springs Holdings, SLS Community

Collaborators: Crafton Tull Associates, Core

Team: Simon David, Vignir Eythorsson, Ethan Mcknight, Kiran Mohanty, Serena Sun

ABOUT OSD

[OSD](#) (Office of Strategy and Design) is a multidisciplinary design group that believes the answers to a thriving future should be formed by innovative, holistic design that addresses every component of the built environment, from structures to social spaces. By rejecting the conventional practice of constructing buildings first with the magical belief that our social and natural systems can work around them, OSD pro-actively builds towards a thriving planet by planning and designing from the outside-in, prioritizing ecological and human needs. Founded by Simon David, OSD prioritizes creativity and collaboration as a means to develop new and enduring approaches to the future of our built environment, and combines this with our extensive experience as urban designers, landscape architects, and architectural designers. OSD has received national and international awards from platforms such as Architect's Newspaper, Rethinking the Future, AZ International Awards, Landizer, and has been Selected as Member of UN-Habitat Planners for Climate Action. OSD is a part of the Walton Family Foundation Design Excellence Program.