



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Rachel Whyte
Park Pride
404-546-7969
rachel@parkpride.org

**16TH ANNUAL PARKS & GREENSPACE CONFERENCE SPARKS IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS
IN LIGHT OF PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH**

Connecting with Parks highlights parks' role in creating and maintaining quality of life

Atlanta, GA, February 16, 2017 – [Park Pride](#), the only Atlanta-based nonprofit that engages communities to activate the power of parks, is hosting the [16th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference](#) at the Atlanta Botanical Garden on Monday, March 27th. The event is expected to draw 450 attendees from across the Southeast, and will offer a diverse array of local and national perspectives on how greenspaces bridge the gaps between individuals, communities, political jurisdictions and ecosystems. As people across the country increasingly relocate to cities, parks will play a major role in all aspects of growth, perhaps most significantly in creating and maintaining quality of life and livability benefits to residents. This year's conference theme, *Connecting with Parks*, will highlight how parks can be leveraged for increased benefits across multiple sectors and why they should be at the forefront of development planning.

Through a mix of tours and lectures, speakers will approach the theme through a variety of lenses, including: health and wellness, history, design, transportation, water, biodiversity and ecology, equitable development and more.

The conference's list of nationally recognized speakers is impressive and includes: Audrey Peterman, author of [Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care](#); Kaid Benfield, author of [People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think about Greener, Healthier Cities](#); Thomas Woltz, Nelson Byrd Woltz; Robert Rogers, Rogers Partners; Paul Morris, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.; and Elena Madison, Project for Public Spaces.

Locally recognized speakers include: Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability; Faye DiMassimo, Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Program General Manager, City of Atlanta Dept. of Public Works; Tim Keane, Commissioner, City of Atlanta Dept. of Planning & Community Development; Amy Phuong, Commissioner, City of Atlanta Dept. of Parks & Recreation; Kishia L. Powell, Commissioner, City of Atlanta Dept. of Watershed Management; Becky Katz, Chief Bicycle Officer of the City of Atlanta; and Ed McBrayer, Executive Director, PATH Foundation.

The 16th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference is comprised of sessions that will appeal to audiences of diverse backgrounds. "It's a cross-section of folks involved in promoting the importance of parks!" stated a past conference attendee. "The Parks & Greenspace Conference is a place to learn from inspiring people who are passionate about parks and what they offer to quality of life!" stated another.

Sponsor support for The Parks and Greenspace Conference has been enthusiastic, illustrating a commitment to greenspace from the following. *Presenting Sponsor:* Cox Conserves/Cox Enterprises. *Community Building Sponsor:* The Home Depot Foundation. *Venue Sponsor:* Atlanta Botanical Garden. *Gold Sponsors:* The Conservation Fund, Ed Castro Landscape, HR&A, The Trust for Public Land. *Silver Sponsors:* American Society of Landscape Architects: Georgia Chapter, Astra, Atlanta BeltLine Partnership / Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., Dominica / Gametime, Georgia-Pacific, HGOR, Jacobs Engineering Group, Jones Day, Perez Planning + Design, LLC, Piedmont Healthcare, Playground Creations, Play South, Playworld Preferred, Pond & Company, RVI, Stantec, USA Shade. *Supporting Sponsors:* Atlanta Downtown Improvement District / Central Atlanta Progress, Batdorf & Bronson Coffee Roasters, City of Decatur, Georgia Forestry Commission, KAIZEN Collaborative, Metropolitan Atlanta Urban Watershed Institute, Perkins + Will.

Registration for the Parks & Greenspace Conference is open. Learn more and register at parkpride.org/conference.

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About Park Pride:

Park Pride is the Atlanta-based nonprofit that engages communities to activate the power of parks. Working with 90 local Friends of the Park groups, Park Pride provides leadership and services to help communities realize their dreams for neighborhood parks that support healthy people, strong neighborhoods, vibrant business districts, a robust economy and a healthy environment. Park Pride is active in greenspace advocacy and educating both civic leaders and the general public about the benefits of parks, and annually hosts the Parks and Greenspace Conference. Learn more about Park Pride at www.parkpride.org.