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## **18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PARKS & GREENSPACE CONFERENCE SPARKS IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS AROUND EQUITY, ART, AND HEALTH**

**Atlanta, GA, March 13, 2019** – [Park Pride](#), the Atlanta-based nonprofit that engages communities to activate the power of parks, is hosting the [18<sup>th</sup> Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference](#) at the Atlanta Botanical Garden on Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. The event is expected to draw over 450 attendees from across the Southeast and will offer a diverse array of local and national perspectives on how well-activated parks and greenspaces serve as the foundation upon which strong communities grow and healthy cities thrive.

Through a mix of tours, lectures, and hands-on workshops, Park Pride's conference theme, *Parks are the Heart of Community*, will explore the power of parks to reflect culture and artistic expression while equitably providing places to pursue healthy lives.

This conversation is both timely and relevant for those living in the metro-Atlanta region. As people across the country relocate in increasing numbers to cities and urban centers like Atlanta face unprecedented growth, parks are vital for providing natural places for residents to connect with each other and access the health benefits (mental and physical) provided by greenspace. Parks also serve as public places where community identity is strengthened and shared through art and cultural expression. All members of every community deserve to live within walking distance of a great park.

The conference's list of nationally recognized speakers is impressive and includes: Gil Penalosa, MBA, PhD, Founder and Chair of [8 80 Cities](#); Dr. Nooshin Razani, MD, MPH, Director of the [Center for Nature & Health](#), UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland; and Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Commissioner of the [New York City Department of Parks & Recreation](#).

Locally recognized speakers include: Dorian McDuffie, Public Art Project Manager at the City of Atlanta's Atlanta City Studio; Isabel González Whitaker, leader of the [Friends of Sara J. González Park](#); William Massey, freelance artist and sculptor at [William Massey Art](#); and Samara Minkin, Manager of Public Art in the [City of Atlanta Mayor's Office](#).

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference is comprised of sessions that will appeal to audiences of diverse backgrounds. "This conference is tops for parks, people who love parks, people who make up the park sector, and people who design and operate parks," stated a past conference attendee. "The passion for parks is *real* at this conference."

Sponsor support for The Parks and Greenspace Conference has been enthusiastic, illustrating a commitment to greenspace from the following: *Presenting Sponsor*: Cox Enterprises / Cox Conserves. *Community Engagement Sponsor*: Kaiser Permanente. *Community Building Sponsor*: The Home Depot Foundation. *Venue Sponsor*: Atlanta Botanical Garden. *Hero Sponsors*: The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public Land, City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management. *Advocate Sponsors*: ADS Playground Creations, American Society of Landscape Architects: Georgia Chapter, Astra, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. / Atlanta BeltLine Partnership, City of Atlanta Department of Parks & Recreation, Dominica / Gametime, Ed Castro Landscape, Georgia-Pacific, HGOR, HR&A Advisors, Integrated Land Design, Jones Day, KOMPAN, Miracle Recreation | PlayPower, Perez Planning + Design, Perkins + Will, Piedmont Healthcare, Piedmont Park Conservancy, PlaySouth, Playworld Preferred, Pond & Company, PulteGroup, Stantec, Sylvatica, USA SHADE & Fabric Structures. *Friend Sponsors*: Atlanta Downtown Improvement District / Central Atlanta Progress, Batdorf & Bronson Coffee Roasters, City of Decatur Active Living, The Coca-Cola Company, DaVinci Development Collaborative, Georgia Chapter of American Planning Association, Georgia Forestry Commission, KAIZEN Collaborative, Metropolitan Atlanta Urban Watershed Institute, NewFields, Reeves Young, REI, Smith Dalia Architects, The Turner Foundation.

Registration for the Parks & Greenspace Conference is open, and the late registration rate goes into effect on Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. Do not delay securing your ticket to this sell-out event! Learn more and register at [parkpride.org/conference](http://parkpride.org/conference).

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**About Park Pride:**

In 2019, Park Pride celebrates 30 years of engaging communities to activate the power of parks! Working with over 150 local Friends of the Park groups, Park Pride provides leadership, services, and funding 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 public about the benefits of parks, and annually hosts the Parks and Greenspace Conference. Learn more about Park Pride at [parkpride.org](http://parkpride.org).