



# VirginiaTech

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American Society of Landscape Architects  
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Dear ASLA Board of Trustees;

It is with great delight that I nominate Peter Pollack for the ASLA Community Service Award. Peter has a long history of involvement in a range of community service projects (see attachment 1) that have had a profound impact on both the landscapes and the people in the communities he has served. Peter's community service work exemplifies the highest standards of the profession. The reason that ASLA has a "Community Service Award" is to recognize dedication and excellence in this type of work and no one better exemplifies this than Peter.

Throughout a distinguished career, as an educator and a practitioner, Peter has always had a passion and commitment to advancing the highest principles of landscape architecture. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that he carries this same passion and commitment into the community. To say that Peter provides a pro bono service for a community does not begin to capture the depth of what he does. First and foremost, Peter is an educator. Whether it is a class of students, the employees in his office or a community board or group, Peter is always teaching them something. His teaching enables a community to see the landscape in new ways. He does this by helping them make their values explicit. In so doing he leads diverse groups to a shared vision of what could be. In the Allen Creek Greenway project Peter helped a community group with divergent views find common ground in a greenway plan for the community and has put them in a position where they can now hire a professional to develop detail plans for implementation.

Peter has a soft spoken but confident demeanor when working with community groups that simultaneously calms their concerns and instills confidence that he can help them get where they need to go. His work with the Ann Arbor City Market Commission is an excellent example of his ability to lead a community group with divergent views through a process that resulted in a plan that will serve the good of all and provide a model for the Farmers' Markets movement across the country.

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Peter's community service work covers a broad range of landscape issues from "community art" to "ecological preservation." Peter brings a variety of professional knowledge and skills to these settings. He used his landscape analysis skills to help the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee of Washtenaw County evaluate land and set criteria for the preservation that resulted in the purchase of \$2,700,000.00 of land per year for five years and resulted in the preservation of 1,000 acres of land. As a founding member of the Ann Arbor Commission on Art in Public Places, Peter created processes to jury public art, put out RFP's and contracts with artists. In all of these situations Peter used his design and graphic skills to help people understand and visualize alternatives.

It is this multidimensional array of skills and abilities that Peter brings to community service, including a technical understanding, facilitation, visualization and design creativity that have contributed to his success – a success that has enriched the lives of thousands of people who experience the landscapes that are the result of his community service work.

Clearly the world is a better place because of the community service work done by Peter Pollack. As a fellow landscape architect, he enriches us all by our professional association with him. I can sincerely say I can think of no one more deserving of the ASLA Community Service Award than Peter Pollack.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patrick A. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Patrick A. Miller, Ph.D., FASLA  
Professor and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Outreach

## **Attachment 1 - Partial Listing & Description of Community Service Work Peter M. Pollack, FASLA, FAAR**

Over the past 33 years in Ann Arbor, Peter has contributed his landscape architectural abilities to many citizen advisory committees, ad hoc Mayoral committees and neighborhood and civic groups. The range of skills and experiences Peter has acquired, as both a practicing and teaching landscape architect, has become a well known and respected source of expertise. His advisory arena contributions span policy making to physical planning to project implementation. When called to participate, Peter seeks to guide vision and perception, sort fact from emotional response, and coalesce consensus. It is generally agreed that when Peter Pollack is a member of an advisory group, more voices are listened to and there is a greater degree of order, logic and creativity in addressing key issues.

### **Allen Creek Greenway Task Force, City of Ann Arbor 2005 to date (Chair)**

At the specific request of the Mayor, Peter accepted the role of Chair of a nine member task force whose charge was to explore the potential for a greenway and bike path in the already developed Allen Creek valley adjacent to the downtown. Its members drawn from divergent groups in conflict over additional development or open space, floodplain use and public safety, historic neighborhood or a DDA proposed parking structure, the task force's charge was to analyze and make recommendations for the greenway as a whole, and more specifically, for the use of three city-owned properties (a parking lot and two maintenance yards) along the potential greenway's route.

Peter guided the work of this diverse and divergent task force, and in the context of an equally conflicted and involved public, through to a successful completion. His professional skills were useful in defining the task force's scope and schedule; the public engagement process; the key political, policy and physical questions to be considered; and, what data was needed to gather and share for a transparent, community oriented decision-making process. Peter did all of the task force's illustrative work including analysis and design drawings, three PowerPoint presentations for community meetings, and the final product – an 80 page, fully illustrated report – about half of which he also wrote. Peter's involvement added up to over 700 hours in this effort over its 14 month life. He has been the source of this very public project's organizational structure and its content; and, through his quiet, thoughtful demeanor, was able to move the task force past much of the difficulty associated with public conflict to a consensus-based conclusion.

The task force's report, *"The Allen Creek Greenway ~ Findings and Recommendations"* is being used as the basis for the City to move forward with an RFP for development of the first of the City-owned properties along the greenway, i.e., to convert ideas on paper into physical reality.

### **Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee Natural Areas Preservation Program, Washtenaw County, Michigan 2001 to date (Chair 2005-2007)**

In 2000, a 10-year millage was passed by the citizens of Washtenaw County creating the Natural Areas Preservation Program. Its goals were to purchase and preserve the diverse ecological heritage of Washtenaw County. The subsequent enabling ordinance established a citizens' committee to further define and carry out the program. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) is a seven-person body with expertise in land trust/conservation, wildlife management, environmental education, real estate/development, land use planning, botany/forestry and fisheries/aquatic ecology. Peter was appointed and is its first member in the land use planning area; he has been reappointed twice, was its Chair for two years (2005-2007), and continues to serve.

Peter has played a key role in both evolving and applying criteria used to evaluate and recommend purchase of the properties nominated: millage revenue of \$2.7M per year over the past five years that has preserved 1,000 acres of natural resource rich land for public use. While largely a policy and advisory role, his work has also included guiding County staff in locating and designing parking and interpretive trails consistent with characteristics of each site, and assisting with resource management plans.

**Pfizer Pharmaceutical Research Campus Site Re-Use Study, Ann Arbor  
Member, Strategic Working Action Team (2007 to date)**

This newest community endeavor derives from Pfizer's mid-January 2007 announcement that it would be closing its 175 acre research and development site in Ann Arbor, with a 12-18 month window for decommissioning the site. Within 24 hours the Governor of Michigan, the President of the University of Michigan, the Mayor and select key figures in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County and the State of Michigan met to form a proactive plan to respond to the impact of this major corporation's departure on state, county and local levels. Among the seven strategic working action teams is one focused on planning for the re-use of the Pfizer site. Having worked continuously with Pfizer for 22 years in the master planning and design of its Ann Arbor facilities, Peter was asked to join this working group as it looks toward redevelopment options. His acknowledged understanding of the site and willingness to view the suggestions of others have allowed Peter to take on a leading role in preparing the first round of design alternatives for the Action Team Chairs on 21 February. Led by Peter, the Site Re-Use Subcommittee is currently preparing design concepts to present to Governor Jennifer Granholm, U-M President Mary Sue Coleman, Mayor John Heftje and the community on 8 March 2007. The work at hand is of such significance on local, county and state levels that it must move at a rapid pace.

**Commission on Art in Public Places  
Founding Member (1998-2005)**

Peter was appointed as one of the original members of this City Commission. The Commission's purpose is to foster a supportive climate for the visual arts; to encourage greater community awareness of, access to, participation in, and appreciation for the visual arts. The Commission was charged with identifying, acquiring, placing and maintaining appropriate works of art in public locations. All of these activities are familiar in the context of the practice of landscape architecture and were areas to which he could offer insight and structure. Peter's early work on the Commission included creating a process for jurying and selection of works of art and acting as liaison with the City to facilitate the installation process. Peter was helpful in securing the early grants and contributions that funded the acquisition and installation of works of art in the public arena. More specifically, as a landscape architect, Peter's knowledge of siting art in public places and his experience with the City's RFP and legal contracting process helped articulate the competitive jury process through which artists were invited to submit works. He played a significant role in working with the artists and the City to ensure that installations met City criteria for public safety.

**City Market Commission, City of Ann Arbor  
Member (2005 to date)**

Peter volunteered to fill a vacancy on the Farmers' Market Commission at a time when there was conflict among commissioners themselves and with the City and its Market Manager. Some of the controversy was due to a new, in-process, market master plan for which there was strong opposition from most vendors and some in the community. Peter believed his landscape architectural background – understanding the master planning process and the nature of conflict resolution – could help all to reach consensus. A new plan has recently been approved by the Commission and City Council. He is now serving on a subcommittee to re-write vendor operating rules, as well as those that govern the role and process of the Commission itself; and, he will represent the Commission on the Citizen Advisory Committee overseeing implementation of the master plan's initial phase. Peter has taken an active role in guiding the Commission back to a more positive level of functioning and, in doing so, participates in strengthening one of the most noted Farmers' Markets in the United States, one that serves as a model for other communities throughout the country.

In addition to these more major undertakings, Peter has participated in numerous Citizens Advisory Committees: Wayfinding Study – Ann Arbor DDA District (2007 to date); Broadway Bridges Redesign, City of Ann Arbor (2002-2003); Citizens Association for Area Planning, Board of Directors (1978-1982); Vision 2020, A Strategic Plan for Michigan State Parks, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (1991-1992); and, Michigan State Parks, MDNR (1993-2000). Whether his participation is requested or he volunteers, Peter Pollack is known as a landscape architect with an open mind and inclusive approach to community activism.