

January 21, 2017



The American Society of Landscape Architects  
Attn: Executive Committee/Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001-3736

Re: Olmsted Medal Nomination for the Atlanta Beltline

Dear President Rinner, Executive Committee, and members of the Board of Trustees,

I am pleased to put forth this nomination of the Atlanta Beltline, as an organization, for ASLA's 2017 Olmsted Medal. The organization has two (2) functioning components:

- 1) The Atlanta Beltline, Inc. which manages the planning, design and implementation for the project.
- 2) The Atlanta Beltline Partnership which enables the project through its fund raising and outreach efforts.

These two concerns have worked as a very effective team in the advancement and implementation of the overall project which represents one of the largest ongoing urban redevelopment projects in the United States.

We all know of the emergence of the profession of landscape architecture in America through the early efforts of Frederick Law Olmsted whom this medal honors. Olmsted's efforts came as a response to a rapidly changing America besieged by the Industrial Revolution where human health and well-being were cast aside along with the rural, agrarian lifestyle. America was transformed and when we arrived and took possession of our cities, they weren't pretty places. Olmsted's efforts changed all that ushering in a new way of viewing urban life. Of significance were Olmsted's efforts on behalf of the City of Buffalo where we were introduced to America's first 'park system'. This, of course, was a radical departure that, again, fostered a new evolutionary trend for our cities.

It is in this spirit that this nomination is being put forth---because of its multi-faceted, systematic approach to enhancing urban life through the purposeful re-purposing of abandoned transportation corridors linked to all sectors of the City of Atlanta. Their efforts represent a classic case of the concept of the resilient and evolutionary city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The linkages and threaded connections to all parts of the city have incentivized redevelopment efforts and advanced the causes of parks development, urban revitalization, access to multi-modal transportation, business growth, environmental enhancement/healing, adaptive re-use of land, and placement of public art.

The larger plans for the Atlanta Beltline include:

- 22 miles of pedestrian friendly rail transit
- 33 miles of multi-modal, multi-use trails
- 1,300 acres of parks
- 5,600 units of affordable housing
- 1,100 acres of remediated brownfields
- 10 billion plus dollars in economic development
- 30,000 permanent jobs
- An average of 48,000 of one-year construction jobs
- Advancement of public art through provision/enabling of multi-venue placements
- Greater awareness and advancement for the causes of historic preservation and sustainable best practices

They are well on their way with in excess of 10 miles of multi-use trail being completed or under construction, portions of which saw 1.3 million users in 2015. Efforts to date have spurred private investment along the route to 3 billion of the previously stated 10 billion dollars estimated to be a minimum anticipated amount of total private investment. The project has been embraced by foundations and private donors to the tune of 54 million dollars to date for multi-use trails, parks, paths and support amenities. The workforce housing component has not seen as much progress due to the Great Recession's damaging effects on land values. However, recent indicators show a rebound in valuations which now bring to bear better conditions for use the innovative tax increment financing to fund this aspect of the project.

Impact on the City of Atlanta? After decades of population loss due to white flight and the effects of sprawl, population numbers have stabilized and Atlanta's population of 463,000 is expected to double in the next 15 years.

Impact on policy? The project has fostered a whole new planning effort on the part of the City of Atlanta to update their comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances with emphasis on a more encouraging and proactive environment for the redevelopment process.

As a result, government officials and critics around the country have taken notice of the encouraging results and growing momentum that the project and the city have experienced. Christopher Lienberger of the George Washington University School of Business has said that the Atlanta Beltline is "...the most important rail-transit project that's been proposed in the country—possibly the world."

First conceived in 1999, the Atlanta Beltline has evolved from a grassroots organization of local citizens and civic leaders to a partnership that has embraced a new outlook for the continued advancement and evolution of Atlanta. Initially, the focus was on enhancement and expansion of park resources as well as the non-conventional transportation network. As the project has gone forward, supporting peripheral development efforts have emerged such that 3,000 acres of adjacent or nearby land along the corridor have become available for new development—both private and public. This has led to advances and expansion in the marketplace for housing, business, education and government.

The reach of the project is impressive—to all 45 Atlanta neighborhoods which have direct access to all the facilities of the 4.8 billion dollars that will ultimately be invested and will reap continued benefit as the project moves forward though time.

Although far from completing the master vision, progress is significant, has accelerated, and positive feeling continues to grow. I can think of no better project to recognize and to encourage by making this award. In this time of uncertainty in the governmental policy landscape of America, we should be making this type of endorsement to reinforce this effort as a means for our cities of the future to emerge. Why is this important? The importance lies in our return to the city. Now more than ever, more people reside in the hearts of our cities than any place else in America. With the ongoing densification of our cities, the pace of this demographic shift is accelerating. The human health and well-being of the urban dwellers now and into the future will be dramatically enhanced. Making this award will also provide great encouragement to similar efforts in other cities of America such as Miami and Chicago to name a few, and ongoing efforts in New York City.

I encourage you to please join me with your support of this nomination.

My thanks in advance,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Mueller', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jonathan Mueller, FASLA, PLA  
Past President  
American Society of Landscape Architects

**Perry Howard, FASLA**

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January 25, 2017

The American Society of Landscape Architects  
Attn. Executive Committee/Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Letter of Endorsement  
Olmsted Medal Nomination for the Atlanta Beltline

Dear President Rinner, Executive Committee, and members of the Board of Trustees,

This is a letter of endorsement for the nomination of the Atlanta, Georgia's Atlanta Beltline for the American Society of Landscape Architects Olmsted Medal. Atlanta Beltline Partnership and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. are the organizations supporting its creation and ongoing development. This is an extraordinary endeavor that not only celebrates Frederick Law Olmsted vision for humanity's urban existence but the spirit of cooperation among various levels and segments of government, its citizens, profit and non-profit organizations, and institutions.

Sincerely,



Perry Howard, FASLA

Past President

American Society of Landscape Architects



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January 23, 2017

The American Society of Landscape Architects  
ATT: Executive Committee /Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001-3736

Re: Olmsted Medal Nomination for the Atlanta Beltline

Dear President Rinner, Executive Committee, and members of the Board of Trustees,

I am pleased to support the nomination of the Atlanta Beltline, as an organization, for ASLA's 2017 Olmsted Medal. As the largest public project in the country, the Beltline and its leadership have proven the transformative role this project has played, and will continue to play, in the future of Atlanta. Starting as a grassroots organization in 1999, the Atlanta Beltline has grown and evolved to become one of the leading organizations in this country supporting public wellbeing.

The Atlanta Beltline has built over 22 miles of pedestrian and bike friendly trails, constructed 1,300 acres of parks, repaired 1,100 acres of impacted soils, and advanced public art; these are only a few of the positive impacts this organization has made on the urban core of Atlanta. The fact that a project can knit back together 45 neighborhoods, provide jobs and training for local citizens and spur three billion dollars of investment to date is truly an amazing accomplishment.

With many more years of investment in the future, the Beltline and its partners are showing other major cities in the United States that it is possible to make positive changes for their citizens and visitors. It for this reason I fully endorse this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas R. Tavella".

Thomas R Tavella, PLA, FASLA  
Past President  
American Society of Landscape Architects

# Susan Hatchell

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The American Society of Landscape Architects  
Attn: Executive Committee/Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

January 24, 2017

Dear Board of Trustees,

It is an honor and a privilege to support the nomination of the Atlanta Beltline for the ASLA's 2017 Olmsted Medal. Google this project! Learn about it. It's history, planning and implementation is a phenomenal example of excellence, dedication and hard work!

The organization and the project show the best in what can, and does happen, when a big vision is combined with careful planning and far-reaching community support. It is truly an inspiring project for the rest of the nation to watch, learn about and emulate.

The Atlanta Beltline is a plan for 22 miles of streetcars and 33 miles of multi-use trails and 2,000 acres of parks connecting a green "beltline" around Atlanta on old rail corridors. The plan exemplifies the absolute best practices in building public/private partnerships, fostering grass roots leadership, remediating brownfields, providing avenues for health and fitness while connecting schools, housing and parks as an alternative transportation corridor.

In the 18 years since it was started, the project has won dozens of awards for design, communication, redevelopment, and sustainability. It has been a huge catalyst in community building efforts and bringing neighbors together. Forty-five in-town neighborhoods are linked by trails, streetcars and parks, making it among the most wide-ranging urban redevelopment projects under way in the United States. Over 5,000 people were mobilized to give input in over 225 public meetings, and thousands of volunteers give time and talent to hold special events, health and fitness tours, bike tours, clean-up days and free classes in yoga, aerobics and boot camps.

The Atlanta Beltline brings people together, fostering greater awareness for planning, affordable housing, historic preservation, public health, sustainability and public art. In addition to the community building and volunteer efforts, the project has leveraged \$3 billion in private economic development as of 2016. The Atlanta Beltline's visionary approach in environmental quality, grassroots leadership and sustainability make it a well deserving as winner for the 2017 Olmsted Medal.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Hatchell, FASLA, PLA, LEED AP  
President



January 23, 2017

The American Society of Landscape Architects  
Attn: Executive Committee / Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Olmsted Medal Nomination for the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

Dear President Rinner, Executive Committee and members of the Board of Trustees,

As a resident of the Atlanta metro area, I am pleased to support the nomination of the Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI) as an organization for the ASLA's 2017 Olmsted Medal. The BeltLine is one of the most comprehensive transportation and economic development efforts ever undertaken in the Atlanta Metro Area. It is a sustainable redevelopment project that is transforming not only the City of Atlanta, but the entire region. The BeltLine is not just a trail system but one of the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment programs currently underway in the United States.

The Atlanta Beltline will ultimately connect 45 in-town neighborhoods via a 22-mile loop of multi-use trails (plus 10-15 miles of spur connecting tails), modern streetcar, and parks – all based on railroad corridors that formerly encircled Atlanta. Currently, the Atlanta BeltLine consists of 4 open trails, 2 trails under construction, 7 parks, intensive planning for modern streetcar expansion, more than \$3 billion in private economic redevelopment, hundreds of affordable workforce homes, free fitness classes, a linear arboretum and urban farm, and the largest temporary public art exhibition in the south. Over 15 miles of multi-use trails are completed or under construction. When completed, it will provide first and last mile connectivity for regional transportation initiatives and put Atlanta on a path to 21st century economic growth and sustainability.

From this former railway corridor around the core of Atlanta, ABI is responsible for the development of new trail construction, new parks, connecting neighborhoods and Transit-Orientated Developments as well as the introduction of new affordable housing, artwork, performers, and musicians...and even hiring goats to control the exotic non native plants.

The future looks bright for the BeltLine and to the citizens of the Atlanta Region due to the work of Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. Please join me with your support of this nomination.

Regards,

Ed Czynson, FASLA, PLA

January 23, 2017



The American Society of Landscape Architects  
Attn: Executive Committee/Board of Trustees  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

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[www.rviplanning.com](http://www.rviplanning.com)

Re: Olmsted Medal Nomination for the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

Dear President Rinner, Executive Committee and members of the Board of Trustees:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the nomination of the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., as an organization, for ASLA's 2017 Olmsted Medal.

The Atlanta BeltLine, as a project, is the most comprehensive transportation and economic development undertaken by the City of Atlanta and among the largest and most wide-ranging urban redevelopment programs currently underway in the United States. Planned as a sustainable development, the Atlanta BeltLine is a transformative project that will ultimately connect 45 intown neighborhoods via a 22-mile loop that follows historic railroad lines that loop the City. When complete, the Atlanta BeltLine will provide first and last mile connectivity for regional transportation initiatives and put Atlanta on a path to future economic growth and sustainability.

Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) was founded as a public/private agency to oversee the planning, design, and engineering for the overall project. ABI put in place the BeltLine Corridor, a one-half mile wide tax improvement district that will allow community connectivity, park expansion and guides development along the BeltLine. This innovative mechanism has allowed for development investment dollars to fund BeltLine improvements. The BeltLine itself is based upon a graduate student's thesis in 1999 and includes parks, greenspace, a walking and biking trail as well as a transit corridor that connects to the City Streetcar system.

As an economic development engine, the Atlanta BeltLine has completed four open trails, two more under construction, seven parks, planning for streetcar expansion, and more that \$3 billion in private economic redevelopment including affordable workforce housing, a linear arboretum and the largest temporary public art exhibition in the South.

Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. has truly been following the type of responsible and sustainable development practices that Fredrick Law Olmsted advocated throughout his career. It is for these reasons, that I am highly supportive of awarding Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. with the Olmsted Medal.

Sincerely,

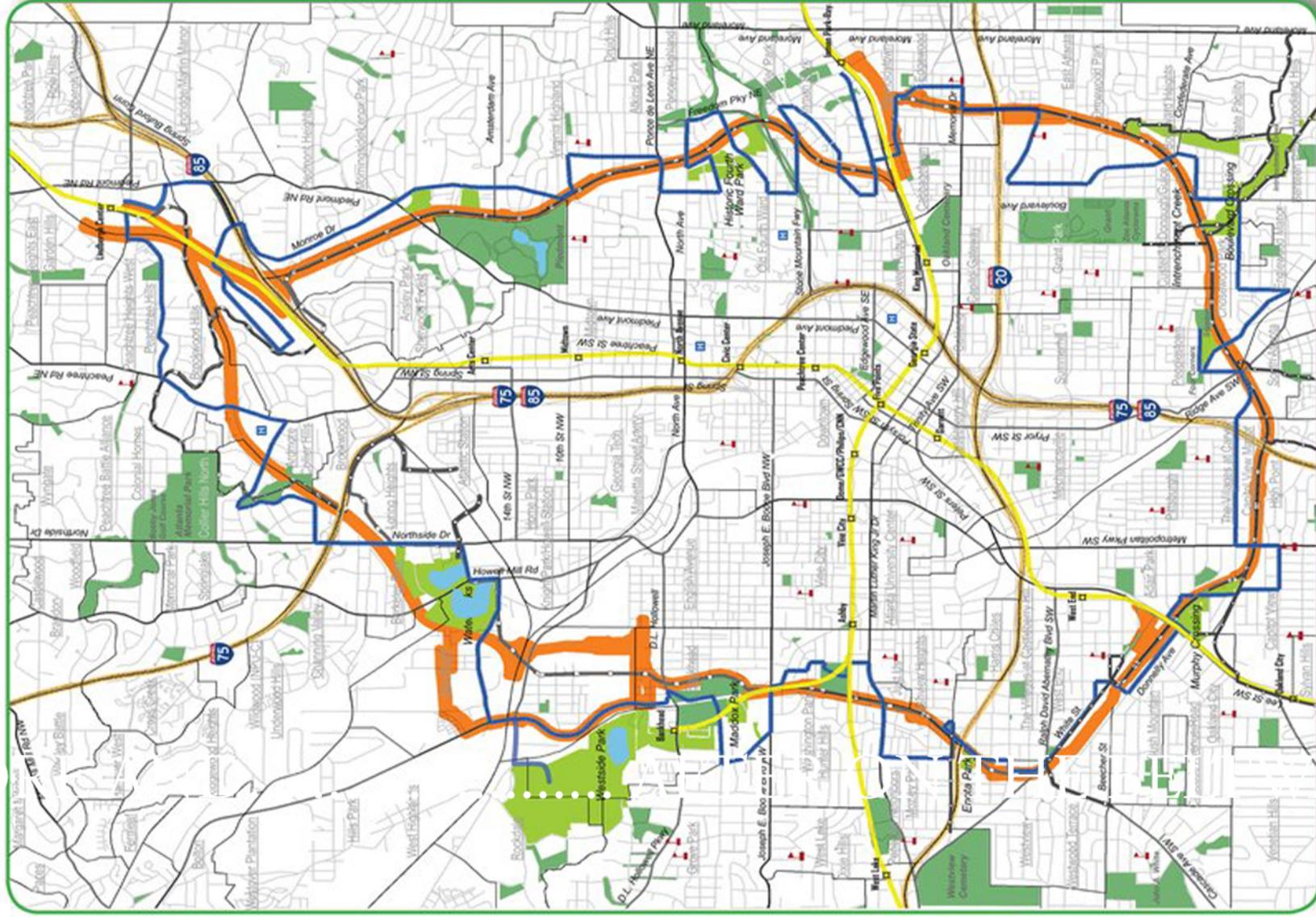


Kerry Blind, FASLA, PLA  
Former ASLA Trustee (Georgia)

# The Atlanta BeltLine

## Project Overview Map

BEH



The **Atlanta BeltLine** is a dynamic and transformative project for Atlanta. Through the development of a new transit system, multi-use trails, and green space along a 22-mile loop of historic rail lines that encircle the urban core, the Atlanta BeltLine will better connect our neighborhoods, improve our travel and mobility, spur economic development, and elevate the overall quality of life in the city.

### LEGEND

- Atlanta BeltLine Corridor
- Atlanta BeltLine Tour Route
- Atlanta BeltLine Trail
- Major Roads
- Existing Parks
- Proposed Parks
- Interstate Highways
- MARTA
- Schools



  
Beltline

  
TRAIL  
OPEN FROM  
6AM to 11PM

CAUTION  
TRAIL  
NARROWS

THE NORTHSIDE TRAIL

atlanta trails



HISTORIC 4TH WARD PARK



BEFORE AND ..... AFTER ON THE BELTWAY

NOVEMBER 2009

DECEMBER 2012