

January 29, 2018

Vaughn B. Rinner, FASLA
6586 High Point Drive SW
Seattle, Washington 98126

Re: Forterra Nomination for Olmsted Medal

I am honored to nominate Forterra, a land conservation non-profit in western Washington state, to receive the 2018 Olmsted Medal.

Forterra started out in the 1990's as a county-based land trust, but in the 21st Century has recognized and acted on two much broader goals:

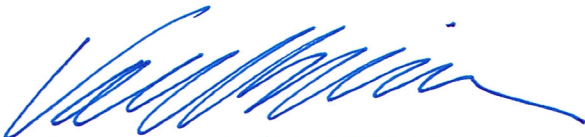
- “1) Protect 1.3 million acres of working forest, farms, shorelines, parks and natural areas;*
- 2) Make cities and towns great places to live, work and raise families.”*

The expanded mission to maintain green spaces not only by protecting natural areas, but also by protecting productive rural land as well as urban green infrastructure is truly remarkable. The ways in which they work through collaboration and partnerships with public agencies, other organizations, and with communities are creative and outstanding, as is their mission to help address environmental injustice and to maintain the cultural character of communities.

The following pages provide an overview of the history of Forterra, their mission and methods, and the means they have found to be effective, providing community value over generations.

Thank you for considering Forterra to receive this well-deserved honor.

Sincerely yours,



Vaughn B. Rinner, FASLA, SITES AP

NOMINATION OF FORTERRA

For THE OLMSTED MEDAL

HISTORY

Forterra was formed in 1989 as the Seattle King County Land Trust, dedicated to saving the region's iconic wild lands utilizing an approach to land conservation that bridged the gap between public and private entities. The Trust quickly moved beyond the goal of saving wild lands, realizing that the region was losing working lands, both farms and forests, that are as important as the wild lands.

Cutting across traditional boundaries, Forterra built a big tent to protect the natural and open space resources of the region while supporting smart urban growth. By 2003, they had conserved over 100,000 acres of land, but realized they needed a greater vision. They met, brainstormed and collaborated with 4,500 individuals across the region and mapped out two plans – The Cascade and Olympic Agendas.

These agendas linked community and conservation, people and place, across the region, with overarching goals to protect land while making great, equitable cities and towns.

“The interconnectedness of the natural, built and now the social world is key to unlocking solutions to a resilient region. To save nature we must solve human problems. Through the prism of land, Forterra is committed to addressing the quality of the underlying social fabric that binds us. This place is who we are.” www.forterra.org

LAND TRANSACTIONS

Forterra's program focuses on Keystone Lands in three ways:

- Acquisition
- Restoration and Stewardship
- Releasing Economic Potential

Land Acquisition

Forterra has, through working with a wide range of partners and communities, permanently protected important land with a variety of uses – wilderness, farms, forest lands, waterways, urban green space, and parks - even community gardens. The lands they have protected now exceed 250,000 acres. They work in many ways to accomplish this, through straightforward acquisition, and through limited interest and conservation easements.

Forterra's work has a large educational component to help communities and individuals understand how land conservation may be accomplished. This includes “Land Conservation 101” as well as real estate advisory services.

The organization also works to capture key real estate opportunities that will become important assets for the community, holding them until a long-term buyer is secured that works with community economic development, arts and cultural facilities, and transit-oriented affordable housing. The goal is to protect and enhance the culture, health and sustainability of the region's unique communities, including extensive work with the tribes.

Forterra looks at the connectivity of land, working to go beyond patchwork land preservation. They work in the Cascades, for example, to maintain effective wildlife corridors across roadways, particularly along Interstate 90.

Restoration and Stewardship

Forterra recognizes the need for good management of the lands in which they maintain ownership and in those lands on which they hold conservation easements. They take an active role in management to enhance ecological value while maintaining them as an asset to the local community. They monitor conservation easements annually, working with the landowners to maximize conservation values while maintaining allowed uses of the land.

Restoration events are a big part of their activities, allowing the public, including youth, to learn about removal of invasive species, planting of native plants, and restoring trails. In February of 2018, for example, they have eleven public restoration work parties scheduled on eleven different sites.

Most of these projects are in partnership with other local and regional entities, an example of how Forterra leverages their own resources while supporting other environmental organizations.

This example is a Three Forks Winter Stewardship Event where volunteers will work with the Snoqualmie Tribe to help restore a riverside riparian forest.



This is an urban restoration project in Georgetown, an historic Seattle neighborhood, in partnership with the Trees for Seattle program. Invasive plants are being removed to allow better growing conditions for large oak trees, to be replanted with appropriate vegetation.



Forterra also has a program called Green City Partnerships, where they have formed partnerships with nine cities in the western Washington region to help cities steward their natural open spaces. Through these partnerships Forterra brings best practices to meet the specific needs and capacity of each city. The Green Cities program also partners with researchers to advance knowledge about the ecological systems of the area. They maintain a library of information related to urban forestry and natural area management, The Green Cities Toolbox, which provides links on Forterra's website to numerous places and publications. Forterra also works with the Tree Ambassador program as a part of the Trees for Seattle initiative, leading tree walks and landscape renewal projects to both educate and motivate volunteers to care for their neighborhood green spaces.

Releasing Economic Potential

One of the things that makes Forterra so unique and so strong is their emphasis on policy innovation to maintain and enhance the economic base for cities and small towns as well as farms. Their environmental work is comprehensive and looks broadly at all of the issues of the human and nature interface and the uses of the land resource. Efforts in this area include their work with regional planning around transit, urban agriculture, cross laminated timber, and complete streets.

Forterra initiated the Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program that combines transfer of development rights with tax increment financing to conserve farms, forests and natural areas while providing funding to support healthy, livable, and equitable cities. The City of Seattle and King County implemented this program in 2013, with Seattle accepting 800 TDR credits into downtown and South Lake Union neighborhoods. South Lake Union, just north of downtown is a former industrial area that is now home to Amazon headquarters as well as dense housing and numerous services.

SUMMARY

Forterra is all about land, and about so much more than land. As an organization that works creatively, over time, with many partners, and with a focus on community and people, it is well deserving of the Olmsted Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects, the profession that is fundamentally about the relationship of the built and natural environments, people and land.





January 30, 2018

Nomination Committee
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street
Washington D.C. 20001-3736

Re: *Nomination for the Olmsted Medal*

Dear Nomination Committee,

As past trustee for the Washington Chapter, I'm very pleased to endorse the Seattle organization, Forterra, for consideration for the Olmsted Medal this year. If Fredrick Law Olmsted were alive today he would be immensely pleased with the work that Forterra is doing. Although perhaps not widely known outside of Washington State, Forterra has been a groundbreaking and sustained leader in environmental stewardship in our region.

Forterra has been highly successful at drawing together people from diverse backgrounds—literally collaborating with thousands of Washington residents—to protect 1.3 million acres of working forest, farms, shorelines, parks and natural areas. In doing so, Forterra has made western Washington an even better place to live by understanding that this place is who we are as Washington residents.

Forterra is in this for the long haul. The Forterra board of directors includes regional and national leaders in design, real estate, public policy, agriculture, business and communications. Locally-based organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Amazon, Boeing and the University of Washington College of the Environment are committed board members of Forterra that have helped guide Forterra's long-term commitment to protecting our way of life in this corner of the Pacific Northwest. Forterra is truly a shining example of bringing people together for nature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis LaPierre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top.

Curtis LaPierre, ASLA, PLA, AICP
Otak, Incorporated



January 29, 2018

American Society of Landscape Architects

Re: Forterra Nomination for Olmsted Medal

I am writing to submit a letter of support for Forterra's nomination to receive the ASLA Olmsted Medal. Forterra has made an invaluable contribution to the Puget Sound region through its role as a traditional land conversancy and as an innovative leader on regional sustainability and livability. While there are many organizations going great work acquiring areas of high ecological value, what makes Forterra really stand out is how they have gone beyond this work to bring urban and rural people together to implement a vision for our region where we protect ecological value, but also support rural jobs, make great urban places, and ensure that growth fosters livability.

Below are a few examples of the innovative work Forterra has done recently to support this vision:

LCLIP: Forterra worked with the City of Seattle and King County to develop a first-of-its-kind program linking urban development and regional protection. Under this program, new development in the densest areas of Seattle were allowed purchase development rights from regional farms and forest in order to achieve additional height. At the same time, the County agreed to allocate a portion of future property tax resulting from this development to pay for local improvements, such as green street improvements and a community center, that would improve the livability of the neighborhood. Together, this program helps to improve both urban and rural areas while supporting our regional vision for growth.

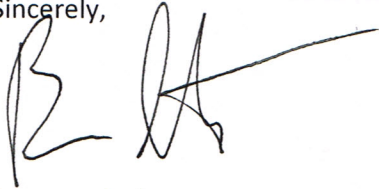
23rd & Union: Forterra worked with local developers and neighborhood groups in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Seattle to create an inclusive development at a key intersection. In this project, their work as a facilitator and development partner allowed a local non-profit to grow its role in a cultural and physical way by owning a portion of this signature development. The ownership stake is allowing the non-profit to have permanent physical space, create more affordable housing, and help steer an important development in its neighborhood.

Green City Partnership: Forterra collaborated with numerous cities throughout Puget Sound, including Seattle, to create a replicable model for combining the actions of governments, citizens, non-profits, and private philanthropy to restore urban natural areas.

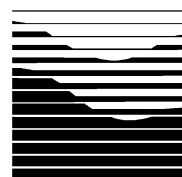
Cross Laminated Timber: Forterra is working with urban cities and rural forestry interests to explore the use of cross laminated timbers as a building material that could lead to more affordable and sustainable construction of mid-rise buildings while also creating a new source of jobs and revenue of rural communities.

These examples highlight just some of the ways that Forterra has greatly contributed to our region and inspired other non-profits across the country. They greatly deserve recognition of all their valuable work.

Sincerely,



Brennon Staley
Strategic Advisor
City of Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development



ASLA

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
WASHINGTON CHAPTER

Letter of Endorsement

Re: Forterra Nomination for the Olmsted Medal

The Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects strongly endorses the nomination of Forterra to receive the 2018 Olmsted Medal.

Forterra is a non-profit that has worked for conservation of not only wild lands, farms, and forests, but also to provide natural spaces and equitable access to enrich city and town environments. They have a unique vision that goes beyond simple land acquisition and protection, working with a wide range of Washington state organizations and individuals to both protect land and support environmentally sensitive and culturally diverse places for people to live and work.

Forterra has worked with many landscape architects to evaluate and make appropriate use of our natural resources. They are the largest environmental non-profit in Washington state, have been a model for stewardship of land, and have provided imaginative, collaborative and exemplary environmental leadership in the Northwest.

Thanking you for your consideration,

Washington Chapter of the ASLA

Laura Thompson, ASLA
President