

Nancy Owens Studio LLC
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE • URBAN DESIGN

March 12, 2005

Patrick A. Miller, PhD, FASLA, President
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: Regional Plan Association Nomination for ASLA Medal of Excellence

Dear Mr. Miller:

I am pleased to write a letter in support of the Regional Plan Association (RPA) for the Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence. I consider it a personal privilege to have worked with an organization that not only recognizes and enlists landscape architects in the planning process, but also values the voice of the community in that process. Over the last eight years, I have had the opportunity to work with RPA on several planning initiatives as the representative of my local community planning board in Lower Manhattan, Community Board One.

Within the land use planning groups and workshops for Lower Manhattan organized by RPA, my local community found a "seat at the table" in a larger forum of civic groups and government organizations. Often local communities do not have access to private and public "power-brokers". Not only could we provide a local viewpoint in these forums, but we also were able join forces, further strengthening our advocacy for certain planning goals, especially the need for more open space downtown.

In 1996 I began participating in RPA's Governors Island Working Group. At this time, the future public use of the island was uncertain. Led effectively by Robert Pirani, the Group advocated for the island's transfer from the federal government to New York City and State. RPA strongly aligned itself with the community, landscape architects, and other open space advocates for the development of Governors Island as a public park.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Civic Alliance mobilized quickly under the strong leadership of RPA's president Robert Yaro, and provided a much needed forum for complex rebuilding efforts. RPA provided a place to communicate the many urgent and long-term planning needs of the downtown community to a wider audience. I was particularly grateful for the Civic Alliance's response to our neighborhood's need for open space, as well as community and cultural facilities, as part of the mix of so many needs required in the rebuilding of downtown.

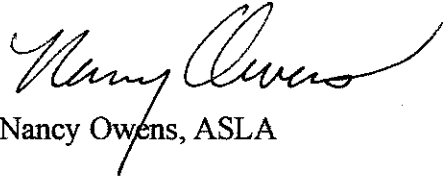
In addition to providing a central forum for viewpoints, ideas, and advocacy, RPA serves the public as a resource center, gathering and disseminating information on current regional projects, as well those occurring nationally and internationally. While typically acting as initiators of forums, Mr. Yaro and Mr. Pirani stepped out of this role to

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participate in the 2002 “Green Dream” workshop for Lower Manhattan organized by the ASLA New York Chapter and Community Board One. RPA is a regional planning non-profit organization with macro perspective and expertise that continues to pay close attention to local realities.

The Regional Plan Association is a working model of the idealized, collaborative environmental design and planning process aspired to in the utopian halls of academia but unfortunately rarely exists. The landscape architectural community should acknowledge and support organizations as effective as the Regional Plan Association.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Owens". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Nancy Owens, ASLA