



Making Parks the Pride of Atlanta

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Park Pride Announces Fourth Annual Parks and Greenspace Conference

*Mayor Shirley Franklin, Philanthropist Arthur Blank, former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, other leaders
will address challenges to Atlanta's greenspace agenda*

Atlanta – Park Pride, a local non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving parks and greenspace, today announced it will hold its Fourth Annual Parks and Greenspace Conference on Monday, April 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

The one-day conference will focus on the vision and challenges for Atlanta's parks and greenspace. Breakout sessions will address the benefits of greenspace and how residents can help build a world-class system of parks.

Key speakers include Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin; Arthur Blank, Chairman of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation; Former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb; Atlanta Councilman Ceasar Mitchell; and Atlanta Councilwoman Joyce Sheperd. The agenda will also include presentations from Tom Weyandt, Atlanta Regional Commission; Cathy Woolard, Friends of the BeltLine; and Jim Langford, Trust for Public Land.

Among the highlights:

- Arthur Blank will open the conference with a speech on the importance of a first class park system to the vitality of a city, highlighting the work of his family foundation to improve one of our most valuable public resources. One of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation's primary focus areas is developing a system of great parks in Atlanta through planning, land acquisition, maintenance and public support. To date, working with city and county officials, civic and neighborhood associations and environmental groups, the Foundation has helped preserve more than 1100 acres of land within metro Atlanta.
- Atlanta City Councilman Ceasar Mitchell will provide a lunch time update on the work of the City Council's Parks Technical Advisory Group (PTAG). Councilman Mitchell chairs PTAG, which the Council created to review fundamental park management and development issues.
- Former mayor of Denver, Wellington Webb, will deliver the keynote address. In his three terms as mayor, Webb focused on four major areas: parks and open space, public safety, economic development and children. Mayor Webb created more park space than any other Denver mayor, including fifteen new parks along the South Platte River and the transformation of the city's old airport into a mixed-use development that will include over 1,400 acres of greenspace.
- A presentation about the Atlanta BeltLine will provide the latest information on the effort to transform Atlanta by creating an emerald necklace of parks linked by transit and multi-use trails. Former Atlanta City Council Chair Cathy Woolard and James Langford, State Director for the Trust for Public Land, will provide an update on efforts to remake a network of mostly abandoned and underutilized freight rail corridors into a vibrant system of trails and transit lines linking over 2000 acres of new and existing parks.



Making Parks the Pride of Atlanta

- Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin will close the conference with a speech focusing on her efforts to create a first-in-class park system for the City of Atlanta. Mayor Franklin has committed to adding 1900 new acres of parks and greenspace by 2009, while charging the Atlanta Development Authority with determining feasible ways to fund the creation of parks and transit along the BeltLine.

The conference will also include several breakout sessions designed to educate and empower residents as they help create and maintain parks in their area. Topics include:

- *Getting Organized in Your Park* – a step by step guide to creating an effective “friends of the park” group in your community. Learn from community activists and Park Pride’s Director of Community Building about how you and your neighbors can transform your park.
- *How Parks Promote Public Health* – experts from the Morehouse School of Medicine, Rollins School of Health at Emory University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discuss the latest information on how parks improve the physical and mental health of the people who use them.
- *Can Parks and Affordable Housing Coexist?* – representatives from the development community, Community Development Corporations and the Southface Institute will lead attendees in a conversation about how to build an Atlanta that meets the needs and improves the quality of life of all residents.
- *Promoting an Environmental Ethic through Parks* – there is no better place to learn about the environment and how it impacts us than in our parks. Learn how parks clean Atlanta’s dirty air, lower the temperature on hot summer days, lessen water pollution and flooding, and provide a valuable habitat for wildlife.

Panel participants include Byron D. Amos, *Vine City Civic Association*; Brendon Barclay, *Outdoor Activity Center*; Dr. Richard Bright, *Morehouse School of Medicine*; Dennis Creech, *Southface Institute*; Dr. Howie Frumkin, *Rollins School of Public Health*; Cooper Holland, *Downtown Neighbors Association*; Young Hughley, *Reynoldstown Revitalization Corporation*; Dr. John Librett, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*; Michele Molden, *Piedmont Hospital*; Vicki Seastrom, *National Wildlife Federation*; Joyce Sheperd, *Atlanta City Council*; Bob Silverman, *Winter Construction*; Tom Weyandt, *Atlanta Regional Commission*; Nicholas Williams, *Park Pride*. For more information, or to register, visit www.parkpride.com.

Incorporated in 1989, Park Pride is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life through the protection and improvement of parks and greenspace. The organization has helped to preserve over 5,000 acres of parks throughout Atlanta and DeKalb by working in public and private partnerships with the City of Atlanta and Fulton County parks departments. Park Pride works to ensure improvements made to parks are supported by both neighbors and government by providing a direct route for citizens to voice their concerns and desires for their local parks.

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