

GREATER & GREENER 2017

AN INTERNATIONAL URBAN PARKS CONFERENCE
JULY 29 – AUGUST 2, 2017 • MINNEAPOLIS & SAINT PAUL



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May 8, 2017

Mayor Anne Hidalgo
100 N Express St
Paris, AR 72855

Dear Mayor Hidalgo:

On behalf of Minneapolis, Saint Paul and City Parks Alliance, we are honored to invite you to be the opening keynote speaker at the next international urban parks conference, *Greater & Greener 2017*.

The keynote will take place on Monday, July 31, 2017 at 9:00 a.m., in the Roy Wilkins Auditorium, Saint Paul RiverCentre. As the keynote speaker, you will help set the stage for the presentations and discussions throughout this year's conference, a key theme of which is "Creating Equitable Cities."

Greater & Greener 2017 will be held in the Twin Cities, July 29-August 2, and will bring together 1,000 urban leaders from around the world to debate, celebrate, organize, connect, and share with others who are working to improve the economy and environment of cities.

Around the world, mayors are grappling with how to mitigate climate change and build resilience, while addressing growing income inequality, and the need for access to housing and high quality of life for all residents. As you said in your C40 Inclusive Cities video, "the ecological challenge will not be solved without tackling poverty."

Your strategies and investments to ensure affordable housing and to green Paris have required innovative approaches, tremendous leadership and a willingness to pursue a vision of a cleaner, greener, healthier and more inclusive city. The results of your leadership and commitment are already having a positive impact and offer an inspiring example for other cities.

As the Chair of C40, you are leading international efforts to build networking and collaboration between cities on complex issues, such as climate action and inclusive growth. In order to deliver on the Paris Agreement, cities need to share their innovative strategies for making cycling and walking safer and more accessible, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investing in large-scale green infrastructure, developing innovative green financing tools, investing in affordable housing and creating inclusive economic opportunities.

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In past years, *Greater & Greener* has attracted speakers and participants from over 20 countries, as well as large city mayors and national leaders, including New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee. This year we have mayors and city leaders joining us from Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Copenhagen, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Tirana, Albania, among others.

Saint Paul and Minneapolis, this year's conference hosts, are ranked the top two cities for parks in the U.S., with tree lined parkways, public-owned lakes and vibrant neighborhood parks covering 11,000 acres, and almost 200 miles of trails. The Mississippi River connects both cities and is the focus of significant park development projects: the Great River Passage and RiverFirst Initiatives.

Minneapolis and Saint Paul have each recently invested significant resources in ensuring public facilities are accessible and sustainable for future generations. As part of its Vibrant Places and Spaces initiative, Saint Paul allocated \$40 million into a series of capital projects that include a new multimodal bikeway and new green space in a low income area with limited park accessibility. In Minneapolis, the City Council and independent Park Board reached a historic agreement this year that provides an additional \$11 million annually for 20 years for neighborhood park capital improvements, rehabilitation and maintenance using a criteria-based system to ensure racial and economic equity in neighborhood park projects.

Founded in 2000, City Parks Alliance is the only independent nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks. It unites and serves a growing network of hundreds of civic and community leaders, government agencies, park and recreation authorities, funders, and others working to transform thousands of parks in cities nationwide. Their members share a vision that everyone in urban America will have access to parks and green spaces that are clean, safe and vibrant.

Thank you for considering our request. In addition to serving as our keynote, you are invited to join other mayors at an informal luncheon on Monday. As a keynote speaker, you will receive a complimentary room for two nights at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront hotel, a \$3,500 stipend towards travel-related expenses, and \$150 per diem. We will work closely with your team to coordinate appropriate translation services to minimize potential language barriers.

Caryn Ernst of City Parks Alliance [caryn.ernst@gmail.com, 202-489-3100] will be able to answer any questions and share more information about the conference, its themes and target audience.

We look forward to welcoming you to this historic event.

Best Regards,

Mayor Coleman, Saint Paul

Mayor Hodges, Minneapolis

Commissioner Tabb, Minneapolis Recreation and Park Board President