

## **Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative**

Nicknamed the “Urban Mechanic,” Mayor Thomas M. Menino focuses on issues large and small in his efforts to make Boston a better place to live. He understands the value of landscape architecture and how the profession is helping to shape Boston’s contemporary landscape, as well as the city’s rich heritage in the field originating with the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and Arthur Shurcliff.

Since first elected Mayor in 1993, Tom Menino has made infrastructure improvements, innovation, and carefully planned growth the cornerstones of his administration. As the longest-serving mayor in Boston’s history, he has distinguished himself locally and nationally with an enviable record of accomplishments resulting in a greener, more livable city.

Mayor Menino has a keen sense of what makes a city work for residents and visitors and readily employs the expertise of landscape architects to create attractive and livable urban districts, parks, playgrounds, and streetscapes. He has made the preservation and maintenance of the historic Emerald Necklace a priority, investing millions of capital dollars in ensuring that Olmsted’s legacy will survive for the enjoyment of future generations. At the same time, he has looked to the future and capitalized on opportunities to expand open space infrastructure through city investment.

The Mayor’s innovative park creation projects have increased residents’ access to open space at sites including the transformation of the former Gardner Street Landfill in West Roxbury into the 100-acre Millennium Park, the conversion of a half-mile Conrail railway corridor into the East Boston Greenway, and the development of Reservation Road Park, a multi-purpose athletic facility and skateboard park built on a former brown field site in Hyde Park. Additional reclamation projects have resulted in the revitalization of the Belle Isle Marsh and Condor Urban Wilds, which reconnect Boston residents to the waterfront while protecting critical ecosystems.

Mayor Menino’s overall vision for the city has led to unprecedented investment in projects requiring the skills of professional landscape architects, among them:

- The planning, scale, and siting of new city neighborhoods at Harvard University’s Allston campus, Roxbury’s Olmsted Green housing development, and South Boston’s Innovation District and Seaport Square.
- Revitalization of the waterfront and creation of the Harborwalk.
- Planning and design of the flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration project for the Muddy River including daylighting of the “Missing Link.”
- Creation of hallmark open space for the downtown and waterfront on the Rose Kennedy Greenway.
- Site design for public institutions and government facilities under initiatives such as the Greening of City Hall Plaza.
- Transformation of Spectacle Island from an abandoned landfill into a recreational destination in the Boston Harbor Island national park system.

Under Mayor Menino's leadership, Boston has become a leader in sustainability and environmental awareness. In 2011, the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Boston the fifth-greenest city in the United States. Hundreds of acres of new open space, 61 miles of new bike lanes, sustainability guidelines for all Parks Department projects, and first-in-the-nation building standards are just a few ways that Mayor Menino has encouraged the greening of Boston.

Other initiatives adding to the overall health of the city include Greenovate Boston, a collective movement to ensure a sustainable, healthier, and more prosperous future by meeting Mayor Menino's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2020. To help meet this goal, Mayor Menino's Grow Boston Greener initiative is tasked with increasing the city's tree canopy coverage from 29% to 35% by planting 100,000 new trees by 2020. The Mayor has also encouraged community involvement with the greening of Boston through beautification grants, the annual Mayor's Garden Contest, and the expansion and support of community gardens. Boston now has more than 100 community gardens and Mayor Menino awards grants allowing city gardeners to purchase tools and other supplies.

Mayor Menino has also been a strong advocate of the benefits of bicycling by assigning a fulltime "bicycle czar" and initiating the Hubway bike share program that provides low-cost and convenient access to bicycle rentals throughout the city. Since he launched "Boston Bikes" in 2007, ridership in the city has more than doubled.

A hallmark of Mayor Menino's years of service has been his dedication to involving neighborhoods and residents in the processes and activities that make up city life and operation. Public participation routinely accompanies all city planning and development. Parks Department projects, for example, include a series of community meetings that allow residents to interact directly with project designers to help determine what features their improved local park or playground might include. The Boston Schoolyard Initiative engages local schoolchildren to help transform Boston's schoolyards from barren asphalt lots into dynamic centers for recreation, learning, and community life.

Mayor Menino understands that great open space helps build strong neighborhoods and connects residents to the city. With this in mind, the Mayor holds an annual Neighborhood Coffee Hour series and numerous free programs in local parks providing residents with the opportunity to meet with him one-on-one and discuss concerns or suggestions for improvements. By being out in the city's open space and interacting with the people who benefit from their services, Mayor Menino has a firsthand view of the value brought by professional landscape architects and the benefits provided to constituents and the city as a whole.

Nominee: Mayor Thomas M. Menino

Nominee's Address: 1 City Hall Square, Suite 500

City/State/Zip: Boston, MA 02201-2013

Phone: 617.635.4500

Nominator: Boston Society of Landscape Architects

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Ogden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Kathleen Ogden

President, Boston Chapter ASLA

44 Allandale Street #144  
Boston MA 02130  
25 February 2013

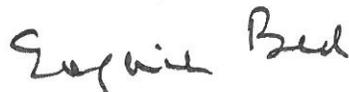
LaGasse Medal Nominations  
Non LA Category  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell  
636 Eye Street NW  
Washington DC 20001-3736

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As a previous winner of the LaGasse Medal, It is a great pleasure for me to endorse the nomination of Mayor Thomas M. Menino in the Non LA category for 2013.

Mayor Menino has paid consistent attention to all neighborhoods of our city and to their streetscape. He has assisted the organization I chaired for many years, Boston Natural Areas Network, in adding to our roster of community gardens, both financially and in other ways. Every passer-by of a garden sees a plot cultivated by neighbors rather than an unsightly weed patch. Boston has greatly benefitted by this insight over his 20 years as our mayor. He richly deserves the prestigious LaGasse medal. I hope he is the recipient this year.

Sincerely,



Eugenie Beal



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February 28, 2013

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American Society of Landscape Architects  
c/o Ray Dunetz, Principal  
Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture  
179 Green Street  
Boston, MA 02130

Dear Members of the ASLA,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino for "Honorary Membership in the ASLA." I feel the honor is appropriate for the Mayor because he has provided admirable leadership in the field of landscape architecture, and in his commitment to the health of the urban fabric of Boston.

Mayor Menino has always been a staunch supporter of the city's green space and has acted to preserve its historic properties. He understands the importance of our green oases to the quality of life of those who live, work and visit the city and has advocated for their enhancement. His administration has had a long-standing commitment to enhancement of our existing historic parks, and creation of new ones. He has also taken important steps to preserve many historic properties with Landmark status over the years, and has launched initiatives to revitalize neighborhoods with programs such as the Main Streets initiative and the Innovation District of South Boston.

In light of all the other pressing issues that a big city mayor faces, it is, in my opinion, outstanding that Mayor Menino has been such a consistent advocate and supporter of issues which landscape architects feel passionate about.

I would appreciate your consideration of the nomination of Mayor Menino for the ASLA honor.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Vizza  
Executive Director