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Fairmount Park Named One of 15 Great Places in America by the American Planning Association

APA's Annual List Recognizes 15 Great Neighborhoods, Streets, and Public Spaces

Washington, DC — The American Planning Association (APA) today named Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as one of five Great Public Spaces on the organization's annual [Great Places in America](#) list, which marks the kick-off of APA's National Community Planning Month celebration

As part of National Community Planning Month, APA's Great Places in America program recognizes streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces in the United States demonstrating exceptional character, quality, and planning—attributes that enrich communities, facilitate economic growth, and inspire others around the country. The Great Neighborhoods, Great Streets, and Great Public Spaces of 2016 are places that are unique and exemplary in their amenities and infrastructure, cultural identity, and use of sustainable and innovative practices.

“Public spaces are essential as gathering places and recreational venues in our communities, and designing them to be innovative, multifunctional, and culturally beneficial requires thoughtful collaboration and planning,” said Carol Rhea, FAICP, president of APA. “The Great Public Spaces of 2016 illustrate how to effectively create spaces that enhance the lives of residents and visitors alike, and we commend them on this tremendous achievement.”

“Among all of the places in the United States that could have been selected for this award, we are tremendously honored by the APA designation, and reminded again how lucky we are to have this incredible urban park in our own backyard, encapsulating the values of a great place which include historic, natural, health, and community benefits,” said Rick Magder, Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Conservancy.

Fairmount Park is a unique planning story as it represents one of the first efforts to protect a municipal watershed by dramatically altering land uses to both mitigate pollution and create a space for public recreation. In addition to Fairmount Park, APA also recognized the following public spaces this year:

- Golden Heart Plaza - Fairbanks, Alaska
- Central Park Plaza - Valparaiso, Indiana
- Findlay Market - Cincinnati, Ohio
- Guthrie Green - Tulsa, Oklahoma

“We are so pleased to see Fairmount Park, along with APA's other 2016 honorees, held in esteem as the welcoming green space, recreational hub, and cultural asset that Philadelphians have known it to be for over a century,” said Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

Since launching the Great Places in America program in 2007, APA has recognized 260 neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces around the country. Places are selected annually and represent the gold standard in terms of having a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement, and a vision for the future.

For the third year, members of the public can suggest their favorite public space, neighborhood, or street to earn a “People’s Choice” designation. During the first half of October, individuals can offer suggestions via APA’s social media channels using the hashtag #APAGreatplaces. APA will select five finalists that the public can vote on via APA’s website. The “People’s Choice” winner is announced in early November 2016.

For more information about these public spaces, as well as APA’s Great Public Spaces and Streets for 2016 and previous years, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

You can also find more information on National Community Planning Month, visit www.planning.org/ncpm.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. For more information, visit www.planning.org.

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