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Contacts: Sanaa Julien, Cleveland Public Square, sannajulien@clevelandpublicsquare.com; 216-533-9247
Roberta Rewers, APA, rrewers@planning.org; 312-786-6395

Cleveland's Public Square Named One of 15 Great Places by the American Planning Association

In its 11th year, APA Recognizes 15 Great Neighborhoods, Streets and Public Spaces

Washington, DC— The [American Planning Association](#) (APA) has named Public Square in Cleveland, Ohio, as one of five Great Public Spaces on APA's annual [Great Places in America](#) list, which starts the countdown to National Community Planning Month in October. Group Plan Commission Board Chairman Anthony J. Coyne accepted the award on Capitol Hill this morning. The Group Plan Commission programs, maintains and operates Public Square.

APA's Great Places in America program recognizes the 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 2018 are places that are unique and exemplary in their amenities and infrastructure, cultural identity, and use of sustainable and innovative practices.

“Public spaces serve a number of functions within a community, from gathering places to recreational venues, and to satisfy these varied community needs requires thoughtful collaboration and planning,” said Cynthia Bowen, FAICP, president of APA. Cleveland's Public Square is a national example of how public spaces effectively create a sense of place that creates access and opportunity for all.” Since the redesign has been completed, Public Square has become a destination for free speech, national demonstrations and public assembly and is regarded as the gateway to the city of Cleveland. Public Square also earned international recognition during the 2016 Republican National Convention as the forum for free speech.

Public Square has a long history, originally planned to replicate a traditional New England town in 1796 by surveyors from the Connecticut Land Company. Public Square hosted numerous historical events, including the location of President Lincoln lying in state when his funeral train came to Ohio, and the site of the first electric street lighting in the world in 1879. Over time, Public Square became viewed as primarily a transit depot to connect streetcar riders.

The recent redesign of the park has established it as a grand gathering space in the center of downtown that has hosted everything from the Cleveland Orchestra's annual free concert for thousands to America Ninja Warriors' television productions to ESPN live broadcasts during the NBA Championships and World Series. Equally important, it is a hub of daily activity for downtown workers, residents, and visitors alike, enjoying the fountain and beautiful gardens, relaxing in the expansive green space, or enjoying lunch in the park. Hundreds of Clevelanders and visitors pass through Public Square daily which has transformed downtown Cleveland by creating a new and vibrant neighborhood that is flanked by more than one billion dollars in private investments as a result of the downtown revitalization.

In addition to Public Square, APA recognizes the following Great Public Spaces in 2018:

- The Plaza – Orange, California
- Aspen Pedestrian Mall – Aspen, Colorado
- Mill River Park – Stamford, Connecticut
- RiversEdge at Marcum Park – Hamilton, Ohio

"I'd like to thank the American Planning Association for recognizing Public Square as one of the Great Places in America," said Mayor Frank G. Jackson. "It would not have happened without the support of the public, private, and philanthropic communities, or the vision of Tony Coyne and the Group Plan Commission.

"The Group Plan Commission is both honored and humbled to accept the prestigious American Planning Association Great Places in America Award for the revitalization of Public Square, " said Tony Coyne, Chairman of the Group Plan Commission. "Not only has the revitalization contributed to the creation of a new neighborhood in the heart of our city, it has also served as a powerful catalyst for investment in our downtown, generating upwards of one billion dollars of investments in the neighborhood surrounding The Square. This revitalization was only possible through the public-private partnership of the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, The Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, our project manager LAND Studio, the Greater Cleveland Partnership, Downtown Cleveland Alliance and numerous businesses who believed in the importance of great public places as a catalyst for making great communities happen."

Since launching the Great Places in America program in 2007, APA has recognized 290 neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces around the country. Designees are selected annually and represent the gold standard for a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement, and a vision for the future.

For the fifth year, members of the public can suggest their favorite public space, neighborhood, or street to earn a "People's Choice" designation. Throughout 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 2018.

For more information about these public spaces, as well as APA's Great Neighborhoods and Great Streets for 2018 and previous years, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

Learn more about APA's National Community Planning Month by visiting www.planning.org/ncpm.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides vital leadership in creating great communities for all. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the profession of planning – physical, economic and social – to foster quality of life for all residents. The 40,000 members work in concert with community members, civic leaders and business interests to create communities that enrich people's lives. Through its philanthropic work, the APA Foundation helps to reduce economic and social barriers to planning. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Learn more at www.planning.org.

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