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**American Planning Association Designates East Park
One of Top 10 Great Public Spaces for 2009**
Charlevoix, Michigan, Park 70 Years In The Making

Charlevoix, MI – The American Planning Association (APA) announced today that East Park has been designated one of 10 Great Public Spaces for 2009 by APA's *Great Places in America* program. APA Great Places exemplify exceptional character and highlight the role planners and planning play in creating communities of lasting value.

APA singled out East Park for several reasons including the unwavering commitment of succeeding generations of town leaders and residents who, over a 70-year period, acquired the privately-held land used to build the waterfront park. APA also applauds this public space, which reopened in 2008 after undergoing a complete renovation, for its environmental best practices.

“East Park is so important to the history of our city dating back to the 1920s when the first piece of land was purchased,” said Mayor Norm Carlson. “The park in its current form reflects the city’s 90 year commitment to public access to water and the importance of a gathering place downtown for festivals, concerts, and events.”

“East Park is a public space the community can be proud of,” said John Hess, Chair of the Planning Commission. “By incorporating environmental design, encouraging mixed uses, preserving views, and integrating historic Charlevoix stone architecture into the buildings and landscape features, the park is truly unique.”

APA Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live. They are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. They are places where people want to be — not only to visit, but to live and work every day. America's great places are defined by several criteria, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement. Through Great Places in America, APA recognizes outstanding characteristics and features found in three essential components of all communities — streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces.

“It is truly exciting to see the result of 70 years of planning and plan implementation,” said APA Chief Executive Officer Paul Farmer, FAICP. “East Park is a model for every community that wants to take back its waterfront for public use and enjoyment. APA is excited to single out East Park for this reason and applauds Charlevoix’s city leaders and citizens for their vision and follow-through,” he added.



Located between the town's bustling business district along Bridge Street and Round Lake, privately owned buildings and storefronts used to stand where the 2.5-acre park is today. The idea for East Park dates to the 1920s when one of the waterfront buildings burned down. Instead of rebuilding, the owners sold the land to the city, which proposed creating a park along the waterfront.

Succeeding generations of elected leaders and residents supported the idea. Past mayor Robert Bridge (1938-1946) played an especially important role, having acquired numerous parcels for the park while in office.

By 1982 most of the waterfront parcels had been purchased and a new park design plan prepared. Twenty years later, in 2002, the last building on parkland was razed and plans were finalized for a new park and marina on the site. Construction on the \$11 million project started in 2007 and was completed a year later.

Today East Park features an interactive water fountain for children; the rebuilt Clarence Odmark performing arts pavilion; a trout pond with pools, rapids, and waterfalls; and a 67-slip marina.

Best environmental practices include increasing overall permeable surface by eliminating a parking lot, incorporating brick pavers, and using green rooftop plantings in order to reduce the amount of storm

The City Marina is a certified "Clean Marina" by the University of Michigan program, Michigan Sea Grant. Also, both the Harbormaster's Building and performing arts pavilion are heated and cooled with geothermal energy.

The nine other APA 2009 Great Public Spaces are:

Virginia Beach Boardwalk, Virginia Beach, VA
The Squares of Savannah, Savannah, GA
The Grand Rounds, Minneapolis, MN
Central Square, Keene, NH
Queens Botanical Garden, Flushing, NY
Lincoln Park, Chicago, IL
New Haven Green, New Haven, CT
The Green, Dover, DE
Central Market, Lancaster, PA

For more information about these public spaces, as well as the lists of the 2009 APA 10 Great Streets and 10 Great Neighborhoods, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

This year's Great Places in America will be celebrated as part of APA's National Community Planning Month in October 2009; for more about the special month, visit www.planning.org/ncpm.



The American Planning Association 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., Chicago, Ill, and Shanghai, China. For more information, visit its website at www.planning.org.

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