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Governors Island, New York Named One of 13 Great Places by the American Planning Association (APA)

In the program's 12th year, APA Recognizes 13 Great Neighborhoods, Streets and Public Spaces

Washington, D.C.— The [American Planning Association](http://www.americanplanning.org) (APA) has named Governors Island in New York, New York one of six Great Public Spaces on APA's annual [Great Places in America](http://www.americanplanning.org/great-places-in-america) list, which starts the countdown to National Community Planning Month in October.

“Over the past decade, Governors Island has seen a remarkable transformation from an abandoned former military base, closed to the public, into a vibrant hub of open space, recreation and creativity in New York City,” said Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island.

“Thanks to proactive community planning, along with visionary leadership at the local, city, state and federal level, today Governors Island is a beloved resource for New Yorkers and visitors alike, and a model for great public spaces across the country. We are thrilled to be selected as one of APA's Great Places in 2019 and to be among great company with this year's honorees. We thank APA and its leadership for this recognition.”

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 2019 are places that are unique and exemplary in their success stories of revitalization, cultural identity, and strong community connection.

“The public spaces recognized this year demonstrate the importance of planning in creating welcoming, multi-use spaces for the entire community to enjoy and come together,” said Kurt Christiansen, FAICP, APA president. “Governors Island is a national example of how imaginative, resiliency-focused planning can be applied to recreational public spaces.”

For much of its history, Governors Island served as a U.S. military base at the center of New York Harbor. When the federal government sold the island to the state and city of New York in the early 2000s, the transfer sparked a vision to transform this former Coast Guard installation into a public recreational resource for the surrounding community. The Trust for Governors Island, a non-profit organization created by the city of New York, was charged with the planning and redevelopment of the site. Through a series of community planning events surrounding the design of Governors

Island's park and public spaces, New Yorkers shared their vision for an open space that preserves history, educates all generations about sustainability and environmental stewardship, serves as a haven for cultural celebrations and safe recreation, and protects against rising sea levels.

West 8 partnered with Matthews Nielsen Landscape Architects to develop the Island's Park and Public Space Master Plan, and the result is a new, 43-acre green paradise with breathtaking 360-degree views of the Statue of Liberty, the New York Harbor and the dramatic New York City skyline. Closed to the public for nearly two centuries, the Island today is a popular seasonal destination with cultural activities, events, public art, educational programs and one of New York City's first car-free recreational environments.

Looking forward, Governors Island is envisioned as a year-round, sustainable campus for learning, arts and culture and entrepreneurship with extraordinary open space. The transformation of Governors Island into a year-round community is underway with the addition of a public high school and arts center.

In addition to Governors Island, APA has also recognized the following Great Public Spaces in 2019:

- Pioneer Park – Mesa, Arizona
- Neponset River Greenway – Milton and Boston, Massachusetts
- Mohawk Valley Gateway Overlook – Amsterdam, New York
- Gathering Place – Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Discovery Green – Houston, Texas

Since launching the Great Places in America program in 2007, APA has recognized 303 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 sixth 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 will be announced **October 30, 2019**.

For more information about APA's Great Neighborhoods, Great Streets and Great Public Spaces for 2019 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 45,000 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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