



## Congratulations to the 2020 Designated Great Places in PA!

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association is proud to announce our Great Places for 2020. Great Places are unique, memorable places that display a wealth of best practices in community planning, serve as a community focal point, and strengthen the local economy. They also demonstrate the rewarding results that occur through community partnerships, planning, and dedication.

For 2020, the designated Great Places are in the Great Public Spaces category. A Great Public Space is a vibrant place that fosters a sense of community through people of all ages gathering to play, socialize, enjoy a meal or concert, relax, or just enjoy the outdoors. It is a focal point for community events, which bring people together and bolster the economy. Below are the 2020 Great Public Spaces.

In recognizing the 2020 Great Places in Pennsylvania, APA-PA also celebrates the many community leaders and officials, professionals, and residents who contributed to making the public spaces “great.”



### **Allegheny Commons Park Northeast Fountain**

(Pittsburgh/Allegheny County): The Northeast Fountain, constructed in the 1860's, was the first of five ornamental fountains to be built in historic Allegheny Commons Park. With its 50-foot basin and 70-foot central plume, the fountain was a focal point of the Park until it's decommissioning after WWII, when it became a planting bed. A master plan for renovation of the Park recommended restoring the fountain to its original 1867 design. Completed in 2019, the renovated

fountain mirrors the original design, with the exception of a lower plume height and lesser number of jets as energy savings measures. The project also included the addition of benches, a flower garden, trees, pedestrian lighting, and connecting paths. Northeast Fountain is once again a popular gathering place for residents and location for an array of community events. It has also spurred revitalization of the surrounding diverse neighborhoods. This restored community gem is a centerpiece not only of the Park, but also the neighboring community.



**The Arboretum at Penn State** (College Township/Centre County): Penn State's Trustees originally set aside 25 acres of land adjacent to University Park Campus for the Arboretum in 1914. However, a master site plan was not completed until 1999 when the site had expanded to 370 acres. The planning process involved community input through a series of brainstorming sessions. Today, the Arboretum, which opened in 2009, preserves a rare remnant of old-growth oak-pine forest, protects the aquifer

supplying most of the campus water needs, and boasts a variety of botanical gardens, wildlife sculptures, a children's garden, a pollinator/bird garden, and a bike trail. The property is easily accessible by residents of adjoining neighborhoods, as well as the University community, and is a popular destination for visitors. The Arboretum is home to a variety of festivals, exhibits, and programs and serves as an attractive venue for many private gatherings. It continues to evolve with planning and community involvement playing an important role to maintain this local jewel as a showcase for preserving and caring for nature.



**Riverfront Park** (Harrisburg/Dauphin County): This approximately 4.5-mile linear Park, which parallels the Susquehanna River and Front Street, extends from downtown northward to an "uptown" neighborhood. It was envisaged in a 1901 master plan during the City Beautiful Movement as the centerpiece to Harrisburg's park system. Riverfront Park is woven into the fabric of the City through its unique views of the state capitol and other historic

structures. The Park is enhanced with a walking/biking trail, benches, picnic tables, exercise stations, and two plazas, as well as multiple crosswalks that provide safe pedestrian access. The Park has a direct connection to City Island Park via the historic Walnut Street Bridge (pedestrians/bicyclists only) and is a key segment of the Capital Area Greenbelt. Riverfront Park, with its spectacular views of the river and surrounding landscapes, is an attraction for residents, downtown employees, and visitors and is host to a variety of events/festivals. The City, together with private citizens and volunteer groups, has worked cooperatively over the years to maintain and sustain this vital City asset.

A special thank you to the dedicated panel of judges that volunteer their time to review and rate the nominations. To date, the Chapter has designated 38 "*Great Places in Pennsylvania*" that can be found in 25 of the Commonwealth's 67 counties. When traveling or seeking an enjoyable adventure, consider visiting these "*Great Places*." Information about the 2020 Great Places and previously designated Great Places is available on the Chapter website ([www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org)).

Stay tuned for the opportunity to nominate Great Places in 2021. It's not too soon to start thinking about great places to nominate in your community.