



AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

News Release

For immediate release

October 2, 2007

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Chicago's North Michigan Avenue Selected One of 10 Great Street in America *A Seven-Block Urban Wonderland*

Chicago, IL -- The American Planning Association (APA) announced today that North Michigan Avenue in Chicago has been designated as one of 10 Great Streets for 2007 through 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.

"We're honored that the American Planning Association has recognized North Michigan Avenue," said Arnold Randall, Planning Commissioner, City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development. "We cherish the diversity of this street's resources that make it so special and unique to those who use it, whether it's because they live or work here, or are visitors."

APA selected North Michigan Avenue as one of 10 Great Streets in America for the rich milieu of planning, architecture, commerce, and community engagement that have combined to make these seven blocks the ultra-dense, ultra-varied urban wonderland that it is.

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 everyday. America's truly great neighborhoods are defined by many unique criteria, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement. Through Great Places in America, APA recognizes the unique and authentic attributes of essential building blocks of great communities – streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces.

"We're excited to recognize North Michigan Avenue as one of this year's Great Streets," said APA Executive Director Paul Farmer, FAICP. "Although the moniker 'Magnificent Mile' originated in the 1940s, the Avenue continues to live up to this characterization," he added.

North Michigan Avenue was envisioned by Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago as a major commercial corridor in the style of the Champs Elysees in Paris. During the 1920s the avenue grew to include high-rise office towers, luxury retail merchants, hoteliers, and

corporate headquarters. Some of the city's most beloved skyscrapers are found here, including the famed Tribune Tower, designed by John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood (1925) and the world-famous John Hancock Center, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (1970). These icons and the Avenue's other tall buildings make this every bit a vertical neighborhood that integrates its historical identity, structures, and spirit of public-private partnership to create an unmistakable, multi-faceted character.

Tremendously active, North Michigan Avenue is six lanes wide with broad, bustling sidewalks shielded by extensive, mature, greenery that fosters a vibrant and safe pedestrian environment. Less than a quarter mile away and running parallel is the Chicago Transit Authority's red subway line. Numerous buses and seasonal trolleys also serve the Avenue, as do the variety of seasonal Chicago water services.

A variety of uses and users abounds along North Michigan Avenue, providing a full array of neighborhood amenities to the people who live, work, shop, visit, and recreate in this seven-block area.

The Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA) -- a non-profit community advocate formed in 1912 (formerly named the North Central Association) -- remains a champion of the street and provides a crucial link between the business community and city government. The Association's activities—ranging from development and signage review to Avenue promotion—compliment property owners' extensive desire to create a unique street environment. Unique in this respect, North Michigan Avenue property owners privately fund all the greenery in both the parkway planters located directly in front of their buildings, as well as in the medians that run the length of the The Magnificent Mile, changing them out three times each year for the spring, fall and summer planting seasons. This is an enormous undertaking by private entities that has a substantial positive impact on the city.

North Michigan Avenue's legacy of exemplary design has continued. Revised zoning in the 1980s allowed for the infill of open-air building arcades (created from zoning bonuses approved in the 1970s) with high-end retail space. Further, a special sign district was approved in 1997 to ensure the installation of high quality signage along the Avenue.

The nine other APA Great Streets for 2007 include: Bull Street, Savannah, GA; Canyon Road, Santa Fe, NM; Delmar Loop, University City and St. Louis, MO; Main Street, Northampton, MA; Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA; Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, FL; 125th Street Harlem, New York, NY; South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT; and St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA. For more information about these streets, and the list of APA's 10 Great Neighborhoods for 2007, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

This year's ten Great Streets and Great Neighborhoods will be celebrated as part of APA's National Community Planning Month, in October 2007, designed to recognize and celebrate the many residents, leaders, officials, and professionals who contribute to making great communities. For more about National Community Planning 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. and Chicago, Ill. For more information, visit its website at www.planning.org.*

***Greater North Michigan Avenue Association (GNMAA)** is a private, non-profit membership organization with a mission of preserving, promoting and enhancing one of the great avenues of the world. Members include real estate properties, retailers, hotel, dining, cultural and entertainment establishments, and institutional and residential properties. For more information, visit its website at www.GNMAA.com.*