



News Release

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Contact: Thomas Potterfield, Department of Community Development, 804-646-6364,
thomas.potterfield@richmondgov.com
Rachel Flynn, Department of Community Development, 804-646-6305,
Rachel.Flynn@richmondgov.com
Denny Johnson, APA, 202-349-1006; djohnson@planning.org

Monument Avenue Designated One of 10 Great Streets in America

Splendid surroundings help turn an ordinary walk into something extraordinary

Richmond, VA -- The American Planning Association (APA) announced today that Monument Avenue in Richmond, VA 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.

Quote from:

"Anyone who visits Richmond already knows that Monument Avenue is one of the stateliest thoroughfares of any city in the U.S.," said Richmond Mayor L. Douglas Wilder. "With its lush, tree-lined concourse bordered by historic statues and elegant mansions, Monument Avenue is also an exceptional recreational promenade," he said.

"There's no better example of this than the annual 'Easter on Parade' when thousands stroll along Monument Avenue with their families," Mayor Wilder continued while adding, "'The city owes its gratitude to the late Zayde Rennolds Dotts and others who have worked tirelessly over the years to preserve the character of this exquisite urban amenity.'"

APA selected Monument Avenue as one of 10 Great Streets in America for its historic architecture, urban form, high quality residential and religious architecture, diversity of land uses, public art, and integration of multiple types of transportation. The Richmond community has shown a strong commitment to preserve, use, and enhance this National Planning Landmark

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 select Monument Avenue as one of this year's Great Streets," said APA Executive Director Paul Farmer, FAICP. "Monument Avenue is one of the finest examples of a public right-of-

way that recognizes the past but lives in the present. Richmond is to be commended for protecting the legacy Monument Avenue brings to the city," he said.

Monument Avenue has an outstanding inventory of architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries -- including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Classical Revival, Mediterranean, Romanesque, and Tudor Revival -- Monument Avenue attracts pedestrians, festival-goers, and others by the thousands each year. Whether for jogging, dog walking, the city's annual Easter parade, or specialized events like the Richmond Marathon and the Monument Avenue 10 K, the boulevard is one of the most vigorously used pedestrian spaces in Richmond.

Monument Avenue's 130-foot-wide right-of-way contains a 40-foot, tree-lined median in the center with adjacent 36-foot-wide, two-lane streets and 10-foot-wide sidewalks on each side. Interspersed at key cross streets are six memorials to Civil War General Robert E. Lee; four of Lee's Confederate contemporaries; and Richmond native, humanitarian, and tennis champion Arthur Ashe.

A straight extension of downtown's Franklin Street, the avenue is on perfect lateral axis with the state capitol building designed by Thomas Jefferson and built in 1785. Entering Richmond from the West and greeted at Roseneath Road by the Ashe statue, the avenue provides a stunningly unified procession to the denouement of Capitol Square.

Also making the avenue memorable is the Richmond community itself. In 1968, resident Helen Marie Taylor stood in front of a paving machine that was about to cover the roadway's original asphalt paving blocks. Soon after, with the support of a growing preservation movement in the country, the avenue was designated a City of Richmond Old and Historic District.

Since Taylor made her stand deteriorating mansions along the boulevard have been fixed up; buildings converted to commercial use have been returned to residences; and, more recently, one of the old apartment buildings once used for office space is now an assisted-living facility.

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; North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL; Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, FL; 125th Street, Harlem, 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.