Santa Monica State Beach Named ‘A Great Public Space’ By American Planning Association

Santa Monica — As part of its ‘Great Places in America’ program for 2008, the American Planning Association (APA) has named Santa Monica State Beach as one of 10 Great Public Spaces in the U.S. APA Great Places exemplify exceptional character and highlight the role planners and planning have had in shaping spaces into something great. Santa Monica State Beach has been recognized for its opportunities for recreation and social interaction; long-standing commitment to accessibility for all people; and a commitment to environmental stewardship and historic preservation.

“Santa Monica’s beach with its colorful beach culture and its incredible beauty plays a critical role in defining who we are as a community,” said Santa Monica Mayor Herb Katz. “It has shaped the growth of Santa Monica over time and continues to be our greatest natural asset.”

Extending 3.5 miles along the Southern California coast from Malibu to Venice, Santa Monica’s beach is framed by the Palisades Bluffs to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Its nearly 250 acres is lined by a series of linear parks, some with historic pergolas and gazebos, native landscaping and the iconic palm tree. Its “people places” such as Chess Park, the original Muscle Beach and the South Beach Promenade draw residents and visitors alike. The South Bay Bicycle Trail welcomes people to skate, bike or stroll along the sand.

“Highlighting our beach as a Great Public Space validates Santa Monica’s long standing goal to be ‘best at the beach,’” said Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem Richard Bloom. “Our stewardship of the beach is a model of successful collaboration between City residents, businesses, visitors and State agencies.”

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 truly great public spaces are defined by many unique criteria, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality and community involvement.

“We’re excited to select Santa Monica State Beach as one of this year’s great public spaces,” said APA Executive Director Paul Farmer, FAICP.

The nine other APA 2008 Great Public Spaces are: Yavapai County Courthouse Plaza, Prescott, AZ; Union Station, Washington, DC; Central Park, New York City, NY; West Side Market, Cleveland, OH; Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland, OR; Mellon Square, Pittsburgh, PA; Waterplace Park, Providence, RI; Waterfront Park, Charleston, SC; and Church Street Marketplace, Burlington, VT.