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## **Downtown Fernandina Beach Earns 2015 People’s Choice Award from American Planning Association Florida**

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (November 2, 2015) – At last week’s Amelia Island Tourist Development Council meeting, representatives of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) recognized Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach as the winner of the organization’s People’s Choice Award. The award is part of the APA’s annual Great Places in Florida awards program, now in its second year.

“Anyone who has experienced Downtown Fernandina can see why the area is such a unique gem to the island and the community,” said Gil Langley, President and CEO of the Amelia Island CVB. “This award from the American Planning Association is an honor and recognition from many others who share our opinion of the area.”

The Florida Chapter of the APA accepted nominations August 10 through September 1, seeking Florida streets, neighborhoods, downtowns and public spaces to be recognized for their unique character and community involvement. Public voting started on October 5, with Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach winning the People’s Choice vote over Downtown Lake Worth, the Gaines Street District in Tallahassee and the Circle B Bar Reserve and Discovery Center in Lakeland.

“This is a vibrant downtown – a place where people come from across Florida and around the United States and the world. Fernandina Beach is a place that respects and understands its history and really looks forward to its future. It is this sense of stewardship that ensures it will remain a Great Place in Florida,” said Brian Teeple, immediate past president of APA, presenting the Great Places Award at City Hall yesterday.

Rich in history, the more than 50 blocks of Downtown Fernandina boast an impressive collection of independent dining options, charming boutiques and local art galleries that make it a favorite island spot for visitors. Another highlight of the historic downtown, the Old Florida Railroad Train Depot, was updated and restored earlier this year to serve visitors as the official Welcome Center. The center features new technology through interactive kiosks for planning activities and dining, weather forecasts and social media information in the 115-year old waterfront building.

The APA Florida Great Places in Florida award program focuses on unique, memorable places that work for the good of their community and attract people to visit them. The Great Places in Florida award is an annual selection of places that represent the gold standard of having a true sense of place, cultural and historic interest, community involvement and a vision for tomorrow. A panel of multidisciplinary experts chose finalists before being the public selected the winner in the People's Choice voting round.

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### **About Amelia Island**

Northeast Florida's coastal treasure, Amelia Island is a barrier island rich in colorful history and breathtaking natural beauty. Amelia Island offers long, beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, and pristine waters. Upscale resorts with world-class spas, championship golf and exclusive dining blend effortlessly with a captivating collection of bed and breakfast inns and historic districts. The island is home to Fernandina Beach, once a vibrant Victorian seaport village, and now a charming downtown district of eclectic shops, attractions and eateries. Forget the everyday getaway; Come make memories on Amelia Island. For visitor information and online planning, visit [www.ameliainland.com](http://www.ameliainland.com).