

## Nomination Form

# Great Places in Washington Awards Program

An awards program co-sponsored by the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA WA) and the Planning Association of Washington (PAW)

Great Neighborhoods in Washington State



### Nominations Due: July 14

Please send a digital copy to [office@washington-apa.org](mailto:office@washington-apa.org) and a hard copy to Washington Chapter American Planning Association 2150 N 107<sup>th</sup> Street Ste 205, Seattle, WA 98133 postmarked by July 14. Submittals are limited to six pages total (including this cover page).

The 2017 Great Places in Washington Awards program will recognize **Great Neighborhoods** in Washington State. Awards this year will be given to two neighborhoods — one in Western Washington and one in Eastern Washington. This program is based on the American Planning Association's Great Places in America Program ([www.planning.org/greatplaces/](http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/)).

### Who Should Apply?

All are welcome to apply. Examples include cities and towns, community/neighborhood groups, Chambers of Commerce, and planning professionals.

### Great Neighborhood Awards Criteria:

A neighborhood can be based on a specific plan or the result of a more organic process. Neighborhoods of different kinds are eligible — downtown, urban, suburban, exurban, town, small village — but should have the following characteristics:

1. A definable sense of boundary.
2. A variety of functional attributes that contribute to a resident's day-to-day living (i.e. residential, commercial, or mixed-uses).
3. Accommodates multi-modal transportation (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, drivers).
4. Has design and architectural features that are visually interesting.
5. Encourages human contact and social activities.

NOMINATION FORM	
Name of Neighborhood	Gig Harbor Waterfront
Name of County, City, or Town	City of Gig Harbor
Contact Person/Title	Jennifer Kester, Planning Director
Phone and Email	P: 253-853-7631 E: <a href="mailto:kesterj@cityofgigharbor.net">kesterj@cityofgigharbor.net</a>

Submittals will be evaluated by a committee including academics and APA WA/PAW chapter members. Winners will be announced at the Fall Washington APA chapter conference in SeaTac (September 28-29).

### Questions?

Contact Hiller West, APA Co-Chair at: [h.west@co.island.wa.us](mailto:h.west@co.island.wa.us)

## NOMINATION STATEMENT — A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (50 words or less)

Briefly describe the neighborhood.

*With a Mt. Rainier backdrop, the charming, authentic Gig Harbor Waterfront is a vibrant place to live, work, and play. It's a neighborhood where the founding fishing industry is still active, history thrives, reuse and infill development has brought new shopping and dining options, and ten parks line the waterfront.*



[Gig Harbor: Tied to the Water](#) (3 minute video)

## MEETING THE AWARDS CRITERIA (this page and up to four additional pages, including graphics)

Tell us why you think this neighborhood meets the four award criteria on the previous page. Please include photos supportive of the criteria (within the page limit). Links to supportive websites or documents might be useful as background information.

*The Gig Harbor Waterfront neighborhood stretches for one and a half miles along Harborview Drive from the Old Ferry Landing park to Peacock Hill Drive.*

*This neighborhood is the heart of Gig Harbor and has a history that predates European settlement. Native Americans came here to fish its safe harbor. In 1841, explorers from the Wilkes Expedition discovered the harbor's well-hidden opening and named it Gig Harbor because they had entered the bay in a small captain's gig.*

*In 1867 the first white men came to settle Gig Harbor's waterfront. A large number of settlers were from the islands off the coast of Croatia. The [Croatians](#) launched a commercial fishing industry that remains alive to this very day. Scandinavians brought businesses to the waterfront and immigrants came to the area from across the nation and Europe. This heritage is not just part of this neighborhood's past but continues to provide a living for generations of families.*

- **The Fishing Economy:** 34 commercial fishing vessels moor full or part-time along the Gig Harbor waterfront with 121 fishboat and/or permit owners from Gig Harbor. As of 2011, Gig Harbor fisherman generated \$28 million a year in gross revenue.
- **Protecting the Working Waterfront:** Over the past decade, members of longtime fishing families and leaders in City government have led a "grassroots" effort to help preserve the historic working waterfronts properties of Gig Harbor and protect its maritime industries. This effort has overwhelmingly been supported by the community through bonds and fundraising, and has led to successful outcomes like construction of the multi-use [Maritime Pier](#) and renovation of the [Gig Harbor Boatshop](#). In 2013, the City protected these working waterfronts by updating the [Shoreline Management Program](#) to create a Historic Working Waterfront Environment designation (Section 5.2.6).

[National Working Waterfront Network Gig Harbor Case Study](#)  
[Gig Harbor's Historic Working Waterfront](#)

- **[Gig Harbor's Historic Netsheds](#)**: Perhaps Gig Harbor Waterfront's most distinctive, and iconic, historic buildings are its netsheds. As early as 1910, Gig Harbor's first netsheds began appearing along the waterfront. These simple structures, many constructed with rough, hand-hewn fir were used by local fishermen to store nets and fishing gear. As the town grew, many netsheds disappeared; displaced by new development and commercial marinas. Today, only 17 netsheds along the western shoreline remain, but Gig Harbor Bay still boasts the largest inventory of historic netsheds on the Puget Sound. [Preserving Gig Harbor's Netsheds](#) (5 minute video)
- **[Downtown Waterfront Alliance](#)**: Formed in 2008 with financial support from the City, the Gig Harbor Downtown Waterfront Alliance brings together community and waterfront district stakeholders in order to encourage economic vitality and to preserve the historic character and quality of the area. It is an award winning Nationally Certified Main Street Program. It supports over 50 retail, restaurant, service, and professional businesses in the neighborhood.



*Ancich Netshed*



*Skansie Netshed*



*Inside Skansie Netshed*

*The Gig Harbor Waterfront is not just a place of work; it is a place of recreation. Our [Canoe and Kayak Racing Team](#) are national champions. Locals enjoy a more leisurely pace whether by paddle, by sail, or by motor. And visitors get a warm welcome at our docks where they can walk, dine, shop, and even drink a local beer or local spirit.*

- **[City Parks](#)**: Ten city-owned waterfront parks line the one and a half mile Gig Harbor Waterfront neighborhood. Providing a third of a mile of shoreline access, these parks provide a variety of recreation opportunities. Notable parks include:
  - **[Skansie Brother Park and Jerisich Dock](#)**: In 2002 the city purchased the [Skansie brothers homestead](#), which consists of a house, a netshed, and approximately 300 ft. of waterfront with the intention of turning it into a public site and park. This park has become the hub of the waterfront. Numerous festivals, event and concerts occur here each year. In 2016, the City updated the public Jerisich Dock with power and water. This year the City completed the [Welcome Plaza](#), a project to update a sewer lift station in the park that serves nearly one-third of the City's sewer. The new building serves as both public restrooms and showers as well as the sewer lift station. The roof of the building serves as a view plaza.
  - **[Ancich Waterfront Park](#)**: In 2012, the City purchased additional undeveloped property along the shoreline. In 2013, the City undertook a visioning exercise in order to determine the uses of the park. The [adopted vision](#) included the commercial fishing fleet utilizing the existing, to-be-rehabilitated, Ancich netshed and pier, and the creation of an upland storage facility for easy access to and from the water for human powered watercraft. Permitting for the 5.2 million project was completed this year. Groundbreaking is scheduled for this fall with opening in May 2018.
  - **[Donkey Creek and Austin Estuary](#)**: The Austin Estuary and Donkey Creek are located at the head of the bay. Donkey Creek was one of the Puyallup Indian Tribe's summer camps, and was abundant with fish. Until the early 1950s, Donkey Creek flowed freely from its headwaters to Austin Estuary and into Gig Harbor Bay. In the 1950s, much of the estuary was filled in and a 300-foot-long, 36-inch-wide culvert was installed to divert the creek beneath Harborview Drive. After 12 years of visioning and planning, in 2014 the City finished the \$5 million [project](#) to daylight Donkey Creek, restore the creek and Austin Estuary to near

natural conditions, accommodate critical transportation infrastructure, and enhance the community by providing public access to the newly created creek channel and estuary.

- **Eddon Boat Park:** The City acquired this 2.89 acre historic boatyard site as the result of a voter approved bond in 2004 to save Eddon Boatyard. Acquisition of the site prevented the demolition of the historic site. The Boatyard building was restored in 2009 and leased to [Gig Harbor BoatShop](#), a non-profit organization that provides traditional shipwright educational classes and programming to the public as part of the City's commitment to preserving the community's maritime heritage.



*Skansie Welcome Plaza and Lift Station*



*Donkey Creek Daylighting*



*Eddon Boat Park and BoatShop*



*Ancich Waterfront Park Schematic*

- **Waterfront Walks:** The legacy of the city's past can be experienced as you walk along the waterfront. The [Downtown Waterfront Alliance](#) offers twice weekly guided treks around waterfront offering a glimpse of what life was like in the early harbor days and how the activities of the past have influenced the present. In addition, a new self-guided [history walk brochure](#) was developed in partnership with the City and History Museum, highlighting 45 historic homes and sites within the Gig Harbor Waterfront.
- **Pierce Transit Trolley** Pierce Transit, in partnership with the City of Gig Harbor, Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce, Merchants of Uptown, and the Gig Harbor Downtown Waterfront Alliance, offers a seasonal trolley service in Gig Harbor. Started in 2013, it provides convenient service between the historic downtown Gig Harbor waterfront district and the Uptown and Gig Harbor North shopping districts.

*The Gig Harbor Waterfront is a place with captivating beauty. Everywhere you look there are scenes of uncommon splendor: watercraft of all shapes and sizes, historic homes and businesses, open views across the harbor, and those amazing moments when "the mountain" towers in the distance.*

- **Historic Millville Residential District:** In the center of the neighborhood lies the Historic Millville area. Fifteen historic turn-of the century homes lines Harborview Drive. The majority of houses are in the Vernacular or Arts and Crafts/Craftsman tradition. This house form is characterized by a two-story, vertical volume with a moderate to steeply pitched gable roof. Typically there is a full-width porch and doors are generally offset center, and the houses were – and continue to be – almost always painted white. Use of the color white may be a carry-over

from Alfred Burnham, one of the community's early residents and promoters, who is said to have provided free lots to those who would build a house and paint it white. These have made a strong contribution to the city's historic character and provide the foundation for the City's residential design standards.



*Historic Millville Homes*

- **Planning Initiatives:** In response to concerns of growth to the downtown area, in 1992, the City of Gig Harbor held public forums to discuss the future of the downtown. Citizens liked the neighborhood's small town scale and favored development that reflects the town's historic form of architecture and natural environment. In 1996, the [Design Manual](#) was established to preserve and enhance the character of the City. In 2007 a [Historic Resource Inventory](#) was conducted in the neighborhood. The survey identified buildings, sites, objects and districts that have historical significance. In 2012 a second public visioning exercise resulted in creation of a vision statement for the downtown waterfront area. Incorporating this vision in 2014, the [Harbor Element](#) was added to the City's Comprehensive Plan to address the community's desires, their concerns for future development, and how to best preserve the beauty found in downtown Gig Harbor. It provides a framework for the future, allowing growth and vitality to occur in a manner that does not impact The Harbor's historical context.
- **Design Review:** Adopted in 1996, the [Design Manual](#) implemented the Comprehensive Plans policy that design consideration go beyond the appearance of individual buildings and address the civic fabric of the city. The standards contained in this manual are intended to identify and respect important visual patterns in Gig Harbor's built environment and relate those to the natural backdrop of trees, hills and water.
- **Infill Development and Reuse:** Over the last 21 years, the City planners and Design Review Board have used the Design Manual to guide infill development and reuse along the waterfront. Notable projects include:
  - **[The Harbor General Store:](#)** Opening in 2015, a vacant gift shop was remodeled into a deli and grocery. It provided the first grocer in the neighborhood since the local QFC closed in 2011 during the recession.
  - **[Heritage Distilling Co.:](#)** In 2014, the Gig Harbor headquartered award-winning craft distillery took over the vacant tenant space on the corner of the neighborhood's main intersection. The historic building was renovated for a small distillery and tasting room.
  - **[Ship to Shore Marine:](#)** An infill development situated on the corner of Harborview Drive and Dorotich Street in the Millville area, the complex provides an expansive courtyard between buildings with public seating, shoreline viewing areas and infinity pool where patrons can test paddle canoes and kayaks.



*Harbor General Store*



*Heritage Distilling*



*Ship to Shore Marine*

*The Gig Harbor Waterfront is a place deeply connected. A stroll along the waterfront will bring you past historic netsheds, a stunning museum, the area's largest collection of independent businesses and restaurants, and lovely parks. Our events bring the community together throughout the year. People gather here at festivals, concerts, films, or family nights out.*

- **Waterfront Farmers Market:** Every Thursday afternoon in the summer at Skansie Brothers Park you will find a variety of vegetables, flowers, berries, shellfish and entertainment at the Waterfront Farmer Market hosted by the Downtown Waterfront Alliance. The market is accessible by car, boat, and the Pierce Transit Trolley.
- **Girls Night Out:** Hosted by the Downtown Waterfront Alliance, Girls Night Out offers a unique and fun experience that showcases the shopping opportunities of the waterfront during November, a month that is typically slow in retail and dining commerce. In its seventh year, it brings in over \$120,000 in one night to the businesses of the waterfront as 1,500 women enjoy the waterfront.
- **Concerts in the Park:** The City brings live music to Skansie Brothers Park on Tuesday evenings. The free music festival features rockabilly to country to the National Guard Band on July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Festivals:** Multiple festivals occur in the neighborhood every year, including the [Maritime Gig Festival](#), the oldest and largest festival which draws approximately 20,000 people over a weekend in June.



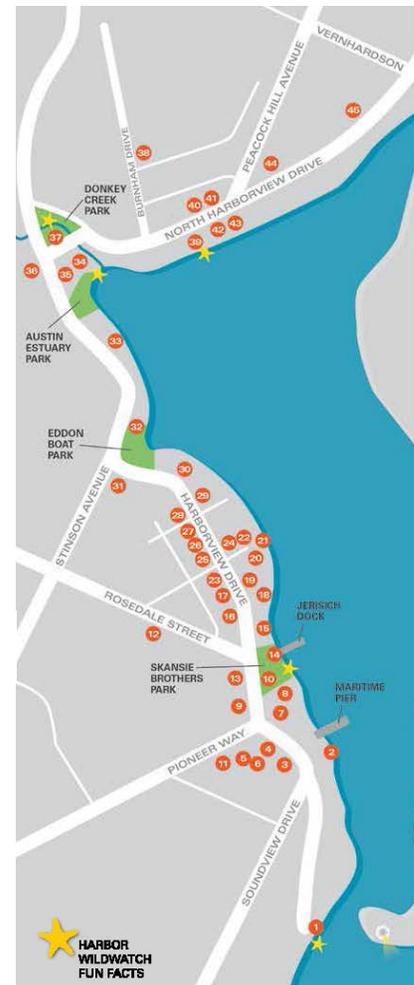
*Waterfront Farmers Market*



*Concerts in the Park*



*Maritime Gig Festival*



*Waterfront History Walk*

*The Gig Harbor Waterfront is a place where our past inspires our future, knowing that we can preserve what is great about this place while continuing to make our downtown waterfront and all that it means to us even better.*