

Civitas and W Win Double American Architecture Awards for Tampa Park
Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park receives U.S. highest award for design excellence



The American Architecture Award-winning design of Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park includes a palm tree promenade to the River Center, winner of a separate second award (photos Albert Vecerka).

Denver, Colorado – September 4, 2019 – An investment in a challenged neighborhood in West Tampa, Florida, has netted not one but two 2019 American Architecture Awards for its designers, Denver-based urban design and landscape architecture firm [Civitas](#) and W Architecture and Landscape Architecture of New York. [Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park](#) in Tampa, Florida, has received the prestigious award for design excellence, with a second separate award being given for the park’s River Center structure. A 25-acre, \$36 million redevelopment of a Hillsborough River park that had fallen into deep disrepair, Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park, completed in 2018, was designed and constructed as the first project in the City of Tampa’s plan to regenerate the West Tampa riverfront and historic African-American and Latino neighborhoods.

The American Architecture Awards, considered the nation’s highest public awards for new architecture and urban planning, are organized jointly by The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies. In selecting [this year’s winners](#), judges looked to honor “the best and next contributions to innovative contemporary American architecture,” arriving

at a list of projects that Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, Museum President, The Chicago Athenaeum, lauds as “Today’s celebrated award; tomorrow’s landmark.”



City views from a grand lawn for gathering were a request from the West Tampa community. More than 100 live oak trees, including champion trees, were retained as part of the award-winning design.

Known for a design process that deeply engages with community and history, Civitas conducted 40 one-on-one meetings with neighborhood leaders and five interactive public meetings, responding to a populace that had been devastated in the wake of 1960s “urban renewal” and a once-loved park that had become a symbol of racial strife. The design team’s amenities-rich plan met the community’s desire for a grand space with views of the city for picnicking and gathering, with state-of-the-art playground and splash pad; and first-class basketball, tennis and football facilities. The dramatic new River Center building designed by W Architecture and Landscape Architecture incorporates a city-run boathouse with kayaks, canoes, paddleboards, dragon boats and sculls below and a community center above.

The award-winning park design reactivates a crucial historical connection between West Tampa and the Hillsborough River, providing residents with the first public access to the water in many decades. In the process, Civitas actually reengineered the river, moving the seawall to create a quiet cove for paddling instruction, protected by a new pedestrian wharf and a floating dock that has become a prized spot for sitting and

watching paddlers, racing shells, passing boats and dolphins, as well as a weekend stop for a water taxi.



A children's play area with splash pad, local art, native plantings and plenty of seating invite engagement with Civitas' award-winning Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park.

In addition to its community-first design approach, the park provides resiliency and sustainability to the riverfront. More than 100 pre-existing live oak trees were retained, enhanced by raised walkways that invite a nature-in-the-city experience while protecting sensitive roots. A continuous waterfront quality filtration trench doubles as a placemaking feature and primary design element that follows the edge of the Great Lawn and offers a backdrop for the Grand Promenade while capturing stormwater onsite into vegetative swales. Likewise, the River Center's distinctively swooping roof design channels runoff into a lush rain garden, filtering through landscape and plant material to control the water's return to the river.

The Chicago Athenaeum will present the 2019 American Architecture Awards at a gala event on October 10 in Miami. All winning buildings and urban planning projects will be represented in a book, (Global Design + Urbanism XIX) *New American Architecture*, published by Metropolitan Arts Press Ltd. and available through the Chicago Athenaeum.

Other recent honors for Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park include a [2019 Design Award](#) from ASLA-NY and a [2019 Best Project Award](#) in the Landscape/Urban Development category from Engineering News-Record (ENR) Southeast. Civitas also won a 2018 American Architecture Award for its Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

About Civitas:

Founded in 1984 with the core purpose of “creating healthier cities” and celebrating its 35th anniversary, Denver-based Civitas, Inc. is an idea-based practice of urban designers, architects and landscape architects engaged in strategic planning for urban change and project design for built works. Recent honors include both the 2017 International Architecture Award and 2018 and 2019 American Architecture Awards from the Chicago Athenaeum/European Centre; the Canadian Institute of Planners “Great Public Space”; a 2017 IMCL Merit Award; and an Excellence on the Waterfront Award from the nonprofit Waterfront Center. A consultancy and a design studio, Civitas advises on a wide range of strategies for re-imagining urban life and places, working in U.S. cities coast to coast and around the world. For additional information visit civitasinc.com.

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