



2021 Great Places in New Jersey Guidelines and Nomination Instructions

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2021

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION (Please Note: You Must Have a Google Account):

<https://forms.gle/unWY8xgaiJNeDYNp8>

Great Places in New Jersey celebrates downtowns, public spaces, streets, and neighborhoods of exemplary character, quality, and planning. These places represent the gold standard in terms of having a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement, and a vision for tomorrow. Know of a downtown, public space, street, or neighborhood you think merits designation as a Great Place in New Jersey? Nominate it today!

Program Rules

- Nominations will close on Friday, December 3, 2021.
- All entrants grant to APA New Jersey the right to use any and all information related to the nomination submitted for marketing and public relations purposes.
- APA New Jersey reserves the right to limit the number of Great Place designations based on the quality of the nominations received.
- The Awards Jury is an independent committee appointed by APA New Jersey representing various professional fields. All nominations will receive careful consideration.
- 2021 Designees will be presented with a plaque, be featured on our website (greatplacenj.org) and will be highlighted in press releases, digital newsletters, and social media announcements.

Required Submission Elements

- Nominator's contact information
- List of partners (those who were instrumental in the process of making the "Great Place" - elected/appointed officials, professional staff, consulting firms, residents, advocacy groups, etc.).
- Great Place name, category, location, and brief description.
- Great Place narrative addressing the category criteria (two pages).
- Six images that demonstrate the qualities or characteristics that you are trying to highlight.

Questions? Contact APA New Jersey Executive Director, Sheena Collum, via email at scollum@njplanning.org or call 848-932-2817.



What Makes a Great Place?

Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live. They are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. New Jersey’s great downtowns, public spaces, streets, and neighborhoods are defined by many criteria, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community activity. *Consider the following descriptions as guiding principles rather than a checklist of mandated characteristics.*

Great Downtown

A downtown is the business district of the community. It generally provides a variety of uses, which may include, but are not necessarily limited to, retail stores, offices, government buildings, theaters, housing, parking facilities, public spaces and other features that draw residents and visitors.

Characteristics of a Great Downtown include:

- Functions as the centerpiece in the everyday life of the community. Offers an array of places where people come to conduct business, meet their daily needs, as well as go shopping, meet friends, and relax.
- Enjoys a reputation for excellence that reaches well beyond the community’s boundaries. Attracts visitors from a distance that reflects its physical size.
- Possesses a tremendous vitality, with lots of people not just during the day but also in the evening and on the weekends.
- Offers special events and attractions throughout the year.
- Provides accessible transportation, walkability, parking, and parking alternatives.
- Receives support from the community to attract, retain and grow businesses. Examples: “Buy Local” campaigns and façade improvement programs.

Great Public Space

A public space may be a gathering spot or part of a neighborhood, downtown, special district, waterfront or other area within the public realm that helps promote social interaction and a sense of community. Examples include such spaces as plazas, town squares, parks, marketplaces, public commons and malls, public greens, piers, special areas within convention centers or grounds, sites within public buildings, concourses, or public spaces within private buildings.

Characteristics of a Great Public Space include:

- Offers high quality attractions and amenities.
- Promotes social activity and creates a sense of community and neighborliness.
- Is safe, welcoming, and accommodating for all users. Encourages use and interaction among a diverse cross section of the public.
- Has a unique or special character that makes it extraordinary or memorable.
 - Has design and architectural features that are visually interesting.
 - Reflects the local culture or history.
 - Relates well to surrounding areas and uses.

Great Street

A street comprises the entire three-dimensional visual corridor, including how it relates to the adjacent development. Submissions should document the street's character, form, and function. Streets of different types are eligible, ranging from pedestrian to arterial roadways, but each should have definable characteristics. Special emphasis is placed on streets that service and consider all users — whether auto, pedestrian, bicycle, or transit riders.

Characteristics of a Great Street include:

- Balances the competing needs of the street — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc. with that of adjoining land uses.
- Capitalizes on natural features and the context in which it resides.
- Creates an atmosphere through the use of design and architectural features. Such features should reflect the local culture or history.
- Encourages social activity such as festivals, parades, and open-air markets.
- Employs hardscape, landscape, street furniture or other physical elements to create ambiance and atmosphere.
- Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day.
- Is well maintained, and capable of being maintained without excessive costs.
- Has a memorable character.
- To the extent feasible, promotes sustainability through minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands, and responding to climatic demands.

Great Neighborhood

A neighborhood is a geographic unit within the municipality that is typically bordered by significant physical features, either natural or man-made. Examples of such features include a major street, a rail line, a river, or a large industrial complex. Residents share the use of public facilities such as schools and shopping areas that facilitate social interactions. The neighborhood may be known by a commonly recognized name. Neighborhoods within municipalities of different types are eligible for nomination: downtown, urban, suburban, exurban, town or small village.

Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood include:

- Has a memorable character that reflects the community's overall character and local history but sets itself apart from other neighborhoods.
- Design and architectural features are visually interesting. Older neighborhoods have retained their historic charm.
- Has a variety of functional attributes that contribute to a resident's day-to-day living (i.e. residential, commercial or mixed-uses).
- Accommodates a variety of modes of transportation (i.e. pedestrians, bicycles, cars) and provides access to multiple destinations that serve its residents.
- Encourages social activity and creates a sense of community and neighborliness.
- Provides and maintains a safe, secure environment (e.g., traffic calming, neighborhood watch organization, Safe Routes to School program).
- Promotes sustainability and responds to climatic demands.

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