



2025 Planning Excellence Awards Guidelines and Nomination Instructions

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2025

Submit Via: <https://forms.gle/q9XAnZLiLy4g4FCNA>

The New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association (“APA New Jersey”) is pleased to announce its 2025 Planning Excellence Awards. These awards honor individuals, organizations, projects, and initiatives at the forefront of planning and design in New Jersey. Honorees will be recognized with a prestigious award plaque, a feature story on APA New Jersey’s website, and special highlights in press releases, newsletters, and social media. Their achievements will also be celebrated at our Awards Reception this December.

Leadership Awards

Budd Chavooshian Award for Outstanding Professional Planner

To a professional planner for sustained contributions to the profession through distinguished practice, teaching, or writing.

Distinguished Civic Leadership Award

To an elected official or citizen planning advocate who has advanced sound planning in the public arena. A citizen planning advocate can be a lay member of a planning board, board of adjustment, economic development board, other appointed official, activist, neighborhood leader, or head of a community development organization.

Distinguished Emerging Planner Award

To a professional planner, 35 years or younger, who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to leadership, professional development, and the advancement of the field of planning in New Jersey.

Stuart Meck Distinguished Service Award

To an APA New Jersey member who has advanced the mission of the Chapter by consistently and freely giving of themselves to the Executive Committee or Chapter initiatives.

James W. Hughes Applied Research Award

To an individual or organization whose applied research has affected change in New Jersey, as the substantive basis for legislative, regulatory, or policy change, or as the driver of a shift in a fundamental approach to planning.

Project Awards

Outstanding Plan Award

To a plan of unusually high merit. Examples include, but are not limited to neighborhood, economic development, conservation, transportation, and other comprehensive plans. *Technical reports and site plans are not eligible for this award.*

Outstanding Implementation Award

To a specific planning project or initiative of unusually high merit for which there are demonstrated “on-the ground” results and success stories that are supported by documented physical or social change.

Outstanding Community Engagement or Education Award

To a planning project or initiative that has involved or resulted in significant advancement of community comprehension of planning issues or outcomes. Examples may include publications, interactive project websites, public planning and design charrettes or seminars.

Outstanding Student Project Award

To outstanding class projects or papers by a student or group of students that contribute to advances in the field of planning. The submission should be primarily the work of the students and based in New Jersey. The students may be from any secondary education institution.

ELIGIBILITY

Any plan, project, program, process, or report entered must have been published, implemented, or completed within three years of the submission date.

Nominators must select the most appropriate category for the submission and may not submit the same project for multiple awards. Changes will not be allowed by the nominator after the submission deadline. The awards jury may move a submission from one category to another.

Judging

Nominators of submissions will be notified of the jury's decision by late October. Official announcements of the winning submissions will be made after all nominators have been notified. Awards will only be made in the stated categories; however, jurors are not obligated to grant an award in any category and may choose to make multiple awards in a single category. The awards jury's procedures prohibit any communication with jurors on behalf of a nominee, except that the jury may contact a nominator to clarify information in a submission.

LEADERSHIP AWARDS CRITERIA

- **Support of Planning and Planners:** The nominee has increased understanding of sound planning principles and processes.
- **Collaboration:** The nominee collaborates effectively to produce positive results and advances access and opportunities to others.
- **Effectiveness and Results:** The nominee has been effective in formulating and implementing their ideas and furthering the cause of planning and the mission of APA New Jersey.

PROJECT AWARDS CRITERIA

- **Originality:** The project presents a visionary approach or innovative concept that results in a meaningful advance to planning.
 - **Quality:** The project possesses excellence in thought, analysis, writing, graphics, and/or sound planning principles.
 - **Implementation:** The project is effective, as evidenced by its post-completion or post-adoption activity.
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SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Nominator's Contact Information
- Leadership or Project Award Category
- Nominee Contact Information
- Paragraph Description of the Individual or Project
- Two-Page Long Narrative Description
- High-Resolution Image(s) of the Individual or Project
- Project Partners (if applicable)

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