

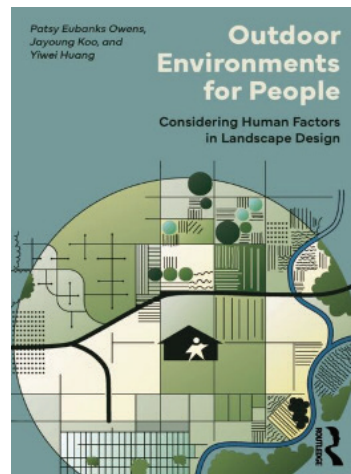
Project for Public Spaces

G R E A T P L A C E S A W A R D S

Deadline February 1, 2026
www.edra.org/greatplacesawards



Passenger Journey Map // Strategy Development at Spatial Touchpoints



edra

WELCOME TO THE EDRA GREAT PLACES AWARDS

The Environmental Design Research Association, in partnership with Project for Public Spaces, presents the **28th Annual Great Places Awards**.

THE PROGRAM

The Great Places Awards are unique among programs that honor professional and scholarly excellence in environmental design. They seek to recognize work that combines expertise in design, research, and practice, and contributes to the creation of dynamic, humane places that engage our attention and imagination.

Award-winning projects reflect an interdisciplinary approach that is enduring, human-centered, sustainable, and concerned with the experiential relationship between people and their environment (built and natural) over time.

We invite participation from a range of design and research disciplines — particularly projects whose significance extends beyond any one profession or field.

All submissions should demonstrate how the understanding of the experience of place may be used to generate insightful design. Submissions should show how research and/or public participation is linked to or part of an environmental design practice, and vice versa.

We welcome submissions from the full breadth of environmental design and related research fields, including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, urban design, interior design, lighting design, graphic design, place-based public art, environmental psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, and the physical sciences.

All submissions for the 2026 Great Places Awards must be electronically UPLOADED to the submission site at www.edra.org/greatplaces by 11:59pm PST on February 1, 2026.

THE PROCESS

Each year we assemble a jury with diverse backgrounds in design, research, and practice. The jury evaluates how each project, no matter what the discipline, addresses the human experience of well-designed places. Special attention is paid to the transferability of research on this topic into design and planning practice. The jury will select exceptional submissions from five categories: place design, place planning, place research, place book, and place art.

The jury will convene in early 2026 and awards will be announced and presented at the EDRA57 Conference in Amherst, MA, May 27 -30, 2026.

The winning entries will be on display throughout the conference and publicized throughout the year in various print and electronic publications.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Place Design (p 6) Place Planning (p 7)
Place Research (p 9) Place Book (p 10)
Place Art (p 11)

WHO WE ARE

The Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) is a global interdisciplinary community of research, design, and planning educators, professionals, and students interested in the links between people and their built and natural environments.

Founded in 1968, EDRA's roots are strong. Our organization's vibrant network of visionaries have anticipated movements in research and design decades before they have hit the mainstream. EDRA's lineage of members have pioneered environment and behavior studies, evidence-based design, facility evaluation methods, attention to social justice and equity in the built environment, sustainability, active living community planning, universal design, diversity in design, workplace design, informatics, and digital technologies.

EDRA members include leading-edge design/planning researchers and practitioners from across the Environmental Design fields, universities and partner organizations. EDRA researchers and practitioners work together to create places where people thrive and foster more sustainable, livable and diverse communities through design, planning, and policies at all scales.



ABOUT THE GREAT PLACES AWARDS

THE PARTNER

EDRA is proud to partner with **Project for Public Spaces** in the 2026 Great Places Awards.

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Their pioneering placemaking approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs.

Project for Public Spaces

What Makes a Great Place?



WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

Placemaking is a collaborative process that engages people in creating and sustaining the public destinations at the heart of their community: the places where we play, shop, eat, gather, interact, and to build the social ties that hold a community together.

Four attributes are key to the success of any place: it is accessible and well connected to other important places in the area; the space is comfortable and projects a good image; people are drawn to participate in activities there; it is a sociable place where people like to gather, visiting it again and again.

The **Place Diagram** was developed to help communities evaluate their own places. The inner ring represents key attributes, the middle ring intangible qualities, and the outer ring measurable data.

SUBMISSION RULES

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To submit to the Great Places Awards, entrants are required to upload a written statement and supporting project documentation in the form of a PDF online through our dedicated submission portal. With the exception of Place Book, entries should be anonymized. Failure to submit an entry that responds to the requirements listed below will result in disqualification.

1. Each entry must follow the specific submission requirements for its category as described and must be submitted in English.
2. The on-line submission requires the following information: Submission type, Title, Submitter, **Written Statement, Support Documentation**, Payment, and Confirmation. The Place Book on-line submission also requires a Digital Copy of the Book.
3. **A Written Statement** should not exceed 500 words and address four sub-topics in relation to the design or research project submitted: Overall Context, Process, Outcomes, and Impact.
4. **A PDF of Support Documentation** should visually summarize the project's significance. It may include, but is not limited to: drawings, photos, press releases, letters of endorsement, written testimony or quotes from stakeholders or users, and other relevant visuals. All additional materials that help explain the project should be integrated into this document in a visually appealing manner. Ideally, this document should be formatted in landscape orientation. To comply with submission requirements, please remove any identifying information from all submitted materials. The PDF Support Documentation should be **maximum 20 pages & no larger than 20MB**. This Support Documentation is required for the Design, Planning, Research, and Art Categories.
5. **For Place Book submissions only, please submit a digital PDF of the book in the electronic format (maximum file size 120MB)**. A PDF of Support Documentation is not required for the Place Book category.
6. **All submissions must be uploaded to www.edra.org/ [greatplaces](http://greatplaces.org)**. Payments must be received by EDRA Headquarters **no later than 11:59 pm PST on February 1, 2026**.
7. Submissions will not be processed unless the appropriate entry fee has been received: EDRA Members \$325 / Non-Members \$400. Discounts are available if you are a student or early-career researcher (within five years post-graduation of your degree), as well as if the organization submitting is a community-based organization, non-profit, or a woman or minority-owned business. Only one discount is applicable per application. Note: Applicants from countries with comparable economic conditions are encouraged to contact the EDRA Headquarters for further information.
7. To receive the EDRA member discounted entry fee, submitter must be active EDRA members. Submitters wishing to join EDRA to receive the discounted entry fee may join online at **www.edra.org** or by calling +1 (507) 339-4620 prior to submission.
8. The application types/fees are listed on the 2026 GPA Awards submission gateway page. For information about EDRA memberships, visit www.edra.org.
9. EDRA and the GPA Jury reserve the right to move entries across categories if a better fit is determined.
10. Jurors award one Winner per category. Occasionally, Honorable Mentions may be bestowed depending on recognition of runner up proposals of exceptional quality.
11. To ensure anonymity in judging, names of entrants, collaborating parties and links to company/personal websites may not be part of the online submission except for the Submitter tab. Location and identity of projects may be included. Provide all project credits in a separate electronic file entitled "Credits." **Failure to submit anonymous applications or incomplete submissions will not be considered.**
12. For Place Book submissions, Credits should include a list of all contributors to the book and their specific tasks, including individuals who have provided materials from professional design, planning, or community development projects whose work might be featured within the book.
13. 2026 Great Places Award Recipients will be recognized during the EDRA₅₇ conference. One award winner for each of the five categories will receive a free conference registration. The discount does not apply to the dinner banquet/mobile sessions.
14. Submitters of winning entries agree to make available further information and graphic material, as requested.

SUBMISSION RULES

15. Drawings, photographs, and other materials submitted for winner and honorable mentions projects will be used for unrestricted publicity. Entrants hereby declare and warrant that they are the copyright owner of the image being submitted to EDRA, or that they have written permission to use this image from the rightful copyright owner. Entrants hereby grant a nonexclusive license to EDRA to use, reproduce, exhibit, publicize and distribute this photograph in whole or in part, in any manner and media now known or hereinafter invented, including, but not limited to, print, publications, the EDRA website, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or other social media platforms, in perpetuity throughout the world, in support of and/or to promote the EDRA mission, and for archival purposes. Entrants represent that they have the legal right and authority to grant such a license.

Entrants agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless EDRA, its Board, employees, volunteers and agents from any and all liability, damages and expenses including reasonable attorney's fees arising from the use of the photo, including any claims brought by any person claiming an interest in the photos or their subject matter.

Submission deadline is February 1, 2026, 11:59pm PST. Contact greatplacesawards@edra.org with questions!

PLACE DESIGN

Place Design awards recognize placemaking projects that enrich people and communities and address the needs of a diversity of users. Submissions can feature projects of various types and scales, encompassing individually-built elements or cohesive groups of environments working together as a unit. Projects can be newly built, or result from the reuse of existing buildings and facilities. They range in scales from local streets to civic boulevards, community parks to regional greenways, and building interiors to clusters of buildings and spaces. They may be the product of traditional design discipline, non-profits operating in the design of the built environment on behalf of a community, or Community Design Centers. **Projects of design courses and academic design and research centers in collaboration with students should be submitted under the Place Research category.**

Projects must have been completed within the last **five years** but have been in existence for a sufficient period of time to enable assessment of how well the design responds to user needs. The written statement should address the impact of the project and it is expected that imagery provided as project documentation will also constitute evidence of how the project responded to people's needs and contributed to the experience of place.

To maintain anonymity in judging, no names of entrants or collaborating parties or any link to a dedicated website may appear in any part of the submissions except in a separate electronic file entitled "Credits". Location and identity of projects can be disclosed.

JURY CONSIDERATIONS

Designs must contribute to the creation of places recognizable and distinctive within a larger fabric of relationships—they should help improve their setting by advancing a larger vision, healing a broken relationship, or retrofitting new qualities and uses to address past design failures.

Designs submitted should involve a place that is meaningful to a community, consider an issue of social, cultural, or ecological importance, or demonstrate how the design is configured to serve a broader constituency and provide enduring benefits.

Submissions should illustrate the potential to enhance the quality of life of a wide range of user-groups, especially those traditionally underserved by designers.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should address context/significance of the project, the process by which the design has emerged. Successful projects illustrate unique responses to human-needs research, human perceptions, citizen participation; the relation of process to design outcomes; and their immediate and broader impacts and performance. Jurors assessments will be based on the four dimensions listed above.

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING

The written statement of no more than 500 words should address the following:

1. Overall Context

Describe the place and its surrounding contexts. Who was the client for and/or sponsor of the project? What issues of social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental importance does the project consider? Describe any other contextual issues that are important to understanding the significance of the project.

2. Process

Describe the place-design problem that the project addresses. Describe the approach used and the design process, including the time frame in which the process took place; and strategies for involving stakeholders in formulating the response. What environmental design research was useful in designing this project? What constituencies participated in the process?

3. Outcomes

Describe how the process and resulting design outcomes innovatively respond to outlined concerns and problems. How does this specific project contribute to the ongoing transformation of a larger fabric of places? What environmental design research is pertinent in evaluating the project? What environmental design research would advance future projects of this type? How were lessons learned disseminated?

4. Impact

What systematically collected evidence illustrates the impact of this project on improving human-environment relationships? What research or other systematically collected evidence is there that the project has broadened or strengthened the constituency for this place, and that it has the potential to enhance quality of life of a broad constituency? How have lessons learned influenced successive place-design projects?

PLACE PLANNING

Place Planning awards any plan generated (but not necessarily built/implemented) **within the past five years** that makes proposals for the future use, future management, or future design of a place—including master plans, management and community development plans, vision documents, or charrette proposals, as long as people-place consideration and well-being is a central focus of the plan/process.

Plans can operate at a range of scales, from a specific area, such as a cluster of buildings, a campus or neighborhood, to a region. They can consider a variety of issues, such as urban design, preservation, environmental engineering, landscape ecology planning, transportation, accessibility, community development, facilities programming, and community visioning

Plans must have been sponsored by an external organized entity— such as a public agency, community group, or private business or institution. Plans should be available for public review and input, but they need not have received official approval.

To maintain anonymity in judging, no names of entrants or collaborating parties or any link to a dedicated website may appear in any part of the submissions except in a separate electronic file entitled “Credits.” Location and identity of projects can be disclosed. Failure to submit anonymous applications or uncompleted submissions will result in disqualification.

JURY CONSIDERATIONS

Plans should address the context of how specific places or activities operate within a larger fabric of spatial, functional, economic, political, environmental, and cultural relationships. Plans should involve places of public, environmental, or social significance, consider issues of social and environmental importance, and/ or be configured to expand the constituency for a place especially to those groups that are often underrepresented in mainstream planning processes. Plans should indicate clear, relevant and innovative methods/processes. They should incorporate effective strategies for participation and communication amongst stakeholders, involving affected constituencies in formulating the plan and conveying the plan’s significance to those whose involvement and commitment will be necessary for achieving the plan goals and objectives.

Even if the plan goals have not yet been realized, the planning process should have demonstrable outcomes that indicate progress towards achieving the stated outcomes. They should result in specific design, management, or policy initiatives; broaden and strengthen the constituency for the place; attract additional resources to the place; or enhance the discussion about or perception of the place. The emphasis of an entry should be to clearly describe the process that led to the final plan.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should address context/ significance of the project, the process by which the design has emerged. Successful projects illustrate unique responses to human-needs research, human perceptions, citizen participation; the relation of process to design outcomes; and their immediate and broader impacts and performance. Jurors’ assessments will be based on the four dimensions listed above.

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING

The written statement of no more than 500 words should address the following:

1. Overall Context

Describe the place involved; the client for and/or sponsor of the plan; the different stakeholder groups involved in the planning process, and any other contextual issues that are important to understanding the significance of the plan.

2. Process

Describe the questions/issues of concern that the plan addresses, the approach used, and specific planning methods and processes, including the time frame in which the planning took place; and strategies for involving stakeholders in formulating the plan and the research that was used in creating/ developing the plan.

3. Outcomes

Describe how the process and resulting plan innovatively respond to outlined concerns and problems. Describe steps and timelines for implementation and communication and engagement strategies by which stakeholders, policy makers, and funders have gained an understanding of the significance of the proposals.

4. Impact

Discuss research that would be pertinent to evaluating the plan, and/or would help make future plans of this sort more effective? Describe evidence of the impact the plan has had to date. How was impact assessed? What individuals or organizations were involved in impact assessment? What changes have come about as a result of the planning process? What other research can help make similar plans more effective in the future?

PLACE RESEARCH

All types of research about the design and use of people-centered places completed within the past five years can be entered either from academia or research development departments within professional design and planning firms. Refer to scale, divide by category and provide examples sorted out by category— including (but not limited to) projects that:

- Document the physical, emotional, or perceptual experience of places or landscapes
- Employ evaluations of the use or management of recent projects or established settings
- Introduce novel approaches to studying place that are relevant to environment-behavior explorations
- Deal with pressing, timely issues and conditions of place
- Are based upon the cultural history of a place or research on place-based sustainable practices, among many others that are place-relevant, and yield significant outcomes.
- Design/Built project developed in Academia to test assumptions or hypotheses
- Courses that engage students to specific social injustice issues using design, evaluation methods, assessment etc.

To maintain anonymity in judging, no names of entrants or collaborating parties or any link to a dedicated website may appear in any part of the submissions except in a separate electronic file entitled "Credits." Location and identity of projects may be disclosed. Failure to submit anonymous applications or uncompleted submissions will be disqualified.

JURY CONSIDERATIONS

Place Research projects should consider the relationship between existing or proposed physical form and human activity or experience. They should enrich our understanding of how people interact with places from a behavioral, social, cultural, or ecological perspective; how people experience places; or processes through which places are conceived, designed, occupied, and managed. Projects should consider places of public, social or cultural importance — such as marketplaces, plazas, parks, squares and streets; campuses, religious, or commercial facilities; or offices, special housing facilities, or extended development patterns.

Research should demonstrate innovation and submissions should describe how the project breaks new ground. Projects should have broad applicability, informing design practice or teaching. The research methods, findings, and implications should be clearly documented and communicated. Projects should be clearly grounded in the context of recent literature and practice; they can revisit previous research, confirming, extending, or challenging earlier findings.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should address the research context and significance; the research process and methods; the relation of process to research outcomes/findings; and both the focused and broader impact of the research. Jurors will be asked to assess the four dimensions listed above in the review process.

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING

The written statement of no more than 500 words should address the following:

1. Overall Context

Describe the context, place or place-type involved, significant issues explored, and the client for the study. Clearly describe the theoretical foundation of the research. What issues and places of social, cultural, political, environmental, or scientific importance does this research consider?

2. Process

Describe the research questions/ hypothesis, methods, and explain how the project relates to recent advancements in theory, literature, and practice.

3. Outcomes

Describe findings and/or research outcomes. How does this research advance our understanding of human interaction or experience of the physical environment? What new knowledge/understanding is being showcased by this research?

4. Impact

How can the research findings contribute to the creation of dynamic, humane places that engage our attention and imagination and heighten the experiential relationship between people and their environment over time? How can the project's research findings be integrated in the design, upkeep and care of places. What may be the education implications of the project?

Any book published for the first time in the last five years advancing the critical understanding of place or design of exceptional environments can be entered.

The book may be primarily scholarly, practical, literary, critical, or visual. The book must be currently available to the public through bookstores, commercial websites, or direct purchase from a publisher.

Books must be published through recognizable publishers such as University Presses, Routledge, and Springer. They may not be re-edited or be re-released versions of older works.

Book award submissions do not have to be anonymous. Credits should include a list of all contributors to the book and their tasks for submission contributions, including individuals who have provided materials from professional design, planning, or community development projects and whose professional/ scholarly placedesign/planning work might be featured within the book. Failure to submit uncompleted entries will result in disqualification.

JURY CONSIDERATIONS

Books should be primarily about the experience, design, or understanding of place. They may be analytic, descriptive, documentary, or practice oriented. They may be about particular places; about people's relationship to place, or about the qualities of place as an area of study. They may be edited volumes or individually authored works. The book should illustrate a mature research agenda that is informed by place-people centered theories and literature, communicates a sound approach, and informs of compelling outcomes/findings. The methodology used must be appropriate for the focus of the book and demonstrate the refined realization of a stated research agenda, with perspective, theory, or findings that are applicable in the future practice of place-based design, planning, or research, and these must engage with and contribute to existing themes in the literature on place. This submission type does not require an anonymous submission.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In this category only, please include a digital PDF of the book in the electronic submission (maximum file size 120MB). Finalists may be asked to provide a hard copy of the book as part of the final award jurying process. In the accompanying credits for all book award submissions, please list all contributors to the book and identify their contributions, including those who have provided materials from professional design,

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING

The written statement (not to exceed 500 words in length) should address the following:

1. Overall

Context Describe the context, focus of the book, place or place-type involved, significant issues explored, and the type of book. What issues and places of social, cultural, political, environmental, or scientific importance does this book consider? Explain how the book relates to recent place-centered literature and practice.

2. Process

Clearly describe the perspective and theoretical foundation of the book, the structure of the narrative, the paradigm examined/investigations carried out, and the methods employed. How does this book address our understanding of human interaction with or experience of place?

3. Outcomes

Describe the place-based strategies and findings identified and the outcomes articulated in the book. What new knowledge/understanding does it advance?

4. Impact

How can the research agenda and book outcomes be applicable in the future practice and stewardship of place-based design, planning, research? How does this book contribute to existing themes in literature on place?

*You must also supply an electronic copy of the book in addition to the supporting documents. (maximum file size of 120MB - if you find your PDF exceeds the file limit please contact greatplacesawards@edra.org)

*Book award finalists may be asked to provide a hard copy of the book as part of the final jury process.

PLACE ART

Place Art awards projects that use art as a primary means of exploring people-place relationships—current, historic, contested, imagined—and the immediate or more far-reaching environmental and societal issues impacting those relationships. These may take form as a temporary, pop-up, or more permanently installed or staged place art intervention, exhibition, event, or program that's made to socially activate a place and convey, uncover, disrupt, challenge, or transform its socio-environmental dynamics, conditions and meanings.

An emphasis on art as a tool of community placemaking, engagement, and social change means Place Art projects will often engage publics as collaborators and co-creators. They may be authored by individuals or collaborative teams from practice, academia, non-profits, community groups and organizations. They may range in type, dimension, and duration and be single- and/or multi-sited, that is occurring in one or multiple geographies and time frames and they may be created using diverse media, materials, methods and approaches. Place Art's roots may extend to a broad range of historic and contemporary art genres and practices such as public art, environmental art, relational art and aesthetics, performance art, new-genre public art, creative placemaking, and activism.

Place Art projects must have been completed—installed/staged/performed—within the last five years and have been in existence for a sufficient period of time to enable documenting and assessing of their impact on the people and public space(s) engaged. A Place Art project's written statement should address its impact and be accompanied by imagery and other materials evidencing the actual people-place interactions and experiences it has generated.

To maintain anonymity in judging, no names of entrants or collaborating parties or any link to a dedicated website may appear in any part of the submissions except in a separate electronic file entitled "Credits." Location and identity of projects can be disclosed. Failure to submit anonymous applications or uncompleted submissions will result in disqualification.

JURY CONSIDERATIONS

Place Art entries should be artistic interpretations of places and their people-place interrelationships involving such things as a place's told and untold stories, histories and memories, its challenges, hopes and desires, and its future imaginings and vision.

Place Art projects should help advocate for the arts as a community engagement tool that can surface a place's unique challenges, strengths and potentials while enabling and empowering the public to question, explore, express, imagine, reimagine and/or transform that place's role, purpose and meaning—socially, culturally and/or environmentally- moving forward.

The submitted works should demonstrate how the arts act to catalyze meaningful positive change in a place in one or multiple ways such as: by strengthening or enabling awareness and expression of people-place connectivity and a community's connection with a place; by fostering greater interhuman and intercultural social interaction; by fostering social and cultural inclusion and place belonging; by enabling and honoring multicultural creativity and expression in public places; by educating a broader audience about a particular place; by advocating

for a place's safeguarding or transformation; by emboldening and empowering publics to engage in impactful placemaking that reflects and fortifies their identities, needs and desires; by affirming diverse peoples' right to inclusive public spaces.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should address the context and significance of the art; the art creation process; the mode of exhibition, the impacts of the art on the community and the place. Jurors will be asked to assess the four dimensions listed above in the review process.

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING

The written statement of no more than 500 words should address the following:

1. Overall Context

Describe the place and its surrounding contexts. What issues and places of social, cultural, political, environmental, or scientific importance does this project consider? Describe any other contextual issues that are important to understanding the significance of the project.

2. Process

Describe the place problem that the project addresses. Describe the approach used and the creative process, including the time frame in which the process took place; and strategies for involving community in formulating the response. How does this project address questions and issues relate to place through process?

3. Outcomes

Describe how the art has been exhibited and what were the outcomes of the event/installation/performance/built project. How does this project address our understanding of human interaction with or experience of place?

4. Impact

How can the outcomes of engagement/event/performance/installation be applicable in the future practice and stewardship of place-based art, design, planning, and research? How does this project contribute to existing understanding of place?

PHOTO CREDITS

Nodeul Island

2025 Place Design Winner - Donghwan Moon

Future Fragments **2025 Place Art Winner** -
Jen Frail, Michael MacLean & Kieran Stepan

Mexico City's Green Infrastructure Special
Program

2025 Place Planning Winner - Maritza
Hernandez Solis, Diana Hernandez Lugo,
Erika Belen Villagomez Flores, Ana Karen
Villalba Aguilera, Jorge Carlos Badillo Suarez,
Lizette Fernanda Romero Moncada & Alberto
Antonio Dias Galindo

Outdoor Environments for People:
Considering Human Factors in Landscape
Design **2025 Place Book Winner** - Yiwei
Huang, Patsy Owens & Jayoung Koo

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