



Great Places in Pennsylvania

Category Criteria

Great Public Spaces

What is a Public Space? A public space may be a formal or informal gathering space within a neighborhood, downtown, district, waterfront or other area of a community that is within the public realm, promotes social interaction and community engagement, and fosters a sense of community. Public spaces may be indoors or outdoors, man-made or natural, and provide opportunities for passive or active social interactions. Some examples of public spaces include plazas, parks, public commons or greens, marketplaces, convention centers, monuments, and special areas within public or private buildings.

Nomination Form: The nomination form is the means to describe the planning story and characteristics that make your nominated public space worthy of a Great Places designation. Use the following criteria to assist with writing your responses. Where possible, quantify the information provided, such as number of visitors, events, activities, and economic impact.

Form & Function: *How does the public space...*

- utilize design, scale, form, architecture and other features to create a visually interesting experience?
- incorporate landscape and hardscape features that are unique or special to the public space?
- incorporate natural features, topography, vistas, and public art?
- accommodate multiple users for a variety of purposes/activities?
- connect to surrounding uses (connectivity/accessibility), including residential, commercial, and public uses, as well as transit systems?

Unique Characteristics: *Does the design of the public space convey...*

- a sense of importance or extraordinary characteristics that set it apart from other public spaces in the community?
- an atmosphere of discovery, inspiration, contemplation or spiritual reflection?
- its cultural, economic, historic, or natural importance?
- environmentally friendly practices, such as green infrastructure?

Social Interaction: *How does the public space...*

- provide a sense of comfort and safety to people using the space?
- encourage users to interact with each other?
- encourage use by a diverse cross section of the community?
- utilize activities or events to attract people to the space or engage them?

Planning and Resilient Economy: *Did or does the space....*

- demonstrate the importance of planning? Did the public space evolve through a planning process?
- involve planners and/or partnerships?
- engage diverse participation and community involvement?
- contribute to the local economy?
- spur economic activity in the greater community?

Great Transformations

What is a Transformation? A transformation involves revitalizing a place that was not thriving. Some examples include a deteriorating shopping center/mall retrofitted into a mixed-use community, a vacant industrial building transformed into apartments, a failing commercial or industrial corridor reenergized to become economically viable, or a rejuvenated neighborhood. Transformations strengthen communities and the local economy.

Nomination Form: The nomination form is the means to describe the planning story and characteristics that make your nominated transformation worthy of a Great Places designation. Use the following criteria to assist with writing your responses.

Form & Function: *How does the transformation...*

- connect and fit with surrounding neighborhoods?
- utilize design, scale form, architecture, and other features to create a visually interesting and environmentally friendly place?
- incorporate natural features, landscaping, and streetscaping ?
- accommodate multiple uses/activities for a variety of purposes?
- serve as a gathering place?
- accommodate connectivity and/or accessibility to surrounding uses, such as residential, commercial, and public, as well as transit systems and trails?
- incorporate historic or cultural features?

Unique Characteristics/Strategies: *Does the transformation...*

- have a sense of importance or extraordinary characteristics that set it apart from other transformations?
- connect to places of cultural, historic and natural importance?
- include innovative ideas, methods and/or techniques?
- serve as a site for any special programming or events?
- demonstrate any unique revitalization strategies?

Environmental and Sustainable Practices: *Does the transformation...*

- have public/private or multi-municipal investment or commitment for ongoing operations, maintenance, and environmental stewardship?
- incorporate green infrastructure (i.e. pervious pavement, natural buffers, native plants)?
- support economic development and vitality of the community?
- affect the creation of new local businesses?

Planning: *Did or does the transformation....*

- demonstrate the importance of planning? Did the transformation evolve through a planning process?
- involve planners and/or partnerships?
- engage diverse public participation and civic engagement?
- include any special zoning or state/local programs that were important to success?
- utilize any smart growth or green infrastructure tools?