



Great Places in Pennsylvania

2017 Category Criteria

For Nominating

Great Public Spaces and Great Streets

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: It is important to describe the geographic, demographic and social characteristics of the public space and its immediate surroundings. First, describe the location of the public space within its community, as well as its geographic size, connectivity/relationship to surrounding land uses, and characteristics of the users of the space. Then use the following criteria to assist with writing other points about the public space that emphasize why it should be designated a Great Public Space. 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 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?

Social Interaction - *How does the 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?

Great Streets

What is a Street? A street comprises the entire three-dimensional visual corridor, including the public realm and how it relates to adjacent land uses. Streets types range from pedestrian-only and local streets to collector and arterial thoroughfares. They may be located in a variety of settings, including a downtown, urban area, suburb, exurban area, small town, village, or rural area.

Nomination Form: It is important to first state the type of street, describe the setting in which the street is located, and identify its start and end points. Nominations may involve just a few blocks or something longer. Special emphasis is placed on streets that are complete, that is, streets that service and take into account all users — not just motor vehicles. Using the criteria below, submissions should document and emphasize why the street should be designated a Great Street in Pennsylvania. Any related planning studies or public involvement processes should also be noted. Where possible, quantify the information provided, such as number of users, social activities, visitors, and economic impact.

Form & Function - *How does the street...*

- Accommodate multiple users and activities (i.e. continuous and unobstructed travel lanes, road-sharing measures, traffic calming measures, sidewalks, median strips, bike lanes, etc.)?
- Connect to the broader street network?
- Accommodate or encourage social interaction and pedestrian activity, or serve as a social network?
- Use hardscaping, landscaping, street furniture, or other physical elements (i.e. signage, public art) to create a unique personality and capture a sense of place?
- Capitalize on building design, scale, architecture, and proportionality?
- Provide for parking?

Character & Identity - *How does the street...*

- Benefit from community involvement and participation (festivals, parades, open-air markets, outdoor performance spaces, etc.)?
- Reflect the area's culture or history? For example, did it play a role in local, State, or national history?
- Showcase interesting visual experiences, vistas, natural features, building design and scale, or other qualities?
- Incorporate artistic expression unique to the community (landscape design, streetscape design, façade program, architecture of buildings, sculptures, murals, etc.)?
- Stand out from other streets? For example, what makes it extraordinary or memorable? What elements, features, and details set the street apart from other streets?

Resilience and Sustainable Practices - *How has the street...*

- Been maintained? Is it capable of being maintained without excessive costs?
- Promoted safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles?
- Promoted use over the 24-hour day?
- To the extent feasible, promoted sustainability through minimizing runoff (stormwater management), protecting groundwater and air quality, reusing water, minimizing heat islands, responding to climatic demands, providing street trees, or implementing other green infrastructure or sustainable strategies?