

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Plan NH Announces 2025 Merit Awards of Excellence

Plan NH Merit Awards of Excellence

On June 12, 2025, Plan NH announced the 2025 Merit Awards of Excellence winners:

1. [Allenstown Community School - Allenstown, NH](#)
2. [Jackson Square Affordable Housing - Nashua, NH](#)
3. [Penacook Community Center - Concord, NH](#)
4. [Souhegan River Trail - Merrimack, NH](#)

Merit Award winners represent outstanding projects that incorporate good planning, design, and/or development and have had a positive impact on their respective communities. Each year, a distinguished jury of industry professionals reviews each nomination and determines those that are truly outstanding and deserving of recognition. The 2025 winners were announced at the Plan NH Awards Evening on June 12 at The Hotel Concord alongside the Plan NH 2025 Scholarship & Fellowship recipients.

The 2025 Awardees will join a long list of outstanding projects including the following 2024 Merit Awards of Excellence Awardees: Brick Market, located in Portsmouth, NH; Capitol Shopping Center, located in Concord, NH; Mill Girl Stair Improvements, located in Manchester, NH; Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, located in Nashua, NH; and The Livery, located in Sunapee, NH.

1. Allenstown Community School - Merit Award of Excellence

By merging two outdated facilities into one modern, collaborative space, the New Allenstown K-8 Community School actively brings the community together in numerous ways. The new school's design enables cutting-edge academics, incorporates wellness features, and provides inclusive classrooms. Intergenerational community engagement is encouraged by providing public access to the gymnasium and auditorium for sports, local performances, and town meetings, with separate pathways between classrooms to ensure student safety. The new school seamlessly integrates with Allenstown's character, respecting the community's traditions while creating a modern learning environment for generations to come.

The school's vital role as a community anchor was reinforced by centering inclusiveness in both the facility's design and the community planning process. The school ensures equitable access for all students and visitors, regardless of ability or learning need, while also serving as a shared resource for the broader Allenstown community, fostering social equity and collaboration.

Allenstown Community School (cont.)

The design also gives careful consideration to environmental responsibility, such that the school serves as a living example of environmental stewardship. Mechanical and plumbing systems utilize high efficiency boilers, pumps, and energy recovery systems. During the design, The Turner Group engaged NH Saves - a consortium funded by electric and natural gas ratepayers and delivered by Eversource, Liberty



Utilities, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, and Unitil - who estimated that design features would result in a reduction of 4,358 tons of annual CO2 emissions. Looking to the future of clean, affordable energy, the roof was designed to accommodate solar panels. The Town has since approved the installation of a solar array that will produce an estimated 60-70% of the school's annual electricity needs. The use of energy efficient technologies reduces operational costs and is used as an educational tool to teach students and families about responsible resource use.

More than an educational investment, this new school campus is a foundational resource for Allenstown, designed to unite its residents, cultivate lifelong learning, and inspire confidence in the Town's future. As a catalyst for community stability and growth, the new facility is poised to draw young families, stimulate the local economy, and sustain property values over time.

Project Name, Location, and Completion Date

Official Project Name: New Allenstown K-8 Community School

Project Location: Allenstown, NH

Completion Date: April 2024

Owner

Name: SAU 53, Allenstown School District (*owner contact Shannon Kruger*)

Address: 171 River Road, Allenstown, NH 03275

Phone: (603) 485-4474

Email: skruger@sau53.org

Key Team Members

Doug Proctor
Bill Hickey
Frank Lemay
Matt Beaulieu
Dave Jackson
Gordon Bristol
Jack Finley
Shannon Kruger

The Turner Group
The Turner Group
Milestone Construction, LLC
Milestone Construction, LLC
Milestone Construction, LLC
Gordon Bristol OPM
SAU 53
SAU 53

Architect
Project Manager
Project Manager
Project Manager
Project Superintendent
Owner's Project Manager
Superintendent of Schools
School Principal

Jury Comments

- Merging two outdated schools into one modern facility not only upgraded the learning environment, but also created a space that fosters collaboration and social engagement.
- The design seamlessly integrates with the existing neighborhood, reflecting Allenstown's unique character.
- This location is close to many residents and will create more modes of transportation for students living in the area.
- Having spaces like the gym and auditorium to use after hours in a community with limited resources like this are critical. This is a new hub for the community.
- Environmental features include solar, enhanced insulation, water saving features - and they are incorporated into the curriculum!

2. Jackson Square Affordable Housing - Merit Award of Excellence

Located in a part of Nashua undergoing gradual transition, 4-6 Bridge Street in Nashua sat dormant for decades. First as home to several underused, dilapidated buildings at the end of their useful life, and then as a parking lot and a place for trash. For years, the owner, Randy Turmel, a realtor for over 30 years, hoped to find the best use for the site that would fill a need and be a community asset.



He reviewed options for commercial spaces, retail, auto service stations, and more. It wasn't until the InvestNH Program for Affordable Housing was announced that Randy was able to make something happen. Through the incredible partnership with the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA) and the city of Nashua, Novo Studio Architects, and the engineering team were able to execute on a design and get the permits in place to meet the stringent requirements, and successfully compete for the grant. When the grant was awarded, the team had just 16 months to finalize the drawings, get approvals and complete construction. With the tremendous support of the Nashua Building Department and NH BEA, Novo, Team Engineering, and Eckman Construction were able to deliver 24 completed, move-in ready apartments by June of 2024.

Randy's goal for Jackson Square was to set the precedent for revitalization with high quality affordable housing. He challenged Novo Studio to create something that would stand out and be an example for what the street could become. The inspiration for the design of Jackson Square was people and community. Novo carefully reimaged the parcel and turned it into 24 beautiful affordable apartments for the Nashua community. Novo's solution was not changing the traditional vernacular materials, but rearranging them in a way that is modern and attractive. The Architect

Jackson Square Affordable Housing (cont.)

wanted the building to stand out and be a blueprint for future housing yet harmonize with the existing neighborhood. The unique sister-building massing concept not only provides a beautiful central landscaped courtyard, it also helps to break down the scale of a larger development and not overwhelm surrounding structures.

Fulfilling its goals for an accessible design to foster community and inclusivity, the residents of Jackson Square are a snapshot of our community; ranging from young professionals, to single mothers, to retirees. Additionally, the building was designed with 8 handicapped accessible units on the ground floor, 4 times more than the code requirement. As a proud recipient of the InvestNH Grant for Affordable Housing, all 24 units are affordable to renters earning 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The building and its residents are part of the new urban fabric of Bridge Street, close to bike paths, amenities and downtown. This project is a beacon of change and possibility in central Nashua, charting the course for urban transformation.

Project Name, Location, and Completion Date

Project Name: Jackson Square Affordable Apartments

Project Location: Nashua, NH

Completion Date: June 2024

Owner

Name: Jackson Square LLC (*owner contact Randy Turmel*)

Address: 20 Trafalgar Square, Suite 101, Nashua, NH 03063

Phone: 603-234-4192

Email:

Key Team Members

Randy Turmel	Crimson Properties/Jackson Square LLC	Owner
Anne Ketterer	Novo Studio Architects	Principal in Charge
Steve Hebsch	Novo Studio Architect	Project Designer
Matt Walsh	Eckman Construction	Project Executive
Preston Hunter	Eckman Construction	Project Executive
Mike Foster	Eckman Construction	Project Manager
Craig Myslivy	Eckman Construction	Site Superintendent
Tom Zajak	Haynor Swanson/IMEG	Civil Engineer
John Turner	Team Engineering	MEP Engineer
Dan Martel	Team Engineering	Structural Engineer

Jury Comments

- Stunning transformation of a derelict property into a vibrant new living space.
- This investment provides a much needed asset to the neighborhood while maintaining affordability.

Jackson Square Affordable Housing (cont.)

- The courtyard is a nice addition that will allow residents to come together and enjoy outdoor space.
- Challenges the normal size standards for living space; demonstrates strong smart growth and livability principles.
- The project is designed to be a catalyst, and will hopefully have neighborhood impact beyond its property lines.
- Walkable to downtown!
- Important use of funding through InvestNH, NH BEA, and the City of Nashua.

3. Penacook Community Center - Merit Award of Excellence

The new Penacook Community Center, home to the Boys & Girls Club and a branch of the Concord Library, is a welcoming place for people to connect, get support, and access important services. Built in the heart of the village, it brings people together and helps make the neighborhood stronger. This project wasn't just about building a new space—it was about supporting the Penacook community in a lasting and meaningful way.



The new facility replaced the ageing and structurally compromised former Community Center. Now home to intergenerational programs for children, students, parents, and seniors, the Center is within walking distance of downtown Penacook and the Merrimack Valley Middle and High Schools. The library, which previously was in the historic police station, is now in a new accessible building with parking, consolidating services into one efficient, state-of-the-art space.

Reinvesting in the village center helps preserve Penacook's traditional development patterns, supports walkability, and strengthens the identity of the village as a vibrant, people-focused place. The design of the new center reduces environmental impact and operational costs by consolidating multiple community services into one highly efficient building, eliminating the need to heat, cool, and operate multiple separate facilities, saving both energy and taxpayer dollars. Solar panels on the roof of the building enables the Center to operate as a nearly energy self-sufficient facility.

Inclusivity was a cornerstone of the Penacook Community Center project, as Milestone Construction worked closely with the City of Concord and the Boys & Girls Club of Central NH to deliver a facility that exceeds ADA standards, with fully accessible entrances, corridors, restrooms, and program

Penacook Community Center (cont.)

spaces. More than just a service hub, the Center is a welcoming space for connection, civic dialogue, and celebration—a place where all voices are heard and the community comes together.

The revitalized Center increases Penacook’s appeal to new families and businesses with its modern infrastructure, enhanced services, and energy-efficient design, supporting sustainable long-term growth. The project builds a stronger, more connected Penacook by creating a lively, safe, and accessible space that meets the needs of the community now and into the future.

Project Name, Location, and Completion Date

Official Project Name: Penacook Community Center

Project Location: Concord, NH

Completion Date: January 2024

Owners

Name:	City of Concord (owner contact <i>Matt Walsh</i>)	Boys & Girls Club of Central NH (owner contact <i>Chris Emond</i>)
Address:	41 Green St, Concord, NH 03301	55 Bradley St, Concord, NH 03301
Phone:	603-225-8570	603-224-1061
Email:	mwalsh@concordnh.gov	cemond@nhyouth.org

Key Team Members

Matt Beaulieu	Milestone Construction, LLC	Project Manager
Karl Plater	Milestone Construction, LLC	Site Superintendent
John Turner	Team Engineering	Engineer
Alessi Architecture	Alessi Architecture	Architect
Romy Mauer	Terrain Planning & Design, LLC	Landscape/Playground Designer
Chris Emond	Boys & Girls Club of Central NH	CEO
Cathy Furlong	Penacook Community Center	Board President
Beth Fenstermacher	City of Concord	Director of Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

Jury Comments

- Incredible transformation of a challenging property into a vibrant new community space for people to connect, get support, and access important services.
- Built in the heart of the village, it brings people together and helps make the neighborhood stronger.
- Excellent integration of many programs on one site. No fossil fuels on site + renewable energy. Huge points for providing child care!

Jackson Square Affordable Housing (cont.)

- This reinvestment in the center of town helps preserve Penacook's traditional development pattern, supports walkability, and strengthens the village's identity as a vibrant, people-focused place.
- This project was a true team effort!

4. Souhegan River Trail - Merit Award of Excellence

Designed for the Town of Merrimack, NH in collaboration with R.M. Piper Inc. and BETA Group, Inc., this project delivers an innovative, sustainable pedestrian trail prioritizing historic preservation, community connectivity, inclusivity, environmental responsibility, and economic vitality. Funded by a NHDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant, this \$1.6M project helps fulfill the Town's Master Plan for safe, non-motorized accessibility connecting neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and recreational areas.

This project connects Merrimack's four quadrants, previously divided by the Souhegan River and F.E. Everett Turnpike, to provide a safe, accessible space for walking, running, biking, and social gatherings. It links Watson Park with schools, residential areas, and the Central Business District, making recreational opportunities available to all ages and abilities. This new accessibility supports local businesses, restaurants, and shops, while enhancing the area's appeal to residents, visitors, and businesses seeking a vibrant, connected, and healthy community.



The trail features interpretive signage depicting the history of the town's water-powered industrial past and leads users by several structures deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The trail also demonstrates adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure, including a cantilevered sidewalk replaced with a structurally improved, on-grade sidewalk over a former canal filled with lightweight foamed glass aggregate (FGA). An emergent wet meadow ecosystem was carefully preserved by using an elevated boardwalk with helical screw piles and Top Down construction methods to minimize environmental disturbance. Sensitive plant and wildlife habitats were protected, and these methods avoided disruption of natural water flows, ensuring long-term ecological health.

This trail enhances Merrimack's unique identity by revitalizing historical waterpower features and preserving open space while creating new connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and

Souhegan River Trail (cont.)

the Central Business District. It respects traditional growth patterns and avoids overdevelopment by improving existing infrastructure. It reconnects people to their landscape and history, while contributing to a more walkable, compact, and resilient town.

Project Name, Location, and Completion Date

Official Project Name: Souhegan River Trail

Project Location: Merrimack, NH

Completion Date: September 2024

Owner

Name: Town of Merrimack (*owner contact Dawn Tuomala*)

Address: 6 Baboosic Lake Rd, Merrimack, NH 03054

Phone: 603-424-2331

Email: dtuomala@merrimacknh.gov

Key Team Members

Anna Girdi	The Turner Group	Sr. Project Engineer
Jim Bouchard	The Turner Group	Sr. Project Manager
Dawn Tuomala	Town of Merrimack	Public Works Director
Leo Laviolette	Town of Merrimack	Assistant Public Works Director
Karen Prince	R.M. Piper Inc	General Contractor
John Byatt	BETA Group, Inc	Construction Engineer

Jury Comments

- The trail serves as a meaningful opportunity for getting people together. ADA-compliant design allows for all residents and non-residents to use these facilities and explore the town without cost.
- Including public feedback sessions and engaging with local students and historic groups to make this segment of the trail town specific and engaging with the users is great!
- Tremendous positive asset to Merrimack! Hit a lot of the right buttons for the community, providing connectivity and social, historical, and economic impact.
- Excellent example of positive impact. Reinforces the importance of natural recreation options to thriving communities.
- Really cool integration with both manmade and natural surroundings.

Plan NH Scholarship & Fellowship Program

The Plan NH Scholarship and Fellowship Program recognizes and honors outstanding students who call New Hampshire home and who are studying a field that supports the Plan NH mission to *foster excellence in planning, design and/or development of New Hampshire’s built environment*. These

students truly represent the future of design, architecture, engineering, and construction in the Granite State.

This year, the Plan NH Scholarship & Fellowship Committee, in partnership with the NH Charitable Foundation, awarded a total of \$31,000 to the following scholarship and fellowship recipients:

2025 Alfred T. Granger Student Art Trust Fund Recipients

Willow Baribault	Art/Fine Arts	University of New Hampshire
Elizabeth Bodnar	Architecture	Drexel University
Hannah Fox	Architecture	Roger Williams University
K Aidan Garriepy	Art Therapy	Springfield College
Maisie Hilliard	Art Education	Plymouth State University
Suprina Kabadkar	Fine Arts / Illustration	Rochester Institute of Technology
Kei Kan	Architecture / Emerging Technologies	Wentworth Institute of Technology
Tyler McPhail	3D Animation	Southern New Hampshire University
Elizabeth Petrov	Civil Engineering	University of New Hampshire
Io Phillips	Studio Arts	Framingham State University

2025 Paul and Ann Harvey Scholarship Fund Recipients

Royce Andrews	Civil Engineering	Cornell University
Zachary Wyborney	Architecture	Wheaton College

2025 Plan New Hampshire Fellowship Fund Recipients

Ryan Hilliard	Civil Engineering	University of New Hampshire
Beckley Wooster	Conservation Biology	St. Lawrence University

These students were acknowledged alongside the Merit Awards of Excellence winners during the Plan NH Awards Evening on June 12, 2025. If you or your company are interested in contributing to the Plan NH Fellowship Fund, we encourage you to contact us at 603-452-PLAN, or email: tiffany@plannh.org.

Special thank you to Kaplan Performance Partners/Dale Carnegie, The Hotel Concord, Nathan Wechsler & Company, Milestone Construction, Bonnette, Page & Stone, Triumph Modular, Stibler Associates, and Harvey Construction for sponsoring the 2025 Plan NH Awards Evening.

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Plan NH is a non-profit organization of planners, designers, builders, and other members across New Hampshire that share a vision to improve and preserve the state's communities. Since 1989, Plan NH's mission has been to foster excellence in planning, design, and development of New Hampshire's built environment.