

Call for Entries — Nomination Guidelines & Submission Form

Due: April 17, 2026

Plan NH invites nominations for the 2026 Merit Awards of Excellence, which recognize exceptional projects in New Hampshire that demonstrate outstanding planning, design, and development. These awards honor projects that reflect the mission and values of Plan NH and illustrate how the built environment can contribute positively to communities across the Granite State. Awards are not limited by category or number — exemplary submissions may be honored based on merit and impact.

ABOUT PLAN NH

Plan NH fosters healthy, vibrant communities across New Hampshire by championing excellence in planning, design, and development. We support the principles of Smart Growth, Livability, and the Triple Bottom Line — which includes social, environmental, and economic sustainability — as well as creative collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders. The Merit Awards program is one of the ways we celebrate projects that embody these values.



For more program information, including previous award winners visit: <https://plannh.org/programs/merit-awards>

ELIGIBILITY

Project Completion Date: 2021 — Present

Project Location: New Hampshire

Submissions should demonstrate positive community impact:

- Socially
- Economically
- Environmentally
- Inclusivity

Note: Submissions are not required to address all four areas but should clearly demonstrate meaningful impact in those most relevant to the project.

Submissions should also demonstrate:

- Creative Approaches to Cooperation & Coordination
- Smart Growth & Livability Principles

IMPORTANT DATES

Nomination Deadline: April 17, 2026 via Dropbox or Google Drive (single PDF file & separate high resolution photos)

Review Period: April 17 — May 15, 2026

Award Notifications: Week of May 18, 2026

Awards Presentation: June 18, 2026 at The Hotel Concord

CONSENT & PERMISSIONS

By submitting your nomination, you grant permission for Plan NH to use your narrative text, project images, and related materials in press releases, the Plan NH website, social media, publications, and other communications. Please include any necessary credits for photography or design.

NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 17, 2026

If you have any questions or need assistance with your submission, please contact:
Tiffany Tononi McNamara, Executive Director | (603) 452-7526 | tiffany@plannh.org



Due: April 17, 2026

NOMINATION FORM

Please complete the following form and include it as the first page(s) of your nomination package. If your project is selected to receive a Merit Award, this information will be used for award presentations and press releases.

Your full nomination package should include:

- 1. Narrative:** A clear description of your project’s purpose, challenges, innovations, and what makes it stand out. Please address as many of the sub-criteria listed on the next page as apply to your project. You may include graphics or illustrations to help the judges understand and evaluate your submission. Max 5 pages.
- 2. File Format:** Submit the nomination package as a single PDF file, combining this form and your narrative.
- 3. Photos:** Provide 4 to 6 high-resolution photos (JPEG format, 300 dpi or higher). Photos should be uploaded separately from the nomination PDF to preserve image quality. Including “before” photos is recommended where available.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Company Name: _____
Contact Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____
Project Role: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Official Project Name: _____
Project Location: _____
Completion Date: _____
Owner #1
Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____
Owner #2
Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

KEY TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Company	Project Role
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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APPLICATION FEE: \$150 for members & \$250 for non-members per submission

Pay online [HERE](#) or by checks made payable to Plan NH, P.O. Box 1105, Portsmouth, NH 03802. Payment must be received by 4/17/2026.



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JUDGING CRITERIA

Nomination packages will be judged based on the following criteria and sub-criteria:

Positive Community Impact

Social

Creating spaces that bring people together, enhance community interaction, or improve quality of life.

Economic

Supporting local businesses, generating job opportunities, increasing tax base, or catalyzing economic activity.

Environmental

Promoting environmental health, energy efficiency, conservation of natural resources, or improved public health outcomes.

Inclusivity

Designing for accessibility and equity across diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Demonstrates Smart Growth & Livability Principles

Support and Value Existing Communities and Neighborhoods

Invest in revitalizing existing buildings and infrastructure to enhance the unique identity and character of communities. Promote thoughtful growth through mixed-use development that improves walkability, preserves open space, and creates new green spaces. Ensure that development maintains a human scale consistent with the community's traditional growth patterns and values.

Provide Equitable Choices in Transportation

Develop infrastructure that offers safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options for all residents to access jobs, education, healthcare, food, and social opportunities. Focus on reducing household transportation costs, decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, and improving air quality by lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Create livable, walkable communities accessible to people of all ages and abilities, whether traveling on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, or motor vehicle.

Expand Housing Options Across Location, Design, and Affordability

Increase the availability of diverse housing choices to accommodate people of all ages, incomes, and mobility levels. Prioritize locations that minimize the combined costs of housing and transportation, making it easier for residents to access essential services such as employment, education, healthy food, and medical care.

Collaboration & Cooperation

Demonstrate creative, inclusive collaboration and cooperation extending beyond the typical project team and regulatory requirements. Competitive projects actively engage a broad range of stakeholders, including residents, community groups, nonprofits, and other atypical partners, to shape both planning and implementation. This collaboration should foster trust, build shared ownership, and ensure the project reflects and strengthens the local community's unique sense of place, traditions, goals, and values. Other examples of creative cooperation may include working with multiple municipalities to achieve common goals, address shared challenges, leverage resources, and achieve common goals more effectively and sustainably

POINTS

Max. 10

Max. 10

Max. 10

