



**ATLANTIC
PLANNERS
INSTITUTE**

**INSTITUT DES
URBANISTES DE
L'ATLANTIQUE**

2021 PLANNING EXCELLENCE AWARDS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

**Approved by API Board of Directors
April 27, 2021**

PLANNING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Atlantic Planners Institute (API) Planning Excellence Awards honour the best in professional planning work undertaken by members in communities and regions across New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The awards program is also designed to raise the profile of planning across Atlantic Canada.

The Planning Excellence Awards were originally introduced at the Annual Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland Labrador in July, 2011, modelled after the Canadian Institute of Planners Awards and those in other Canadian jurisdictions. With the tenth anniversary of the awards, in early 2021 the Planning Excellence Awards were reviewed and revised to modernize the submission process and expand the award categories to better reflect current work in planning.

There are five categories of awards:

- Comprehensive Policies and Plans
- Physical Plans and Design
- Planning for a Contemporary Issue
- New Planning Directions
- Rural/Small Town Planning

Awards Submission Process

Submissions for Planning Excellence Awards are sought every year, usually during the summer.

Award submissions must be submitted online by the published deadline and in the format requested.

A project may only be submitted once to the API Planning Excellence Awards.

A submission should clearly indicate the category under which it is being submitted. Please note: API reserves the right to reclassify a submission in another category if it is deemed by the adjudicators to fit better in another category.

Applicants can make multiple submissions, but they must be for different projects in different categories.

The awards are adjudicated by the API Awards Committee with representation from each of the four provincial associations.

Award recipients are announced in the early fall, usually at the Annual Conference

Award recipients will be invited to present their project to the API membership at either the Annual Conference or through a webinar.

Criteria for Planning Excellence Awards

All submissions for Planning Excellence Awards must reflect work:

- prepared under the direction of or endorsed by a Full Member.
- by a practicing Student, Precandidate, Candidate or Full API Member in good standing.

- that commenced during the preceding two years, and have been approved by a board, council, planning department, educational institution, private sector firm, provincial or federal agency.
- that represents a completed plan, design or study (phased projects should be submitted upon completion of all phases). The project does not have to be implemented to qualify.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Applicants may make project submissions for more than one category, but each entry must be applied for in only one of the following categories:

Comprehensive Policies and Plans

Submissions in this category include a strategic, long-range policy plan for a municipality, a portion of a municipality (e.g. neighbourhood, downtown) or multiple municipalities (a region), often in the form of a regional plan, municipal development plan, neighbourhood plan, rural plan, area structure plan, or area redevelopment plan, also including a land use / zoning by-law.

Physical Plans and Design

Submissions in this category include a physical land use plan or project focusing on design elements for a specific site or larger area, including but not being limited to site design plans, mixed use development, business/industrial park plans, park/trail plans, historic site/resource plans, natural asset management plans, revitalization plans, or downtown improvement plans with guidelines for implementation.

Planning for a Contemporary Issue

Submissions in this category include:

- A special plan which addresses the environment, housing, economic development, recreation and/or parks, social planning, transportation and infrastructure of a municipality or region.
- A special plan that focusses on addressing a current issue being faced by the community, including affordable housing, the environment, climate change, housing for ageing in place, economic development, recreation and /or parks, social planning, de-centralized work places (live-work units / flexible work spaces), transportation and infrastructure of a municipality or region'

New Planning Directions

- Samples of submissions in this category include:
 - New models, guides, templates tools, materials or publications used to communicate information about a planning process, to gather public input or stimulate discussion, to promote planning and the value of planning to create greater awareness among citizens or specific segments of the public.
 - The use of technology such as social media, to expand public participation in planning.
 - Publications (books or magazines); websites; models, podcasts; films/video.
- An original or clearly outstanding study/report, based on sound research and analysis through creative or outstanding approaches leading to findings, solutions and/or approaches of value to the planning profession, the liveability of communities or the sustainability of resources.

Rural/Small Town Planning

- Targeted at small Atlantic Canadian towns, villages and rural communities, who have demonstrated innovative or creative approaches to planning in a more rural context.

- Submissions may address a wide range of issues, including land use and natural asset management, heritage preservation, planning for economic change, maintaining community identity, population decline, and innovative partnering in the delivery of services.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Awards Committee appointed by API Council will evaluate submissions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, based on the following criteria. Each project will be evaluated based on the following 10 criteria:

- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** *the submission should provide evidence that a variety of perspectives have been included in the planning process, particularly from traditionally underrepresented groups such as First Nations, people of colour, low socio-economic status, youth and elderly. The submissions should also explain how it has considered the impact of the plan on different populations*
- **Climate Change** *as a significant factor in current and future land use discussions, the submission should outline how climate change risks to the subject area have been considered and what mitigation and adaptation strategies have been included*
- **Public Interest** *the submission should be able to identify at least one significant issue/challenge/need (e.g., housing, environmental health etc.) which is impacted by the project and outline how the project works to address the issue/challenge/need*
- **Sustainability** *how well the project contributes to the quality of life and building or maintaining a healthy community relative to environmental, economic, social and cultural attributes as well as its capacity to support good governance over the long term.*
- **Innovation & Contribution to the Profession** *the introduction of an original concept or refinement of an existing technique or procedure. Importance to the profession, and the portability of ideas and the ease with which they can be applied;*
- **Methodology** *how the project / plan is devised and developed to the point of implementation;*
- **Public Participation and Engagement** *consideration will be given to the rationale and effectiveness of specific techniques used to share information with the public (and to solicit and utilize feedback) at various points in the development of a project and the use of a diverse and inclusive approach to engaging all segments of the community;*
- **Clarity of Goals and Objectives** *the overall focus, clarity of expression and degree of comprehensiveness relative to the applicable subject matter and topics to be addressed;*
- **Implementation** *how the project is proposed to be implemented and effectiveness of the implementation strategy and/or programming; and*
- **Overall Presentation of the Nomination to be judged on organization and clarity of the text and graphics as well as completeness of the nomination package as per submission guidelines.**

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions should be made in English. If a full plan has been produced in French, applicants are asked to submit copies of the original plan (as per 4 below), and provide all other documentation outlined in 1, 2, 3 and 5, as well as a short synopsis of key elements of the product(s) in English.

The 2021 API Planning Excellence Awards application submission **must be received by Monday, September 13, 2021 at 9am ADT.**

A complete submission must include the following:

- (1) a complete application form submitted through the website page below;
- (2) a signed cover letter which confirms the category for which the submission is made, stating that the eligibility requirements are met, summarizes the merits of the project and the role(s) of API members therein (*two pages maximum*);
- (3) a summary of how the applicant feels the submission meets the evaluation criteria (*three pages maximum*);
- (4) copies of: project documentation, including the plan, report or other 'product' together with supportive illustrative materials (if any);
- (5) a confirmation letter that the client is aware and supportive of the submission;
- (6) a short written summary of the project suitable for a news release.

SUBMISSIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ON-LINE AT: www.atlanticplanners.org

For any issues with the website forms or submission, contact jay@atlanticplanners.org.