



What makes a Great Public

A public space may be a gathering spot or part of a neighborhood, downtown, special district, waterfront, or other area within the public realm that helps promote social interaction and a sense of community. Examples include spaces such as plazas, town squares, parks, marketplaces, public commons and malls, public greens, piers, special areas within convention centers or grounds, sites within public buildings, lobbies, concourses, or public spaces within private buildings. As with all categories of Great Places, it is important to identify what sets a space apart from others spaces to qualify it for

LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Great Public Spaces are designed to support community quality of life by creating a space in which all elements of the built environment — including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure — work together for the benefit of community members. Does the public space:

- Illustrate that the space type, function and design are appropriate to the location, whether part of a neighborhood, downtown, special district, waterfront or other area within the public realm?
- Accommodate all community members through connected and accessible sidewalks and pathways?
- Provide nearby access to transit, bicycle infrastructure, and other means of transport?
- Connect to a larger plan for mixed land-use patterns that are walkable and bikeable?
- Promote, or act as an example of, infill development?
- Conserve and reuse historic resources?
- Illustrate the value of design standards appropriate to the community context?

HARMONY WITH NATURE

Great Public Spaces are designed to recognize the value of natural systems and respond to their natural settings. Does the public space:

- Exhibit development patterns that are sensitive to existing natural habitats and topography?
- Support environmentally friendly practices?
- Include green infrastructure?
- Promote the reduction/recycling of waste?
- Protect natural water resources and encourage water conservation?

What makes a great Public Space— continued

RESILIENT ECONOMY

Great Public Spaces build a community's capacity to react to both changes in economic circumstances by providing a hub for community connections and economic activity. *Does the public space:*

- Provide opportunities for economic activity?
- Feature cultural programming, traffic-generating events, or other activity that might support community and economic health in the area?

INTERWOVEN EQUITY

Great Public Spaces are treasured by their entire communities, serving a diverse population's need for safe and healthy recreation and community. *Does the public space:*

- Improve the physical, environmental, and economic conditions of its community or neighborhood?
- Specifically improve health and safety of at-risk populations?
- Ensure cultural offerings are accessible to residents regardless of age, income, disability, etc.?

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Great Public Spaces contribute to the health of their community by providing safe and healthy access to physical activity, recreation, and community cultural events. *Does the public space:*

- Incorporate any measures to reduce the public's exposure to toxins and pollutants?
- Exist on a former brownfield site returned to productive use?
- Promote security from crime, and is it perceived as safe for children and other users? (i.e., traffic calming, street lighting, bicycle, police, etc.)
- Support physical activity and healthy lifestyles?
- Contribute to access to healthy, locally grown foods?

RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM

A Great Public Space connects with, and is compatible with, surrounding land uses, public spaces, and the community as a whole. *Does the public space:*

- Reflect the outcome of a local or regional open space planning process?
- Promote regional cooperation?
- Act as a regional anchor, drawing residents and visitors alike?

AUTHENTIC PARTICIPATION

Great Public Spaces reflect the desires of all segments of the community, and are designed through planning process that involve a broad cross-section of community members in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.

Does the public space (or do its related planning efforts):

- Engage diverse stakeholders and promote leadership development among community members, especially the disadvantaged and underserved, in all stages of the planning process?
- Show diverse participation and community involvement when planning and hosting neighborhood events?
- Include diverse leadership, participation, and advocacy with community groups and members of disadvantaged communities?