

Request for Proposals: Legacy Projects for CNU 34

Dates

Letter of Interest Due
5 pm August 29, 2025

Selected Projects
Notified September
26, 2025

Participant Kick-Off Call
Week of October 13,
2025

Local Matching Funds Due
November 24, 2025

Organizing Calls
Oct. 2025 - Feb. 2026

Design Workshops
March 2026

CNU 34.Northwest
Arkansas
May 12-16, 2026

Overview

In May 2026, Northwest Arkansas will host the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)—a national gathering of planners, designers, civic leaders, developers, and community advocates focused on building stronger, more resilient places. Each year, the Congress brings together hundreds of professionals committed to creative and practical approaches to strengthen communities, make the most of public investment, and reflect local character.

Legacy Projects are a key feature of each Congress. These projects provide technical assistance that focuses on locally identified priorities—whether revitalizing a corridor, supporting local business districts, improving walkability or multi-modal transportation options, expanding housing choices, or managing growth responsibly. CNU pairs nationally respected planning and design professionals with local communities to address real-world challenges. The selected projects serve as a lasting contribution to the host region and offer replicable models for other communities.

The Local Host Committee for CNU 2026 invites cities and towns, local organizations, and community groups across Northwest Arkansas to propose Legacy Projects. We expect to select approximately four projects—ideally from a variety of communities with an emphasis on different issues—through a competitive review process.

What Is a Legacy Project?

Legacy Projects provide pro-bono design and planning workshops—focused, hands-on sessions that bring together expert teams and local stakeholders. These typically take place several months before the Congress and include public engagement activities hosted by the local partners.

Legacy Projects aim to:

- Help local partners advance a clearly defined need or opportunity in the areas of planning and design.
- Deliver usable products such as conceptual site plans, design strategies, or policy recommendations.
- Highlight effective approaches to land use, development, or infrastructure.

- Reflect CNU values such as walkability, housing choice, local identity, and responsible growth.

What Kinds of Projects Are We Looking For?

For the 2026 Congress, we are particularly interested in projects that:

- Offer broad public benefit with clear pathways for local engagement and implementation.
- Address regional growth pressures with smarter land use and transportation strategies.
- Support or preserve the distinct character of Northwest Arkansas communities—whether urban, small-town, or rural.
- Expand housing options that meet community needs at a range of price points.
- Ensure all residents benefit from improvements to the built environment.

Examples of past Legacy Projects include:

- Reimagining key corridors as vibrant, walkable boulevards.
- Encouraging infill development or neighborhood-scale housing.
- Planning new town centers or mixed-use districts.
- Redeveloping underutilized sites such as shopping centers or former industrial areas.
- Revitalizing historic town and neighborhood centers.

To view past Legacy Projects, visit:

www.cnu.org/our-projects/legacy-projects

What to Include in Your Proposal

We are not asking for fully developed plans. We are seeking strong concepts with clear local relevance and demonstrated support. Proposals should be no more than 5 pages and must include:

- 1. Project Title and Community**
Name the project and the city, town, or area where it is located.
- 2. Problem Statement & Vision**
Describe the challenge or opportunity and your vision for improvement.
- 3. Connection to CNU Goals**
Briefly explain how the project aligns with principles such as walkability, housing choice, infill development, placemaking, or responsible growth.
- 4. Community Impact**
Who will benefit from this project? What local plans, goals, or partnerships does it support?

5. **Stakeholders and Partners**

Identify the lead applicant and any other organizations, agencies, or community groups involved. Who will lead local coordination?

6. **Site or Area Details**

Provide a description of the physical location, including historic and current context if relevant to the proposal. Maps, photos, or supporting visuals may be submitted as attachments.

7. **Readiness**

What groundwork has been laid? Why is now the right time for this project?

8. **Community Engagement**

How would you involve local residents, business owners, or civic partners in the process?

9. **Anticipated Outcomes**

What deliverables or next steps would help move this project forward after the charrette? Who will be responsible for implementation?

10. **Local Match**

Professional services of a Legacy Project are valued at \$100,000 - \$125,000 in donated time and work. Each selected organization or community is expected to contribute \$7,500 for direct travel expenses of the firms and to demonstrate the capacity to implement the recommendations. Assistance with funding may be available from the Local Host Committee. Any combination of municipal, foundation, corporate, or individual sponsorship can be the source of the funds.

Selection Criteria

Projects will be selected by the Local Host Committee in coordination with national CNU staff. Criteria include:

- Alignment with CNU values and local priorities
- Demonstrated community benefit
- Clarity of purpose and feasibility
- Diversity of project types and geographic areas
- Local commitment to engagement and follow-through

Submission Details

- **Deadline:** Friday, August 29, 2025
- **Format:** PDF, no more than 5 pages (excluding attachments). Shorter is fine.
- **Submit to:** jmccurdy@rogersar.gov and maddenplanningllc@gmail.com
- **Subject Line:** "CNU 2026 Legacy Project Proposal – [Your Project Name]"

Questions? Contact the Local Host Committee through John McCurdy at jmccurdy@rogersar.gov or Mary Madden at maddenplanningllc@gmail.com.

We look forward to reviewing your proposals and partnering to create lasting value for Northwest Arkansas.

Local Host Committee – CNU 34

Bringing the Congress to Northwest Arkansas. Building Stronger Places Together.