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AIA winners sidestep 'isms'

Among the winners of this year's AIA Honor Award are Portland's Crandall Arambula, for its MAX Station Area Revitalization Strategy.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Institute of Architects this week announced the 2003 recipients of the AIA Honor Awards, in recognition of works that exemplify excellence in architecture, interiors, and urban design.

Selected from nearly 600 submissions, 32 recipients will be honored in May at the 2003 AIA National Convention and Expo in San Diego.

The Northwest award winner was Crandall Arambula of Portland. The firm won an Honor Award for regional and urban design for its Interstate MAX Station Area Revitalization Strategy. The development of a three-mile, light rail transit line in Portland presented an opportunity to reestablish a once vital neighborhood.

In addition to the MAX Station Revitalization Study, these projects were honored for outstanding regional and urban design. Schuylkill Gateway, by Sasaki Associates. By thinking of the river as the center, the Schuylkill Gateway builds on site assets and creates a vibrant new district that looks to the future of Philadelphia. Howard University's LeDroit Park Revitalization Initiative, by Sorg and Associates. This revitalization initiative in Washington, D.C., represents a model for bringing new life to inner-city communities. Charlottesville Commercial Corridor Plan, by Torti Callas and Partners-CHK. This project illustrated ideas for redesigning commercial areas of the city and opened the eyes of residents and officials to a number of new possibilities. East Baltimore Comprehensive Physical Redevelopment Plan, by Urban Design Associates. This complex project provides a sensitive solution for 40 suffering neighborhoods. "There were a great variety of projects submitted and reviewed this year," said Regional and Urban Design jury chair Martha Welborne. "We did not get any large regional planning submissions and it seems that we are seeing more mid-size cities doing great urban design. There were many brownfields projects, and we also saw an increased influence and imitation of 'New Urbanism.'" "The projects clearly demonstrated to the jury that good urban design is good for communities," she said. "Through their selections, the jury seemed to be sending a message that big ideas aren't always necessary to achieve good urban design."