

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Madrid Río Wins Harvard Graduate School of Design's 2015 Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design

*\$50,000 international prize awarded to four firms: Burgos & Garrido,
Porras & La Casta, Rubio & Álvarez-Sala, and West 8*

CAMBRIDGE, MA (November 9, 2015) — The Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) is pleased to announce that the 12th Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design has been awarded to Madrid Río, a new linear park in Madrid designed by a team led by Ginés Garrido of Burgos & Garrido, including Porras & La Casta, Rubio & Álvarez-Sala, and West 8. The three Madrid architecture studios and the Rotterdam-based landscape architecture firm will share the prize's \$50,000 purse.

The City of Madrid reclaimed the banks of the Manzanares River by depressing a large segment of the inner ring road, the M-30, built in the 1970s and severing whole sections of the city from each other. The result of surfacing nearly 30 kilometers of tunnels is the creation of 120 hectares of new public space, which encompasses dozens of sports areas (tennis and basketball courts, soccer fields, fitness areas, rock climbing center, skate park), greenswards, plazas, cafes and restaurants, an orchard, an urban beach, children's play areas, plus 30 kilometers of cycling paths, and 11 new footbridges. The project also prompted the restoration of five historic dams and two historic bridges (the Puente de Segovia and Puente de Toledo), as well as the refurbishment of highway bridges and the recuperation of the areas surrounding these infrastructural works. With these new river crossings and the incorporation of existing historic features into the new park plan, Madrid Río has strengthened surrounding neighborhoods' connection to the new amenities and to each other.

The project won an international competition in 2005, and construction was phased so that the public could enjoy it starting in 2011; the park was fully completed earlier this year. "The decision to award Madrid Río the Green Prize in Urban Design was motivated by the jury's desire to highlight the potential for thoughtfully planned and carefully executed mobility infrastructures to transform a city and its region," commented Jury Chair Rahul Mehrotra, Professor of Urban Design and Planning at Harvard GSD. "The extent to which the project harnesses the deployment of new infrastructures as an opportunity to repair and regenerate the city through carefully articulated design interventions is particularly valuable within the context of contemporary urbanization globally."

Mehrotra has directed the prize since 2011. Other 2015 jury members included Silvia Benedito, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard GSD; Jerold Kayden, Frank Backus Williams Professor of Urban Planning and Design, Harvard GSD; Toshiko Mori, Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture, Harvard GSD; and Mirko Zardini, Director of the Canadian Center for Architecture. The Veronica Rudge Green Prize is unique among international urban design award programs in that its jury members travel to experience finalist projects firsthand.

An exhibition on the winning project will be on view at the GSD's Gund Hall gallery from January 18 to March 6, 2016. The awards ceremony will be held at the GSD on February 2, at which prize jury chair Mehrotra will lead a discussion and presentation.

Select jury comments:

- **Silvia Benedito:** “I appreciate Madrid Río for what it does for the city and for the social body. I see it as the contemporary counterpart of the open space structure of the 19th-century Madrid’s El Retiro Park or Paseo del Prado. It embodies the optimistic idea that design can be a transformative force, acknowledging the plurality of the city, its many social and economic profiles, uses, velocities, time scales, and cycles. This project is part of a larger vision for the city that embraces culture, education, and well-being for its future restructuring. Located in an area that was historically the ‘back door’ of Madrid, where the population has been exposed to pollution and noise for many years, this park is designed to bridge communities, to be inclusive, non-hierarchical, informal, serving as a platform for various activities and healthier lifestyles. Madrid Río is an excellent example of how a reclaimed urban riverfront (once taken by traffic infrastructure) can be a catalyst for a better civic life, while integrating the micro-climatic potentials of the Manzanares River for Madrid’s urban environment.”
- **Jerold Kayden:** “Madrid Río is one of the most impressive urban-roadway-depression-topped-by-a-park projects worldwide. What I particularly appreciate is its social re-distributional aspects, in that the poorer neighborhoods of Madrid benefit specially by having the pollution and noise of the surface road replaced with neighborhood parks. Madrid Río is a biker’s and jogger’s dream linear park, to be sure, but it is as much a collection of neighborhood spaces. Matadero Madrid, the cultural center in a renovated slaughterhouse at one end of Madrid Río, is a quintessential adaptive reuse for the arts and gives the overall project an exclamation point.”
- **Rahul Mehrotra:** “Madrid Río invigorates civic space as well as creates room for new architecture and infrastructure interventions. The park’s many bridges both literally and symbolically celebrate the connections between different parts of previously unconnected portions of the city. The professional and pedagogical value of awarding Madrid Río is that it makes evident the diversity of economic, technical, political, logistical, and cultural challenges that its designers and proponents have surmounted.”
- **Toshiko Mori:** “Madrid Río’s designers confronted many constraints—a short schedule, a limited budget, and they had to be reactive—responsive to decisions that had already been made [with regards to the tunnels]. Despite a perhaps not ideal process and other controversial local political issues, in the long term the impact of the project will be positive. With a meager budget, the team made many wise decisions—for example, to invest in plantings to create pockets of shading and the reuse of stone [from the site] to create interesting walls that vary from place to place, providing continuity throughout while lending a sense of locality and tactility. The landscape is not monolithic, but rather episodic—disrupting the linearity of the park with a variety of elements that encourage oblique ways of viewing and traversing its spaces. This is a park that admirably responds to the contemporary desires and values of the people using it.”
- **Mirko Zardini:** “Madrid Río is an act of repair, addressing the unwanted consequences of an infrastructure project [a tunnel]. The park makes the infrastructure disappear, creating public spaces as well as valuable transversal connections [to the surrounding neighborhoods] that enhance a rich new park system. What I’ve found interesting emerging from Europe in recent decades is the notion of the urban project—projects that introduce an intermediate scale, designed to bring urban transformations through physical improvements and, at the same time, play an important role at the level of the city, bolstering urban networks.”

ABOUT THE VERONICA RUDGE GREEN PRIZE IN URBAN DESIGN

The Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design is the foremost award recognizing achievement in this field. Awarded biennially, the prize recognizes exemplary urban design projects realized anywhere in the world in the past 10 years, with the understanding that such projects often require many years before they are able to demonstrate impacts. Projects must be more than one building or an open space, and are evaluated in terms

of their contributions to the public realm and to quality of urban life. The project must also demonstrate a humane and worthwhile direction for the design of urban environments.

The award was established in 1986 on the occasion of Harvard University's 350th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the Harvard GSD. Nominations for the prize are received from the GSD's extensive network of academics and urban design professionals.

Previous winners include: Metro do Porto in Porto, Portugal, by Eduardo Souto do Moura with the Metro do Porto, and the Northeastern Urban Integration Project in Medellín, Colombia, by the City of Medellín with architect Alejandro Echeverri and Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano (EDU) (co-winners, 2013); Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project in Seoul, Korea, by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (2010); Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Washington, by Weiss/Manfredi (2007); Rehabilitation of the Old City of Aleppo, Syria, by the City of Aleppo (2005); Borneo Sporenburg Residential Waterfront in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, by Adriaan Geuze/West 8 (2002); Favela-Bairro Project in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, by Jorge Mario Jáuregui Architects (2000).

For links to high-resolution artwork, interviews with jurors or winners, or more information, please contact:

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