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2015 Grow Smart Awards Jury

Stan Cole, architect and principal, Cole Architects
Russ Dane, Realtor, Ada County Board of Realtors
Daren Fluke, president, Idaho Chapter American Planning Association; Boise City comprehensive planner
Maureen Gresham, director, ACHD Commuterride
David Hale, developer, Hale Development
Derek Hurd, board member, North End Neighborhood Association; architect, Gravitas, Inc.
Sherry McKibben, board member, Idaho Smart Growth; architect, McKibben + Cooper
Caroline Merritt, director of public relations, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce
Jenah Thornborrow, development services administrator, Garden City
Jaap Vos, director, Bioregional Planning and Community Design Department, University of Idaho
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2015 Jury . inside front cover

Cover photo, above: Surel’s Place, Garden City, by Winston C. Mitchell. Other images provided by the project nominator or by Idaho Smart Growth; credits on page. Printed by Owyhee Printing; special to Idaho Business Review.
The Grow Smart Awards

Smart growth denotes many characteristics of vibrant communities—a mix of land uses, walkable neighborhoods, parks and open space, transportation and housing choices, green building—just to name a few. One of the best ways to learn about smart growth is to see it in action, in our communities. It’s also important to come together to celebrate what makes our communities successful. For these reasons Idaho Smart Growth launched the Grow Smart Awards program in 2005. The program recognizes the exemplary application of smart growth principles in projects nominated from around the state. A volunteer jury of experts and professionals deliberates and makes awards within ten categories. Over the past 11 years we have given a total of 88 awards in 25 communities. For more on past winners, organized by category, city and date, visit www.idahosmartgrowth.org/portfolio/grow-smart-awards/.

Citizen Advocacy - any individual, group or process that exhibited excellent citizen advocacy
Commercial or Industrial - projects that are 90-100 percent commercial
Overall Community Excellence - recognizes an outstanding comprehensive approach to growth and development
Mixed Use - development with a good balance of residential and commercial with opportunity for live, work and play
Public Planning and Policy - fully adopted policy or plan
Redevelopment - any project that revitalizes an area and/or reuses existing structures
Residential - any project that is 90-100 percent residential
Small Community - any project in a community with a population of less than 10,000
Green Building - building design, materials and construction integrated with land use and efficiency
Transportation - projects that improve connectivity, reduce reliance on car travel and enhance community through context-sensitive design
Charles Hummel Award (chosen by the Idaho Smart Growth board) - recognizes leaders who are exemplary in their dedication to and implementation of smart growth principles, reflecting a respect for place as well as for design and function.

Smart Growth Principles
There are ten recognized smart growth principles leading to better land use and community development:

- Mix land uses
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Adopt compact building patterns and efficient infrastructure design
- Preserve open space, parks, farmland, natural beauty and environmentally critical areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
- Foster distinctive communities with a strong sense of place
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
Idaho Smart Growth is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to bring people together to create great places to live. Smart growth is a way of looking at community design that makes sense economically, environmentally and socially. It aims to increase property values, conserve land and resources, provide more housing and transportation choices, promote active living and foster a strong sense of community.

• We partner with and can provide technical assistance to neighborhood groups, developers and local governments to encourage development that is more compact, makes it safer to walk and bike and includes a mix of land uses.

Through facilitated discussions, we bring all parties to the table for best results.

• We provide education and expertise to help communities encourage efficient development of lasting value, and tools that show how smart growth actually produces more tax revenue over time than sprawl.

More information is available at idahosmart-growth.org or by calling 208-333-8066.

Idaho Smart Growth is a 501c3 nonprofit, dependent on the support of members and sponsors. To learn about how you can help further our work, please get in touch. We’d love to talk with you.
Sandpoint is blessed with a number of architectural treasures from the beginning of the last century, and also apparently with citizens willing to restore and repurpose them as gifts to the community. Last year’s Grow Smart Award-winning Heartwood Center was one example, and this year’s winner in the Commercial category continues the trend. The Belwood 301 project is a labor of love for owners Julie and Steve Meyer, who transformed a defunct former furniture store into a vibrant mixed-use showcase blend of old and new materials and design. The owners and their design team preserved and updated the historic timber and brick structure with seismic reinforcing, ADA and bicycle/pedestrian access improvements and energy efficiency measures. The result is a vibrant commercial and entertainment anchor bringing renewed prominence and economic energy to this corner of Sandpoint’s downtown.

The Grow Smart Awards jury liked Belwood’s renovation and repurposing of an existing building, its mix of uses and the way it fits into the existing neighborhood. They praised the time, energy and money spent in town instead of on the fringe, which would have been easier and cheaper, but ultimately not as valuable.
FAQs

Owners: Julie and Steve Meyer, Red House LLC
Architect: Tim Boden
Year built: 1907; remodel completion: 2014
Size: 20,000 square feet
Address: 301 Cedar St, Sandpoint
Reused materials: timber columns, glass, brick siding
Past businesses (pre-renovation): Williams Mercantile, Saint James Hotel and Cafe, The Furniture Exchange
Current tenants: restaurant, wine bar, yoga studio, gift shop

Robert Liberty addresses Idaho Smart Growth members and friends at the Belwood in October.
A defining feature of Idaho Falls is the Snake River carving through its center, both a barrier and an incredible opportunity. The city of Idaho Falls and many collaborators emphasized the latter in the redevelopment of a quarter mile of derelict and dangerous riverbank into a year-round amenity. The resulting park provides outdoors access through walking paths, flower gardens, an amphitheater, picnic areas, fishing piers and improved Snake River Greenbelt connectivity. The project provides a range of benefits—it enhances the riparian environment, creates a community gathering point and complements the recent economic investment in the nearby Taylor’s Crossing and Snake River Landing redevelopments.

The jury appreciated how the project involved the community in coming up with the plan, bringing in partners and improving access for all users. They noted that this is a good example of placemaking closely tied to economic development.
FAQs

Project owner: Idaho Falls Department of Parks and Recreation
Completed: June 2015
Size: 1,400 linear feet riverbank; 2 acre park
Highlights: picnic areas, outdoor amphitheater, walking paths, fishing piers, ADA access points
Contributing: Idaho Falls Power, Idaho Falls Redevelopment Agency; Idaho Falls Rotary Club; Rock Solid Construction

photos: Malori Eckersell, ISG | City of Idaho Falls
A bridge may be a metaphor for smart growth, but in this case it’s also an example. Spanning the Boise River west of Boise, the bicycle/pedestrian West Bridge joins the greenbelt in Garden City on the north to a new greenbelt portion in unincorporated Ada County on the south. Prior to construction, the nearest river crossing was 3.7 miles away and includes motorized traffic. Technically two bridges and other landscape work, the project required layers of public-private collaboration, more than five years of planning and funding from many different sources. It provides accessible opportunities for fishing, birdwatching and other outdoor activities and it should encourage new compact development nearby. The jury highlighted the vital link in the transportation network and voiced hope that the bridge will encourage the development of a future greenbelt connection on the north to the existing greenbelt in Eagle.

**FAQs**

**Developer:** City of Garden City  
**Opened:** June 2015  
**Design life:** 100 years  
**Dimensions:** Larger: 176’x12’; smaller: 20’x12’  
**New pavement:** 721 ft of new paved greenbelt  
**Connections:** Garden City, Boise, Eagle, Ada County
The Ada County Highway District’s improvements to 27th Street in the West End accomplished a number of transportation and community goals, especially making the street safer and more accommodating for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. With the nearby 2013 Grow Smart Award-winning Whitewater Park Boulevard capturing much of the through traffic, 27th Street has returned to a neighborhood street that no longer splits the neighborhood in two. Now much safer to cross, it better connects the east and west halves of the neighborhood and the commercial uses at State and Main streets with homes, schools, offices, churches and markets in the middle.

The jury appreciated the project’s strong public participation, involving all neighborhood associations and a variety of organizations. They also liked how the project provides a high degree of benefit for relatively little cost and disturbance.

**FAQs**

**Project developer:** Ada County Highway District  
**Project team:** City of Boise, Capital City Development Corp., Valley Regional Transit  
**Completed:** November 2014  
**Improvements:** Speed limit reduced; lane reductions; parking on one side; bike lanes on both sides; controlled and protected pedestrian crossings  
**Project details:** $600,000 cost; 0.68 mile length
Surel Mitchell gave generously to her friends, her art and her community, and this legacy of giving continues with Surel’s Place. Surel was a visual artist who was an early artistic pioneer in Garden City, building a modern home in 1998 among trailers near the greenbelt and Boise River. She served on the city’s Planning and Zoning Commission, the Comprehensive Plan Committee and its first Arts Commission, promoting the establishment of a “Live-Work-Create” overlay zone in 2007. The district overturns traditional zoning’s separation of residential and commercial land uses and allows owners the option to live, work and create on a single property. The change has encouraged all manner of artistic, industrial and other small commercial businesses to flourish in Garden City.

When Surel died in 2011, her family and friends created the nonprofit Surel’s Place to build on her legacy, converting her house to an artist-in-residence home, studio and gallery that plays host to several national artists and around 30 public showings and events each year. Garden City honored Surel’s life and work by rebranding the new zone as the “Surel Mitchell Live-Work-Create District.”

The jury cited Surel’s Place as a catalyst that brings a new atmosphere to the area, stimulating positive growth and serving as an ongoing source of community identity and pride.

Surel Mitchell, photo by Deborah Hardee; detail, Garden City street sign.
FAQs

Project designer: Surel Mitchell/Thoreson Design
Contractor: Seidl Home Company
Size: 1,500 s.f.
Address: 212 E. 33rd St, Garden City
Year built: 1998
Nonprofit founded: 2012
Highlights: 10 artists in residence and around 30 events each year
Green Building Award: Bandon River Apartments

The Bandon River Apartments in Idaho Falls is a pioneering project. As part of the Snake River Landing mixed-use development it embodies a number of smart growth firsts: first multifamily project, first LEED Platinum for Homes, first affordable and senior-designed residences. Snake River Landing is a new neighborhood being built from the ground up on a reclaimed industrial brownfield less than a mile southwest of downtown. Bandon River Apartments join single-family housing a block away, office/industrial buildings across the street and growing restaurant/commercial uses within a few blocks. The project is adjacent to a bus stop and incorporates paths connecting to the various amenities in Snake River Landing and to the greenbelt into downtown and beyond.

While the jury noted the difficulty in evaluating a component of a large development when the full context is not yet built, they were impressed with the many things this project gets right. Bandon River Apartments sets a high bar for service and sustainability that should prove valuable to the neighborhood and city for a long time to come.
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Above, project nears completion; south-facing terrace looks to the Snake River and mountains; parking on building’s north side; walking paths circle the perimeter. Below, Snake River Landing commercial center.

Google Earth image of Snake River Landing shows Bandon River Apartments at lower left, downtown above.

FAQs

**Project Developers:** Thomas Development Co. and Northwest Integrity Housing Co.

**Project design:** Erstad Architects, Inc.

**Opened:** June 2014

**Size:** 48 units; 46,100 s.f.

**Address:** 1755 White Sand Creek Way, Idaho Falls

**LEED rating:** LEED for Homes Platinum; 92/136 points

**LEED consultant:** Sharon Patterson Grant, Eco Edge

Above left, walking paths connect with Snake River Landing’s greenbelt system; right, low-water landscaping covers most of the site.

photos: Bandon River Apartments | Malori Eckersell | ISG
COMPASS, the metropolitan planning organization for Ada and Canyon counties, produces the area’s long-range transportation plan, currently Communities in Motion (CIM) 2040. CIM 2040 looks at growth projected for the next 20 years to help ensure that area transportation systems will be ready. CIM 2040 goes further than traditional transportation plans by incorporating seven planning elements in addition to transportation modes: land use, housing, open space, farmland, economic development, community infrastructure and health. Smart growth principles form the core of this broader vision, derived through an extensive public participation process involving stakeholders, decision-makers and the general public.

The jury liked many things about this project, especially its comprehensive scope and the level of effort that went into it. They noted that CIM 2040 makes a number of adjustments to accommodate the comprehensive plans of participating cities, and it includes performance measures for all seven planning elements to help guide local decisions. The jury also pointed to the work COMPASS is doing to educate and encourage interest; while they don’t have authority to enforce the plan, they are doing what they can to make it happen.

**FAQs**

**Project owner/developer:** Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)

**Developed:** 2011 to 2014

**Policy adoption:** July 2014

**Elements:** 22 corridor improvements and projects; 17 goals; 100 tasks; 56 performance measures; biannual progress reports
The citizens of Boise repeatedly have proven they value the iconic foothills on the edge of town, and the Hillside to Hollow Master Plan is a great example of community involvement in deciding how to preserve the open space and make it more accessible. The plan area covers more than 300 acres of foothills within the city limits managed by three different entities: the city of Boise, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley and Ridge to Rivers. Working with consultants Agnew::Beck, the team conducted a process that illustrates the importance of community partnerships and community engagement in creating a long-term plan. The jury applauded the outreach as well as the way the plan provides both connectivity and land preservation. They especially liked how the project did a good job of placemaking and in getting people to say what they would like to use the area for.

Clockwise from top left: wildflowers in the foothills, Michelle Cooper digs into trail construction, other volunteers prepare to work, view of downtown from the foothills, detail from master plan.

FAQs

Project owners: City of Boise, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley  
Project consultant: Agnew::Beck.  
Approval: October 2014  
Size: 300 acres  
Location: between Bogus Basin Road and 36th Street, Boise  
Outreach: 2 workshops; 175+ participants
Growing up in Boise, Nancy Chaney says she thought walking to school was “normal” and knew all the best bike routes to her friends’ houses and the neighborhood grocery store. She was interested in smart growth “before Smart Growth had a name.” After degrees in nursing and psychology from Boise State University, marriage, kids and years in healthcare, science and nonprofit work, she returned to school at the University of Idaho and completed a master’s in environmental science in 2002. She was interested in the integration of built environments with landscapes and the people who inhabit them. The program sharpened her understanding of smart growth principles, and, she says, “That knowledge proved invaluable when I became an elected official.”

A “reluctant candidate,” Nancy was persuaded to run for the Moscow City Council in 2003, and found, “To my surprise, public service turned out to be the most rewarding work I’ve done.” She served on the council for two years and then as Mayor of Moscow for two terms, from 2006–2014. While in office she championed and accomplished a wide range of smart growth-related actions, including the rewrite of the city’s comprehensive plan; water conservation measures, public transit and multimodal transportation improvements; sustainability and green building programs; infill and brownfield redevelopment; arts and culture investments; and public outreach and recognition, among many others. She remains active in many environmental, health, recreation and advocacy organizations, including Idaho Smart Growth.

“To my surprise, public service turned out to be the most rewarding work I’ve done.”

Nancy’s advice to others working to improve Idaho cities is to “envision the whole, not just its parts.” Compartmentalized thinking leads to disconnected neighborhoods, inequality and loss of a sense of place. Event though they might not recognize it as such, Nancy says, “Communities that feel good, function well, and are attractive to business, families, and retirees probably employ principles of smart growth.”

We are fortunate to have Nancy as a champion.
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Michael T. Spink JoAnn G. Butler
T. Nethe Clark Chad W. Lamer Tara Martens Miller
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