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2016 GROW SMART AWARDS

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In Memoriam
Charles Hummel

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Cover photo, above: Willard Arts Center & Colonial Theater, Idaho Falls, courtesy Idaho Falls Arts Council. Other images provided by the project nominator or by Idaho Smart Growth. Printed by Owyhee Printing; special to Idaho Business Review.
The Grow Smart Awards

Smart growth represents characteristics of vibrant communities—walkable neighborhoods, mixed-use development, transportation and housing choices, open space—and others. Smart growth is a set of choices we can make to build better communities. One of the best ways to learn about smart growth is to see it in action, all around us. It’s also important to celebrate examples of smart growth that make 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 several possible categories. Over the years we have given nearly 100 awards in 25 communities. For more on past winners, organized by category, city and year, visit www.idahosmartgrowth.org/portfolio/grow-smart-awards/.

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

2016 Grow Smart Awards Sponsors

The 2016 Grow Smart Awards event is November 17 at the Owyhee in downtown Boise. Idaho Smart Growth gratefully acknowledges the support of the following sponsors:

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Table Sponsors are Harris Ranch, Harmony Design, Idaho Falls Arts Council and Hummel Architects.

Idaho Smart Growth is also grateful for the many volunteers who make this work possible. Special thanks to Kate Rodriguez, Margaret Havey, Kenny Werth and Alexandra Monjar.
Idaho Smart Growth

Idaho Smart Growth is a statewide private nonprofit organization whose mission is to bring people together to create great places to live. Smart growth is an approach to community development 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, expertise and advocacy to help communities encourage efficient development of lasting value, and tools that show how smart growth actually produces more tax revenue over time than wasteful alternatives.

More information is available at idahosmartgrowth.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.

Thank you, Charles.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Charles Hummel at home on Oct. 22. Charles was a co-founder, president and longtime board member of Idaho Smart Growth whose storied career as an architect, historic preservationist and citizen included a steadfast commitment to smart growth principles. We are deeply grateful for the leadership and support Charles gave to this organization and will miss his stewardship for years to come.

The board of Idaho Smart Growth each year pays tribute to Charles through the Charles Hummel Award, honoring leaders who share Charles’ dedication to smart growth and who exemplify his personal integrity and contributions to Idaho’s quality of life. The award is given at the annual Grow Smart Awards celebration; the first recipient in 2010 was Charles himself.

The Charles Hummel Award recipient for last year was Nancy Chaney, former mayor of Moscow. She shared these thoughts with us:

Charles Hummel informed our sense of place by preserving architectural attributes of our past, while anticipating functional practicalities for our future. He was a champion for compact, walkable, bikable, mixed-use development, public transit, and conservation of resources and open spaces, with an eye for aesthetics and a feel for fair, inclusive, realistic outcomes to the public process.

Charles Hummel’s legacy is larger than life. He influenced generations of Smart Growth advocates who will advance sustainable principles of public engagement and community design and development.

Thank you, Charles.
“Infill” is new development that fills in places where other development—and roads, services and people—already exist. 36 Oak in Garden City is a cottage development pattern that is somewhat new in the Boise area and provides a nice example of single family infill that increases density without overwhelming the surrounding neighborhood. 36 Oak is the initial project of NeighborWorks Boise’s “pocket neighborhood” development approach that features small cottages clustered within exiting, established neighborhoods. This approach is so successful they have already begun replicating it in two other locations.

The project and structures are well designed. It embraces the smart growth principles that come with infill and creates a neighborhood near other successful infill projects, the greenbelt and other amenities. It offers housing and transportation choices, green energy practices and it showed a strong community engagement. The jury especially liked how NeighborWorks is using this innovative approach to the significant challenge of providing affordable housing for the Boise area.
This highway bridge, known as the Lardo Bridge in McCall, built in 1931, had reached the end of its useful life and was scheduled for replacement in 2014 by the Idaho Transportation Department. Because the bridge is heavily traveled and is an important local bicycle/pedestrian connection, the city of McCall began working early with ITD to make the most of the design opportunity. Close collaboration between city departments, ITD, the contractor and the community resulted in a design that now has bike lanes and sidewalks in both directions, a “belvedere” viewing and fishing platform over Payette Lake, and integration of facilities for public art, historical interpretation, lighting and city utilities.

The jury congratulated all the partners for their collaboration and the city of McCall for its vision to engage the public in a bicycle and pedestrian plan, recognizing the bridge as a critical gap in the network, and as an opportunity to celebrate art, history, recreation and community. This project is a great example of how highways can play a role in creating a sense of place within the communities they connect.
Commercial Award: Nampa Library Square

Library Square is a public-private partnership that accomplishes far more than any of the many partners could have done singularly. Nampa’s library and business associations, the redevelopment agency, several city departments, the developer, contractor and citizens are all to be congratulated for working together to deliver an exemplary project that demonstrates a number of smart growth principles.

Library Square includes the library, two retail/office buildings, a public parking garage, and a public plaza with benches, fountain, open lawn and bicycle parking. The project is the result of community involvement dating back to 2004 with the Central Nampa Revitalization Blueprint, the guiding document for the Nampa Development Corporation. The vision from the beginning was that the library would serve as a catalyst for community and economic development. Library Square touches nearly every smart growth principle in its reused downtown infill location, with a walkable, mixed-use design, structured parking and bicycle and pedestrian facilities on site, green energy efficiency measures, and the sense of community—inside and out. The jury especially liked its robust partnership and the extent of its citizen and stakeholder involvement.
This remarkable redevelopment of historic vacant buildings in the heart of downtown Idaho Falls began in the early 1990s when several groups developed an interest in rebuilding their downtown. Downtown property owners formed the Idaho Falls Downtown Corporation at the same time that the city was rewriting its comprehensive plan and identified the need for a reinvention of downtown. Meanwhile, the Idaho Falls Arts Council was searching
for a facility that could house performance arts. The effort coalesced around the shuttered Paramount Theater, a former vaudeville theater and one of only three large theaters of historic significance left in Idaho. The result is the Willard Arts Center and Colonial Theater, a visual and performing arts center which brings more than 60,000 patrons to downtown annually, and has served as a catalyst for an arts renaissance which redefined downtown as a regional cultural center and vibrant community gathering place.

The jury cited the Willard Arts Center and Colonial Theater as an example of what a commitment to a shared vision can accomplish. One juror noted, “It’s arguably more impressive that this project was started in the ‘90s in Idaho Falls,” before communities were thinking about downtown revitalization as much as today.
Sometimes simple actions have complex results. Building on downtown Meridian’s Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper placemaking project of 2015, one block of Idaho Avenue became the first site for further placemaking implementation. In spite of active restaurants and public spaces at its ends, the street’s middle section was “sleepy” and not especially conducive to business development. One local businessman seized the opportunity and together with support from the downtown business association, the city, redevelopment agency and others including Idaho Smart Growth, arrived at a vision for temporary changes to the street to promote activity while maintaining on-street parking. Floating parking, new paint, flower planters and decks extending into the roadway serve to widen the sidewalk and provide places for tables, chairs and other activity that make the street more inviting. Later programmed activities will invite people to explore this new place and enhance its vibrancy.

The jury liked the catalytic nature of the lighter, quicker, cheaper approach that helps move planning forward more quickly. Some noted that it was an atypical redevelopment project since it repurposes a road right of way to other uses. All felt it’s a good illustration of low cost, experimental placemaking and how placemaking is economic development.
Transportation Award:
Martin Luther King, Jr. Way Livability & Storm Water Project

The project is an example of synergy in partnerships accomplishing multiple goals. The effort originated in an ongoing interest of Idaho State University to vacate a portion of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way on its campus. Closing the street was not feasible but prior planning had identified support for improving the corridor. The city and ISU staff collaborated on planning and the metropolitan planning organization conducted a pedestrian and traffic study along the corridor. The new design reduced the street’s width about a third, with narrowed lanes and wider sidewalks. The project increased safety and vitality in the corridor by calming traffic and improving accommodations for buses, bicyclists and pedestrians. New landscaping contributes to the quality of the space and a bonus is integrated rain gardens that help the city meet its storm water treatment requirements. This feature caught the jury’s attention as an affordable innovation that provides important aesthetic and environmental benefits, and could be replicated throughout Idaho.
Nearly half a million visitors recreate along the
Fishing, boating and other river related
activities. The natural beauty and outstanding
scenery, and outdoor recreation opportunities
chose the natural environment, wildlife and
and almost a third of the population worldwide
of 2011, that number had grown to 2.2 billion
internet users worldwide. By the end
lives. In 2000, there were an estimated 361
The internet has become a widespread and
system to improve redundancy, bandwidth,
alternative energy sources to improve
energy efficient/renewable technologies.
state of the art construction techniques with
impact storm water designs that reduce our
per capita culinary and irrigation water use.
for sustainable development

Focus on Teton Valley

• Encourage building types, features, and low
• Encourage and incentivize the use of
sources, and promote green energy purchasing
distributed, small-scale renewable energy
Theme 3.3: Implement a regional broadband
Project SC.7 A TETON VALLEY
HOUSING AUTHORITY

Summary: A housing authority was appointed
by the Teton County Commissioners in
2007/2008 to provide new employee rental
accommodations for the creative energies
who were relocated to Jackson from New York.
It is proposed that a permanent housing
authority take the lead on developing
following principles:

FUTURE NEEDS

• fading rural land for new
• roads for health limiting
• Teton for mountain and winter sports
• skiing for affordable housing
• provide very best
• provide very best
• provide very best
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• provide very best
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FORMULA

• Encourage building types, features, and low
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Theme 3.3: Implement a regional broadband

Measure: Housing Cost Burden; Housing and
Transportation Affordability
Plan Theme: 2.5 – provide access to affordable
and suitable housing, and create additional
diversity in the housing supply at appropriate
affordable levels

ALL IMPERATIVES: 7. Families have the closest
access to affordable homes through various
programs that require the dedication for
protected clusters and improve and generate
existing clusters

Aims/Goals:
1. Increase built, occupancy
2. Increase built, occupancy

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The Teton View plan hit all the markers for the jury for a quality plan. It involved four counties in two states with a multitude of stakeholders working together to create a plan for regional sustainability and resiliency. This breadth of involvement is impressive, especially for a regional plan that includes so much detail. It does what a plan should do in providing clear direction for the region’s growth and addresses regional resources beyond land use with a view toward sustainability.

“Because we lead regional lives” is the theme that guides the plan for communities surrounding Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. The effort began with the vision to pursue and win a $1.5 million HUD grant to create a regional plan, followed by a three-year planning process. It has already produced 12 initiatives and projects currently being implemented across the region, including code modifications to economic development plans, workforce analysis, a housing assessment and greenway and trail plans.

This plan recognizes that sustainable communities are not islands but part of a region and they are sustained through preservation of place—not just resource conservation but preservation of the social fabric, the economy, transportation and housing.
Boise’s Vista Avenue is the gateway connecting the airport to downtown, and on to the rest of Idaho. Unbecoming a gateway, however, Vista is a typical auto-oriented strip commercial street, with few bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, that turns its back on the surrounding Vista and Depot Bench neighborhoods. This project, led by the Urban Land Institute in cooperation with the city, highway district, Boise State University and neighborhood associations, is a study of a corridor through the lens of health, with the goal of finding ways to improve area residents’ physical health and safety as well as the economic and social health of the district. One of four similar ULI projects around the country, the Vista project included workshops, tours, stakeholder interviews and planning that led to a set of recommendations on infrastructure, land use, economic development and cultural and social connectivity.

The jury has never before recognized a study but felt this project showed excellent community engagement and collaboration with many ongoing efforts that show a strong potential for implementation. One noted, “We need to award projects that instigate change and that’s what this does.”
Citizen Advocacy Award: Blaine County Community Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

Blaine County’s Wood River Valley offers beautiful scenery as well as transportation challenges, including an increase in bicycle and pedestrian activity. The regional transit agency recognized the need to pull together a region-wide plan to help manage this growth, and organized a large working group representing the county, cities, health care, transportation, recreation and community interests. The result was a plan that builds on the bicycle/pedestrian pathway that bridges all those interests: the popular Wood River Trail. The plan recommends improvements, connections and facility projects throughout the trail’s length.

The jury commended the plan on having implementation strategies, with some elements already completed. They awarded it an Advocacy Award for tackling the issues at the regional level, and for involving so many entities in the successful adoption of a single plan. The jury also appreciated that the plan included a Health Impact Assessment of the recommended implementation steps; they added that this is a practice they would like to see more plans include.
Renée is one of those people whose actions speak louder than her words. She has impressive work experience, education and accomplishments in the fields of land use planning, community redevelopment and historic preservation but it is her quiet dedication to people, process and results that makes her exemplary.

Renée holds degrees in English, planning and law, and has worked as a planner, city attorney, historic preservation officer, university professor and promoter of the profession of planning in Idaho. She retired recently after a long career as the planning director for the city of Idaho Falls and the executive director of its redevelopment agency.

Much of the recent success enjoyed by downtown Idaho Falls is a result of her efforts. She was actively involved in projects that received previous Grow Smart Awards: Taylor Crossing, Bandon River Apartments and River Gardens at Taylor Crossing, as well as this year’s Willard Arts Center and Colonial Theater.

“Being excellent at her job was never enough for Renée,” says one colleague. Another says, “Renée’s work has been more influential than she probably gets credit for.” At the heart of that influence is her belief that engaging citizens in the process is the most effective way to get things done, and the way to engage them is not through open houses at city hall, but going out into the community where the people are. Her successor and former colleague Brad Cramer says, “During planning efforts you could find her at the mall, at grocery stores, at the library, in parks, anywhere she could go to engage with people and understand what was important to them. I don’t know if people really understand how progressive that method of thinking has been compared to traditional planning models.”

She strongly believes any community planning effort must start by asking citizens open-ended questions, not leading ones. “Start with a blank sheet of paper” is Renée’s motto. It’s one we would all do well to adopt.
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2016 Grow Smart Awards Jury

- Daren Fluke, president, Idaho Chapter American Planning Association; Boise City comprehensive planner.
- Melissa Galli, Realtor; board member, Idaho Smart Growth.
- Maureen Gresham, director, ACHD Commuterride.
- David Hale, developer, Hale Development.
- Derek Hurd, architect, Gravitas, Inc.; board member, North End Neighborhood Association.
- Caroline Merritt, public relations director, 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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