



# 2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement



A message from...

## EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson

On behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, I am delighted to congratulate the winners of the 2011 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. For the past 10 years, the EPA has presented this coveted award to communities that are committed to creating healthier, safer and more economically and environmentally sustainable places to live, work and play. This year's winners highlight the exceptional depth and diversity of smart-growth practices across the nation.

The projects demonstrate the extraordinary value of working together to ensure that new developments create opportunities accessible to everyone. These are communities that work — for residents, for businesses and for the local economy. They are also the kinds of places that the EPA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Transportation work together to foster through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Our federal collaboration aligns environmental, housing and transportation initiatives to get the most out of every dollar we invest and to facilitate the kinds of success stories we are honoring with these awards.

The EPA is proud to share the stories and ideas from these projects so that other communities can learn from — and build upon — these successes. Please join me in celebrating the achievements of this year's winners.



Lisa P. Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

“Across the country, local communities are finding innovative ways to connect people to jobs through new transit lines, bus routes, and bicycle and pedestrian paths. At the Department of Transportation, I'm proud that through our work with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities we are empowering communities to build the efficient, affordable transportation options that will create jobs today and lay a foundation for future prosperity.”

— Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood

# About the Award

EPA created the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement in 2002 to recognize exceptional approaches to development that respect the environment, foster economic vitality, and enhance quality of life. Over the past 10 years, EPA has received 762 applications from 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This year, EPA received 68 applications from 27 states.

The winning entries were selected based on their effectiveness in creating sustainable communities; creating a robust public involvement process; generating partnerships among public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders; and serving as national models.

Award winners were selected by two panels. The first consisted of experts from the planning and design professions, nonprofits, academia, and federal agencies. The second was an internal EPA panel that provided additional comments. EPA's Associate Administrator for Policy, Michael Goo, made the final award determinations.

“Thanks to the Partnership for Sustainable Communities that HUD forged with EPA and DOT, communities are developing comprehensive housing and transportation plans that will give them a built-in competitive edge in attracting jobs and private investment. In this way, we're not just building more sustainable communities — we're laying the foundation for the 21st-century economy our country needs to compete.”

— Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan

# Winners

## Overall Excellence

**Old North St. Louis Revitalization Initiative, St. Louis, MO:** A community redefined and rebuilt a historic neighborhood to attract new residents and economic growth while maintaining its distinctive character.

## Smart Growth and Green Building

### Silver Gardens Apartments,

**Albuquerque, NM:** The first LEED Platinum-certified affordable housing project in the Southwest puts innovative green design near reliable transportation options, meeting a critical public need.

## Programs, Policies, and Regulations

### Plan El Paso 2010, El Paso, TX:

A comprehensive, transit-oriented development plan will help link neighborhoods to greater economic opportunity and to one another, creating new homes and jobs.

## Rural Smart Growth

**Maroney Commons, Howard, SD:** A green building generates jobs and teaches rural communities about innovative environmental approaches to spur economic development.

## Civic Places

### Uptown Normal Roundabout, Normal, IL:

A roundabout originally designed to manage traffic has evolved into a civic gathering place and an anchor for economic revitalization, with green features that benefit the entire community.

# How Smart Growth Protects

## Smart Growth Principles

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

In an era of reduced budgets and constrained resources, governments at all levels are trying to use every dollar wisely and meet multiple goals with every public investment. Smart growth approaches allow communities not only to achieve better environmental results, but to wisely invest their limited resources to realize multiple benefits.

Today, most communities are looking for ways to create more jobs and improve their economies. Smart growth approaches can help communities protect their environment, save money on infrastructure, make money through increased property values, and create jobs through maintenance and reconstruction of infrastructure or through the renovation of older structures. At the same time, these approaches can help communities meet the market demand from young people looking for vibrant neighborhoods and from older Americans looking for a setting where they can walk safely or take public transportation to health care facilities and other needs or amenities. Safe, compact communities also save individuals money by giving them a range of housing choices at different price points and affordable transportation options.

But no economic prosperity will endure without a healthy, safe, clean environment. Investments in making communities more environmentally sustainable can also make them more economically sustainable.

One of last year's winners, Smart.Growth@NYC, has invested heavily in safety improvements to protect bicyclists and pedestrians. This approach has reduced pollution, reduced traffic injuries, and encouraged people to get exercise by walking and biking. After Times Square was converted into a pedestrian-friendly plaza, the city saw a 35 percent drop in pedestrian injuries in the area and a 63 percent reduction in injuries to drivers and passengers.<sup>1</sup> Air quality also improved dramatically, with concentrations of nitrogen oxide and nitrogen dioxide, two pollutants that

# the Environment

can trigger respiratory problems such as asthma, decreasing by 63 and 41 percent, respectively, between 2008 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>

The benefits go beyond health and safety to become pocketbook and quality-of-life issues as well. Reducing air pollution and injuries helps individuals save money on health-related costs. In addition to the environmental and health benefits, more than two-thirds of stores in the area approved of the pedestrian plaza, showing that this change benefitted businesses as well as visitors.<sup>3</sup>

In another example of multiple benefits from a single project, New Columbia, a 2007 award winner from Portland, Oregon, is a former public housing site that used green design to redevelop into a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood. Because of this effort,

New Columbia recently landed a new, full-service grocery store that provides residents an opportunity to buy healthy, affordable, fresh food. The store is also a source of much-needed jobs for low-income residents. Before the store opened, the nearest grocery was a 30-minute bus ride away — a serious problem for a community where one-third of residents do not have a car. The new store has already become a meeting place for families from New Columbia and surrounding neighborhoods.

These approaches, like those of other award winners, improve the quality of life for residents, create vibrant places that draw private-sector investments and jobs, and make it easier for people to stay healthy by being active — all while helping to protect our land, air, and water.



New Columbia provides a range of housing opportunities for residents of various incomes.



New Columbia's green street design, including 100 pocket swales, helps reduce stormwater runoff.



The redesigned Times Square includes new pedestrian areas as a result of the Green Lights for Midtown project, a major initiative in the city's efforts to improve mobility and safety, which was implemented in April 2009.

<sup>1</sup>Grynbaum, Michael. "A Closing on Broadway Becomes Permanent." New York Times, City Room blog. February 11, 2010.

<sup>2</sup>New York City. Press release. "Mayor Bloomberg Announces Latest Results of Health Department Air Quality Study That Shows Air in Times Square Is Cleaner and Healthier Since Pedestrian Plazas Were Opened." April 3, 2011.

<sup>3</sup>Grynbaum.

# Winner

City of St. Louis and the  
Old North St. Louis  
Restoration Group

St. Louis, Missouri

## *Partners:*

City of St. Louis Community Development Administration, Affordable Housing Commission, Land Reutilization Authority, Cultural Resources Office, and Planning and Urban Design Agency; Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance; Missouri Housing Development Commission; Missouri Foundation for Health; Missouri Department of Agriculture; University of Missouri-St. Louis; and University of Missouri Extension

## *For More Information:*

Catherine L. Werner  
Sustainability Director  
City of St. Louis, Mayor's Office  
(341) 622-3733  
WernerC@stlouiscity.com

# Overall Excellence in

## Old North St. Louis Revitalization Initiative

Old North, a historic St. Louis neighborhood, has been transformed over the last several years through a comprehensive, locally driven redevelopment strategy that has turned a largely abandoned area into a flourishing community. Old North now attracts new residents with its various housing options and amenities, including a farmers' market, a neighborhood grocery co-op, outdoor movie presentations, and a history trail.

The downtown neighborhood of Old North St. Louis, first built in 1816, sat largely vacant after decades of decline until 1981, when a group of engaged citizens committed themselves to its recovery. At that time, the historic neighborhood covered 85 blocks, the majority of which were underused with few occupied buildings. Residents, business owners, and community leaders formed the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group (ONSLRG) as a not-for-profit corporation and laid the groundwork for the neighborhood's transformation.

Over the last decade, ONSLRG has engaged area residents in community-driven practices to achieve concrete

results. Old North's population has increased 28 percent over the last decade, reversing a 50-year pattern of outmigration from the neighborhood. Residents are now active participants in everything from design workshops and building projects to potluck suppers and "quality of life" meetings where community members can raise neighborhood concerns. ONSLRG also collaborates with a wide variety of organizations in the public and private sectors.

Providing a range of housing options has been critical to Old North's success. ONSLRG and its partners have created nearly 200 homes — affordable and

# Smart Growth

“The community is like a little town in the middle of the city. The first week that my shop opened, everyone from business owners to the neighbors came by and introduced themselves... Old North is very, very family-oriented.”

— *Ebony Wilson, owner of Therapy, a boutique shop*

market rate, single-family homes and apartments — by renovating abandoned historic buildings rather than demolishing them and by developing on vacant lots. These efforts have added housing choices that allowed longtime residents to stay while attracting newcomers. ONSLRG has also completed several large community design projects. Two main blocks have been redeveloped with new sidewalks, benches, street trees, and streetlights. The changes, which required rehabilitating 27 vacant buildings, reconnected the commercial district to the neighborhood.

Old North has varied amenities, including restaurants and shops, all within walking distance of homes. In the past four years, ONSLRG has organized a farmers' market, supported eight community gardens, and initiated a grocery co-op to encourage healthy

eating and lifestyles and to create new jobs. New streetscape improvements make walking safer and more pleasant and take advantage of the area's gridded street pattern. These changes in Old North used innovative financing from both public and private sources, requiring the community to creatively use block grants, historic tax credits, affordable housing financing, and land donated by the city.

Old North has used complementary, forward-looking strategies that encourage a mix of land uses, promote walking, rehabilitate vacant buildings, support varied housing choices, and establish green spaces. The revitalization shows the success of a grassroots effort to reinvigorate a struggling neighborhood by investing in its people and respecting its historic character.



Residents enjoy a guided bicycle tour around Old North.



The North City Farmers' Market, launched in 2007, provides free health screenings and healthy cooking demonstrations.



After 33 years as a pedestrian mall, two neighborhood blocks were reopened to vehicular traffic yet remain pedestrian-friendly.

# Winner

# Smart Growth and Green

City of Albuquerque

Albuquerque, New Mexico

*Partners:*

City of Albuquerque; Romero-Rose, LLC; Silver Gardens I, LLC; Historic District Improvement Company; Enterprise Community Investment, Inc; and the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico

*For More Information:*

Doug H. Chaplin  
Associate Director, Department  
of Family & Community Services  
City of Albuquerque  
(505) 768-2745  
dchaplin@cabq.gov

## Silver Gardens Apartments

Silver Gardens Apartments is a 66-unit affordable housing development located on a reclaimed brownfield site in downtown Albuquerque. Situated across the street from the city's primary transit hub, Silver Gardens is the Southwest's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum affordable housing development and the first affordable housing project in the nation to sell carbon offsets.

Silver Gardens Apartments provide homes for residents with a mix of incomes in a transit-accessible and innovatively financed green building downtown. The project is on a reclaimed brownfield — a former bus depot and repair shop along a main commercial street in central Albuquerque. Restaurants, shops, museums, theaters, schools, and other amenities are all within easy walking and biking distance, and the transportation center across the street is the hub for city and regional buses, regional light rail, and train service. The building, designed with the input of nearby residents to ensure that it fit into the surrounding neighborhood, provides

much-needed workforce housing in Albuquerque's downtown, which was important to the business community. More than half the units offer deeply subsidized affordable housing, targeting tenants earning 60 percent or less of the area median income, including several renters who were previously homeless. Another 15 percent are market-rate apartments, and several units are set aside for special-needs residents.

The colorful Silver Gardens building creatively incorporates sustainable design and other innovative elements. Before and during construction, unsuitable soils were "flipped" safely beneath clean soil on the site, saving landfill space and the 1,300 gallons of



# Building

“We have been able to make a real difference in downtown Albuquerque and help improve the lives of hundreds of people.”

— Jay Czar, Executive Director, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority



The apartments are across from the Alvarado Transportation Center, a regional transit hub.



Silver Gardens is an ENERGY STAR Multifamily Pilot. Rainwater collected in an underground cistern irrigates the landscaping, and rooftop solar panels and a wind turbine provide electricity.



The building's courtyard incorporates art from local Native American artists.

fuel that would have been needed to transport the waste. More than 85 percent of the construction refuse was recycled. The apartments boast blown-in cellulose insulation, ENERGY STAR appliances, energy-efficient glazed windows, and insulated water pipes, making the apartments 40 percent more efficient than conventionally built counterparts. A central 15,000-square-foot courtyard has provided a playground, picnic space, native landscaping, and artwork. The downtown location and the transportation options further reduce the residents' energy footprint — and costs — by making driving optional, as evidenced by frequently full bicycle racks.

Funding for the project came from a variety of sources — federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the city's Workforce Housing Trust Fund, the New Mexico Sustainable Building Tax Credit, and

private foundations. As a condition of its financing through the Workforce Housing Trust Fund, Silver Gardens will maintain its affordable housing status for at least 90 years. Revenue the building receives in state tax credits for its LEED Platinum status helps provide assistance for Silver Gardens' low-income residents, including an on-site social services coordinator. Silver Gardens also sells its carbon offsets, making it the first affordable housing development to take advantage of this tool, and has used those funds to install solar panels on the roof.

Silver Gardens provides attractive homes for low-income residents, puts workers close to downtown businesses, and uses energy and other resources efficiently. With more than 130 people already on the waitlist for the second phase of apartments under construction, the project is expected to continue transforming and revitalizing downtown Albuquerque.

# Winner

City of El Paso

El Paso, Texas

*Partners:*

Texas Department of Transportation; Sun Metro; Dover, Kohl & Partners; and Project Navigator

*For More Information:*

Mathew McElroy  
Deputy Director for Planning and Economic Development  
City of El Paso  
(915) 541-4322  
mcelroymx@elpasotexas.gov

# Programs, Policies, and

## Plan El Paso 2010

With the help of robust community input, Plan El Paso 2010 created a vision for three environmentally sustainable, transit-oriented neighborhoods linked by bus rapid transit and anchored by the redevelopment of a former industrial site. El Paso rezoned the industrial site to make redevelopment easier and plans to use the new zoning around the city.

A city of more than 750,000 residents on the U.S.-Mexico border, El Paso was concerned about a variety of converging factors. Automobile-oriented development was isolating residents, while the upcoming expansion of a nearby military base created the need for thousands of housing units and increased infrastructure. In response, the city initiated Plan El Paso 2010, an effort to create more environmentally and socially sustainable communities connected by a bus rapid transit (BRT) network. El Paso's BRT is intended to improve the speed and reliability of transit between neighborhoods by integrating facilities, services, and amenities into one transportation system.

The public shaped this vision for growth during a two-week workshop that included more than 30 meetings

with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders and hands-on design sessions where participants could sketch out ideas. Since over 70 percent of El Paso's residents speak Spanish as their primary language, the city conducted bilingual outreach to as many residents as possible, and a translator was present at all public events. The far-reaching plan was unanimously approved by the city council in 2009, and BRT construction began in 2010.

Plan El Paso 2010 creates transit-oriented development in four areas:

- The Oregon Corridor, which connects a key U.S.-Mexico border crossing, the central El Paso business district, the University of Texas at El Paso, and other civic and cultural destinations. Bus and BRT lanes are

# Regulations

“I am a lifelong resident of El Paso. I’ve seen the city grow from a prosperous city in the 1950s to a sprawling, large city with all of the problems that come with it. Connecting El Paso is a huge step in the right direction which will help the city bring back its quality and prosperity through smart growth.”

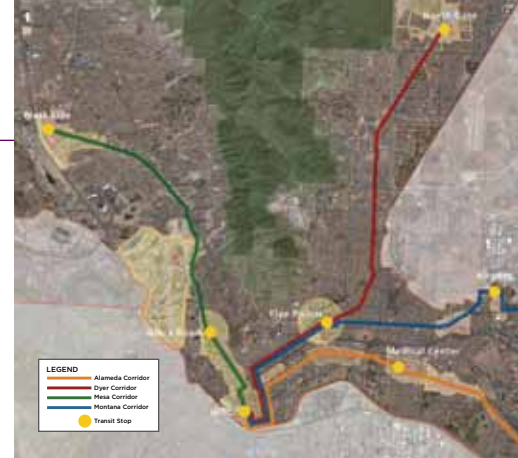
— Charlie Wakeem, resident and Coronado Neighborhood Association president

currently being constructed to replace existing parallel parking.

- Five Points, a historic community, formerly connected to downtown via a streetcar line that shut down decades ago, contains homes and businesses in need of revitalization.
- Remcon Circle, the site of a BRT transfer station and a spread-out shopping area that is slated to be retrofitted to a walkable neighborhood with homes, offices, stores, and green spaces.
- The former location of the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), a 600-acre brownfield sits on one of the BRT routes. ASARCO is envisioned as a mixed-use, walkable, compact redevelopment that will stimulate cooperation between El Paso and its cross-border neighbor, Ciudad Juárez.

The city council rezoned the ASARCO site using SmartCode, which will also apply to the other three neighborhoods. SmartCode emphasizes the form and design of buildings rather than their uses. It encourages mixing retail, businesses, and homes and requires streets to be welcoming to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. It also helps create and protect parks, greenways, arroyos (seasonal streams), and open space.

The city hopes that the new development in these four neighborhoods will provide welcoming streets and convenient destinations that give residents places to socialize in their neighborhoods, make them feel safe walking to local stores, and better connect them to the rest of the city with the BRT. By reinvesting in existing neighborhoods and preserving historic structures, El Paso honors the past and reinforces its sense of place.



When completed, the BRT system will provide transportation choices to connect residents to downtown El Paso.



A rendering of the future Oregon Street BRT line.



Plan El Paso 2010 engaged the public to provide detailed input during hands-on workshops on the design of their neighborhoods and the vision for the city’s future growth.

# Winner

Miner County Development Corporation and the Rural Learning Center

Howard, South Dakota

*Partners:*

City of Howard; Miner County; U.S. Department of Agriculture; American Institute of Architects South Dakota; Citi Foundation

*For More Information:*

Kathy Callies  
Vice President for Advancement  
Rural Learning Center  
(605) 772-5153  
kathy.callies@  
ruralllearningcenter.org

# Rural Smart Growth

## Maroney Commons

With just over 850 residents, Howard is reimagining what it means to be rural with Maroney Commons. The Commons, built with green building techniques, is a mixed-use complex with a hotel, a conference center, a restaurant, and offices that will help rural residents learn about green jobs and technology.

The story behind Maroney Commons began over a decade ago, when Howard High School students launched a successful “buy local” campaign to increase sales tax revenue in Miner County. The effort generated nearly \$16 million in additional gross sales for Howard, the county seat, in its first year and inspired Miner County’s residents to engage in a community visioning process. The visioning process, combined with the growth of the wind energy industry in Miner County, led to the development of the Maroney Commons.

Although the town could have built the new facility on 40 acres of donated land outside of town, Howard residents instead chose to reinvest in their downtown by demolishing — and salvaging materials from — dilapidated

buildings on Main Street, putting Maroney Commons at the center of the community. Intensive workshops gathered citizens’ input throughout the design process.

With the community’s input, Maroney Commons contains a restaurant, a community kitchen, a fitness center, retail space, a hotel, and meeting space. This multi-use community facility will provide educational, social, and business opportunities for not just Miner County residents, but rural communities all across the region. The facility is expected to create 13 fulltime jobs and bring the local economy more than \$6 million per year. Profits will likely allow the building to be self-sustaining within three years.

“This is wonderful to have reused the old materials and built something that looks to the future. You have to believe it can be done — and this building will help people do that.”

— Lulu Anderson, Maroney Commons volunteer

Maroney Commons has raised the bar — both through its innovative design and construction and its educational opportunities for rural residents. One of the first LEED Platinum-certified buildings in South Dakota, the building has solar panels, a wind turbine, geothermal heating and cooling, porous outdoor pavement, rainwater capture and storage, and native landscaping. Materials gathered from demolished Main Street buildings were recycled and reused during construction; the wood floor from an old gymnasium is now the floor of the restaurant, and Maroney Commons’ siding came from an old American Legion hall. Real-time, touch-screen displays of the wind and solar energy produced at the building help visitors understand these technologies.

The conference center, which holds up to 300 people, was designed for

training in green energy jobs and rural health care. The facility also hosts design:South Dakota, a team of architects and community development experts who travel statewide helping residents reimagine their rural communities through design workshops. Eighty percent of South Dakota’s population lives within 100 miles of Howard, making the center accessible to many small-town residents.

Maroney Commons serves as a model for other rural towns looking to create vibrant community places that strengthen Main Streets, help residents learn new skills to compete in the 21st-century economy, and demonstrate environmentally responsible, energy-efficient design. Its message that “Rural is a good investment!” can inspire other towns around the nation.



Maroney Commons is located downtown and blends into the streetscape.



The restaurant reuses the floor from a basketball court and incorporates the bleachers in the ceiling.



Maroney Commons will become a national training center for wind energy technicians.

# Winner

# Civic Places

Town of Normal, Illinois

Normal, Illinois

*Partners:*

Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects, Farr Associates, and the Illinois Department of Transportation

*For More Information:*

Mercy Davison  
Town Planner  
Town of Normal  
(309) 454-9590  
mdavison@normal.org

## Uptown Normal Roundabout

The Uptown Normal traffic roundabout doesn't just safely manage traffic flow, it also brings together residents in an attractive public space, diverts thousands of gallons of untreated stormwater away from a creek, and contributes to the town's economic development. The roundabout serves as a central civic space for Normal, which had previously lacked a true town center.

Normal, Illinois, has transformed a busy five-way intersection into a roundabout and an attractive, green civic space. The roundabout moves traffic at lower, more predictable speeds, which reduces the time vehicles spend idling and the areas with potential for crashes. The result is a safer and more efficient traffic flow with less air pollution due to fewer emissions. The roundabout design complements the multimodal transportation station the town is currently constructing next to it with a U.S. Department of Transportation grant. The station, which will eventually have high-speed rail service, and the roundabout take advantage of existing infrastructure, bus service, and the town's historic central business district.

The one-third-acre roundabout does much more than move cars. It invites

pedestrians with shade trees, benches, lighting, bike parking, green space, and a water feature. People have lunch, read, and play music, and the open space invites community gatherings such as a holiday caroling event. It is the anchor for a community-wide revitalization and is part of Uptown Normal's LEED-ND Silver recognition.

A popular rails-to-trails conversion, the Constitution Trail, leads to and around the roundabout, helping both to revitalize Normal and to bring people from surrounding areas to Normal's central district. A new Children's Discovery Museum on the edge of the roundabout already receives over 140,000 visitors per year, and a hotel and conference center have recently opened nearby. One indication of the success of the

“As a bicycle commuter, I use the traffic circle every day. It’s quicker and more efficient than a four-way stop and seems to lower the speed of the motor vehicles so bikes and cars are all going about the same speed.”

— Mike McCurdy, resident

redevelopment is that property values in the district have increased by about 30 percent since 2004.

The roundabout’s design helps protect the local ecosystem. Its water feature keeps runoff out of a nearby creek by pumping 1.4 million gallons of stormwater per year into the roundabout’s outer channel, where it is filtered by aquatic plants and redirected into a recycled underground cistern. Most of the accumulated water is used to irrigate the town’s streetscape or will simply evaporate, protecting the creek from unfiltered runoff. On the outer ring of the roundabout, Normal planted trees in uncompacted soil using a technology that allows the trees to grow larger and live three times longer than conventional sidewalk trees, saving the town an estimated \$61,000 over 50 years in replacement costs.

Because of the roundabout’s innovative nature, the project required extensive negotiation with state transportation officials, and Normal created marketing materials that explained how vehicles circulate around the roundabout. The town also worked with Illinois State University, located three blocks away, and encouraged broad public involvement with more than 85 public meetings about the town-wide renewal plan, of which the roundabout is a central element.

Normal’s multi-use roundabout is an innovative project that turned what could have been an ordinary intersection into a true amenity for the community. With a little creativity, Normal found a way to reap lasting economic, environmental, transportation, and civic benefits from its investment.



Plants filter the roundabout’s stormwater and beautify the water feature.



The roundabout creates a pedestrian-friendly environment and invites people to enjoy the space.



The roundabout makes the area safer for pedestrians and motorists by encouraging a constant, but lower, speed.

# National Award for Smart Growth

## TEN YEARS of Creativity and Commitment

From Seattle, Washington, to the suburbs of Washington, D.C.; from Maine's coastal towns to the beach town of Santa Cruz, California; from a former military base in Orlando, Florida, to a current military base in San Diego, the 47 recipients of the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement over the past 10 years have demonstrated an impressive range of ideas and strategies for improving communities.

Challenges like a lack of affordable homes, underused or blighted properties, and loss of agricultural land are common to many communities around the country. Award winners tackled these problems and many others with creative strategies that improved tax revenues, encouraged new businesses, protected the environment, and preserved cultural and historical treasures. They offer models and lessons for tribal communities, states, regions, cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural areas that can help meet short-term economic challenges and create a foundation for long-term prosperity.

Affordable housing is often a particular challenge for senior citizens, disabled

people, and working adults. Award winners have encouraged more affordable housing options in innovative ways. In San Francisco, the Mission Creek Senior Community (2008), offers environmentally healthy, affordable units to seniors and ensures that all units are accessible to the disabled. Another California city, Santa Cruz (2004), created preapproved design prototypes for accessory dwelling units, also known as "granny flats," to make it easier for homeowners to build small units to rent. This program has been the template for similar programs across the nation, providing a low-cost housing option for seniors, young adults, and others and a source of income for homeowners.

Miller's Court (2010) in Baltimore markets affordable apartments in a renovated historic building to teachers to encourage them to live in the city. Breckenridge, Colorado, a high-priced resort town, cleaned up a former mining site to develop the Wellington neighborhood (2002), with homes reserved for workers who could not otherwise afford to live near their jobs. Military families have gotten attractive,

affordable new homes in the Village at NTC (2003) in San Diego.

Revitalizing underused places where prior investments have been abandoned brings new economic activity and provides homes and amenities. Some award winners, such as Old Town Wichita (2006) in Wichita, Kansas, and Baldwin Park (2005) in Orlando, have taken advantage of large tracts to create vibrant neighborhoods with homes, stores, offices, parks, and public spaces. Others have used a single building to spark revival, like the Moore Square Museums Magnet School (2003) in Raleigh, North Carolina, which has encouraged investment in the surrounding area.

Forward-thinking, long-term planning and visioning gave many award winners a road map for growth and development that makes sure public funds are invested wisely and effectively. The Sacramento Region Blueprint (2004) engaged more than 5,000 community members to create a growth scenario that is still helping determine how the region spends its



# Achievement Winners, 2002–2011

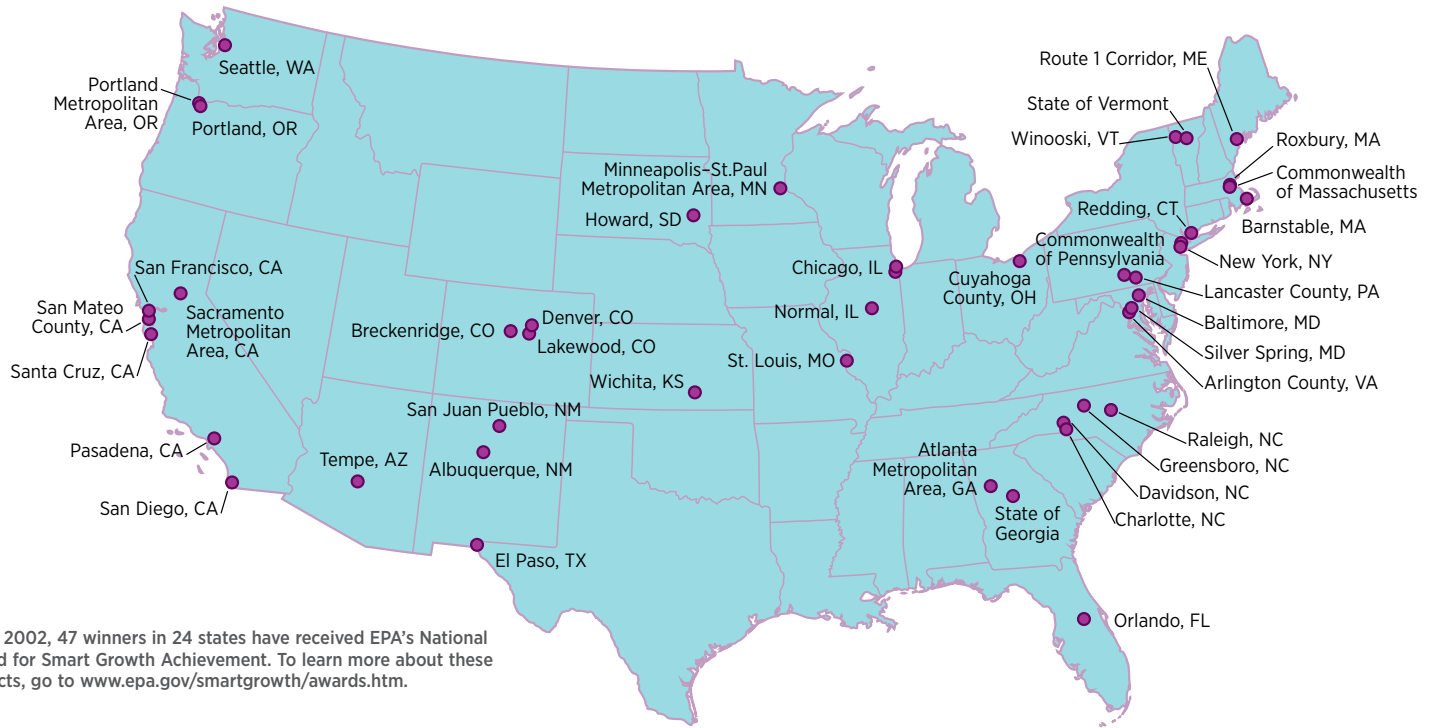
transportation and infrastructure money. San Juan Pueblo (2004) in New Mexico built on its 700-year history to develop a long-term master plan that is the first smart growth model for Native American tribes and that preserves the pueblo's distinctive sense of place.

Regional, long-term planning has also helped a variety of places ensure that their economically and culturally

important agricultural land and scenic landscapes are protected from encroaching development. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (2009), directs growth to selected areas and away from agricultural land that the county and its residents want to preserve. On a larger scale, the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan region (2010) has been using a similar model for more than 15 years, designating

growth areas and areas for preservation of working lands and natural resources, and coordinating transportation investments to serve the growth areas.

The National Award for Smart Growth Achievement winners demonstrate that growth, development, and conservation, when done right, strengthen communities, create economic opportunities, and protect our environment.



# Acknowledgments

Thanks to our review panel members

Chris Beck  
*U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Kaid Benfield  
*Natural Resources Defense Council*

Frank Giblin  
*General Services Administration*

Liz Guthrie  
*American Society of  
Landscape Architects*

Anita Hairston  
*PolicyLink*

Cooper Martin  
*American Institute of Architects*

Chris Miller  
*Piedmont Environmental Council*

Vernice Miller-Travis  
*Maryland State Commission on  
Environmental Justice and  
Sustainable Communities*

Kathy Nothstine  
*National Association of  
Development Organizations*

Danilo Pelletiere  
*National Low Income Housing Coalition*

Jeff Price  
*Federal Transit Administration*

Lynn Ross  
*National Housing Conference and  
Center for Housing Policy*

Dru Schmidt-Perkins  
*1000 Friends of Maryland*

Jason Schupbach  
*National Endowment for the Arts*

Gretchen Sweeney  
*U.S. Green Building Council*

Jess Zimbabwe  
*Urban Land Institute*

## Photo Credits

### Front Cover:

St. Louis, MO: Photo courtesy of Sean Thomas,  
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group.

### How Smart Growth Protects the Environment (page 3):

Portland, OR: Photo courtesy of Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon.  
Portland, OR: Photo courtesy of Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon.  
New York City, NY: Photo courtesy of New York City  
Department of Transportation.

### Award Winners

#### Overall Excellence in Smart Growth, St. Louis, MO (page 5)

Top and middle: Photos courtesy of Sean Thomas,  
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group.  
Bottom: Photo courtesy of EPA.

#### Smart Growth and Green Building, Albuquerque, NM (page 7)

All photos courtesy of Patrick Coulie.

#### Programs, Policies, and Regulations, El Paso, TX (page 9)

Top: Photo courtesy of Dover, Kohl & Partners.  
Middle: Rendering courtesy of Urban Advantage.  
Bottom: Photo courtesy of the City of El Paso.

#### Rural Smart Growth, Howard, SD (page 11)

Top and bottom: Photos courtesy of EPA.  
Middle: Photo courtesy of the Rural Learning Center.

#### Civic Places, Normal, IL (page 13)

All photos courtesy of Scott Shigley, Shigley Photo.

#### Photo Credits

San Francisco, CA: Photo courtesy of Martin Building Company.



Mint Plaza, San Francisco, winner of the  
2010 Civic Places category.

## Application Information for 2012

To apply for the 2012 National Award for  
Smart Growth Achievement, please check  
[www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm).

Applications will be available in February 2012.



For more information about the  
National Award for Smart Growth Achievement  
and EPA's other smart growth activities, visit:

[www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Sustainable Communities (1807T)  
EPA-231-K-11-002  
[www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth)  
December 2011