

## Finding Common Ground: A region unites to prepare for the future

The advantages and challenges of growth face most communities. While some mature areas have had growth management policies in place for decades, other areas have only recently begun to strategize how to plan for and accommodate growth. The greater Boise (Idaho) region, now the third-largest metropolitan area in the Northwest, has seen a recent surge in growth. People have discovered the area's natural beauty, economic opportunities, and high quality of life. This trend is projected to continue according to COMPASS (the regional planning organization for southwest Idaho), the area expects a more than an 80% population increase in the next 20 years.

While most residents and decision-makers see the economic and social benefits of this maturation, such as job and education opportunities and social and recreational amenities; they also recognize the importance of planning for growth in a manner that is economically responsible and responsive to the community. "If we continue down the same path we are on right now we will be at a critical junction where we won't be able to sustain the growth we are experiencing while still maintaining our quality of life," says Matt Stoll, COMPASS Executive Director

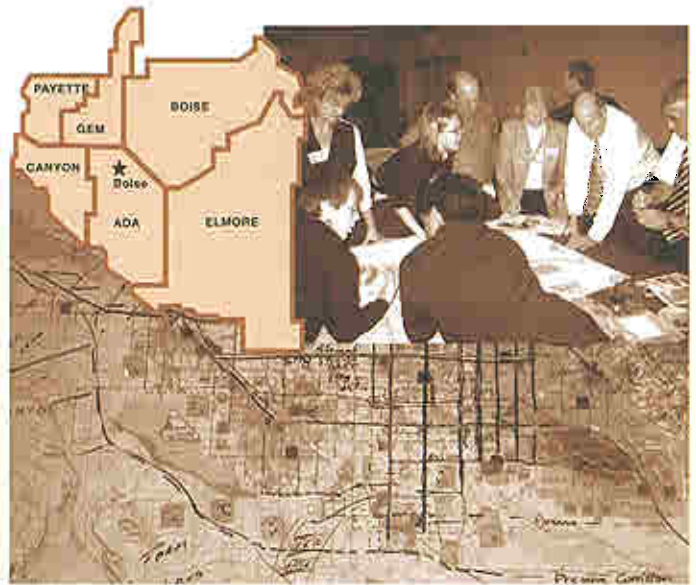
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Dr. Robert Freilich

who is raising his family in the area.

Over 30 local and regional agencies, representing 6 counties, have jointly undertaken two groundbreaking efforts for this region: Communities in Motion (CIM) and Blueprint for Good Growth (BGG).

As prime consultants on the CIM project, Kittelson & Associates works closely with the BGG team and has an inside look at the complexities of each project. Both projects take a visionary approach to integrate land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning to create an integrated land use and transportation vision for the region that represents the community's values and provides the building blocks for implementation.

"One of the key challenges we are facing is creating an appropriate jobs-to-housing balance," says Stoll. The plan will need to provide options for jobs, housing, and transportation. By doing this, the region will have options for how to fiscally accommodate growth for a broad range of demographics.



Participants at a CIM public workshop design maps of the 6 county area to reflect the transportation and land use elements they find important.

Rather than creating a technical plan before seeking public input, CIM and BGG came to elected officials, community leaders, and the general public with a blank slate to seek their input on where growth should occur and how it should be accommodated.

Once the regional land use vision has been established, the CIM project will develop a long-range regional transportation system plan to support the implementation and development of that vision. The BGG project will take that information to an even more refined level of detail in Ada County to set an example for land use ordinances, zoning and development codes, as well as utility, school, and park planning. Dr. Robert Freilich, a nationally respected land use and economic planner who is leading the BGG effort, has faith in the process: "I think it will work first of all because this is an extraordinary act of regional cooperation, which is very little seen in most of America." **K**