

Governor-Elect Shumlin has named Noelle MacKay, executive director of Smart Growth Vermont, as Commissioner of Economic, Housing and Community Development. Below is a message from our Founder and Board Chair.

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Noelle Named Commissioner

We have some exciting – and sad – news to share with you. Noelle MacKay, our executive director for the past five and a half years, has just been selected by Governor-Elect Shumlin as Commissioner of Economic, Housing, and Community Affairs. While we certainly hate to see her leave the organization, we also recognize that her appointment opens up opportunities for us as well. As Noelle said in her letter to the board:



“Thank you all for a wonderful five plus years. While definitely challenging, together we have accomplished so much for the state. We have helped bring smart growth principles beyond words and translated them to on-the-ground action; we have forged strong partnerships; passed significant state legislation and paved the path for many projects in our downtowns ... I know I leave things in capable hands. I hope as we move forward we can continue to accomplish great things for the state.”

By supporting our work, you have been instrumental in helping Noelle take the organization that Beth Humstone and John Ewing built to the next level. Thank you. Here are just a few highlights of how your support and Noelle’s leadership have moved us forward.

State:

We established the Growth Center legislation. There are currently five designated Growth Centers.

Communities:

We created the Community Planning Partnership to provide on-the-ground assistance to communities drafting new bylaws and town plans, creating new mixed-use zoning districts, planning to protect their rural character and scenic assets. Since its creation, Smart Growth Vermont has worked closely with 11 communities and three communities are waiting to establish contracts with us.

Research:

We further developed our partnership with the UVM Center for Rural Studies and completed the Indicators of Downtown Health research and implementation project in conjunction with them. Noelle developed the concept of indicators from her previous research.

Projects:

We established the Smart Growth Awards program to put a face on successful projects for other communities to emulate. In the past four years, we have recognized plans and projects from village center revitalization (Proctorsville) to urban infill (Banknorth Block in Burlington). In all, 41 plans and projects statewide have been nominated for awards and inclusion in our Smart Growth in Vermont publications.

This is an exciting time for all of us as we envision the future growth of our organization. The board will all be actively involved in charting our next steps and planning our coming decade of work. With a strong advocate for smart growth in the administration, we are sure we can accomplish even more in the next several years. We are all proud of what Noelle has accomplished and her appointment. We wish her well and look forward to continuing to work with her for the good of Vermont.

If you have any questions about the transition, please don’t hesitate to call either of us. Our contact information is included below.

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UPDATE

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