

## Press Statement November 24, 2021

**FMI:** Web Link FMI: <http://bit.ly/MESmartGrowthAwards>

YouTube Link to Smart Growth 2020 Award Video: [Maine Smart Growth Awards 2021](#)



**Photo (left to right):** Healthy Neighborhoods Board Member Mohamed Ibrahim; Community Concepts CEO Shawn Yardley; Lewiston Economic Development Manager Misty Parker; Healthy Neighborhoods Board Member Amy Smith, Raise-Op Housing Cooperative’s Craig Saddlemire; Healthy Neighborhoods President Ashley Medina; Lewiston Economic & Community Development Director Linc Jeffers; Lewiston Mayor Mark Cayer; and Lewiston City Administrator Heather Hunter.

The City of Lewiston continues to shine with GrowSmart Maine bestowing an **“Outstanding Plan Award”** to the City, Community Concepts, and Choice Neighborhood partners for efforts described as *“what is arguably the largest, most comprehensive, and most ambitious neighborhood redevelopment plan in our state’s history and, more importantly, one with social and economic justice at its core, adding that “the City of Lewiston and the non-profit Community Concepts facilitated a robust community process with multiple community partners in the development of a comprehensive Neighborhood Transformation Plan named, “Growing our Tree Streets.”*

GrowSmart’s fourth annual Smart Growth Awards recognition described the plan as demonstrating *“enormous power of public-private partnerships to tackle community challenges and better the lives of residents.”*

Deputy City Administrator Brian O’Malley enthusiastically noted, *“We are so proud of the collaborative effort that has resulted in this award. The City of Lewiston and its partners want the best for our community and have diligently strived to put a comprehensive plan together for the betterment of Lewiston and its residents. They have put vision and ideas into action, and the City is appreciative that GrowSmart Maine is recognizing the vast transformation that is ahead.”*

It is also important to note that *Growing our Tree Streets* has successfully secured \$30 million in grant funding from the Choice Neighborhood Program which has already leveraged an additional \$10 million in private investment. Once secondary private investments are factored, the plan has sparked a total of over \$100 million in anticipated public & private investment in the Tree Streets neighborhood.

GrowSmart Board Chair Rebecca Casey noted, *“We share common hopes and fears for the future. Across Maine we are all keenly focused on challenges such as social and economic injustice, escalating housing cost, sprawl, and climate change. These*

*challenges threaten the quality of life that defines our Maine communities, and these awards recognize successes to inspire further action across the state.”*

GrowSmart notes that in recent years, the City of Lewiston has seen significant economic investment into its downtown and mill districts marking an exciting turning point in the City’s economic development. However, just a few blocks away, Lewiston’s Tree Streets neighborhood has been one that greatly needed investment and extensive change. In that regard, the transformation plan provides ways to systematically redevelop each and every pre-1950 distressed housing unit to achieve an entirely lead free Tree Streets Neighborhood, and the scope and variety of new construction activity is deemed “*impressive.*” The GrowSmart Maine award also focuses on the fact that the plan advances wide ranging social, health and economic development initiatives, all while maintaining the Tree Streets as a vibrant, walkable neighborhood.

This year’s GrowSmart judges were Chuck Lawton, retired economist; Paul Schumacher, Director of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission; Betsy Biemann, Chief Executive Officer for CEI, and Rob Wood, Director of Government Relations and Climate Policy for The Nature Conservancy of Maine.

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