Chapter 5: Land Use
CHAPTER 5 – LAND USE

Mission Statement
Preserve and enhance the quality of life in Pocatello by creating a land use pattern that is orderly and has a minimal impact on the environment. This pattern should benefit and facilitate the basic elements of the community, including residents, commerce, industry, government, education, and recreation.

Discussion
The land-use element is integral to all elements in a comprehensive plan. Effective land-use planning is essential to:

1. Reserve areas well-suited for types of business or industry that may require special access, large areas of land, or special site conditions;
2. Allow for the orderly provision of basic public services and facilities;
3. Provide efficient movement of goods and people among interdependent land uses (e.g., employees to work, resources to industry, children to school); and
4. Encourage a well-planned and coordinated mixture of land uses that will result in a more dynamic, livable and compact community.

Historical Perspective
Pocatello's history and development are closely tied to the development of the railroad. Pocatello was established in 1881 as a tent town along the railroad. In 1888 land was made available for the Pocatello Townsite to be platted to the east and west of the railroad and Pocatello was incorporated in 1889.

The original Pocatello Townsite is laid out in a grid system, paralleling the railroad tracks rather than in a true north-south, east-west alignment. The plat is composed of 300 foot by 300 foot blocks of 20 lots each, which are bisected by 20-foot wide alleys that contain public utilities. Most rights-of-way for streets are platted to be 60 feet wide.
The former City of Alameda is located to the north of the original Pocatello Townsite. Alameda merged with the City of Pocatello in 1962. Alameda was laid out with streets running true north and south. The original Pocatello Townsite and the former City of Alameda converge along Oak Street resulting in angled intersections and triangle shaped parcels along its intersecting border that are difficult to develop.

The Portneuf River and its valley imposed constraints on the layout and growth of the original townsite boundaries. The rigid form of the original grid pattern of streets could not expand onto the steep benches and rolling hillsides surrounding the relatively narrow valley. More recently, alternative patterns of residential development have been constructed on the hillsides to the east and west of the City center. Newer residential subdivisions are distinct from the original grid systems by features such as larger lot sizes, the absence of alleys, the absence of commercial uses in residential neighborhoods and fewer parks.

Early commercial and industrial development was located close to the railroad, specifically in the downtown area (a.k.a. Old Town Pocatello) several blocks west of the rail yard and also in the warehouse district to the east of the rail yard. More recently, commercial development has expanded in a linear pattern along major automobile corridors, specifically along the Yellowstone Avenue and 4th and 5th Avenue corridors.

**Future Growth**

Through the “Our Valley Our Vision” project (2003), the City found that public opinion, environmental constraints and financial considerations called for changes to current development patterns in order to accommodate population growth while avoiding and mitigating impacts to natural resources and reducing urban sprawl. Major changes to current land use development patterns include open space preservation, a greater emphasis on infill and redevelopment and the creation of new compact neighborhoods. The same concerns remain with this effort. All types of development patterns should be considered which may take advantage of infill opportunities before considering significant expansion of the Urban Services Boundary.
Buildable Land Needs 2010-2030
The projected land needs are derived from population projections in Chapter 2, economic (employment) forecasts in Chapter 4 and housing needs projections in Chapter 12 of the Comprehensive Plan. The land needs projections have been adjusted to allow for infill development and redevelopment and occupation of existing vacant land, building space and existing housing units. The following land needs projections pertaining to increases in population and employment are based on the assumption that 75% of the jobs generated within the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) will be located in the City of Pocatello. The projected population increase for Pocatello by 2030 is between 3,650 and 5,750 people with 50% of this total entering the workforce.

Projected residential land needs are based on the need to provide between 431 and 1,257 new residential units between 2010 and 2030 (see Chapter 12 Housing). The 2010 Census shows the vacant housing units at 1,572. The inventory of vacant housing units was supplemented by about 300 existing platted vacant lots, and about 100 vacant infill and redevelopment lots which are available to accommodate a portion of the anticipated growth without the addition of new development land. The 2010 Census allocated 62.8% of the housing units as “owner occupied” and 37.2% as “renter occupied.” Therefore, projections based on these percentages result in a need to accommodate between 278 and 811 new single-family owner occupied units and between 153 and 446 new renter occupied units.

The average land area needed per typical owner occupied dwelling unit is estimated at 10,000 square feet per unit and about 5,000 square feet per multi-family renter occupied unit (based the average of required minimum residential lot sizes, multi-family dwelling unit density, off-street parking and required public right-of-way). The average ratio of building permits issued for single-family units versus multi-family units from 2000 through June of 2014 was 90% single-family units and 10% multi-family units. The 20-year average from 1994 through June of 2014 was 85% single-family units and 15% multi-family units.
Based on the population projection ranges and estimates of needed housing units, there is a broad range for potential acreage necessary to accommodate future development through 2030. Calculations based on a projected average annual growth rate of 0.32% and a mix of 90% single-family and 10% multi-family units would require a minimum of 94 additional acres. Calculations based on a projected average annual growth rate of 0.32% and a mix of 85% single-family and 15% multi-family units would require a minimum of 92 additional acres. Calculations based on a projected average annual growth rate of 0.5% and a mix of 90% single-family and 10% multi-family units would require a minimum of 275 additional acres. Calculations based on a projected average annual growth rate of 0.32% and a mix of 85% single-family and 15% multi-family units would require a minimum of 267 additional acres.

Based on a preliminary analysis, there is about 1,452 acres of undeveloped, residentially zoned land within the City. Most of this acreage is located on the west and east bench areas of the City where topography impacts the potential build-out density. A conservative assumption that 50% of the 1,432 acres (about 716 acres) is suitable for residential development and would provide adequate land area to meet the projected housing needs through the year 2030.

Projected commercial land needs is based on the need to accommodate 1,172 new jobs between 2010 and 2030. Approximately 22% of the MSA workforce (about 1,562) would be employed in the commercial sector and 75% of that employment (1,172) would be located within the City. The typical calculation ratio is one acre of land per 70 employees which would require about 17 acres of land for the 1,172 employees. A preliminary inventory of land zoned and available for commercial development with existing available commercial floor space indicated there was about 150 vacant or available acres within the City in 2010. Therefore, infill development and redevelopment of the existing inventory should be adequate to accommodate projected commercial needs.

Projected professional office/services land needs is based on the need to accommodate 1,385 new jobs between 2010 and 2030. Approximately 26% of the MSA workforce (about 1,846) would be employed in this sector and 75% of that employment (1,385) would be located within the City. The typical calculation ratio is one acre of land per 70 employees which would require about 20 acres of land for the 1,385 employees.
Professional offices and related services are generally located within the same zoning districts that allow for commercial uses. There are 30 acres of mixed use zoned land available in addition to that zoned for commercial. Therefore, the inventory of vacant and/or available land and floor space cited above would be adequate to meet the projected needs without the addition of new land area.

Projected land needs for the industrial, manufacturing, resource and construction sector is based on the need to accommodate 1,600 new jobs between 2010 and 2030. Approximately 30% of the MSA workforce (about 2,130) would be employed in this sector and 75% of that employment (1,600) would be located within the City. The typical calculation ratio is one acre of land per 24 employees which would require about 67 acres of land for the 1,600 employees. A preliminary inventory of vacant and/or available land and building floor space zoned for these uses indicated that approximately 175 acres of potentially available land existed in the City. This available inventory is in addition to 400+ acres of land and space available around the Pocatello Regional Airport. The airport land is owned by the City of Pocatello and is available for warehouse, distribution, business, manufacturing and light industrial uses. Based on the existing available inventory, there does not appear to be a need to add additional land area for these uses.

Projected land needs for public facilities, including education and government, is based on the need to accommodate 1,172 new jobs between 2010 and 2030. Approximately 30% of the MSA workforce (about 2,130) would be employed in this sector and 75% of these employees (1,600) would be located within the City. It is anticipated that a majority of these jobs would be absorbed within existing public facilities and/or by the development or redevelopment (infill) of existing land and buildings within the City.

Because there is an available supply of vacant or under-utilized commercial and industrial property within the region, it is assumed that 75% of the new jobs will be located within existing urban areas or within redeveloped areas, while 25% will be located in undeveloped areas. Industrial and other employment opportunities are expected to occur along Yellowstone Avenue, north of Highway 30 and south of I-86 at the western side of Pocatello, in southeast Pocatello along South 5th Street and at the Pocatello Regional Airport Business Park.
Area of City Impact
The City has identified an Area of City Impact where growth is expected to occur and is synonymous with the City Urban Service Boundary. This area includes land outside the City limits which is under the County’s jurisdiction and where the future extension of City services is likely to occur. As part of the Our Valley Our Vision planning process, an analysis determined how much land was available in the region to accommodate projected population growth. The area outside of the City limits is administered according to County regulations.

Urban Service Boundary
In 2010, there were 6,376 acres of land located outside the City boundary and within the Urban Service Boundary. Because the availability of land generally exceeds projected demand over the next 20 years, an urban services boundary (USB) was defined as part of the Our Valley Our Vision planning process. The USB is essentially a line around the City showing where growth is likely to occur beyond City limits. This land is currently in the County’s jurisdiction and is partially developed at rural levels, but potentially could be annexed and developed at urban levels. The USB was defined to accommodate projected growth and deliberately avoids environmentally constrained or unbuildable lands.

The land-needs analysis summarized above and the inventory of vacant and buildable land within the City and the USB confirms that the amount of potentially buildable land exceeds the projections necessary to accommodate the growth anticipated by 2030. When comparing land needs and buildable land, it should be recognized that not all of the inventory of buildable land will be immediately available on the market or suitable for development; however, it is likely to become available over a 20-year timeframe. The USB allows the City to plan for the extension of facilities for the areas within the boundary and conveys an intent to allow urbanization of this land when urban facilities can be delivered in a cost efficient manner.

Map 5. Area of City Impact map
See larger map in Appendix A.

Map 6. Special Districts Map
See map in Appendix A.
New Neighborhoods

Another growth management tool aimed at encouraging compact development is the New Neighborhood concept. New Neighborhoods are areas where new development including a mix of housing types and land uses could be planned on a neighborhood scale. These neighborhoods are intended to be pedestrian oriented and characterized by a walkable, connected system of streets. Incentives may be provided by the City to encourage New Neighborhood development.

Neighborhood Refinement Plans

An important tool for implementing the New Neighborhood concept is the use of Neighborhood Refinement Plans. A Neighborhood Refinement Plan is a master plan for a particular neighborhood to coordinate and direct the development of land use and infrastructure. Neighborhood Refinement Plans should identify major roads, public infrastructure, land uses and public facilities such as parks and schools. City staff may create Neighborhood Refinement Plans in cooperation with property owners. The City may also use Neighborhood Refinement Plans to coordinate development in other appropriate areas in the City such as areas targeted for redevelopment.

Infill and Redevelopment

Infill and redevelopment refers to development on vacant, under-utilized or partially-used land. Infill occurs on land that may have been skipped over in the urbanization process. Infill target areas have been identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map in key locations in the downtown core of Pocatello and along the Yellowstone Corridor where there is land that has potential to achieve higher densities. It is anticipated that by 2030 approximately 33% of the region’s 3,650-5,750 projected new residents could be accommodated by infill development. In addition, 75% of the region’s new jobs could be located in redeveloped areas.

Infill development in the downtown area can help create a unique urban living environment. In addition, mixed-use redevelopment located between downtown and the University can provide a stronger link between the two areas and create a vibrant area for student-oriented housing and commercial activities. Infill and redevelopment are encouraged in order to revitalize developed residential and commercial areas and take advantage of existing infrastructure.
Important tools, such as form based or performance based planning, would allow more flexible but consistent and more desirable results for implementing infill and redevelopment concepts and may include one, all or a combination of the following: 1) the use of special development standards for properties that are considered infill sites; 2) provisions specifically relaxing requirements such as setbacks for developments on the narrow Original Townsite lots; 3) a provision establishing a “not limited to” list of uses permitted in each of the zoning districts, provided the land meets criteria for being considered “infill”; 4) a provision that specific development standards for infill can be set on a project-by-project basis through using general standards for the zoning district in which the development is located as a guideline.

There are various planning tools available that can support good infill, provide good product design, define proper scale, offer proper mixed use and define the best location for each development type. Compact planning, form based planning, performance based planning, transit oriented development, Smart Code, complete streets, overlay districts and master planning are several of these opportunities that can successfully create flexibility and more options for housing and housing choices. These options should be explored and implemented in their proper locations to provide more housing and land use options in Pocatello.

Open Space
Managing growth to provide compact and contiguous development will focus development away from open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands. The development and adoption of the City’s 2010 Open Space Plan will facilitate protection of open space. Environmentally sensitive areas have been excluded from the USB to the extent practical.

Comprehensive Plan Map – Plan Designation
The Comprehensive Plan Map provides direction for how land is to be used within the City of Pocatello. The Map includes six basic categories of land use which are described briefly below. The Comprehensive Plan Map designations are implemented by specific zoning districts through the adopted City Zoning Map and specific land use and development standards in the City Zoning Ordinance. A 2010 inventory of land area within the adopted zoning districts is included at Table 5.1. The Comprehensive Plan designations and associated adopted Zoning Districts are subject to change subject to adopted public involvement processes.
R — Residential. The Residential designation is intended to support zoning districts allowing a range of housing types and densities. The “R” designation also allows for public and quasi-public uses such as parks, schools, and some public facilities.

MU — Mixed Use. The Mixed Use designation is intended to support zoning districts that allow a mixture of compatible and/or inter-related uses including the horizontal or vertical mixture of complimentary or integrated uses within a structure or development. The “MU” designation also allows for public and quasi-public uses such as parks, schools, and some public facilities.

C — Commercial. The Commercial designation is intended to support zoning districts that allow commercial uses. The “C” designation also allows for second-story residential uses, most community service uses, public and quasi-public uses such as parks or schools, and some public facilities.

I/OP — Industry/Office Park. The Industry/Office Park designation is intended to support zoning districts that allow industrial, light industrial and high-density office parks. The I/OP designation also allows Mixed Use zoning districts.

P — Public. The Public designation is intended to support zoning districts that allow public and quasi-public uses such as parks, open space or schools and other public facilities.

A — Airport. The Pocatello Regional Airport, owned and operated by the City of Pocatello, is located in Power County and is designated as ASOD (Airport Safety Overlay District) under the Power County Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The ASOD designation is designed to comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations and provide for compatible uses that support the viability and integrity of the airport. The Pocatello Regional Airport Master Plan provides guidance for development activities.
Table 5.1 – 2010 Zone District Inventory

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<tr>
<th>District type</th>
<th>District name</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Residential Estate District</td>
<td>2,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>Residential Low-Density District</td>
<td>1,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMS</td>
<td>Residential Medium-Density Single Family District</td>
<td>3,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMM</td>
<td>Residential Medium-Density Multifamily District</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RH</td>
<td>Residential High-Density District</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial District</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Central Commercial District</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Commercial General District</td>
<td>1,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>Office Park District</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>LI</td>
<td>Light Industrial District</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
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<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Airport District</td>
<td>3,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>University District</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLF</td>
<td>Public Lands Facilities District</td>
<td>2,706</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: All acreage figures are approximate.

Overlay Area Designations. Overlay designations are applied where additional development requirements or alternative development options are appropriate on portions of existing (or underlying) zoning districts. The standards developed for the overlays are effectively added to or substituted for the standards of the original zoning district. Therefore, careful review is warranted to ensure that multiple overlays do not overly burden a single parcel. If no overlays exist, the regular zoning standards apply. Overlays are applied to areas with special conditions, such as environmental or historic features, or potential infill and redevelopment areas within geographic boundaries that may not coincide with underlying zoning districts or Comprehensive Plan designations.
The following are examples of existing Comprehensive Plan overlays:

**Sensitive Lands Overlay** – This overlay is included to protect the ecological value of wildlife habitat, such as critical winter range for deer and elk; significant natural or archeological features, such as lava flows and petroglyphs; and other sensitive lands within the City, such as the Edson Fichter Nature Preserve. *(See Natural Features Overlay Map)*

**Hillside Overlay** – This overlay is included to minimize hazards and risks of development on hillsides associated with soil instability, help prevent soil erosion and minimize the impacts of development on the natural and scenic character of hillsides and ridgelines. *(See Natural Features Overlay Map)*

**Portneuf Greenway Overlay** – This overlay is included to protect the natural, scenic, historic, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Portneuf River and provide public access to the river corridor via the Portneuf Greenway Trail. *(See Natural Features Overlay Map)*

**Water Resource Overlay** – This overlay is included to protect wetlands, streams, riparian corridors and aquifer recharge areas. *(See Natural Features Overlay Map)*

**Historic Preservation Overlay** – This overlay promotes the preservation and protection of buildings, sites, monuments, structures and areas of historic importance or interest within the City. *(See Development Overlay Map)*

**Residential Stabilization Overlay** – This overlay is included to provide protection of residential areas that are vulnerable to encroachment from non-residential uses. Restrictions on changes from residential to non-residential zoning and development are provided for areas within this overlay. *(See Development Overlay Map)*
Goal 1.

Implement zoning designations and development regulations that accommodate existing and future needs of the City’s population and that serve to facilitate orderly development within the City and region.

OBJECTIVE

1.1 Integrate cooperative planning and development actions with all local governments and public agencies in the Portneuf River Valley region.

POLICY

a. Work cooperatively with the City of Chubbuck, Idaho State University, Power County and Bannock County to implement the community vision set forth in A 2020 Vision of the Portneuf River Valley.

b. Work closely with Bannock Transportation and Planning Organization when planning for future transportation needs that will sustain growth and may provide new land use opportunities by design.

c. Implement the Comprehensive Plan policies related to growth and development in the Portneuf River Valley region.

1.2 Use the Urban Services Boundary (USB)/Area of City Impact (ACI) to support development when adequate public facilities and infrastructure are available or are planned to be installed concurrent with development.

POLICY

a. Ensure that the USB identifies the areas to which urban services are expected to be provided over the 20-year time frame of this plan.

b. Use the USB/ACI to promote the efficient delivery and use of urban services by encouraging a compact form of urban development.
c. Within the USB, develop capital improvement plans or programs to provide essential public urban services: potable water, sanitary sewer, storm water management and street and transportation improvements.

d. Within the USB, develop plans to provide the following services at urban levels: police protection, fire protection, garbage collection and parks and recreational services.

e. Expansion of the USB/ACI should be subject to the following criteria:
   1. Consensus between the City of Pocatello, City of Chubbuck, Power County and Bannock County.
   2. Demonstrated need for extension of services to accommodate growth or economic development and job creation.
   3. Public facilities and urban services can be provided cost effectively within a reasonable time period.
   4. Environmental, economic, and social impacts are evaluated and minimized.
   5. New development is compatible with nearby agricultural uses and activities.

1.3 Encourage preservation of open spaces by using the adopted Open Space Plan as a guide.

**POLICY**

a. Work with the adjacent counties to encourage clustering of new development at appropriate locations within the USB/ACI to reserve tracts of land outside of the USB/ACI for potential urbanization beyond the year 2020 planning time frame.

1.4 Guide annexation within the USB/ACI to encourage orderly growth.

**POLICY**

a. Annexation may be sought for new developments within the USB/ACI when essential urban services can be delivered to the subject property in a timely and cost-effective manner consistent with the City’s plans for extension of said services.
Goal 2.

Encourage development to accommodate population growth in areas indicated on the Comprehensive Plan Map as suitable and desirable for development.

**OBJECTIVE**

2.1 Develop zoning districts and regulations to implement the land use designations depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

**POLICY**

a. Implement zoning districts and regulations that correspond to Comprehensive Plan Map designations in order to promote development in suitable and desirable areas.

b. Provide flexible, incentive-driven regulations to promote types of development in specific locations that may help meet many goals and policies from various chapters as outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

Goal 3.

Develop and implement zoning designations and regulations that promote land uses and developments that complement the surrounding vernacular while utilizing the unique context and opportunities of each designated area.

**OBJECTIVE**

3.1 Develop zoning districts and regulations that focus on relationships between developments based on form, scale and function.

**POLICY**

a. Explore all of the various planning options available to provide flexible, diverse and productive development options in their respective and proper locations.

b. Develop design codes that support infill development and redevelopment that is visually compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and complements established areas.
c. Develop zoning overlay districts and regulations that integrate the form, scale and function aspects of development rather than segregating specific land uses.

d. Define development standards for new subdivisions and infill and redevelopment projects, allowing vertical and horizontal mixed-use areas with regulations governing their location, type, and design dependent upon location, surrounding land uses and true market demand.

Goal 4.

Preserve open spaces consistent with the City's adopted Open Space Plan and protect identified Natural Features by developing an orderly, well-integrated and compact pattern of land uses, including a dense city center, compact new neighborhoods, mixed use developments, infill and redevelopment projects and protection of public amenities.

OBJECTIVE

4.1 Create overlay zoning districts and regulations that provide process incentives for infill development or redevelopment projects.

POLICY

a. Develop zoning districts and regulations that allow medium and high density residential developments in areas where infill and redevelopment are encouraged.

b. Develop regulations for accessory residential dwellings within residential zoning districts to encourage additional housing opportunities.

c. Promote the development of public amenities or improvements within or near infill and redevelopment areas that would make private investment more attractive.

d. Apply flexible standards to encourage vertical mixed-use commercial infill and redevelopment.
e. Work with property owners, contractors, developers and real estate brokers to develop isolated “infill” residential and commercial properties. Provide flexible standards and ordinances that encourage infill on isolated undeveloped or deteriorated properties that cannot meet current zoning regulations.

f. Work with property owners, contractors, developers and real estate brokers to redevelop under-utilized properties.

g. Pursue opportunities to create public/private partnerships that promote infill, redevelopment and mixed-use development projects.

4.2 Develop and apply overlays on the Natural Features Overlay Map that identify significant natural features. See Hazardous Areas and Natural Resources Chapters.

**POLICY**

a. Develop and implement development provisions that protect identified Natural Features.

**Goal 5.**

Create and implement development standards that protect and improve connectivity for pedestrian and bicycle-oriented travel throughout the City.

**OBJECTIVE**

5.1 Promote new pedestrian and bicycle-oriented neighborhood developments within the City.

**POLICY**

a. Create and implement Neighborhood Plans to guide new development incorporating pedestrian and bicycle-oriented travel.

b. Support the implementation of the 2008 "Pocatello/Chubbuck Pedestrian Plan" and the 2012 "Pocatello and Chubbuck Bicycle Plan" prepared and adopted by the Bannock Transportation Planning Organization.
Goal 6.

Coordinate land use planning with Bannock Transportation and Planning Organization and the Idaho Department of Transportation plans and programs related to the existing and developing transportation network in order to provide for the safe and efficient transport of people and goods.

OBJECTIVE

6.1 Support development that will utilize alternate modes of transportation, such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit. See Transportation Chapter.

POLICY

c. Develop provisions that allow mixed-use developments that provide commercial services within walking or biking distance from residences. See Community Design Chapter.

d. Develop provisions that support transit-oriented development near major transit lines.

e. Prepare development provisions that promote a network of pedestrian-oriented streets that are safe, interesting and convenient. See Transportation Chapter.

“The world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far, has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them.”

~ Albert Einstein