

Bhutanese Government Awards Druk Thuksey Medal to Visionary Urban Planners Jonathan F.P. Rose and Jonathan Rose

The Order of the Beloved of the Thunder Dragon, the highest honor bestowed upon non-Bhutanese, recognizes exceptional service to the country in the development of the Thimphu Structure Plan

The Thimphu Structure Plan addresses Bhutan's rapidly increasing urbanization while prioritizing regenerative economic, social and ecological development

New York, NY (January 16, 2024) – His Majesty The King of Bhutan honored Jonathan F.P. Rose, Chair of the International Advisory Board for Urban Development and Jonathan Rose of Prior + Partners, Planning Team Lead, with the prestigious Druk Thuksey (*The Order of the Beloved of the Thunder Dragon*) Medal. His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, awarded the duo for their exceptional services to the country of Bhutan, with recent work including their instrumental role in the newly adopted Thimphu Structure Plan, a framework for sustainable development in the country's rapidly urbanizing capital city.

The Thimphu Structure Plan, which was formally adopted by the Bhutanese government in October 2023, provides a measurable, comprehensive guide to growing the city of Thimphu, utilizing regenerative building strategies and balancing essential human needs within the limits of responsible ecological stewardship.

Over the past twenty years, Thimphu has experienced rapid population growth and accelerating urbanism, which has placed acute pressure on the region's natural and cultural resources, resulting in a declining quality of life for many urban residents – falling short of Bhutan's foundational aspiration of Gross National Happiness, which has been enshrined in its constitution since 2008.

In 2017, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck engaged Jonathan F.P. Rose, Founder and President of Jonathan Rose Companies and an expert in sustainable development and regenerative communities, to bring together an international team of experts to address these challenges. The team was co-led by Jonathan Rose, a Director at the London based master planning practice Prior + Partners and included Arup and Gerald Eve. Over the next five years, the team spent substantial time on the ground in Bhutan, collaborating with planners in Bhutan's Ministry of Works and Human Settlement.

"Jonathan Rose Companies has been dedicated to regenerating the environmental and social qualities of communities to create Communities of Opportunity across the United States," said **Jonathan F.P. Rose, President of Jonathan Rose Companies and Chair of the International Advisory Board**. "It is a privilege to bring this experience to a nation so deeply committed to the core principles of environmental and social wellbeing."

"It is a huge honor to be recognised as a Heart Son of Bhutan by His Majesty and all our friends," said **Jonathan Rose, Director at Prior + Partners**. "We are only at the beginning of our work together here. Now it's all about determination and pulling together to reveal the full potential of His Majesty's vision and deliver against the promise of the Thimphu Structure Plan."

About Bhutan:

The Buddhist Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan is one of the three carbon negative nations in the world. The size of Switzerland, Bhutan stretches from high mountains in its north, to the Indian plains in the South. Its magnificent forests and biodiversity has been significantly preserved. In 1972, the 4th King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, proposed that for Bhutan, Gross National Happiness was a

more important than Gross National Product, introducing the idea that sustainable development should balance the economic, cultural, health and spiritual aspects of wellbeing.

About The Thimphu Structure Plan

The Thimphu Structure Plan is rooted in the principle of directing “good growth in the right places” to guide the long-term transformation of the city and region, ensuring the improvement of social conditions while respecting Bhutan's unique Buddhist culture and its cultural and ecological limits.

The plan includes the creation of 60,000 new jobs to build critical capacity and diversify the economy, and over 20,000 secure and affordable homes, a Royal Park, and green infrastructure to help reinforce the social foundation in a rapidly changing urban context. Infrastructure developments include pioneering electric bus-based public transport, reducing car dependency and releasing space for active public use. The plan also features local valley-specific initiatives to enhance food security and modern organic farming practices, with a goal of invigorating the connection between culture and landscape, and a renewed relationship with agrarian life for the region.

The results of implementing the plan will be tracked via a system that combines the metrics of Gross National Happiness and Doughnut Economics, which situates economic progress between social and planetary boundaries, i.e. between a “floor” of social foundation for life’s essentials for all (food, housing, healthcare, education, and more) and an “ecological ceiling” of what the environment can sustain.

The plan proposes that its new buildings be designed and constructed using Bhutan’s traditional, local, sustainable building materials such as timber and rammed earth, but with contemporary systems to meet seismic and environmental codes. This would create good local jobs, and reduce imports.

As one of only three carbon-negative nations in the world, Bhutan’s goal is for the Thimphu Structure Plan is to provide other developing nations with a model of green urbanization, advancing its national commitments to affordable housing, economic development and an improved quality of life with conserving natural capital, carbon stewardship, community action, water and food security, energy security and diversification of energy portfolio, and decarbonization of transport. For more information and images, [vist this link](#). Images of the Druk Thuksey Medal recipients can be found [here](#).

About Jonathan Rose Companies

Jonathan Rose Companies is one of America’s leading developers and investors in sustainable, affordable, and mixed-income multifamily real estate, with nearly 19,000 units owned. Founded in 1989, Jonathan Rose Companies is a mission-driven company focused on enhancing the health and wellness of its residents with green, energy efficient property improvements and through its Communities of Opportunities programming. Jonathan Rose Companies has developed or acquired more than \$4.5 billion of real estate.

About Prior + Partners

Prior + Partners are a 90-strong integrated masterplanning and planning practice based in London. Our purpose is to unlock the potential of places and communities around the globe, grounded in a strong understanding of context, civic leadership, planning policy and implementation. We work across scales- from regional plans, district masterplans and site development strategies- with a project culture based on collaboration and commitment to design excellence and rigorous review.

Our portfolio includes: Thimphu-Paro Regional Strategy and Structure Plan, Kingdom of Bhutan - establishing a Regional Vision and Spatial Strategy to provide a long-term spatial plan to 2050 and accommodate future growth in a sustainable manner; AlUla, Saudi Arabia – working to capitalise upon the region’s unique cultural, heritage and natural assets and transform Al Ula County into a global tourism destination welcoming 2 million visitors annually by 2035; and Moffett Park, California, USA– an ambitious 468 ha mixed-use development for Google’s main landholdings in Sunnyvale that involves the transformation of a suburban car-centric office park into a 21st century innovation district. We are also working on some of the UK’s most important strategic development and urban regeneration projects, including: Birmingham Smithfield; Bristol Temple Quarter; and Silvertown, London.

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