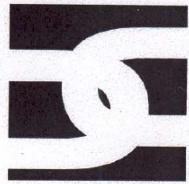


**University UNITED**

***Metro Award***



**Presented to**

## **Transit for Livable Communities**

Since 1996, Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) has been working to improve the quality of life in Minnesota through a balanced transportation system that encourages transit, walking, biking, and transit-oriented development. TLC conducts research that documents the real costs and benefits of our transportation system, and serves as a resource to provide information to the public, the media, legislators, and institutions so they can advocate for greater transportation choices.

Recently, TLC played a prominent role in the *Vote Yes* campaign for better transit, which succeeded in getting the public to approve an amendment to the State's constitution that directs all motor vehicles sales tax revenues to transportation, and at least 40% of that to transit. This is Minnesota's first ever constitutionally dedicated source of funding for transit.

TLC was also recently named the administrator of a \$21 million federal pilot program that aims to get more people bicycling and walking in Minneapolis (and adjoining communities) by 2010. The non-motorized transportation pilot project presents TLC, the region, and the country with a unique opportunity to innovate and demonstrate the ways in which bicycling and walking can become even more integral modes of transportation.

Transit, bicycling, and walking will be a key component of creating stronger ties between Minneapolis and St. Paul over time. Transit for Livable Communities is leading the way toward a more livable, sustainable region.

## **University UNITED 2006 Annual Awards Program December 11, 2006**

The University UNITED Annual Awards are presented to projects that have been built during the prior year that meet the guidelines of transit-oriented development and enhance the quality of life along University Avenue.



***Awards Panel:***

**Richard Fischer**, American Institute of Architects, St. Paul Chapter  
**Tim Griffin**, Director of the St. Paul on the Mississippi Design Center  
**Sam Riesgraf**, Kraus-Anderson Construction and University UNITED Board Chair  
**Art Weddington**, Executive Director, Selby Area CDC  
**Florence Littman**, Zoning Chair, Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association

## **2006 Project of the Year**

### **Carleton Artist Lofts, 2285 University Avenue, St. Paul**

The Carleton Artist Lofts project is unique in several respects. Among the residential developments recently built on University Avenue, it is the first project that adaptively re-uses an existing building, it is the first that conforms to the guidelines for converting a designated historic structure, and it is the first that is specifically designed for artists. In addition, it is an affordable housing project. Carleton Artist Lofts will be housed in three large multi-story brick warehouses built between 1909 and 1931. For over thirty years the complex was home to the Johnson Brother's liquor distribution center; prior to that it was operated by the Twin City Wholesale Grocery Company.

The BKV Group, Inc., are architects for the renovation which features a number of amenities that are specifically tailored to the needs of artists. These include spacious, open floor plans, large windows, exposed brick, twelve foot ceilings, wet and dry studio space, gallery and performance space and an oversized elevator. The renovation is bringing the complex back to its 1920's and 1930's appearance.

A new single story building connects two of the warehouses, and functions as the main entrance and the social lounge. The other spaces between the warehouses have been attractively landscaped. A master plan for the site calls for 170 units of housing in phase one, and with later in-fill development the site will have a total of approximately 420 homes.

Developers of the \$60 million project are the Johnson family, long time owners of the complex, organized as Carleton Development, LLC, in consultation with Dominion Housing. The contractor for the project is Weis Construction.

## **2006 "Uni" Award" Winners**

### **The Metro Lofts, 2380 University Avenue, St. Paul**

Wellington Management is continuing with its winning formula of phased residential development at the Minneapolis - St. Paul city line. The Metro Lofts, adjacent to former projects of the year 808 Berry Place and Emerald Gardens, brings housing directly on to University Avenue in the form of a six story mixed-use project consisting of 67 condominiums, 11,000 sq. ft. of commercial retail, and an 84 car ramp plus 54 underground parking stalls. The awards panel recognized this building because of the skillful way in which it has met all the criteria of transit-oriented development: a mix of uses; a residential density of 54 units per acre and a lively and attractive frontage at pedestrian level. The \$11 million project is sited on 1.25 acres.

Designers of the project are Elness Swenson Graham Architects Inc., with Pete Keely, AIA of Collage Studio of Urban Design. The contractor was Bor-Son Construction.

### **TCF Bank, 459 Lexington Parkway, St. Paul**

The awards panel selected the TCF Bank building for its straightforward but elegant design that addresses the functional needs of the bank and the community desire for an urban form that responds to its unique setting. Designer HTG Architects have created an attractive site plan with a landscaped set-back on Lexington Parkway, and pedestrian friendly approaches. In addition, they have very skillfully incorporated the history of the site - previously Lexington Park, early home of the St. Paul Saints - into both the architecture and the landscape. The contractor for the project was Morcon Construction.

The community has had a long standing interest in how development occurs at the critical eight-acre site at Lexington Parkway and University Avenue. For years, this corner housed a vacant and blighted strip mall, but recently has been a beehive of construction activity with no let-up in sight. University UNITED is especially pleased to express its appreciation to TCF Bank for responding to the community call for a building a two story building – larger than originally proposed. The second floor is a teller training facility that the Bank operates in partnership with Goodwill Industries.

### **U Garden, 2725 University Avenue S.E., Minneapolis**

U Garden Chinese Restaurant recently completed its third major expansion in seven years to meet the needs of its growing business. This project is a success story that epitomizes the historic opportunities found along University Avenue. The Ung family came to Minneapolis in November, 1981, as refugees from the Killing Fields of Cambodia. Chun Keath Ung started working in a restaurant as a dish washer, and Guek Eng Ung worked as a waitress, while raising their four children. In August 1987, the family started a Chinese restaurant in Robbinsdale, which they sold in 1993 when they opened U Garden in Minneapolis.

This recent building expansion, completed in June, added 3,500 sq ft, bringing the restaurant to a total of 8,000 sq ft. The awards panel appreciated the fact that the building has been extended forward to University Avenue, creating strong pedestrian access. The panel also noted the attractive Asian themed-ornamentation. Finally, the awards panel took special pleasure in the irony that this building started out as a fast food restaurant and has now evolved into a very attractive and unique dining destination. Xerxes Architects were the designers and Shaw-Lundquist Associates Inc., were the contractors.