



NEWS RELEASE

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MPC Honors Local Development at 28th Annual Excellence Awards

Tonight the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission will present its 28th Annual Excellence Awards, which recognizes developers, designers and neighborhood activists who have made our community a better place to live. The 2009 awards will be announced at the Knoxville Convention Center, following a dinner and guest speaker MPC Chair Trey Benefield, who will present the Sustainable Development Incentive Program proposed for Knoxville and Knox County.

The Environmental Sustainability category was established this year to recognize projects that use green building principles and technologies to conserve environmental resources and reduce energy consumption as well as limit building site disturbance. Two projects, the Bearden Greenway and the Park City Infill Houses, tied for this award.

The Bearden Greenway is a two-mile bicycle and pedestrian path that runs along Sutherland Avenue and connects to the Third Creek Greenway. It provides transportation

options for the adjoining neighborhoods and students at Bearden Elementary School, West High School and the university.

Developed by the Knoxville Housing Partnership and the Knoxville-Knox County CAC, the Park City Infill Houses meet the LEED Gold standards established by the U.S. Green Building Council as well as visitability standards for people with disabilities. They utilize energy efficient and water conservation technologies along with an architectural style that blends seamlessly into the established community.

The Civic Achievement award goes to the city's Community Development Department for the implementation of the Façade Improvement Program, which has instilled new life in neighborhoods including Burlington, the Old City, Old North Knoxville and Mechanicsville. Federal Empowerment Zone and block grant funding along with 11 million private dollars have restored the look of twenty businesses in these areas creating new jobs, increasing tax revenues and occupying long vacant properties.

Two awards are being given in the Commercial//Industrial/Office category. Partners Development received an award for Cherokee Plaza, a multi-tenant center along Kingston Pike in Bearden. This project redeveloped an existing commercial location to create an aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly plaza.

PIPS Technology wins the second award in this category. Developed by Alan Sefton, this project realizes the Technology Corridor Board's goal to create attractive, researched-based businesses along Pellissippi Parkway. The building includes corporate offices, a laboratory and manufacturing operations.

The Residential award goes to the Gratz Street Infill Houses at 803 and 807 Gratz Street. Built on the former site of McCallie School, these two new homes feature

Craftsman-style architecture that complements the older homes of the surrounding Fourth & Gill neighborhood. The house at 807 Gratz Street is particularly noteworthy because it was designed by architect Elizabeth Eason to realize LEED energy saving standards.

The Crown and Goose is the winner of the Renovation award. Developer Jeffrey Nash transformed a vacant, deteriorated store in the Old City to an English-style gastropub complete with second story apartments. The renovation was complete with an “indoor-outdoor” lounge and a beer garden that offers views of the city skyline and a mural of a London streetscape.

Although many extraordinary projects were nominated in this category, the Historic Restoration award goes to 4 Market Square. The Cornerstone Foundation led the project to renovate this collection of deteriorated and unoccupied historic buildings according to plans developed by Smee + Busby Architects. Café 4 along with the Square Room performance theatre now occupy the ground level while the upstairs houses offices and residences for The Fellows Initiative.

The East Tennessee Veterans Memorial wins the Special Use Category. A heartfelt addition to the World’s Fair Park, this plaza honors East Tennesseans who have died in military service as well as the 14 Medal of Honor recipients from the region. Strong granite pillars, a bell tower and poignant inscriptions illuminated by soft lighting create a reflective setting.

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