November 19, 2015

Transition Town-All St. Anthony Park, as many Bugle readers know and to which many have contributed, works toward a positive, local response to climate change. We applaud Ecumen, OneTwoOne Development and Kaas Wilson Architects (the team) for their willingness to work with the neighborhood on their threefold design on two parcels of the Luther Seminary campus: senior cooperative housing for active, independent living; apartments that include affordable rental rates; and a senior-care facility.

This development can help our neighborhood achieve some of the visions it put forth for our 2040 Plan (which you can find at [TransitionASAP.org](http://transitionasap.org/)). Specifically, the team is offering ways our community can address needs for housing, healthcare, quality of life and support of local business. They also appear committed to sustainability, in terms of energy conservation, storm water management, transportation and greenspace.

These are very welcome steps. In the final designs and construction of the buildings, we urge them to significantly exceed current minimum building energy standards and to engineer the structures to permit conversion in the future to geothermal, solar, energy storage or other technologies that are on the horizon. To the extent possible, we ask that they include opportunities for flexible use of space in all buildings—meeting rooms, workshop spaces and emergency shelters, for example—and outdoor gardening areas for food, beauty, habitat and community-building.

We recognize change often is not welcome: the loss of a tree, on-street parking near light rail, a favorite business or a beloved neighbor who has had to move away; expansion of Murray School, the library or a neighbor’s garage; the need for new priorities and habits in the face of global climate change. This proposed development will alter how two areas of our neighborhood look and has raised some concerns. But the opportunities to benefit our community are huge.

Let’s continue a respectful, creative and constructive dialog.

*Marilyn Benson, Lois Braun, Lynn Englund, Ranae Hanson, Mimi Jennings, Mindy Keskinen, Michael Russelle, Regula Russelle, Pat Thompson and Tim Wulling, on behalf of the Transition Town-All St. Anthony Park planning group*