

July 18, 2011

To Whom it May Concern,

I am pleased to offer my support for the University of Minnesota Twin Cities' AASHE STARS submission, and in particular, inclusion of Innovation Credit 4: The University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park. This credit demonstrates the University's active role and contributions through publicly engaged research, education and outreach to address the complex issues of sustainability in community development.

The University's vision for its 5,000-acre UMore Park property in Dakota County, Minnesota, is development of a unique, University-founded, sustainable community for 20,000 to 30,000 people over the next 30 years. A concept master plan for the community at UMore Park was affirmed by the University Board of Regents in December 2008. Planning and development as well as unique research, education and outreach activities to advance the vision are under way.

As executive director for the Office for UMore Park Academic Initiatives, I am responsible for ensuring that the University's engaged research, education and outreach are integrated into all phases of planning and development of the property – innovation in infrastructure, energy efficiencies through sustainable building design and renewable energy options, health and wellness, life-long learning, transportation and transit, arts and culture, economic development, ecology and the environment and support of a strong and diverse social fabric.

The University's strengths in research, education and outreach will differentiate the community from all others. The new community at UMore Park will be a model for sustainable development nationally and internationally. The Office for UMore Park Academic Initiatives supports this unique-in-the-nation opportunity by fostering new disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and education initiatives that benefit UMore Park planning and development. Our students are contributing to the development through experiential learning projects. Our faculty benefit from UMore Park as a research platform that is incorporated into grant proposals and interdisciplinary learning. Research and education enrich the community and contribute to quality of life for residents.

I am pleased to support this credit – as we continue to foster innovative solutions for the development of sustainable communities worldwide and promote public engagement.

Sincerely,



Carla Carlson
Executive Director