

## MULTI-HOUSING NEWS



Powered by  Clickability

### Urban Partners Receives Accolades for Transit-Oriented Developments

*Published: March 10, 2009*

By Erika Schnitzer, Associate Editor

Los Angeles—Urban Partners LLC has received honors for “Outstanding Developer” and “Outstanding Project” in the Los Angeles Business Journal’s real estate awards issue, which is focused on the best in local transit-oriented development.

“Our transit system, relative to the planning process, has been at odds since the end of World War II,” John Hrovat, director of operations at Urban Partners, tells *MHN*. “We are trying to cut back and fight the sprawl that’s taken place since then.”

Urban Partners’ \$150 million Del Mar Station (pictured, at right), a 347-unit mixed-use, transit-oriented development on Pasadena’s Gold Line, received the award for “Outstanding Project.” The company was selected by the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 2000 among 11 bidders to develop the 3.8-acre site, which included rehabilitation of the historic 1920s Santa Fe Depot that sat on the property and that provided the design cue for the development, notes Hrovat.



“Pasadena is blessed with some wonderful architecture. It takes a great deal of pride in existing buildings,” notes Hrovat. With that in mind, the community had an active role in determining what the development would look like. While the historic Depot building has a Spanish architectural style, a Craftsman style is prevalent throughout the city and thus had to be present in the new buildings. Consequently, Hrovat says, “When you look at Del Mar Station, it doesn’t look like it’s one building that was just dropped in the middle of town. It looks like four buildings that evolved over time.”

Because of a public parking requirement, Urban Partners built two subterranean garages on the site. To do this, the company had to dismantle the existing building and move it temporarily to excavate for the garage. Once a concrete deck was in place, the Depot—which now sits in the center of the project—was put back in place and four residential buildings were developed around it.

Designed by Pasadena, Calif.-based Moule & Polyzoides with Los Angeles-based Nadel Architects as the Executive Architect, Del Mar Station, which includes both market-rate and affordable residences, features 11,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 1,190 parking spots. The project was sold to Denver-based Archstone during construction in 2004.

The “Outstanding Developer” award recognized Urban Partners for its leadership in building innovative transit-oriented developments throughout Los Angeles County. In addition to Del Mar Station, the LABJ spotlighted Wilshire Vermont Station (pictured, at right), a \$175 million, 449-unit mixed-use community located on the Red Line in Koreatown.



For this project, Urban Partners was tasked with the challenge of building a residential and retail community around the already-existing transit, without blocking the subway portal. “At the end of the day, we ended up with a building that embraces the transit rider in the middle of our project,” Hrovat notes. “We went from having a barren plaza with no amenities or services, and now when you come off [the train], you can stop and grab a coffee.”

“The project, which opened in 2007, sets aside 20 percent of the residences as affordable housing. In addition, the community includes 35,000 sq. ft. of retail space.

Both “projects have been embraced by the community and by the residents,” says Hrovat. “Using [public] transit is a much more pleasant experience than previously thought.

#### Links referenced within this article

#### Find this article at:

[http://www.multihousingnews.com/multihousing/content\\_display/news/e3i719c968044c38f8c64c729c181968fdc](http://www.multihousingnews.com/multihousing/content_display/news/e3i719c968044c38f8c64c729c181968fdc)

Uncheck the box to remove the list of links referenced in the article.

2008 Nielsen Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.