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Suburbs Seek Certification as Redevelopment Ready *Six Cities Selected to Redevelopment Ready Communities Program*

Ferndale – The Michigan Suburbs Alliance announced today it will work with six suburban Detroit communities to improve community-developer relations and foster increased interest in redevelopment of the region’s built-out suburbs.

“This program is catalyzing some of the most creative and aggressive policy approaches in the state for encouraging redevelopment,” said Conan Smith, Executive Director of the Suburbs Alliance. “We hope that Redevelopment Ready certification will show developers that there is opportunity for investment and profit throughout the region.”

The cities will work to achieve “Redevelopment Ready” certification through participation in Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC), a first-in-the-nation program established by the Suburbs Alliance that helps cities make their economic development processes more efficient and less complicated. Each city will receive technical assistance to help them meet the certification standards and goals for redevelopment.

The six communities selected for 2006-2007 RRC program are **Grosse Pointe Woods, Hamtramck, Lincoln Park, Mount Clemens, Rockwood and Roseville**. These cities will be the second group to become “redevelopment ready.” In March, Eastpointe, Hazel Park, River Rouge, Southfield and Ypsilanti were certified in March at a ceremony officiated by Governor Granholm.

The Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program encourages cities to evaluate and reform their redevelopment processes in six areas:

Community Visioning and Education– cities are encouraged to adopt proactive and aggressive public participation strategies focusing on early visioning and engagement in determining the need for redevelopment; updated master plans are key to engaging developers who clamor for consistency and clarity in the process, as well as helping citizens feel secure that the character of their community will be protected;



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Continuing Education for Public Officials – cities establish training plans and set educational requirements for key staff members and elected and appointed officials;

Tools for Redevelopment – the program encourages development of a clear, community-wide commitment to the redevelopment process and appropriate use of and access to financial redevelopment tools;

Development Regulations – existing development regulations, including zoning ordinances, often prevent communities from executing innovative redevelopment plans that encourage mixed uses and other modern types of development; RRC communities are encouraged to clarify the decision-making process and diversify their zoning practices;

Marketing of Redevelopment Sites – cities must engage community leaders from a variety of sectors in promoting redevelopment opportunities, and they must make information on priority redevelopment sites easily available;

Redevelopment Plan Review Process – building from the maxim “time is money,” cities are urged to make their site-plan review processes more efficient; through fewer public hearings (mitigated by early public participation) and concurrent departmental review, communities can speed up the redevelopment process without compromising community values;

A committee that balances public and private sector interests, including representation from local and state-level economic development officials, developers, planners and others developed the RRC Best Practices with the help of nearly twenty national experts on redevelopment.

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance created Redevelopment Ready Communities in response to the increasingly dangerous trend of disinvestment that is threatening the stability of older suburbs. Because of the complications associated with redeveloping existing properties, investors are choosing to develop in fast-growing exurbs and greenfield areas. By reducing project timelines and eliminating potential risks in the development process, RRC makes older suburbs competitive in a market of limited development dollars.

“Time is a nonrenewable asset, and the need for speedy handling of redevelopment projects increases as the complexity of the projects increases,” says Bren Buckley, Vice President of Burton-Katzman Development. “Redevelopment Ready Communities acknowledges this fact and treats developers accordingly.”

Additional information, including the scorecard and best practices, is available at www.RedevelopmentReady.com.

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