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March 30, 2007

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## **Suburbs Alliance Grows**

### *Farmington joins coalition of built-out cities*

FERNDALE – The City of Farmington became the 27<sup>th</sup> municipal member of the Michigan Suburbs Alliance this week, marking an increased interest by local governments in working together to address shared challenges.

“Communities are finding that addressing many of the issues they face requires reaching beyond their borders,” said Suburbs Alliance Executive Director Conan Smith. “The Suburbs Alliance offers cities a forum for initiating collaborative actions and finding allies among their neighbors.”

Farmington and other built-out cities throughout southeast Michigan are facing a unique set of challenges relatively new to suburban communities; among them, changing demographics, growing retiree costs, decreasing or stagnant populations, and perceptions that redevelopment is difficult and complex. In addition, the crippling interplay of Proposal A and the Headlee Amendment and repeated cuts to revenue sharing in recent years are making it even more challenging to maintain core city services and make ends meet. Many cities have been forced to sell city property, reduce essential services and even raise taxes. Nearly all mature communities are feeling the strain – even those that are successfully attracting new investment.

The Suburbs Alliance, a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, was created by a group of elected and appointed suburban leaders to give inner suburbs a means by which to organize around their shared challenges. The organization is working to facilitate regional collaboration, encourage the use of innovative redevelopment processes and reform public policies that affect mature communities. Its members span Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Washtenaw counties.

Located in southern Oakland County, Farmington is a community of approximately 10,000. Its distinctive downtown draws people from nearby areas, including Farmington Hills, Livonia, Southfield and Novi. City officials will work with the Suburbs Alliance and its member communities to collectively address the many challenges threatening established cities across the southeast Michigan.

“How do we, as a city, continue to remain who we are, and maintain all the positive benefits our community receives without losing our identity, our character and our integrity?” asks Farmington mayor JoAnne McShane. “We all strive to be better at what we do and we are always striving to achieve more. How can we grow and change and help one another? We unite. And we are.”

More information about the Michigan Suburbs Alliance can be found at [www.michigansuburbsalliance.org](http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org).

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