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National Community Development Association Bestows Annual Award to the City of Birmingham for the BEACON Program NCDA Recognizes City's Achievements through Main Street Based Program

BIRMINGHAM, AL - Jan. 10, 2006 – The achievements of the City of Birmingham's BEACON Program are being recognized by the National Community Development Association (NCDA) with an Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement Award.

The BEACON Program, an initiative of Mayor Bernard Kincaid, was created by an act of the Birmingham City Council in February 2004. A new nonprofit organization, Main Street Birmingham, Inc. (MSB), was incorporated to be the managers of the BEACON Program and implement strategies to meet its mission. The BEACON program targets nine neighborhood commercial districts seeking to stabilize and revitalize them and increase the quality of life for the surrounding residential area.

“The Mayor saw the need to create an organization focused on neighborhood commercial districts,” said Jim Fenstermaker, Director of the Department of Community Development for the City. “To be given an Audrey Nelson Award by the National Community Development Association is a big honor and it means that you must be doing something right.”

NCDA is an association of more than 550 local governments across the country that administers federally-supported community and economic development programs. The Audrey Nelson Achievement Award is given to communities that demonstrate creative uses of federal funds to accomplish community development goals.

“BEACON has been around for only a short time, and they have a challenging task. We are proud of the achievements of BEACON thus far,” said Mayor Kincaid.

“The BEACON Program is a blend of traditional community development activities and the approach of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program,” according to David Fleming, Executive Director for MSB. The City of Birmingham has utilized a portion of its annual Community Development Block Grant allocation to support the BEACON program. Fleming says that for every dollar of public funding that has been spent through the BEACON program, since its inception, the result has been nine dollars of private sector investment in the targeted districts.

Activities have ranged from marketing the commercial districts through merchant associations to facilitating development of projects that result in new businesses and jobs. The targeted districts are the commercial sections of Avondale, East Lake, Woodlawn, Ensley, North Birmingham, West End, Titusville and Parkway East.

The award will be presented on **Wednesday, January 25; 8:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m.** during the National Community Development Association Opening General Session and Audrey Nelson Awards Breakfast. It will be held at the **Hart Senate Office Building, 2nd Street and Constitution Avenue, NE; Room 902, Washington D.C.** The City of Birmingham will be recognized as the Project Sponsor and the award will be presented to David Fleming as Project Director.

For more information, please contact David Fleming at (205)595.0562 or via e-mail at dfleming@mainstreetbham.org. You may also visit the MSB website at www.mainstreetbham.org; at the City of Birmingham, please contact Jim Fenstermaker, director of Community Development, 205-254-2309; at NCD, please contact Karen Proctor at 202-293-7587.