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EPA Recognizes CHA with Smart Growth Achievement Award *Parkside of Old Town is leader in ‘Built Projects’ category*

CHICAGO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized the Chicago Housing Authority, along with FitzGerald Associates Architects and Holsten Real Estate Development Corporation, as one of four national winners of the 2009 National Smart Growth Achievement Awards for transforming an aging, isolated public-housing development into the successfully integrated Parkside of Old Town community.

Parkside of Old Town won in the ‘Built Projects’ category for creating a mixed-use, socioeconomically diverse neighborhood in the heart of one of Chicago’s most historically isolated areas. Prior to redevelopment, the site was home to the former Cabrini-Green public housing projects – a notorious island of poverty in the affluent Gold Coast-Old Town neighborhood. In revitalizing the area, CHA and developers involved the input of all community stakeholders to create a cohesive community where market-rate, middle-income and public housing residents live side-by-side.

The final site includes expansive green and community space, including pedestrian pathways, proximity to the newly renovated Seward Park and reintegration of the street grid to reconnect the development to the surrounding city. Green elements are also included in the design of the site as well as energy-efficient lights and boilers. As a whole, Parkside demonstrates the community benefits of aligning housing, transportation and environmental objectives to create a better place to live.

“We are honored to receive such a prestigious award for creating vibrant places to live and work,” said CHA CEO Lewis Jordan. “We continually strive to provide a high quality of life in all our developments as we carry out the Plan for Transformation.”

The selection committee also noted the designers’ ability to blend a variety of housing options and pricing levels, as well as the inclusion of smaller intimate spaces to meet the practical needs of residents and create a sense of community and responsibility.

“Every year the Smart Growth Achievement Award winners show us new and creative ways to bring environmental sustainability to our communities – and this year is no exception,” said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. “Smart Growth plays an important role in establishing a new foundation for prosperity in communities across the nation.”

The EPA created the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement in 2002 to recognize exceptional approaches to activities that protect the environment, foster economic vitality and enhance quality of life.

Since its inception, 623 communities in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have applied for consideration, while only a select 37 have received recognition.

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