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Seattle's first *Community Benefits Agreement* struck between Developer and Community Coalition

Agreement defines benefits developer will provide to the community in the 10-acre Dearborn Project on the Goodwill site

SEATTLE—After almost two years of negotiations, an agreement has been struck between the Dearborn Street Coalition for Livable Neighborhoods and Dearborn Street Developers LLC on a \$300-million project, slated to be built on a 10-acre site at the crossroads of Seattle's most economic and ethnically diverse communities – including Little Saigon, the Central District, the International District and North Rainier Valley.

"This project has come a long way toward ensuring that neighborhood families will benefit from the economic growth this project will bring. More workers will now earn a livable wage and live in affordable housing and the development will better meet the needs of the people who work and live here," said David West, executive director of Puget Sound Sage, a coalition member.

"For many service workers, the lack of quality jobs and affordable housing are the two biggest challenges of living in Seattle," said West. "This agreement addresses both problems, moving us towards economic justice for working families.

Sage was joined by neighborhood groups and Little Saigon small business leaders in negotiating key sections of the agreement. The Dearborn coalition is comprised of business, neighborhood, labor, faith, housing, environmental, ethnic and other community organizations, all deeply concerned with how growth and change shape Seattle's neighborhoods.

"This CBA – the first in the Pacific Northwest – gives community groups like Jackson Place and others a voice in shaping their neighborhoods," said Maura Deering, a member of the Jackson Place Community Council Board of Directors. "We are glad to have played a role in setting this type of precedent."

Jermaine Smiley of Laborers Local 242, another coalition member, commented, "Making sure this project provides living wage jobs and benefits is benefit to the entire community, not to mention affordable housing at a time we need it the most."

"This agreement is a step in the right direction for neighborhoods such as Little Saigon where development pressure is high. The agreement helps balance development

interests and neighborhood interests,” said Quang H. Nguyen, executive director of the Washington Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce, a coalition member.

The Dearborn project, with 600,000-square feet of retail and 500 units of housing, is located between South Dearborn and Weller streets at Rainier Ave. Among the items in this unprecedented agreement, Dearborn Street Developers LLC have agreed to:

- Build 200 units of affordable housing in the project, including 50 family units;
- Contribute \$200,000 to mitigate traffic impacts in the Little Saigon and Jackson place neighborhoods in addition to the street improvements that the developer will pay for as traffic mitigation immediately around the project;
- Follow fair labor standards by hiring construction contractors that pay prevailing wages and provide health and retirement benefits; and by ensuring that 15% of all work hours are performed by apprentices. The contractors will also participate in minority/women-owned business programs and strive to hire local residents through pre-apprentice programs;
- Ensure grocery and drug stores agree to stay neutral if employees decide to unionize. Janitors, security officers and other employees of the development will be covered by the same labor standards;
- Offer below-market rents on 5,000 square feet of space in the project to community nonprofits at a cost of \$1 million;
- Contribute \$200,000 for the design of a community center in Little Saigon, and \$600,000 over 12 years to support the Little Saigon commercial district;
- Use environmentally sustainable building practices;

The project still needs the approval of the Seattle City Council, which must approve a site rezone and street vacations. The developer will have to pay the city for the street vacations, and the coalition and developer will ask that the City of Seattle invest those funds in neighborhoods around the project.

Seattle Goodwill, a nonprofit organization that helps low-income and disadvantaged people prepare for and secure jobs so they may achieve self-sufficiency, has been housed at Dearborn and Rainier since 1931. Goodwill’s main building was constructed in 1946.

“This agreement is a win for the community, a win for Goodwill, and a win for the developer,” said Goodwill President and CEO Ken Colling. “We are very excited because we have been trying for more than 10 years to replace our worn-out facilities.”

Under the agreement, 200 of the 500 units of housing in the project will be affordable units. Of these units, 120 will be affordable to families making no more than 50% of the city’s median income, which is \$32,550 for a two-person household. The other 80 units will be affordable to families making no more than 80% of the median income. The Seattle Housing Authority will build the affordable units.

The project will have tree-lined streets, two interior plazas and open space on the perimeter. The developer will build the project using environmentally sustainable methods, such as green roofs and permeable sidewalks.

Columbia Legal Services Seattle attorney Andrew Kashyap assisted the Dearborn Coalition in the complex work of analyzing and negotiating the Dearborn community benefit agreement.

Community benefit agreements (CBAs) have long been used by community coalitions in major cities in California to improve housing and jobs. The Dearborn agreement is the first fully enforceable agreement of its kind in the Northwest. For more information on CBAs, visit <http://www.communitybenefits.org/>, the website of the Partnership for Working Families.

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Puget Sound Sage brings together community, labor, and faith to make the region's economy work for working people. We improve the lives of working families by raising job standards, and by ensuring that development creates affordable housing and livable communities. Sage stands for "wisdom in making development choices."