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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAMPAU COMMONS REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, June 28, 2006--The Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) today announced that resident relocation from its Campau Commons housing development will be completed in mid-July in anticipation of demolition of the existing apartments and support buildings in early August. Located at Franklin and Division Streets near downtown Grand Rapids, the 37-year-old low-income apartment community is being razed in preparation for a \$13.6 million total redevelopment of the site. The redevelopment project will include 92 housing units—60 townhouse-style apartments located within four buildings along Franklin Street and 32 semi-detached duplexes along Antoine and Campau Streets—as well as an office building that will house management offices, a community center and a Head Start facility. The duplexes and an expansion of Campau Park will enhance curb appeal and help integrate the development within the surrounding neighborhood. The redevelopment effort is being financed through federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Hooker DeJong is the project architect and Pioneer Construction is the general contractor.

“The Housing Commission is very excited to get a project that will ultimately revitalize the Campau Commons neighborhood underway,” noted GRHC Executive Director Carlos A. Sanchez, “And we are pleased that the resident relocation phase of the project is nearing its successful completion.”

Sanchez said the GRHC began working with current Campau Commons residents last February to make them aware of the various types of relocation assistance available to them. The agency established an on-site relocation “Support Center” staffed by social workers who helped tenants access and evaluate their credit reports, find credit repair help and locate other needed moving-related resources.

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Most relocating Campau Commons tenants are eligible to receive a rental subsidy through the GRHC's Section 8 program, which provides a preference to residents displaced from their homes by government action. Residents who meet program eligibility requirements have also had the option to relocate to an alternative GRHC subsidized housing development as suitable units became available. The GRHC is paying tenants' moving expenses with funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

"Finding alternative affordable housing has represented significant challenges for many families, and we are grateful to HUD and to all of the community partners who are supporting our residents as they make the transition to their new homes," Sanchez said.

The GRHC has worked with the City of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Public Schools, local businesses and numerous social service, faith-based and educational organizations to provide relocating residents with logistical support ranging from mentoring and budget planning assistance to furniture, packing supplies and help transporting possessions. A mid-May Housing Fair in the Campau Commons Gymnasium brought members of the local Rental Property Owners Association and social-service agency representatives on site to help link families with suitable apartments and services.

Sanchez said relocated residents will be invited to apply for housing at the redeveloped facility before the Housing Commission offers the new apartments to those on its waiting list. In a resident needs assessment conducted this past spring, 70% of the 87 households surveyed showed an interest in moving back to Campau Commons when it reopens in late 2007.

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Background on the Grand Rapids Housing Commission: The Grand Rapids Housing Commission was established by the Grand Rapids City Commission in 1966 as a public-body corporation under the state enabling law now known as Public Act 18. The law empowers the City to act to provide housing for low-income people and to eliminate substandard housing conditions.

Funded primarily through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission is an independently administered entity governed by a five-member board appointed by the City Commission. The Housing Commission currently makes affordable housing available to 4,078 West Michigan families through a diverse portfolio of housing programs.