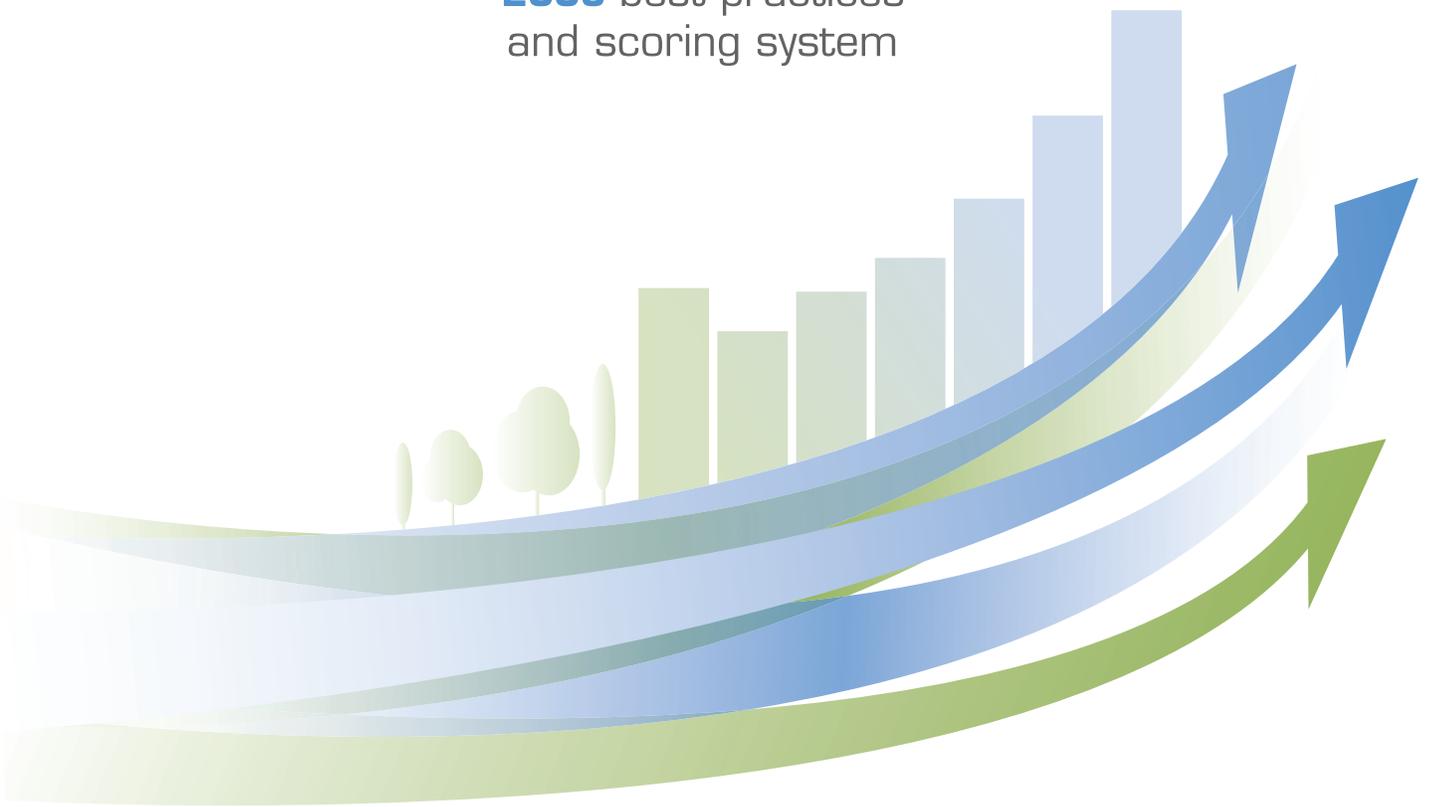




2006 best practices
and scoring system



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michigan suburbs alliance

Solving our Redevelopment Challenges

Revitalizing our older communities by supporting redevelopment efforts is essential to building a stronger, more competitive region. Mature, built-out suburbs typically have properties with older housing stock and outdated or underutilized commercial buildings which are accompanied by aging infrastructure like roads, sewer systems, and public transit lines. Converting these out-of-date properties to efficient, productive status can be a complicated, challenging process, and developers who take on these projects often encounter complexities that they typically would not when working in newer, less developed suburbs. These redevelopment complexities, which are rarely found in Greenfield areas, often raise the costs and risks of investing in older communities. All of these factors can deter potential developers and deny older communities new investment that is essential to their continued viability.

In the past several decades in southeast Michigan, investment has overwhelmingly bypassed inner-ring communities and opted instead for the outer fringe of exurbs. Many developers inaccurately perceive that developing in older cities *has* to be difficult, and as a result, these communities are missing out on development opportunities at a time when they need them most. Increasingly declining populations, shrinking tax bases, and economic instability are pushing cities toward insolvency. A strong, well-planned redevelopment strategy that empowers cities to retain existing residents and businesses and attract needed new investment is one solution to this financial crisis. The Redevelopment Ready CommunitiesSM program challenges and motivates older communities to modify municipal processes and streamline how and where redevelopment occurs.

...By Uniting Local Government and Business

Through a set of best practices and a certification system developed via a partnership between public and private sector development interests, the RRC program encourages mature suburbs to bolster their competitive attractiveness by making the development process more efficient and less complicated. The program helps cities acquire the skills, knowledge, and methods that enable them to compete for, recruit, and capitalize on redevelopment opportunities. This system for certifying communities as “redevelopment ready” benefits both older communities struggling to revitalize themselves and developers by targeting several aspects of cities’ redevelopment processes:

- **Openness and predictability.** Developers will enter a community with greater certainty about the quality of service, specific requirements and overall environment for development and can expect to engage in a process that is efficient, predictable and deliberate. Local governments will have an incentive to critically assess their development procedures to ensure that they meet the needs of the community.
- **Visioning.** The RRC program encourages communities to engage in redevelopment planning that creates a coherent vision for revitalization and promotes regional cooperation that takes advantage of existing underutilized local infrastructure capacity, promotes sound economic development, and reduces regional urban sprawl.
- **Relationship building.** In the course of analyzing and documenting their redevelopment processes, communities will be called upon to interact with a diverse group of developers and other industry professionals, creating working relationships that are often the precursor to moving ahead on development deals.
- **Marketing.** Participation in RRC provides older communities a powerful marketing tool that can be used to attract interest from developers, nonprofits and the state and federal government.

Incorporating Smart Growth Principles

At the core of the RRC program is a commitment to Smart Growth – a set of principles supported by the Environmental Protection Agency that encourages restoring and enhancing older cities. Smart Growth policies promote responsible land use and the development of vibrant, economically competitive communities that give residents various housing and transportation options. By producing attractive urban centers, Smart Growth discourages people from moving out into undeveloped areas and thereby preserves the vitality of core cities and their surrounding suburbs. The RRC program actively works to promote Smart Growth practices and encourages cities to incorporate these planning principles into their community vision and master plan.

10 smart growth principles

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions



From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Why Become RRC Certified?

The Redevelopment Ready CommunitiesSM certification signals to the region that your community has voluntarily embraced the RRC Best Practices and elected to participate in a program where development and redevelopment procedures are evaluated and assessed for strengths and weaknesses. With RRC consultants working in coordination with city staff, the program improves municipal processes to become more predictable, cost effective, and efficient. The RRC program encourages dialogue and collaboration among key decision makers including boards, commissions, and the legislative body to help establish best practices and engage in redevelopment planning that is reflective of a community-wide vision for revitalization.

An RRC certification award can attract potential investors and developers who can help stimulate reinvestment in older communities. In the future, RRC certification may secure additional points in competitions for state grants.

Eligibility

For 2006, Suburbs Alliance dues paying Charter Member cities are eligible to participate in the RRC program and are encouraged to apply to the program.

Scoring System

The six standards and subsequent requirements are weighted based on a 100-point system. The order of standards follows the natural steps typically set in development and redevelopment municipal processes. An evaluator is responsible for scoring participating cities.

Certification Score

A participating city in the RRC program **must achieve a score of at least 80 out of 100** in order to become certified.

The RRC program outlines specific requirements that must be achieved, yet allows each community ample flexibility to determine which areas are best tailored to address local needs with the available technical assistance.

Certification Duration

Once a city receives RRC certification, it is ***valid for 2 years*** starting at the date certification was awarded. After 1 1/2 years, the city should evaluate its processes in preparation for recertification. Cities must have met recertification requirements by the end of the 2-year period in order to maintain RRC certified status.

Certification Evaluator

A third-party consultant, the certification evaluator, is one of many partners that shepherds RRC applicants through the program. As your city begins the RRC program, the certification evaluator is responsible for:

- Conducting initial evaluations;
- Identifying which internal municipal processes need reform to comply with the Best Practices;
- Determining the initial score based on first evaluations;
- Supports cities in identifying technical assistance needs;
- Making recommendations on certification status to RRC Committee; and
- Performing final evaluation and determining the final score after reforms and changes are made.

Our certification evaluators are selected for their excellent understanding of urban redevelopment and expertise of local and state redevelopment tools. These consultants have intimate knowledge of how local governments operate in southeast Michigan and fully understand the redevelopment challenges facing our older suburbs. In addition, each evaluator on our team supports Smart Growth principles and regionalism.

Technical Assistance

The RRC program recognizes that each city has unique challenges in the type and amount of resources available to address recommended reforms. A lack of resources can hinder city staff from improving processes independently; for this reason, we offer technical assistance through our Resource Center. Technical assistance comes in the form of direct assistance from professional planning consultants, research and case study analyses, mentorship by industry professionals from the RRC Committee, and templates and/or guidelines for ordinances, zoning processes, marketing site information and cataloguing vacant property.

The initial evaluation determines a preliminary overall score and individual points awarded under each standard category. This score highlights strengths and weaknesses in the city's development and redevelopment processes, indicating where technical support is most likely needed.

In a collaborative effort, the RRC and city staff determine what types of technical assistance will be the most effective to create sustainable solutions for those areas in need of improvement.

Once both parties agree on a technical assistance plan, the RRC staff presents the plan to the RRC committee for comment and approval.

certification process

The certification process takes approximately one year. However, there is no deadline to obtain RRC certification, and cities can remain in the program for as long as it takes them to meet the standards. While these communities can continue to receive Suburbs Alliance support, they may require more technical assistance from a planning consultant than we are able to provide. When funding for this technical assistance runs out, the city will no longer receive assistance from our planning consultants. However, they will continue to have access to other forms of technical assistance, such as model ordinances and templates, through our Resource Center.

1 Step 1: Apply to Program

Interested and eligible cities need to complete the RRC program application form and submit it to the Michigan Suburbs Alliance. This form can be obtained at redevelopmentready.com or by contacting Melanie Brown at (248) 546-2380 or melanie@suburbsalliance.org.

2 Step 2: Application Review & Acceptance

The RRC Committee reviews the application. Preference is given to Suburbs Alliance member communities that fit well with the program's goals and objectives and have indicated a strong desire to participate in the program.

3 Step 3: Threshold Requirements

The City Council, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals of participating cities must demonstrate their commitment to the program by meeting the Threshold Requirements, which begin the certification process. Cities have 120 days from the date of acceptance into the program to complete the Threshold Requirements (see pg. 11).

Once this step is completed, the city can begin receiving technical assistance.

4 Step 4: Technical Assistance Evaluation

A certification evaluator, Suburbs Alliance staff, and a planning consultant conduct an evaluation and assessment of current redevelopment processes, applying the RRC standards and scorecard to help define target areas needed for community attention.

The evaluation is an informal discussion between city staff and RRC consultants to determine which internal processes need to be changed to comply with the RRC Best Practices. The discussion begins with an assessment of existing city processes and how they are implemented.

After the RRC consultants, Suburbs Alliance staff and city staff agree on the targeted areas, the RRC planning consultant begins work in the city, as outlined in a work agreement.

5 Step 5: Evaluation Scores

Using the indicators listed under each standard as a guide, the certification evaluator generates an evaluation score which is then shared with the city's RRC project lead.

An *indicator* is an example of how a community may denote its achievement of an RRC Standard; however, the indicators listed are not the only way to demonstrate achievement. The RRC program seeks to share new ideas with other RRC cities. If a city demonstrates a new indicator, we will add it to the corresponding list.

6 Step 6: Amendments and Reform

Two types of reform surface after the evaluation and assessment step – those that can be completed by city staff independently and reforms that require specific support from a planning consultant. Cities are expected to tackle and complete both types of reforms.

7 Step 7: Final Evaluation

When a community believes it has met or exceeded the requirements for RRC certification, the certification evaluator conducts a final assessment, updates the scorecard, and submits a recommendation to the Committee to award RRC certification.

8 Step 8: Promoting the RRC Award

A major benefit to a participating in the RRC program is access to our network and partnerships with the development industry. Our partners are dedicated to promoting the available redevelopment properties to the real estate and development market. In addition, the Suburbs Alliance markets the city's hard work and accomplishments through many outlets including

- An RRC Certification award that can be displayed in city hall;
- RRC Certification logo to place on community printed materials and city website;
- Announcement and case study of city's accomplishments on RRC program website, www.redevelopmentready.com;
- Press releases sent to key community and regional media outlets; and
- Promotions sent to partner websites.

RRC score card

The scorecard is a tool used to identify development strengths and areas that need improvement. It is based on the evaluation of the six communities that participated in the 2005 pilot program and input from the RRC Committee. In Step 5, the scorecard complements the evaluation report so those involved can concentrate on the recommended improvements detailed in the report rather than try to achieve the minimal amount of points to obtain certification. Scoring is weighted and balanced between visioning, applications of available tools, and implementation. A participating city in the RRC program must achieve a score of at least 80 out of 100 in order to become certified.

| TOTAL POINTS | Points 100 |
|--|-----------------------|
| Standard 1: Community Visioning and Education | |
| 1.1 Baseline Communications | 2 |
| 1.2 Stakeholder Involvement | 8 |
| 1.3 Redevelopment Plan | 8 |
| 1.4 Site Specific Visioning | 5 |
| 1.5 Redevelopment Project Timelines | 2 |
| Standard 2: Continuing Education for Public Officials | |
| 2.1 Establish a Training Plan | 3 |
| 2.2 Educational Requirements | 2 |
| Standard 3: Tools for Redevelopment | |
| 3.1 Financial Redevelopment Tools | 8 |
| 3.2 Demonstrate Community Commitment | 7 |
| Standard 4 : Development Regulations | |
| 4.1 Zoning | 7 |
| 4.2 Development Review | 5 |
| 4.3 Supplementary Development Regulations | 3 |
| Standard 5 : Marketing of Redevelopment Sites | |
| 5.1 General Community Marketing | 6 |
| 5.2 Promoting Site Specific Information | 9 |
| Standard 6: Redevelopment Plan Review Process | |
| 6.1 Streamlining the Process | 8 |
| 6.2 Documentation | 6 |
| 6.3 Staff Review and Project Tracking | 6 |
| 6.4 Maintain Communication During the Process | 5 |

RRC threshold requirements

Before cities can receive technical assistance, they must complete the Threshold Requirements. Completing these actions ensures that all relevant departments understand the principles of RRC, support involvement in the program, and are committed to improving the city's redevelopment processes. Cities are given a period of 120 days to pass the Threshold Requirements, during which they can review sample resolutions and request assistance from the RRC staff in educating the involved groups if necessary.

To be certified as Redevelopment Ready, a local government must take the following steps:

- (1) The legislative body (city council) initially passes a certifying resolution committing to the initial adoption and implementation of the standards.

- (2) The community's chief executive (mayor, city manager or township supervisor) implements the certifying resolution as official policy of the municipality and directs compliance and implementation of these policies and practices by all relevant departments, boards, authorities and their consultants.

- (3) The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals or any other relevant boards or commissions adopt the certifying resolution.



redevelopment ready communities best practices

The following pages contain the RRC Best Practices. The Best Practices will guide you through the certification process and form the basis of the Redevelopment Ready Certification.

Each Best Practice has two components. Listed in the left-hand column are requirements each community must meet for each of the six best practices. In the right-hand column is a series of indicators communities might use to illustrate that the requirement has been fulfilled.

An *indicator* is an example of how a community may denote its achievement of an RRC requirement; however, the indicators listed are not the only way to demonstrate achievement. The RRC program seeks to share new ideas with other RRC cities. If a city demonstrates a new indicator, we will add it to the corresponding list.



Standard 1 ~ Community Visioning and Education

[25 POINTS]

Lead dialogue on the need for redevelopment with the community to reach consensus and commitment on a vision.

With every redevelopment project, it is essential to create focused and consistent public involvement opportunities that inform citizens about the economic and fiscal necessity of redevelopment. Without public support, redevelopment projects can become complicated and drawn out, something no developer wants to experience. Upfront visioning and planning set development priorities that are supported by affected residents and businesses, providing clear direction and guidance for potential investors and developers. Many communities have basic public engagement processes, but they may be implemented too late or never in the development process to be effective in attracting new development opportunities.

The Comprehensive Master Plan allows communities to identify a vision for the community, including the establishment of long-range redevelopment strategies. Per state law, communities are required to review their comprehensive master plan every five years. Unfortunately, many communities have not met this requirement and often miss an opportunity to enhance redevelopment planning. Because land development regulations are built on the Comprehensive Master Plan, communities that do not periodically update their master plans often have outdated assumptions regarding population, income, transportation, existing land uses and legislation that do not specifically address redevelopment, making them ill-equipped to respond to development proposals or seek appropriate development for the community.

Visioning upfront in the redevelopment process should become part of a community's culture. The creation of a redevelopment plan does not require a complete update of the master plan, but can easily be accomplished through the creation of a sub-area plan that addresses the community's problems, opportunities, and goals for redevelopment, as well as identification of redevelopment sites.

Community visioning should take into account Smart Growth principles and incorporate them into the master plan.

01

Community Visioning and Education

01.1

2 points

Baseline Communications

Indicators

Inform community of the need for redevelopment and its beneficial effects to increase public understanding of development issues.

- Define and communicate the problems facing the community and consequences of not engaging redevelopment practices.
- Cite importance of enticing investment into the community. Explain that development approaches historically used to grow the community are often inappropriate for redevelopment.
- Describe the fiscal, social and physical benefits of development and redevelopment and what they mean to the community.

- City officials communicate a community profile and analysis that includes the following topics:
 - Demographics (households, household size, income, age of community, population statistics, etc.)
 - Regional profile
 - Proposal A/Headlee "Pop Up"
 - Taxes
 - Jobs
 - Quality of Life
- Weekly, monthly, or quarterly city newsletters or e-newsletters discussing current economic situation are sent to residents/businesses.
- Economic Development web page on city website that is updated regularly.
- Documented budget process
 - Business forums
 - Mayor State of the City
 - Chamber of Commerce involvement
- Town hall meetings, community forums addressing redevelopment.
- Redevelopment needs and/or projects are addressed on local access television programs or in newspaper articles, etc.
- Monthly or bi-weekly e-newsletters are sent to residents/businesses.

01

Community Visioning and Education

01.2

8 points

Stakeholder Involvement

Indicators

Create and document a process for strategic stakeholder involvement in redevelopment planning and projects.

- Identify the pertinent stakeholders with particular participation of elected and appointed city officials.
- Document the community process outcomes. Outcomes must demonstrate current redevelopment processes and how they are different after the implementation of selected indicators.

- Written strategy of how the city and staff will implement stakeholder involvement.
- City officials engage in dialogue with local community residents and property and business owners prior to making land use decisions.
- Visioning sessions with citizen advisory groups are used to determine community needs for specific parcels of land.
- Outreach to varied community groups previously not engaged in community visioning such as property owners, senior groups, religious organizations, neighborhood groups, etc.
- Involvement and participation of planning and economic development groups. (e.g. Planning Commission, DDA, ZBA, LDFA, Chamber of Commerce)
- Improved communication channels between the planning, economic development departments and other related departments.
- New relationships forged with top local taxpayers in municipality.
- Frequent and consistent dialogue between city and community groups.
- Results of community sessions are communicated through available media channels
 - Newsletters, e-newsletters, local cable access, newspaper articles, community brochures, etc.

01

Community Visioning and Education

01.3

8 points

Redevelopment Plan

Indicators

Formally adopt a redevelopment plan or amendment to the master plan to include a problem statement, goals, site identification and proposed uses, recommendations and redevelopment strategies.

- Identify types of redevelopment and specific areas where the community will concentrate its resources.

- City documents advisory redevelopment plan or policy.
- City adopts redevelopment plan or official master plan.

Review Comprehensive Master Plan every 5 years.

If the Comprehensive Master Plan has not been updated in 5 years or more, construct a timetable for reviewing or completing updates.

- Updated master plan or master plan amendments are made available to the community.
- Timetable indicating action steps to completing the plan.

01

Community Visioning and Education

01.4

5 points

Site Specific Visioning

Develop a clear vision and consensus on the goals for individual redevelopment sites which allow for changes in market dynamics. Alternative visions for a target area or site are encouraged.

Maintain information on market characteristics and demographics for redevelopment sites that can attract developers.

Indicators

- Community visioning sessions are included in the planning process.
- Planning Commission/City/County support projects, and a method is in place for documenting their support.
- Neighborhood groups are involved in redevelopment projects.
- City facilitates discussion with all boards and commissions on preliminary market information such as an opportunity or trend analysis study, where appropriate, to estimate the feasibility of various development options and obtain local leadership buy-in.
- New relationships with local brokers, Chamber of Commerce or other entities familiar with the community that assist City in documenting land values, rental rates, vacancies, market demand, etc.
- Project plan is flexible so that it may be most responsive to market forces and have the greatest opportunity for market success and achievement of community goals.
- City communicates outcomes from market discussions to community.

01.5

2 points

Redevelopment Project Timelines

Specify strategies and tools to accomplish the goals of the plan with a timing estimate associated with the approval of redevelopment plans.

Indicators

- Past redevelopment tools used by the community and any policies related to them are identified.
- Benchmarks for developing tools are established and tools are implemented.



Create a process for ensuring that elected and appointed officials and staff involved in the redevelopment process have received adequate training and technical support to make informed decisions about development.

Local officials who are informed about redevelopment processes and available incentive programs and receive regular training to improve their decision making skills have a greater ability to attract significant new investment to the community. A turnover in officials from the election and appointment cycle can provide gaps in understanding about key development issues. Ongoing training ensures a community's continued compliance with applicable laws and reduces exposure to potential lawsuits.

Adequate and appropriate training for public officials and staff is essential to the efficient and equitable functioning of a community's redevelopment processes. Training basics are considered an important first step to inform officials about development processes. This section offers recommendations to expand training opportunities beyond the basics.

02

Continuing Education for Public Officials

02.1

3 points

Establishing a Training Plan

Establish continuing education requirements and document a process for ensuring that elected and appointed officials responsible for community development and/or planning and zoning, along with applicable local government staff, will obtain continuing education.

Indicators

- Desired skill sets for elected and appointed officials and staff are identified and documented.
- Successful completion of education or training through recognized organizations such as MML, MAP, MTA , etc.
- Conduct in-house dissemination and discussion of planning and development principles.
- Funds allocated for professional development are earmarked for staff and elected and appointed officials.
- Officials and appropriate staff participate in professional development training sessions that emphasize redevelopment.
- Appointed officials have Citizen Planner Program (or similar) certification.
- Professional Development Plans and budgets are in place for key staff members.
- Completion of Train the Trainer Programs
- Participation in online training

02.2

2 points

Educational Requirements

Fullfill and document educational requirements.

Indicators

- Staff evaluations reflect progress in professional development.
- City maintains a training spreadsheet that cross-references desired skill sets with elected or staff capabilities and existing or planned training.

Define and communicate the redevelopment incentive programs that your local government will use to facilitate redevelopment.

Development or redevelopment in inner-ring suburbs is significantly different than greenfield development. Communities should recognize all “extraordinary redevelopment costs” (i.e. the costs that differentiate the redevelopment site from a greenfield site such as those incurred to mitigate contamination, acquire and combine smaller sites, and replace deteriorating infrastructure. Local governments must be willing to utilize available tools to bridge the extenuating circumstances generally encountered with brownfield development.

Financial tools are necessary to close market gaps which drive redevelopment opportunities. The number of developer inquiries may increase when local governments express upfront their willingness to partner with investors.

03

Tools for Redevelopment

03.1

8 points

Financial Redevelopment Tools

Identify and use appropriate financial redevelopment tools for site assessment, due care, site remediation, demolition, infrastructure and other eligible redevelopment improvements such as:

- Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities (BRA)
- Single Business Tax Credits (SBT)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Tax Abatement
- EDC Revenue Bond Financing Programs
- Downtown Development Authorities (DDA)
- Smart Zones
- Available private foundation or nonprofit programs
- Empowerment Zones
- Land Assemblage
- Neighborhood Enterprise Zones
- Renaissance Zones
- Local Development Finance Authority
- Special Assessment Districts
- Corridor Improvement Authorities
- Any other state and federal grants, loans and tax incentives that are applicable

Indicators

- Historical use, current use or intended use of financial development tools is documented and described.
- Tools currently in use by the city are promoted on the website, in specific redevelopment site packages, and are readily accessible in city hall.

03.2

7 points

Demonstrate Community Commitment

Demonstrate the community's commitment and ability to work with the private sector developers and non-profits to address extraordinary redevelopment costs that arise because of environmental, title, infrastructure, land assemblage and other obstacles specific to redevelopment.

Indicators

- Extraordinary costs and/or the process by which they are identified are defined.
- Identify and use financial tools to help address extraordinary costs. In addition, the city can demonstrate the ability of the community to provide assistance.



Standard 4 ~ Development Regulations

[15 POINTS]

Adopt zoning ordinance amendments that facilitate redevelopment

Existing development regulations, including zoning ordinances, often prevent communities from executing innovative redevelopment plans that encourage mixed uses and other modern types of development.

04 Development Regulations

04.1 Zoning

7 points

Indicators

Provide Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments that permit redevelopment techniques not currently permitted by the local community.

These amendments may include:

- Mixed-use zoning
- Planned Unit Development
- Overlay zoning
- Form-based codes
- Form-district codes
- Density bonuses
- Incentive zoning
- Conditional Rezoning
- Special use provisions
- Review of RRC Model Ordinance

04 Development Regulations

04.2 Development Review

5 points

Amend ordinances and codes with specific standards that allow officials to make decisions which will improve the predictability of the development review process.

Indicators

- Inclusion and adoption of specific standards that address appropriate conditional land use approvals and review procedures i.e. landscape requirements, engineering plans, building materials, access, etc.
- Rezoning, special land use, site plan review, and variance applications that identify and describe the process and submittal requirements are in effect.
- Officials' true authority and decision-making power in the redevelopment process is clearly defined.
- Public/private partnerships, deed restrictions, contract zoning, urban renewal plans, etc. are identified.

04.3 Supplementary Development Regulations

3 points

Adopt supplementary development regulations and/or standards to implement redevelopment/development plans.

Indicators

These supplementary amendments or authorities may include:

- Land division regulations
- Condominium regulations
- Access management
- Affordable housing
- Redevelopment of Principal Shopping Districts
- Conditional rezoning

Identify, publish and proactively market information on available redevelopment sites and uses

Most developers do not recognize that older suburbs are viable opportunities for investment. As a result, RRC communities need to work extra hard to market specific redevelopment sites in order to attract the development community. To facilitate redevelopment, it is essential that cities know what parcels of land are available for redevelopment, provide a site analysis describing existing conditions, identify the desired land use and provide potential developers with a comprehensive list of all redevelopment sites, including both vacant parcels and redevelopment parcels as identified in Standard 1.2.

05

Marketing of Redevelopment Sites

05.1

6 points

General Community Marketing

Identify entities including DDA, Chamber of Commerce and any others that are actively marketing your community to potential investors or discussing the need for redevelopment.

Identify key community characteristics and attributes that sell the assets of the community.

Indicators

- Community's profile is marketed through partner organization websites, Travel Michigan, newsletters, trade shows, community bulletin boards and/or county and state agencies.
- Available properties are accessible on the municipal website or as a printed listing in city hall.

05.2

9 points

Promoting Specific Site Information

Obtain, update and make available information about priority redevelopment sites and areas targeted for development.

Indicators

- A list of available parcels for redevelopment is accessible.
- Local real estate community helps city to create and maintain a land use inventory.
- City has a template to sustain the identification of priority site packages.
- Thorough checklist or questionnaire is utilized to evaluate attributes of available sites.
- Developers can access printed or electronic priority site packages that include the following information:
 - Site assessment information:
 - Property ownership
 - Site location
 - Environmental info
 - Location of utilities
 - Taxes
 - Summary of development regulations and plans:
 - Zoning ordinance
 - Redevelopment plans for specific sites
 - Preferred redevelopment uses or redevelopment potential.



Over the course of many decades, many inner-ring suburbs have acquired layers of well-intentioned development review approval requirements such as multiple hearings and reviewing bodies. Many of these requirements are outdated and unnecessarily increase the time and expense associated with development review, threatening to not only stymie the development process but frustrate and even drive away developers. In older communities needing to attract redevelopment, such a process runs counter to a competitive strategy that responds to development interests in a timely manner.

At its most fundamental level, redevelopment planning involves responding to evolving circumstances. Often this means pursuing development strategies that depart significantly from the historic standards and procedures which created local communities as they exist. New strategies are necessary to stem population decline, provide new growth opportunities for increasing the tax base, and foster a diverse economic mix and strong local development climate. Areas of growing abandonment, blight or obsolescence must be repositioned according to societal and market trends. Redevelopment plans take into account changes which describe the kind of actions necessary to restore the vitality to declining areas.

A well defined, predictable and documented process is a vital step in encouraging developers to proceed and participate in redevelopment projects.

06.1**8 points****Streamlining the Process**

Identify the reviewing agencies and procedures for the following activities:

- Rezoning or conditional rezoning
- Special land use
- Planned Unit Development
- Site plan review
- Variances
- Minimize the number of reviewing bodies or number of meetings for the referenced activities on a redevelopment project.
- Adopt procedures for simultaneous review of special land use requests, site plan review, PUDs, variances, and rezoning to be held at the same meeting unless otherwise required by state law.
- Define situations where site plans can be reviewed and approved administratively.

Indicators

- Reviewing bodies are described and referenced in the zoning ordinance or city code.
- Redevelopment proposals move between reviewing bodies (Planning Commission, City Council, Zoning Board of Appeals) in a shorter time period.
- One reviewing body (either Planning Commission or City Council) exists for a site plan requiring such action.
- Zoning Board of Appeals completes its action in one meeting following the action of the reviewing body.
- Administrative approval of compliance with any conditions placed on site plan approval by the reviewing body and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Public/private partnerships are pre-approved by the city council.

06.2**6 points****Documentation**

Applications for rezoning, special land uses, site plan review, and variances applications shall be made easily accessible and include:

- Fee schedules
- Plans required (number and content)
- Meeting schedules (regular and special)
- Review process
- Timeline

Identify any special permits or approvals required (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, brownfield, tree removal, etc.) and at what point in the process they need to be obtained.

Indicators

- New or updated fee structure for reviews, permits, expedited reviews and special meetings.
- Timeline of the development review process to include hearings of all board and commission.
- Situations in which site plans can be reviewed administratively are clearly defined.
- Application is available for download on city website.
- Flow chart that includes permit steps or approvals from other agencies and is accessible for external use.

06

Redevelopment Plan Review Process

06.3

6 points

Staff Review and Project Tracking

Indicators

Designate a qualified staff member as the “intake professional” who is responsible for receiving and processing the application and plans, maintaining contact with the applicant for revisions and/or scheduling meetings, facilitating meetings, and processing after approval.

Create and maintain a tracking process which identifies conditions to approved plans and ensures that information about the status of the project is shared among departments and the applicant.

- Time periods for plan reviews (submission dates and review dates) are established.
- Decreased timetables for review.
- Procedures for reviewing special land use and site plan review requests with affected departments (building, engineering, police, fire, solid waste, planning, etc.) and consultants, as well as, county and state agencies are in place and applicants receive feedback within a specified period of time.
- A variance request is placed on the first legally available Zoning Board of Appeals meeting agenda once a local government’s staff, planning commission or legislative body has determined that such a request is required.
- Timeframes for administratively approving as-of-right use are established.
- Uses that require commission, board or council review and approval are immediately placed on the approving body’s next available agenda, as specified by the intake professional.
- When a particular plan is not in compliance with the community’s adopted development review standards (zoning, site plan, etc.), city produces a staff report that identifies how it is such and provides a “checklist” of requirements necessary to meet the standards.
- An applicant’s re-submitted plan that complies with zoning standards and review of changes against the “checklist” is placed on the approving body’s next available agenda, as specified by the intake professional.
- Easy-to-follow process flow charts outline the permit and construction stages and are available for interested community members and stakeholders to follow.

06

Redevelopment Plan Review Process

06.4

5 points

Maintain Communication During the Process

Indicators

Require a pre-application meeting with the reviewing agencies.

Once a proposal has been submitted, provide the applicant an opportunity to meet with the reviewing agencies to respond to concerns and questions (planning staff, consultants, city departments, planning commission, city council).

Allow for special meetings to expedite the review process and establish a fee structure.

Allow for and encourage community meetings at the outset of the application process in which a development proposal can be discussed with residents and businesses of the affected area.

- Procedures for calling a special meeting of the reviewing bodies are established and followed.
- Process for internal staff review of plans with/without consultants is clearly established, and departments required in the review are identified and involved.
- City officials regularly conduct study and review meetings with the planning commission and/or city council.
- Periodic customer surveys are conducted.
- Customer responses that identify areas of improvement in the development process are analyzed and, when applicable, integrated into the process.



michigan suburbs alliance

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance, a nonprofit corporation registered in the State of Michigan, was founded by a group of local government officials (mayors and city managers) who realized that many of the challenges confronting their communities were regional or statewide in scope. We seek to unite and strengthen metro Detroit's mature suburbs by elevating regional cooperation, reforming public policies and innovating redevelopment strategies.