



## The Redevelopment Ready Communities<sup>SM</sup> Program

### ➤ The Problem

An increasingly dangerous trend of disinvestment is threatening the stability of older suburbs in southeast Michigan. Because of the complications associated with redeveloping existing properties and misperceptions that redevelopment is difficult and overly bureaucratic, many investors are choosing to develop in fast-growing exurbs and greenfield areas. Meanwhile, blighted, vacant buildings and empty storefronts are becoming more common in inner suburbs, reducing their quality of life and perpetuating population loss.

### ➤ The Program

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance's Redevelopment Ready Communities program is a nationally-recognized program that strives to certify cities for incorporating innovative redevelopment best practices into their daily development processes. By participating in the program, built-out cities develop strategies for streamlining municipal processes, engaging the community in planning for redevelopment, and creating a more inviting redevelopment climate.

### ➤ The Process

RRC encompasses an eight-step certification process, throughout which cities can receive technical assistance from the Suburbs Alliance and RRC professional planning consultants. Participating cities' redevelopment processes are evaluated by an RRC consultant to produce a score and evaluation report. Cities must achieve 80 out of 100 points to achieve certification.

### ➤ The Graduates

To date, the cities of Eastpointe, Grosse Pointe Woods, Hazel Park, Lincoln Park, River Rouge, Southfield and Ypsilanti have achieved 'Redevelopment Ready' certification. To become certified, these cities made changes in their redevelopment processes that have increased their efficiency and openness, creating more business-friendly environments for redevelopment. Using the RRC Best Practices as a guide, these cities conducted community visioning sessions, updated master plans, created vacant land cataloguing systems, and passed new zoning ordinances, among many other proactive measures.

### ➤ The Best Practices

The RRC Best Practices, or Standards, address six principles essential to an efficient, successful redevelopment process and serve as the foundation of the certification process. They were developed by the Suburbs Alliance with the help of nearly twenty national experts on redevelopment. The best practices were tested during a 2005 pilot program and were revised to include participants' recommendations. One of the most significant changes was the addition of indicators, or examples of how a community may illustrate its achievement of an RRC Standard.

