



*Michigan Association of Planning  
A Chapter of the American Planning Association*

## **Public Redevelopment Policy Guide**

**Adopted April 22, 2005**

The redirection of a growth into the nation's central cities, urbanized areas, inner suburbs, and other areas already served by infrastructure and supported by urban services is an essential element of the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) vision. The purpose of this Policy Guide is to establish policies that will increase the effectiveness of planners and the planning process in formulating and implementing redevelopment policies and programs.

### **GENERAL POLICY**

**POLICY 1.** The Michigan Association of Planning supports the adoption of state legislation requiring that a redevelopment area may be established only if the local government agency performing redevelopment has adopted a local comprehensive plan and the redevelopment area plan conforms to the comprehensive plan insofar as the plan applies to the redevelopment project, and intergovernmental cooperation to ensure that actions of single purpose agencies are not inconsistent with local adopted redevelopment plans.

**POLICY 2.** While recognizing that the enabling legislation must be developed in light of the opportunities and constraints posed by the entire body of land use legislation, MAP believes that there are certain basic premises that should underlie and support all redevelopment statutes. Well-written enabling legislation governing redevelopment authorities, and the practices of effective, equitable redevelopment should include:

- A clearly defined process for determining eligibility of designating areas in which the municipality or other governments have the authority to engage in redevelopment projects including both prevention and elimination of blight and provision for public/private partnerships.
- A means of choosing partners that is fair, open equitable, transparent (while protective of trade secrets or other proprietary data), and demonstrated to be the best choice for the public interest.
- Mechanisms to prevent the use of partnerships to subvert the responsibilities that are imposed on the public agency through enabling legislation or case law to provide due

process, demonstrate public purpose, and establish a nexus between the public purpose for redevelopment and the means to achieve that purpose.

- Assurance that public/private partnerships adhere to the adopted plans of the jurisdiction.
- Requirements for clearly defined responsibilities and liabilities of public and private partners.

**POLICY 3.** MAP supports the adoption of legislation that authorizes the appointment of a representative of the Planning Commission as a regular or ex-officio member of the redevelopment agency's governing board and encourages local government to include a planning commission representative as a regular member of the agency board when such appointments are already permitted. Where state law does not require a redevelopment agency as a prerequisite, the process should provide for review and a recommendation by the body responsible for the comprehensive planning function before adopting any redevelopment program.

**POLICY 4.** MAP encourages state and local governments to organize so that redevelopment and economic development functions are assigned to the same agency or department that is responsible for comprehensive long-range planning, housing, and community development activities, transportation, and other planning functions. When it is not feasible to assign these functions to the same agency, state and local governments should use inter-departmental committees, cross training, and other approaches to promote integration of planning, housing and other community development considerations in the redevelopment process.

**POLICY 5.** MAP encourages state legislation, including eminent domain when appropriate, to achieve a well-defined public purpose adopted through an inclusive public process.

**POLICY 6.** MAP encourages the use of redevelopment strategies that embrace sustainable, "smart" growth in that they:

- Conserve land resources by attracting new development to infill and brown field sites rather than converting raw agricultural or undeveloped acreage;
- Take advantage of existing infrastructure rather than requiring the construction of expensive new infrastructure;
- Reuse existing resources;
- Recycle materials and structures;
- Conserve energy and other non-renewable resources;
- Adapt historic or culturally significant existing buildings to new uses;
- Improve or restore natural systems such as streambeds, drainage courses, wetlands, rivers, ports, ambient air quality, and other ecological features;
- Embrace the principles of sustainable community planning, as articulated in other MAP policies.
- Are designed to promote long-term economic sustainability.
- Address potential oversupply of land for development.

**POLICY 7.** MAP believes that planners should better understand the redevelopment process, and should take an active role in ensuring that redevelopment is informed by proper planning practice. To this end, MAP should:

- Promote effective redevelopment planning through its publications, sponsored research, and materials;

- Identify best redevelopment practices that represent new or progressive models for community engagement, redevelopment planning and economics, sustainable practices and technologies, and effective implementation;
- Encourage and support the efforts of communities to actively track and participate in the development of new redevelopment legislation, to ensure that legislative responses are informed by good information about the manner in which redevelopment planning occurs;
- Support the development of post-graduate courses that train planners to properly formulate and implement redevelopment programs in accord with the principles set forth in this policy guide.
- Support the continuing education and outreach to elected and appointed officials.

**POLICY 8.** MAP should work closely with other organizations involved in the practice and policy of redevelopment to define legislative models that reflect the principles and policies reflected in this policy guide and to coordinate effective responses to legislative initiatives that conflict with our mutual objectives.

**POLICY 9.** MAP believes that good redevelopment practice requires that the public have sufficient and appropriate opportunities to learn how effective redevelopment improves community life. MAP supports the development of media strategies and educational programs that showcase success in redevelopment planning, citizen empowerment, effective implementation, and improved quality of life resulting from redevelopment.

**POLICY 10.** MAP supports the adoption of state legislation that requires an inclusive and informative public notice and public participation process to ensure open and participatory redevelopment programs. MAP support the inclusion of citizens, property owners, and businesses in redevelopment plans.

**POLICY 11.** MAP encourages local planning agencies to develop consistent planning practices and standards for redevelopment programs to support decision making

**POLICY 12.** MAP encourages intergovernmental and agency cooperation and budget cooperation to reduce conflict in redevelopment planning and implementation efforts

## **SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**SPECIFIC POLICY 1.** MAP supports redevelopment that ensures the amount of public or tax increment funding diverted to redevelopment projects can be shown to advance its economic, housing, and blight eradication goals without unduly diminishing the capability of other taxing entities to serve their consumers. To this end, MAP supports state and local legislation that:

- Places reasonable limits on the amount of tax increment that can be accrued by a redevelopment project area over a specified period of time;
- Sets reasonable performance standards to ensure that redevelopment funds are utilized within a certain period of time and in the manner intended by the redevelopment plan;
- Provides adequate opportunities for other governmental entities to receive the accrued taxes once a redevelopment project is completed or its statutory time period has expired.

- Provides sufficient guarantees and protections in the event that the private parties who receive tax benefits withdraw from participation.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 2.** MAP supports the use of redevelopment programs to expand opportunities for communities that are most in need responding to the need for inclusion, nondiscrimination, social and economic equity. Such programs may include a mandatory set-aside of redevelopment funds for below market-rate (BMR) housing or creation of job opportunities for unemployment/underemployed residents of project area. Plans must also guard against redevelopment activities that fail to recognize and respect existing societal and cultural fabric as well as promote jobs retention and minimize displacement of existing residents and businesses. Redevelopment for housing purposes shall be consistent with the adopted housing policies of MAP.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 3.** MAP supports a balanced approach to redevelopment that recognizes the value that historic and cultural resources and archaeological and paleontological resources provide, and that incorporates them into redevelopment project design. These tools include, but are not limited to:

- The adaptive reuse of historic structures to provide an alternative to demolition and new construction that preserves culturally and historically significant community resources;
- The use of historic preservation tax credits and state and local incentives to encourage the preservation of critical historic resources;
- The incorporation of cultural resources and landscapes into project design by protecting structures of architectural or historical merit, establishing conservation easements to protect specific portions of resources worthy of protection, and encouraging compatible design of new construction;
- The adaptation of permitting, fee reduction, and streamlining strategies to promote cultural resource preservation in redevelopment project areas;
- The incorporation of public art and interpretive exhibits into project design where they can provide economic, aesthetic, and cultural benefits.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 4.** MAP supports adequate funding of federal and state programs that provide assistance to communities for community redevelopment, including support for neighborhood revitalization by providing funding for the development and rehabilitation of urban parks.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 5.** MAP encourages policies to ensure that federal and state redevelopment aid programs promote integration of local redevelopment comprehensive planning.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 6.** MAP supports the passage and maintenance of federal and state tax incentives for the reuse and rehabilitation of historic and other qualifying existing structures.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 7.** MAP supports state and federal investment and property management policies that promote local livability, downtown vitality, and neighborhood redevelopment and that discourage sprawl. Such policies include making siting and design decision consistent with local planning, maintaining federal facilities in downtowns and historic districts, evaluating impacts on sprawl and redevelopment in decision making, and appropriate management of federal real estate, including coordination with local municipalities on vacant or abandoned property.

**SPECIFIC POLICY 8.** MAP supports state and federal legislation that supports redevelopment of brownfields consistent with the provisions of MAP policy guides on these topics.