

United Growth for Kent County, Inc.



United Growth for Kent County, Inc. is a citizen-based effort that addresses both urban and rural land use issues by seeking to revitalize Grand Rapids' central city neighborhoods while preserving farmland and open spaces.

For more information or if you would like to join United Growth, check out www.UnitedGrowth.org

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MSU Extension in Kent County is part of a state-wide information and education delivery network, applying university level, research-based knowledge to locally-identified critical issues. We respond to local needs through a unique partnership of County, State and Federal resources. Information is extended to Kent County residents through the MSU non-formal education system, which assists individuals, families and communities to make better decisions.

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Neighborhood and Community Development

ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS



Created by:

Kent / MSU Extension

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United Growth for
Kent County, Inc.





Introduction

WELCOME!

Engaging in community development can be a challenging task for someone who is new to the neighborhood revitalization and community development world. The need to have a solid understanding of the lexicon specific to community development is magnifying the challenges faced by those who wish to build up communities. However, learning that lexicon can be tricky as it varies from city to city, region to region, state to state.

This guide is meant to be a resource connecting those who want to learn the “language” with the information they need. This guide is by no means exhaustive but rather serves as an introduction to the tools, resources, and organizations available in Grand Rapids that can help them make this city *the best place* to live, work, and play.

This guide compiled by:

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Download additional copies at: www.UnitedGrowth.org



HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
HRS	Home Repair Services
HUD	U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development
ICCF	Inter City Christian Federation
ITP	Interurban Transit Partnership
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LEED-ND	LEED - Neighborhood Development
LID	Low Impact Development
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
MEDC	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
MSHDA	Michigan State Housing Development Authority
MSUE	Michigan State University Extension
NA	Neighborhood Association
NEZ	Neighborhood Enterprise Zone
NV	Neighborhood Ventures
NBA	Neighborhood Business Alliance
PDR	Purchase of Development Rights
POD	Pedestrian-Oriented Development
RFP	Request for Proposals
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
ROI	Return on Investment
SEV	State Equalized Value
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TIFA	Tax Increment Financing Authority
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
UGKC (RNC)	United Growth for Kent County, Revitalizing Neighborhoods Committee
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WMEAC	West Michigan Environmental Action Council
WMSA	West Michigan Strategic Alliance
ZBA	See BZA



Quick Reference - General

ASP	Area Specific Plan
BA	Business Association
BID	Business Improvement District
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BZA	Board of Zoning Appeals
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CEDAM	Community Economic Development Association of Michigan
CHDO	Community Housing Development Organization
CLT	Community Land Trust
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
CIA	Corridor Improvement Authority
CID	Corridor Improvement District
CNU	Congress for New Urbanism
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CRI	Community Research Institute
DA	Downtown Alliance
DDA	Downtown Development Authority (City of Grand Rapids)
DID	Downtown Improvement District
DLEG	Department of Labor and Economic Growth (MI)
DMB	Downtown Management Board
GRCC	Grand Rapids Community College
GRCF	Grand Rapids Community Foundation
GRCMC	Grand Rapids Community Media Center
GROW	Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women
GRPD	Grand Rapids Police Department
GRPS	Grand Rapids Public School
GTLO	Get the Lead Out
GVMC	Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
GVSU	Grand Valley State University
HHC	Healthy Homes Coalition



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Affordable Housing - BRT

Affordable Housing: Decent housing that costs no more than 30% of the household income per month. Ideally, affordable housing should be incorporated into mixed-income neighborhoods and be indistinguishable from market-rate housing.

AmeriCorps: Federal organization that provides volunteers to communities to create and expand programs that build neighborhood capacity. See www.AmeriCorps.org

Area Specific Plan (ASP): ASPs are an effective way to ensure that land use and development goals for a particular area of the city are created which protect that area's unique characteristics while encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment. ASPs are typically created by the neighborhood and business associations located in that area and become amendments to the City's master plan. See *Chapter 11 of the 2002 Master Plan available at www.grcity.us*

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA): The City of Grand Rapids Board to which appeals are made contesting the application of the zoning ordinance to a particular property or building. See www.GRCity.us/Planning

Business Association (BA): A nonprofit organization of business owners representing a neighborhood commercial district. Business associations generally meet monthly and undertake activities that market their area and businesses and improve their neighborhood.

Business Improvement District (BID): State economic development tool that allows a business association or other organized community body to implement a special assessment on property taxes to be used to fund improvements within the district. See www.legislature.mi.gov; Enabled by Public Act 120 of 1961

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Innovative, high capacity, higher speed, cost-effective public transit solution that can achieve the performance of the more expensive light rail system. Utilizes dedicated bus lanes and other state-of-the-art technologies to improve service. See www.RideTheRapid.org



Quick Reference - Business Associations

Ridgemoor Neighborhood Organization

Roosevelt Park NA

South East Community Association

South East End NA

South West Area Neighbors

South Hill NA

West Grand Neighborhood Association

West Side Connection

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS (BAs)

Algers Heights BA

Grandville Avenue BA

Boston Square BA

Heartside BA

Burton Heights BA

Madison Square BA

Cheshire Village BA

Michigan Street BA

Creston BA

Monroe North BA

Division South BA

Seymour Square BA

East Fulton BA

Stockbridge BA

East Hills BA

Wealthy Street BA

Easttown BA

West Fulton Area BA

Franklin/Eastern BA

West Leonard BA



Quick Reference - Neighborhood Associations

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (NAs)

Alger Heights NA
Auburn Hills NA
Baxter NA
Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community
Breton Village NA
Cherry Run Area Neighbors
Creston NA
East Hills Council of Neighbors
Eastgate NA
Eastown NA
Fuller Area Neighbors
Fulton Heights NA
Garfield Park NA
Heartside
Heritage Hill Association
Highland Park Association
John Ball Park Community Association
Madison Area NA
Michigan Oaks NA
Midtown NA
Millbrook NA
Neighbors of Belknap Lookout
North East Citizen Action Association
Oakdale Neighbors
Ottawa Hills NA



CSO - CRI

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO): Outdated sewer system that allows stormwater runoff to mix with household waste during periods of intense rainfall and be dumped into bodies of water. EPA regulations now require the effects of CSOs to be mitigated resulting in the removal of most of these systems. See www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=3323

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Federal grant program that funds local community development activities such as affordable housing initiatives, anti-poverty programs, neighborhood associations, and others. The City of Grand Rapids and Kent County both receive CDBG funds. See www.HUD.gov

Community Development Corporations (CDC): Nonprofits organized for the purpose of providing housing and economic development services within a community or neighborhood. Their programs are typically geared to low-income citizens and struggling neighborhoods. Typically, a majority of board members are from the target neighborhood. An example of a CDC is New Development Corp. See www.NewDevelopmentCorp.org

Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM)*: Association of community development corporations, individuals, and other organizations interested in promoting and expanding community-based housing and economic development across the state of Michigan. See www.CEDAM.info

Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO pronounced Chodo): A designation the City of Grand Rapids gives to housing organizations, which qualifies them for special funding through the federal government. See www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/topical/chdo.cfm

Community Research Institute (CRI)*: CRI monitors changing local and regional social conditions and provides this information to the local nonprofit and philanthropic community. CRI also helps neighborhood organizations understand the demographic and population trends of their community, document these needs for grant applications, and measure the success of their various programs. See www.CRIData.org



Community Land Trust (CLT): Affordable housing method that enables property to remain affordable even after changing owners. Dwelling Place is currently coordinating efforts to create a CLT in Grand Rapids. See www.iceclt.org

Congress for New Urbanism (CNU)*: A national nonprofit organization that works with multi-disciplinary professionals to promote walkable, diverse, and sustainable development. See www.CNU.org

Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA): State economic development tool that enables the city to establish an authority to capture the taxes assessed on a specifically designated district and use those taxes to finance neighborhood improvement and redevelopment projects. See www.legislature.mi.gov; Enabled by Public Act 280 of 2005

Corridor Improvement District (CID): The geographical area targeted by a CIA (see previous entry).

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)*: The goal of CPTED is to prevent crime through designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior – people who use the area regularly perceive it as safe, and would-be criminals see the area as a highly risky place to commit crime. See www.CPTED-Watch.com

Downtown Alliance (DA)*: The DA is a business improvement district in downtown GR designed, governed and implemented by stakeholders to strengthen the downtown area by: advocating for the interests of downtown; providing a clean, friendly and attractive downtown; creating a more productive business and community environment; preserving and enhancing the downtown character; all of which are essential to downtown’s success as a place to work, live, shop and recreate. See www.DowntownGR.org

Downtown Development Authority (City of Grand Rapids) (DDA)*: Established in 1979 to promote economic growth and revitalization and encourage historic preservation within the central business district. See http://www.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=1657; Enabled by Public Act 197 of 1975



COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (CHDOs)

Garfield Development Corporation
334 Burton St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: (616) 241-2443

Genesis Nonprofit Housing Corporation
528 Bridge St. NW, Suite 6
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: (616) 988-2897

Heartside Nonprofit Housing Corporation
101 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Suite 2
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: (616) 454-0928

ICCF Nonprofit Housing Corporation
920 Cherry Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Phone: (616) 336-9333

Lighthouse Communities, Inc
1422 Madison Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: (616) 451-9140

New Development Corporation
1589 Plainfield Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Phone: (616) 361-7500



U.S. HUD - Walkability

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)*: HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. HUD administers CDBG. See www.hud.gov

U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)*: The mission of USGBC is to transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built, and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life. USGBC also sponsors and supervises the LEED program. See www.usgbc.org

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)*: The number of miles that residential vehicles are driven. See www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/rtecs/chapter3.html

West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC)*: Nonprofit organization working to protect and enhance West Michigan's natural and human environments by translating the concerns of people into positive action. See www.wmeac.org

West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA)*: Regional organization with a vision to make West Michigan the best place to live, learn, work and play by creating a regional mindset; ensuring a sustainable environment; revitalizing our urban centers; developing a growth strategy; strengthening our community through diversity; and fostering a prosperous community. See www.WM-Alliance.org

Walkability: The degree to which a community's stores, schools, parks, civic and recreational opportunities are accessible to pedestrians rather than being auto-oriented. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/walkability>

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): See BZA

*Description prepared by organization and is also available on the provided website



DID - GROW

Downtown Improvement District (DID): City of Grand Rapids board that oversees the activities of the Downtown Alliance. See www.DowntownGR.org/about_us-resources.php

Downtown Management Board (DMB): Former name for the Downtown Improvement District. See *alphabetical listing of services at* www.grand-rapids.mi.us

Dwelling Place: Dwelling Place improves the lives of people by creating quality affordable housing, providing essential support services and serving as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization. Efforts are focused in the Heartside Neighborhood. See www.DwellingPlaceGR.org

Get the Lead Out (GTLO): Pilot program that began in 2001 by the Community Leadership Institute at Aquinas College to combat the increasing numbers of inner-city children with elevated blood-lead levels. Pilot program ended in 2005 and resulted in the formation of the Healthy Homes Coalition. See www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org/about-us/

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC or just CC): Primarily two-year higher education institution located in downtown Grand Rapids. GRCC also provides job-retraining programs for adults. See www.GRCC.edu

Grand Rapids Community Foundation (GRCF): Grand Rapids area foundation that administers grant programs in a variety of fields including community and neighborhood development. See www.GRFoundation.org

Grand Rapids Community Media Center (GRCMC): A highly respected local nonprofit that provides media training, web design, and other assistance to area groups for nominal fees. See www.GRCMC.org

Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW)*: GROW exists to provide women of West Michigan the education and resources that will allow them to strive towards their dream of achieving self-fulfillment and positive economic change. See www.GrowBusiness.org



GRPD - ITP

Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD): The City of Grand Rapids' law enforcement organization.

Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS): School system serving the City of Grand Rapids. See www.grps.k12.mi.us

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)*: GVMC is an alliance of governmental units in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area that are appointed to plan for growth and development, improve the quality of the community's life, and coordinate governmental services. See www.GVMC.org

Grand Valley State University (GVSU): Four-year public university with campuses in Allendale and downtown Grand Rapids. See www.GVSU.edu

Healthy Homes Coalition (HHC): Nonprofit dedicated to ending childhood lead poisoning and to apply the lessons learned to other children's environmental health issues. See www.HealthyHomesCoalition.org

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC): Grand Rapids committee tasked with ensuring that the City of Grand Rapids is able to preserve buildings with historical value for future generations. See www.grcity.us/index.pl?page_id=2627

Home Repair Services (HRS): Non-profit organization that assists low-income homeowners in the Kent County area. See www.HomeRepairServices.org

Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF): Non-profit housing corporation that builds new housing, rehabs existing housing, provides emergency housing, assists with long term rental housing, and provides homeowner education classes. See www.ICCF.org

Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP): Authority that oversees the local transit system, The Rapid. Comprised of a 15-member board of directors representing 6 municipalities (East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming) served by The Rapid. See www.RideTheRapid.org



SHPO - UGKC

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO): Using federal grant money SHPO identifies, evaluates, registers, interprets and protects the state's historic properties. SHPO is a federally-mandated program. See www.michigan.gov/SHPO

Sustainability: Sustainability is the idea of "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Also referred to as the "Triple Bottom Line" -- Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, and Social Equity. See www.epa.gov/Sustainability/ OR www.CenterForSustainability.org

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA): Economic tool that enables local taxes to be captured for use in redevelopment and area improvement projects. TIFAs oversee the implementation and activities of an area utilizing a TIF. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a TIFA. See www.legislature.mi.gov; *Enabled by P.A. 197 of 1975; P.A. 450 of 1980; P.A. 281 of 1986; P.A. 381 of 1996; P.A. 280 of 2005*

Traffic-calming*: Traffic calming involves changes in street alignment, installation of barriers, and other physical measures to reduce traffic volume and speed. in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes. See www.TrafficCalming.org

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Moderate- and high-density housing concentrated in mixed-use developments located along transit-routes. The location, design, and mix of uses in a TOD emphasize pedestrian-oriented environments and support the use of public transportation. See <http://www.ReconnectingAmerica.org/Public/TOD>

United Growth for Kent County, Inc. (UGKC); Revitalizing Neighborhoods Committee

(RNC)*: UGKC is a citizen-based nonprofit that unites urban and rural people and organizations around the promotion of positive land use in Kent County and West Michigan. RNC represents the urban contingency and assists community-based organizations in building capacity, improving the social and economic vitality of neighborhoods; and identifying and mitigating the effects of urban sprawl. See www.UnitedGrowth.org



Ren Zone - Smart Growth

Renaissance Zone (Ren Zone)*: Renaissance Zones are distressed and blighted areas which are virtually tax free for businesses or residents presently in or moving to a Zone. The Zones are designed to provide selected areas with a powerful market-based incentive and the elimination of most state and local taxes, to spur new jobs and investment. See www.GRCity.us

Return on Investment (ROI): Generally a financial investment term used to describe the monetary outcome of a particular investment. In the community development world, returns on investments can be financial and/or social gains.

Request for Proposals (RFP): An RFP is basically an invitation for companies to bid on a particular project by laying out their proposed plans and costs for delivering a requested service..

Request for Qualifications (RFQ): An RFQ is an invitation for companies to submit a proposal demonstrating their qualifications to carry out a project Once a company is selected based on an RFQ, then design plans are created jointly.

The Right Place, Inc.: Regional economic development agency that promotes economic growth in the areas of employment, productivity and technology in Greater Grand Rapids by developing jobs through business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts. See www.RightPlace.org

State Equalized Value (SEV): The SEV is approximately 1/2 of the market rate for real property and is determined by the local municipality's assessor's office subject to the approval of the County and State. Property taxes are based on the lesser of the SEV or the Capped Value of the property. See www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=154

Smart Growth: Development that concentrates growth in the already populated areas to avoid urban sprawl; and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, streets that work for everyone, mixed-use development with a range of housing choices. Smart growth values long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over a short-term focus. See www.SmartGrowth.org



Land Banking - MEDC

Land Banking: Purchasing land cheaply with the intent to sell it when the demand for the land, and the price, increase.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED): Rating system that provides standards for construction to be considered environmentally sustainable. As of 2007, Grand Rapids has 12% of the Nation's LEED-certified buildings. See www.usgbc.org/leed

LEED-Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND): Rating system that integrates smart growth, urbanism, and LEED building standards into a program that can evaluate design at the neighborhood scale. See www.usgbc.org/leed/nd

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC): LISC's mission is to support the development of local leadership, the creation of affordable housing, commercial, industrial, and community facilities, businesses and jobs by providing capital, training and information, and technical expertise to community organizations. See www.lisc.org OR www.lisc.org/michigan/index.shtml

Local First: An organization that promotes shopping at locally owned businesses so that each dollar spent is re-circulated in the local economy. See www.LocalFirst.com

Low Impact Development (LID): Land planning program that manages stormwater runoff through conservation and use of natural geographical features. LID practices result in less flood risk, improved aesthetic value, and better protected natural habitats. See www.LowImpactDevelopment.org

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG): DLEG is the state department responsible for overseeing construction codes; jobs, education & training; Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority; as well as the state Energy Office. See www.michigan.gov/DLEG

Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC): The State's official economic development agency. Provides help with site location, job training grants, tax abatement information, etc. See www.MichiganAdvantage.org OR www.theMEDC.org



MSHDA - NV

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)*: MSHDA provides financial and technical assistance through public and private partnerships to create and preserve safe and decent affordable housing, engage in community economic development activities, develop vibrant cities, towns and villages, and address issues faced by the homeless. See www.michigan.gov/MSHDA

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE): MSUE focuses on bringing knowledge-based educational programs to the people of the state to improve their lives and communities. County-based staff members team up with on-campus faculty members to serve every county with programming focused on agriculture/natural resources; children, youth & families; and community & economic development. See www.msue.msu.edu

Mixed-Income: A building, development, or neighborhood with housing that is affordable to a range of household incomes. A primary goal is to provide housing within walking distance of one's place of employment - no matter what position is held.

Mixed-Use: A building or area that provides a variety of land uses. For example, a building with retail on the ground floor and offices and/or residential on the upper floors.

Neighborhood Association (NA): A group of residents and property owners who advocate for or organize activities within a particular neighborhood. See <http://maps.grand-rapids.mi.us/CommunityDev/viewer.htm> for a listing of Grand Rapids' NAs

Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ)*: NEZs in the City of Grand Rapids are aimed at promoting home ownership and investment in areas where the greatest impact will occur and where such improvements may trigger additional investment in nearby neighborhoods. First time homeowners who buy new or recently rehabbed homes are eligible for tax breaks lasting up to 12 years. See www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=5515

Neighborhood Ventures (NV)*: A nonprofit community and economic development agency that works within urban business districts to bring greater vitality into neighborhoods through a variety of initiatives. See www.NeighborhoodVentures.org



NBA - Rapid Growth

Neighborhood Business Alliance (NBA)*: NBA consists of representatives from all 20 area business associations who meet together monthly to coordinate city-wide services, share best practices and advocate on issues effecting neighborhood businesses and districts.

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA): NRSA is a program that builds collaboration between federal and local governments, private and community organizations, and residents within a specific neighborhood. These partnerships become the foundation for neighborhood revitalization and economic development. NRSA is intended to be a strategy that empowers low- and middle- income families within the NRSA area.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): PDR compensates farmland-owners for the appraised, fair market value of their property development rights in exchange for a permanent agricultural conservation easement on their property. This ensures that the land will forever be agricultural land. See www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/BOC/PDR/default.htm

Pedestrian-Oriented Development (POD): Development designed with an emphasis primarily on sidewalks and pedestrian access to the site and building rather than on vehicular access and parking. Traditionally, this means the building is built close to the sidewalk, building walls along the sidewalk include large windows, and the main entrance is oriented to the sidewalk. See also Walkability. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedestrian-oriented_development

The Rapid*: Transit system serving 6 municipalities in the Greater Grand Rapids area. The Rapid operates 19 fixed routes, demand-response services for people with disabilities and those living outside the fixed-route service area, car and vanpooling programs, and the Air Porter shuttle among other services. See www.RideTheRapid.org

Rapid Growth: A weekly e-newsletter that positively promotes the economic development activities occurring in West Michigan. Articles incorporate new urbanist and neighborhood revitalization concepts. See www.RapidGrowthMedia.com