

### **Single-Family Rental Certifications Talking Points**

- We all benefit from quality housing – tenants, neighbors, the City, and the rental market.
- The program as proposed is self supporting and budget neutral.
- Neighboring communities such as Holland, Wyoming, and Kentwood certify single-family rental units. Kalamazoo charges twice as much as the fee being proposed for Grand Rapids.
- Between 2006 and 2009, the number of families renting single-family homes in Grand Rapids increased by 3,200 families—an astounding 70% (American Community Survey, 2009).
- A large percentage of single-family rental units (those that are not being proactively inspected under the current policy) are located in economically-challenged, low-income, and high minority neighborhoods.
- Substandard single-family rental units lower neighboring property values and therefore tax revenue, along with negatively impacting neighboring business districts.
- By exempting single-family rentals from inspection and certification, Grand Rapids is attracting unscrupulous income-property owners who profit from substandard properties At the expense of neighborhoods, hard-working families and homeowners.
- Grand Rapids residents should have access to housing that is both affordable AND in good repair.
- This is about having competitive housing for middle-income families as much as providing good housing for low-income families.
- This policy change will ensure that all Grand Rapids housing is of good quality and will improve consumer confidence.
- Improved inspector efficiency reduces complaints from the community, therefore reducing time staff spends on chasing complaints as well as time Commissioners spend responding to constituent needs. Also, this plan will free up inspector time to more effectively address other important issues (i.e. two-family units).
- Single family rental property is a business that is already regulated by the City.
- An annual evaluation of the program is proposed that will allow the City to make adjustments as needed, such as gained efficiencies, proactive policies, and cost reductions.

## **Vacant Property Talking Points**

- Vacant homes cost nearby homeowners a lot of money. In a preliminary GVSU study, each vacant home located within 500 yards lowers adjacent property values by approximately one percent.
- The foreclosure crisis has exacerbated vacant property issues. More than 1 in 7 homes have foreclosed in recent years, and too many remain vacant.
- Vacant properties increase crime, lower nearby property values, and can become an eyesore.
- Without accurate identification on vacant properties, the City of Grand Rapids lacks critical information and therefore cannot develop and implement an effective program to stem vacancy-related decline.
- The current vacant property registry needs to be enhanced to meet the current needs of neighborhoods most severely affected by the foreclosure crisis.
- We have a great new opportunity to reuse vacant properties through the Kent County Land Bank Authority. The land bank acquires, maintains, and disposes of foreclosed property, along with offering many incentives to developers for sustainably reuse vacant property, such as title clearance, Brownfield Tax Credits, tax-free holding of the parcel, and improved chances to receive financing.
- Accurate vacant property data will help inform the Kent Count Land Bank Authority's future reuse policies.
- A local point of contact will provide neighbors the ability to contact the responsible party if there is a problem at the property.
- "No Trespassing" orders help deter crime.
- Instituting a fee for registering vacant properties will fund staff dedicated to finding unregistered properties and performing code compliance checks on vacant homes.