

MICHIGAN REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) Program is a state-wide certification program that supports communities to become development ready and competitive in today's economy. It encourages communities to adopt innovative redevelopment strategies and efficient processes which build confidence among businesses and developers. Through the RRC program, local municipalities receive assistance in establishing a solid foundation for development to occur in their communities – making them more attractive for investments that create places where people want to live, work and play.

Once engaged in the program, communities commit to improving their redevelopment readiness by undergoing a rigorous assessment, and then work to achieve a set of criteria laid out in the RRC Best Practices. Each best practice addresses key elements of community and economic development, setting the standard for evaluation and the requirements to attain certification. The program measures and then certifies communities that actively tap the vision of local residents and business owners to shape a plan for their future while also having the fundamental practices in place to be able to achieve that vision. The six RRC best practices include:

- Community Plans and Public Outreach
- Zoning Regulations
- Development Review Process
- Recruitment and Education
- Redevelopment Ready Sites®
- Community Prosperity

Through the RRC best practices, communities build deliberate, fair and consistent development processes from the inside out. RRC provides the framework and benchmarks for communities to strategically and tactically ask “What can we do differently?” By shifting the way municipalities approach development, they're reinventing the way they do business – making them

more attractive for investments that create places where talent wants to live, work and visit.

The RRC program also has an advisory council consisting of public and private sector experts to assist in guiding the development of the best practices, provide feedback and recommendations on community assessments, and consider new opportunities to enhance the program. In addition to Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) assistance, communities receive comments from multiple perspectives from experts working in the field, tapping into a broader pool of talent.

RRC certification formally recognizes communities for being proactive and business friendly. Certified communities clearly signal they have effective development practices such as well-defined development procedures, a community-supported vision, an open and predictable review process and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects. Through the program, MEDC provides evaluation support, expertise and consultation, training opportunities, and assist certified communities market their top redevelopment sites. These packaged sites are primed for new investment because they are located within a community that has effective policies, efficient processes and broad community support.

For more information email RRC@michigan.org or contact the MEDC at 517.373.9808.



redevelopment ready communities®

BEST PRACTICES



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BEST PRACTICES

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If your community plans for future investment, invites public input, and offers superior customer service, then Redevelopment Ready Communities certification® is for you!

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program works with Michigan communities seeking to streamline the development approval process by integrating transparency, predictability and efficiency into their daily development practices. RRC is a statewide program that certifies communities who actively engage stakeholders and plan for the future. RRC empowers communities to shape their future by assisting in the creation of a solid planning, zoning and development foundation to retain and attract businesses, investment and talent.

Through RRC, communities commit to improving redevelopment readiness by agreeing to undergo a rigorous assessment, and work to achieve a set of criteria as described in this document. Developed by public and private sector experts, the RRC best practices are the standard for evaluation. Each best practice addresses key elements of community and economic development. Evaluations are conducted by the RRC team through interviews, observation and data analysis. After the evaluation, a community is presented

with a report of findings that highlights successes and outlines recommended actions for implementation of missing best practice criteria. The expectations listed with each evaluation criteria are what a community is measured against to determine if that criteria is being accomplished. A community must demonstrate how the expectations are being achieved, and when applicable, may propose alternative approaches. To be awarded certification, a community must meet all RRC best practice criteria.

Redevelopment Ready Communities certification signals that a community has clear development policies and procedures, a community-supported vision, a predictable review process and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects. Once certified, the MEDC will assist in the promotion and marketing of up to three Redevelopment Ready Sites®. These packaged sites are primed for new investment because they are located within a community that has effective policies, efficient processes and the broad community support needed to get shovels in the ground.

In this document, parts of the best practices will have further explanation. If a word is in orange, hover your mouse over it and a yellow box will appear with more information. If a word is orange and underlined, it contains a hyperlink. Contact the RRC team at RRC@michigan.org with questions.

Best Practice One: Community plans and public outreach

1.1 — THE PLANS

Best Practice 1.1 evaluates community planning and how a community's redevelopment vision is embedded in the master plan, capital improvements plan, downtown plan and corridor plan. Comprehensive planning documents are a community's guiding framework for growth and investment. Information and strategies outlined in the plans are intended to serve as policy guidelines for local decisions about the physical, social, economic and environmental development of the community.

The master plan is updated, at a minimum, every five years to provide a community with a current and relevant decision making tool. The plan sets expectations

for those involved in development, giving the public some degree of certainty about their vision for the future, while assisting the community to achieve its stated goals. An updated master plan is essential to articulating the types of development the community desires and the specific areas where the community will concentrate resources. Coordination between the master plan, capital improvements plan, downtown plan and corridor plan is essential. It is important that planning documents incorporate recommendations for implementation, including goals, actions, timelines and responsible parties.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The governing body has adopted a master plan in the past five years.

EXPECTATIONS

The **master plan** reflects the community's desired direction for the future.

The master plan identifies strategies for priority redevelopment areas.

The master plan addresses land use and infrastructure, including **complete streets** elements.

The master plan includes a **zoning plan**.

The master plan incorporates recommendations for implementation, including goals, actions, timelines and responsible parties.

Progress on the master plan is **annually reported** to the governing body.

The master plan is accessible online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The governing body has adopted a **downtown plan**.

EXPECTATIONS

The downtown plan identifies development area boundaries.

The downtown plan identifies projects, and includes estimated project costs and a timeline for completion.

The downtown plan includes mixed-use and pedestrian oriented development elements.

The downtown plan addresses transit oriented development, if applicable.

The downtown plan coordinates with the master plan and capital improvements plan.

The downtown plan is accessible online.

Best Practice One: Community plans and public outreach

1.1—THE PLANS *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The governing body has adopted a **corridor plan**.

EXPECTATIONS

The **corridor plan** identifies development area boundaries.

The corridor plan identifies projects, and includes estimated project costs and a timeline for completion.

The **corridor plan** includes mixed-use and pedestrian oriented development elements.

The corridor plan addresses transit oriented development, if applicable.

The corridor plan coordinates with the master plan and capital improvements plan.

The corridor plan is accessible online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4

The governing body has adopted a **capital improvements plan**.

EXPECTATIONS

The **capital improvements plan** details a minimum of six years of public structures and improvements and is reviewed annually.

The capital improvements plan coordinates projects to minimize construction costs.

The capital improvements plan coordinates with the master plan and budget.

The capital improvements plan is accessible online.

Best Practice One: Community plans and public outreach

1.2—PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Best Practice 1.2 assesses how well a community identifies its stakeholders and engages them, not only during the master planning process, but on a continual basis. A public participation strategy is essential to formalize those efforts and outline how the public will be engaged throughout planning and development processes.

Public participation is the process by which a community consults with interested or affected stakeholders before making a decision. It is two-way communication and collaborative problem solving with the objective of being intentionally inclusive, and the goal

of achieving better and more acceptable decisions. Public participation aims to prevent or minimize disputes by creating a process for resolving issues before they become an obstacle.

The best plans and proposals have the support of many stakeholders from businesses, residents, community groups and elected and appointed community officials. Public engagement should be more frequent and interactive than only soliciting input during the master plan update and public hearings.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community has a **public participation strategy** for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholders.

EXPECTATIONS

The strategy identifies **key stakeholders**, including those not normally at the visioning table.

The strategy describes public participation methods and the appropriate venue to use each method.

If a third party is consulted, they adhere to the public participation strategy.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community demonstrates that public participation efforts go beyond the basic methods.

EXPECTATIONS

Basic practices:

Open Meetings Act

Website posting

Postcard mailings

Local cable notification

Newspaper posting

Flier posting on community hall door

Attachments to water bills

Announcements at governing body meetings

Proactive practices:

Individual mailings

Community workshops

Social networking

One-on-one interviews

Charrettes

Canvassing

Focus groups

Crowd-sourcing

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The community shares **outcomes of public participation processes**.

EXPECTATIONS

The community tracks success of various outreach methods.

The community participation results are communicated in a consistent and transparent manner.

Best Practice Two: Zoning regulations

2.1—ZONING REGULATIONS

Best Practice 2.1 evaluates a community's zoning ordinance and how well it regulates for the goals of the master plan.

Zoning is a key tool for plan implementation. Inflexible or obsolete zoning regulations can discourage development and investment. Outdated regulations can

force developers to pursue rezoning or variance requests, disturbing project timelines, increasing costs and creating uncertainty. Communities should look to streamline ordinances and regulate for the kind of development that is truly desired. In addition, zoning is an essential tool for shaping inviting, walkable, vibrant communities.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The governing body has adopted a zoning ordinance that aligns with the goals of the master plan.

EXPECTATIONS

The community has reviewed the master plan's **zoning plan** to determine if changes to the zoning map or ordinance text are necessary to implement the master plan vision.

The community has reviewed zoning district intent statements to reflect master plan land use recommendations.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The zoning ordinance provides for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations and encourages the type and form of development desired.

EXPECTATIONS

The ordinance allows mixed use in areas of concentrated development by right.

The community understands **form-based zoning** and has reviewed the ordinance to consider how form-based zoning could help achieve community goals.

The community allows for the following **placemaking elements**, in areas of concentrated development, where appropriate:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Build-to lines | Ground floor signage standards |
| Open store fronts | Public realm standards |
| Outdoor dining | Other pedestrian-friendly elements |

The ordinance allows for preservation of sensitive historic and environmental features.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The zoning ordinance includes flexible tools to encourage development and redevelopment.

EXPECTATIONS

Special land use and conditional zoning approval procedures and requirements are clearly defined.

Industrial districts allow for related compatible uses that serve **new economy-type** businesses.

Best Practice Two: Zoning regulations

2.1—ZONING REGULATIONS *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4

The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.

EXPECTATIONS

The ordinance allows for two or more of the following **non-traditional housing types**:

- Accessory dwelling units
- Attached single-family units
- Stacked flats
- Live/work
- Residential units above non-residential uses

- Co-housing
- Mixed-income housing
- Corporate temporary housing
- Housing for those with special needs

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5

The zoning ordinance includes standards to improve non-motorized transportation.

EXPECTATIONS

The community understands the benefits of walkable and transit oriented development and has standards for the following elements where appropriate:

- Bicycle parking
- Traffic calming

- Pedestrian lighting
- Streetscape elements

The community understands the benefits of **connectivity** and has **ordinance requirements** that accommodate pedestrian activity within and around development.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 6

The zoning ordinance includes flexible parking standards.

EXPECTATIONS

The ordinance includes regulations for one or more of the following:

- Reduction or elimination of required parking with the availability of on-street and public parking
- Interconnected vehicle passage between lots

- Shared parking agreements
- Parking maximums or waivers
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Bicycle parking

Best Practice Two: Zoning regulations

2.1—ZONING REGULATIONS *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 7

The zoning ordinance includes standards for green infrastructure.

EXPECTATIONS

The ordinance includes regulations for one or more of the following:

Rain gardens, bioswales and other treatment techniques

Green roofs

Rain barrels

Landscaping that encourages or requires use of native, non-invasive species

Pervious pavement

The community recognizes the benefits of street trees and parking lot landscaping to mitigate the impacts of heat island effects.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 8

The zoning ordinance is user-friendly.

EXPECTATIONS

The ordinance portrays clear definitions and requirements.

The ordinance is available in an electronic format at no cost.

Hard copies are available for review at convenient locations.

The ordinance is accessible online.

Best Practice Three: Development review process

3.1—DEVELOPMENT REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Best practice 3.1 evaluates the community’s development review policies and procedures, project tracking and internal/external communication.

The purpose of the development review process is to assure plans for specific types of development comply with local ordinances and are consistent with the master plan. Streamlined, well-documented development policies and procedures ensure a smooth and predictable experience when working with a community. It is essential for a community’s development review team to also coordinate with permitting and inspections staff.

Unnecessary steps or unclear instructions increase time

and expenses associated with development. Community leaders should look to simplify and clarify policies, operate in a transparent manner and increase efficiency to create an inviting development climate that is vital to attracting investment. To do this, sound internal procedures need to be in place and followed. Tracking projects internally across multiple departments can alleviate potential delays. Offering conceptual site plan review meetings is one more step a community can take to show investors they are working to remove development barriers and cut down on unexpected time delays.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The zoning ordinance articulates a thorough site plan review process.

EXPECTATIONS

The responsibilities of the governing body, planning commission, zoning board of appeals, other reviewing bodies, and staff are clearly documented.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community has a qualified intake professional.

EXPECTATIONS

The community identifies a project point person and trains staff to perform intake responsibilities including:

- Receiving and processing applications and site plans
- Maintaining contact with the applicant
- Facilitating meetings
- Processing applications after approval
- Coordinating projects with permitting and inspections staff

Staff understands the importance of excellent customer service.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The community defines and offers conceptual site plan review meetings for applicants.

EXPECTATIONS

The community has clearly defined expectations posted online and a checklist to be reviewed at conceptual meetings.

Best Practice Three: Development review process

3.1—DEVELOPMENT REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4

The community encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the onset of the application process.

EXPECTATIONS

The community **assists the developer** in soliciting input on a proposal before site plan approval as detailed in the public participation strategy.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5

The appropriate departments engage in **joint site plan reviews**.

EXPECTATIONS

The joint site plan review team consists of the following representatives:

Planning department	Community manager or supervisor
Department of Public Works	Historic District Commission
Building department	Economic development
Fire	Transportation department
Police	Consultant
County	
Assessor	

EVALUATION CRITERIA 6

The community has a clearly documented internal staff review policy.

EXPECTATIONS

The internal review process articulates clear roles, responsibilities and timelines.

Development review standards are clearly defined and followed.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 7

The community promptly acts on **development requests**.

EXPECTATIONS

Site plans for permitted uses are approved administratively or by the planning commission.

The community follows its documented procedures and timelines.

The community has easy to follow flowcharts of development processes that include timelines.

Community development staff coordinates with permitting and inspections staff to ensure a smooth and timely approval process.

Best Practice Three: Development review process

3.1—DEVELOPMENT REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 8

The community has a method to track development projects.

EXPECTATIONS

The community uses a **tracking mechanism** for projects during the development process.

The community uses a tracking mechanism for projects during the permitting and inspections process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 9

The community annually reviews successes and challenges with the development review process.

EXPECTATIONS

The community **obtains customer feedback** on the site plan approval and permitting and inspections process and integrates changes where applicable.

The joint site plan review team, including permitting and inspections staff, meets to capture lessons learned and amends the process accordingly.

Best Practice Three: Development review process

3.2—GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice 3.2 evaluates the accessibility of a community's planning and development information.

Development information and applications must be assembled to help citizens, developers and public officials gain a better understanding of how the development

process in the community works. Documents should be updated regularly and provide a general overview of development processes, steps necessary to obtain approvals and be readily available online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community maintains a guide to development that explains policies, procedures and steps to obtain approvals.

EXPECTATIONS

The guide includes:

- Relevant contact information
- Relevant meeting schedules
- Easy-to-follow step-by-step flowcharts of development processes, including timelines
- Conceptual meeting procedures
- Relevant ordinances to review prior to site plan submission
- Site plan review requirements and application
- Clear explanation for site plans that can be approved administratively

- Rezoning request process and application
- Variance request process and application
- Special land use request process and application
- Fee schedule
- Special meeting procedures
- Financial assistance tools
- Design guidelines and related processes
- Building permit requirements and applications

The guide to development is accessible online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community annually reviews the fee schedule.

EXPECTATIONS

- The fee schedule is updated to cover the community's true cost to provide services.
- The community accepts credit card payment for fees.

Best Practice Four: Recruitment and education

4.1 — RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION

Best practice 4.1 evaluates how a community conducts recruitment and orientation for newly appointed or elected officials and board members.

Diversity on boards and commissions can ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered when making

decisions on development and financial incentives.

Communities should seek applicants with desired skill sets and establish expectations prior to new officials and board members becoming active.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community sets expectations for board and commission positions.

EXPECTATIONS

The community outlines expectations and **desired skill sets** for open seats.

Board and commission applications are available online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions.

EXPECTATIONS

The **orientation packet** includes all relevant planning, zoning and development information.

Best Practice Four: Recruitment and education

4.2—EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Best practice 4.2 assesses how a community encourages ongoing education and training and tracks training needs for appointed or elected officials, board members and staff.

Planning commissioners, zoning board of appeals members, the governing body and staff make more informed development decisions when they receive

adequate training on land use and development issues. Turnover in officials and staff can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential to the efficient functioning of a community's development processes.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community has a dedicated source of funding for training.

EXPECTATIONS

The community has a training budget allocated for elected and appointed officials and staff.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community identifies training needs and tracks attendance for elected and appointed officials and staff.

EXPECTATIONS

The community manages a simple tracking mechanism for logging individual training needs and attendance.

The community identifies trainings that assist in accomplishing their stated goals and objectives.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The community encourages elected and appointed officials and staff to attend trainings.

EXPECTATIONS

The community consistently notifies its elected and appointed officials and staff about training opportunities.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4

The community shares information between elected and appointed officials and staff.

EXPECTATIONS

The community holds collaborative work sessions, including joint trainings on development topics.

Training participants share information with those not in attendance.

The planning commission prepares an annual report for the governing body.

Best Practice Five: Redevelopment Ready Sites®

5.1—REDEVELOPMENT READY SITES®

Best practice 5.1 assesses how a community identifies, visions for and markets priority redevelopment sites. A redevelopment ready site is a site targeted by the community and ready for investment.

Identifying and marketing priority sites can assist a community to stimulate the real estate market for **obsolete, vacant and underutilized property**.

Communities that have engaged the public and determined desired outcomes for priority sites create a predictable environment for development projects. A community which takes steps to reduce the risk of

rejected development proposals will entice hesitant developers to spend their time and financial resources pursuing a project in their community. If a development proposal on a priority site is deemed controversial, additional public participation opportunities should be held to ensure community support. To encourage development, it is essential that communities actively package and market sites prioritized for redevelopment. Developers look to invest in places that have an overall vision for the community and priority sites.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites.

EXPECTATIONS

The community maintains an updated list of priority sites to be redeveloped.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community gathers basic information for prioritized redevelopment sites.

EXPECTATIONS

Required information to include:

Photo of the site and/or rendering

Desired development outcomes for the site

Owner contact information

Community contact information

Zoning

Lot size

Building size

State equalized value

Utilities on site: Water, sewer, electricity, natural gas

Wired broadband

infrastructure: DSL, cable, fiber

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3

The community has developed a vision for the priority redevelopment sites.

EXPECTATIONS

The **vision** includes desired development outcomes and specific development criteria.

Community champions for redevelopment of the site are identified.

High controversy redevelopment sites may require additional public engagement.

Best Practice Five: Redevelopment Ready Sites®

5.1 — REDEVELOPMENT READY SITES® *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4

The community identifies **potential resources and incentives** for prioritized redevelopment sites.

EXPECTATIONS

The community identifies negotiable development tools, financial incentives and/or in-kind support, based on the project meeting the community's vision and desired development outcomes.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5

Property information packages for prioritized sites are assembled.

EXPECTATIONS

The property information package includes basic information and the following as applicable:

Available financial incentives	Demographic data
Deed restrictions	Surrounding amenities
Property tax assessment information	Planned infrastructure improvements as identified in CIP
Property survey	GIS information including site location and street maps
Previous uses	Natural features map
Existing conditions report	Traffic studies
Known environmental and/or contamination conditions	Target market analysis or feasibility study results
Soil conditions	

EVALUATION CRITERIA 6

Prioritized redevelopment sites are actively marketed.

EXPECTATIONS

The property information packages are accessible online.

Best Practice Six: Community prosperity

6.1—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Best practice 6.1 assesses what goals and actions a community has identified to assist in strengthening its overall economic health.

Today, economic development means more than business attraction and retention. While business development is a core value, a community needs to include community development and talent in the

overall equation for economic success. The goal of the economic development strategy is to provide initiatives and methods that will encourage diversity of the region's economic base, tap into opportunities for economic expansion and help to create a sustainable, vibrant community.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community has an approved [economic development strategy](#).

EXPECTATIONS

The economic development strategy is part of the master plan, annual budget or a separate document.

The economic development strategy connects to the master plan and capital improvements plan.

The economic development strategy identifies the economic opportunities and challenges of the community.

The economic development strategy incorporates [recommendations for implementation](#), including goals, actions, timelines and responsible parties.

The economic development strategy coordinates with a regional economic development strategy.

The economic development strategy is accessible online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community annually reviews the economic development strategy.

EXPECTATIONS

Progress on the economic development strategy is reported annually to the governing body.

Best Practice Six: Community prosperity

6.2—MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Best practice 6.2 assesses how a community promotes and markets itself to create community pride and increase investor confidence. It also evaluates the ease of locating pertinent planning, zoning and economic development documents on the community's website.

Community marketing and promotion can take many forms. Communities must develop a positive, promotional strategy through marketing campaigns,

advertising and special events to encourage investment. Marketing campaigns can assist with sharing the established community vision, values and goals. Developing a brand to promote a consistent identity can position a community for future success. A community's website is an important marketing tool and must be well-designed to provide information to the public and build a positive image.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1

The community has developed a **marketing strategy**.

EXPECTATIONS

- The marketing strategy identifies opportunities and outlines specific steps to attract businesses, consumers and real estate development to the community.
- The marketing strategy strives to create or strengthen an image for the community.
- The marketing strategy identifies approaches to market priority development sites.
- The community coordinates marketing efforts with local, regional and state partners.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2

The community has an updated, user-friendly municipal website.

EXPECTATIONS

- The community's website is easy to navigate.
- The community's planning, zoning and development information is grouped together with links to the following:
 - Master plan and amendments
 - Downtown plan
 - Corridor plan
 - Capital improvements plan
 - Zoning ordinance
 - Guide to development
 - Online payment option
 - Partner organizations
 - Board and commission applications
 - Property information packages
 - Economic development strategy

Conclusion

The Redevelopment Ready Communities® program looks to foster communities that creatively reuse space, embrace economic innovation and proactively plan for the future, making them more attractive for investments that create places where talent wants to

live, work and play. RRC certification signals to business owners, developers and investors that the community has removed barriers by building deliberate, fair and consistent processes.



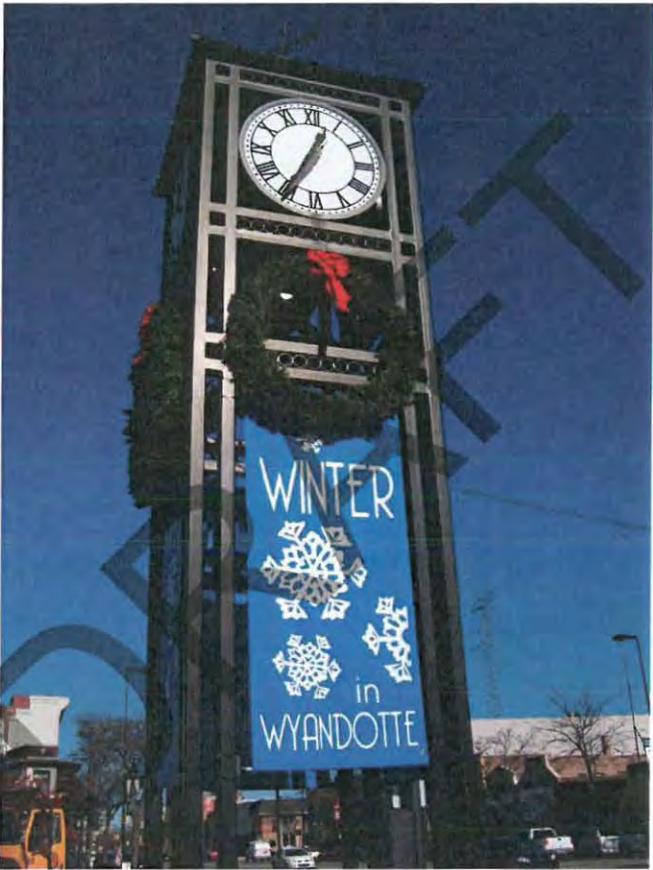
Communities not formally engaged in the RRC program, but wanting to work toward certification are encouraged to compare their current policies and procedures to the best practice standards by completing RRC self-evaluations. The self-evaluations are available to assist any community interested in being more redevelopment ready. Completion of the self-evaluation documents does not replace the formal evaluation process conducted by the RRC team. In addition to the self-evaluations, guides have been developed to act as resources for communities working on RRC best practice components. Each guide is a tool describing recommended processes and sample language. Every community has different needs and capacities, so the process and document can be tailored to fit individual community requirements.

To be vibrant and competitive, Michigan communities must be ready for development. This involves planning for new investment, identifying assets and opportunities and focusing limited resources. Communities must create the types of places where talent and businesses want to locate, invest and expand.

Certified Redevelopment Ready Communities® signal that locating a new business or growing an existing one is straightforward. Certified communities have removed barriers to development including eliminating uncertainties surrounding project timelines and approvals by implementing and executing the RRC best practices.

Contact the RRC team at rrc@michigan.org or your CATeam specialist with questions.

Redevelopment Ready Communities® Report of Findings



City of Wyandotte

JANUARY 2015

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Executive Summary

Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) is a certification program supporting community revitalization and the attraction and retention of businesses, entrepreneurs and talent throughout Michigan. RRC promotes communities to be development ready and competitive in today's economy by actively engaging stakeholders and proactively planning for the future – making them more attractive for projects that create places where people want to live, work and invest.

To become formally engaged in the RRC Program, communities must complete each of the six RRC Self-Evaluations and a community representative must attend all six best practice trainings when offered. The governing body must also pass a resolution of intent, outlining the value the community sees in participating in the program. Representatives from city staff and the DDA attended trainings in December 2014. The city submitted completed self-evaluations and the Wyandotte City Council passed a resolution of intent to participate in the program in April 2014.

Stated priorities in the city's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan outline a commitment to fiscal stability, streamlining government operations, improving accountability and transparency and making openness, ethics and customer service the cornerstone of city government, all fundamental elements of the RRC Best Practices. Developed by experts in the public and private sector, the best practices are the standard to achieve certification and designed to create a predictable experience for investors, businesses and residents working within a community. Communities must demonstrate that all best practice criteria have been met to receive RRC certification.

With dedicated leadership and qualified staff, the city has positioned itself to strengthen local quality of life. Even with strengths such as solid support for redevelopment projects, an active downtown development authority and widespread community engagement, our evaluation encourages Wyandotte to reach further in order to receive RRC certification. In a time when businesses can locate anywhere in the world, a community that is dedicated to a proactive approach for revitalization and straightforward procedures will stand out. While a spirit for redevelopment exists, the city needs to adopt an up to date master plan establishing a vision for the future, develop a comprehensive public participation plan formalizing the community engagement process, document internal development processes, and package available redevelopment sites. The RRC certification is a statement to the private sector that Wyandotte's development process is streamlined, predictable and user-friendly and these steps will help ensure the city's competitiveness and secure RRC certification.

Methodology

The basic assessment tool for evaluation is the RRC Best Practices. These six standards were developed in conjunction with public and private sector experts and address key elements of community and economic development. A community must demonstrate all of the RRC Best Practice components have been met to become RRC certified. Once received, certification is valid for three years.

Measurement of a community to the best practices is completed through the RRC team's research, observation and interviews, as well as the consulting advice and technical expertise of the RRC Advisory Council. The team analyzes a community's development materials, including, but not limited to: the master plan; redevelopment strategy; capital improvements plan; budget; public participation plan; zoning regulations; development procedures; applications; economic development strategy; marketing strategies; and website. Researchers observe the meetings of the community's governing body, planning commission, zoning board of appeals and other committees as applicable. In confidential interviews, the team also records the input of local business owners and developers who have worked with the community.

A community's degree of attainment for each best practice criteria is visually represented in this report by the following:

	Green indicates the best practice component is currently being met by the community.
	Yellow indicates some of the best practice component may be in place, but additional action is required.
	Red indicates the best practice component is not present or outdated.

This report represents the findings of the evaluation of the city of Wyandotte's redevelopment processes and practices. All questions should be directed to the RRC Team at RRC@michigan.org.

Best Practice 1.1- The Plans

Best Practice 1.1 evaluates community planning and how the redevelopment vision is embedded in the master plan, downtown plan and capital improvements plan. The master plan sets expectations for those involved in new development and redevelopment, giving the public some degree of certainty about their vision for the future, while assisting the city in achieving its stated goals. Local plans can provide key stakeholders with a roadmap for navigating the redevelopment process in the context of market realities and community goals.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), Public Act 33 of 2008, requires that the planning commission create and approve a master plan as a guide for development and review the master plan at least once every five years after adoption. Wyandotte's Master Plan for Future Land Use was adopted in 1994, marking over 20 years since land use has been addressed in the city. The plan notes the drastic change from 1974, when the previous land use plan had been adopted, and identifies the need to reevaluate the plan to ensure the city is well positioned for future development. The master plan should serve as a roadmap and foundation for future decision making, as well as the official policy guide for community development.

To comply with the MPEA and the RRC Best Practices, and create a foundation to move the city forward, Wyandotte must draft and adopt a new master plan for land use. The master plan should identify priority areas for redevelopment and include recommendations for implementation, including goals, actions, timelines and responsible parties. A thorough review of the city's zoning code will be necessary after the adoption of a new master plan to ensure that the desired character for community can be fostered.

Downtown is often viewed as focal point of a community; it is an indicator of economic health and serves as a gathering place. Wyandotte's downtown, situated along the Detroit River, is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented mix of uses and a regional destination. The city's DDA Strategic Plan was adopted in 2014 and emphasizes the importance of the district's many historic buildings and gathering places. The plan outlines key considerations for the physical improvement of downtown, noting vacant parcels in the district that interrupt the continuity of blocks. The restoration of historic buildings and infill projects matching the district's character are also encouraged. Wayfinding signage and pedestrian walkways should be developed to define connections between downtown, parks and the riverfront. Various placemaking concepts, including improving parking lot aesthetics, pocket parks, outdoor seating, public art projects and pedestrian furniture are also included as ways to improve the district. The plan should be updated to identify specific capital projects, including estimated costs and timelines for completion.

Dwindling resources and increasing costs put pressure on local governments to make limited budgets work more efficiently. A comprehensive capital improvements plan (CIP) is an essential tool for the planning and development of the social, physical, and economic wellbeing of a community. The CIP can be used as a tool to implement the master plan and provides a link between planning and budgeting for capital projects. Wyandotte has started to draft a six year CIP that will be reviewed and updated with the annual budget. Prioritized capital projects should be consistent with adopted plans and align with identified priority redevelopment areas and target available resources to maximize return on investment. The plan must also be uploaded to the city's website.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The governing body has adopted a master plan in the past five years.	Adopt a master plan in compliance with the MPEA and BP 1.1	18 months
	The governing body has adopted a downtown plan.	Update DDA plan to include projects with timelines, responsible parties & cost estimates	12 months
N/A	The governing body has adopted a corridor plan.		
	The governing body has adopted a capital improvements plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt 6-year CIP in compliance with the MPEA and BP 1.1	6 months

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Best Practice 1.2- Public Participation

Best Practice 1.2 assesses how well the community identifies and engages its stakeholders on a continual basis. Public participation aims to prevent or minimize disputes by creating a process for resolving issues before they become an obstacle. Wyandotte employs a wide variety of traditional and proactive outreach and engagement activities, including but not limited to: focus groups, community meetings, workshops, open houses, online surveys, social networking and coffee and conversation sessions with the Mayor. Results from public engagement efforts are outlined in various plans and in meeting minutes, available online. While the city demonstrates excellent

public engagement efforts, a comprehensive public participation plan must be drafted, identifying interested and affected stakeholders and their unique communication needs encompassing all planning processes. The plan should build upon the existing community engagement activities and serve as the city’s best practices for obtaining input in planning and policy development processes. Authentic and timely engagement is crucial to obtaining buy-in from community stakeholders.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
Red	The community has a public participation plan for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a public participation strategy as outlined in BP 1.2	12 months
Green	The community demonstrates that public participation efforts go beyond the basic methods.	✓	
Green	The community shares outcomes of public participation processes.	✓	

Best Practice 2.1 – Zoning Regulations

Best Practice 2.1 evaluates the city's zoning ordinance and assesses how well it regulates for and implements the goals of the master plan. Zoning is a significant mechanism for achieving desired land use patterns and quality development. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) Public Act 110 of 2006, requires that a zoning ordinance be based on a plan to help guide zoning decisions. Wyandotte's master plan was last updated in 1994 and the city's zoning code has been amended numerous times since the adoption of the master plan. Ideally, the plan should be written or updated before a zoning ordinance is revised, but an outdated ordinance may not always allow this to happen. As the legal tool to implement the master plan, it is critical that zoning regulations align with the plan's recommendations for land use. When the city's master plan is updated, the zoning code must be reviewed to support implementation of and align with the vision outlined in the new plan.

Zoning is an essential tool for shaping inviting, walkable communities and flexible zoning regulations can encourage desired development. Form based codes emphasize building form with the goal of creating a "place" and primarily manage physical form with a lesser focus on land use than traditional zoning. Wyandotte's zoning ordinance incorporates placemaking principles with form based elements within the design review district, covering the DDA district, however, the regulations need to be strengthened with the development of review standards. Currently, applicants submit site plans to the design review committee, but there are no standards or the committee to follow when reviewing applications. The city should also consider form based code to achieve a predictable built environment, particularly for downtown.

Communities can encourage desired development types and implement the community vision through the incorporation of flexible zoning tools. While the ordinance provides for a variety of housing types, second floor residential

units are a special use in the central business district, rather than a permitted use, which could help encourage residential units downtown. Special land use and conditional rezoning requirements are clearly outlined and industrial districts allow for related compatible uses that serve new-economy businesses.

By placing a high priority on creating walkable places and mixing uses, communities can increase the likelihood of walking and biking trips, reduce harmful emissions and increase social interaction. The DDA Strategic Plan strives to improve walkability by promoting a fully connected pedestrian network and a built environment that is pedestrian-oriented. To implement the DDA Strategic Plan, the zoning ordinance should include requirements that the street network, including sidewalks, results in a high degree of connectivity. Regulations to consider include requirements to improve access to transit stops and bicycle parking. While public streetscape elements, including building design, signs and street hardware are included in the design review section of the ordinance, design guidelines must be developed to encourage and implement pedestrian-friendly development.

Provision of adequate parking can be challenging in communities of all sizes. Flexible parking standards provide relief where appropriate. Many uses are exempt from off-street parking requirements in the central business district. While shared parking is permitted upon issuance of a special use permit, operating hours of the two uses cannot overlap. Additional flexible parking regulations should be considered, including provisions for bicycle parking, payment in-lieu of parking, parking maximums and waivers. Rethinking parking design to appropriately manage supply and demand and better meet the needs of communities, developers and users is essential.

Stormwater runoff is a major cause of water pollution in developed areas. While Wyandotte requires a landscape plan to be included in the site plan and suggests planting materials, innovative green infrastructure standards

should be incorporated when the zoning ordinance is updated. Many green infrastructure elements can be integrated into parking lot designs. Permeable pavements can be installed in sections and rain gardens and bioswales can be included in medians and along a parking lot perimeter. Benefits include urban heat island mitigation and a more walkable built environment. When the zoning ordinance is updated, standards for additional green infrastructure such as rain gardens, green roofs and bioswales should be included to help mitigate the effects of stormwater runoff.

Wyandotte’s zoning ordinance and map are accessible online, allowing developers and other interested stakeholders to access information at any

time. Zoning definitions are clearly depicted. The ordinance is set up as a traditional or pyramid ordinance, where each zoning district builds on the previous one. To improve clarity of uses permitted in each district and allow users to access basic information quickly, a use matrix should be included. The ordinance also incorporates a design review district for the DDA District, to encourage site and building design that is creative and compatible with the existing district. While the district is a part of the zoning ordinance, no design guidelines are followed. To achieve desired results and improve transparency, clear design guidelines should be developed and implemented.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The governing body has adopted a zoning ordinance that aligns with the goals of the master plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review zoning ordinance to determine if regulations reflect master plan vision	24 months
	The zoning ordinance provides for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations and encourages the type and form of development desired.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review zoning ordinance to determine if regulations reflect master plan vision and develop standards for the design review district	24 months
	The zoning ordinance includes flexible tools to encourage development and redevelopment.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance includes standards to improve non-motorized transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add standards to improve non-motorized transportation connections	24 months
	The zoning ordinance includes flexible parking standards.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance includes standards for green infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add innovative green infrastructure standards to the zoning ordinance	24 months
	The zoning ordinance is user-friendly.	Add a use matrix and graphics to improve user-friendliness and develop clear design guidelines for the DDA district	24 months

Best Practice 3.1 – Development Review Policy and Procedures

Best Practice 3.1 evaluates the city's development review policies and procedures, project tracking and internal/external communications. The purpose of the site plan review process is to ensure that plans for specific types of development comply with the zoning ordinance. An efficient site plan process is integral to being redevelopment ready and can assist a community in attracting investment dollars. The framework for Wyandotte's site plan review process is clearly documented in the zoning ordinance. A site plan must be submitted for Planning Commission review and approval for all new construction where six or more parking spaces are required. The guide to development currently being drafted should include all resources and contact information related to the development process.

The Engineering and Building Department is responsible for inspections, permitting and plan reviews for the city. The City Engineer manages and facilitates projects through the development review process, including meeting with applicants, processing applications, plan review, approval and project closeout. Developers and consultants should have the option to meet with staff involved in the site plan review process to review proposed projects and the city code of ordinances prior to formally submitting plans for approval. Conceptual meetings can facilitate a smooth and efficient review process and also provide an opportunity to discuss community objectives. The availability of conceptual meetings should be outlined in the zoning ordinance, guide to development and online.

Significant public opposition or concern can slow down the review and approval of a project and ultimately cost a developer time and money. Often, public concern arises out of limited or incorrect understanding of a project. Currently, the city follows the public notice process required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to inform neighboring properties of development

proposals and holds public comment meetings at City Hall or the Copeland Senior Center. The city proactively encourages developers to meet with citizens and neighborhood groups to review development plans and address concerns prior to submitting final site plans for approval. By soliciting public input early in the process, well before required public hearings, neighbors can make their concerns known to the developer and decision makers.

The plan review process is coordinated by the City Engineer. All staff and outside consultants responsible for commenting on plans should review concurrently to ensure timely decision making. Development projects are not formally tracked through the city's process and the city should develop a simple tracking mechanism for all projects. Tracking development projects allows for increased transparency and efficiency, keeps staff well informed, provides clarification as to the status of a project and can assist in measuring the results of the approval process.

Streamlined, well documented development review policies ensure a smooth and predictable experience when working with a community. While the zoning ordinance clearly illustrates the process and requirements for site plans, development review process flowcharts with estimated timelines should be added to the website and guide to development to clearly outline expectations for the applicant. Documented internal procedures need to be in place and followed to effectively communicate expectations to prospective developers and business owners. An internal requirements checklist for the development review process should be created to ensure consistency in reviews over time, regardless of staffing.

Stakeholder interviews indicated the development review and approval process was ... Wyandotte should develop a formal customer feedback mechanism to monitor the development review process, and amend the

process if necessary. In the future, the Planning Commission annual report should highlight the results of the development review process.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The zoning ordinance articulates a thorough site plan review process.		
	The community has a qualified intake professional.	▼	
	The community defines and offers conceptual site plan review meetings for applicants.	<input type="checkbox"/> Outline expectations for and advertise availability of conceptual site plan review meetings online	6 months
	The community encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the onset of the application process.	✓	
	The appropriate departments engage in joint site plan reviews.	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage appropriate departments & consultants in a joint site plan review process	12 months
	The community has a clearly documented internal staff review policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Document internal steps for the development review process	6 months
	The community promptly acts on development requests.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a flowchart outlining the development review process	6 months
	The community has a method to track development projects.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a simple mechanism to track projects through the development process	12 months
	The community annually reviews the successes and challenges with the site plan review and approval procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a formal customer feedback mechanism for the development review process	12 months

Best Practice 3.2 – Guide to Development

Best Practice 3.2 evaluates the availability of the community’s development information. Land use planning and development involve a wide range of stakeholders. For the process to work effectively, everyone involved must understand roles and responsibilities. Development materials should be assembled to help citizens, developers and public officials gain a better understanding of how the process works in each community. While contact information, meeting schedules, agendas and relevant plans are available on Wyandotte’s website, city staff is drafting a comprehensive guide that includes all relevant documentation related to development. Once completed, the guide to development will be a valuable tool to assist with navigating through various development processes.

It is important that developers understand review and permitting costs at the start of the process, so there are no surprises later. Wyandotte’s fee schedule is readily available on the city’s website. An updated fee schedule was reviewed and approved in October 2012. The city should review the fee schedule annually during the budget process to ensure that costs are fair to applicants and affordable by the community. The city accepts credit cards for planning and zoning fees, providing customers with a convenient method to pay development fees. Credit cards are flexible methods of payment and have become increasingly important in business transactions.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The community maintains an online guide to development that explains policies, procedures and steps to obtain approvals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Finalize the draft guide to development	3 months
	The community annually reviews the fee schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the fee schedule annually	9 months

Best Practice 4.1 – Recruitment and Orientation

Best Practice 4.1 evaluates how a community conducts recruitment and orientation for newly appointed or elected officials. Numerous boards, commissions and committees advise city leaders on key policy decisions. The city has created an application for open board and commission seats that is posted on the city’s website. Expectations and desired skill sets for board and commission seats are listed on the city’s website and include a description of the appointment process, responsibilities and meeting schedule.

community and economic development is vital to them playing a part in the city achieving its goals and objectives. All city board and commission members should receive orientation materials, including all relevant planning, zoning and development information when appointed or elected. Orientation prepares officials to understand roles, perform effectively and can promote trust and a good working relationship between staff and officials.

Assisting newly elected officials and appointees with learning basic information about the structure and processes of government and

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
✓	The community sets expectations for board and commission positions.	✓	
✗	The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide orientation materials to all newly elected & appointed officials	6 months

Best Practice 4.2 – Education and Training

Best Practice 4.2 assesses how a community encourages training and tracks education needs for appointed and elected officials and staff. Trainings provide officials and staff with an opportunity to expand their knowledge and ultimately make more informed decisions about land use and redevelopment issues. While training funds are budgeted for the mayor, city council and staff, training needs for boards and commissions should be reviewed as part of the annual budget process and covered under a dedicated line item in the budget. Elected and appointed officials should be provided with pertinent training announcements on a regular basis. Training announcements are typically initiated by a department head or board member individually. A standing item could be added to meeting agendas or training announcements could be provided by email or phone.

Tracking is a useful way to identify future training needs by documenting education received, identifying gaps and determining what topics should be focused on in the future. Departments track training that is required of staff

to obtain or maintain required certifications. The city does not formally track individual training needs and attendance for staff, council, boards or commissioners. A simple tracking mechanism should be developed to log training information. Information obtained at trainings should be shared with members not in attendance. Turnover in staff and officials can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential.

Joint meetings between boards and commissions are essential to foster communication and effectively address development issues. While administration and staff provide regular updates at meetings to keep individual groups informed, boards and commissions are not meeting jointly. At a minimum, the Planning Commission, and City Council should meet collaboratively at least once per year to discuss development issues and opportunities. In an effort to continue open lines of communication and meet the requirements of the MPEA, an annual Planning Commission report highlighting activities should be developed.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The community has a dedicated source of funding for training.	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish training budget for advisory boards & commissions	6 months
	The community identifies training needs and tracks attendance of the governing body, boards, commissions and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a simple tracking mechanism to log training needs & attendance	9 months
	The community encourages the governing body, boards, commissions and staff to attend trainings.	Notify elected and appointed officials of training opportunities on a regular basis	6 months
	The community shares information between the governing body, boards, commissions and staff.	Hold collaborative work sessions on development topics Prepare a Planning Commission annual report	12 months

Best Practice 5.1 – Redevelopment Ready Sites®

Best Practice 5.1 assesses how a community identifies, visions for and markets their priority redevelopment sites. Communities must think strategically about the redevelopment of properties and investments should be targeted in areas that have the potential for positive future development. Focusing on the redevelopment and reuse of a single property can catalyze further development around it. Restoring buildings without a vision for the surrounding area is often insufficient to generate lasting change. Wyandotte’s 1994 Master Plan for Future Land Use and more recent DDA Strategic Plan recognize the downtown as the focal point of the community and encourages continued mixed use redevelopment for the downtown. The city’s 2010-2015 Strategic Plan highlights the importance of Wyandotte’s riverfront district as a dining, recreational and entertainment destination.

The city must gather basic site information and establish a vision for the priority sites. Sites where redevelopment may be viewed as controversial may require additional public engagement efforts. A summary of commercial business incentives and programs is available on the city’s website, however, negotiable development tools, financial incentives and in kind support available for projects meeting desired development outcomes on priority sites must be identified. Once information has been compiled that a developer would need to pursue a project on the available sites, the materials should be assembled in a property information package and posted online. The city should collaborate with the Wyandotte Business Association, Southern Wayne County Chamber and local real estate community to market properties.

While the DDA lists properties available for rent and for sale, next steps for Wyandotte include identifying and prioritizing available redevelopment sites.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
	The community identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize available redevelopment sites	3 months
	The community gathers basic information for prioritized redevelopment sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather background information for priority redevelopment sites	6 months
	The community has developed a vision for the priority redevelopment sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a vision, including desired development outcomes for priority redevelopment sites	9 months
	The community identifies potential resources and incentives for prioritized redevelopment sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify negotiable resources and incentives for priority redevelopment sites	9 months
	A property information package for the prioritized redevelopment site(s) is assembled.	Create a property information package for at least one priority redevelopment site	12 months
	Prioritized redevelopment sites are actively marketed.	Market available redevelopment sites and upload property information package to website	12 months

Best Practice 6.1 – Economic Development Strategy

Best Practice 6.1 evaluates goals and actions identified by the community to assist in strengthening its overall economic health. Strategic economic development planning is critical to attract jobs and new investment in communities. The city of Wyandotte does not have a formal community economic development strategy offering a compelling case for local development opportunities. Working with regional partners, the city must adopt an economic development strategy that identifies goals and related objectives that provide direction for implementation. A detailed breakdown of lead agencies and partners responsible for implementation, along with associated resources and an anticipated timeframe for completion should also be included in the implementation plan. Economic development efforts

should complement implementation strategies outlined in the DDA Strategic Plan. It is also imperative that the local strategy coordinate with the regional economic development strategy, Increasing Jobs and Prosperity in Southeast Michigan, developed by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), and the forthcoming Regional Prosperity Plan. Continuing to work with community and regional partners to offer diverse employment opportunities, support existing businesses and continued efforts to sustain a vital, vibrant downtown should be emphasized. The strategy should be the official guide for future economic development efforts in Wyandotte. Progress made on the economic development strategy should be reported annually to the governing body.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
Yellow	The community has approved an economic development strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create an economic development strategy in accordance with BP 6.1	18 months
Red	The community annually reviews the economic development strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually report progress made on the economic development strategy to the governing body	24 months

Best Practice 6.2 – Marketing and Promotion

Best Practice 6.2 evaluates how the community promotes and markets itself. Community marketing and promotion can take many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that rekindles community pride and improves consumer and investor confidence. Marketing and branding should frame what sets a community apart from others. Wyandotte is a historic waterfront community, often described as the “Heart of Downriver.” The city has a rich history, and a formal marketing and branding campaign must be developed to proactively draw attention to community assets and economic development opportunities. Future marketing and branding efforts should be coordinated with the DDA, Wyandotte Business Association, Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber and other partners. Coordinated marketing strategies strive to strengthen the image of the community, heighten awareness and promote the city. Enhanced marketing efforts can assist with sharing the established vision, values and goals outlined in the master plan and reinforce Wyandotte’s identity as a destination. Wyandotte must continue to market the city with the intent of positioning the community as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

A municipal website serves multiple functions. At a basic level, it is a means to share information about public meetings, access public documents, find links to other community organizations and to obtain general information. Beyond this, a municipal website is also a significant expression of community character and image. People unfamiliar with a community will often look to a website for information and they will form important first impressions and conclusions. Visitors to a community’s website need to be able to find accurate information quickly and the importance of a user-friendly website cannot be overstated. Wyandotte’s website is relatively easy to use and includes linked pages where pertinent planning, zoning and economic development information is assembled. Property information packages and the guide to development must be uploaded to the website when completed. The website also features links to city Twitter and Facebook pages, providing stakeholders with an additional resource to obtain information.

Status	Evaluation Criteria	Recommended Actions for Certification	Estimated Timeline
Red	The community has developed a marketing strategy.	☐ Create a unified marketing strategy as outlined in BP 6.2	18 months
Yellow	The community has an updated, user-friendly municipal website.	☐ Add missing items to website as completed	12 months

Conclusion

The RRC Program assists communities in maximizing their economic potential by embracing effective redevelopment tools and best practices. The city must find a balance between removing unnecessary delays and hurdles, while preserving the integrity of the community's vision and goals, positioning the city for success. Wyandotte has exhibited a strong commitment to improving their redevelopment readiness and is working diligently to meet the remaining best practice criteria and achieving the Redevelopment Ready Certified Community designation. Next steps for the city include the governing body adopting a resolution of support to proceed with the RRC program. Staff has already attended the RRC Best Practice trainings and is required to submit quarterly progress reports to inform the RRC Team of progress made in terms of implementing the necessary steps to meet the RRC Best Practices. Upon meeting all of the Best Practice criteria, Wyandotte will be a certified Redevelopment Ready Community.

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