



redevelopment ready
communities®

RRC Baseline Report

City of Rochester Hills

February 2018

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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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 the RRC self-evaluation, send at least one representative to the best practice trainings, and pass a resolution of intent, outlining the value the community sees in participating in the program. Representatives from Rochester Hills city staff completed the training series in June 2017 and submitted the city's self-evaluation and resolution in August.

Developed by experts in the public and private sector, the RRC best practices are the standard to achieve certification, 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. As this baseline report shows, Rochester Hills is well on its way to certification, already showing alignment with 68 percent of the criteria and another 29 percent in progress.

Going forward, the city should focus its efforts on updating the 2013 master plan (already underway) which serves as a foundational document for any community. Outside of the plan, the city has a few housekeeping actions to institutionalize the great things already happening. As it already the case in Rochester Hills, the city should work with its many partners to make RRC certification a communitywide effort, primarily through the master plan process.

RRC recognizes that each Michigan community is unique and as such does not impose deadlines on when RRC items must be complete. Your RRC planner will be with the city each step of the way to provide input and connect the city with technical assistance resources. We look forward to a strong partnership with Rochester Hills to unleash the city's full potential through strong planning and development frameworks that help guide the community's vision and attract business investment and talent to make that vision a reality.

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 significantly outdated.

This report represents a mutual understanding between RRC and the community regarding its current status in meeting all the redevelopment ready best practice criteria and establishes a foundation for the community’s progress as it moves forward in the program. All questions should be directed to the RRC team at RRC@michigan.org.

Rochester Hills has completed 68 percent of the Redevelopment Ready Communities® criteria and is in the process of completing another 29 percent.

1.1.1	1.1.2 (N/A)	1.1.3	1.1.4	1.2.1	1.2.2	1.2.3
2.1.1	2.1.2	2.1.3	2.1.4	2.1.5	2.1.6	2.1.7
2.1.8	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.1.3	3.1.4	3.1.5	3.1.6
3.1.7	3.1.8	3.1.9	3.2.1	3.2.2	4.1.1	4.1.2
4.2.1	4.2.2	4.2.3	4.2.4	5.1.1	5.1.2	5.1.3
5.1.4	5.1.5	5.1.6	6.1.1	6.1.2	6.2.1	6.2.2

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.¹ Rochester Hills' current master plan, a well done plan that aligns nicely with the RRC best practices, was adopted in 2013. The city has recently launched efforts to conduct a five-year review and update as called for in the MPEA.

As noted in the 2013 plan, the city experienced significant growth in the second half of the 20th century. During that time the city offered ample land for development which calls for a different approach and set of practices. The 2013 plan in particular notes that the city has reached full build out and that it will need to focus on redevelopment, infill and preservation of remaining open spaces. This presents a unique challenge for any community—a challenge which the Redevelopment Ready Communities® program is designed to address. For Rochester Hills in particular, the city has opted to focus on two key redevelopment opportunities: the city's SMART Zone which can shift from traditional industrial to more modern uses and on infill along key commercial corridors (specifically Auburn Road west of Crooks Road and the Old Towne district). While this plan could provide more specific direction for these priority areas, more detail on redevelopment strategies can be found in other plans the city has completed.

Overall the plan includes 11 goals and 64 objectives providing specific direction for the city. Having these

specific goals, along with associated timelines and responsible parties, allows the city to track its progress and determine if additional resources or a change in direction is needed. At this time all responsible parties are city staff or public entities—during the 2018 update the city should be sure to bring in all partners and identify activities which others partners could lead, thus increasing overall buy-in for the plan. The plan also includes a detailed future land use section which encourages the establishment of flex districts. These districts have since been incorporated into the zoning ordinance and are discussed in greater detail under RRC best practice two. Ultimately the only RRC criteria which is missing for the master plan is for the city to annually review and report on master plan progress. The city has already demonstrated a commitment to five-year updates but an annual report will keep the plan fresh in the city's mind and increase its effectiveness over time.

In addition to the city's master plan, the city has developed two corridor plans: the "M-59 Corridor Study/Plan" (2012) and the 2017 "Auburn Road Corridor Plan." Both plans provide strong guidance for the development of two key areas and include specific recommendations. The M-59 plan also serves as the development plan for the local development financing authority (LDFA) which increases the specificity of cost estimates and timelines. While the Auburn Road corridor plan could benefit from a stronger implementation section, work is already moving forward with completion of an early preliminary engineering study and current work on preliminary design engineering. Between these two plans the city meets the RRC best practice for a corridor plan.

Tying the above mentioned plans, as well as many others, together is the city's capital improvements plan (CIP) which is updated each year along with the city budget. The current CIP was adopted in April 2017 and includes \$80,125,003 in proposed projects over the next six years. The plan is detailed and fully aligns with the MPEA requirements and RRC best practices.

¹ Since Rochester Hills does not contain a "traditional downtown" as defined by MEDC Community Development, a downtown plan is not required for certification.

Best Practice 1.1—The plans *continued*

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
1.1.1	The governing body has adopted a master plan in the past five years.	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an annual review/report on progress meeting master plan goals and objectives.	2018
1.1.2	The governing body has adopted a downtown plan.	N/A	
1.1.3	The governing body has adopted a corridor plan.	✓	
1.1.4	The governing body has adopted a capital improvements plan.	✓	

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. Continual public engagement can also help build broad, long term support for the city’s plans.

Rochester Hills has a history of civic engagement and that remains true for the city today. The city goes well above and beyond on engaging the public using both traditional methods such as meeting notices, website postings and postcard mailings and expanding into more sophisticated methods such as social media (Facebook, Twitter), community workshops, surveys and a mobile app. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods, the city tracks attendance at meetings and

interactions on social media. They also ask for feedback on the app and ask meeting attendees how they learned about the meeting.

The city is well on their way to meeting this best practice thanks to its proactive efforts to work on items it identified as missing in the RRC self-evaluation. A draft public participation plan is in the works to outline all the great activities underway in the city. This plan will help provide continuity for these activities, inform residents about all the ways they can communicate with their city officials and also provide insight for developers regarding the expectations for engagement and tools available to them. Upon completion of the plan, the city will fully align with Best Practice 1.2.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
1.2.1	The community has a public participation plan for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the public participation plan	Q1 2018
1.2.2	The community demonstrates that public participation efforts go beyond the basic methods.	✓	
1.2.3	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 implements the goals of the master plan. Zoning is a significant mechanism for achieving desired land use patterns and quality development. Foundationally, 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.

A review of the city’s zoning ordinance found substantial alignment with the master plan, including the implementation of the flex business districts as called for in the 2012 M-59 and 2013 master plans. Conversations with key stakeholders indicate that the city conducts reviews on a fairly regular basis to identify potential amendments.² Thanks to the city’s up-to-date plans and aligned ordinances, this baseline assessment finds the city’s ordinances in full alignment with the RRC best practices. A brief description of each finding is included below. For detailed descriptions of what each criteria entails please consult the RRC best practices document.

Concentrated Development: The city meets this criteria in numerous ways including the business flex districts which allow for both horizontal and vertical mixed-use; inclusion of several place-making provisions such as build-to lines, outdoor dining, minimum ground floor transparency and streetscape elements; and the inclusion of historic preservation measures such as the Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Pond districts.

Housing Diversity: The ordinance includes numerous housing types beyond single family homes and traditional apartments. Options include townhomes, stacked flats, live/work units, mixed-use housing (2nd floor and above units) and cluster housing. While the ordinance does allow a multitude of housing options, the master plan did note a lack of missing middle housing in the city. Despite the current lack of such options, the city is prepared to handle redevelopment which may offer those options in the future.

Non-motorized Transportation/Pedestrian Safety:

The ordinance makes clear that the city understands the benefits of complete streets where cars, bicyclists and pedestrians can commute in harmony. The city’s 2008 Thoroughfare Plan lays out a vision for a complete system. The ordinance backs this plan up with standards for sidewalks/public realms, traffic calming and requirements to complete connectively throughout the city.

Parking Flexibility: The ordinance is based on traditional parking minimums, but does provide some tools for flexibility including shared parking agreements and reduction/elimination of requirements due to publicly available parking. The city also does include parking maximums which are 125 percent of minimum for most of the city but 200 percent in the business flex districts.

Green Infrastructure: The ordinance includes several provisions to support sustainable development through green infrastructure. It does so by encouraging native, non-invasive species for all landscaping, providing standards for parking lot landscaping (to mitigate heat island impacts and storm water runoff) and encourages other low-impact development practices such as retention ponds and rain gardens.

Development Flexibility: The ordinance provides clear standards for special land uses, includes planned unit developments (PUDs) and offers the Business Flex and REC districts to promote creative development proposals. The city also includes several new-economy categories in its use table though it could benefit from reviewing other communities’ use tables to see if other items should be included.

User-friendliness: The ordinance is available online, includes helpful tables/charts and clear definitions. The ordinance is contained within a single PDF and includes hyperlinks to easy navigation.

² These same conversations did also result in a recommendation that the city pursue amendments annually in a predictable fashion versus somewhat irregular updates of the past. A planning commission annual report can assist with that.

Best Practice 2.1—Zoning regulations *continued*

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
2.1.1	The governing body has adopted a zoning ordinance that aligns with the goals of the master plan.	✓	
2.1.2	The zoning ordinance provides for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations and encourages the type and form of development desired.	✓	
2.1.3	The zoning ordinance includes flexible tools to encourage development and redevelopment.	✓	
2.1.4	The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.	✓	
2.1.5	The zoning ordinance includes standards to improve non-motorized transportation.	✓	
2.1.6	The zoning ordinance includes flexible parking standards.	✓	
2.1.7	The zoning ordinance includes standards for green infrastructure.	✓	
2.1.8	The zoning ordinance is user-friendly.	✓	

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. An efficient site plan review process is integral to being redevelopment ready and can assist a community in attracting investment dollars while ensuring its zoning ordinance and other laws are followed. In addition to the ordinance and conversations with city staff, evaluation of this best practice included interviews with several developers who’ve worked on projects in Rochester Hills.

The development review process in Rochester Hills is very straight forward, as outlined in Article 2, Chapter 2 of the zoning ordinance. Prior to starting the official process, developers are encouraged to meet with city staff for a pre-application meeting. The application for this meeting requests that developers bring seven copies of a draft site plan for review. City staff will conduct a review with the developer to provide initial feedback on the plan’s compliance with the ordinance. If the developer has other questions about the process, those can be answered as well. At this point the city can also work with a developer to identify if additional community outreach may be needed. The city can provide meeting space and mailing lists if requested.

Once a developer is ready to submit a formal application, it is submitted to the planning and economic development department (PED). The application is accompanied by the appropriate fee and requested number of copies (clearly indicated on the application). Once deemed complete, city staff conduct a joint review process with PED, building, transportation, engineering, fire, public works and the assessor. Others are brought in as needed. This review takes a maximum of 15 days. If deficiencies are noted, the developer is given time to make revisions. Once ready for the planning commissions, 10 updated copies of the site plan are provided to the city. These are typically shared with the planning commission a week before the meeting. At the meeting the planning commission reviews the plans in

accordance with standards set forth in Section 138-2.203. The planning commission makes final approval or denial for all permitted uses while conditional land uses are sent to city council for a final decision.

The city tracks an application from initial contact through occupancy via a detailed excel spreadsheet. The city’s development review committee (PED, Building, Fire and Engineering) also meets monthly to coordinate activities and ensure smooth transitions between departments.

Interviews with developers who have done recent work in the city indicated a strong commitment from city staff and officials to be proactive, reasonable and timely. In fact, several developers held up Rochester Hills as an example of what other communities should strive for. Key to this success is that city staff view themselves as partners in the development process—this can be seen in particular through the simple action of staff sitting at the table with developers during planning commission or city council meetings.

While much of this process is already aligned with RRC best practices, this baseline assessment has identified a few areas where improvements will be needed for full alignment:

- Develop a checklist of items to be covered in the pre-application meeting. This could include other items outside of zoning ordinance compliance, such as possible incentives (if desired).
- Develop a flowchart of the internal review process which includes timelines and key players.
- Develop a flowchart of the site plan, conditional land use, PUD, and rezoning processes, including timelines.
- Develop a customer feedback mechanism (survey, follow up calls, etc.) to solicit feedback from developers at least annually. Results should be discussed with the development review committee and included in the annual report.

Best Practice 3.1—Development review policy and procedures *continued*

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
3.1.1	The zoning ordinance articulates a thorough site plan review process.	✓	
3.1.2	The community has a qualified intake professional.	✓	
3.1.3	The community defines and offers conceptual site plan review meetings for applicants.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a checklist of items to be covered at the conceptual review meeting	Q1 2018
3.1.4	The community encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the onset of the application process.	✓	
3.1.5	The appropriate departments engage in joint site plan reviews.	✓	
3.1.6	The community has a clearly documented internal staff review policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a flowchart outlining the internal review process, including timelines	Q1 2018
3.1.7	The community promptly acts on development requests.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create flowchart outlining the site plan, conditional land use, PUD, and rezoning processes, including timelines	Q1 2018
3.1.8	The community has a method to track development projects.	✓	
3.1.9	The community annually reviews the successes and challenges with the site plan review and approval procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a customer feedback mechanism. Review the feedback with the development review team at least annually	Q2 2018

Best Practice 3.2—Guide to Development

Best Practice 3.2 evaluates the availability of the community’s development information. Having all the necessary information easily accessible online for developers and residents alike creates a transparent development process that can operate at any time. This information creates a smooth process overall and reduces the amount of time staff spend answering basic questions.

While the city indicated on its self-evaluation that it did not have a guide to development, this assessment found that much of the information requested in a guide is found on the city’s “Application, Documents & Ordinances” webpage. While not the most user-friendly way to lay out information as it lacks the context that an actual guide would have, this is a very solid start to

compiling a guide. In order to complete this objective, the city could either create an actual guide or it could instead establish an online version using the information from the aforementioned page as a foundation.

In addition to having information on the process itself, a developer should be able to understand their expected costs for review. The city’s website includes a fee schedule to help calculate estimated costs. Developers are expected to establish escrow accounts and deposit funds to cover these costs up front. One developer did note that it’d be helpful to have more advanced notification if funds are running low. The city also offers the ability to pay fees via credit card — a key tool for smaller developers as well as those who are not local.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
3.2.1	The community maintains an online guide to development that explains policies, procedures and steps to obtain approvals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Publish a guide to development either as a document or an online tool	Q4 2018
3.2.2	The community annually reviews the fee schedule.	✓	

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. Such officials sit on the numerous boards, commissions and committees that advise city leaders on key policy decisions. Ensuring that the community has a transparent method of recruitment, clearly lays out expectations/desired skillsets, and provides orientation for appointed officials is key to ensuring the community makes the most of these boards and commissions.

Members of the public who are interested in serving on one of Rochester Hills’ 40 committees, boards or commissions can apply by completing the candidate questionnaire available on the city’s website. The questionnaire allows candidates to select up to five boards and express the reasons for their interest. It includes a hyperlink to the city’s webpage for committees, boards and commissions from which an applicant can

learn more about each. What is noticeably missing from this process is guidance on what skillsets would be desirable for each committee, board and commission. For example, what might be helpful background to have for the planning commission or the zoning board of appeals? Giving this guidance can help candidates self-select into the most beneficial boards for them and the city. The application could also be stronger by explaining the process and timeline for appointment.

Once members are appointed, they are provided with orientation packets to assist in their duties. These packets include a copy of the zoning ordinance and applicable plans. While this meets the intent of the RRC best practice, the city should explore whether additional resources provided through the Michigan Municipal League or the Michigan Association of Planning may be helpful to include as well

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
4.1.1	The community sets expectations for board and commission positions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish desired skillsets for development-related boards and commissions	Q3 2018
4.1.2	The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development-related boards and commissions.	✓	

Best Practice 4.2—Education and training

Best Practice 4.2 assesses how a community encourages training and tracks educational activities 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. An effective training program includes four components: financial resources to support training, a plan to identify priority topics and track attendance, consistent encouragement to attend trainings and sharing of information between boards and commissions to maximize the return on investment for the community.

Discussions throughout this evaluation indicate that the city does provide funding support to encourage training for staff and officials alike. The amount has been stable over the years and is not based on any particular event or training. With a stable funding source in place, the city could provide a stronger, more predictable approach to training by evaluating needs each year and drafting a simple training plan for its development-related boards and commissions. This provides clarity for the upcoming year and establishes expectations for officials and staff to reinforce the importance of training. Currently the city uses the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) to identify training opportunities.

Other providers such as the Michigan Municipal League (MML) or American Planning Association (APA) could also provide opportunities for the city to access training often at little to no cost. The city has also held internal trainings in recent years, bringing training speakers directly to staff and officials. In order to adjust training approaches as needed, the city should begin to track training attendance for all staff and officials. This can be included in the annual report.

The final component, sharing of information, goes beyond training and evaluates how the city encourages communication between staff and the various boards/commissions. Once key way to achieve this is through an annual joint meeting with city council, the planning commission and other development-related boards. This is something the city has done periodically in the past but not consistently. A joint meeting was scheduled to occur and will become an annual tradition according to city staff. In addition to this annual meeting, the city should be sure to encourage report outs from training events and share minutes between relevant groups. As part of its efforts to meet RRC best practices, the city recently drafted its first annual planning commission report covering 2017 activity.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
4.2.1	The community has a dedicated source of funding for training.	✓	
4.2.2	The community identifies training needs and tracks attendance of the governing body, boards, commissions and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop an annual training plan for development-related boards and commissions <input type="checkbox"/> Track attendance at training events	Q2 2018
4.2.3	The community encourages the governing body, boards, commissions and staff to attend trainings.	✓	
4.2.4	The community shares information between the governing body, boards, commissions and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide an opportunity on agendas to report out from recent training events <input type="checkbox"/> Publish a planning commission annual report	Q1 2018

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 and should be targeted in areas that can catalyze further development around it. Instead of waiting for developers to propose projects, Redevelopment Ready Communities® identify priority sites and prepare information to assist developers in finding opportunities that match the city’s vision.

In order to meet this RRC best practice, a community should engage stakeholders across the community to identify redevelopment ready sites and prioritize at least three. As part of this process, the community should develop a vision for what they’d prefer to see on the site—this vision should be tied to the master plan and the city should ensure the framework is in place to support that vision. With sites and visions identified, basic information such as address, owner, value and infrastructure should be gathered and packaged into a short, marketable document. At least one of the site packages should be developed further into a complete property information package which includes an expanded list of more technical items (as applicable) such as environmental conditions, traffic studies, etc. Finally, the sites should be actively marketed via the city and its economic development partners.

In Rochester Hills, site identification and marketing is

primarily handled by the city’s Economic Development Director. According to staff, the city maintains an inventory of available redevelopment sites and identifies priority sites and visions for those sites. Previously it had maintained an online inventory of available sites but that proved to be time consuming and didn’t deliver the results to justify the time invested. As such, the city’s economic development department now works with private owners to connect their sites with developers who match the desired outcome of the site.

Due to the private nature of many sites, the city doesn’t run an active public marketing strategy but instead works through brokers, trade shows and other methods to identify potential developers for priority sites. The city does have one priority site, Madison Park, which is publicly advertised with permission from the property owner. The site is a former landfill which presents unique challenges but the current owner and city have worked to identify those challenges and seek out development that would fit. As part of this RRC evaluation, the city provided a copy of that information package which mostly meets the RRC best practice criteria. This report does recommend just a handful of small changes to that document including the identification of available incentives and clarification as to whether previously done studies are available for review.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
5.1.1	The community identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites.	✓	
5.1.2	The community gathers basic information for at least three priority sites.	✓	
5.1.3	The community has development a vision for at least three priority sites.	✓	
5.1.4	The community identifies potential resources and incentives for at least three priority sites.	✓	
5.1.5	The community has assembled a property information package for at least one priority site.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the Madison Park information sheet to include information on available incentives and indicate if the previously environmental studies are available for review	Q1 2018
5.1.6	Prioritized redevelopment sites are actively marketed.	✓	

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.

Rochester Hills has done an excellent job of incorporating economic development into its planning and development processes in a way that uses the city’s high quality of life as a strong marketing tool. The master plan includes a very well done economic development section which identifies the city’s opportunities and challenges including its position to build off existing

supply chains and connect with the energy surrounding Michigan’s economic comeback. The master plan incorporates recommendations from the economic development strategy directly in the implementation section. In addition to the economic development strategy in the master plan, the city maintains a business attraction strategy which is discussed in more detail on the next page. This strategy is detailed and serves as a strong complementary document to the master plan section.

The city reviews its economic development strategy each year as part of the budget process.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
6.1.1	The community has approved an economic development strategy.	✓	
6.2.1	The community annually reviews the economic development strategy.	✓	

Best Practice 6.2—Marketing and promotion

Best Practice 6.2 evaluates how the community promotes and markets itself. Marketing and branding is an essential tool in promotion of a community’s assets and unique attributes. Consumers and investors are attracted to places that evoke positive feelings and to communities that take pride in their town and their history.

Rochester Hills has a strong network of marketing and branding initiatives in place ranging from social media and branding to trade show visits and international trade missions. The city’s motto, “Innovative by Nature,” presents the image of a proactive community ready to be a partner in development. In 2012, the city developed a business attraction strategy to focus specifically on business recruitment with approaches such as supplier mapping, building upon foreign business investment, development of “Innovation Square” to capitalize on Oakland County’s Medical Mainstreet initiative, creation of a land report to market available properties and developing alliances with site selection consultants. City

staff have indicated that this strategy is in need of an update and will receive one in the near future.

Conversations indicate that the city considers the strategy to be a playbook of sorts and it doesn’t intend to publish it online. RRC understands this approach and recommends that instead of publishing the full document, it instead make available a high level overview of the city’s approach. This helps promote transparency and foster collaboration while protecting the city’s competitive advantage.

Rochester Hills’ website is a key marketing tool for the city, providing helpful information to residents and businesses. The website includes much of the information a business would need to develop in the city and also provides easy access to key planning and community engagement tools. As the city completes RRC deliverables, it should ensure those items are included on the website in a centralized location where all planning and development information can be found.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
6.2.1	The community has developed a marketing strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Update the 2012 business attraction strategy	2018–2019
6.2.2	The community has an updated, user-friendly municipal website.	<input type="checkbox"/> Upload missing items as identified in the RRC best practices	2018–2019

The RRC program assists communities in maximizing their economic potential by embracing effective redevelopment tools and best practices. As this report makes clear, Rochester Hills has a strong foundation in place for meeting the best practices and should be able to move swiftly toward certification.

Upon receipt of this report, city staff and leadership should review the recommendations and determine if they align with the city's priorities and vision. If after review the city believes that RRC is still a good fit, council should pass a resolution of intent to continue with the process. Upon receipt of that resolution, the city will enter final phase of the process: working toward certification. During that phase, the city will be able to

make progress on RRC items at its own pace and receive regular support from its RRC planner. It will also have continued access to the RRC online library of resources (www.miplace.org/rrclibrary) and extensive network of other RRC-engaged communities while also becoming eligible for matching technical assistance dollars from RRC (once the city has shown at least one quarter of progress). In order to guide this next phase, RRC recommends the creation of a RRC workgroup consisting of city staff, officials and community representatives. We look forward to working with the city on reaching certification and a long, positive partnership for many years to come.