

Memorandum

TO: Decatur Village Council

FROM: Brett Hanlon, MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities Planner

DATE: January 28, 2020

RE: **Village of Decatur RRC Baseline Report**

I am pleased to inform you that we have completed the village's formal RRC evaluation. The findings of our evaluation and recommended actions to assist the village in ultimately achieving RRC certification are included in the RRC Baseline Report. This memo is intended to provide key findings from the report and lay out the village's next steps in the RRC process.

Redevelopment Ready Communities: RRC is a free technical assistance program offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) which aims to help communities incorporate best practices in planning, zoning and economic development to encourage redevelopment and new investment. MEDC Community Development also uses RRC as a prioritization factor when determining investments through our programs (visit www.miplace.org for more information on those programs). Communities that fully align with the best practices can become RRC certified, which comes with its own set of benefits. Decatur has been formally engaged with RRC since November 2017. There are currently more than 250 communities across Michigan engaged in the program including nearby communities such as Dowagiac, Lawton and Lawrence.

Baseline Report: The Baseline Report completes a key step in the RRC process. Using responses from Decatur's self-evaluation, the RRC program took a deeper dive into the village's plans, zoning ordinance, site plan review process, priority development sites, training and more to make initial determinations regarding how well the village's existing practices align with the RRC best practices. Key findings include:

- The village's existing practices already align with 40% of the RRC best practices including:
 - Master plan
 - Capital improvements plan
 - Economic development strategy

- The village is partially aligned with another 58% of the RRC best practices. Major areas of partial alignment include:
 - Zoning ordinance
 - Site plan review
 - Marketing strategy

Reaching Certification: With this Baseline Report in hand, the village is now ready to move into the third and final phase of the RRC process. During this final phase, the village will work to address each of the best practice criteria identified as red or yellow. The report includes specific recommendations for each criterion; however, RRC is a dynamic program and is always willing to have discussions if the village has a different idea for how to meet a best practice criterion. During this phase the village will have access to RRC technical assistance tools such as the RRC Online Library (www.miplace.org/rrclibrary), guidance from your RRC Planner, and matching technical assistance funds to help with the cost of larger projects (if needed). There is no deadline for reaching certification and RRC understands that each community will approach this phase at their own pace given available resources at any given time.

Next Steps: The next formal step in the process is for the village to review the report and, if desired, pass a resolution to continue with RRC. Upon passage of that resolution, the village can begin to access the RRC tools which can assist with reaching full alignment and RRC certification. *We ask that the resolution be passed within 30 days of receiving this memo.*

I look forward to working with the village as it seeks to align with the best practices. Michigan is experiencing a strong economic climate at this time and it is our hope that through the RRC best practices communities of all shapes and sizes will be in a strong position to leverage the excitement around Michigan and attract additional redevelopment and investment. If you have any questions about RRC or this Baseline Report, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Brett Hanlon, AICP
RRC Planner