



# CITY OF OAK PARK

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Ken Rich  
**City Manager**  
Erik Tungate

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### **UM-Dearborn's iLabs' eCities Research Recognizes the City of Oak Park For Developing a Positive Entrepreneurial Climate**

**November 3, 2016, Oak Park, Michigan** – The City of Oak Park is one of 22 communities within the State of Michigan to be honored as a five star community by iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Innovation Research. The distinction is provided to communities that foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development. The study is conducted by researchers at iLabs for Innovation Research.

The City of Oak Park follows the principles of the Oakland County One Stop Ready program to offer best in class customer service. The City's Economic Development, Planning, and Building Departments collaborate to expedite and streamline processes for all development.

"We are pleased to have moved from a three star community in 2015 to a five star community for 2016. Last year, we also received an award as a best practice community," said Kimberly Marrone, Economic Development and Communications Director.

"Under Kim Marrone's leadership in the City's Economic Development Department, we have made tremendous strides in the last few years. We have come from a community on the back burner to one that is top-of-mind," said City Manager Erik Tungate about the City of Oak Park. "As time goes on, we will continue to support projects and initiatives that unite a higher quality of life with a world-class environment built in our own City and in the Detroit metropolitan marketplace."

#### **Oak Park Issued Five Star Community Status**

(\*denotes best practice community)

To qualify, five star communities have issued over 2,000 construction permits; claim commercial constructions worth more than \$875 million; have combined real and personal

properties worth more than \$29 billion; and have acquired more than \$21 million in additional assets in the past year. In five star communities, 10 percent of the employed population are self-employed.

Ann Arbor Charter Township	Cascade Charter Township	Charter Township of Meridian
City of Ann Arbor	City of Coldwater	City of Dexter
City Farmington	City of Grandville	City of Madison Heights
City of Marquette	City of Midland	City of Mount Pleasant
City of Novi	City of Oak Park	City of Romulus*
City of Sault Ste. Marie*	City of Sturgis	City of Wixom Delta
Charter Township	Kochville Township	Pittsfield Township
Plymouth Township		

### **Twenty-Three Other Communities Are Awarded Four Star Community Status**

In addition to five star award winners, 23 communities are awarded four star community status. Four star communities, according to iLabs' criteria, boast over \$342 million in commercial construction which account for close to 50 percent of the total construction value and 16 percent of the construction permits pulled. A four star community's assets are worth more than \$30 million. At least 68 percent of a four star community's population is over the age of 25 and at least 47 percent have attended some college.

Bath Charter Township	Charter Township of West Bloomfield	City of Adrian
City of Dearborn	City of Farmington Hills*	City of Grand Blanc*
City of Livonia	City of Mason	City of Mount Clemens
City of Norton Shores	City of Plymouth	City of Portage
City of Swartz Creek	City of Tecumseh*	City of Trenton
City of Ypsilanti	Comstock Charter Township	Flint Charter Township
Northville Charter Township	Saginaw Charter Township	Thomas Township
Village of Oxford	Village of Quincy	

To reach their conclusions, the eCities study surveyed 76 communities from 25 Michigan counties that are home to more than 22 percent of Michigan residents and 28 percent of the state's college students who hold a bachelor's degree. These communities account for nearly one-fifth of the state's self-employed entrepreneurs who earn more than \$1.9 billion. About 60 percent of these communities have a local business database, more than a quarter provide business improvement grants, and more than 40 percent have full-time economic development employees.

"The eCities project highlights how local governments from across the state of Michigan are cultivating and supporting economic development. These communities show how local governments can work in distinct and strategic ways to energize public spaces while investing in businesses and job development," said iLabs' Director Tim Davis.

The City of Oak Park was among those honored Wednesday, November 2, at UM-Dearborn. Support for eCities is provided, in part, by the DTE Energy Foundation, Comcast, Plante Moran and UM-Dearborn's College of Business.

The annual eCities research project, which began in 2007, uses data supplied by the participants and other public records to assemble a six factor, 32 item index of entrepreneurial activity. The judges look at such factors as clustering, incentives, growth, policies, community and education. The eCities study focuses on entrepreneurship by recognizing its importance to the expansion and diversification of Michigan's regional economic impact. To date, more than 200 communities across Michigan have participated in the study.

### About the City of Oak Park

The City of Oak Park is situated on the southern-most border of Oakland County, Mich., and serves as a suburban ambassador to the City of Detroit. Incorporated as a city in 1945, Oak Park's current population exceeds 29,300 and is home to more than 1,000 local businesses, including corporate headquarters. The community is busting at the seams with new economic development projects that are making the City an even more attractive option for those looking for quiet neighborhoods, vibrant commercial corridors, and exceptional city services.

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