



CITY OF OAK PARK

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Oak Park is 23rd Community in State to Receive Redevelopment Ready Certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation

June 5, 2018, Oak Park, MI - The City of Oak Park has officially gained Redevelopment Ready Community certification by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The city joins 22 other communities in the state who have already qualified.

Oak Park is now designated "thoroughly prepared" when it comes to planning, zoning, community and economic development practices, and other key features that remove barriers and promote opportunities for prospective investors. Certification ensures that a community can better attract and retain businesses, offer superior customer service, and have a streamlined development approval process. The comprehensive assessment also evaluates and certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their best practices.

"Like a handful of other inner ring suburbs, Oak Park is experiencing a revitalization, in part, because of our commitment to planning, pro-active zoning and community engagement," said Mayor Marian McClellan. "The best practices provided through the Redevelopment Ready Communities program have promoted economic development and renewed interest in our community as a great place for investment, and an exciting place for families to grow."

Economic Development and Communications Director Kimberly Marrone and her team comprising of City Planner Kevin Rulkowski and interns Elizabeth King (now with MEDC) and Colton Dale spearheaded the initiative for the City. They are guided by the support of City Manager Erik Tungate, Mayor Marian McClellan and City Council.

"Working alongside our partners at the MEDC, I'm proud of the great work our Economic Development team has done under the leadership of Kimberly Marrone," said Tungate. "This certification is an asset we plan to utilize to continue the tremendous momentum we're building in the area of business attraction and retention throughout the city."

Oak Park is now recognized as having removed development barriers and streamlined processes to be more competitive and attractive to investors. In receiving RRC, Oak Park

will now enjoy access to the many incentives and programs that MEDC's RRC status has to offer to assist those interested in investing or locating in the city.

"This type of certification doesn't come easy. And, they aren't given to every single city," said James Jackson, Regional Director for U.S. Senator Gary Peters. "If this was the first event that I had been to in Oak Park, I would say, 'Oak Park is at the beginning of a really great era for the city,' but it's not. This is not the first event I've been to in Oak Park, so this becomes acknowledgement of momentum that is already in motion."

There is a three-step certification process every community that wishes to become certified must follow. They must attend the training series, complete the RRC Best Practices self-evaluation which in turn is evaluated, and then the municipality's governing body must pass a resolution of intent to participate in the program and proceed with the MEDC recommendations. When the community meets all the requirements, they are awarded certification.

"The Mayor wanted the certification completed within one year and you did it in 10 months," said Katharine Czarnecki, Senior Vice President of Community Development at MEDC. "That's super fast. Usually we don't see a community go through the process that fast. It usually takes two to three years. So, for Oak Park to make that kind of a timeline is really amazing."

"I'm so proud of this little city with the big heart," said U.S. Representative Brenda Lawrence at this week's award ceremony.

Developers directly benefit by seeking to invest in RRC certified communities with effective and efficient development practices. Oak Park has clear development procedures, a community-supported redevelopment vision, an open and predictable review process, established incentives, and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects.

If you are a business owner interested in opening a business, moving, or growing in Oak Park, contact Kimberly Marrone, Director of Economic Development and Communications for the City of Oak Park. She can be reached at (248) 691-7404 or via email at kmarrone@oakparkmi.gov.

For more information on the importance of Redevelopment Ready Community certification, visit:

- MEDC's Press Release, visit <http://bit.ly/OPMEDCRRC>
- MEDC's RRC Website, visit <https://www.miplace.org/communities/rrc/>
- MEDC's RRC Overview, visit <http://www.michiganbusiness.org/cm/files/fact-sheets/redevelopmentreadycommunitiesprogram.pdf>
- MEDC's RRC FAQ's, visit <https://www.miplace.org/communities/rrc/rrc-faqs-Communities/>



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