

redevelopment ready
communities®



Redevelopment Ready Communities®
Community Assessment Report



City of Boyne City
Evaluation Findings

March 2014

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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 investments that create places where people want to live, work and play.

In January 2013, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) announced the first open application round for communities interested in achieving RRC certification. MEDC received submissions from 36 communities across the state. Boyne City's application scored in the top eight and was selected to receive a full RRC assessment. We applaud the city's efforts in working to achieve RRC certification. The foundation of the evaluation is 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 evaluation criteria have been met to receive RRC certification. While the report of findings outlines recommended actions to meet each best practice criteria, the city may choose its own path of alternate strategies as long as the required criteria is being accomplished. Boyne City is the seventh community to be evaluated under the statewide RRC program.

Boyne City is well on their way to becoming redevelopment ready. The city has a culture of good planning that spans well over a decade. The city embraces gathering public input for major projects by holding biannual community-wide goal setting sessions. The city also strongly encourages developers to work with the citizens at the beginning of the development process to ensure public support. Boyne City was one of the first communities selected to participate in the Michigan Main Street program, which has helped the city maintain and strengthen their downtown. While the spirit of redevelopment exists, the city does need to document internal processes, adopt a capital improvements plan and create a property information package for prime redevelopment opportunities. Completing these steps will assist Boyne City's competitiveness and ultimately the accomplishment of receiving RRC certification.

“Boyne City has been successful because everybody works together. They have a culture that I have not experienced in many other communities.”

—Glen Catt
President and CEO of Catt Development

“Boyne City sets the benchmark for what a community's development process should be.”

—Dave Luesink
President of Bay Winds Federal Credit Union

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 Boyne City 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 into the master plan, capital improvements plan, downtown development plan and corridor plan. The master plan sets expectations of 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.

Boyer City has a long history with master planning and each new plan builds upon the previous one. Boyer City’s most recent master plan was adopted in 2007. The city is currently updating the 2007 plan, with an expected completion date of July of 2014. While the existing master plan reflects the community’s desired direction for the future and designates priority redevelopment areas, it lacks strategies, timelines and tools to accomplish the stated goals and actions for redevelopment.

A capital improvements plan is an important tool used to assist with the implementation of the master plan visions and goals. Boyer City does not currently have

an adopted CIP. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008 requires a city to adopt a CIP for public structures or improvements, in general order of their priority that in the planning commission’s judgment will be needed or desirable and can be undertaken within the ensuing six year period. Developing a CIP brings departments together that are rarely thought of as players in the redevelopment process. Planning for future investment is not only a best practice for redevelopment readiness, but a CIP encourages project coordination internally and externally, and assists with implementing the community vision established during the master planning process. A comprehensive CIP also makes a community more competitive in securing available funding by showing funders the city is properly planning for the future needs of the community.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The governing body has adopted a master plan in the past five years or has a master plan update in development.	✓	
	The master plan identifies a strategy for redevelopment or a redevelopment plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify strategies for redevelopment in the master plan as outlined in RRC Best Practice 1.1	6 months
	The governing body has adopted a capital improvements plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a capital improvements plan in accordance with Public Act 33 of 2008 as outlined in RRC Best Practice 1.1	12 months
	The governing body has adopted a downtown development plan.	✓	
N/A	The governing body has adopted a corridor improvement 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. Boyne City demonstrates exceptional execution of public participation, using both traditional and innovative techniques to engage stakeholders. The city holds a semiannual community-wide goal setting session after every city council election. City boards, commissions and staff rely on the community supported goals developed during these sessions to help with

decision making. The city holds charrettes for major public projects, uses social media to engage the public and shares the outcome of all public participation efforts. The city has a public participation plan identifying the key stakeholders in the city and the methods they use to gather public participation. This plan will help the city maintain the high level of public participation they gather, while evaluating the effectiveness of these efforts in the future.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The community has a public participation policy for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholders in land use decisions.	✓	
	The community demonstrates that public participation efforts go beyond the basic methods.	✓	
	The community shares outcomes of all public participation processes.	✓	

Best Practice 2.1—Zoning regulations

Best practice 2.1 evaluates the city’s zoning ordinance to determine how well it regulates and implements the goals of the master plan. Inflexible or obsolete zoning regulations can discourage redevelopment. Boyne City’s zoning ordinance goals and objectives are connected with the master plans goals and objectives. The city’s master plan states “Downtown Boyne City is a high density, mixed-use growth center that has blended the need for concentrated and efficient development with a respect for the city’s architectural heritage and natural environment.” The city’s zoning ordinance works to achieve this by requiring build to lines within the downtown, allows for outdoor dining and ground floor signage standards. The city allows for flexibility in their zoning code through

the conditional rezoning process. While the city has not considered a traditional form based code, they do have clearly defined and documented design standards in the central business district’s zoning requirements.

The city’s zoning ordinance is accessible online and free of charge and contains graphics to help portray definitions and requirements. The zoning ordinance also contains standards for green infrastructure such as native species plantings, vegetation within parking areas, and stormwater control measures. While the city’s zoning regulations meet the criteria for this best practice, the city should put the graphics within the zoning ordinance online so they are easily accessible to the general public.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The governing body has adopted a zoning ordinance that reflects the goals of the current master plan.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance is easy to read and accessible online.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance provides for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations and encourages the type and form of development desired.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance includes flexible zoning tools to encourage development and redevelopment.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance includes elements for improved non-motorized transportation.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance allows for flexible parking requirements.	✓	
	The zoning ordinance includes standards for green infrastructure to improve storm water management, mitigate heat island effect of large paved surfaces and improve the health and appearance of the community.	✓	

Best Practice 3.1—Site plan review policy

Best practice 3.1 evaluates the city’s site plan review policies, project tracking and availability of development information. Boyne City’s site plan review process is clearly articulated in the zoning ordinance. It outlines the responsibilities for the applicant, planning director, planning commission and other committees as applicable. Tracking development projects through the review process is the job of the planning director. The city should implement a method to track development projects that allows for increased transparency, keeps

staff well informed, provides clarification as to the status of a project and can assist in measuring the results of the approval process.

While staff is very helpful at guiding applicants through the development process, the city is in need of a “Guide to Development.” Creating a guide to development that contains specific instructions, flowcharts, application forms, submittal deadlines and requirements for each development process allows instant access to information after normal business hours.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
Green	The zoning ordinance articulates a thorough site plan review process.	✓	
Green	The zoning ordinance documents the responsibilities of the governing body, staff, ZBA, planning commission and other reviewing bodies.	✓	
Yellow	The community has a method to track development projects.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement an internal system for project tracking as outlined in RRC Best Practice 3.1	3 months
Green	The community annually reviews the fee schedule.	✓	
Red	A “Guide to Development” is maintained online that explains policies, procedures and steps to obtain approvals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a “Guide to Development” as outlined in RRC Best Practice 3.1	12 months

Best Practice 3.2—Site plan review process

Best practice 3.2 evaluates the community’s site plan review procedures and internal/external communication. The purpose of the site plan review procedures is to ensure plans for specific types of development comply with the zoning ordinance. Site plan review procedures and review timelines should be communicated in a clear and concise manner to prospective developers and business owners. To do this, sound internal procedures need to be in place and followed.

Boyne City’s planning director is the qualified intake professional that receives and processes applications and

site plans. In our business interviews, all interviewees indicated that the city provides exemplary customer service. While the city follows the development plan requirements spelled out within the zoning ordinance, there is no documented internal review procedure. The city should work to create an internal review procedure to help define the roles of each official that is part of the process. This can also help guide staff in the absence of key officials.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
Green	The community has a qualified intake professional or project manager.	✓	
Red	The community has a clearly documented internal staff review policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop an internal staff review policy including timelines and joint team review process as outlined in RRC Best Practice 3.2	3 months
Green	The community defines and offers conceptual site plan review meetings for applicants.	✓	
Green	The community encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses at the onset of the application process.	✓	
Green	The appropriate departments engage in joint site plan team reviews.	✓	
Green	The community promptly acts on special land use, variance or rezoning requests.	✓	
Green	The community annually reviews the successes and challenges with the site plan review procedures.	✓	

Best Practice 4.1—Training for elected officials, board members and staff

Best practice 4.1 assesses how a community encourages training and tracks training needs for appointed and elected officials, board members and staff. Trainings provide officials and staff with an opportunity to learn, build their knowledge and ultimately make more informed decisions about land use and redevelopment issues. Boyne City has a dedicated source of funding for all departments, boards, and commissions and encourages all members to attend them regularly. The city has started to track the trainings attended by city officials. This will help to identify any additional training needs. The city also regularly conducts communitywide collaborative study sessions.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The community has a dedicated source of funding for training.	✓	
	The community identifies training needs of the governing body, boards, commissions and staff based on the stated goals in the redevelopment strategy.	✓	
	The community encourages board and commission members to attend trainings.	✓	
	The planning commission, zoning board of appeals and the governing body conducts collaborative study sessions.	✓	

Best Practice 4.2—Recruitment and orientation

Best practice 4.2 evaluates how a community conducts recruitment and orientation for newly appointed or elected officials and board members. Planning commission members should be recruited based on requirements articulated in Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Boyne City actively recruits members of the community to serve on their boards and commissions. They have the application on their website and routinely post notices in the newspaper however, they do not set any expectations for the open positions. The city should consider drafting expectations for each board and committee, so applicants understand the position they are applying for.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The community sets expectations for boards and commission positions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a process and criteria for selecting members for open board and commission positions as outlined in RRC Best Practice 4.2	3 months
	The community provides orientation packets to newly appointed and elected members.	✓	

Best Practice 5.1—Redevelopment Ready Sites®

Best practice 5.1 assesses how a community identifies, visions and markets their priority redevelopment sites. Boyne City was provided the opportunity to work with Peter Allen and a team of University of Michigan students by the MEDC. The RRSites project completed an in-depth analysis of three prime redevelopment areas within the city. The report focused on the SoBo Lakefront, Ray Street Infill and Riverfront Boutique Hotel. These areas are all located within the Central Business District and redevelopment of these sites is vital to assisting in the revitalization of downtown. While initial research has

been done through the RRSites project, the city should take the study and build upon it to identify what kinds of support they may be willing to offer a potential project. The city also needs to package property information for interested developers who may want to pursue a project on one of their top priority redevelopment sites. This information will assist developers with upfront due diligence and help identify possible obstacles before the formal development process starts. Once these steps are complete the city will be better positioned to get developers at the table.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The community identifies and prioritizes individual redevelopment sites.	✓	
	The community forms a steering committee(s) for prioritized redevelopment sites.	✓	
	The community gathers preliminary development research for prioritized redevelopment sites.	✓	
	A public visioning session is held for the prioritized redevelopment sites.	✓	
	Available resources for the prioritized redevelopment sites are identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify available resources for redevelopment sites as outlined in RRC Best Practice 5.1	6 months
	A “Property Information Package” for the prioritized redevelopment site(s) is assembled.	<input type="checkbox"/> Assemble a property information package for identified redevelopment sites as outlined in RRC Best Practice 5.1	6 months
	Prioritized redevelopment sites are actively marketed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Market identified redevelopment sites according to plan developed by steering committee as outlined in RRC Best Practice 5.1	6 months

Best Practice 6.1—Economic strategies

Best practice 6.1 evaluates what goals and actions a community has identified to assist in strengthening its overall economic health. Strategic economic development planning is critical to attracting jobs and investment in communities. Creating an economic development strategy for Boyne City that connects the master plan and future capital improvements plan, while coordinating with the municipal budget, will help the city focus resources where they matter most. This strategy will assist in identifying potential economic opportunities within the city and

region. Boyne City, through the Michigan Main Street program, drafted a “Cultural Economic Development Strategy.” While the strategy does not identify a timeline, benchmarks or primary economic development tools the city is willing to use, it does connect to the master plan, identifies the unique economic opportunities and challenges of Boyne City. The city should amend this document to include timelines, benchmarks and tools, or incorporating economic development strategies into their master plan.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The governing body has approved an economic development strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Revise and adopt the 2007 draft economic development strategy in accordance with expectations as outline in Best Practice 6.1	6 months
	The governing body annually reviews the economic development strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the economic development strategy during the city’s annual budget review	6 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. While Boyne City is working with the chamber of commerce and the Main Street program to market the city, they are lacking a formal marketing strategy. Drafting a formal marketing strategy will help the city focus their efforts

on how they strategically manage their resources to promote Boyne City.

The city’s website is very user friendly and updated frequently, but is lacking information such as a guide to development, capital improvements plan, and a property information packages. Once these documents are completed, they should be uploaded to the city’s website so they are accessible to residents and developers.

Status	Evaluation criteria	Recommended actions for certification	Estimated timeline
	The community has developed a marketing strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop an internal marketing strategy for the city in accordance with expectations as outlined in Best Practice 6.2	12 months
	The community has an updated, user-friendly municipal website.	<input type="checkbox"/> Update the city’s website to include capital improvements plan, guide to development, and property information packages once completed as outlined in Best Practice 6.2	12 months