

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Wendy Rampson, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: **Redevelopment Ready Communities Assessment Report**

DATE: October 31, 2014

In November 2013, City Council authorized a memorandum of understanding with the Michigan Department of Economic Development (MEDC) to participate in the Redevelopment Ready Communities certification process (resolution attached). Ann Arbor was one of eight communities selected by the MEDC to receive a no-cost, comprehensive assessment and a report with recommended strategies for supporting the city's economic vitality.

MEDC started the assessment process in May 2014, working with Planning staff to obtain documentation of the city's development processes and interviewing local developers about their experiences. MEDC staff reviewed this information and evaluated the City on six best practices:

- Community plans and public outreach
- Zoning regulations
- Development review process
- Recruitment and education of boards and commissions
- Assembly of Redevelopment Ready sites
- Community prosperity initiatives

The Community Assessment Evaluation Findings Report was completed earlier this month and is attached. The city's attainment for each of the 43 best practices is reflected through color coding. A green result indicates the best practice is currently being met. A yellow result indicates the practice is partially met, but additional action is required. A red result indicates the practice is not being met. The report concludes that Ann Arbor is achieving 32 best practices (74%); is partially meeting 9 best practices (21%); and currently is not meeting 2 best practices (5%)

MEDC concluded that Ann Arbor was well on its way to becoming redevelopment ready and called out initiatives such as the citizen participation ordinance and downtown premium incentives as being especially innovative. Recommendations for improvement include completing the zoning ordinance reorganization project; shortening the site plan

approval process; packaging key redevelopment sites; and creating an economic development and marketing strategy.

The list of recommended actions is ambitious. The practices that can be implemented administratively are being reviewed by staff. Practices that involve policy will require direction from the Planning Commission and/or City Council. The MEDC is requesting an opportunity to review the report with City Council, and recommends including the Planning Commission. City Council's January work session is a possibility being explored.

Attachments: Resolution R-13-364
 City of Ann Arbor Evaluation Findings, October 2014

c: Steven D. Powers, City Administrator
 Sumedh Bahl, Community Services Area Administrator