



JOINT MEETING

City Council, Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority and Historic District Commission

January 9, 2020 – 12:00 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL

Marc Tall, Mayor
Peggy O’Connell, Mayor Pro-Tem
Ralph B. Blasier, Council Member
Tyler D. DuBord, Council Member
Karen S. Moore, Council Member

PLANNING COMMISSION

Christine Williams, Chairperson
James Hellermann, Vice Chairperson
Craig Gierke, Secretary
Paul Caswell, Deputy Secretary
Dominic Benetti, Commissioner
Brian Black, Commissioner
Richard Clark, Commissioner
Stephen Davis, Commissioner
Kelvin Smyth, Commissioner

ADMINISTRATION

Patrick S. Jordan, City Manager
Phil DeMay, City Clerk
John Bergman, City Attorney
Ed Legault, DDA Director
Roxanne Spencer, Planning & Zoning Administrator

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Dan Bender, Chairperson
Eric Swanson, Vice Chairperson
Andy Crispigna, Treasurer
Marc Tall, Trustee
Mark Ammel, Trustee
Patrick Jordan, Trustee
Curt Spaulding, Trustee
Pat Baribeau, Trustee
Peggy Berg, Trustee

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Don Curran, Chairperson
Judith Fouts, Vice Chairperson
Suzell Eisenberger, Secretary
Elizabeth Keller, Commissioner
Karen Lindquist, Commissioner
Monte Morrison, Commissioner
Ellie O’Donnell, Commissioner

Escanaba City Hall Council Chambers, Room C101, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 9, 2020, at 12:00 p.m.

- CALL TO ORDER
- ROLL CALL
- APPROVAL/ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION
- NEW BUSINESS

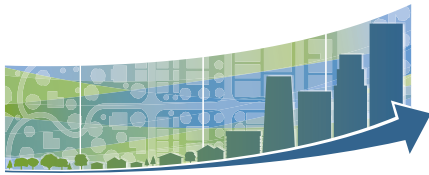
- 1. **Presentation/Discussion – Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) – Report of Findings.**
Explanation: The Michigan Economic Development Corporation will present its findings and recommendations for aligning the City of Escanaba’s development practices with Redevelopment Ready Community Best Practices as the City moves toward re-certification.

- GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
- COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
- ADJOURNMENT

The City of Escanaba will provide all necessary, reasonable aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon five days notice to the City of Escanaba. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City of Escanaba by writing or calling City Hall at (906) 786-9402.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick S. Jordan
City Manager



redevelopment ready
communities®

RRC Recertification Brief

Escanaba

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

City of Escanaba holds the distinction as the first community in the Upper Peninsula to achieve certification as a Redevelopment Ready Community® and the 10th in the state. The city's efforts from March 2015 to April 2017 to achieve certification helped the city establish a foundation to grow, attract and retain investment in its downtown and throughout the community.

RRC certification is valid for a period of three years—in Escanaba's case, until April 13, 2020. In order to maintain certification, the city must demonstrate that it continues to align with the RRC Best Practices. Those practices—much like communities—evolve over the three year period. This memo seeks to assist Escanaba staff and officials in determining whether it would like to renew its certification and if so, how it can incorporate (or in some cases, reincorporate) the current best practices into its everyday activities.

REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES®

RRC is free technical assistance tool offered through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) 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 who fully align with the best practices become RRC certified which come with its own set of benefits including:

1. Access to the Redevelopment Services Team to help the with the community's redevelopment priority sites;
2. Assistance marketing sites, including a dedicated priority sites page on www.miplace.org;
3. Special opportunities for community development tools and services;
4. Continued technical assistance funding opportunities;
5. Invitations to special events and conferences supported by MEDC; and
6. Customized potential benefits depending on each community's needs.

Over the past three years, Escanaba has received or been offered many of the benefits above; the most significant being current support through the Redevelopment Services Team to help the city redevelop the former county jail site.

THE RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Much like communities, RRC is always evolving to keep up with current planning and development trends as well as feedback from RRC communities. As such, the current RRC Best Practices are slightly different than those in place at the time of the city's initial certification. Keeping this in mind, RRC has crafted a recertification process that provides significant lead time and resources to help certified communities update their practices without needing to go through a full reevaluation process. Steps taken to-date and steps remaining include:

1. **Initial review:** In April 2019, RRC conducted a initial review of the city's practices to assess any high-level areas of concern for alignment with the best practices. This resulted in a one-page list of items that the city could begin working on.
2. **Meeting:** In October 2019, RRC met with the city's new zoning administrator to introduce the city to a new online project management tool, called Trello, which will help the city with securing recertification and to more easily maintain it going forward.
3. **Formal review:** Later that month, RRC conducted a more robust assessment of the city's planning and development processes against the current best practices. That resulted in an official list of recommendations for getting the city back into full alignment with the best practices. That list is included in this briefing.
4. **NEXT STEP—Decision to continue:** The city should review this briefing and the recommendations and determine whether it would like to continue maintaining its RRC certification.
5. **Action plan:** If the city opts to continue, RRC will work with the city's RRC contact (zoning administrator) to formalize a plan of action to complete all the missing items. Most should be done prior to certification anniversary but a few may go past that if there is a plan in place to complete them within a reasonable timeframe (no longer than a year). Work has already begun on this step via Trello.

6. **Accept plan and confirm:** Once a plan has been finalized and accepted by RRC, the city's RRC planner will confirm with the RRC team that the city is ready to be recertified. The city may opt to do a celebratory event or media release if it so chooses.
7. **Maintenance:** The city will complete the items from the action plan within the time identified. The city will use Trello going forward to provide updates on the annual items to help it maintain certification. Certification will be extended to April 13, 2023.

THREE YEARS OF PROGRESS

Escanaba has seen planning and development progress on many fronts since its certification in April 2017. Many of these projects are directly tied to RRC Best Practice items or efforts including the city's downtown plan, redevelopment of the old jail site, and downtown façade improvements. Examples of work the city has completed (or is currently undertaking) include:

Downtown marketplace: Opened in July 2017, the downtown marketplace was a key project in the city's efforts to revitalize the downtown area. The \$1.3 million dollar project replaced the former Northern Motors parking lot and was financed as a partnership between the Escanaba DDA and the Community Development Block Grant program, administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Downtown façades: The DDA provides an annual opportunity for downtown business owners to enhance facades as part of the city's efforts to revitalize the downtown district; this is considered a top priority item according to the DDA's 2011 TIF plan. For the 2017–2018 round, approximately \$492,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds from MEDC are supporting an additional \$503,000 in private investment in four properties. The city has a long history of actively pursuing downtown façade improvements, including an additional five completed the year before (2016–2017).

Priority Redevelopment Site (111 North Third Street): In 2018, the city began working with the Redevelopment Services Team as the newest benefit for RRC certified communities. The team worked with the city to identify

111 North Third Street (including the former Delta County Jail facility), as a target ripe for redevelopment. The team assisted the city with gathering information, identifying potential uses, packaging the site for marketing, coordinating a developer showcase event, and is currently supporting the city as it works with its selected developer to move the project forward. This site is expected to be home to mixed-use development in the coming years, including a new hotel. The total project is projected to bring in approximately \$18 million in investment as of current projections.

Welcome center and museum: In 2019, community stakeholders used MEDC Community Development's Public Spaces, Community Places program to raise \$51,466 for a new welcome center and museum. The project, sponsored by the U.P. State Fair and Commerce Center team, will provide a single location for the region's residents and visitors to congregate with the goal of enhancing the community through collaboration. The center will include office space for the Delta County Chamber, the Builders Exchange, the EDA and the U.P. State Fair. It will also include the Bays de Noc "Visit Escanaba" welcome center outfitted with the latest technology to entice tourists to visit Escanaba and throughout the U.P., as well as the Webster Marble "Inventing the Outdoors" Museum, that will recount how a local Gladstone entrepreneur, inventor and industrialist, Webster Marble, patented 64 different outdoor products.

Zoning and process enhancements: The city has continued to review its zoning ordinance to add new provisions such as wind energy standards and clarification to what is required for site plan approval. The city's efforts to evaluate the development review process also resulted in a new step to ensure that utilities are handled appropriately early in the process to avoid potential issues near the end. This has been especially effective in supporting additional investment in the Escanaba mall and out-lot areas. The planning commission is currently working to review the zoning ordinance in its entirety (chapter by chapter) and is reviewing the zoning map for any needed updates. Those efforts are expected to reach into 2020.

RRC Recertification Brief



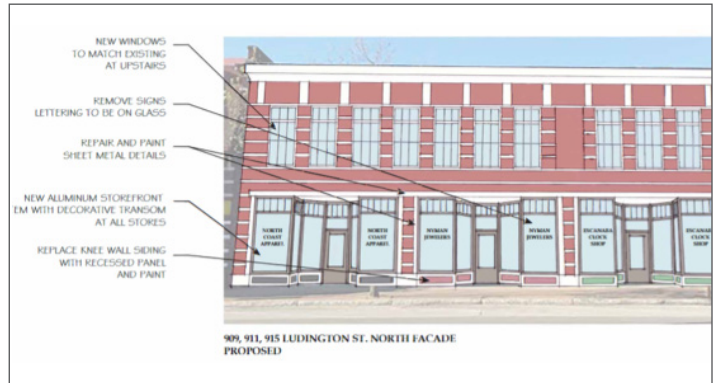
Escanaba Farmer's Market



Welcome center and museum (Patronicity project)



Old jail site (priority redevelopment site)



Downtown façade improvement rendering

STATUS OF BEST PRACTICES

Escanaba has experienced significant turnover in staff and officials since its initial certification. As is the case with any major change, new people lead to new processes, perspectives, and priorities. In Escanaba’s case, these changes have resulted in different or eliminated

processes that no longer fully align with the RRC Best Practices. The following matrix shows an overview of the city’s status in aligning with the best practices. A table with recommendations for realignment follows the matrix.

Escanaba is currently aligned with 45 percent of the Redevelopment Ready Communities® criteria and is partially aligned with another 55 percent.						
<i>Evaluation Snapshot: Status of RRC Best Practices in Escanaba</i>						
1.1.1	1.1.2	1.1.3 (N/A)	1.1.4	1.2.1	1.2.2	1.2.3
2.1.1	2.1.2	2.1.3	2.1.4	2.1.5	2.1.6	2.1.7
2.1.8	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.1.3	3.1.4	3.1.5	3.1.6
3.1.7	3.1.8	3.2.1	3.2.2	4.1.1	4.1.2	4.2.1
4.2.2	4.2.3	4.2.4	5.1.1	5.1.2	5.2.1	5.2.2
6.1.1	6.1.2	6.1.3	6.1.4	6.1.5	6.1.6	

TABLE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECERTIFICATION

Criteria	Description	Proposed action to take
1.1.1	Master Plan	Update the planning commission annual report to include a progress update on the city's efforts to achieve the master plan goals and actions.
1.1.4	Capital Improvements Plan	Extend the CIP to include six years (currently only five).
1.2	Public Participation Plan	Update the public participation plan to remove outdated references and a more active evaluation component.
2.1	Zoning Regulations	CUPPAD is currently conducting a zoning audit using RRC funding. Once that audit is complete, there may be minor updates needed to fully align.
2.1.2	Zoning: <i>Concentrated development</i>	Add provisions to support at least one type of place making such as build-to lines, ground floor transparency, outdoor dining, etc., to support efforts to maintain a vibrant atmosphere in the downtown.
2.1.6	Zoning: <i>Parking flexibility</i>	Add at least one additional tool to clearly allow for creative parking solutions when minimums may not be applicable.
2.1.7	Zoning: <i>Sustainable infrastructure</i>	RRC is continuing to assess this criterion and may have additional recommendations. Those should be confirmed by the end of December.
3.1.3	Development Review Process: <i>Conceptual meetings</i>	Clearly advertise the availability of conceptual review meetings on the website. Create a checklist or guidance document outlining how to prepare and what will be covered.
3.1.5	Development Review Process: <i>Internal review process</i>	Document the internal review process, from application to zoning permit.
3.1.6	Development Review Process: <i>Prompt action</i>	Remove the required public hearing for permitted uses. This hearing is not legally required and adds cost, time, and uncertainty for projects which much legally be approved as long as they meet the zoning ordinance requirements.
3.2.1	Guide to Development	Develop a more detailed online guide to development as part of the new website.
4.1.1	Recruitment and Orientation	Develop position descriptions for development-related boards. Document the appointment process from application to orientation.
4.1.2	Recruitment and Orientation	Complete the city's current efforts to create a boards and commissions handbook, including orientation sections.
4.2.2	Recruitment and Education: <i>Strategy and tracking</i>	Create training strategies for development-related boards and commission.
4.2.2	Recruitment and Education: <i>Consistent reminders</i>	Add training as a standing agenda item for development-related boards.
4.2.4	Recruitment and Education: <i>Joint meeting</i>	Hold a joint meeting or training with council, planning commission, and DDA (others as desired) at least annually.
5.1.2	Economic Development Strategy: <i>Reporting</i>	Included the master plan; incorporate the annual progress update into the planning commission annual report.
5.2.1	Marketing and Promotion: <i>Marketing strategy</i>	Review the city's marketing strategy from 2017 and identify next steps with key partners, including a matrix of actions and responsible parties.
6.1	Redevelopment Ready Sites	Identify a third priority site and provide the requested information to MEDC to complete three site information sheets.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Escanaba has much to be proud of over the past three years. From the downtown marketplace to the potential redevelopment of 111 North Third Street, the city is seeing significant public and private investment.

Over the years, some of the city's processes have evolved away from the RRC Best Practices. In order to maintain its certification, the city will need to readjust some of its practices to bring them back into alignment. Luckily, all the city's foundational plans and documents remain valid and continue to provide guidance; most of efforts needed to realign will be focused on internal processes such as the board and commission appointment process, training, and the internal site plan review process. Some work will also be needed on the city's approach to marketing and priority redevelopment sites.

With this information in hand, the city should determine whether it would like to continue with maintaining its RRC certification. Assuming it does, city staff should then work with RRC to finalize the action plan for completing the recommendations. Once city staff and RRC have a mutual agreement on the strategy, the city will be cleared for recertification, set to take effect from April 14, 2020 – April 13, 2023.

Should there be any questions, they can be directed to the city's RRC planner, Christopher Germain, AIC, at germainc2@michigan.org or to the RRC team as a whole at RRC@michigan.org. The MEDC looks forward to continuing its longstanding partnership with the city and to helping it maintain its RRC certification for many years to come.