



River Rouge Board and Commission Training Strategy

The City of River Rouge encourages ongoing training for staff, elected officials, and appointed officials charged with making development-related decisions for the community. This guide aims to identify goals and expectations for training opportunities and identify the potential sources for those opportunities.





Importance of Training

Members of River Rouge’s boards and commissions make important decisions for the community which can reach far into the future. As such, it is important to prioritize continued education and onboarding training for appointed and elected board members and staff. Ongoing training is an important form of risk management and helps ensure the city’s projects, programs, and budgets are aligned with long-term goals. Turnover in officials and staff can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential to efficient functioning of the City’s development processes.

General Training Resources

The following organizations offer relevant training, workshops, and conferences which may be available to River Rouge’s development-related elected and appointed officials and staff members.

- Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program
- Michigan Municipal League (MML)
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
- Michigan Association of Planning (MAP)
- Michigan State University Extension (MSU-E)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM)
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)
- Michigan Downtown Association (MDA)
- Planetizen

Below are several on-demand webinars and training series available this year.

- [RRC: RRC Best Practice Online](#)
- [RRC: Training Educational Webinar Videos | Michigan Business](#)
- [State of Michigan: BLGSS Learning Center](#)
- [MML: Newly Elected Officials Training and Events](#)
- [EGLE: Remediation and Risk Management Series](#)
- [MAP: Education and Resources for Officials](#)
- [MSU: Center for Local Government Finance & Policy](#)



Training Plan for 2024

Universal Trainings

Universal Trainings cover topics which are important for all of the city’s boards and commissions. These trainings rely on already-created handouts, guides, and materials, which are distributed to all nine (9) of the city’s boards and commissions. Each member will receive a packet (either digitally or in print, depending on their preference) with the specified materials. Universal Trainings are mean to be refreshers on key topics.

Topic	Related To	Training Source / Resources	End-Year Reporting: Completed?
Open Meetings Act	Record Keeping & Transparency	State Fact Sheet	
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	Transparency	MML Fact Sheet	
Conflicts of Interest	Risk Management	MML Fact Sheet	

City Council

Topic	Related To	Training Source / Resources	End-Year Reporting: Completed?
Municipal Fiscal Sustainability	Budgeting Duties	Fiscally Ready Communities (Treasury), MML	
Open Meetings Act	State Law	State of Michigan , Foster Swift Webinar Series	
CIP Budgeting		Open Gov CIP Module , City Staff	

Planning Commission

Topic	Related To	Training Source / Resources	End-Year Reporting: Completed?
Missing Middle Housing	Master Plan	Missing Middle Housing , StrongTowns , MML/MEDC	
Joint Training with ZBA: How to Read the Zoning Ordinance	Powers and Duties	City Staff	



Downtown Development Authority

Topic	Related To	Training Source / Resources	End-Year Reporting: Completed?
Development & TIF Plan Updates	State Required Plans	City Staff	
RRC Program	Business Retention and Redevelopment	RRC MiPlace Self-Paced Training	
Budgeting and Reporting	State Law	City Staff, MML	
Small Business Resources	Supporting Constituents	City Development Handbook, MEDC Small Business Services	

Zoning Board of Appeals

Topic	Related To	Training Source / Resources	End-Year Reporting: Completed?
Zoning Court Decisions	Board's Role	MSU Extension Annual Recap	
Dimensional vs Use Variances	Board's Role	City Staff	
Joint Training with ZBA: How to Read the Zoning Ordinance	Powers and Duties	City Staff	



Training Budget

The City should allocate a small amount of money in its annual budget for trainings. Where an online training session has a paywall, staff should coordinate a group training session at City Hall where members can attend simultaneously, to lower the overall cost. For example, the MSU self-paced Zoning Certificate Course costs \$75, and could be used to train all ZBA members. Free or low-cost trainings should be prioritized, as well as trainings by staff.

Identification of Trainings

The City Council, Planning Commission, ZBA, and DDA should annually review the trainings plan with staff to identify trainings they believe are most important. These may include refresher trainings on foundational topics, or trainings that address new and upcoming changes in the industry. Members should express if there are any key areas where they feel under-trained so staff can prioritize these subjects.

Notification of Opportunities

Whenever staff members notice a new training that may be helpful, they will include it as a note in the next meeting agenda of the board or commission for which they are responsible. These opportunities are supplements to the established training plan. For Council training, department heads will forward the opportunities to the city clerk, who then can coordinate providing them within the meeting packet.

Tracking Attendance

Members attending training will be asked to fill out a training reporting form (see next page) that indicates the training topic, the training dates, who put on the training, what was learned applicable to the City, and whether they would recommend the training. These tracking documents will be kept in a training file in the Community Development Department and used to determine who has attended trainings and who has not. If a member fails to fill out a report, it will be assumed they did not attend.

Reporting on Training Results

In addition to completing the tracking form, members who attend training will be asked to share what they learned at their next meeting. Additionally, boards and commission which have required annual reports under state law (Planning Commission and DDA) will include a summary of the training in the report.



Training Reporting Form

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
BOARD/COMMISSION	
<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Development Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Retirement System <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service Commission <input type="checkbox"/> Police and Fire Retirement Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Commission <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Commission <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning Board of Appeals <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Commission <input type="checkbox"/> City Council
TRAINING DATE	
TRAINING TITLE/TOPIC	
TAKEAWAYS	
<p>What was the most valuable part of the training? What was the least valuable part of the training?</p>	
<p>Would you recommend that other city volunteers or staff take this training?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>What are a few key takeaways you plan to share with your board or commission?</p>	

Return this form by email or in print to:

Lisa Givens (HR Director)
lgivens@cityofriverrouge.com
 2nd Floor of City Hall

Please return within 1 week of training date.