

# **Traverse City Downtown Development Authority Regular Meeting**

**Friday, July 18, 2025**

**9:00 am**

Commission Chambers, Governmental Center  
400 Boardman Avenue  
Traverse City, Michigan 49684



The City of Traverse City does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in, its programs or activities. Interim Assistant City Manager, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan 49684, phone 231-922-4440, TDD/TTY 231-922-4412, VRS 231-421-7008, has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA Coordinator.

If you are planning to attend and you have a disability requiring any special assistance at the meeting and/or if you have any concerns, please immediately notify the ADA Coordinator.

The City of Traverse City and Downtown Development Authority are committed to a dialog that is constructive, respectful and civil. We ask that all individuals interacting verbally or in writing with board members honor these values.

Downtown Development Authority:  
c/o Harry Burkholder, Executive Director  
(231) 922-2050  
Web: [www.dda.downtowntc.com](http://www.dda.downtowntc.com)  
303 East State Street, Suite C  
Traverse City, MI 49684

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# Welcome to the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority meeting

## Agenda

Page

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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### 2. ROLL CALL

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### 3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

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### 5. CONSENT CALENDAR

*The purpose of the consent calendar is to expedite business by grouping non-controversial items together to be dealt with by one DDA Board motion without discussion. Any member of the DDA Board, staff or the public may ask that any item on the consent calendar be removed therefrom and placed elsewhere on the agenda for individual consideration by the DDA Board; and such requests will be automatically respected. If an item is not removed from the consent calendar, the action noted in parentheses on the agenda is approved by a single DDA Board action adopting the consent calendar.*

- A. Consideration of approving the minutes from the June 20, 2025 DDA Regular Board Meeting (approval recommended) 4 - 7

[June 20, 2025 DDA Regular Meeting Minutes - PDF](#)

- B. Consideration of approving the June 2025 Financial Reports of and Distributions for DDA General, Old Town TIF, TIF-97, and Arts Commission (approval recommended) 8 - 16

[June 2025 DDA General, Old Town TIF and TIF-97 Financial Report and Dashboard - PDF](#)

[Arts Commission June financial report](#)

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### 6. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

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### 7. OLD BUSINESS

- A. TIF-97 Project Priorities Report 17 - 22

[TIF-97 Project Priorities Memo \(Burkholder\) - PDF](#)

[Rotary Square Timeline Update - PDF](#)

[Boardman Ottaway Riverwalk Timeline Update - PDF](#)

B.	Moving Downtown Forward TIF Plan <a href="#">MDF TIF Plan Memo (Burkholder) - PDF</a> <a href="#">Strategic Action Plan - DDA Gaps and Alignment Matrix - PDF</a> <a href="#">Traverse City Strategic Action Plan Report - PDF</a>	23 - 66
<hr/>		
<b>8.</b>	<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
A.	DDA Handbook (approval recommended) <a href="#">DDA Handbook Memo (Burkholder) - PDF</a> <a href="#">DDA Employee Handbook FINAL (draft)</a>	67 - 88
B.	Executive Director Evaluation Proposal (approval recommended) <a href="#">Executive Director Evaluation Memo (Burkholder) - PDF</a> <a href="#">TC DDA 2025 Executive Director Performance Evaluation Proposal (HRC) - PDF</a>	89 - 92
C.	Holiday Lights Proposal (approval recommended) <a href="#">Holiday Lights Memo (Bohac) - PDF</a> <a href="#">Strain Holiday Lights Preliminary Contract - PDF</a>	93 - 95
<hr/>		
<b>9.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT</b>	
A.	Executive Director Report <a href="#">Executive Director Report (Burkholder) - PDF</a>	96 - 99
B.	Introduction of Carly Nicholas <a href="#">Introduction Memo (Burkholder) - PDF</a>	100
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<b>10.</b>	<b>BOARD MEMBER REPORTS</b>	
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<b>11.</b>	<b>STAFF REPORTS</b>	
A.	Arts Commission <a href="#">Art Commission Report (Bohac) - PDF</a>	101 - 102
B.	Director of Events and Engagement <a href="#">Director of Events and Engagement Memo (Klebba) - PDF</a>	103 - 104
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<b>12.</b>	<b>RECEIVE AND FILE</b>	
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<b>13.</b>	<b>PUBLIC COMMENT</b>	
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<b>14.</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	



**Minutes of the  
Downtown Development Authority for the City of Traverse City  
Regular Meeting  
Friday, June 20, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Downtown Development Authority of the City of Traverse City was called to order at the Commission Chambers, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, at 9:00 a.m.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Board Member Peter Kirkwood, Board Member Jeff Joubran, Board Member Todd McMillen, Board Member Ed Slosky, Mayor Amy Shamroe, Board Member Shelley Spencer, Board Member Gary Howe, and Board Member Mike Powers

The following Board Members were absent: None

Chairperson Slosky presided at the meeting.

(a) **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Slosky called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

(b) **ROLL CALL**

(c) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

(1)

That the board approve the Agenda as presented.

Moved by Mike Powers, Seconded by Jeff Joubran

**Yes:** Peter Kirkwood, Jeff Joubran, Todd McMillen, Ed Slosky, Amy Shamroe, Shelley Spencer, and Mike Powers

**Absent:** Gary Howe

**CARRIED. 7-0-1 on a recorded vote**

(d) **PUBLIC COMMENT**

(e) **CONSENT CALENDAR**

*The purpose of the consent calendar is to expedite business by grouping*

*non-controversial items together to be dealt with by one DDA Board motion without discussion. Any member of the DDA Board, staff or the public may ask that any item on the consent calendar be removed therefrom and placed elsewhere on the agenda for individual consideration by the DDA Board; and such requests will be automatically respected. If an item is not removed from the consent calendar, the action noted in parentheses on the agenda is approved by a single DDA Board action adopting the consent calendar.*

- (1) Consideration of approving the minutes from the May 16, 2025 DDA Regular Board Meeting (approval recommended)
- (2) Consideration of approving the the May 2025 Financial Reports and Distributions for DDA General, Old Town TIF, TIF-97 and the Arts Commission (approval recommended)

That the board approve the Consent Calendar as presented.

Moved by Amy Shamroe, Seconded by Todd McMillen

**Yes:** Peter Kirkwood, Jeff Joubran, Todd McMillen, Ed Slosky, Amy Shamroe, Shelley Spencer, and Mike Powers

**Absent:** Gary Howe

**CARRIED. 7-0-1 on a recorded vote**

(f) **ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR**

(g) **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- (1) Informational Bi-Annual Report to the Community (MCL 125.4910(4))

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder  
Ed Slosky

(h) **OLD BUSINESS**

- (1) 2025 - 2026 DDA Budget (approval recommended)

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder  
Ed Slosky  
Amy Shamroe  
Mike Powers  
Pete Kirkwood  
Jeff Joubran

That the DDA Board of Directions hereby approves the 2025/2026 budget as follows: Downtown Development Authority (General) Fund \$2,600,900 Tax

Increment Financing District 97 Fund \$6,983,400 Tax Increment Financing District  
Old Town Fund \$ 729,200

Moved by Amy Shamroe, Seconded by Todd McMillen

**Yes:** Peter Kirkwood, Jeff Joubran, Todd McMillen, Ed Slosky, Amy  
Shamroe, Shelley Spencer, and Mike Powers

**Absent:** Gary Howe

**CARRIED. 7-0-1 on a recorded vote**

**(2) Streetscaping/Snowmelt Reimbursement Policy**

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder

**(3) Project Priorities (approval recommended)**

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder

Ed Slosky

Mike Powers

Pete Kirkwood

Amy Shamroe

Shelley Spencer

That the DDA Board enter into contract with Beckett & Raeder for a not-to-exceed cost of \$93,100 for conceptual design and cost estimation for the Farmers Market Pavillion using TIF-97 funding, subject to approval as to its form by the DDA Executive Director and Attorney. Boardman/Ottaway Riverwalk

Moved by Peter Kirkwood, Seconded by Jeff Joubran

**Yes:** Peter Kirkwood, Jeff Joubran, Todd McMillen, Ed Slosky, Amy  
Shamroe, Shelley Spencer, and Mike Powers

**Absent:** Gary Howe

**CARRIED. 7-0-1 on a recorded vote**

**(i) NEW BUSINESS**

**(j) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

**(1) Executive Director Report**

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder  
Ed Slosky  
Amy Shamroe

(k) **STAFF REPORTS**

(1) Arts Commission

The following addressed the board:

Harry Burkholder  
Lauren Bohac  
Ed Slosky

(2) Director of Events and Engagement

The following addressed the board:

Sara Klebba  
Amy Shamroe  
Ed Slosky  
Pete Kirkwood

(l) **RECEIVE AND FILE**

(1) Traverse Connect Spring 2025 Informational Bi-Annual Report to the Community

(m) **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following addressed the board:

Richard Robbins  
720 Center Place, Traverse City, MI

(n) **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Slosky at 10:01am.

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Harry Burkholder, Executive Director

# Traverse City DDA - General

## Trial Balance

As of June 30, 2025

	DEBIT	CREDIT
1000 Fifth Third Checking - 3112	512,981.54	
1010 Fifth Third Savings - 6740	216,299.38	
1020 Petty Cash	0.00	
1072 Bill.com Money Out Clearing	0.00	
1200 Accounts Receivable	4,227.89	
1101 Due From APS (City of TC)	0.00	
1102 Due From Arts Council	0.00	
1103 Due From DTCA	0.00	
1104 Due From Other Funds	0.00	
1220 Grants Receivable	0.00	
1230 Other Receivable	0.00	
1300 Pre-Paid Expense	12,540.86	
1480 Payroll Advance	0.00	
1499 Undeposited Funds	0.00	
2000 Accounts Payable		24,713.65
2153 Credit Card		1,711.55
2050 Other Accrued Liabilities		0.00
2100 Due to Other Funds		0.00
2110 Due to Oldtown TIF		0.00
2120 Due to TIF 97		0.00
2200 Payroll Liabilities		0.00
2201 Payroll Liabilities:Direct Deposit Liabilities		0.00
2202 Payroll Liabilities:Accrued Payroll Liabilities		11,136.76
2203 Payroll Liabilities:Accrued Salaries		49,794.32
2205 Payroll Liabilities:457b Payable		1,880.24
2210 Payroll Liabilities:Federal Income Tax Payable		5,245.17
2215 Payroll Liabilities:Health, Dental, Vision Insurance Payable		1,866.47
2220 Payroll Liabilities:Life & Disability Insurance Payable		184.85
2225 Payroll Liabilities:Medicare Tax Payable		0.00
2230 Payroll Liabilities:Social Security Tax Payable		0.00
2235 Payroll Liabilities:State Income Tax Payable		0.00
2240 Payroll Liabilities:State Unemployment Tax Payable		0.00
2245 Payroll Liabilities:Wage Garnishment Payable		0.00
2300 Deposits Payable		0.00
2301 Deposits Payable:Double Up Food Bucks	2,668.00	
2303 Deposits Payable:NCF Reimbursements		0.00
2304 Deposits Payable:Prescriptions for Health		0.00
2305 Deposits Payable:Project Fresh		0.00
2306 Deposits Payable:Senior Project Fresh		0.00
2307 Deposits Payable:SNAP Food Assistance Payable		0.00
2403 GRANTS:EGLE - Cornwell Development		0.00
2407 GRANTS:MEDC Civic Square		100,000.00
2409 GRANTS:Rotary Charities		0.00
2600 Deferred Income		22,510.83
Bryan Crough Memorial Fund		0.00

Accrual Basis Tuesday, July 15, 2025 12:10 PM GMT-04:00

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# Traverse City DDA - General

## Trial Balance

As of June 30, 2025

	DEBIT	CREDIT
Bumpout Project Funds Collected		0.00
Buy Local Give Local Campaign		0.00
Suspense		0.00
3000 Opening Bal Equity		107,606.27
3900 Retained Earnings		468,428.85
4101 TAXES:Property Taxes		122,431.44
4200 GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS		141,656.00
4204 GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS:Grants - EGLE cornwell		1,250.00
4207 GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS:MACC Grant		12,000.00
4212 GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS:EGLE Grant-State Street West-End Mixed Use		742.50
4302 REIMBURSEMENTS:Administrative Services		743,728.00
4303 REIMBURSEMENTS:Parking Services		181,317.90
4305 REIMBURSEMENTS:Farmers Market Revenue		17,437.68
4306 REIMBURSEMENTS:Farmer's Market Booth Rental Income		56,850.00
4501 INTEREST INCOME:Interest & Dividends		7,617.58
5101 SALARIES:Salaries & Wages	447,179.13	
5102 SALARIES:Hourly Wage Expense	133,106.02	
5201 FRINGE BENEFITS:Health Insurance	20,865.33	
5202 FRINGE BENEFITS:Disability Insurance Benefits	1,885.23	
5203 FRINGE BENEFITS:Life Insurance Expense	367.44	
5204 FRINGE BENEFITS:457 Company Matching	40,545.11	
5208 FRINGE BENEFITS:Social Security Tax Expense	37,683.04	
5209 FRINGE BENEFITS:Medicare Tax Expense	8,812.91	
5210 FRINGE BENEFITS:SUTA Tax Expense	1,477.58	
5211 FRINGE BENEFITS:Workers Compensation	1,534.50	
5401 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Contract Services	129,553.30	
5402 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Legal	46,180.48	
5403 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Professional/Contractual	254,451.90	
5409 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Grant exp EGLE cornwell bldg	1,250.00	
5418 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:SNAP Food Assistance Expense	17,721.39	
5419 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:EGLE Grant-State Street West-End Mixed Use	962.50	
5420 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Farmers Market Administrative Expense	25,193.39	
5421 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:Marketing	97,869.00	
5501 TRAVEL AND CONFERENCES:Lodging, meals	708.64	
5502 TRAVEL AND CONFERENCES:Transportation	390.76	
5503 TRAVEL AND CONFERENCES:Training	275.00	
5601 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE:Repairs & Maintenance	1,642.64	
5301 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Office Supplies	13,989.54	
5302 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Utilities	5,276.75	
5303 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Operation Supplies	464.70	
5305 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Dues, Subscriptions and Memberships	27,148.15	
5306 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Printing & Publishing	1,593.24	
5307 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Communications	2,909.48	
5308 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Miscellaneous Expense	7,273.60	
5311 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Escheatment Liability	0.00	

Accrual Basis Tuesday, July 15, 2025 12:10 PM GMT-04:00

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Traverse City DDA - General

Trial Balance  
As of June 30, 2025

	DEBIT	CREDIT
5404 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Insurance, Bonds & Taxes	3,081.64	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,080,110.06</b>	<b>\$2,080,110.06</b>

# Traverse City DDA - Old Town TIF

## Trial Balance

As of June 30, 2025

	DEBIT	CREDIT
1001 Fifth Third Checking - 0650	1,345,750.91	
1072 Bill.com Money Out Clearing	0.00	
1200 Accounts Receivable	0.00	
1103 OTHER CURRENT ASSETS:Due From Other Funds	0.00	
1104 OTHER CURRENT ASSETS:Due From DDA	0.00	
1300 Prepaid Expense	1,249.98	
2000 Accounts Payable		0.00
2100 Due to Other Funds		0.00
3900 Retained Earnings		799,554.29
4101 Property Taxes		927,662.98
Sales		0.00
5302 OFFICE SUPPLIES & UTILITIES:Utilities	1,961.60	
5308 OFFICE SUPPLIES & UTILITIES:Miscellaneous Expense	146.10	
5400 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	292,183.82	
5500 Contributions to District Construction Projects	85,894.43	
5900 Repairs and Maintenance	1,914.00	
4501 INTEREST INCOME:Interest & Dividend Income		1,883.57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,729,100.84</b>	<b>\$1,729,100.84</b>

# Traverse City DDA - TIF 97

## Trial Balance

As of June 30, 2025

	DEBIT	CREDIT
1001 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:Fifth Third Checking - 8026	7,685,432.52	
1072 Bill.com Money Out Clearing	0.00	
1200 Accounts Receivable	0.00	
1102 OTHER CURRENT ASSETS:Due from other governments	0.00	
1103 OTHER CURRENT ASSETS:Due From Other Funds	0.00	
1104 OTHER CURRENT ASSETS:Due From DDA	0.00	
1210 Deposits-Security Deposit	4,500.00	
1300 Prepaid Expense	15,519.84	
1499 Undeposited Funds	0.00	
2000 Accounts Payable		10,956.83
2300 Due to City - Capital Projects		0.00
2100 Due to Other Funds		0.00
2200 Deferred Revenue		0.00
3000 Opening Bal Equity	21,200.00	
3900 Retained Earnings		6,307,524.02
4101 TAXES:Property Taxes		4,214,671.52
4501 INTEREST INCOME:Interest & Dividends		15,264.13
5301 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Office Supplies	210.75	
5302 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Utilities	3,818.63	
5306 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Printing & Publishing	1,530.43	
5308 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Miscellaneous Expense	1,123.26	
5309 OFFICE SUPPLIES AND UTILITIES:Bank Charges	704.99	
5400 Professional Services	1,262,572.61	
5500 Contributions to District Construction Projects	621,018.46	
5600 Contributions to Other Governments-Debt Service	913,719.95	
5901 REPAIR & MAINTENANCE EXPENSES:Repairs and Maintenance	17,065.06	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,548,416.50</b>	<b>\$10,548,416.50</b>

**TC Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**  
Board Financial Report - Dashboard

6/30/2025

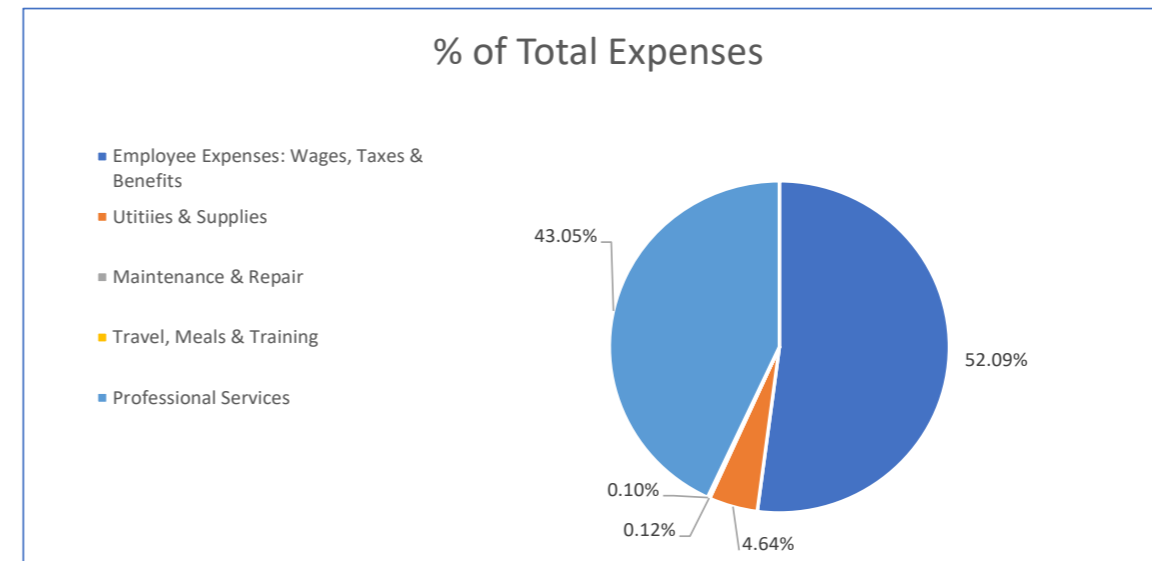
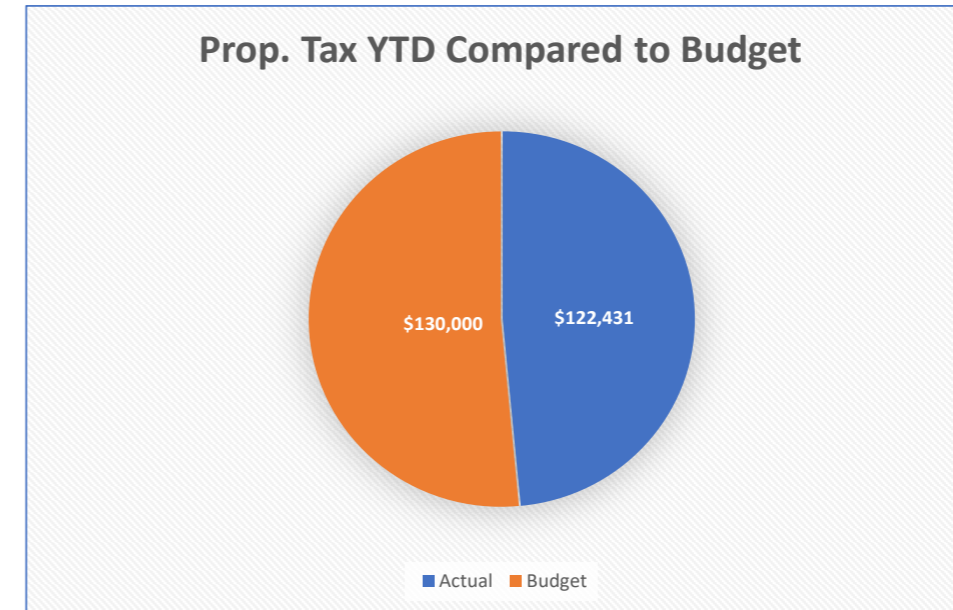
<b>Financial Position</b>	<b>YTD as of 6/30/2025</b>	<b>Prior Year as of 6/30/2024 *</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 729,281	\$ 811,754	\$ (82,473)
Other Assets	16,769	283,104	(266,335)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 746,050</b>	<b>\$ 1,094,858</b>	<b>\$ (348,808)</b>
Current Liabilities	\$ 189,951	\$ 337,420	\$ (147,470)
Total Other Liabilities	26,425	181,402	(154,977)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>216,376</b>	<b>518,823</b>	<b>(302,447)</b>
Fund Balance	529,674	576,035	<b>(46,361)</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 746,050</b>	<b>\$ 1,094,858</b>	<b>\$ (348,808)</b>

\* Prior year balances are pre-audit and subject to change

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
Property Taxes	\$ 122,431	\$ 130,000	94.2%
Grants & Contributions	155,649	1,875,000	8.3%
Reimbursements	942,484	743,728	126.7%
Rental Income	56,850	51,000	111.5%
Interest	7,618	2,000	380.9%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,285,031</b>	<b>\$ 2,801,728</b>	<b>46%</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
Employee Expenses: Wages, Taxes & Benefits	\$ 693,456	\$ 541,113	128%
Office Supplies & Utilities	61,737	80,000	77%
Maintenance & Repair	1,643	0	0%
Travel, Meals & Training	1,374	30,000	5%
Professional Services	573,182	377,800	152%
Rental Expense	-	-	0%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,331,392</b>	<b>\$ 1,028,913</b>	<b>129%</b>

No CPA has audited, reviewed, compiled or expressed any assurances on these financial statements



**Old Town Tax Increment Financing**  
Board Financial Report - Dashboard

6/30/2025

Financial Position	YTD as of 6/30/2025	Prior Year as of 6/30/2024 *	Change
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,345,751	\$ 1,192,161	\$ 153,590
Other Assets	1,250	35,035	(33,785)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,347,001</b>	<b>\$ 1,227,196</b>	<b>\$ 119,805</b>
Current Liabilities	\$ -	\$ 427,642	\$ (427,642)
Total Other Liabilities	-	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>427,642</b>	<b>(427,642)</b>
Fund Balance	1,347,001	799,554	<b>547,447</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 1,347,001</b>	<b>\$ 1,227,196</b>	<b>\$ 119,805</b>

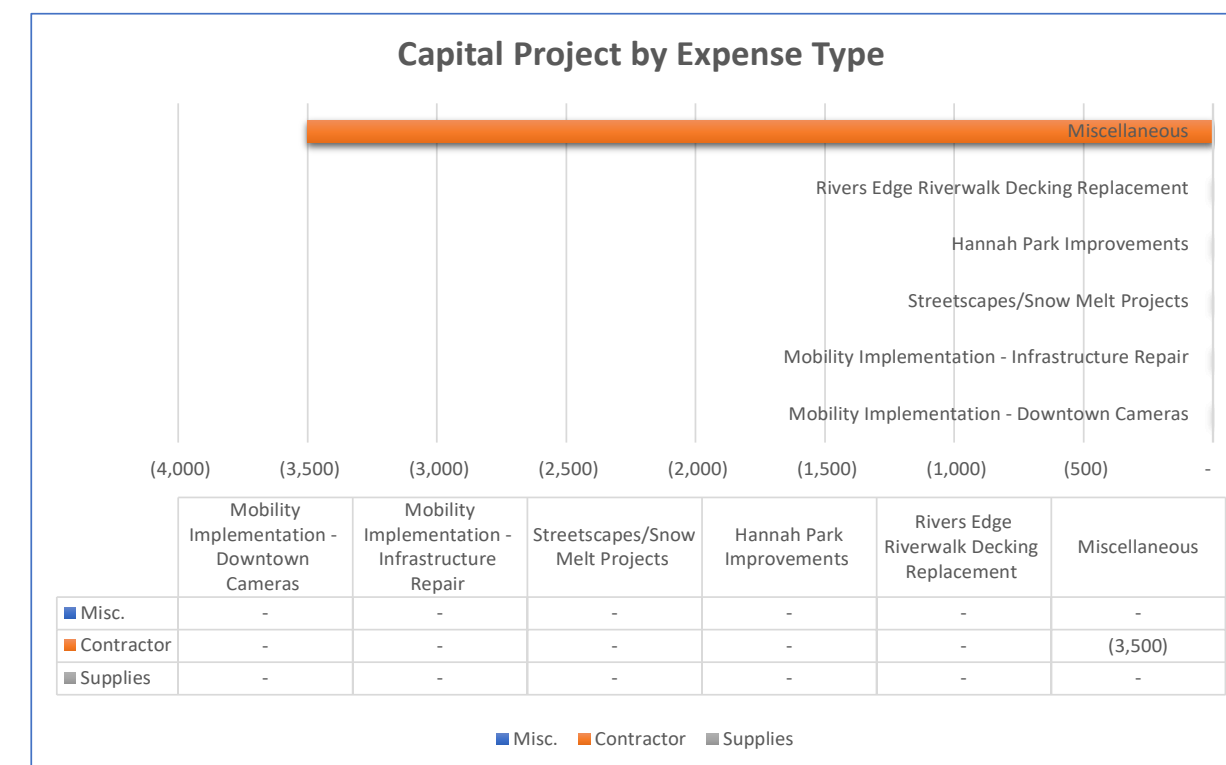
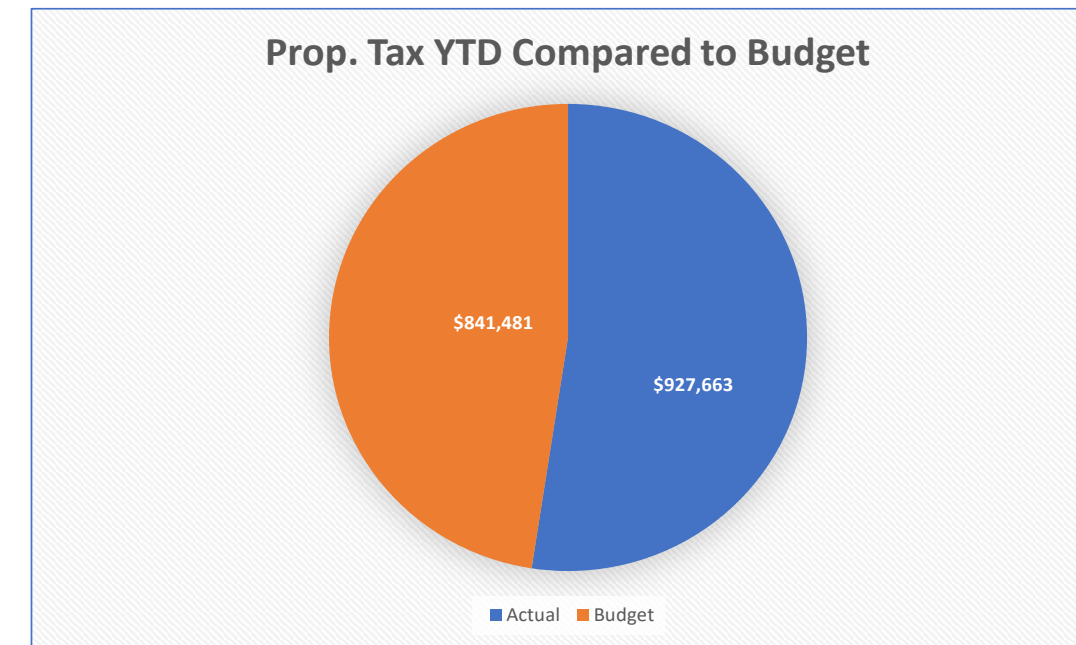
\* Prior year balances are pre-audit and subject to change

Revenue	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Property Taxes	\$ 927,663	\$ 823,427	112.7%
Interest	1,884	100	1883.6%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 929,547</b>	<b>\$ 823,527</b>	<b>113%</b>

Expenses	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Utilities	\$ 1,962	\$ -	N/A
Professional Services	292,184	303,383	96%
Other: Printing/Publishing, Supplies	146	100	146%
Repairs & Maintenance	1,914	60,000	3%
Capital Projects	85,894	<b>467,514</b>	18%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 382,100</b>	<b>\$ 830,997</b>	<b>46%</b>

Capital Project Expenses:	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Mobility Implementation - Downtown Cameras	-	28,120	0%
Mobility Implementation - Infrastructure Repair	-	30,000	0%
Streetscapes/Snow Melt Projects	-	100,000	0%
Hannah Park Improvements	-	80,000	0%
Rivers Edge Riverwalk Decking Replacement	-	130,000	0%
Miscellaneous	(3,500)	10,000	-35%
Intersection Improvements - 8th & Cass/Union	89,394	89,394	100%
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 85,894</b>	<b>\$ 467,514</b>	<b>18%</b>

No CPA has audited, reviewed, compiled or expressed any assurances on these financial statements



**Tax Increment Financing Bond 97 (TIF97)**  
Board Financial Report - Dashboard

6/30/2025

Financial Position	YTD as of 6/30/2025	Prior Year as of 6/30/2024 *	Change
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 7,685,433	\$ 6,109,666	\$ 1,575,766
Other Assets	20,020	274,515	(254,495)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 7,705,452</b>	<b>\$ 6,384,181</b>	<b>\$ 1,321,272</b>
Current Liabilities	\$ 10,957	\$ 97,857	\$ (86,900)
Total Other Liabilities	-	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>10,957</b>	<b>97,857</b>	<b>(86,900)</b>
Fund Balance	7,694,496	6,286,324	<b>1,408,172</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 7,705,452</b>	<b>\$ 6,384,181</b>	<b>\$ 1,321,272</b>

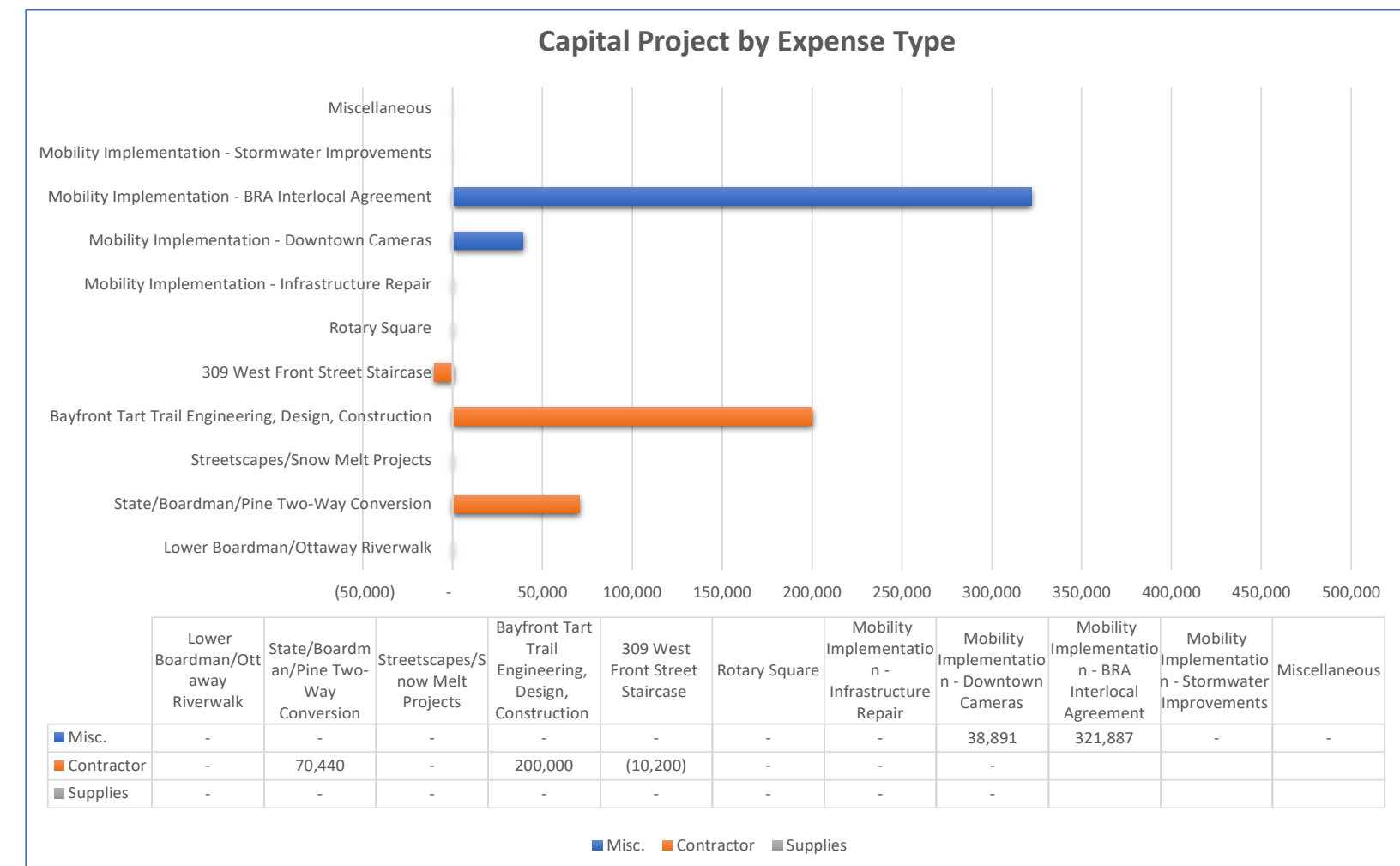
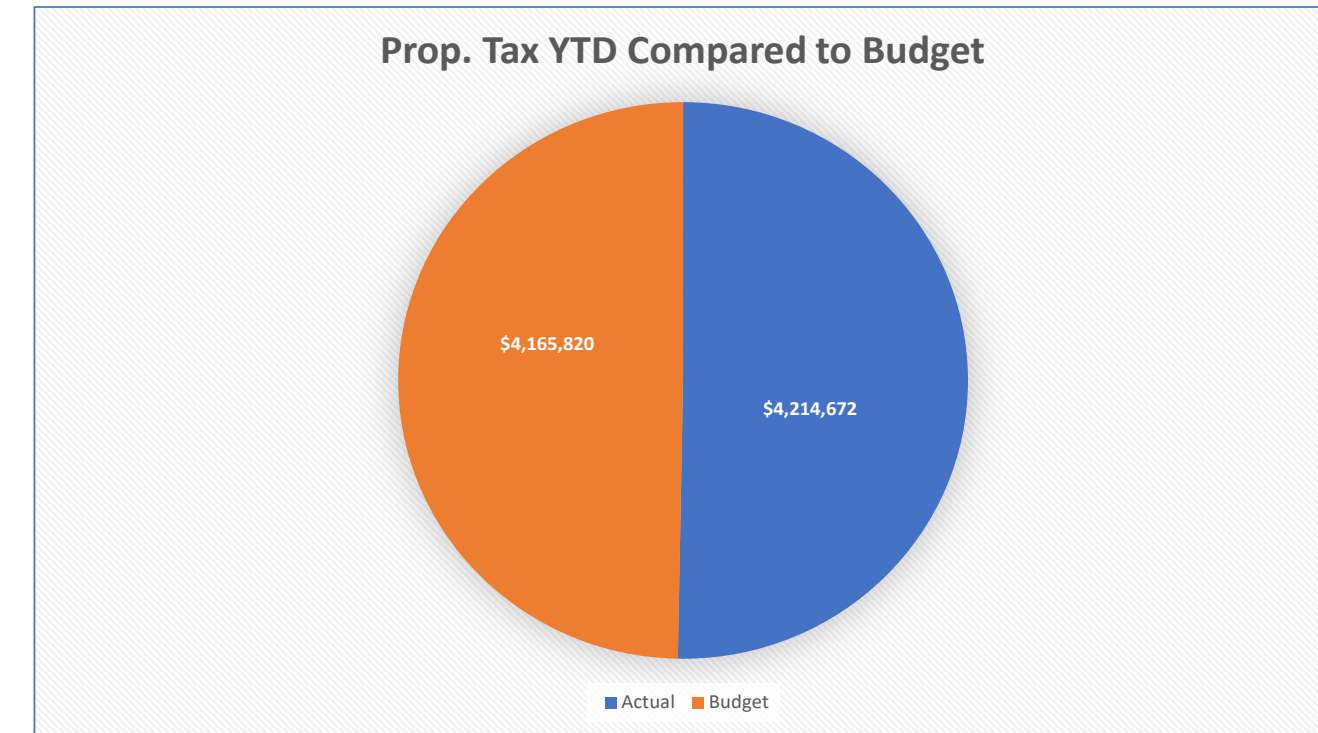
\* Prior year balances are pre-audit and subject to change

Revenue	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Property Taxes	\$ 4,214,672	\$ 4,165,820	101.2%
Grant Revenue	-	-	N/A
Reimbursements	-	-	N/A
Interest	15,264	4,500	339.2%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 4,229,936</b>	<b>\$ 4,170,320</b>	<b>101%</b>

Expenses	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Office Supplies & Utilities	\$ 7,388	\$ 20,000	37%
Professional Services	1,213,073	1,427,215	85%
Rent Expense	49,500	50,000	0%
Repair & Maintenance	17,065	250,000	7%
Capital Projects	621,018	3,034,367	20%
Debt Service	913,720	913,720	100%
Taxes & Transfers	-	-	0%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,821,764</b>	<b>\$ 5,695,302</b>	<b>50%</b>

Capital Project Expenses:	YTD	Annual Budget	% of Budget
Lower Boardman/Ottaway Riverwalk	-	1,000,000	0%
State/Boardman/Pine Two-Way Conversion	70,440	500,000	14%
Streetscapes/Snow Melt Projects	-	400,000	0%
Bayfront Tart Trail Engineering, Design, Construction	200,000	200,000	100%
309 West Front Street Staircase	(10,200)	100,000	-10%
Rotary Square	-	100,000	0%
Mobility Implementation - Infrastructure Repair	-	100,000	0%
Mobility Implementation - Downtown Cameras	38,891	112,480	35%
Mobility Implementation - BRA Interlocal Agreement	321,887	321,887	100%
Mobility Implementation - Stormwater Improvements	-	100,000	0%
Miscellaneous	-	100,000	0%
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 621,018</b>	<b>\$ 3,034,367</b>	<b>20%</b>

No CPA has audited, reviewed, compiled or expressed any assurances on these financial statements



REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR TRAVERSE CITY  
 PERIOD ENDING 06/30/2025

\*NOTE: Available Balance / Pct Budget Used does not reflect amounts encumbered.

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2024-25 AMENDED BUDGET	YTD BALANCE 06/30/2025	ACTIVITY FOR MONTH 06/30/2025	AVAILABLE BALANCE	% BDGT USED
Fund 107 - PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION FUND						
Revenues						
Dept 000 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL						
107-000-664.000	INTEREST & DIVIDEND EARNINGS	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
107-000-664.002	CHANGE IN FAIR VALUE OF INVESTMENTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107-000-674.000	CONTRIBUTIONS-PRIVATE SOURCES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107-000-675.000	CONTRIBUTIONS-PUBLIC SOURCES	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	0.00
107-000-676.000	REIMBURSEMENTS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107-000-692.000	PRIOR YEARS' SURPLUS	20,000.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	0.00
107-000-699.000	TRANSFERS IN	45,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total Dept 000 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL		81,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	36,000.00	55.56
TOTAL REVENUES		81,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	36,000.00	55.56
Expenditures						
Dept 000 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL						
107-000-727.000	OFFICE SUPPLIES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107-000-801.000	PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTUAL	64,000.00	13,367.74	6,000.00	50,632.26	20.89
107-000-900.000	PRINTING AND PUBLISHING	0.00	153.68	0.00	(153.68)	100.00
107-000-930.000	REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00
107-000-970.000	CAPITAL OUTLAY	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	0.00
107-000-988.000	UNALLOCATED FUNDS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 000 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL		81,000.00	13,521.42	6,000.00	67,478.58	16.69
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		81,000.00	13,521.42	6,000.00	67,478.58	16.69
Fund 107 - PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION FUND:						
TOTAL REVENUES		81,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	36,000.00	55.56
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		81,000.00	13,521.42	6,000.00	67,478.58	16.69
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES		0.00	31,478.58	(6,000.00)	(31,478.58)	100.00
TOTAL REVENUES - FUND 107						
TOTAL REVENUES - FUND 107		81,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	36,000.00	55.56
TOTAL EXPENDITURES - FUND 107						
TOTAL EXPENDITURES - FUND 107		81,000.00	13,521.42	6,000.00	67,478.58	16.69
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES		0.00	31,478.58	(6,000.00)	(31,478.58)	100.00



**Downtown Development Authority**  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## MEMORANDUM

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To: Downtown Development Authority Board

From: Harry Burkholder, Executive Director

Date: July 14, 2025

Re: TIF-97 Project Priorities

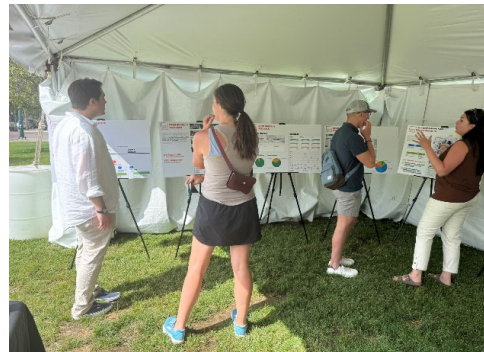
This memo is intended to provide an update on the status of each capital improvement project priority, including the next steps, critical decisions and budget needs. Attached to this memo is a project “timeline” for the Riverwalk and Rotary Square projects. The timeline illustrates project phases, key decisions and project milestones. This memo and an updated project timeline will be included in every DDA Board meeting moving forward.

### **TIF-97 Priority Projects**

1. Rotary Square
2. Farmers Market Pavilion
3. Boardman/Ottaway Riverwalk

### **Rotary Square**

Work is progressing on the conceptual design for Rotary Square, in partnership with Progressive Companies. On July 8<sup>th</sup> we hosted a community Open House at Rotary Square, where approximately 30 community members reviewed and provided input on two “concepts” for the square (see below), as well as their supporting features.





As you can see, both concepts incorporate the adjacent alley and parking spaces, reflecting a recurring theme from the Steering Committee and community members about the opportunity to use this space for public purposes related to Rotary Square - either temporarily for special events or permanently.

However, it is important to note that the DDA does not have control over the alley and adjacent parking spaces. Any modification or use of this space is solely at the discretion of the City. If permission is not granted, we will continue advancing the design of Rotary Square with its other elements while seeking opportunities to link to adjacent areas and properties in the future.

In addition to the Open House, we launched another online survey to gather broader community feedback, receiving 161 responses to date. This input, combined with guidance from the Steering Committee, will directly inform the final design for Rotary Square.

### **Project Phases and Milestones**

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| A. Planning, Design and Engineering Phase                              |                       |
| Task One. Community Engagement   | Timeline: Feb. – June |
| Task Two. Prior Work Review  | Timeline: Completed   |
| Task Three. Develop Preliminary Conceptual Design Alternative Concepts | Timeline: April - May |
| Task Four. Develop Schematic Design Plans                              | Timeline: May- July   |
| Task Five. Develop Operational and Management Framework                | Timeline: August      |
|  |                       |
| B. Procurement Phase   | Timeline: Jan. 2026   |
| C. Construction Phase  | Timeline: May 2026    |
- 

### **Farmers Market Pavillion**

We recently met with the Beckett & Raeder (B&R) team to review the project timeline, key considerations, logistics, and a working schedule for deliverables. We have also scheduled meetings with the B&R team and City Engineering to ensure that elements of each of our projects are aligned and interwoven as planning moves forward.

### **Potential Phases and Milestone**

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| A. Budget allocation for Planning, Design and Engineering Phase | Timeline: July  |
| B. Planning, Design and Engineering Phase (cost estimate)       | Timeline: Sept. |
| C. Procurement Phase  | Timeline: Dec.  |
| D. Construction Phase   | Timeline: April |
- 

### **Boardman/Ottaway Riverwalk**

We continue to work with INFORM Studio on the Schematic Design phase of this project, which we anticipate completing in September. The second phase—Design Development—is targeted for later this winter. Additionally, we have connected the

INFORM Studio team with Beckett & Raeder to coordinate efforts, as the two projects are connected and overlap.

**Working Phases and Milestone**

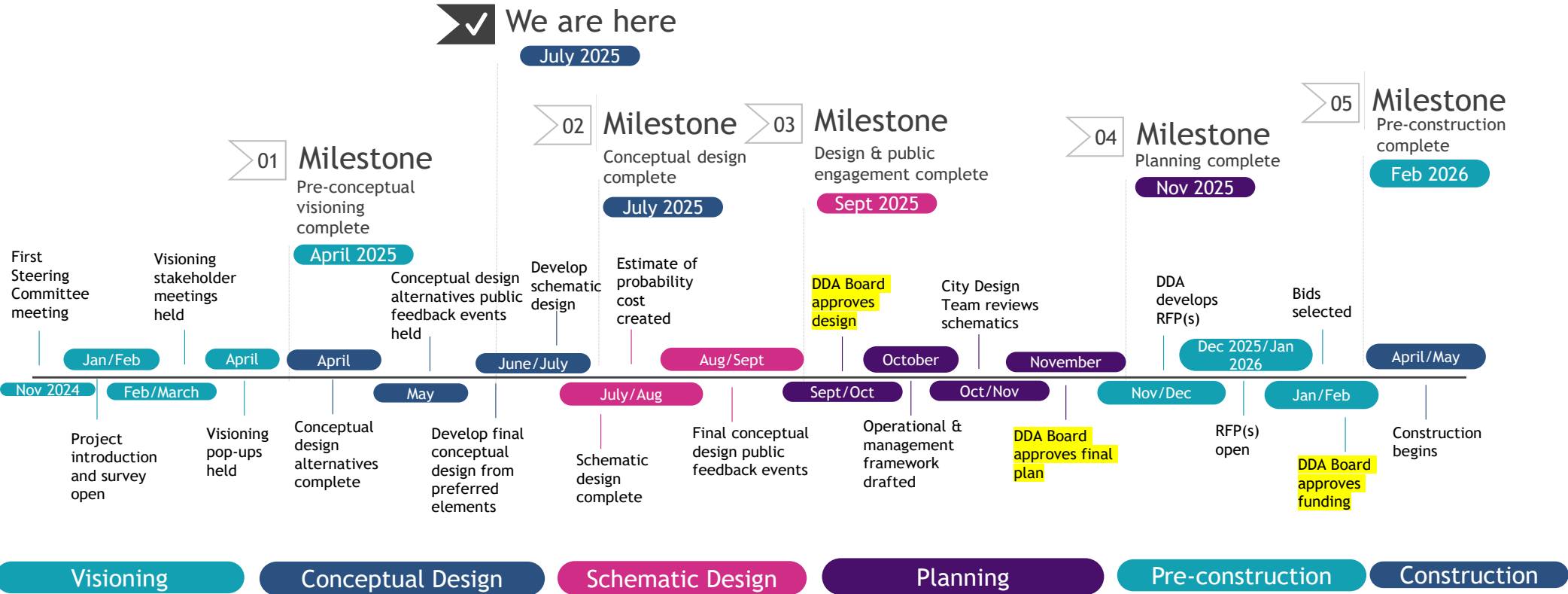
A. Schematic Design

Timeline: Sept.

B. Design Development (cost estimate)

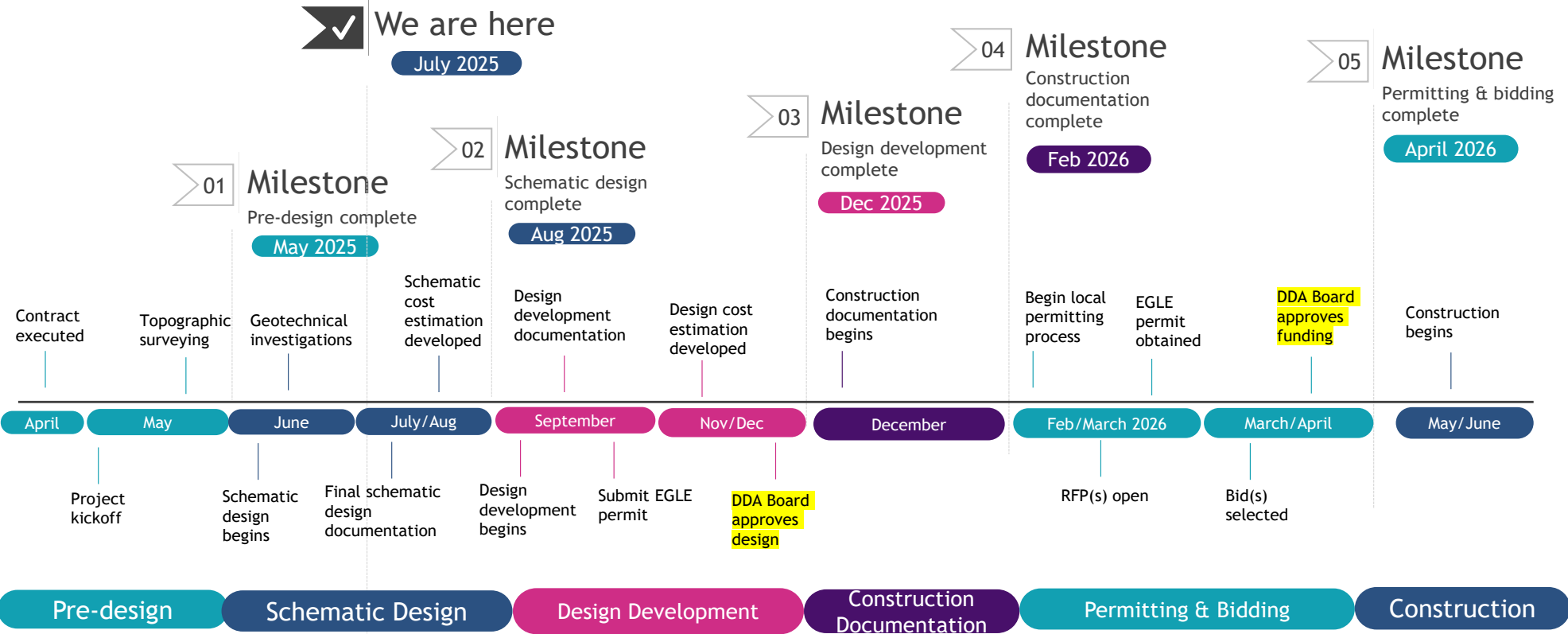
Timeline: Dec.

# Rotary Square Timeline



Timeline subject to change

# Boardman/Ottaway Riverwalk Timeline



Timeline subject to change



Downtown Development Authority  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

---

To: DDA Board of Directors  
From: Harry Burkholder, DDA Executive Director  
Date: July 15, 2025  
Subject: Moving Downtown Forward TIF Plan

As we discussed at our June meeting, even with the City Commission's approval of the TIF Implementation Policy imminent (July 21), we agreed it is important for the DDA Board to begin discussing next steps for the *Moving Downtown Forward* TIF Plan.

As part of this discussion, the Board noted the recent adoption of the City of Traverse City Strategic Action Plan. Understanding how the goals and priorities outlined in this plan align - or do not align - with the *Moving Downtown Forward* TIF Plan will be essential as we consider our next steps. The Strategic Action Plan is attached, and I encourage all Board members to review it ahead of our meeting.

To help spark conversation, we have also prepared and attached a working document – *Action Plan – DDA Gap and Alignment Matrix* - identifying how the goals and priorities within the Strategic Action Plan align with (or where there may be gap) - with the DDA's Guiding Principles, the *Moving Downtown Forward* TIF Plan, and our project priorities and current budget allocations. To be clear, this matrix is a working document and a place to begin the conversation.

**TC Strategic Action Plan - DDA Gap and Alignment Matrix (Draft)**

TC Strategic Action Plan	MDF Guiding Principles	MDF TIF Plan Infr. Projects	Priority Projects	Current Budget Allocation
--------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------

**Strategic Pillars**

<b>One.</b>	<b>Proactively Manage Urban Design</b>	One	1,2,7,15	C	Yes
Objective	Proactively manage urban design to protect local character and community feel	One	1,2,7,8,15	C	
Action 1.	Proactively design the future of key corridors	One	1,2,5,7,8,11,13		
Action 2.	Create localized building design guidelines	One			
Action 3.	Explore people-centric street design	One	1,2,5,7,8,13		
Action 4.	Intentionally create more community connection points	One	1,5,6,7,8,13,15	C	
Bold Idea	Create a unique Traverse City 'people-first design model'	One	1,5,6,7,8		
<b>Two.</b>	<b>Strengthen Placemaking and Neighborhood Character</b>		1,2,3,5,7,8	B	Yes
Objective	Protect the character of downtown and neighborhoods	One	1,2,5,7		
Action 5.	Bring an 'experienced-based' approach to placemaking efforts across the City	One	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,15,16	A,B,C	
Action 6.	Empower and elevate the role of the neighborhoods associations				
Action 7.	Intentionally create gathering and social spaces for locals	One	1,3,4,6,7,15,16	A,B,C	
Action 8.	Enhance multi-modal connectivity between neighborhoods and community places	One	1,5,6,7,8,11,13,16	A	
Bold Idea	Build a fully-connected city-wide trail network	One	6		
<b>Three</b>	<b>Fostering A Regional Collaborative Approach</b>				
Objective	To help manage resources, utilities and climate adaptation and lead on key issues	Two	2,10		
Action 9.	Map the current collaborations across the region				
Action 10.	Convene organizations in the region to identify needs and solutions				
Action 11.	Explore the potential for shared Government services				
Action 12.	Enhance multi-modal connectivity between neighborhoods and community places	One	1,13		
Bold Idea	Convene a leadership group to address the housing crisis	Four			
<b>Four.</b>	<b>Creating a Complete Community</b>		12		
Objective	Build socio-economic systems and amenities that foster demographic balance	Three	12		
Action 13.	Map the current collaborations across the region				
Action 14.	Host summits to showcase best practice solutions to socio-economic challenges				
Action 15.	Promote social equity within Traverse City		3,12	B	
Action 16.	Develop a plan to boost childcare capacity in Traverse City				
Bold Idea	Find innovative ways to address childcare shortage				

TC Strategic Action Plan		MDF Guiding Principles	MDF TIF Plan Infr. Projects	Priority Projects	Current Budget Allocation
<b>Strategic Pillars</b>					
Five.	Supporting Environmental Sustainability	Two	2,3,10,14,16		Yes
Objective	Helping to adapt to a changing world and supporting a thriving ecosystem	Two	3,10,11,14,16	A,B	
Action 17.	Develop a comprehensive region-wide sustainability plan that focuses on climate mitigation and adaptation	Two	10,14		
Action 18.	Research and replicate best sustainability practices from other similar cities	Two	2,10,11,14,16	A	
Action 19.	Embed environmental education initiatives at visitor interface locations	Two	7,14,16	A	
Action 20.	Explore novel ways for the visitation economy to help fund sustainability measures	Two			
Bold Idea	Pilot electrification of houses as a demonstration project	Two	2		
<b>Six</b>	<b>Building Thriving Year-Round Economy</b>	Three, Five	1		Yes
Objective	Expand business diversity and innovation capability to build a year-round economy	Three, Five	1		
Action 21.	Embrace sustainable tourism approaches to moderate seasonal nature tourism	Three, Five			
Action 22.	Strategically market Traverse City to the future remote workforce	Five			
Action 23.	Explore the potential for recreation and resource related products and businesses	Three, Five			
Action 24.	Build on the specialized advanced manufacturing sector				
Bold Idea	Embrace a sustainable tourism model approach	Three, Five			
<b>Key</b>					
<b>Moving Downtown Forward Guiding Principles</b>			<b>Project Priorities</b>		
One.	Design a great place for all ages and for future generations		A. Riverwalk		
Two.	Advance climate action, sustainability, renewable energy, energy efficiency & resiliency		B. Farmers Market Pavillion		
Three.	Protect and preserve small locally independent businesses		C. Rotary Square		
Four.	Champion the development of attainable and workforce housing				
Five.	Support job growth and varied career opportunities				
<b>MDF TIF Plan Infrastructure Projects</b>					
1. Garland Street Repairs & Improvements		9. Downtown Camera System		17. Retail Inc.	
2. Public Alley & Utility Improvements and Relocation		10. Stormwater Infrastructure			
3. Farmers Market Infrastructure		11. District Wide Heated Sidewalks			
4. City Opera House Renovations		12. Housing			
5. Bridge Improvements & Replacement		13. Mobility Improvements			
6. Bayfront Improvements		14. Composting Program			
7. Street, sidewalk, crosswalk and streetscaping improvements		15. Rotary Square			
8. East Front Street Gateway		16. Boardman/Ottaway River Plan			



TRAVERSE CITY  
**STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**  
MICHIGAN, USA MAY 2025





# TRAVERSE CITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

MICHIGAN, USA MAY 2025

**This Strategic Planning process was designed to identify focus areas and actions that are important to the community over the next five years.**

Stakeholder engagement was a priority element, and the desire was to gather extensive input in an open and transparent manner. The engagement work has included stakeholder interviews, two community surveys, a two-day Think-Tank, focus group sessions, community visioning sessions and updates, and a strategic round-table work session. There have been regular community updates via e-newsletters, in-person sessions and presentations at Commission meetings.

The findings from this planning process can be used to help inform future priorities for the City and the Commission. Over the coming years, this will help shape City goals and objectives and will help guide new investments and planning decisions.

These reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

[lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/)



Revised: June 5, 2025



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## »»»» SNAPSHOT | REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

This planning work has identified a range of existing and emerging issues that are important to the community and has highlighted areas where the community would like to see new or additional attention. Some of these areas have been previously identified in Commission goals and objectives, and some are new priorities. Some highlights include:



### **STRONG DESIRE TO PROACTIVELY MANAGE URBAN DESIGN AND STRENGTHEN PLACE-MAKING**

Throughout the planning process, there has been considerable interest and support in taking a much more intentional approach to guiding urban design, including corridor developments and establishing stronger guidelines to protect and enhance the charm of the community.



### **DEEP INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY AND REDUCE RELIANCE ON TOURISM**

There is strong support to continue to diversify the economy, with particular interest in building the manufacturing sector to provide more year-round well-paid jobs. The current manufacturing resurgence in the country offers an opportunity to attract some new investments to the city and region.



### **CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Traverse City has a long history of commitment to environmental sustainability. This commitment continues, with support for the idea of broader County-wide sustainability planning and applying best practice solutions to reduce and mitigate climate impacts.



### **EMERGING HIGH PRIORITY ISSUE AROUND AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE**

The availability of childcare has been flagged as one of the most important and urgent current issues. This is an area where people would like to see action taken to address, and it is seen as a constraint for young families.



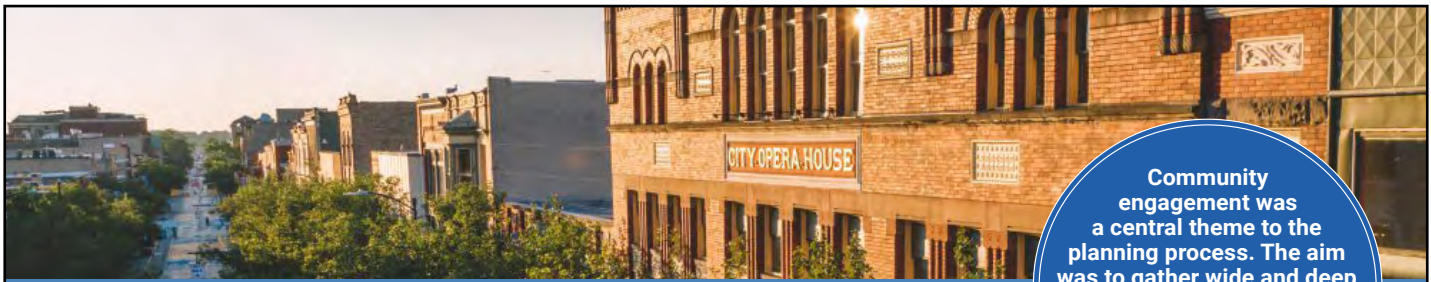
### **NEED TO CREATIVELY AND AGGRESSIVELY TACKLE THE HOUSING ISSUE**

The issue of availability and affordability of housing has been repeatedly raised as a concern, and how it is pricing locals and families out of the community. There is also concern about losing the year-round population from the core neighborhoods, and people support creative ways to bring this back to year-round residential areas. Housing was also seen as an impediment to attracting and retaining people in the local workforce.



### **EMERGING INTEREST IN DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM APPROACH**

There is growing discomfort with some residents about the potential negative impacts of tourism and over-tourism. Taking a sustainable tourism approach was seen as a way to help manage destination impacts, and move away from more destination marketing.



Community engagement was a central theme to the planning process. The aim was to gather wide and deep community input, to help shape and prioritize key actions to include in the Strategic Action Plan.

## 1.0 | INTRODUCTION

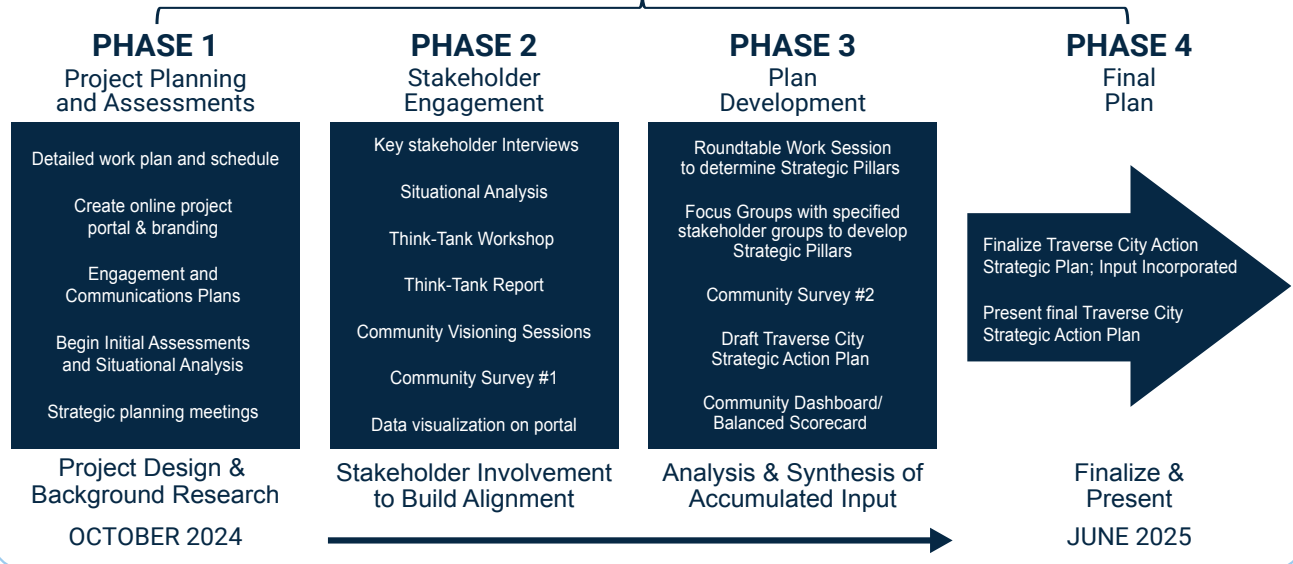
### In October 2024, the City of Traverse City embarked on a strategic planning process to deliver a 5-year Strategic Action Plan.

Key to this process was the desire for extensive community and stakeholder engagement and input. This engagement was very successful with over 1,500 individuals participating in the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan over the seven months process. This engagement ascertained where Traverse City is and where it could evolve by 2035.

The strategic planning community engagement process began in October 2024 and ended in May 2025, with the production of this final Traverse City Strategic Action Plan. This report represents the analysis of the engagement outcomes and outlines how the accumulated data has informed the identification of a preferred future and key strategic action areas. All information pertaining to the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan project can be viewed on the unique project portal at [lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/](https://lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/).



### CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PROJECT



## 1.1 | OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAVERSE CITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PROCESS

One of the overarching principles in the planning process was to create a community-driven process, where the community ideas and thoughts could be drawn into identifying a vision and future strategic direction.

**The objective of the strategic planning process is to build on the current success and incorporate new actions to maintain this success over the next 5 years.**

This planning process has had a specific and deliberate focus on community engagement. The intention was to provide residents and city staff with numerous opportunities to contribute to the creation of the plan and help identify and prioritize key strategic actions. Some of the specific steps through the planning process were:



**Understanding key drivers** that are shaping the future of Traverse City. This included examining emerging trends, developments and shifts in societal expectations and desires.



**Exploring different plausible future scenarios** and examining their implications for the future. This allowed residents to consider what represented their preferred future, and to gather insight into the appetite for change.



**Formulating key strategic themes**, which were presented as Strategic Pillars. These represent the broad focus areas that the community identified as important in shaping the future direction of the community.



**Identification and prioritization of a range of strategic actions** that support the Strategic Pillars. This was intended to identify new actions or priority areas, that the community judged as having the greatest impact on shaping the preferred future.



### Future Insights

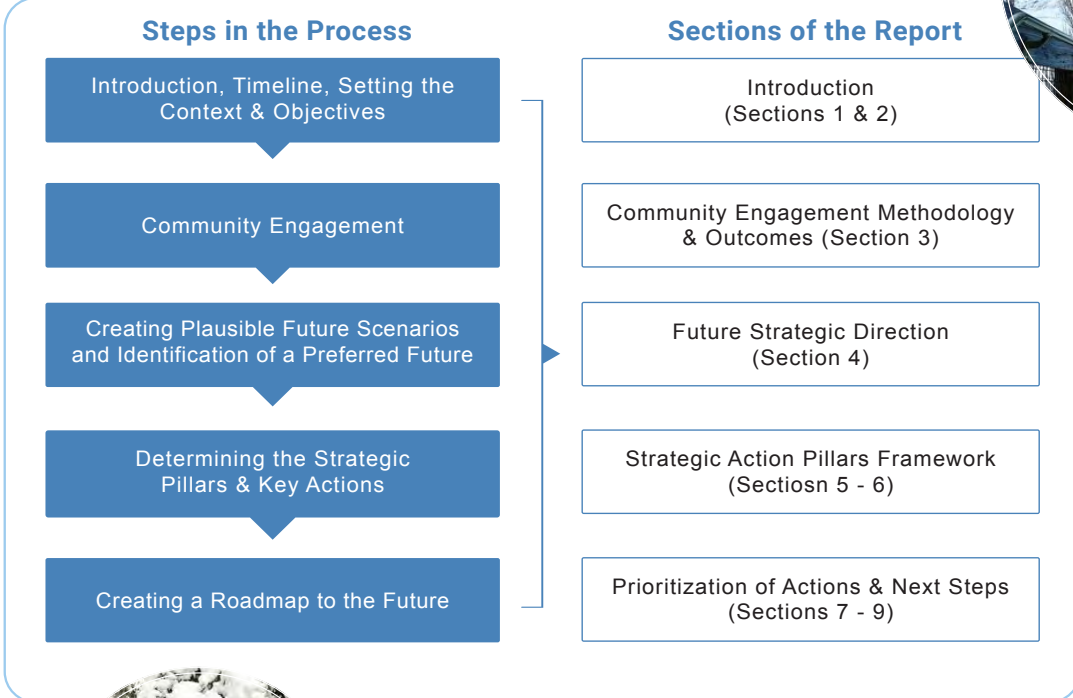
- The City of Traverse City leadership team recognized the importance of strong community engagement with residents, staff and other partner organizations. Over the seven-month planning cycle, people were offered numerous opportunities to contribute ideas and help shape the actions. This makes the plan stronger, and more reflective of the community aspirations and priorities.
- Traverse City is at the center of an important and growing region. It is also the center of a high visitation tourism economy, which brings additional dynamics and stresses to local communities and infrastructure. Considering the future trajectory of the community was an important part of this planning work.



The focus of the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan has been on in-depth community and stakeholder engagement that focuses on the future of Traverse City, looking out to 2035.

## 2.0 | HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This report lays out the findings from each key step in the Strategic Action Planning process. The process moved from a background analysis and exploration, through to identifying key priorities for the future of Traverse City. This work represents robust 'future thinking' regarding where stakeholders and community members considered possible future directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions for Traverse City. The process then drilled down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helped lay the groundwork for illustrating how the preferred future can be reached. The preferred future identified through this process presents a compelling and enticing vision for how Traverse City could evolve looking out to 2035. However, a vision needs actions, and this report provides a summary of the key focus areas and actions identified by the community.



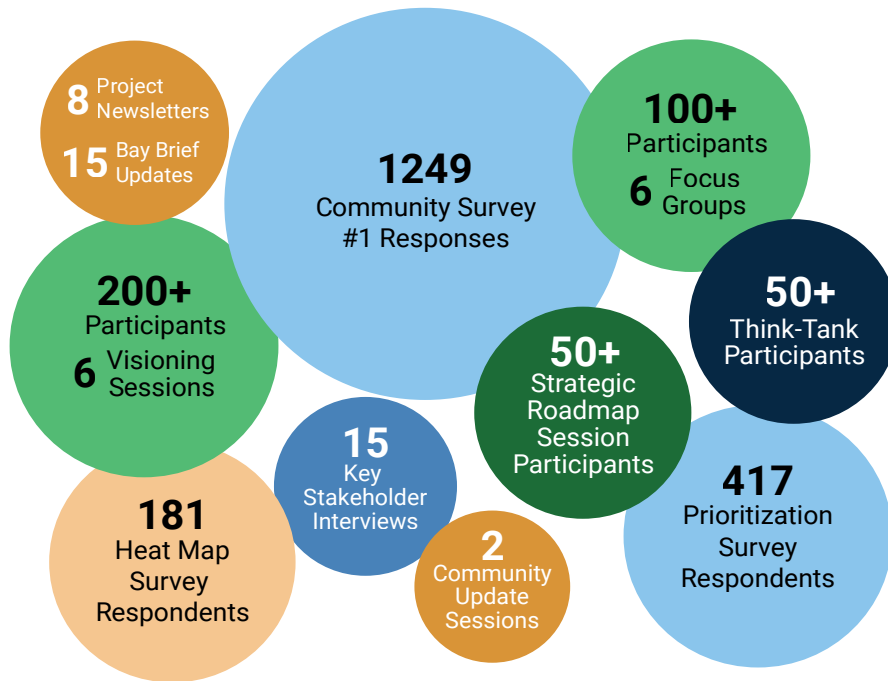
## 3.0 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY & OUTCOMES

The Traverse City Strategic Action Plan has been built on extensive community and stakeholder input. This engagement was an integral and central design feature of the planning process.

The engagement and data-driven methodology progressively focused the discussion on emerging key themes and stakeholder aspirations for the future. The purpose of the process was to arrive at a ‘point of consensus’ that represented the shared vision for the future, and a comprehensive strategic plan – with actions - that propels the region towards that preferred future.

A key feature of the engagement and planning process was the amount of participation at key engagement sessions. These engagement opportunities were also supported by a robust communication effort, with a dedicated project website portal, regular e-newsletters and socials media posts.

The Traverse City Strategic Action Plan involved a wide, deep, and transparent engagement process with over 1,500 people providing high quality input.



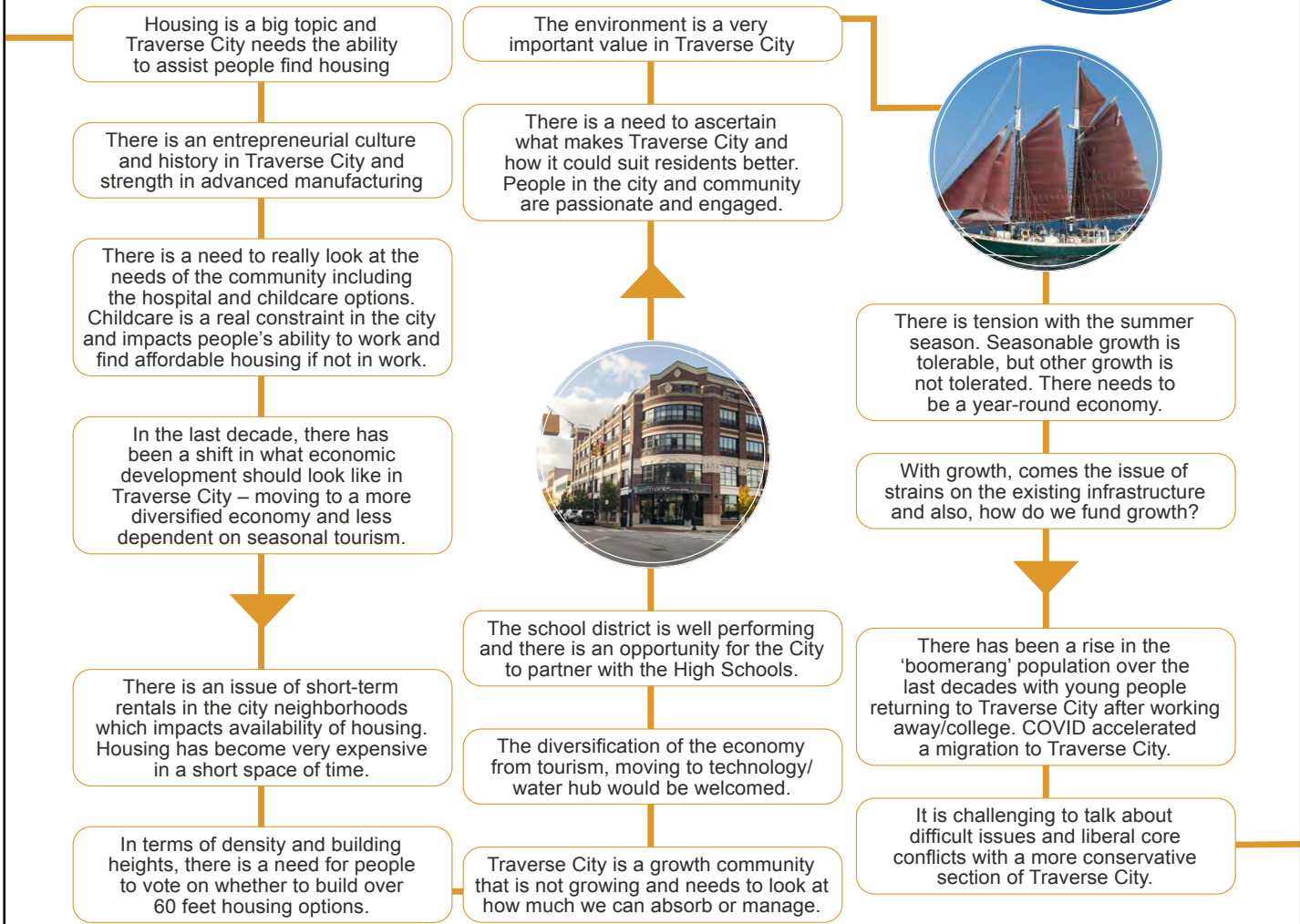
### Data Insights

- In total, over 1,500 people had input into this planning process. This included significant resident input, in both virtual surveys and in-person sessions. Overall, people appeared to really appreciate the opportunity and generously provided their insights and perspectives.
- People were able to offer input in a variety of ways, including online surveys, workshops, Think-Tank sessions and focus groups. This was complemented by more informal sessions with community visioning sessions with residents, interviews with organizational and business stakeholders, and presentations at service groups.

### 3.1 | INITIAL SITUATIONAL SCAN – INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS

These interviews and discussions were very valuable in providing an initial context to the challenges and opportunities that Traverse City faces, prior to the community engagement.

In May and June 2024, the project team held a range of interviews and discussions with City of Traverse City Staff and other local and regional organizations. These discussions explored issues that helped frame the engagement process starting with community and stakeholders.



#### Key Insights

- The Traverse City area is a community that is rapidly changing and growing. This has implications across many dimensions such as social fabric, infrastructure and economy. There is a sense that the community is at a cross roads on a range of important issues.
- Across the region and City there are many effective organizations, with very capable leadership. These leaders are very mindful of the issues and challenges and are seeking solutions that suit the unique character of Traverse City.





## 3.2 | TRAVERSE CITY FUTURE THINK-TANK

Approximately 50 people attended the Future Think-Tank, held at the Governmental Center, Traverse City over 2 days to work on four plausible futures for Traverse City, looking out to 2030.

**A key part of the engagement methodology was the Think-Tank held in early October. This was the first significant stakeholder engagement event and kicked off the discussion about the future direction of the community.**

To identify the preferred future of Traverse City, looking out to 2035, stakeholders and community members participated in the two-day scenario-planning future Think-Tank. The six-hour Traverse City scenario-based Think-Tank event was conducted over two days on October 8 and 9, 2024. Approximately 50 people attended including key business, education, government, non-profit stakeholders, and community members.

Traverse City participants worked through the scenario planning process to produce 4 plausible futures for Traverse City, looking out to 2035. These scenarios became a 'testing ground' for future stakeholder input in the survey and focus groups.

More information on the content and outcomes from the Future Think-Tank can be found in Section 4 of this Strategic Action Plan and also in the Traverse City Future Think-Tank report that was released in December 2024 and can be viewed at [lab2.future-iq.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Traverse-City-Think-Tank-Report.pdf](https://lab2.future-iq.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Traverse-City-Think-Tank-Report.pdf).



### Key Insights

- The Think-Tank process highlighted several key future splitting themes. One of these was around how development is managed and guided. There was a recognition that the intensity of development in Traverse City is reshaping the character of the community, and there is potential to more intentionally and proactively guide urban design.
- The demographic makeup of the community was discussed. It was identified that there are some encouraging signs of new younger families moving into the city, but this is also having impacts on housing prices as people with more income or resources move in from more expensive urban locations. Maintaining a healthy demographic was seen as important, and there was appetite for finding ways to support more year-round residents and not lose vital family housing to seasonal rental markets.
- The natural environment was a common point of discussion, and residents are very interested in environmental sustainability. They are also very concerned about potential impacts of climate change on the natural landscape, and also how it might drive more people to move to locations like Traverse City.

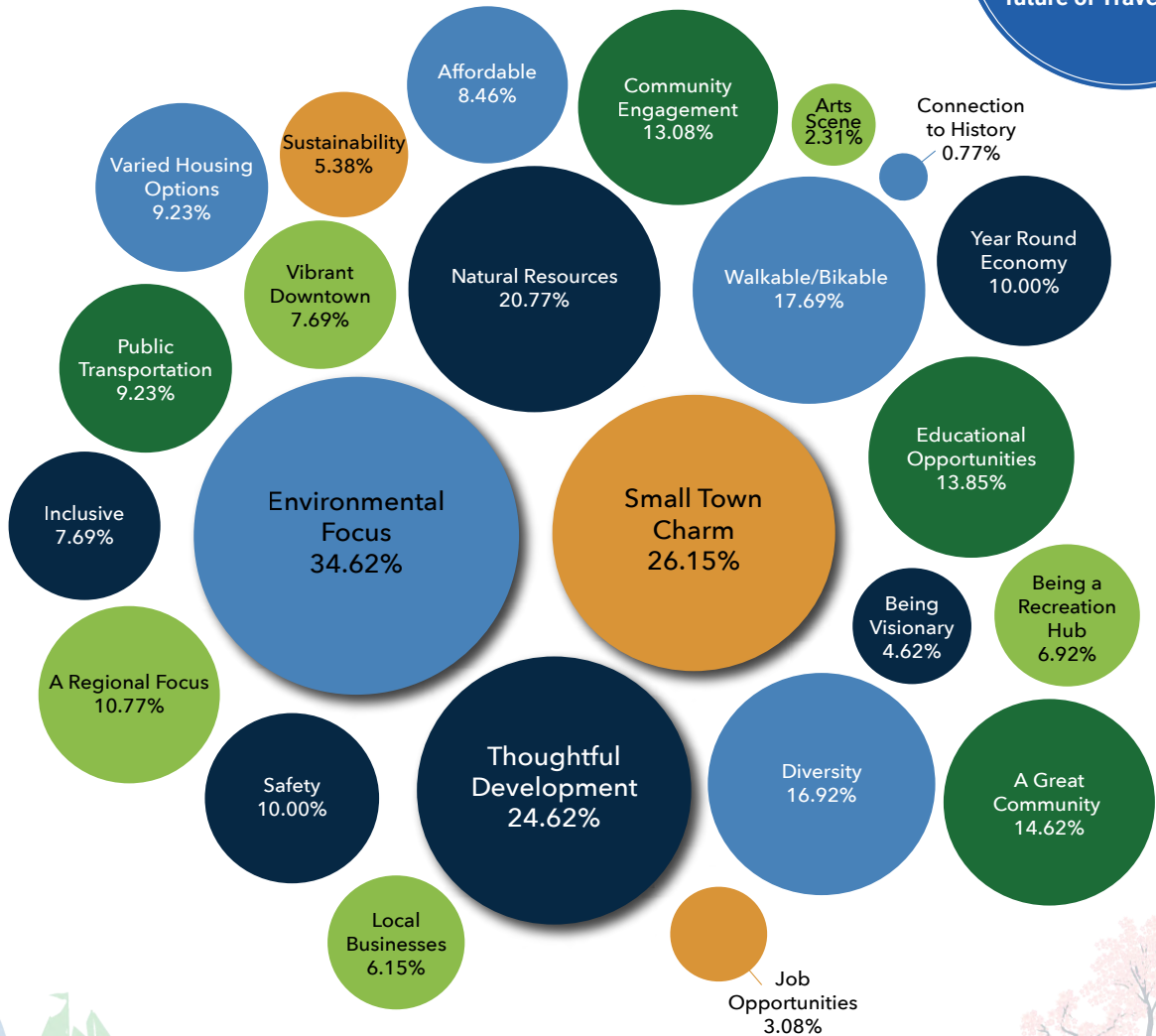
### 3.3 | COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSIONS

Following on from the Traverse City Future Think-Tank, six Community Visioning sessions were held between November 11 and 14, 2024 with approximately 200 participants.

These workshops were highly interactive 60-minute sessions discussing the preferred future generated from the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan Think-Tank and issues facing the future of the city. Participants discussed their reactions to the scenarios and completed a short survey that explored their view about desirable values and attributes of Traverse City.

The well attended Community Visioning sessions enabled community members to discuss the Think-Tank and issues facing the future of Traverse City.

#### 'WHAT VALUES AND ATTRIBUTES SHOULD TRAVERSE CITY RETAIN OR DEVELOP?'



## 3.4 | TRAVERSE CITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Traverse City Strategic Action Plan Community Survey ran from January through February 2025. The survey received 1,249 responses. With a mix of ranking questions and open-ended questions, this survey intended to ascertain the community and stakeholders' views on the following topics:

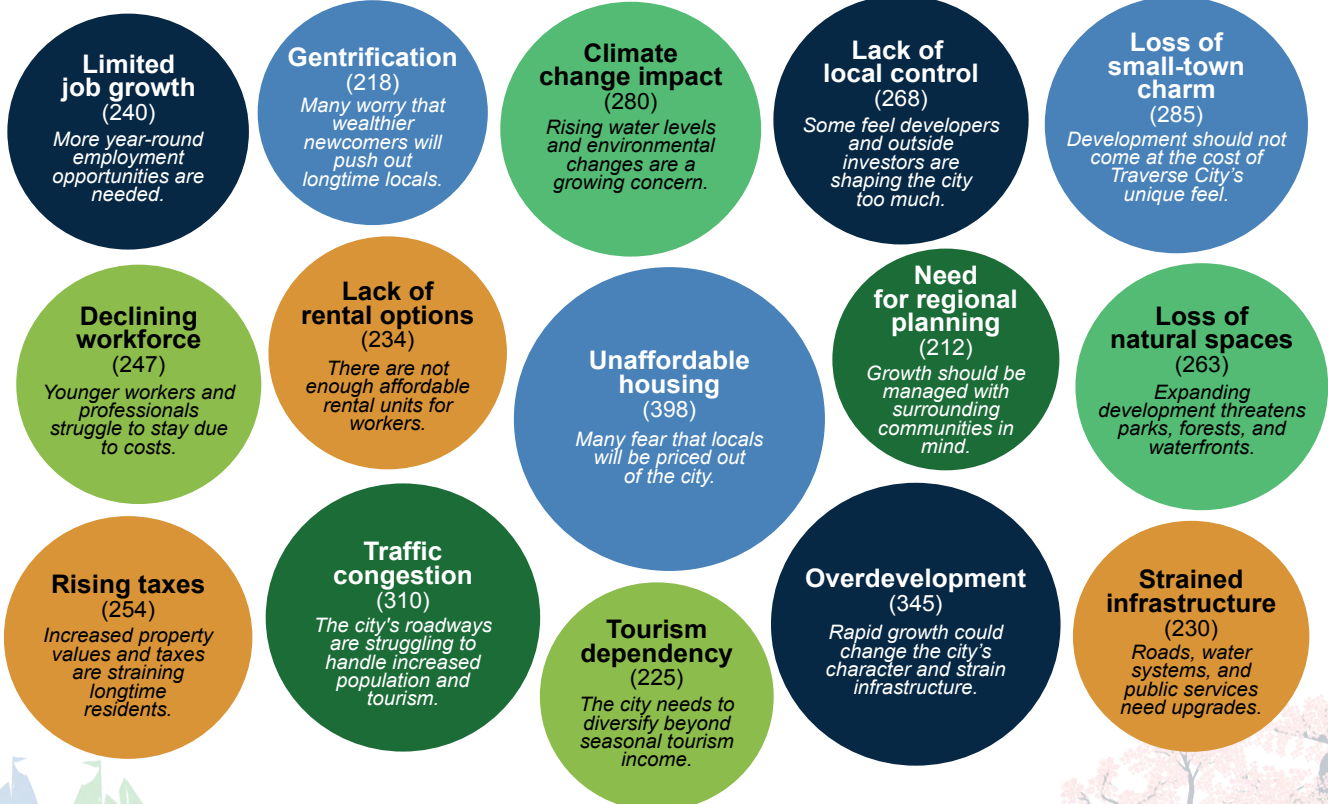
- Satisfaction with living in Traverse City
- Current community dynamics within Traverse City
- Traverse City vision and values
- Traverse City's current direction and speed of change
- Development trajectory and community direction of Traverse City

The results from the Community Survey can be viewed on the project portal at [lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/survey1/dv/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/survey1/dv/).

Respondents were asked 24 questions which can be viewed in the Community Survey results on the project portal. These results can be filtered and analyzed in terms of age groups, ethnicity, how long people have lived in Traverse City and where people live in Traverse City. The full range of responses can be viewed at [lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/survey1/dv/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/survey1/dv/).

### 'WHAT CHANGES MOST CONCERN YOU ABOUT TRAVERSE CITY'S FUTURE?'

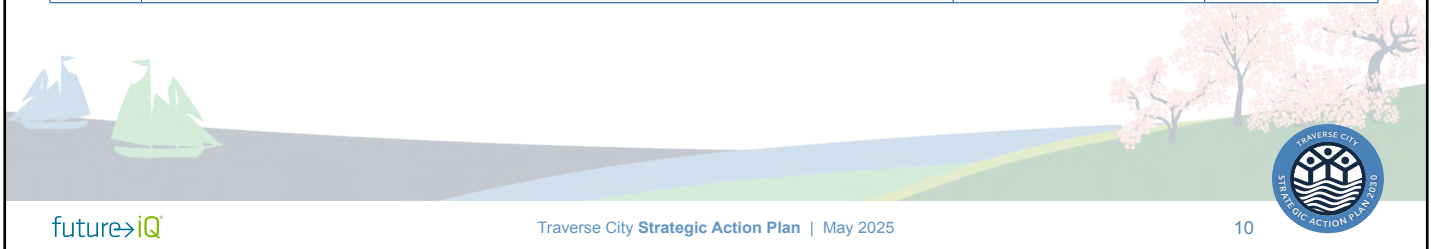
Below are the **top 15 key sentiments**, their **frequency** of mentions, and a brief **narrative**.



### 3.4.1 | ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP

The open-ended responses were analyzed to explore sentiments and themes. There are notable differences by age groups. The 60+ year age group respondents represented just over half the total responses, which is a slight over-representation in the survey sample. The under 39 year age group is under-represented in the survey sample.

Age Group	Key Sentiments	Key Difference	# Survey Respondents
19-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeated calls for <b>more affordable housing</b> and protection of natural spaces.</li> <li>Concerns about <b>climate change</b>, pollution, and loss of green areas.</li> <li>Emphasis on creating more <b>job opportunities</b> beyond tourism/service sectors.</li> </ul>	This group shows the <b>strongest emphasis on environmental protection</b> and economic opportunity, with progressive outlooks on growth.	34 (3%)
30-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted concerns about <b>development near water</b>, pollution, and maintaining character.</li> <li>Strong support for <b>childcare access</b>, family-oriented amenities, and managing short-term rentals.</li> <li>Desire for <b>balanced growth</b> that keeps Traverse City livable for families.</li> </ul>	The <b>most family-focused age group</b> , advocating for policies that support children, affordable living, and safe neighborhoods.	158 (13%)
40-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns around <b>neighborhood overdevelopment</b> and rising costs.</li> <li>Continued emphasis on <b>housing availability</b> and preserving the city's appeal.</li> <li>Advocacy for <b>master planning</b> and investment in long-term infrastructure.</li> </ul>	Most aligned with <b>regional planning</b> , community structure, and managing sprawl effectively.	207 (17%)
50-59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express worry over <b>increased cost of living</b> and potential cultural shifts.</li> <li>Desire to <b>preserve greenspace</b> and reduce traffic.</li> <li>Mixed sentiments on development: support for infrastructure but concern over losing local feel.</li> </ul>	This group shows the <b>highest concern about affordability and tourism growth</b> disrupting long-time residents.	203 (16%)
60-69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong emphasis on controlling <b>short-term rentals</b> and protecting affordability.</li> <li>Preference for <b>intentional development</b> that aligns with Traverse City's values.</li> <li>Concerns about <b>infrastructure and housing stability</b>.</li> </ul>	Balanced view of growth, but with an increasing focus on <b>stabilization rather than expansion</b> .	294 (24%)
70-79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on <b>community character</b>, protecting natural beauty, and avoiding crowding.</li> <li>Call for <b>better infrastructure maintenance</b> and walkability.</li> <li>Concerned about losing community identity to external development pressures.</li> </ul>	This group is more <b>conservative toward development</b> , preferring to reinforce what exists over expanding.	293 (24%)
80+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Want to preserve <b>Traverse City "as it is"</b> with minimal change.</li> <li>Support for <b>senior services</b>, healthcare, and easy access amenities.</li> <li>Worry about <b>losing sense of community</b> due to pace of change.</li> </ul>	<b>Most resistant to change</b> , prioritizing comfort, preservation, and protection of long-held values.	56 (4%)





## 3.5 | STRATEGIC ROUND-TABLE AND FOCUS GROUPS

The 6 Focus Group sessions would inform the final six Strategic Pillars for this Strategic Action Plan.

Following on from the Community Visioning Sessions, a Strategic Round-Table and six Focus Groups were held during January and February 2025, to explore in greater detail the topics that had been generated to date in the process.

Six topics were identified as being critical to the future of Traverse City. Each topic was studied in a 90-minute session with experts and interested parties participating. The topics would form the basis of the Strategic Action Pillars, which are outlined in Section 6.

The topics were identified as:

- Proactively manage urban design
- Strengthen place-making and neighborhood character
- Fostering a regional collaborative approach
- Building economic systems and amenities
- Supporting environmental sustainability
- Building thriving year-round economy



### Key Insights

- The Focus Group sessions helped identify key issues, objectives and actions under each of the Strategic Pillars. The discussions were very productive and surfaced actionable ideas and highlight points of tension about the future direction of the community.
- Concerns about the pace and type of development was a reoccurring theme. There is a concern the community is losing its natural small-town charm, and that over-tourism could further degrade the resident experience of living in the community. This was balanced by a very strong affinity and affection people have for the community.
- The discussions were solution based and explored residents ideas about how to achieve the right balance and enhance the community.



## 4.0 | FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### 4.1 | SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE FOR TRAVERSE CITY – FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORATION

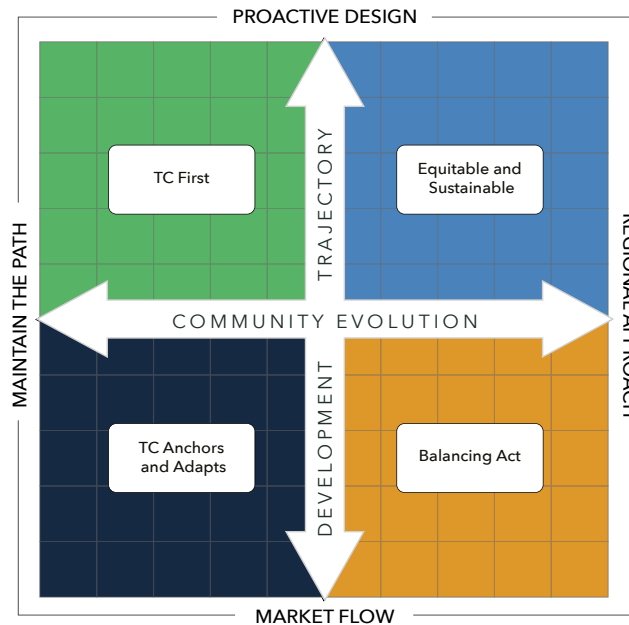
The scenarios developed during the scenario planning process at the Think Tank were used as a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for strategies for the City of Traverse City.

The scenario development process at the Think-Tank allowed community members to examine the implications and consequences of different plausible future directions for Traverse City, looking out to 2035.

The scenario framework created four different future scenarios, with varying degrees of change and trajectory. The scenarios were created using the scenario matrix framework, which was built around the two macro themes of Community Evolution and Development Trajectory. This framework was used throughout the community engagement work and survey to identify a preferred future and help inform the strategic action plan. For more details on the Traverse City Strategic Action Think-Tank, please refer to the published in-depth [Think-Tank Report](#).

Proactive urban design shapes the future. There is investment in expanding business diversity and innovation capability, to build a year-round economy. The focus is on regional collaboration and integration, that helps manage resources, utilities, and climate adaptation.

The City focuses on local and internal issues. The community fabric is allowed to naturally change and evolve as the population demographics and ownership patterns shift, and as the tourism and visitation economy grows.



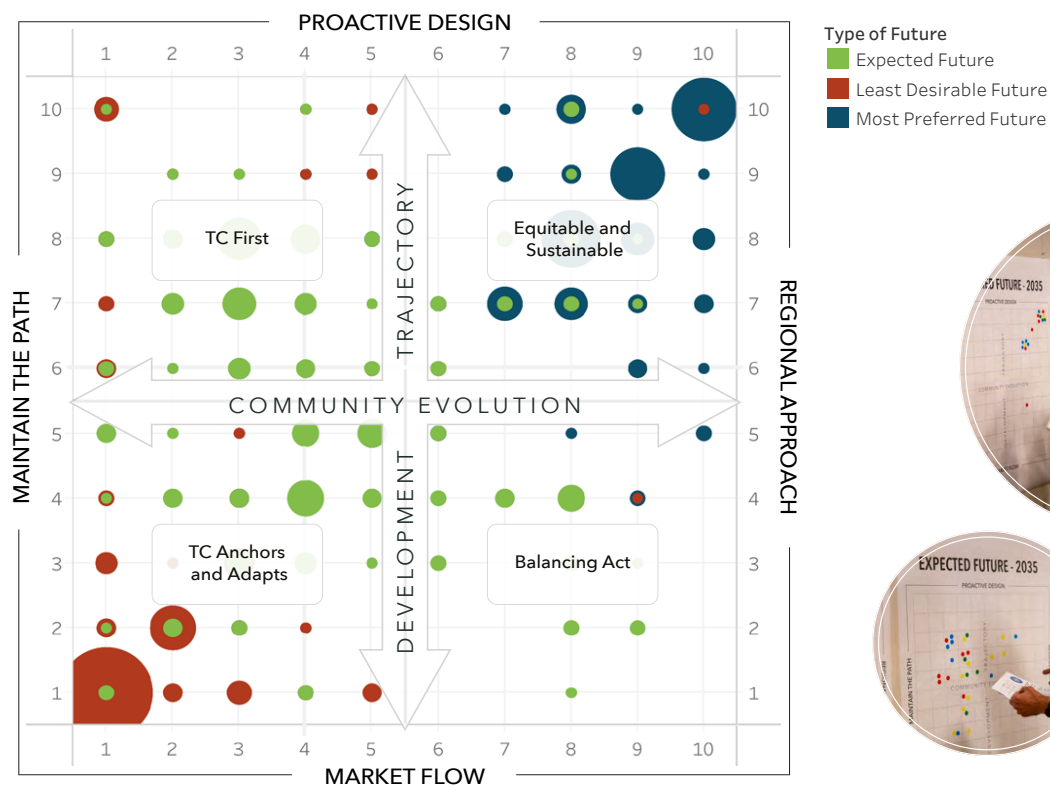
The community intentionally invests in designing and building the socio-economic systems and amenities to create a 'complete community'. A strong regional leadership approach helps amplify the City influence and heft.

Development patterns and housing availability is primarily driven by emerging market needs and forces. City planning and infrastructure investment responds as the needs arise, including making adaptations and upgrades as climate impacts occur.

## 4.2 | IDENTIFYING AND VALIDATING THE PREFERRED FUTURE

The scenario development process at the Think-Tank allowed community members to examine the implications and consequences of different plausible future directions for Traverse City against a backdrop of Macro Trends and the key drivers that are impacting Traverse City now and looking out to 2035.

During the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan Think-Tank, four different future scenarios were created. The scenarios were created using the scenario matrix framework, which was built around the two macro themes of Community Evolution and Development Trajectory. An in-depth scenario planning process over two days enabled the development of four potential future scenarios. For more details on the Traverse City Strategic Action Think-Tank, please refer to the published in-depth [Think-Tank Report](#).



### Key Insights

- Throughout the process community members repeatedly identified the upper right quadrant as the preferred future. In fact, most responses are in the extreme upper right, which reflects a high appetite for change and even a sense of urgency.
- This result has been validated in multiple ways throughout the engagement to ensure it is reflective of the community aspirations.
- The preferred future represents the most change, and a significant investment in intentionally planning and designing the future. It also represents a changing role for City leadership, as there is a greater emphasis on building regional collaboration.



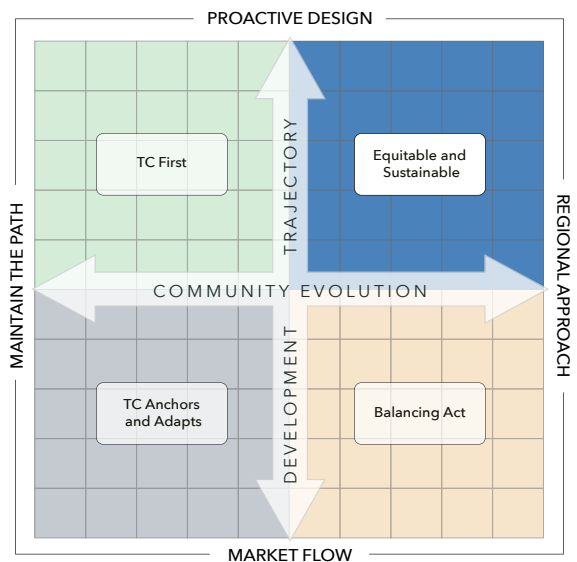
## 4.3 | THE PREFERRED FUTURE FOR TRAVERSE CITY IN 2035 – ‘EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE’

The preferred future, generated from the work carried out in the Future Think-Tank and following sessions, was Scenario B – Equitable and Sustainable.

This future is one where proactive urban design shapes the future. There is investment in expanding business diversity and innovation capability, to build a year-round economy. The focus is on regional collaboration and integration that helps manage resources, utilities, and climate mitigation and adaptation. The community intentionally invests in designing and building the socioeconomic systems and amenities to create a ‘complete community’. A strong regional leadership approach helps amplify the City influence and heft.

The preferred future was used to help define the strategic plan framework, which is designed to focus on the building blocks to make that future a reality.

- SCENARIO SNAPSHOT | FUTURE IMPLICATIONS**
- The region grows as communities come together to strategize and increase the regional population.
  - Climate change, housing, transportation, and other issues are dealt with regionally.
  - The City of Traverse City leads a regional collaborative effort to maintain influence statewide.
  - All voices are brought to the table to help make decisions and influence outcomes.
  - The transition to a year-round economy strengthens regional economic resilience.

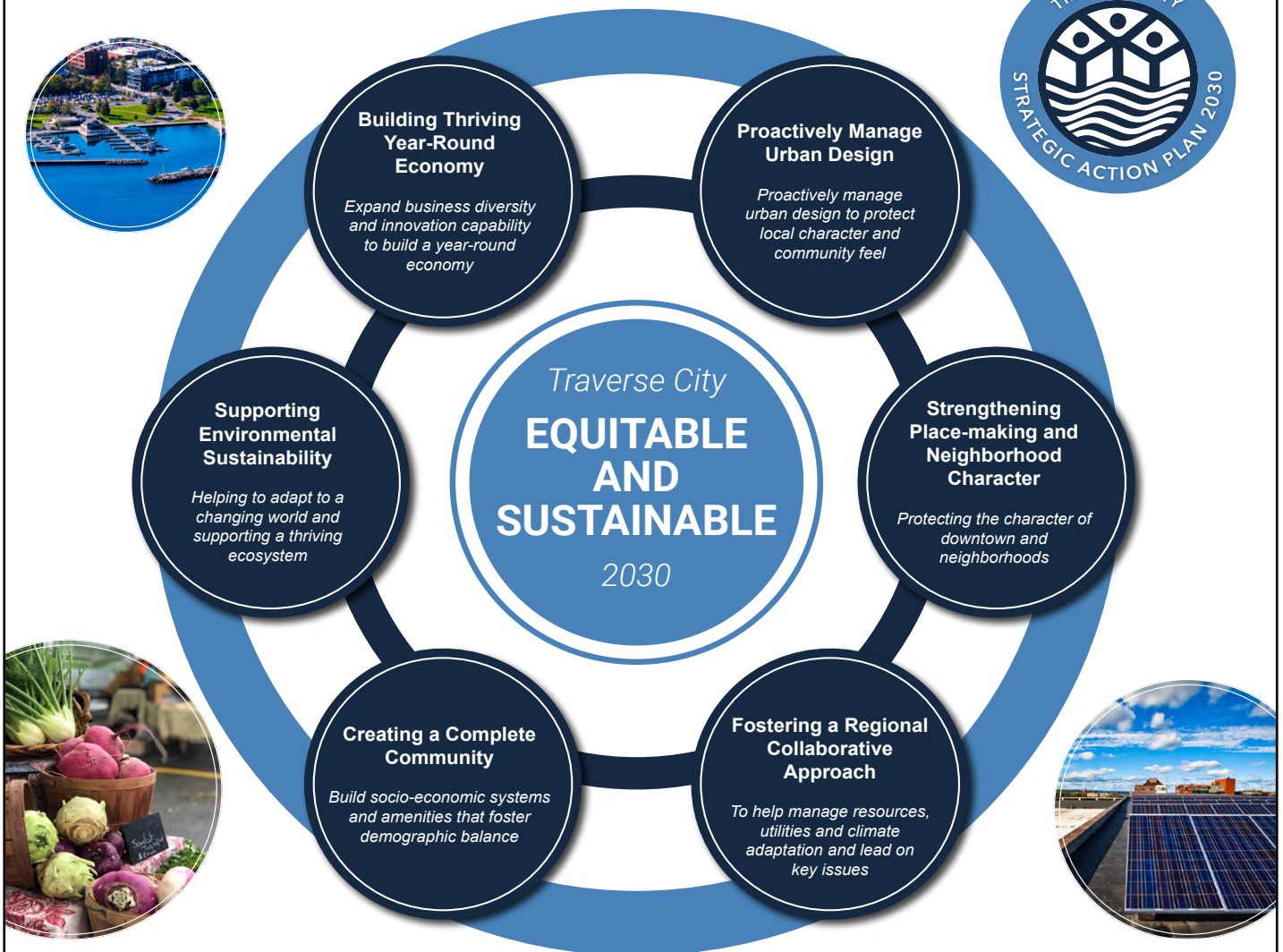


## 5.0 | STRATEGIC PILLARS FRAMEWORK

The preferred future was used to help define the strategic plan framework, which is designed to focus on the key strategic areas that will make that future a reality. These key focus areas are called the Strategic Pillars.

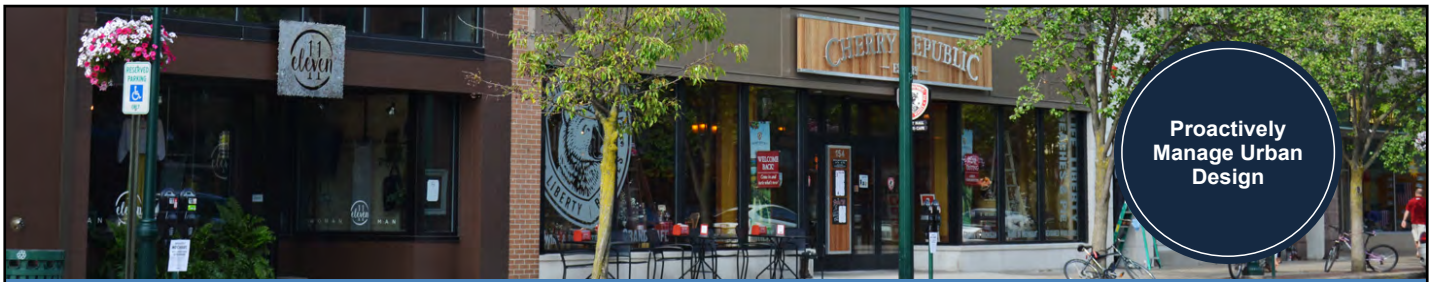
Each of the Strategic Pillars are supported by a series of key actions that can be achieved in the short to medium term and will produce long term results. They are intended to produce systemic and catalytic shifts that will drive the future economic growth, community reputation and character of Traverse City. These objectives have been designed to build the future pathway to the preferred future. The time-frame for the Strategic Pillars and Actions was 2030. This creates five years of actions, that support the longer 2035 vision established in the Think-Tank process.

The Strategic Pillars are the big focus areas identified through the stakeholder engagement work. Traverse City community members, City staff and additional stakeholders helped to shape these focus areas and their supporting objectives.



Pillar called 'Creating a Complete Community' was renamed following feedback at the Future Summit in May 2025.





## 5.1 | PROACTIVELY MANAGE URBAN DESIGN

**High Level Objective: Proactively manage urban design to protect local character and community feel.**

### 5.1.1 | IMPORTANCE OF PROACTIVELY MANAGING URBAN DESIGN

Throughout the engagement process, the importance of this topic was highlighted through the Community Survey, Leadership interviews, the Think-Tank and Focus Groups. In the Community Survey, almost 74% of respondents felt that to ‘Proactively manage urban design to protect local character and feel’ was extremely important to help shape the future development of Traverse City. Furthermore, Community Survey respondents were overwhelmingly in support of the focus being on ‘Proactively guiding and managing development and urban design.’ There is significant innovation occurring in urban design, where cities are looking at creating more walkable environments that better connect people to nature and to each other. Traverse City appears to have the appetite to pilot or test some very innovative models.

The concept of proactively managing urban design is intriguing for a city the size of Traverse City. Residents expressed a strong desire to have design actively influence the streetscape and building developments in the future.



**Future Insights**

- Emerging trends in city and urban living, such as aging population and increasing work-from-home options, is changing the way people live and relate to their neighborhood spaces and local recreation spaces. There is an increasing social appetite for more connection, to avoid loneliness and isolation, and to enrich people’s social lives.
- Traverse City could reimagine some of the city spaces to create more gathering and connection ‘third places’.





Proactively  
Manage Urban  
Design

## 5.1.2 | KEY ACTION AREAS

The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshops.

### Action 1: Proactively design the future of key corridors

There was a strong interest in creating corridor plans for key areas such as 14th Street, East Eighth Street (east of Boardman Avenue), and South Garfield Avenue. These areas offer the opportunity to provide additional community experiences and smaller scale local commercial nodes, and to relieve some of the pressure on the downtown area. Residents highlighted the need to get the scale and building design right, to create the desired intimate experience.



### Action 2: Create localized building design guidelines

There was a strong sentiment that establishing design guidelines could help preserve and enhance neighborhood character and reflect key historic design features. These guidelines could be developed on a neighborhood basis, in collaboration with residents. The approach is intended to help new buildings blend better into the overall neighborhood aesthetics.



### Action 3: Explore people-centric street design

Many of the residents offered ideas about creating a more people-centric, and less car-centric street design approach. There is an opportunity to re-imagine 'Traverse City street design' that encourages more walking and biking options, and reduces the impact of noise and visual impact of vehicle traffic. This could also include topics such as examining street-tree selections, lane width, periodic closures and vehicle speeds.



### Action 4: Intentionally create more community connection points

There has been considerable interest in the idea of designing more local community connection points, intentionally linked by trails and walkways. There could be small plaza areas, pocket parks and commercial nodes, that help foster the casual interactions of locals and could be used to host small occasional events.

### Bold Idea: Create a unique Traverse City 'people-first design model'

The sentiment from residents was that this pillar is where bold thinking and innovation could be applied. Some people suggested flipping planning models 'on their head' and create a 'Traverse City model' where design of housing, roads and public spaces is focused primarily on people's experience and enjoyment. In discussion, there was considerable appetite for a more European style of urban design, that is focused on walkability and smaller scale neighborhood connection points. This idea was raised multiple time in different engagement steps. This is an idea that could be bold and transformational for residents, and offer a car-free option, at least for three seasons of the year.



## 5.1.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY



The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.

Share positive stories within the community and other communities from people who are enjoying diversity and growth.

*"Development should not come at the cost of Traverse City's unique feel."*  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

We need Intergenerational meetings about lack of housing— all ages together (hopes/fears/ what people are going through).

We need to look through the zoning codes regarding what communities need to change relating to urban design.

There should be design standards for walking – reflective of the streets that we want.

There is a need for heated sidewalks and fully protected bike lines

City Commission to adopt Street Design Manual for complete streets – narrow lanes and street trees.

Additional Corridor Plans to promote new mixed use development.

Provide funding for individuals to develop new dwellings on existing lots. ADUs, Duplexes, two smaller home on a lot.

Responsible tourism – visitors help pay for maintaining the community and enhancing parks and community amenities.

14th street corridor should have more of a downtown feel with slow moving traffic (20 mph) with on street parking, filling in existing parking lots with buildings and parks.

New downtown in 14th St.

Add to the diversity of uses that would serve neighboring residential areas – makes Traverse City more walkable.

Traverse City is for everyone – we need intentional design.

A year round community – more seasonal residents (dark buildings/ homes/windows – empty).

*"Traverse City needs traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets."*  
- Strategic Roundtable Participant

Need more sustainable businesses and provide goods and services that embrace biking/walking.

Functional design for intentional integration.

Traverse City for everyone – equitable and sustainable.

Protecting community character – a year round community. Concern for dark buildings.

Amenities and economy that will keep people here year round.

Greatly increase density with creative solutions.

Form Commission with neighborhood representation.

Plan from the bottom up, not the top down.

Individuals should identify issues, problems and have questions on how to improve issues.

European style plazas and parks.

Tall buildings do not hurt people! Build up!

Less curb cuts and strip malls.

*"We need to focus on Corridors – 14th street is the right project for Traverse City. We could have a design competition with firms to help with uses for 14th street."*  
- Focus Group Participant

We need housing availability within Traverse City at different price points.

Need to incorporate green areas into urban planning.

We need cohesive building design.

Implement the Master Plan that has already been approved.

Move forward on the mobility plan and 5 year action plan.

Educate the public about barriers to development.

Source of Stakeholder Idea:

- Focus Groups
- Community Survey
- Strategic Roundtable





## 5.2 | STRENGTHENING PLACE-MAKING AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Traverse City has a long history of investment in place-making, and pride in its character and history. There is resident desire to extend this work into the neighborhoods.

**High Level Objective: Protecting the character of downtown and neighborhoods.**

### 5.2.1 | IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING PLACE-MAKING AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

People in Traverse City are proud of their city and also of the downtown and their specific neighborhoods. This has been conveyed through all aspects of the engagement process. Currently there are 13 Neighborhood associations, albeit some are more active and engaged and influential than others. There is also zoning currently in place with guidelines for design. There are strategic leases for downtown businesses (i.e. retail store fronts, coffee shops, and food establishments) which will enhance the downtown appeal and attraction. The Community Survey respondents noted that improvements in the downtown area, including more walkability and public spaces would generate enthusiasm among residents and visitors. Furthermore, Community Survey respondents were overwhelmingly in support of a focus on 'Strengthening place-making and neighborhood character'. This was reiterated at every point during the engagement process with key ideas being generated, which feature in the 'Ideas from the Community' section of the report.



#### Future Insights

- Place-making can be a very powerful planning tool for cities to create the right scale and sense of intimacy. Activating community spaces with small festivals, public art and 'pop-up events' can create the sense of vibrancy and activity that can create destinations and connection points.
- Traverse City residents are proud of the sense of place, and the character of the iconic areas. There is a clear desire to protect and strengthen this character, and a fear that key parts of the community will become over-developed.





## 5.2.2 | KEY ACTION AREAS

The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshop.



### Action 5: Bring an 'experience-based' approach to place-making efforts across the city

The character and the experience of various community spaces is very important to residents. This is reflected in a desire for intimate community scale and enhancing the 'small-town feel'. An intriguing approach would be to identify the desired charm and character people are seeking in specific community places, then explore how spaces, buildings, trees and art can help amplify the desired experience.

### Action 6: Empower and elevate the role of the neighborhood associations

The neighborhoods are becoming well defined in Traverse City, and a number have functioning neighborhood associations. Elevating the support and role of these associations could help residents have a more direct role in shaping the character and evolution of their neighborhoods. Convening the associations together on a regular basis could help foster innovation and strengthen the relationship with the City.

### Action 7: Intentionally create gathering and social spaces for locals

Attractive tourism destinations often face the challenge of residents feeling 'squeezed out' in high visitation periods. There is the potential to intentionally create community social and amenity spaces, that are orientated to locals rather than visitors. For example, areas around community spaces that are outside of the tourism hot spots (like library or schools) can be enhanced with dog parks, recreation areas and social spaces, that can offer a haven for locals in busy visitation periods.

### Action 8: Enhance multi-modal connectivity between neighborhoods and community places

Tourism communities like Traverse City can experience an intensity of traffic and congestion that erodes the ease of living and livability of the local community. Enhancing the multi-modal connectivity, including walkable and bikeable options, could better connect the neighborhoods to community spaces and offer another way to reduce the dependence on cars, and navigate the traffic congestion.



#### **Bold Idea: Build a fully connected city-wide trail network.**

Develop and build a fully connected city-wide trail and bike network that allows residents to access key community destinations, and to connect neighborhoods together in a different way.



## 5.2.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY



The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.

Keep neighborhoods safe and reflecting the charming community that attracted so many people to live here.

To maintain safety and appearance standards, we need regular inspections on rental properties.

Discuss how parking can impact the neighborhoods.

*"Traverse City has a small-town feel, especially in the winter months. Our children are growing up with a sense of community - they can walk to school, and they have great neighborhood friends. But we still have access to some really good restaurants and events/things to do. And, of course, summer is a dream living this close to the water."*  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

Neighborhood Association presidents should meet on six-monthly basis and make recommendations.

'Little Fleet' effect and third places in new areas such as Union/8th St. and 14th St.

Transient lodging tax – some cities have generated enough money from these to take care of waste, parks, etc. It is important for these taxes to be really looked at. Impact management instead of promotion.

*"More social districts to create meeting places around town, similar to what happened during Covid."*  
- Strategic Roundtable Participant

We need to funnel tourism tax to come back to the neighborhoods and residents. Incentives to builders/developers to build a better aesthetic appeal.

Towne Plaza to be open in the evenings with pop ups and food trucks.

Concentrate population density to key hubs (i.e. downtown TC, Kingsley, etc.) to preserve the agricultural integrity of the region.

Deed restrictions could be a possible tool to preserve neighborhood character.

Not just protect but enhance the neighborhoods.

We need specific havens for locals to meet. How do we use tools to develop these havens?

We need to define what character is and come to consensus and bring it into better focus neighborhood per neighborhood. How does each neighborhood define its character?

14th Street should be gateway to the city.

We should aim for a compatibility of materials that are in context.

Urban design needs to be better defined.

Incentivize ADUs.

We need enforcement behind the design and consequence if these standards are not followed.

Explore what the architecture integrity is per neighborhood.

Communicate to government what people want to accommodate within the bound of 'small town charm/character and clarify what these terms mean.

Neighborhood associations should be more proactive than reactive and work to assist community connections.

Create safe streets for all users.

Create incentives for creativity regarding downtown development.

City priorities should ensure equity across all neighborhoods .

'Community Character' to be valued.

Gathering spaces in the neighborhoods, even if it is just enhancing sidewalks and planting more trees.

Address current adversarial relationship between Traverse City Planning and neighborhoods.

For 14th Street corridor improvements, we need Old Town and Fernwood to be active participants.

**Source of Stakeholder Idea:**

Focus Groups

Community Survey

Strategic Roundtable



## 5.3 | FOSTERING A REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Fostering a Regional Collaborative Approach

**High Level Objective: To help manage resources, utilities and climate adaptation and lead on key issues.**

### 5.3.1 | IMPORTANCE OF FOSTERING A REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Throughout the engagement process, the importance of this topic was highlighted through the Community Survey, Leadership interviews, the Think-Tank and Focus Groups. In the Community Survey, almost 73% of respondents felt that to 'Foster a regional collaborative approach to help manage resources, utilities and climate adaption and lead on key issues' was extremely important to help shape the future development of Traverse City. It was also noted that there is a lot of work currently being carried out between Traverse City and regionally to foster and build this regional collaboration, including the 10 county regional planning of Networks Northwest, BATA, Traverse Connect, TART, MPT/TTIC (Leelanau Grand Traverse and Traverse City), Regional healthcare via Munson hospital, the Airport, TCAPS, MSH Water Quality, the Traverse Bay Intermediate School District and via the Grand Traverse County Funding levels. While Traverse City is doing well with current partnerships across the region, there was a perception that even more can be done, which could help accelerate progress on key issues.

A regional collaborative approach has been a key focus area throughout the engagement process. Community members are keen to see Traverse City take on a leadership role in helping convene groups to work together on the grand challenges.



#### Future Insights

- Greater region-wide collaboration will help provide better access to services and new efficiencies and quality in service delivery. When asked what changes in Traverse City would most excite residents, many respondents noted that stronger partnerships with surrounding communities to address housing and infrastructure are welcomed.
- Any of the biggest challenges in the region, such as housing and transportation, will require inter-government solutions, and public-private partnerships. Building these collaborative approaches will help spur new solutions and accelerate outcomes.



Fostering a Regional Collaborative Approach

### 5.3.2 | KEY ACTION AREAS

The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshop.

#### Action 9: Map the current collaborations across the region

Build understanding of the current collaborations and relationships, and between sectors of the regional economy to explore gaps, opportunities and identify where success is occurring. Understanding the current successes in collaboration can help encourage institutions to continue to do the hard work of finding common ground, aligning plans and sharing resources.



#### Action 10: Convene organizations in the region to identify needs and solutions

Engage major institutions from across the wider region to identify the needs and resources required. This will involve more cooperative planning with a common vision between all regional jurisdictions with an initial focus on infrastructure, housing, connectivity, utilities and transportation. The current housing challenges and shortages is an ideal place to start - as this is an urgent and shared issue in the region.



#### Action 11: Explore the potential for shared Government services

Identify and deliver shared services and infrastructure, ultimately providing better value to residents across the region. The region is a mixture of governments, including cities, townships and municipalities. They all have services to deliver and key roles to play, however people are looking for increased coordination and efficiency of service delivery. An increased collaboration model offers a way to continue to explore ways to identify and deliver shared services, ultimately delivering better value to residents across the region.

#### Action 12: Create a leadership team to advocate for the region

Draw together key leadership entities to advocate for the region at a State and Federal level. Create a Roadmap on how local government and parts of the region can contribute to the region as a whole. This leadership team should draw from a cross section of municipalities, County and key groups.



**Bold Idea: Convene a leadership group to address the housing crisis.**

Throughout the engagement, examples were repeatedly shared of where there are economic and service gaps because there are open jobs that can't be filled, including key positions in the healthcare and education sectors. A major contributing reason is there is not enough available housing. This is an important issue to address in a bold and urgent manner. The housing topic has been previously identified in Traverse City Commission Goals and Objectives, and remains a priority issue.



### 5.3.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY



The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.

Engage major institutions and identify the resources (expertise/people/facilitation).

This is part of the communication process – celebrate the wins. We need more regional collaboration to help with this.

Leadership needs to be coming together from the region to discuss the impact of funding issues since change in national government.

Key institutions can help – Networks North West.

We need to understand limitations and strengths – townships have a lower tax base.

Focus on infrastructure, connectivity, utilities, roads and transportation as a start.

Look to Grand Traverse County to play a bigger and better role – communicate out the work of the townships (CO/MSU/Traverse Connect).

Build trust through established committees.

“Create a Roadmap on how each local unit of government can contribute to the region as a whole.”  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

Engage talent communities (i.e. Alumni of Leadership Grand Traverse).

Engage the major institutions (Munson, NMC, Traverse Connect, LSD, Airport, Network Northeast, Sleeping Bear, Major Non-profits, etc) i.e. – Groundwork Center.

“Establish a structure and process tasked with promoting the region, currently it is not clear who convenes it/owns it.”  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

Play up and celebrate some of the wins with regional collaboration – NM Chamber Alliance (policy advocacy), TART, Freshwater R & I Center – Homelessness Collective and strong regional healthcare system.

Create a Regional Housing Planning Commission and regional Commissions to address key issues across the region, including tourism.

Produce and promote regional economic development planning and co-ordination, noting the need to understand limitations and strengths – townships have a lower tax base.

Engage major institutions from across Traverse City and the wider region in an organized manner to identify the resources (expertise/people/facilitation) that will benefit the entire region.

Work with MDOT to create better pedestrian infrastructure region wide.

Prevent suburban sprawl and protect rural land.

Traverse City and surrounding region to support homeless population.

Surrounding counties that benefit from Traverse City to share the load.

Copy collaboration example set by Housing Coalition.

New TIF to support these strategies.

Work with surrounding jurisdictions to strengthen BATA services.

The first issue is housing – Benzie, Leelanau and Grand Traverse County?

We need a regional approach to waste management dictated by the State.

“We need to be fostering regional cooperation – we all see ourselves as Traverse City despite where we live in the region.”  
- Focus Group Participant

Traverse City needs to engage with Networks Northwest.

Create Regional Housing Planning Commission.

We need to define the region – Traverse City and Townships, Grand Travers and then Benzie and Leelanau and beyond.

Source of Stakeholder Idea:

Focus Groups

Community Survey

Strategic Roundtable





Creating a Complete Community

## 5.4 | CREATING A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Many people are keen to retain a balanced community demographic. This will require addressing the housing affordability and availability issues.

**High Level Objective: Build socio-economic systems and amenities that foster demographic balance**

### 5.4.1 | IMPORTANCE OF CREATING A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Traverse City is known for its diverse and progressive community. It is a place that people want to move to, remain living in, return to and visit. A high response rate from all engagement parts of the process discussed how much people love Traverse City and the individual neighborhoods that exist within Traverse City. Housing was the key issue that emerged during the process, regarding affordable housing and overall housing options. It was noted that surrounding townships are providing a lot of the new housing because they have more available land, and that the city is exploring ways to limit or balance short term rentals with the desire for full time residents. However, there is concern about the community becoming less appealing and affordable for young families, and residents were keen to find creative ways to build a balanced and vibrant demographic profile.



#### Future Insights

- There is a desire to ensure that Traverse City has a diverse and attainable housing market, which is necessary for attracting and retaining a strong workforce as well as for young families and young professionals.
- Many members of the community have expressed that they would like to keep Traverse City as Traverse City. This would include ways to accommodate socially and culturally the various demographics that live in the city.
- As tourism is a key element in Traverse City, which bring visitation pressures, there is a need to find ways to maintain the quality of life for the Traverse City resident. Many people spoke about gathering spaces or havens for the community, that would help maintain the social fabric and community feel of the city.





The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshop.

### Action 13: Encourage more full-time residents living in core neighborhoods

A key concern for residents was the ‘loss’ of family homes to short-term rental or seasonal residents, creating ‘dark windows’. Residents are keen to see approaches that encourage more full-time residents, especially in the traditionally family home neighborhoods. This can bring vibrancy to the neighborhood, and help ensure the school enrollments stay at healthy levels.



### Action 14: Host summits to showcase best practice solutions to socio-economic challenges

Across the country, numerous cities, counties and organizations are experimenting with new and novel approaches to tackling systemic issues such as housing affordability and availability, childcare, and homelessness. Best practice examples from this broader work should be showcased, to help spark innovation, creative local ideas and action.



### Action 15: Promote Social Equity within Traverse City

As the demographics in the community change, there are new needs and issues. It is proposed to develop an action plan to more intentionally support the needs of underserved groups, including age-in-place communities.



### Action 16: Develop a plan to boost childcare capacity in Traverse City

Develop a target goal and plan for childcare capacity in Traverse City, which would increase accessibility of childcare for young families who are in the workforce and help those who struggle to meet the cost of childcare. The lack of childcare was seen as a key constraint for a lot of working families, which in turn makes it challenging for young families to live in the community.

**Bold Idea: Find innovative ways to address childcare shortage.**

The shortage of childcare was highlighted as a key issue in the engagement sessions. This issue needs a bold and innovative approach to create a breakthrough in the supply. This could be a topic for immediate focus.



## 5.4.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

### Creating a Complete Community

The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.

Embrace the Corridor Development plan and Housing Atlas as tools for smart growth.

Increase housing stock across the region and for every income level.

Work on a vision for how housing will be provided in a sustainable way to meet the needs of Traverse City residents now and in the future at all income levels.

Incentivize people aged 55-62 to sell their larger properties therefore allowing families to move into the established larger homes.

*"We need to create opportunities for our high school and college graduates to remain gainfully and positively employed locally .... Let's stop the boomerang of our young people."*  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

We need Policies that promote smart development, increase housing inventory, and support middle-income residents will create a more balanced and sustainable community.

Poverty – people in crisis – set aside units for a coalition to house people with vouchers.

Increase membership to Traverse Connects.

Incremental Development Alliance – teaching homeowners to make things affordable.

Housing – Brown Ridge Trust Fund Advisory Board setting up Housing Trust Fund who will provide micro loans for roofs etc.

Better packages and more input at planning commission. We need a more 'across the board' approach to level out the changes regarding planning and zoning.

People need social roots – places for people to meet and make families/see a future here.

Community Center. We need a social outlet if people aren't sporty, etc. Common Grounds is a great community space.

Need to embrace Traverse City being a City – is Traverse City the hub of the region? We have to be a city with all of the amenities of a city. We need to choose to embrace that – but will have to take on the infill and density.

Create a Welcome package for new residents.

Incentive long term rentals of second homes - homestead exemption for long term rentals.

Incentivize major employers to offer daycare (i.e. TCAPS).

Support service-workers regarding housing availability.

Create multi-use dense housing.

Work with partners such as hospitals to build industry housing.

*"How do people build equity – i.e.) condos that are attainable for young people to build equity to build a larger home. This is useful for young professionals who are not ready for the responsibilities of a larger home but condos offer ownership."*  
- Focus Group Participant

Protect the public schools.

Explore the possibility and concept of inclusive housing mileage and explore an in-depth, local census of the state of housing and its impact on the ability of employers (including healthcare) to function and provide their service.

Cultivate and nurture relationships and actively (and proactively) work to find workable solutions to develop empty lots for housing.

Develop a tool and/or fund to help people who no longer need larger residences to downsize feasibly.

Develop quantifiable target goal for housing for all .

Explore financial appeal and benefits to splitting lots for creation of desired housing.

Develop target goal and plan for childcare capacity.

Make plan for adding smaller parks adjacent to new housing.

Build capacity for mental health care.

#### Source of Stakeholder Idea:

- Focus Groups
- Community Survey
- Strategic Roundtable





Supporting Environmental Sustainability

## 5.5 | SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**High Level Objective: Helping to adapt to a changing world and supporting a thriving ecosystem**

### 5.5.1 | IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Traverse City has the potential to be a model for how communities can reduce their environmental impact. This resonates with the values expressed by the community.

It was noted throughout the Community Survey, Focus Groups and the meetings with leadership that Traverse City is focused on environmental sustainability. There is a clear desire in the community to pursue environmental and sustainability practices. Adjustment to climate change, and the mitigating impacts of extreme weather events, such as extreme heat, fires and floods, are seen as urgent issues to address. Throughout the planning process, environmental sustainability was seen as the overall driver of community health. It was also consistently highlighted that people choose to live in Traverse City due to its natural resources which is why this is an important messaging tool.



#### Future Insights

- The younger population cohorts (under 40) in the survey expressed greater concern and interest in issues associated with environmental sustainability, and concerns about the future impacts of climate change.
- There appears to be appetite in the community to continue and expand the efforts to address sustainability steps and programs. In particular, there was interest in how to embrace some of the emerging technologies and systems that allow houses to be fully electrified, and therefore using 100% renewable energy sources for heating and operating.





Supporting Environmental Sustainability

## 5.5.2 | KEY ACTION AREAS

The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshop.

### Action 17: Develop a comprehensive region-wide sustainability plan that focuses on climate mitigation and adaptation

Create a city and county-wide plan to help anticipate where climate impacts might occur and build in mitigation and offset strategies. This should also include the pathway to zero-carbon and other established goals.



### Action 18: Research and replicate best sustainability practices from other similar cities

Explore and apply best practice from across the United States and Europe regarding incremental changes that are demonstrably achievable. This could include ideas from similar cities, and also ideas from across all types of cities. This should cover practices across all scales, from individual homes to neighborhood and city levels.



### Action 19: Embed environmental education initiatives at visitor interface locations

Build broad awareness and promote Traverse City as an ambitious 'living laboratory' for environmental sustainability. Make this visitor-facing, so they can appreciate the community values and become active contributors to the vision.

### Action 20: Explore novel ways for the visitation economy to help fund sustainability measures

Examine the potential for ideas like airport surcharges and 'tourism taxes' to help fund local environmental offsets and initiatives. There is a 'sea-change' occurring in many tourism destinations, where there is a pivot from destination promotion to destination impact management.



### Bold Idea: Pilot electrification of houses as a demonstration project.

There is a need to pilot projects that demonstrate the ability and capacity to reduce environmental impact at a local level. There is the existing local capacity and technology to establish an innovative electrification project, to show how houses can be completely powered by renewable electric technology. This issue has been previously included in Traverse City Commission goals and objectives, but has been primarily focused on government buildings. There is an opportunity to bring that thinking to residential homes, allowing people to see how they can contribute directly on their own properties.



## 5.5.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

### Supporting Environmental Sustainability

The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.

Low hanging fruit/incremental changes. There are lots of versions of incremental changes and so be bold and politically savvy. I.E) Make downtown car free. We need to show people case studies.

*"We need to remember that it is the bay, lakes, rivers, and woods that make our area so great."*  
- Community Survey #1 Respondent

Create a surcharge on flights during tourism season at the regional airport. This is a price that people should have to pay on a year round basis regarding the downgrade of the environment.

We need to create opportunities to pilot projects – i.e.) incentives to keep yards tidy.

Gap financing/ incentives for those businesses who may be impacted.

Local glamping at Boardman Lake.

Boardman River – make it more beautiful.

Waste water and Storm Run off.

Improve city parks regarding biodiversity and native species.



Change curb design to reduce storm run-off.

Attract more environmentally sustainable year round businesses, which attract more jobs.

Look at zoning regarding driving differently or increase density development.

Reduced paved parking – encourage public transportation.



Boardman River behind Front Street – make more of a natural riparian ecology.

Continue to maintain and upgrade water treatment, including storm water run-off.

Advocate at State level to clarify environmental options such as run off utility.

Prioritize infrastructure and the CIP over non infrastructure progress.

Include EV chargers in all new construction

Support bikeable and walkable design to reduce car reliance

Create infrastructure that doesn't incentivize more vehicle traffic.

Don't sacrifice all of the permeable surfaces.

Naturalize the Boardman River, make it an amenity.

Follow TCLP lead on Climate Action Plan.

Continue to develop as a Trail City.

*"We are not going to get everyone to participate for environmental reasons. We need to appeal to people regarding financial benefits, quality of life, congestion, time, etc.... Talk to people about their hyper local environment rather than the larger national picture."*  
- Focus Group Participant

TCLP and solar for home owners.

Continue to maintain and upgrade water treatment – including storm water run off.

Manage city urban forestry plans. Update tree species planting list – include shrubs and bushes as alternatives (especially flowering).

Advocate at state level to clarify options for run off utility.

#### Source of Stakeholder Idea:

Focus Groups

Community Survey

Strategic Roundtable





Building Thriving Year-Round Economy

## 5.6 | BUILDING THRIVING YEAR-ROUND ECONOMY

**High Level Objective: Expand business diversity and innovation capability to build a year-round economy**

### 5.6.1 | BUILDING THRIVING YEAR-ROUND ECONOMY

Traverse City is well known for its exceptional outdoor recreational offerings. Throughout the engagement process, many spoke about the need to create a year-round economy with tourism in the winter. Also, in the Community Survey, respondents were excited about economic diversification beyond seasonal tourism. Almost 61% of Community Survey respondents felt that it was extremely important to expand business diversity and innovation capability to build a year-round economy. With post COVID options to work remotely, this could improve a year-round economy for Traverse City.

The goal should be not only a greater diversity of businesses, but a greater number of businesses in current sectors to increase competition, which will give employees options and can support more competitive wages for employees.



#### Future Insights

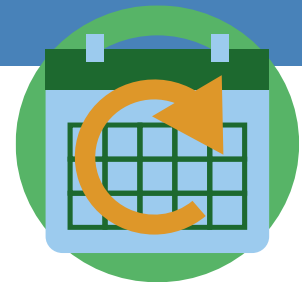
- A greater diversity and number of businesses will also encourage high school and college graduates to remain in Traverse City without the need to leave the area in search of employment and career paths.
- Build the 'Traverse City Brand' to attract the future workforce and ascertain the industries that Traverse City needs to attract and the skills that they need. The future workforce is predicted to focus more on skills than roles, with more expertise needed in technological roles.





## 5.6.2 | KEY ACTION AREAS

The key actions areas have been drawn from the focus group discussions, and aggregate ideas shared by the community in the surveys and workshop.



### Action 21: Embrace Sustainable Tourism approaches to moderate seasonal nature of tourism

Adopt a destination impact management approach built on the philosophy of sustainable tourism that addresses local community and environmental impact. For Traverse City to adopt an intentional sustainable approach, this will mean moving from a destination marketing approach to destination impact management.

### Action 22: Strategically market Traverse City to the future remote workforce

Continue to build the 'Traverse City Brand' to attract the future remote workforce. This target group is likely to be recreation orientated and drawn by the lifestyle and character of the community. They could also be important new demographics in the community, representing younger age groups.

### Action 23: Explore the potential for recreation and resource related products and businesses

The Traverse City brand could be leveraged for business creation that is associated with outdoor recreation and resource management. An example is the higher-end products that are appealing to the recreation market, such hiking gear, equipment, water bottles and accessories.



### Action 24: Build on the specialized advanced manufacturing sector

There is a 'window' of time to capture some of the reshoring manufacturing that is occurring and will likely accelerate. This will help reduce seasonal tourism dependency through fostering industries and businesses that provide stable, well-paying jobs throughout the year. Traverse City already has a strong advanced manufacturing base which could be expanded. This could also include a water-related industries hub, creating a unique location for technical and specialty businesses.

### Bold Idea: Embrace a sustainable tourism model approach

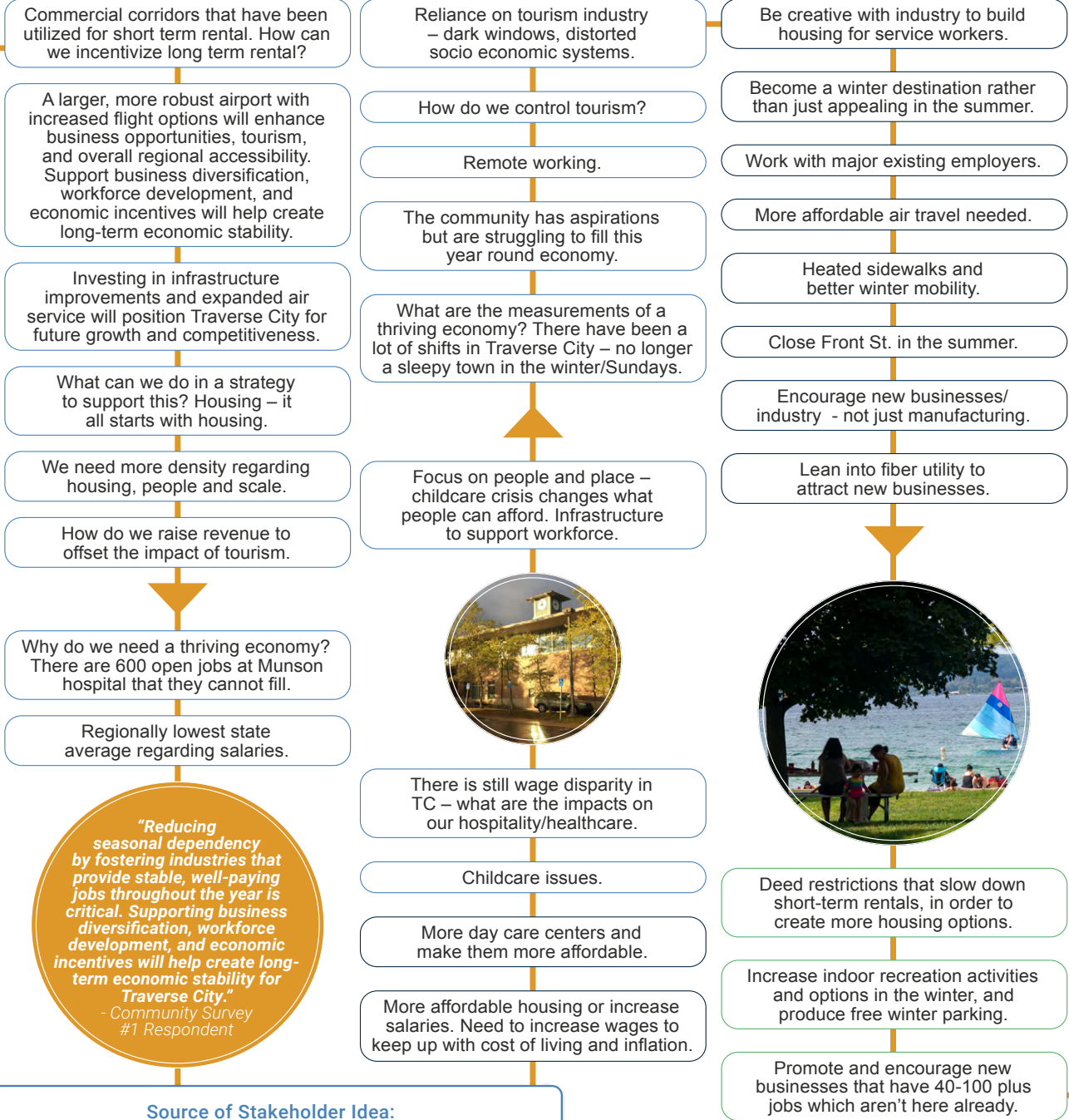
Across the world, visitation dependent economies are increasingly exploring the idea of sustainable tourism, and focusing on the impact on destinations and residents. This includes changing the focus to 'quality over quantity', and more experienced-based approaches where local values and community interests are put first. This is a challenging pivot for many destination communities, but is showing promise as a way to avoid heading further into over-tourism situations.



## 5.6.3 | IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

### Building Thriving Year-Round Economy

The following bullet points are ideas and actions that emerged during the engagement process. Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked for specific ideas on actions that could be taken to achieve the preferred future, 'Equitable and Sustainable'.



#### Source of Stakeholder Idea:

Focus Groups

Community Survey

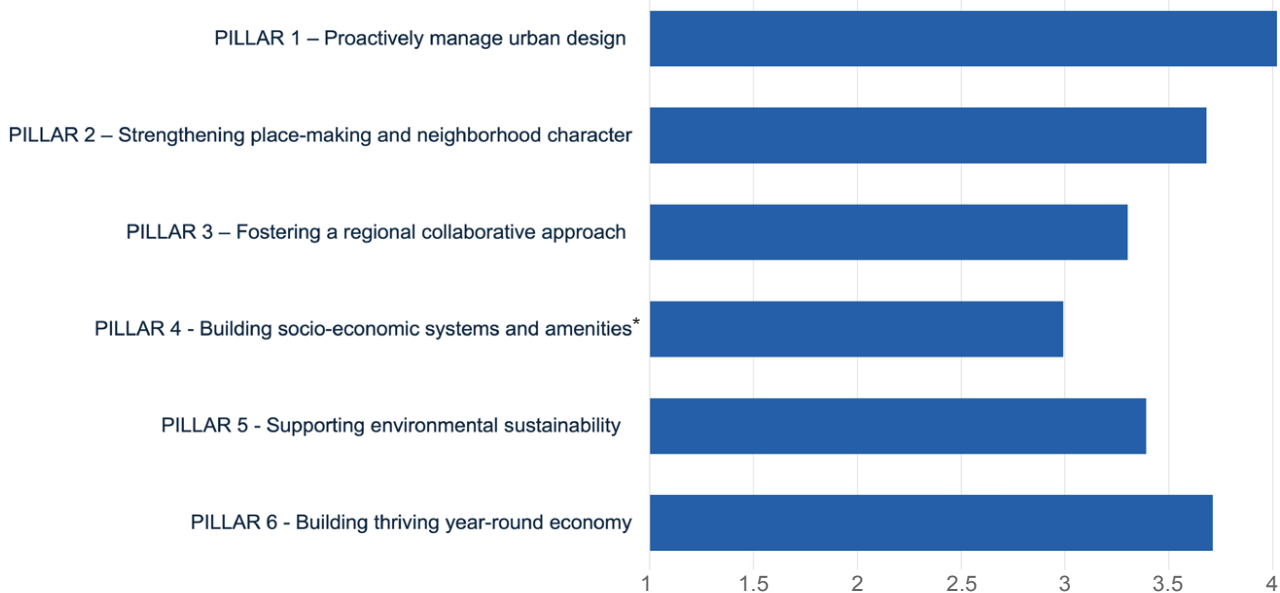
Strategic Roundtable

## 6.0 | DYNAMIC SYSTEMS-THINKING APPROACH

The framework for action developed through the strategic planning process has identified a set of six key Strategic Pillars that will help the City of Traverse City pivot its trajectory towards the 'Equitable and Sustainable' scenario. This framework is the culmination of engagement and input via survey, in-person events and deliberation by the focus groups. The resulting overall framework creates the basis of the roadmap to the future and the guiding vision that will inform future planning efforts by the City of Traverse City.



**Ranking of pillars based on their potential positive impact on Traverse City over the next five years. SCALE: 1= lowest; 6= highest**



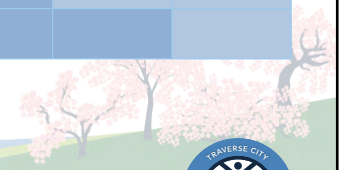
\* This pillar was renamed to 'Creating a Complete Community' after feedback at the Future Summit.



## 7.0 | PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS

The 24 actions were prioritized against dimensions of ‘Future impact on Traverse City,’ ‘Need to be bold and innovative’; and ‘Urgency for implementation’. The darker the color, the higher the average score. This provides a way to sort the highest priority actions, based on community input and perspective.

Pillar	Action	Impact	Boldness	Urgency
PILLAR 1: Proactively manage urban design	Proactively design the future of key corridors	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue
	Create localized building design guidelines	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Explore people-centric street design	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Intentionally design more community connection points	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
PILLAR 2: Strengthening place-making and neighborhood character	Bring an ‘experience-based’ approach to place-making efforts	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Empower and elevate the role of the neighborhood associations	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Intentionally create gathering and social spaces for locals	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Enhance multi-modal connectivity between neighborhoods & places	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
PILLAR 3: Fostering a regional collaborative approach	Map the current collaborations across the region	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Convene organization in region to identify needs and solutions	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Explore the potential for shared Government services	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Create a leadership team to advocate for the region	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
PILLAR 4: Creating a Complete Community	Encourage more full-time residents living in core neighborhoods	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue
	Host summits to showcase solutions to socio-economic challenges	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Promote social equity within Traverse City	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Develop a plan to boost childcare capacity in Traverse City	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue
PILLAR 5: Supporting environmental sustainability	Develop a sustainability plan that focuses on climate mitigation	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Research and replicate best sustainability practices from other cities	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Embed environmental education at visitor interface locations	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Explore new visitation economy funding for sustainability measures	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue
PILLAR 6: Building thriving year-round economy	Embrace Sustainable Tourism approaches to moderate seasonal nature of tourism	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Strategically market Traverse City to the remote workforce	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Explore potential for recreation and resource products & businesses	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
	Build on the specialized advanced manufactured sector	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue





## 8.0 | NEXT STEPS - ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

The findings from this planning process can be used to help inform future priorities for the City and the Commission. Over the coming years, this will help shape City goals and objectives and guide new investments and planning decisions.

This Strategic Planning process was designed to identify priority focus areas and actions that are important to the community over the next five years. It has successfully accomplished this aim. Some of the ways this planning framework can be used over the coming years will include:

- Identifying **new initiatives and focus areas** for City staff and Commissioners attention and deliberation.
- Informing **future planning decisions** and helping to refine planning priorities, guidelines and approaches.
- Guiding future Commission **goals, objectives,** and informing investments and **budget priorities.**
- Reframing the role the Commissioners and City **leadership take in a regional context.**

The community of Traverse City has shown a healthy appetite for change going forward. This is the first step toward the preferred future 'Equitable and Sustainable,' that will guide the City's future planning efforts.



The community has identified they have appetite and interest in bold and innovative solutions on a number of high impact areas, that are seen as urgent to address.





## 9.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & MORE INFORMATION

Community members and stakeholders have engaged in this strategic action planning process with great enthusiasm and commitment. Their passion and interest have ensured discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within Traverse City. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of Traverse City.

Additionally, extra appreciation is extended to Elizabeth Vogel (City Manager, The City of Traverse City), Colleen Paveglio (Communications Director, The City of Traverse City), Deborah Allen (Assistant City Manager, The City of Traverse City) and Benjamin Marentette (City Clerk, The City of Traverse City). Weekly project calls held with this team have ensured that the project has been organized, seamless and thorough.

For more information on the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan project please contact:

### ELIZABETH VOGEL

**City Manager**  
The City of Traverse City  
400 Boardman Avenue  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
231- 922-4700  
[evogel@traversecitymi.gov](mailto:evogel@traversecitymi.gov)

### DAVID BEURLE

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Future iQ  
612-757-9190  
[david@future-iq.com](mailto:david@future-iq.com)

Learn more about the Traverse City Strategic Action Plan on the project portal:

[lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/traverse-city-strategic-action-plan/)





TRAVERSE CITY  
**STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**  
MICHIGAN, USA  
MAY 2025



Downtown Development Authority  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

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To: Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
From: Harry Burkholder, DDA Executive Director  
Date: July 15, 2025  
Subject: Governance Committee Item – Approval of DDA Handbook

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, the Governance Committee met to discuss a revised draft (attached) DDA Handbook. With Parking Services transition to the City, and the DDA's "treasury and HR services" shifting to the City on July 1<sup>st</sup>, I have been working to revise the DDA Employee Handbook (and its associated policies) to address policies that reflect a post-pandemic office environment and new employment benefit requirements. As part of that effort, I have been working with the City's HR Department to review the draft handbook and align revisions with city policies, where there is opportunity.

### Notable Changes from the Current Handbook to the New Proposed Handbook

- The *Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure* now includes the City HR Office (the handbook did not previously include this)
- Eliminated the Uniform Policy (applicable only to parking)
- Eliminated the On-Call Schedule Policy (applicable only to parking)
- Added an Event Policy (for our Downtown Events)
- Added an Earned Sick Time Policy
- Added a Remote Work Policy
- Added a Floating Holiday (DDA now has the same number of holidays as the city)

After reviewing the Draft Handbook, the Governance Committee recommended moving it forward to the full DDA Board for review and consideration.

### Recommended Motion

That the DDA Board approves to the DDA Handbook as presented.



Downtown Development Authority  
Employment Handbook

July 1, 2025

1

## Welcome

Welcome to the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA). We are excited to have you join our team! The work of the DDA has a great impact on the culture of our community through the work that we do by maintaining and building essential public infrastructure, facilitating essential public services, building transformative place-based public infrastructure, hosting community events, growing businesses and supporting our merchants through our work with the Downtown Traverse City Association (DTCA).

This Employee Handbook is provided as a guide and is not to be considered a contract. The Handbook will help you understand what you can expect from the DDA and what we expect from you.

The DDA reserves the right to make changes to the policies, procedures, and other statements made in this Employee Handbook. Business conditions, federal and state laws, and DDA needs change and may require that portions of the handbook be amended as necessary to successfully provide the appropriate employment relationship and to obtain the goals of the DDA.

### I. Employment Policies

#### At-Will Employment

The DDA is an “at-will” employer and operates under the provision that employees have the right to resign their position with or without notice and with or without cause at any time. The DDA has similar rights to terminate the employment relationship with or without notice and with or without cause at any time.

#### Equal Employment Opportunity

Our policy is to select, place, train and promote the best-qualified individuals based upon relevant factors such as work quality, attitude and experience, so as to provide equal employment opportunity for all our employees. This will be in compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws. This will be done without regard to non-work-related factors such as to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, height, weight, familial status, sexual orientation, status as a covered veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law. This equal opportunity policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to recruiting, hiring, training, transfers, compensation, leave of absence, promotions and benefits.

## Disability Accommodation

The DDA is committed to complying fully with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related state law. Those laws prohibit discrimination against a qualified employee or applicant with a disability who can perform the essential functions of his or her job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.

An employee requiring an accommodation must notify the DDA as soon as the need for accommodation becomes known. The DDA shall engage in the interactive process with the employee in good faith in order to determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation would allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job. Documentation from a medical provider may be necessary to verify the presence of a disability or to assist in developing a reasonable accommodation. The DDA will accommodate the disabilities of qualified employees and applicants who are able to perform the essential functions of their position with or without a reasonable accommodation unless undue hardship or a direct threat to safety of the employee, co-workers, or others would result.

Under state law, an employee must notify the employer in writing of the need for an accommodation within 182 days of when the employee knew or reasonably should have known that an accommodation was needed.

## Anti-Harassment Policy

The DDA is committed to a work environment in which all individuals, including employees, vendors, consultants, clients and the general public in our work areas are treated with respect and dignity. The DDA expects that all relationships among individuals in the workplace will be professional and free of bias, prejudice and harassment. Each employee has the right to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting including events outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

Conduct or communications based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, height, weight, familial status, sexual orientation, status as a covered veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law will not be tolerated.

Harassment is any unwelcome or unsolicited verbal, non-verbal, physical or sexual conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Discriminating or harassing conduct is not allowed in the workplace, on organization time, and using organization equipment like phones, computers, via e-mail, text and voice messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites or other means.

Examples of harassing conduct include but are not limited to:

- Negative stereotyping;
- Threatening, intimidating or hostile acts;
- Denigrating jokes, disparaging remarks, and the use of degrading nicknames and slurs;
- Unwelcome or unsolicited touches or threats of physical harm;
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct or communications that are intended to or do in fact substantially interfere with an employee's employment or create and intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. Examples of conduct or communications that constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to:

- unwanted sexual advances;
- offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- leering or making sexual gestures;
- displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- derogatory comments or jokes;
- use of sexually degrading words to describe an individual;
- suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- sexual touching or assaults, and the impeding or blocking of movements.

Unwelcome sexual conduct or communications constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of an individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the employee; or
- the harassment has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the employee's work performance or creating an environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the employee.

## Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure

Any employee who experiences or witnesses conduct that may constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment is strongly encouraged to report the matter immediately.

Reports may be made to any of the following:

- The employee's supervisor
- The Executive Director of the DDA
- The City of Traverse City Human Resource Office

All complaints will be taken seriously. The DDA will promptly and thoroughly investigate any report of discrimination or harassment. Appropriate corrective or disciplinary action will be taken as warranted by the findings, up to and including termination of employment.

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, as some disclosure may be necessary to conduct a fair and thorough investigation.

Upon conclusion of the investigation, the individual who filed the complaint will be informed that the investigation has been completed and, where appropriate, advised of the outcome.

#### Management Responsibility:

All supervisors and members of management are responsible for enforcing this policy. Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of potential discrimination or harassment must report it immediately so it can be properly investigated and addressed.

Executive Director of the DDA is located at 303 E State St, Traverse City, MI 49684

City of Traverse City Human Resource Office is on the 2nd floor of the Governmental Center located at 400 Boardman Ave, Traverse City, MI 49684

## Retaliation

The DDA strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee who, in good faith, reports discrimination or harassment, files a complaint, or participates in an investigation related to such matters. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy, and any employee found, after a thorough investigation, to have engaged in retaliatory behavior shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees who believe they have been subjected to retaliation are encouraged to report their concerns immediately to their supervisor, the DDA Executive Director, or the City of Traverse City Human Resources Director.

Please note that employees who knowingly make false or malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation that are not made in good faith may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Workplace Violence/Bullying

It is expected that all employees will always be treated with respect and courtesy. Behavior that is dangerous, intimidating or offensive to others is not allowed.

In addition, weapons, firearms, explosives or other hazardous substances or devices are not allowed on organization property including the parking lot.

Conduct that may reasonably be perceived as threatening, intimidating, and bullying or which coerces another employee, a customer, or any person, including during work and/or non-work time, will not be tolerated and will be subject to a Performance Improvement up to and including termination of employment.

## Health Information Privacy (HIPAA) Compliance

It is our intent to protect the privacy of your health information. Although the organization's access to your health information is limited, we remain committed to safeguarding any such information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

- The organization will not release Protected Health Information (PHI) without your authorization.
- Employees should respect the privacy of others and refrain from discussing or asking other employees about their health (don't ask/don't tell).
- Employees who choose to share their health information should do it on a need-to-know basis (for example, letting a supervisor know why you are absent).

If you have any questions or feel your privacy has been compromised, please contact the DDA Executive Director.

## Tobacco and Vape-free Workplace

The use of tobacco products and vaping is strictly prohibited on all organization premises and in organization-owned vehicles. Employees may use these products only during unpaid breaks, such as lunch, and only while off organization property and outside of organization vehicles.

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to the smooth operation of our organization and the delivery of quality service. We understand that employees may occasionally need to miss work due to illness, injury, or emergency. In such cases, employees are expected to notify their supervisor or manager as soon as possible.

Full-time employees who are absent are required to use available Paid Time Off (PTO) during their absence, in accordance with the PTO Policy. If an absence lasts more than three (3) consecutive days, or if the illness or injury is deemed serious, the employee may be required to provide a written statement from their healthcare provider and/or undergo an evaluation by a designated organizational physician before returning to work.

Employees are expected to be at their workstations and ready to begin work promptly at the start of their scheduled shift. Frequent tardiness or excessive unscheduled absences can disrupt operations and negatively impact team productivity.

Excessive absenteeism is defined as more than three (3) unscheduled absences within a 12-month period and shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Unscheduled absences are those for which less than 24 hours' notice is provided. Consecutive days of absence for the same reason are counted as a single occurrence. Approved absences such as military leave or other qualifying protected leaves are excluded.

Please note: Other forms of absenteeism or repeated tardiness may also result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. These guidelines are intended to provide general expectations and do not alter the at-will nature of employment.

## Dress Code

While there is no formal dress code, employees are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for the nature of their work and the environment in which they perform their duties. Attire should be neat, clean, in good condition, and suitable for a professional setting. Clothing that presents a safety hazard or is considered inappropriate or distracting is not permitted.

The DDA Executive Director reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of attire and may provide guidance or request changes if necessary.

## Gifts

Employees and administrators are prohibited from accepting gifts of a value in excess of \$25, or gratuities from individuals and firms with which the employer does business. We believe that acceptance of such gifts is unprofessional, unbusinesslike, and places administrators and employees in compromising positions which are not in the best interests of the employer, its employees, or the citizens. It is also against the policy to give gifts to those with whom the employer does business.

## Drug-Free Workplace Policy

We recognize alcohol and drug abuse as potential health, safety and security problems. It is expected that all employees will assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances. Compliance with this Drug-Free Workplace Policy is made a condition of employment.

Employees are prohibited from the following when reporting for work, while on the job, on Organization or customer premises or surrounding areas including the parking lot, or in any vehicle used for DDA business:

- The unlawful use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of an illegal or controlled substance or drug paraphernalia. "Illegal drug" includes a drug not legally obtained and a drug not being used for its intended purpose or in its prescribed quantity.
- The unauthorized use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of alcohol or marijuana.
- Being under the influence of alcohol having a detectable amount of an illegal or controlled substance in the blood or urine without a valid medical explanation ("controlled substance" means a drug or other substance as defined in applicable federal laws on drug abuse prevention).
- Possession or use of marijuana during work hours is not permitted.

The DDA reserves the right to require any employee to immediately submit to a drug and/or alcohol screen upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence or has otherwise violated this policy. Employees involved in a work-related injury or accident, or safety violation may be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test provided there is a reasonable possibility that drug or alcohol use by the employee could have been a contributing factor to the injury, accident, or violation. Employees who test positive for drugs shall be offered the opportunity to take a second confirmatory test.

Employees who refuse to comply with the DDA's drug testing requirements, tamper with a test sample, or otherwise violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. All drug and alcohol testing will be conducted in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

Any employee who is convicted under a criminal drug statute for a violation that occurs while on duty, on organization or customer premises, in an organization vehicle, or in any vehicle used for organization business must notify the DDA within five calendar days of the conviction. A conviction includes any finding of guilt, plea of no contest, or imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalty. Employees with such convictions may be subject to a Performance Improvement Plan or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, regardless of whether the offense occurred during working hours or on the employee's personal time.

## Personal and Company Property

Your personal property is your responsibility. Because many people enter, and leave work areas daily, do not leave valuables where they could be easily picked up. The DDA assumes no responsibility/liability for your personal belongings. The DDA reserves its right of access to organization property, equipment, facilities (including desks) and Organization vehicles at all times. Any search of Organization facilities or vehicles does not have to be based on reasonable suspicion.

## Social Security Privacy

It is the policy of the DDA to protect the confidentiality of social security numbers obtained in the ordinary course of business from employees, clients, vendors, contractors, or others. No employee

shall knowingly obtain, store, transfer, use, disclose, or dispose of a social security number that the DDA obtains or possesses except in accordance with the Social Security Number Privacy Act and this policy.

Social security numbers obtained in the ordinary course of business must be held confidential to the extent practical and will be maintained in a secure location. Access to social security numbers will be limited to those with a legitimate business “need to know.” Any employee accessing the social security number of another individual without the express authorization of the DDA Executive Director will be subject to discipline and could be subject to criminal prosecution.

## Social Media

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes blogs, podcasts, social networks (like Facebook and Instagram), feeds, discussions and chat rooms and any other form of online activity which displays text and images. This policy applies to the use of social media while at work and when not at work.

Rude or unprofessional behavior toward a customer or anyone in contact with the DDA is not allowed. Employees must be courteous and respectful to customers and any member of the public while in the course and scope of the DDA’s business.

Employees may not disclose any confidential information related to DDA or its vendors, customers or business partners. Employees are expected to work in a professional manner with management, customers, and vendors. This includes abiding by our policies that prohibit harassment and discrimination both at work and away from work.

Employees are required to use good judgment when posting on-line and be mindful that on-line activity leaves a digital “footprint” which can be retrieved, even if it is deleted later. Social media can only be used if it is part of your duties while at work or the employee is on lunch or break. Improper use of social media according to this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## Performance Evaluation/Goal Setting

All DDA personnel will be appraised periodically, no less than annually, at the anniversary date of hire on their job performance. This evaluation is deemed necessary for goal setting purposes and all evaluations are confidential and performed for information and goal-setting purposes between supervisors and employee. The appraisals may be utilized when determining job performance or assessing personnel problems.

Any recommended rate changes shall be brought to the City Commission for inclusion to the budget. Annual rate changes are not guaranteed and final budget approval is required by City Commission.

## Separation of Employment

If you decide to resign your position, the DDA requests you provide a minimum of two weeks' notice in writing. This helps with scheduling and enables the employee to be eligible for rehire. Employees are required to return all keys, proximity cards, uniforms (other than those items purchased under the uniform allowance policy), and parking permits to the DDA Executive Director.

## II. Wage and Salary Policies

### Anniversary Date

Your anniversary date is the first day of your employment with the organization. For purposes of full-time benefits eligibility, the date you begin full-time employment will be considered your full-time start date.

### Employment Classifications

All employees are classified as full-time, part-time or temporary. Unless otherwise specified, the employee benefits described in this manual only apply to full time employees. All other policies apply to all employees. Also, all employees are classified as either non-exempt or exempt.

**Full-time Employee.** Any employee who is regularly scheduled to work at least 38 hours per week is considered a full-time employee.

**Part-time Employee.** An employee who is normally scheduled to work less than 29 hours per week on a continuing basis is considered a part-time employee. Part-time employees are not eligible for the benefits provided in this manual, unless indicated or except as granted on occasion or to the extent required by state or federal law.

**Temporary Employee.** The Organization may hire short-term employees for specific tasks or for summer employment. Temporary employees are not eligible for the benefits provided in this manual, except as granted on occasion or to the extent required by state or federal law.

**Non-exempt or Exempt Employees.** By law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of certain limits. These employees are referred to as "non-exempt". This means they are not exempt from the overtime pay law. See Overtime Policies for a full explanation of overtime payment policies. If your position meets the rules for "Exempt status, your position is not subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

### Pay Period

The normal pay period begins at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

## Payday and Paychecks

Employees are responsible for recording their time worked and will be trained how to record time worked by their supervisor. If an employee makes an error in recording time, they need to alert their supervisor immediately so the error can be corrected.

Time sheets must be submitted every other Monday and payday is every other Friday.

Any deductions to your pay, including required taxes will be itemized on your paystub. Employees should review this information carefully each payday. If at any time you have questions about the amount or calculations, or notice a potential error, please contact the DDA Executive Director immediately.

## Direct Deposit

Full time and part-time regular employees are required to have their pay deposited directly into their account at a participating financial institution. Direct deposit should be established within 10 days of their start date.

## Travel Time

Travel time is considered work time when the following conditions are met:

- When an employee who normally works at one location is sent out of town on a single-day trip, time which is spent traveling is work time;
- An employee who travels away from home overnight is not working when they are a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus or automobile outside of the employee's regular work hours, however any time which the employee spends traveling as a passenger on a weekend will be counted as work time if the travel cuts across the hours which the employee would normally work during the week.

## Work Schedule

The DDA's regular office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, due to the nature of our operations, employees may occasionally be required to work outside of normal business hours, including evenings and weekends, particularly in support of special events.

If you are unable to report to work at your scheduled time, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible. If you are unable to reach them directly, please leave a detailed voicemail or message indicating the reason for your absence and your expected return time.

## Overtime Policy

The DDA is committed to fair and consistent compensation practices, including appropriate pay for authorized overtime work.

**Eligibility:** Non-exempt employees, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), are eligible for overtime pay. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation.

**Overtime Rate:** Eligible employees will be compensated at one and one-half times (1.5x) their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in a single workweek. Paid leave (e.g., PTO, holidays) does not count as hours worked when calculating overtime eligibility.

**Approval and Authorization:** All overtime must be pre-approved by a supervisor or the Executive Director. Working unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action, even though the hours must still be compensated in accordance with applicable laws.

**Special Events and After-Hours Work:** Employees may be required to work beyond regular business hours for special events or other operational needs. Supervisors will provide advance notice when possible, and any overtime incurred will be compensated in accordance with this policy.

**Recordkeeping:** Employees must accurately record all hours worked, including overtime, using the organization's designated timekeeping system. Falsification of time records is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## DDA Employee Event Support & Compensatory Time Policy

The DDA, often in partnership with the (DTCA), funds and facilitates a variety of public events throughout the year within the downtown district. These events are vital to fostering community identity, increasing foot traffic, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the overall vibrancy of downtown Traverse City.

The Director of Events is responsible for the day-of facilitation of all DTCA-sponsored events. However, all other DDA employees are expected to contribute to the successful execution of events by providing support as needed. This may include tasks related to larger events such as art fairs, parades, or other high-attendance activities.

If an employee provides event-related support outside of their normal work schedule, they are eligible to take equivalent compensatory (comp) time off. The following rules apply:

- Comp time must be taken within two weeks of the event.
- If not used within this time frame, the comp time is forfeited.
- Employees may not "bank" comp time in advance of an event.
- Use of comp time is optional and at the discretion of the employee.

The DDA understands that some employees may be unable to assist with event duties outside of regular business hours due to personal or professional obligations. In such cases, employees are expected to proactively coordinate with fellow staff to ensure appropriate event coverage.

This policy applies specifically to DTCA-sponsored public events and the associated scheduling and staffing expectations. It does not apply to other duties or responsibilities performed outside of regular hours that fall within the general scope of the employee's job description.

### III. Benefits

#### Insurance

The DDA offers a benefit package for full-time employees, which are outlined below.

##### Medical Insurance

*Eligibility: Full time employees, first of the month after date of hire*

Every benefits-eligible employee is encouraged to have medical insurance coverage either by participating in the DDA's plan or having coverage under another plan. The DDA offers medical insurance plans, which may change from time to time. Employees must pay part of the monthly premium, which is determined each year. These plans are described in their respective Summary Plan Descriptions.

Once an employee has elected coverage or opted out of coverage, changes will not be able to be made until the next open enrollment period unless there is a qualified change in status. Qualified change in status includes; marriage, divorce, legal separation, birth or adoption of a child, and change in a child's dependent status. For an extensive list please contact the City HR Department. Employees are required to contact the City HR Department within 20 days of a status change during the plan year.

The employee contribution is made by payroll deduction through a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan. This plan deducts the contribution from taxable income, thereby saving taxes and reducing your net cost of coverage.

#### Health Savings Account

The DDA will deposit on a pro-rated quarterly basis the cost of the plan's deductible amount paid into the individual employee's health savings accounts. Employees shall reimburse the Employer the employee cost share through payroll deduction of the deposited amount.

New hires and/or employees who increase coverage level from single to double/family after July 1 shall receive a pro-rata payment into their health savings account beginning with the first full month of insurance eligibility or coverage change through the end of the plan year. Employee shall be responsible for the remainder of the deductible. For employees separating from employment within the plan year shall receive a pro-rated payment into their health savings account for those months enrolled in the plan as an active employee.

## Opt-Out Compensation

The DDA offers an annual opt-out incentive of three thousand six hundred dollars (\$3,600.00) to benefits-eligible employees who decline coverage under the DDA's health insurance plan due to enrollment in other qualifying health insurance coverage.

This opt-out compensation will be paid in monthly installments through payroll and is subject to normal payroll taxes and deductions.

To be eligible, employees must provide proof of other qualifying coverage and complete the required opt-out documentation through the City of Traverse City Human Resources Department. Employees must re-certify eligibility during each annual open enrollment period or if their alternative coverage changes.

## Dental Insurance

*Eligibility: Full time employees, first of the month after date of hire*

The DDA provides dental insurance to the employee, spouse and dependents (up to age 26), at no cost to the employee.

## Vision Insurance

*Eligibility: Full time employees, first of the month after date of hire*

Employees have the option to purchase Vision Insurance through the group vision plan. This plan includes co-pays for eye exams and materials. Employees are responsible for 100% of the insurance premium.

## Short-term Disability Insurance (STD)

*Eligibility: Full time employees, two months following the date of hire*

STD insurance provides for partial wage continuation for periods which eligible employees are unable to work in the event of a non-duty related disability. The DDA provides this coverage to employees at no cost to the employee.

Key benefits include:

- Up to 26 weeks of coverage
- Effective on the first day of an accident and the eighth day of illness
- A weekly benefit of up to 66 2/3% of the employee's wage.

## Long Term Disability Insurance (LTD)

*Eligibility: Full time employees, two months following the date of hire*

This benefit begins after the 180-day waiting period, and pays 60% of the first \$6,667 of monthly pre-disability earnings, reduced by deductible income, with a maximum of \$4,000 before reduction by deductible income. The DDA provides this coverage to employees at no cost to the employee.

## Life Insurance

*Eligibility: Full time employees, two months following the date of hire*

The benefit is two (2) times annual earnings, rounded to the next higher multiple of \$500, if not already a multiple of \$500. The maximum benefit amount is \$100,000. The DDA provides this coverage to employees at no cost to the employee.

**Life insurance amounts in excess of \$50,000 are subject to Federal tax. Tax deductions for life insurance are taken on the final paycheck at the end of the calendar year.**

## Retirement Benefits

*Eligibility: Full time employees, two months following the date of hire*

The DDA will assist employees in saving for retirement and offers a 457 Deferred Compensation plan. The DDA automatically contributes 4% of the employee's gross wages each pay period. The 457 Plan allows employees to make their own contributions pre or post-tax (Roth). If employees choose to participate via payroll deduction, the DDA will match the employee's deferral up to an additional 6%. Employees can individually choose investment options offered through this program or select a target date managed fund.

## Paid Time Off (PTO)

Paid Time Off (PTO) is eligible for regular full-time employees to use for vacation and personal business. Employees are accountable and responsible for managing their own PTO hours to allow for adequate reserves to cover vacation, appointments, emergencies or other personal business according to their own personal and family needs. PTO is used to receive pay for absences that are either "scheduled" or "unscheduled." Please see the Attendance Policy for more information.

An employee is eligible to earn PTO as described in this policy if they are a regular full-time or part-time employee.

The chart below illustrates the rates at which PTO is accrued based on the years of service. Employees can begin to use PTO after they have completed thirty (30) days of employment.

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Accrual Rate (Hrs/Pay Period)</u>	<u>Annual Accrual (Days/Weeks)</u>
Zero to Four Years	4.62	15 days/3 weeks
Five to Fourteen Years	6.15	20 days/4 weeks
Fifteen Years	7.69	25 days/5 weeks

Employees will be required to use available PTO in conjunction with "Unscheduled" absences and/or an FMLA and/or Leave of Absence. The Attendance Policy standards of "scheduled" and "unscheduled" absences apply to the use of PTO.

PTO can be used in minimum increments of one (1) hour. If an employee has an unexpected need to be absent from work, they should notify their supervisor before the scheduled start of the workday. The supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of unscheduled absence.

To schedule planned PTO, please use the online request system for advance approval from your supervisor. Scheduled PTO must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. Requests will be reviewed based on several factors, including organizational needs and staffing requirements and approval of time off is at the discretion of the supervisor.

The organization believes that using PTO is important to the health of the employee and the organization. It's important that employees take occasional breaks from work for recreation and rest. DDA encourages employees to use their PTO by the end of their anniversary date.

If PTO is not used before the anniversary date, a maximum of 120 hours are eligible for rollover into the next work year and accumulation PTO "bucket". Unused PTO above 120 hours that remain on the anniversary date will be forfeited, unless approved by the Executive Director prior to the anniversary date. Upon resignation, employees in good standing will receive payout of any unused balance of their PTO up to 120 hours.

### Earned Sick Time Act

In accordance with the Michigan Earned Sick Time Act 338 of 2018, the DDA provides eligible employees with paid and unpaid sick leave each calendar year to support employee health and ensure compliance with applicable law.

Each calendar year, the DDA grants forty (40) hours of paid medical leave and thirty-two (32) hours of unpaid medical leave. These hours are front-loaded annually on January 1. For employees hired after January 1, the leave will be prorated based on their date of hire.

Medical leave under this policy may be used for qualifying reasons, including the employee's own physical or mental illness, injury, or health condition; medical diagnosis, care, or treatment; preventative medical care; care for a family member with a qualifying health condition; absences related to domestic violence or sexual assault; or for reasons related to a public health emergency as defined by law. Leave may be used in hourly increments unless otherwise restricted due to operational needs.

Unused paid or unpaid medical leave will not carry over into the following calendar year and will not be paid out upon separation from employment.

Employees should notify their supervisor as soon as reasonably possible when using medical leave. For absences lasting three or more consecutive workdays, appropriate documentation may be required to verify the need for leave.

## Remote Work Policy

The DDA recognizes that, under certain circumstances, remote work may support productivity, flexibility, and health considerations. This policy applies to eligible employees who request to work from a location other than the DDA office. It is important to note that not all positions are suitable for remote work, and eligibility will be determined based on job responsibilities and organizational needs.

All remote work requests must receive prior approval from the Executive Director. Remote work is considered a privilege, not an entitlement, and is not intended to serve as a permanent work arrangement.

Employees approved for remote work are generally expected to work on-site a minimum of four (4) days per week, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Director. Required in-office days will be determined at the Executive Director's discretion and must be consistently followed for continued eligibility to participate in remote work. Employees approved for remote work are expected to maintain productivity, availability, and communication consistent with their on-site responsibilities.

There may be occasional circumstances, such as when an employee feels well enough to work but wishes to avoid exposing others to a potential illness, where temporary remote work may be appropriate. These requests will also be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director.

## Leave of Absence

All regular full-time team members employed for a minimum of ninety (90) days are eligible to apply for an unpaid Leave of Absence (LOA).

A Leave of Absence can be used to request an extended period away from work, usually for reasons such as the employee's own medical condition, to care for a dependent, or following the birth, adoption or placement of an employee's child.

A leave of absence (LOA) will be approved on a case-by-case basis taking the needs to the business into consideration. The DDA will not approve a leave for personal reasons such as travel. The employee must request the LOA in writing and submit it to their direct supervisor or the Executive Director. When foreseeable, employees should submit their request at least thirty (30) days in advance of the need for the leave.

A leave of absence may be approved in increments of up to thirty (30) days and the employee will be asked to provide documentation that verifies their need to be off work. Job performance, absenteeism and departmental requirements will all be taken into consideration before a request is approved. Leaves may be extended or renewed with certification from a qualified health professional and at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Employees must use any available/accumulated PTO (or unused sick time if applicable) while on an LOA. The employee is responsible for their portion of the benefits while out on leave and time off work will not count towards benefit accruals and seniority. The DDA will make every attempt to hold the employee's job but cannot guarantee that the employee will be restored to their original position under this policy, unless otherwise required by law.

Employees will be asked to provide a Fitness for Duty from your health care provider before returning to work if the leave is for the employee's own serious medical condition. The employee must return to work on the scheduled return date or the DDA will consider the employee to have voluntarily resigned from employment. Extensions of leave will only be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Executive Director for more information on request procedures.

Employees who need leave as a reasonable accommodation for a disability that is longer than the 30 days of Leave under this policy will have their request addressed under the Disability Accommodation policy.

### Jury Duty

When an employee is absent from work because of being summoned, and/or serves on a jury, or because of being subpoenaed as a witness at court, the employee shall be paid the difference between his/her regular salary and the fees received as a juror or as a witness for time lost from the employee's regular scheduled workdays.

### Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave shall be granted in case of the death of any relative living within the household of the employee, or for the death of a spouse, child, father, mother, sister, brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparents, or grandchildren. Leave will be granted from the date of death to the date of the funeral not-to-exceed three (3) working days.

Employees may use PTO or request a leave of absence if additional time away is needed.

### Holidays

The DDA observes the following Holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- Floating Personal Holiday (8hr day)

### Parking Benefit

Employees of the DDA have the option of receiving a parking permit at no cost. Employees should park at the Old Town Deck or Hardy Deck.

### Cell Phone Reimbursement

Depending on the needs requirements of the job, employees may be eligible for cell phone reimbursement. The Employee's Supervisor and the Executive Director will make that determination.

## IV. Information Security

### General

Employees and contractors/agents of the DDA can access customers' personal information only while conducting business for the DDA. Any employee or contractor/agent found in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and legal action.

### Credit Card Data Handling

Only employees and contractors/agents of the DDA are explicitly authorized are permitted to process credit and debit cards provided it is done in compliance with this policy. Card numbers, security codes and other related data may be used only to run charges requested by the cardholder. Once the charge has been processed, all account numbers and security codes must be destroyed immediately or must be fully blacked out on both sides of the page on retained forms. No credit card data are allowed to be transmitted via end-user messaging technologies. Employees and contractors/agents of the DDA may not use this data for any other purpose.

## V. Equipment, Accidents, Injury and Reports

### Department Vehicles

All Traverse City DDA motorized vehicles (maintenance equipment, enforcement vehicles, golf cart, etc.) require the employee to maintain a valid state issued driver's license. The employee shall notify the employer if their driver's license validity has lapsed or been suspended. Motorized vehicles may be assigned to any employee as needed to complete job tasks and may not be operated by non-employees.

### Accident Reports

Any employee involved in an accident shall report the accident, and the damage to their supervisor. The supervisor may assess the accident and request the employee to contact the Traverse City Police Department. When required by the Employer, the employee shall complete an accident report in writing to include available names and addresses of witnesses, and description of the accident and supporting details. The written report shall be submitted to the employer prior to the beginning of the employees' next shift following the accident.

### Injury Reports

Any employee involved in an injury shall report the injury to their supervisor. The supervisor may assess the severity of the injury and request the employee seek medical attention. If medical care is refused by employee, a form of refusal must be submitted and filed. For non-threatening injuries, the employee shall make the employer aware of their intent to seek medical attention. Employees are required to complete specific injury forms and seek medical attention at Munson Community Health Center at 550 Munson Avenue. For accidents that occur after regular business hours, employees should report to the Munson Emergency room. For all injuries, the Employer requires the employee complete an accident report in writing to include available names and addresses of witnesses, and description of the accident and supporting details. The written report shall be submitted to the employer prior to seeking medical treatment and no later than the beginning of the employee's next shift following the injury.

## DDA Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Employment Handbook. I also understand it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies as outlined in the Employment Handbook.

I agree to conform to the rules and regulations of the DDA as described in the handbook which is intended as a guide to human resource policies and procedures. I understand that the DDA has the right to change the handbook without notice. It is understood that future changes in policies and procedures will supersede or eliminate those found in this book and that employees will be notified of such changes through normal communication channels.

I also understand and agree that the information contained in these materials does not constitute an employment contract between the DDA and me, and either I or the DDA may terminate our employment relationship at any time, with or without cause. I understand that no supervisor or representative of the DDA, other than the Executive Director of the DDA, has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period, or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

I shall return this acknowledgment form within five (5) working days.

\_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

Upon return of this acknowledgment form to your supervisor.



Downtown Development Authority  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

---

To: Downtown Development Authority Board

From: Harry Burkholder, DDA Executive Director

Date: July 15, 2025

Subject: Governance Committee Recommendation – Executive Director Evaluation

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, the Governance Committee met to discuss a proposal (attached) from Kate Green at Human Resource Partners (HRP) to facilitate a performance evaluation of the DDA Executive Director with the DDA Board. Kate has provided similar services for the DDA in previous years and has also assisted the Board with a salary comparison study for Downtown Development Authorities across Michigan.

After reviewing the proposal, the Governance Committee recommended moving it forward to the full DDA Board for review and consideration. To better understand the landscape of services and costs for this work within our community, I reached out to other local municipal entities that recently completed similar processes. Based on this research, I believe Kate's proposal is in line with comparable services in the community.

### **Recommended Motion**

That the DDA Board approves to enter into a contract with Human Resource Partners for a not-to-exceed cost of \$4,000 to facilitate the Board of Director's 2025 performance evaluation for the Executive Director of the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority.



333 Sixth Street  
Traverse City  
Michigan 49684

Phone: 231.409.9175

## **Proposal for Services - Traverse City Downtown Development Authority**

### **Objective**

Facilitate the Board of Director's 2025 performance evaluation for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority.

### **Scope and Approach**

HRP will work with the Governance Committee of the board (or other members) and CEO to review past processes and update for the current review cycle. HRP last facilitated the CEO review in 2023.

Key facilitator responsibilities of the process include:

1. Meeting with representatives of the TCDDA Board and CEO to review and finalize the criteria and process.
2. Create information for board packet with instructions and background.
3. Conduct survey (either live/over the phone or facilitate electronic survey), up to 10 respondents.
4. Summarize information, identify themes, create summary report.
5. Present and discuss initial findings with the Governance Committee and CEO.
6. Present findings to the full Board (in closed session if requested).

In the past the board was interviewed either over the phone or virtually. The summary will identify themes rather than individual comments or perceptions. For the purposes of this project, themes will be similar comments made by two or more respondents.

During the planning meeting, if there are substantive changes to the process, HRP can revise this proposal if needed.

### **Timeline**

HRP can begin this process within two weeks of receiving approval of the contract.

## Experience and Qualifications

Founded in 2000, Human Resource Partners focuses on providing professional Human Resources counsel and services primarily in Northern Michigan. The partners of the firm are Kate Greene, Michelle Baldwin and Jennifer Ewing. For this project, Kate Greene would be the primary manager.



### **Kate Greene, SHRM-SCP, GPHR, SPHR**

Kate Greene is the co-founder and President of Human Resource Partners. Having worked with clients across a range of organizations, Kate is an HR Generalist with a strategic mindset. Her deep knowledge of HR practices and organizational health and behavior provides a valuable perspective for clients who wish to drive a positive culture. Kate specializes in working with Boards of Directors and their Executive on issues like Performance Evaluation, Succession Planning and Compensation.

Kate earned her bachelor's degree in Human Resources from Michigan State University and attained the highest professional certification in the field of Human Resources as a Senior Human Resources Professional (SPHR, 2002), Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR, 2006) and Society for Human Resource Management Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP, 2015).

Since returning to her hometown of Traverse City, Kate has been an active leader in the community serving on numerous boards including the Traverse Area Human Resources Association and the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce. Currently she serves on the Board of Generations Ahead (a teen parent program), and on the HR Committee for TART Trails.

Kate lives in Traverse City with her husband, Matthew Schmidt, daughter, and twin sons.

**Confidentiality and Copyright**

All information received from the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, the Client, will be treated as confidential except information, which was or becomes generally available to the public other than as a result of a disclosure by the Client; was or becomes available to HRP from a source other than the Client or its agents; or was known to HRP prior to the disclosure by the Client.

HRP is the owner of, including copyright, of all processes, materials and training programs developed for, and provided to, the Client. The Client may not provide or resell the HRP processes or training programs to other parties without HRP written authorization.

HRP materials and advice are intended to enhance HR practices and processes and are not legal advice. HRP encourages its clients to seek legal advice if questions exist about employment practices and procedures.

The Client will indemnify and hold HRP harmless against all losses, damages, costs, and expenses including reasonable attorney fees, resulting from any breach of any warranty, representation or covenant contained in this agreement.

This agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and shall benefit and be binding upon the parties and their respective successors and assignees. This section shall survive the termination of this agreement.

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**Investment**

**Planning and facilitation of Annual Executive Evaluation**

- *Planning meeting*
- *Update materials, create packet*
- *Schedule and conduct interviews*
- *Analyze and create report, present report at board/committee meeting*

**Total** \$ 4,000

For consulting outside the scope of this project or if attendance is required at additional meetings the client will be billed at \$200/hour.

Terms: 50% billed upon commencement of the project and remainder upon completion of project. This quote is valid for 30 days.

---

**Acknowledged and Accepted by:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Traverse City Downtown Development Authority Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Greene, Human Resource Partners

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: May 27, 2025



303 E. State Street  
 Traverse City, MI 49684  
 lauren@downtowntc.com  
 231-922-2050

## Memorandum

To: Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors

From: Lauren Bohac, DDA Deputy Director

Memo Date: July 11, 2025

Subject: Holiday Lights Contract

The DDA’s contract with its holiday lights vendor ended with the 2024/2025 holiday season. In April, the DDA released an RFP for the installation and removal of downtown Traverse City’s holiday lights for the 2025/2026 season and received bids from four vendors.

Company	Location	Cost
Hang Lights	Laurium, MI	\$182,860/yr for 3 yr contract
Elite Creations	San Antonio, TX	\$150,227/yr for 3 yr contract
Strain Electric	Grand Rapids, MI	2025/2026: \$148,430 2026/2027: \$86,650 2027/2028: \$94,955
Holiday Lamplighters	Battle Creek, MI	\$98,175

After reviewing each company’s bid materials, previous work, and professional references, DDA staff is recommending Strain Electric’s bid and is seeking Board approval to proceed with a contract.

Strain has provided a preliminary contract for the Board’s review. The preliminary contract describes the scope of work to be included in the forthcoming contract if approved.

**Recommended Motion**

That the DDA Board approves to enter into a three-year contract with Strain Electric for a not-to-exceed cost of: \$148,430 for Holiday Lighting Services for the 2025 - 2026 holiday season; \$86,650 for the 2026 – 2027 holiday season and; \$94,955 for the 2027 – 2028 holiday season using TIF-97 and Old Town TIF funding, subject to approval as to its form by the DDA Executive Director and Attorney.



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A Division of the POWER

## Preliminary Contract

### Traverse City Holiday Tree Lighting

Strain Electric is pleased to provide a preliminary contract to the City of Traverse City (The City) for the **Holiday Tree Lighting** based on the RFP posted dated **04/06/2025** and **subsequent requests of information and images provided.**

#### Contract Time

The contract is to begin from the date of acceptance, in the year 2025, for (3) consecutive holiday seasons and will terminate on or before April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2028.

#### Contract pricing as follows:

Season	Lump Sum
2025-2026	\$ 148,430
2026-2027	\$ 86,650
2027-2028	\$ 94,955

**Payment** is due ten (10) days from receipt of invoice from the owner. Strain is requesting an adjustment on the payment schedule for the first year and is requesting the following for the 2025-2026 year: Payment terms as listed within the RFP for the remainder of the contract are agreeable

**This Contract is exempt from Dues & Bonds.**

#### Work to include:

- Providing and installation of holiday lighting
  - o Approximately (18) are full wrap in white lighting
    - Includes (6) trees located at the NW corner of Rotary Park
  - o Approximately (4) are full wrap in (1) solid color (other than white)
  - o Approximately (4) are full wrap in (1) solid color (other than white)
  - o Approximately (434) are lights strung through upper branches
- Removal of lighting from approximately (434) trees
- Storage of lighting materials
- A total of **(8) service calls**, per season, to address outages, weather related damaged, and/or fallen lights
  - o Does not include repair/replacement due to vandalism or other damages that are not weather related, or due to workmanship
  - o Service calls are expected to be scheduled based on multiple repairs being performed in one trip
- No items may be deleted without our prior consent.

**STRAIN ELECTRIC**  
1701 Steele Ave S.W. Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
616.453.2108



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**Excluded Work:**

- Power sources or troubleshooting of non-functioning power
- Lighting controls
- Overtime or off-hours work
- Holiday work
  - o Emergency work requested during off-hours or holiday will be subject to and emergency rate charge of \$250/hr per responder and \$125/hr per service vehicle

**Product Availability & Installation**

Installation is expected to be completely installed and operational by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in November per the RFP in each year of the contract. All locations, that are not to remain for the entire year, will be taken down and stored by the first Friday of April of the following year.

Due to the current market volatility, all efforts will be made to ensure materials are able to be procured in advance in order to ensure installation deadlines can be met. **Final installation deadlines will be predicated on the availability of materials.**

Lighting color selection for the (8) trees in the 100, 200, and 300 blocks should be specified for a preference listed in order. Color used for installation will be based on product availability.

**Traffic Control:**

It is not expected that lane closures will be necessary with the majority of work able to be completed from on street parking areas. Strain Electric will ask that The City allow for the temporary closure of on-street parking, in a phased manner, in order for workers to access the trees with the equipment.

Sidewalk barricades will be set in place to protect pedestrians from entering the work zone.

Sincerely,

**Becky Hendges**  
Project Manager  
becky@strainelectric.com  
616-407-1792  
7/10/2025

**STRAIN ELECTRIC**  
1701 Steele Ave S.W. Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
616.453.2108



Downtown Development Authority  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

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To: DDA Board of Directors  
From: Harry Burkholder, DDA Executive Director  
Date: July 14, 2025  
Subject: Executive Director Report

Below is an overview and update on projects and initiatives that the DDA is working on.

### **Two-Way Pilot Project**

The City's Design Team, community stakeholders, DDA staff, and members from Progressive met to walk the full stretch of the two-way pilot and discuss its progress. Together, we worked to identify the remaining objectives and next steps for the pilot. These include analyzing data from the remaining collection periods, determining the short-term and long-term costs of making the pilot permanent, assessing the long-term impacts on downtown circulation if only one eastbound lane remains, and exploring options (with associated costs) for implementing bicycle infrastructure. We also developed a tentative schedule for these activities, including key meetings and decision points (including the DDA Board) that will lead to a recommendation on the pilot to the City Commission in December.

### **General Infrastructure Repair**

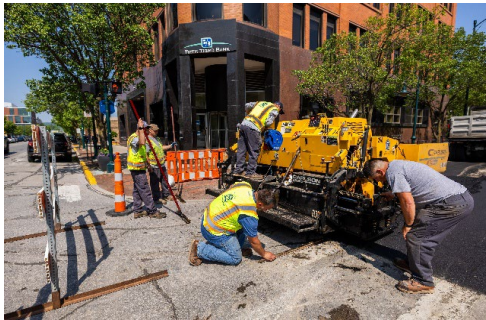
As you may recall, earlier this spring, DDA and City staff conducted a walking tour of downtown to identify opportunities for targeted public infrastructure repairs, including sidewalks, curbs, streets, and related improvements. Through this collaborative effort, we identified several areas in need of maintenance and repair.

#### **Streets**

Prior to the Cherry Festival, and in collaboration with the City's Street Department, we resurfaced portions of three downtown streets in poor condition:

1. Union Street (North of Front to the Bridge) - Repaved southbound lane (315 ft.) and patched east lane.
2. Union Street (South of Front Street) - Repaved northbound lane (100 ft).
3. Cass Street (South of Front Street) - Repaved both northbound lanes (50 ft).

For the remaining projects (alley approach, crosswalk, and sidewalk repairs), DDA staff partnered with the City Engineering Department to prepare bid documents. Bid responses reflected cost estimates ranging from \$243,000 to \$457,500 - well above the \$75,000 budgeted (\$65,000 from TIF-97 and \$10,000 from Old Town TIF) for general infrastructure maintenance in the FY 2025–2026 budget. We are continuing to work with the Engineering Department to determine which project(s) should be prioritized for this coming fiscal year. Remaining projects will be earmarked for FY 2026–2027. I will keep the Board updated as cost evaluations and scheduling progress.



### **Way-Finding Infrastructure**

Last week, Valley Hill Sign installed several repaired components - such as base covers and panels - within our comprehensive wayfinding signage system.



BEFORE



AFTER

### **Downtown Maintenance**

Our partnership with SEEDS for our day-to-day downtown maintenance activities “clean and green” - sidewalk cleaning, weed mitigation and mowing, watering planters – (see example below) continues to move forward. You may have noticed that the SEEDS crew have new vests, with the DDA logo.



BEFORE



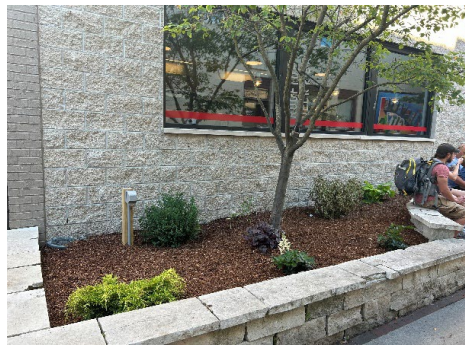
AFTER

### **J-Smith Walkway**

In partnership with Tru-North Landscaping, we have clean-up, mulched and added new plantings to the J-Smith Walkway.



BEFORE



AFTER

### **Hannah Park Overlook**

The Hannah Park Overlook project is now complete!



### **Potential Zoning Changes in Old Town**

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, the City Commission will consider the approval of a rezoning of the 300 and 400 blocks of South Union Street (between Sixth and Eighth Streets) from C-2 to C-4a.

This rezoning effort was originally initiated by the City and the DDA in 2022, but it has resurfaced due to a recent inquiry from a property owner in the district. A full description and analysis of the proposed rezoning was included in last month's meeting packet taken from the Planning Commission's materials.

Two key aspects of the proposed rezoning to note:

1. Flexibility for Vertical Expansion – The change to C-4a zoning would make it easier for existing building owners to add an additional floor to their structures.
2. Height Limit Unchanged – The maximum building height would remain at 45 feet, consistent with the current C-2 zoning.

This rezoning proposal could support modest increases in density and investment in the Old Town district.

### **TIF Implementation Policy & Next Steps**

The City Commission is expected to discuss and possibly approve proposed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Implementation Policy at their July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent process for how future TIF plans will be evaluated and approved by the City Commission, including the steps required to place a proposal on the ballot - as now mandated by the City Charter. The policy is designed to ensure that all TIF proposals are reviewed and approved under the same framework, regardless of the scope or content of the request.



Downtown Development Authority  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
harry@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

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To: DDA Board of Directors

From: Harry Burkholder, Executive Director

Date: July 12, 2025

Subject: Welcome New Team Member

I want to introduce and welcome Carly Nicholas as our new Communications and Special Project Coordinator. Carly is a proud Traverse City native and recent graduate of the University of Michigan, where she was actively involved in student leadership, media, and community outreach. Carly will support initiatives focused on downtown growth, accessibility, events, and community communications and engagement.



303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
lauren@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

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To: Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
From: Lauren Bohac, DDA Deputy Director  
Memo Date: July 14, 2025  
Subject: Arts Commission Update

As the Arts Commission is meeting on July 16, the Commission will be meeting between the time of this memo's writing and the DDA Board meeting. Any updates from Wednesday's meeting will be provided at the Friday Board meeting.

### **Inaugural Mural Festival**

6 artists and 7 mural sites have been selected to participate in the Inaugural Mural Festival. The participants will include:

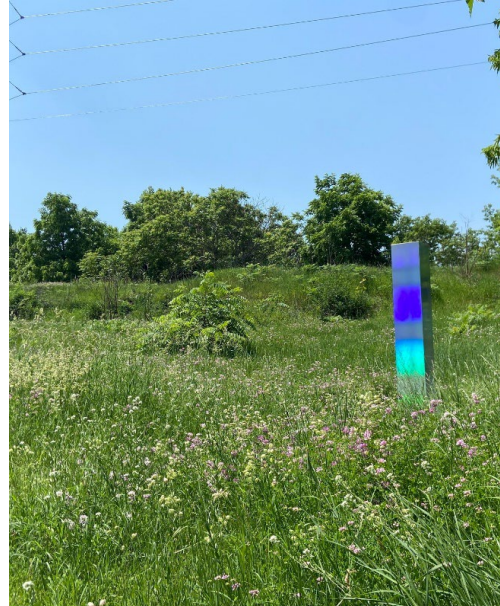
[Nik Burkhart](#) (Maple City) at Oryana  
[Jamie John](#) (Traverse City) at The Filling Station  
[Dania Grevengoed](#) (Grand Rapids) at Bay Family Vision and EB2  
[Son Visual](#) (Grand Rapids) at Silver Spruce Brewing  
[Drift Mural Co.](#) (Ottawa, Ontario) at The Box  
[Daisuke Okamoto](#) (Los Angeles) at The Copy Shop

The Arts Commission's focus for the next month is finalizing programming details for the festival. Tentative plans include a panel discussion with the muralists, a walking tour of the completed murals, and family programming partnered with TADL.

The Commission intends to roll out the festival's communication and advertising this month.

### **Rotating Art Exhibit**

Steve and Dorota Coy installed their piece "Four Portals" over the first week of July. Four Portals can be viewed on the Boardman Lake Loop Trail near Oryana. (See photos)



### **TART Bayfront Expansion Artistic Bench**

As part of the expansion of the TART Bayfront Trail, the Arts Commission sought an artist to fabricate an “artistic bench” on the newly expanded trail. The initial artist for the project fell through, and the Commission was not able to find another artist before the completion of the trail expansion.

The Commission has since revisited this project and have selected a bench from artist Scott Klinker’s “Theory” line to be installed at Sunset Park as originally proposed. The Arts Commission is now working with the City Parks and Recreation Department on the logistics of installing this unique piece.





**Downtown Development Authority**  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
sara@downtowntc.com  
231-922-2050

## Memorandum

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To: Harry Burkholder, DDA Executive Director  
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors

From: Sara Klebba, DDA Director of Events & Engagement

Date: July 15, 2025

Subject: DTCA Director of Events & Engagement Update

### **DTCA Events Report**

#### **Toast to Downtown (June 5, 5-8pm, COH)**

- Survey results (27 respondents)
  - 23 of 27 respondents rated the event either a 4 or 5 out of 5 for 4.22/5, namely for the casual and flexible format, social energy, interactive games, and food/drinks
  - Areas for improvement centered mostly on the Showdown's voting system and punch cards
  - 4 out of 5 preferred the interactive mixer over the traditional sit-down dinner
  - Perceived value: 74% of respondents believe events like this remain valuable to the downtown community. 4 out of 5 said they'd "absolutely" attend again
- Considerations
  - Continued experimentation with format is welcomed — but the mixer-style experience is on the right track.
  - Consider moving the event to a month, day, and time when all staff are available for a drop in. Perhaps a Toast & BBQ hybrid at Rotary Square with casual and fun food and activities, music, and networking

#### **Art Fair Series**

- **Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair:** Sat, June 14. (Sponsored by WellNow and MSUFCU.)  
Survey results (24 respondents):
  - High satisfaction with overall experience: 8.67 out of 10, 100% satisfaction with event organization and staff/volunteer service and communications
  - Sales satisfaction: 75% very or somewhat satisfied with sales; 13% somewhat dissatisfied, 4% (1 person) very dissatisfied

- Most important to vendors: Clear load-in/-out process (we performed 88% excellent/4%good), Attendee traffic (we performed 71% excellent/good, 13% below avg/poor)
- **NCF Arts & Crafts Fair:** Sun, June 29, Received a lot of unsolicited positive feedback around experience, communications/organization, and volunteers – even after a short rain/windstorm and massive heat and humidity. Official survey responses (58 replies)
  - Satisfaction: 7.7 overall experience. 98% satisfaction with event organization, 81% very satisfied/12% somewhat satisfied with staff and volunteer service & communications. 41% very satisfied/19% somewhat satisfied with sales (10% very dissatisfied).
  - Most important to vendors: Attendee traffic (we performed 74% excellent/good), Clear load-in/-out process (we performed 83% excellent/good), Booth layout/spacing (we performed 83% excellent/good)
- **Downtown Art Fair:** Sat & Sun, Sept 13-14; 10a-6p, 10a-4p
  - Working on more outreach for vendors. Have space for about 8-10 more fine artists and makers.
  - Working with Crooked Tree Arts Center to secure artist(s), theme, materials, process for community mural.
  - Dan Stiebel to provide location for mural on his building, adjacent to Hardy Deck on Front St.

#### **Street Sale/FNL**

- Finalizing Aug 1 Street Sale members
- TCFD to answer questions at informal meeting 7.10.25 at Fire Stn 1 – for new participants or those with concerns.
- FNL web page live will all current entertainment, NPOs, and F&B vendors. Highlights: On August 1, local supergroup Little Dipper brings the best of '90s country with honky-tonk swagger so you can strap on your line dancin' shoes with instructors from Up North Line Dancing. We'll also feature street performances, comedy, music Bingo, and plenty of activities for kids. On August 8, prepare for the All-American Dance Party, offering family-friendly dance music spanning all genres, from '60s rock and Motown to country, pop, and pap, played in fun two-to-three song segments. More dancing to the Timebombs and Fresh Coast, a vinyl DJ – plus OTP performs songs from *The Prince of Egypt*.

#### **New DTCA Board Members**

- Three new members were welcomed to the DTCA board at the Toast to Downtown. Terms are July 2025–June 2028:
  - Katie Asher: Owner, slip. vintage
  - Andre Bushell: Owner, Bushell's Kitchen + Cocktails
  - Hunter Eagle: Manager, Mammoth Distilling
- We say goodbye to two of our valuable board members:
  - Dawn Gildersleeve, Cherry Republic (Board President)
  - Libby Hogan, Lilies of the Alley (Board Treasurer)
- The new executive members will be nominated and elected at the July 10 DTCA board meeting.