



CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY MASTER PLAN

2009



A Community of Neighborhoods and the Relationships They Foster

July 15, 2009

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE	1
REMEMBERING THE PAST	1
BALANCING THE PAST AND PRESENT	
Land Use and Intensity	2
ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE	
TC Neighborhoods	3
VISION AND PRINCIPLES	5
GOALS	6
INTERPRETING THIS PLAN	7
TC NEIGHBORHOODS	8
TC-1 Conservation Neighborhood	8
TC-2 Conventional Neighborhood	10
TC-3 Traditional Neighborhood	12
TC-4 Corridor Neighborhood	14
TC-5 Downtown Neighborhood	16
TC-C Campus Neighborhood	18
PLAN ELEMENTS	19
Capital Improvement Element	20
Economic Element	21
Historic Resource Element	22
Natural Resource Element	23
Park and Recreation Element	24
Public Utilities Element	25
Transportation Element	26
Urban Design Element	27
Zoning Element	28
Future Land Use/Zoning Plan	29
Neighborhood Map	30
Acknowledgements	31
Resource Documents	31
Glossary	32

Preamble

This Master Plan for Traverse City emerges from a simple but essential idea: that our shared values will form the future of the community. The Master Plan articulates a process by which those shared values can frame each new issue and guide each new decision. It is not meant to preside over or confine community members but to facilitate the difficult decisions that inevitably come with growth. The Plan should be seen as a process: a guide for creating inclusive responses and a tool for managing the evolution of our neighborhoods one decision at a time.

No plan can protect a culture unless there is a shared commitment to a preferred future, and no plan can speak for an entire community. But a plan can enact the core values that live beneath any surface differences. It can put a community's shared values to work for the community. It can remind individual citizens that they are responsible for the future and have a voice in creating it. Without such a plan, citizens and taxpayers can become victim to outside forces and inside divisiveness.

Because we cherish Traverse City and all that it has been, we hope the Plan will help us to protect what is unique and adopt what is best. We hope the Plan evokes within all decision-makers their better voices, their best reasoning, and their soundest judgment.

Remembering the Past

Traverse City owes much to those who have come before. Early in the city's development, great sailing ships provided the connections to transform the region into a bustling center of commerce. The city took form, with a grand downtown, tree lined streets, and electric lights. Access to the larger world was provided by ship, and later rail and road. Schools, merchant shops, churches, and city government served growing neighborhoods. Ready employment, rich natural resources and efficient transportation assured steady growth and opportunity.

Our traditional neighborhoods were designed to foster interaction among neighbors whose needs were met by closely spaced homes, accessible front porches, continuous sidewalks, neighborhood parks, schools, and small businesses. After World War II, automobile ownership represented the future and historic neighborhood designs were set aside as quaint and old-fashioned. Cars freed us to range further and more quickly than ever before. Because we no longer needed to live close to work and schools, we could develop our neighborhoods away from the city center. Alleys were no longer needed as gas and electricity replaced the need for coal delivery. Garages replaced porches as architectural focal points and modern suburban style neighborhoods were born.

These and other historic patterns formed the neighborhoods that define our community today. Which of these historic patterns do we wish to protect and encourage for the future? Which should we replace and with what? How should we, as neighbors and neighborhoods, direct our future? How shall we protect each neighborhood's sense of place and anticipate the nuisances that might emerge from these choices? How do we balance the needs of the neighborhoods with the intensity levels they create?

Balancing the Past and Present: Land Use and Intensity

Historically, planners have worked to separate incompatible uses. For instance, industrial parks were formed to consolidate and isolate large-scale activities that generated noise, dirt, and heavy vehicle traffic, while shopping plazas convened high-intensity consumption away from residential areas. In these instances, the model of separating uses and users has served well. But in other instances, the model has created some new problems: people are increasingly separate from basic amenities, from everyday services, from community goods; and people must drive for even the most basic needs. In short, when applied on a large scale, the use model may oppose some of the community's shared values.

A close inspection of Traverse City's neighborhoods reveals an important insight about the nature of our growth: Problems arise not with an activity itself but with the intensity of the activity. For example, a small local market on the periphery of a residential neighborhood may resonate appropriately with the residents' needs. However, a large corporate retail store adjacent to a residential neighborhood would undermine intimacy and cut against shared values. The old use model may not account for or protect against these possibilities.

For these reasons, the Plan offers a new criterion—a tool for decision-making based on intensity. Rather than dictate use, the Plan focuses on the level of intensity desired for and within each neighborhood. It places high priority on services developed in scale and proportion with each neighborhood. Intensity, then, is synonymous with proportion and scale.

We realize that neighborhoods are best equipped to live in harmony with one another when the needs of one neighborhood are balanced against the needs of all neighborhoods. When balance and proportion are in harmony, residents have a sense of place borne of a sense of scale. That scale developed across all neighborhoods creates a sense of trust and community.

Envisioning Our Future: TC Neighborhoods

This Master Plan defines “neighborhood” as more than a collection of buildings. The definition expands to embrace collections of complementary and compatible activities central to the well being of our citizens. This definition recognizes the culture that has developed in each neighborhood and the benefits of embracing the layers of life that will emerge from each culture. It provides for a full range of evolving activities, services, and lifestyles while honoring the traditions that have delivered us to this time and place.

Traverse City neighborhoods have followed a traditional pattern: Rural lands stood at the town’s edge. Larger “estate lots” lined the neighborhood edges. The estate lots defined the edge of a town and intrinsically connected to the neighborhood. The bulk of the neighborhoods were single-family lots ranging from thirty to two hundred feet in width. The lots narrowed closer to the center of the community. The block structure became more rigid at the center and more fluid away from the center. The highest density areas were located near the center.

This Plan supports and honors that geography. In moving forward, it encourages a social (people-oriented) perspective—one that defines neighborhoods according to the nature and intensity of human activity within a given area.

Each neighborhood nurtures a degree of human activity, which can be measured according to four variables (known as H.A.M.E. standards):

Hours: the hours of operation of an activity within a neighborhood.

Auto: all motorized and non-motorized traffic within a neighborhood including but not limited to automobiles, trucks, buses, pedestrians, and bicycles.

Mass: the intensity of the buildings or structures within a neighborhood as defined by area, land coverage, height, distance to property lines, access to light, or conversely, effects of shadow.

Emissions: by-products of activities that leave the property or neighborhood within which it is created, including, but not limited to, noise, dust, odors, smoke, and light. Each neighborhood has an expected background level of emissions related to those characteristics found to be a normal part of an existence within that neighborhood’s context.

The Plan uses these variables as practical and quantifiable standards of intensity. The standards will be used for decision-making—for protecting and nurturing the unique culture of each neighborhood and for maintaining transition zones between neighborhoods. With these standards, decision-makers are not limited to geographic space as a sole criterion; they can also factor in the way people live within a particular space—what kinds of activities they want to encourage or limit. By focusing on the standards within a particular neighborhood type, decision-makers can become more receptive to uses that promote other goals within our neighborhoods (small neighborhood services that promote walkability, for example).

The Plan also acknowledges that intensity changes within each neighborhood—that intensity is naturally but not evenly distributed. The center or core of the neighborhood tends to be the most pure to the neighborhood type. The Plan acknowledges this distribution and allows for the transition from one neighborhood type to another. Higher intensities will be allowed at the periphery of residential neighborhoods than what is allowed in their interior. Lower intensities will be encouraged at the periphery of commercial neighborhoods than what is allowed at their interior. This protects residential neighborhoods by creating a transition zone between high-intensity commercial activity and low-intensity domestic life.

This Plan confronts the reality that each neighborhood shares a boundary with several others—with other kinds and degrees of activity. No neighborhood is an island. Therefore, a practical, clear-headed discussion of those boundaries is crucial to the overall health of the community. That discussion must transcend any one neighborhood but include them all.

To begin the discussion, this Plan defines neighborhoods in ascending order of intensity (from least to most). The least intense neighborhood, TC-1 Conservation, has low levels of noise and a low acceptance of formal urban structures while the most intense, TC-5 Downtown, has high levels of noise and formal urban structures. If the area is residential, then the center has the least intensity in terms of H.A.M.E. for that neighborhood type. If the area is commercial, then the center has the most intensity for the neighborhood type. The boundary areas become blended where similar neighborhood types meet, for example: where TC-2 Conventional meets TC-3 Traditional or where TC-4 Corridor meets TC-5 Downtown. These areas may have traits of each neighborhood type.

The boundaries between residential neighborhood types and commercial neighborhood types are hard: between TC-2 Conventional and TC-4 Corridor or between TC-3 Traditional and TC-5 Downtown. The commercial neighborhoods at the boundaries are expected to mitigate their intensity level to one that is no higher than the highest accepted intensity level of the adjoining residential neighborhood.

Vision and Principles

The Master Plan is a collective vision of the community's future. Our aim is to retain and maintain the intimacy and spirit shaped by those who have come before us and sculpted the culture of our spaces. We endorse what we are, yet recognize we are evolving. Our vision and the principles that guide it are based on the planning traditions that have shaped this place we care so much about.

Vision Statement

Traverse City is a regional center comprised of connected and related neighborhoods - residential, business, public, recreational and mixed. This plan promotes and protects the vitality, diversity and improvement of our neighborhoods.

Core Principles

Seven core principles guide our vision. These principles guide land use decisions, leading us to ask the right questions in our dialog with citizens about their ideas and concerns.

- 1** *The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions.*
- 2** *Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future.*
- 3** *Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve.*
- 4** *Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected.*
- 5** *Services should be conveniently located.*
- 6** *Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health.*
- 7** *Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region.*

Goals

These goals presume intentional action toward the accomplishment of our vision to:

- 1** *Enforce compatible intensities within, among and between neighborhoods.*
- 2** *Seamlessly link our neighborhoods while allowing each neighborhood's unique character and culture to evolve.*
- 3** *Become pedestrian friendly and encourage more, energy efficient, environmentally friendly transportation choices.*
- 4** *Be innovative and inventive in developing our neighborhoods through consensus.*
- 5** *Protect, conserve and preserve the natural and historic resources of our region.*
- 6** *Stabilize neighborhood economies and economic interests.*
- 7** *Locate services near users to protect the community's health, safety and welfare.*
- 8** *Expand residential choices and multi-generational recreational opportunities.*
- 9** *Open regional dialog and develop regional partnerships.*

Interpreting This Plan

This Plan is a conceptual document. It preserves our community's core values and extends them as guiding principles in building a compatible future. It manages change and focuses priorities for our central role in the region. The Master Plan draws its strengths from a collective vision of our community and support for seven Core Principles to guide our actions and drive interpretation of the Plan. These principles are based on the belief that well managed cities focus on the fundamental barrier to positive change-intensity rather than land use. For it is the intensity of a use, not the use itself, which is of importance. Therefore, focusing on the intensity allows decision-makers more flexibility and nuance when addressing the real challenges ahead.

When reviewing this document, one should keep in mind that the Master Plan serves as the translator between the cherished priorities of the neighborhoods and the regulations that express those priorities. As such, the Plan is an adaptive document; one not fixed on any particular future. Its role is to:

- **Address needs and preferences for future growth.**
- **Link evolving community and neighborhood intentions proactively.**
- **Provide an emphasis for positively influencing the region.**

The Master Plan encourages action in harmony with community values. When consistently applied, it provides the legal basis for protecting the community, which is achieved by developing the Master Plan in concert with those values as expressed in the Plan's Vision and Core Principles statements and linking them to specific policies, implementation documents, and regulations. In some instances the goals, policies, and text will remain as guidelines and will not be translated into law. This premise is fundamental to adapting to the challenges of a prosperous future while protecting the values of our community.

TC-1 NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-1 **Conservation** Neighborhood represents our least intensely developed neighborhoods. The focus is on conservation and protection of natural resources. The level of intensity generated within the confines of each property in this neighborhood type tends to be low.



Scenic Overlooks



Wildlife Habitat

Standards established for governing intensity typical of TC-1 neighborhoods would include measures enforcing:

Hours

Typically daylight use. Occasional or incidental night use.
Natural lighting typical.

Auto

Pedestrian oriented. Limited, informal automobile parking areas.

Mass

Buildings typically small and informal and not the primary focus of the land use.

Emissions

Low emissions, strictly limited in scope, time, and frequency.



Core Principles

The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions. No or low-level lighting, quiet forms of recreation, restricted hours of operation.

Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future. Minimal support services. Areas enhance quality of life of all residents which lends itself to economic stability.

Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve. As density of other neighborhood types increase the preservation of natural areas increases in value. Natural areas can reduce infrastructure costs by reducing flooding and sequestering pollutants.

Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected. Conservation of natural features, preservation of fragile environments, protection of local heritage and cultural artifacts.

Services should be conveniently located. Variety of recreation opportunities with community access.

Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health. Walking, biking, skiing and other low impact choices with access to an interconnected network of trails. Informal trail head parking.

Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region. Natural and recreational areas are critical to the well being of the community.



Natural Landscapes



Boardwalks



TC-2 NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-2 *Conventional* Neighborhood is the least formally developed of the two types of residential neighborhoods. The focus is on single family residential. Multiple family is minimally interspersed and low in density. The level of intensity generated within the confines of each property in this class of neighborhood tends to be the lowest of residential uses.



Informal Landscapes



Spacious and Manicured Lawns

Standards established for governing intensity typical of TC-2 neighborhoods would include measures enforcing:

Hours

Typically night time sleeping and daytime working with few odd hours.

Auto

Auto accessible. Traffic moderated through street design. Informal access for pedestrians or non-motorized vehicles (trails, paths). Public transportation access on the perimeters.

Mass

Residential in scale. Low to moderate building mass.

Emissions

Moderate daytime emissions and low night or prolonged emissions.



Core Principles



The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions. Low intensity of residential areas, low level lighting primarily for safety. Short duration or low levels of noise and other emissions.

Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future. Predominantly single family detached dwellings with some lower density, multiple family dwellings at perimeters of the neighborhood.

Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve. Higher intensity neighborhoods must step down intensity when at the borders of this neighborhood type.

Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected. Neighborhood parks, recreation and civic spaces with little formal infrastructure. Naturalistic planting pattern, informal development pattern and informal street edges.

Services should be conveniently located. Home occupations, schools and places of worship.

Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health. Least formal connectivity, roads may follow contours. Access to an interconnected network of trails. Public transportation limited to perimeter of neighborhood.

Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region. Lower intensity residential neighborhoods stabilize and strengthen Corridor and Downtown Neighborhoods.



Attached Garages



Informal Street Edges

TC-3 NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-3 *Traditional* Neighborhood is the most formally developed of the two types of residential neighborhoods. The focus is on historic patterns. The level of intensity generated within the confines of each property in this class of neighborhood tends to be closely spaced single family residences.



Walkability



Neighborhood Parks

Standards established for governing intensity typical of TC-3 neighborhoods would include measures enforcing:

Hours

Typically night time sleeping and daytime working with few odd hours.

Auto

Auto accessible with historic street grid. More formal designated transportation access (sidewalks, bike lanes, alleys). Accessible public transportation. Respectful use accomplished through design, education and enforcement.

Mass

Historic patterns with a residential scale. A range of building types and masses, with closely spaced buildings.

Emissions

Typical urban residential emissions levels.



Core Principles

The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions. Moderate intensity residential areas.

Moderate noise and other emissions. Moderate levels of street and pedestrian lighting.

Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future. Single family detached dwellings,

moderate density with some multi-family dwellings, and home occupations.

Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve. Higher intensity neighborhoods must step down

intensity when at the borders of this neighborhood type.

Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected. Neighborhood parks, recreation facilities and civic

spaces with more formal infrastructure compared to the Conventional (TC-2) neighborhoods.

Services should be conveniently located. Neighborhood level services, schools, parks and places of worship.

Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health. Formal interconnected street pattern

with sidewalks and alleys. Typical Streets are curbed and tree lined. Public transportation is easily accessed.

Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region. Healthy residential neighborhoods stabilize and

strengthen Corridor and Downtown Neighborhoods.



Front Porches



Neighborhood Businesses



TC-4 NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-4 *Corridor* Neighborhood is the least formally developed of the two types of commercial neighborhoods. The focus is on commercial innovation. The overall level of intensity generated within the confines of each district in this class of neighborhood tends to be the lower of commercial uses.



Shopping Centers

Standards established for governing intensity typical of TC-4 neighborhoods would include measures enforcing:

Hours

Wide range of hours allowed as typical of overall higher activity levels. Residential uses adapted to appropriate adjacent commercial users.

Auto

Geared toward motorized transportation. Should adapt well to multiple, interconnected transit systems. High level of transit services. Bike lanes incorporated with street markings along major streets.

Mass

Wide range of building masses, placement and form.

Emissions

Moderate to high emissions. Design and architectural solutions utilized to minimize effect on adjacent neighborhoods. Higher emissions contained within the neighborhood.



Pedestrian Connections



Core Principles

The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions. Commercially and industrially focused with higher residential intensities, usually of commercial scale. Noise, traffic and lighting decrease where this neighborhood joins Conventional or Traditional neighborhoods.

Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future. Commercial in scale and intensity with a wide range of commercial ventures allowed. Twenty-four hour operations are possible. Housing is also of commercial scale, apartments sometimes are built on upper floors of commercial buildings.

Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve. This neighborhood has a great deal of variety and flexibility in terms of design and activity.

Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected. Development is mitigated by using low impact designs, shared parking and driveways.

Services should be conveniently located. Regional and neighborhood services are near employment centers and dwellings.

Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health. High volume transit corridors efficiently move goods and people. Access to private transportation is well coordinated with public transportation and a network of sidewalks and trails.

Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region. Movement of goods and people are lifelines to the community and provide a special role in terms providing areas of concentrated employment and large commercial ventures.



On-site Parking



Bike Lanes



TC-5 NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-5 *Downtown* Neighborhood is the most formally and intensely developed of the two types of commercial neighborhoods. The focus is on high intensity, regional, commercial activity. The overall level of intensity generated within the confines of each district in this class of neighborhood tends to be the highest of commercial uses.



Public Markets



Mixed Use Buildings

Standards established for governing intensity typical of TC-5 neighborhoods would include measures enforcing:

Hours

Day and night activities. Appropriate for all hours of business, especially when accommodating or supporting adjacent land uses.

Auto

Motorized vehicle restrictions in terms of traffic speed, parking costs and access. Pedestrian focused, centralized parking facilities. High level public transit service.

Mass

Most dense. Greatest building mass within the city with appropriate balance and scale. Buildings typically placed close to street or civic spaces to provide a sense of enclosure to the public realm.

Emissions

High emission levels carefully managed with design and architectural solutions utilized to minimize effect on adjacent neighborhoods.



Core Principles

The intensity of any land use should be the focus of land use decisions. Highest intensity of the five neighborhood types.

Late night activities and associated emissions. Well lit.

Social, economic and residential diversity and stability are key to our future. Regional hub for commercial and governmental activities.

High intensity, 24-hour operations, visitor and resident resources. Housing of commercial scale, typically located on upper floors.

Our neighborhoods need to be preserved and protected as they evolve. Maintain or enhance the character of downtown with new development.

Maintain or enhance the character of downtown with new development.

Natural and historic resources are limited and need to be protected. Cultural center, formal infrastructure and civic spaces.

Preserve buildings and structures within designated historic districts. Integrate Boardman River and Grand Traverse Bay into the fabric of the neighborhood.

Services should be conveniently located. Regional public service hub. Regional entertainment and service center.

A variety of uses in close proximity to each other with good access to the residentially focused neighborhoods.

Transportation choices are important to our vitality and environmental health. Access to well established sidewalk network and trail system. High level of transit services.

Access to high density parking strategically located within the neighborhood.

Maintaining a healthy and vibrant City is important to the region. Downtown is a key marketing feature for Northwest Lower Michigan and a regional gathering place for public events and celebrations.

Downtown is a key marketing feature for Northwest Lower Michigan and a regional gathering place for public events and celebrations.



Public Transportation



Community Events



TC-C NEIGHBORHOOD

The TC-C *Campus* Neighborhood is for those campuses that are unique within the community. The focus tends to be inward and specific to the campus. These neighborhoods will have individualized special plans approved by the Planning Commission. At the boundaries of the campus the level of intensity can not exceed the level of intensity of the adjoining neighborhoods.

Campus Areas



Munson Medical Center

Munson Medical Center

Northwestern Michigan College

Traverse City Cherry Capital Airport

Traverse City's Waterfront



Cherry Capital Airport

Oakwood Cemetery

Governmental Center

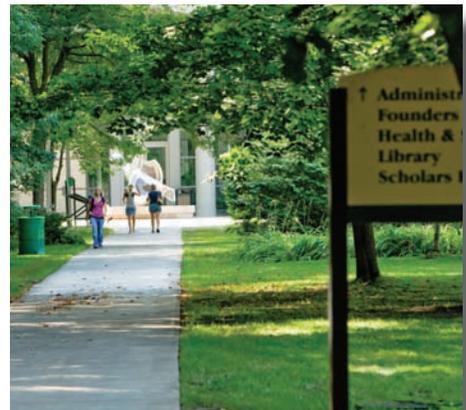
Grand Traverse Commons

Grand Traverse Civic Center

Airport and Traverse Field Industrial Parks



Grand Traverse Commons



Northwestern Michigan College

Plan Elements

The Master Plan expresses the vision of our community and provides the fundamental basis by which planning decisions are made. It is supported by a number of Plan Elements that provide the framework for developing more detailed plans.

Plan Elements include but are not limited to:

Capital Improvement Element

Economic Element

Historic Resource Element

Natural Resource Element

Parks and Recreation Element

Public Utilities Element

Transportation Element

Urban Design Element

Zoning Element

Capital Improvement Element

Purpose

The Capital Improvement Element provides an investment strategy for funding public infrastructure and facility improvements for the community.

*Prepared by: City Administration
Adopted by: Planning Commission
and City Commission.*

Introduction

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a multi-year schedule for capital expenditures that includes costs, priorities, and identified funding for the next six years. Each Master Plan Element has capital improvement implications and each neighborhood type will have varying requirements for capital improvements. Priorities are identified and evaluated according to the community goals and core principals of the Master Plan. With the exception of federal or state mandates, only capital improvement projects that are consistent with the Master Plan or any of its primary elements should be included in the CIP.

Funding levels depend upon numerous economic factors, including funding availability, market forces, and the City's bond rating. The CIP needs to be updated on an annual basis as opportunities and budgets change.

Goals

- 1** Prioritize projects that most directly benefit public health and safety, the local economy, and the local government.
- 2** Invest in energy efficient design and construction when cost-effective over the life of the improvement.
- 3** Identify funding sources for the construction and life-cycle maintenance of public infrastructure and facilities.
- 4** Pursue grants and other outside funding opportunities for appropriate public projects.
- 5** Develop regional partnerships to preserve and fund regional assets.
- 6** Evaluate the distribution of spending throughout the community.

Economic Element

Purpose

The purpose of the Economic Element is to direct the City's strategy for business and institutional investment in the region. The focus of that support is to encourage long-term tax stabilization and support the community's growing infrastructure needs.

Prepared by: City Commission

Recommended by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission

Introduction

Traverse City government plays an integral role in coordinating local and regional efforts to build a strong, resilient economy. This element recognizes the importance of growing our economy in a manner that balances the investment priorities of our citizens, our neighborhoods, and the environment.

Goals

- 1** Enhance the City's role in coordinating the regional economy, specifically, working with local and regional institutions to represent and support the needs of Traverse City's citizens.
- 2** Facilitate regulatory functions to insure proportional and appropriate processes to safeguard the community's economic stability and success.
- 3** Develop a system of prioritization that supports economic goals of other elements within the City's Master Plan.
- 4** Encourage development that protects and promotes the character of distinctive neighborhoods.
- 5** After financial and economic analysis, prioritize capital improvement and private development projects that require public funding.

Historic Resource Element

Purpose

To identify buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes and works of public art with historic value and to develop preservation strategies.

Prepared by: Historic Districts Commission

Adopted by: Historic Districts Commission

Introduction

The creative preservation of historic resources in Traverse City has a long history of public interest and support as evidenced by the formal designation of the Central and Boardman neighborhoods as National Historic Neighborhoods, the designation and active maintenance of the downtown historic district and the preservation of the Grand Traverse Commons.

The first marker for individual buildings having historic significance is a minimum age of 50 years. Beyond age, factors can include: unique design or materials; historically representative style, historically significant location, historically significant origin, and other characteristics important to Traverse City as deemed by the Historic Districts Commission.

The historic preservation community has also realized that landscapes can be historically significant for their design, their effect on public and/or private life, their representation of a significant style or pattern of development, their designer, their location as the site of historically significant acts or activities, or other factors of importance to the community.

Art work too, is recognized by the public as being historically significant. For the purposes of the inventory, this document is limited to works of public art (statues, fountains, etc.).

Goals

- 1** To locate and identify public and private properties within the City of Traverse City which are deserving of formal historic designation.
- 2** To create and maintain a formal inventory of historic resources.
- 3** To develop strategies for preserving the designated resources.

Natural Resource Element

Purpose

The Natural Resource Element provides the basis for developing a natural resource protection plan.

Prepared by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission

Introduction

The Natural Resource Plan consists of a natural features inventory and a strategy to conserve these features. Conserving the community's natural features helps to minimize the loss of life and property and contributes to the desirability of Traverse City. The standards in this plan provide the framework for a set of ordinances aimed to protect those natural features deemed important to Traverse City.

Goals

- 1** Encourage environmentally sensitive areas to be used as natural preserves or for passive recreation, and to limited development in these areas.
- 2** Require new buildings to be set back from the shoreline using vegetative buffers where possible, rather than engineered walls and stone revetments per established guidelines.
- 3** Protect surface waters, ground water, wetlands and shoreline zones.
- 4** Require flood plain capacity lost due to development be replaced with storage capacity elsewhere.
- 5** Encourage hillside development to conform to the natural topography and help to prevent erosion.
- 6** Encourage flexible standards that will aid in conserving woodlands and mature trees.
- 7** Require outdoor lighting to be shielded to minimize light emissions onto neighboring properties, public rights-of-way, and the night sky.

Parks and Recreation Element

Purpose

The Parks and Recreation Element provides a framework for the recreation planning and development efforts over a five-year period. The plan provides guidance on issues such as acquisition of land, recreation facilities, maintenance, neighborhood parks, and natural areas. The revised and updated plan is intended to meet the State of Michigan's standards for community recreation grant eligibility.

*Prepared by: Parks and Recreation Commission
Adopted by: City Commission*

Introduction

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan first phase consists of background studies, evaluation, and plan development. The second phase includes evaluation and analysis of the gathered data including input to determine recreation facilities and program deficiencies and needs.

Goals

- 1** Design and protect the bay primarily as an open space and recreational resource for residents and tourists.
- 2** Develop the Boardman Lake and River as natural resources promoting recreational activities.
- 3** Continue a strong, flexible recreational program affording a variety of recreational activities and experiences for a wide range of people.
- 4** Incorporate the need for safe, attractive pedestrian access with private or public development while maintaining and developing additional pedestrian linkages.
- 5** Encourage cooperative governmental relationships to establish an adequate and equitable method for financing development, operation, and maintenance of recreation facilities and programs.
- 6** Concentrate on upgrading and maintaining existing parks and facilities before considering new facility development.
- 7** Develop new recreational facilities when supported by the residents, especially in park deficient areas and along waterfronts.
- 8** Maximize the use of existing facilities.
- 9** Work with schools to make recreation facilities and programs part of the education system.

Public Utilities Element

Purpose

The Public Utilities Element encompasses all strategic components for serving the community with water, sewer, and electrical services.

Prepared by: City Administration

Recommended by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission.

Introduction

The continued health, safety, welfare, and growth of the community depend on reliable utility resources. The Public Utilities Element combines the service plans of the city's water, sanitary sewer, storm drains, and electrical services.

Goals

- 1** Develop and support plans for the community to conserve water, sewer and electricity resources.
- 2** Provide service improvements/upgrades to support areas of planned growth and increased density.
- 3** Reduce negative impact of utility services on neighborhoods by coordinating construction and repair projects across all Master Plan Elements.
- 4** Provide schedules for implementing improved service and efficiency-producing technologies, including commercial and residential service undergrounding.

Transportation Element

Introduction

The purpose of the Transportation Element is to establish policies and goals guiding public transportation system choices.

Choices include public transit, non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian movement, and motorized vehicular access and distribution.

Prepared by: City Administration

Recommended by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission

Introduction

The Transportation Element coordinates efforts to expand choices among all modes of public conveyance in a balanced transportation system. The City supports more compact, mixed-use development patterns in urban residential and commercial neighborhood types. A major component of these policies will be expanding accessibility options.

Goals

- 1** Encourage compact development patterns, which will curtail vehicle traffic and shorten trips.
- 2** Make businesses, services, and amenities more accessible through safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive transportation.
- 3** Provide linkages between regional and local transportation options by coordinating related capital investments with regional and local providers.
- 4** Require all Campus Neighborhood Master Plans and the Downtown Development Authority to develop and implement transportation management plans that encourage transportation choices, such as transit, walking, and carpooling.

Urban Design Element

Purpose

The purpose of the Urban Design Element is to provide a framework for creating urban design standards for the community. The principle purpose of these standards is not to indicate dimensions or quantity of things, but rather to convey a sense of the preferred quality. It is one means the community can encourage development that strengthens its quality and character. These standards fill the gap between broad planning policies found in the Master Plan and the inflexible exactitude of zoning requirements.

Prepared by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission

Introduction

Urban Design Standards need not be lengthy and complicated. To be effective, the standards need to be communicated with clear terms and illustrated with diagrams, simple charts, and other graphics. The standards should be descriptive and suggestive, rather than prescriptive or proscriptive.

The Urban Design Plan will focus on the fundamentals such as: overall site design, building orientation, public spaces, and landscaping. Each of these four subjects has within it a number of issues that can be addressed through specific guidelines. Some of these guidelines are applicable community-wide while others are only relevant to a given neighborhood type or street.

Goals

- 1** Foster new development that will improve the public realm.
- 2** Integrate new development that will emphasize, retain or enhance the City's identity.
- 3** Protect and enhance views to and from established landmarks, hills and the bay front.
- 4** Require new development that reinforces the character of distinctive neighborhoods.
- 5** Foster design standards that advance community safety, accessibility, and outdoor comfort.
- 6** Support new development that draws upon the past and allows for interpretation, creativity and innovation.

Zoning Element

Purpose

Regulate property use, relationship to adjacent property and relationship to the city as a whole for the health, safety and welfare of the community. The Zoning Ordinance translates the concepts of the Master Plan into specific regulations

Prepared by: Planning Commission

Adopted by: City Commission

Introduction

The City's current zoning code has been continuously updated since its original adoption in 1999.

The Master Plan anticipates that there may be more than one zoning category within the various neighborhood types.

The Zoning Ordinance will be updated based on the needs of the City and the need to bring the ordinance into closer conformance with the Master Plan. Updates will follow a public process, as required by law.

Goals

- 1** The Zoning Ordinance requires consideration of the variables in intensity when in evaluating future zoning and map amendments.
- 2** Require commercial zones adjacent to residential zones and neighborhoods to match the residential intensity and scale as described in the Master Plan.
- 3** Ensure that existing commercial zones within residential neighborhoods are residential in scale and intensity.
- 4** Maintain and improve the public, open process for evaluating proposed changes in the zoning ordinance.
- 5** Make maximum use of current technologies to incorporate information into the Zoning Map.

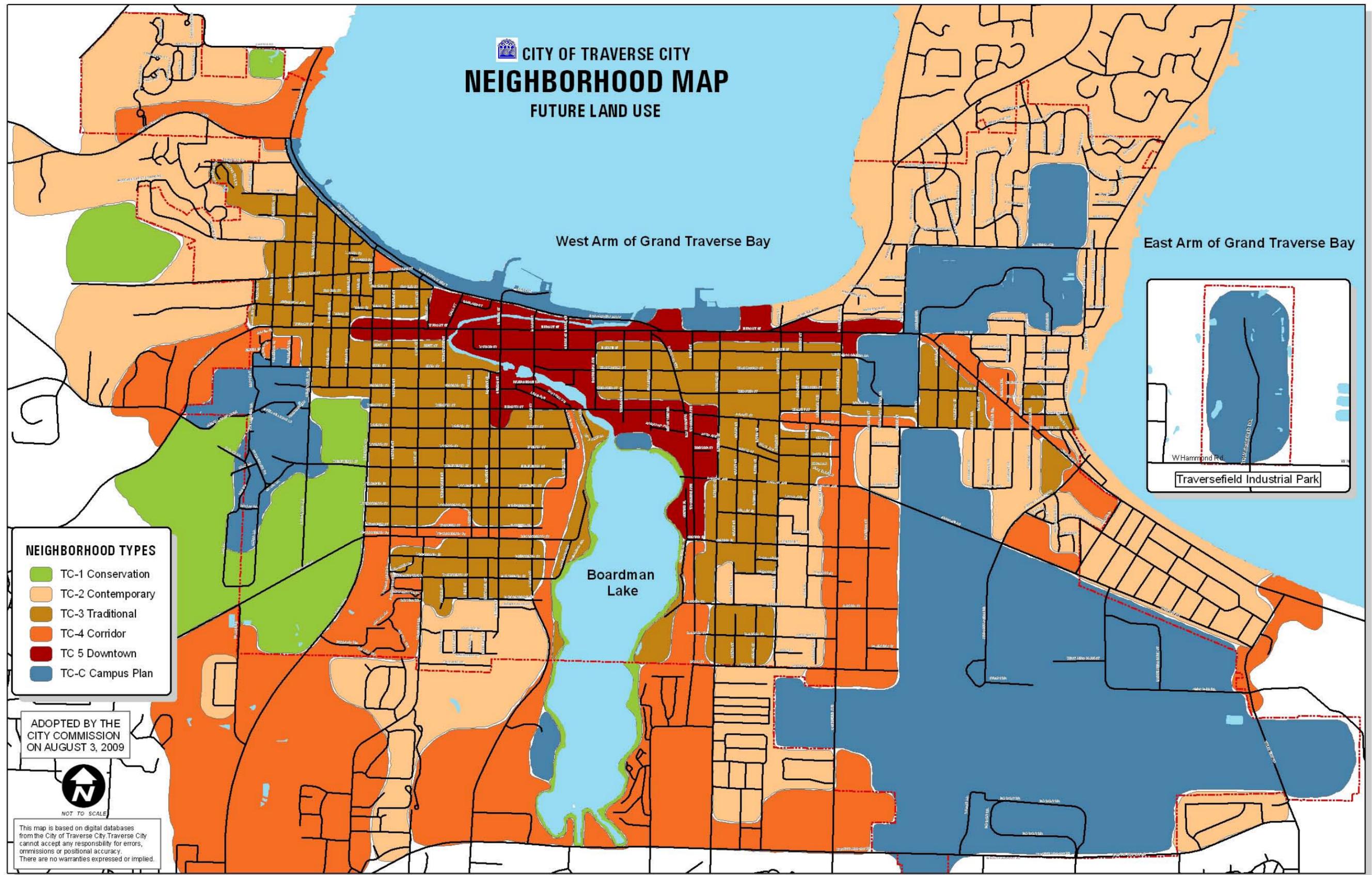
Future Land Use/Zoning Plan

Future Land Use/Zoning Plan relationship to the existing Zoning Map Districts:

Each neighborhood type identified in the Master Plan and graphically displayed in the Future Land Use/Zoning Plan is defined by four variables of intensity. Intensity levels are measured by hours, auto, mass and emissions. Any zoning text or zoning map amendment shall be consistent with the Future Land Use/Zoning Plan, including the text of the Master Plan.

All the neighborhood types depicted on the Future Land Use/Zoning Plan contain several Zoning Map Districts and it is envisioned that in most cases the zoning district will not change. However, the zoning district regulations will be amended over time to reflect the intended intensities and desired characteristics described in the Master Plan. For example, it is not envisioned that properties currently zoned residential (RC, R-1, R-2, R-9, R-15 and R-29) will be rezoned to a non-residential zoning classification.

On the other hand, properties that are in a zoning district wholly inconsistent with the intent of the Master Plan as depicted on the Future Land Use/Zoning Plan will be re-zoned to a zoning district consistent with the Plans. For example, parcels currently zoned non-residential may be rezoned to a zoning classification that more closely matches the neighborhood type as depicted on the Future Land Use/Zoning Plan.



This Plan is to be used in conjunction with the text of the Master Plan, which guides the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises within differing neighborhood types by setting forth the character and intensity of each neighborhood. The campus neighborhoods are intended to be developed according to specific plans approved for the different campuses.

Acknowledgements

City Commission

Michael Estes, *Mayor*
Chris Bzdok, *Mayor Pro Tem*
Jody A. Bergman
Barbara D. Budros
Jim Carruthers
Denise Scudato
Ralph Soffredine

Planning Commission

Fred Wilmeth, *Chairperson*
Jennifer Jaffe, *Vice-Chairperson*
Jody A. Bergman, *City Commission Representative*
Michael Estes, *Mayor*
Ross Richardson
John Serratelli
Robert Stow, *Secretary*
Bill Twietmeyer, *City Staff Representative*
Jan Warren

Master Plan Committee

Jody A. Bergman, *City Commission Representative*
Barbara D. Budros, *City Commission Representative*
Chris Bzdok, *City Commission Representative*
Debra Chavez, *City Staff Representative*
Robert Stow, *Planning Commission Representative*
Jan Warren, *Planning Commission Representative*
Fred Wilmeth, *Planning Commission Representative*
Jeanine Easterday, *former Planning Commissioner*
Jason Eckerly, *former Planning Commissioner*
David Hoekje, *former Planning Commissioner*

City Staff

Russell Soyring, *AICP, Planning Director*
David Weston, *Zoning Administrator*
Kristie McCaw, *Planning Assistant*
Kelli Springer, *former Planning Assistant*
Tim Lodge, *P.E., City Engineer*
Karrie Zeits, *Esq., City Attorney*

Professional Resources

Dr. Johnathon Mauk,
Northwestern Michigan College, Editor
Jane Kowieski,
Michigan Land Use Institute, Graphic Design
Sarah Lucas, *AICP, Reviewer*
*Photos provided by Northwestern Michigan College,
Michigan Land Use Institute, Rauth Photographic,
R. Clark Associates, Inc., and the City of Traverse City.*

Resource Documents

*A New Agenda for Michigan. Michigan Future Inc.
June 2006.*

*Across Grandview Parkway: Strengthening Connections
Between Downtown and the Bay. University of
Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment
and the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban
Planning. April 2006.*

Burlington Municipal Development Plan, 2006.

*Land Use Plan, Albermarle County Land Use Plan.
July 2002.*

Michigan Planning Act, March 2008.

Smart Code & Manual, v.8.0, New Urban Publications.

*Smart Growth Audit. Grand Traverse County, Traverse
City and Peninsula Township. Smart Growth Leadership
Institute. 2006.*

Traverse City Master Plan. Revised May 2002.

*Visioning TC, William McDonough & Partners.
October 2004.*

*Your Bay Your Say. Traverse City's Waterfront Plan.
Accepted by the Bayfront Planning Committee on
September 13, 2007.*

Glossary

Activities: Refers to those uses of a property that generate intensity within a neighborhood.

Auto: (related to Intensity Charts) Includes all motorized and non-motorized vehicular traffic within a neighborhood including but not limited to automobiles, trucks, buses, bicycles, etc.

Balance: The relationship between the rights of the property owner to the use of his/her own property and the rights of a community to protect or enhance the overall good.

Boundaries: The areas delineating the edges of neighborhoods.

Campus: Those neighborhoods developed for specific purposes that have development plans that are inwardly focused and approved by the Planning Commission.

Compatible: Those activities which generate similar levels of intensity, similar intensity values and are similar in scale to each other.

Complementary: Those activities within a neighborhood which support or compliment other activities within that neighborhood.

Element: The portion of the Master Plan which defines purposes and sets standards and goals for developing and evaluating the Implementation Documents.

Emissions: By products of activities that leave the property or neighborhood within which it is created, including, but not limited to noise, dust, odors, smoke, light, etc. Each neighborhood has an expected background level of emissions related to those characteristics found to be a normal part of an urban existence within that neighborhood's context.

Future Land Use/Zoning Plan: A graphic illustration depicting the general location and arrangement of neighborhood types and campuses. The boundaries are not parcel specific. This document is intended to help determine the extent of the different neighborhood types which have varied characteristics.

Hard edge: Those boundaries separating neighborhoods containing significant variations of scale and intensity at their point of abutment

Hours: Refers to the hours of operation of an activity within a neighborhood, when used in the Intensity Chart.

Implementation Documents: Those elements of Traverse City's governmental regulations and plans which give specific and/or detailed guidance and direction. The Implementation Documents are intended to be in support of the Master Plan but not a part of the Master Plan.

Intensity: The level of activity within a neighborhood. Intensity is quantified by the four components: Hours (of operation), Autos (motorized and non-motorized traffic), Mass (of buildings or structures), and Emissions (of noises, dust smoke, odor, light, etc.).

Mass: The intensity of the buildings or structures within a neighborhood as defined by area, land coverage, height, distance to property lines, access to light, or effects of shadow.

Neighborhood: A geographic area with similar, compatible and complementary activities. In mapping terms, a transect.

Neighborhood political: An organized neighborhood with officers and self described political boundaries. Political neighborhoods are organized to promote and support common interests and create a sense of community. Political neighborhoods are generally, but not always, of one neighborhood type. There may be many individual political neighborhoods within a given neighborhood type.

Nuisance: A by-product of organization into communities where people live in close proximity to one another. In this Master Plan, nuisance is deemed as a product of an unacceptable level of the intensity of an activity within a neighborhood.

Proportionality: The balance between competing priorities, principles, or neighborhood activities.

Scale: The combination of activity, mass, height, site organization and site coverage which determines how a building, structure or property relates to its neighbors and community.

Scale, residential: The combination of activity, mass, height, site organization and site coverage which are compatible with and complimentary to the residential neighborhood type in which the property, building or structure is located. Residential scale in one neighborhood type may not be the same as it is in another neighborhood type.

Services: Municipal, commercial and recreational activities which provide support for neighborhoods.

Shared: Those values held in common within a community or those characteristics held in common within a neighborhood type.

Soft edge: Connotes the evolution of activities along boundaries of neighborhoods that, left unattended, may produce unintended, negative consequences to one or more of the abutting neighborhoods. Boundaries of this nature require focus and action to determine their appropriate development.

Street, collector: Streets designed to collect traffic from other, more local streets. Collector streets can occur within or between neighborhoods.

Street, complete: Streets designed with equal emphasis and giving equal importance to all modes of transportation including motorized vehicular, non-motorized vehicular, and pedestrian traffic.

Suburban: A form of development characterized by wider lots, vehicular property access from the street, less formal free form streets. Many areas do not require traditional sidewalks or curbs and gutters.

Urban: A form of development characterized by formal street grids, vehicular property access from alleys, formal property organization into blocks with sidewalks and formal tree lawns in residential neighborhoods and streetscapes in commercial areas.

The City of Traverse City

Office of the City Clerk

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-4480
tcclerk@ci.traverse-city.mi.us

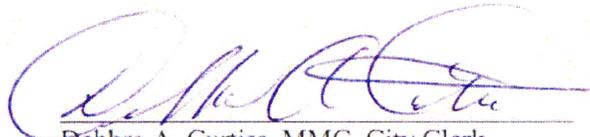


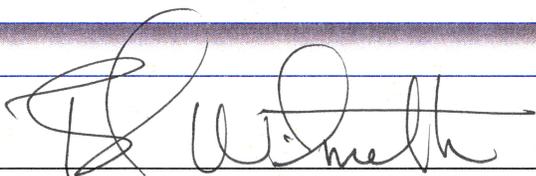
RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TRAVERSE CITY MASTER PLAN

- Because, the City Planning Commission under the authority of Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended, is required to make and may from time to time amend in whole or by parts a master plan for the physical development of the City of Traverse City; and
- Because, the City of Traverse City Master Plan provides Traverse City the fundamental ability to shape the urban environment in accordance with the principles and objective therein and to avoid costly and undesirable decisions affecting the well-being of the community; and
- Because, the Traverse City City Commission and Planning Commission concluded after reviewing existing conditions, issues, and trends of the municipality and the neighboring jurisdictions that the 1994 City Plan was in need of revision and updating; and
- Because, citizens of the Traverse City community played an integral part in establishing the core principles, goals, and standards of the City of Traverse City Master Plan which recommends priorities for change and improvement and that neighborhoods be defined by the nature and intensity of their human activity; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to hereby approve the accompanying Traverse City Master Plan containing core principles, goals, standards, recommendations, elements, and Future Land Use/Zoning Plan (map), bearing the date July 15, 2009, and further that such plan replace the City Plan dated September 28, 1994.

I hereby certify that the above resolution was adopted by the City Commission at its regular meeting held August 3, 2009, in the Commission Chambers, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan 49684.


Debra A. Curtiss, MMC, City Clerk


Fred Wilmeth, Chairman, Traverse City Planning Commission

8/3/2009
Date