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## CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY

### INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY POLICY

The City Commission adopts the following goals, priorities and strategies associated with its infrastructure. Three broad principles apply.

- A. An Asset Management Plan has been developed. Asset management is a systematic process of maintaining, upgrading, and operating physical assets cost-effectively. It optimizes preservation, upgrades, and replacement of assets through effective programming and resource allocation. It involves collecting data about existing physical resources and managing conditions based on strategic goals. It is a systematic, rather than purely tactical, process of inventory, scenario evaluation, and action that results, ideally, in selecting the best method of implementation to achieve specified goals and objectives.
- B. All projects should use the technical resources:
  - a. *“Urban Street Design Guide”* (2013) by the National Association of City Transportation Officials. The guide shows how streets of every size can be reimagined and reoriented to prioritize safe driving and transit, biking, walking, and public activity.
  - b. *“Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities.”* Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is a process of balancing the needs of all users of the system, including non-vehicular uses. It is a “Complete Streets” approach that incorporates methods to reduce vehicular traffic impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
- C. Infrastructure needs to be managed as a system, including the underground components. Utility upgrades need to be coordinated with aboveground work to minimize the need to disrupt surface improvements. While it is impossible to eliminate utility cuts on new streets due to unknowns associated with the underground system, every effort needs to be made to coordinate aboveground and belowground improvements. Coordination with Traverse City Light and Power on undergrounding electric lines is included in this systemic approach.

Following these principles, the priorities are:

1. Sidewalks/bikeways

From the 2006 Pavement Management Report, approximately 10% of the total spending need is for sidewalk and bikeway improvements. As such, the City should dedicate approximately 10% of its resources to this part of the infrastructure system.

Expenditure priorities should be:

- a. Fixing the existing network. Sections of sidewalks that don't meet minimum safety standards should be the first priority. This provision includes sidewalks in commercial areas. Within the DDA, this anticipates DDA cooperation. Streetscape improvements would continue to be 50% cost sharing with the adjacent property owners.
- b. Infill projects. In locations where there is a gap in an otherwise continuous system, that gap should be filled.
- c. New extensions. Extensions to the sidewalk and bikeway system should follow a.) and b.) unless otherwise dedicated grant funds are available.

## 2. Local Streets

Local streets account for approximately 63% of the City's street system. Local streets should receive at least that proportion of available funding. Having allocated approximately 10% of available funding to sidewalks/bikeways, approximately 60% of available funds should be used for local streets and associated storm sewer systems.

All local street construction should include a bias in favor of sidewalk or bikeway construction in conjunction with the street (in addition to the #1 sidewalk above). There may be cause to not include either sidewalks or bikeways but that cause would need to be demonstrated.

- a. Due to the existing condition of the street system, during the first two years of this program, attention is necessary for the very worst streets. Approximately ½ of available funds will be focused on these streets.
- b. Asset Management. An asset management program is not a "worst first" approach. Using a life cycle costing approach, it will be advantageous to invest dollars to improve streets classified as "fair" "good" and even "very good." Curb and gutter would be included at locations where it currently exists but not on streets where it does not exist unless 1) it is necessary for the City to control storm water or 2) it is included for consistency with the Master Plan or 3) it is petitioned for special assessment.
- c. Economic Development. Infrastructure spending can lead to new economic development opportunities. These opportunities may be limited on the local street system, but to the degree that they exist, they should be pursued.
- d. Existing Brick Streets. The City maintains a number of brick streets throughout the community. These streets represent a unique situation. In considering the reconstruction of brick streets, the life cycle cost of a brick street will be compared to the life cycle cost of a typical asphalt street. If the residents adjacent to the street desire a brick street and by majority petition to bear the cost

difference between the brick and asphalt street as a special assessment, the brick street will be reconstructed in brick. If there is no special assessment for the life cycle cost difference, the street will be reconstructed with asphalt.

### 3. Major Streets

Major streets account for approximately 37% of the City's street system and would receive the balance of funds available. These funds can be matched by grant funds and would be used on major streets and associated storm sewers as follows. All major street construction should include a bias in favor of sidewalk or bikeway construction in conjunction with the street (in addition to the #1 sidewalk above). There may be cause to not include either sidewalks or bikeways but that cause would need to be demonstrated.

- a. Asset Management. An asset management program is not a "worst first" approach. Using a life cycle costing approach, it will be advantageous to invest some dollars to improve streets classified as "fair" "good" and even "very good."

- (1) Curb and gutter along with associated storm sewer would be included on all major streets.

- b. Economic Development. Infrastructure spending can lead to new economic development opportunities. Woodmere Avenue is an excellent example of private investment following public investment.
- c. Existing Brick Streets. The City maintains a number of brick streets throughout the community. These streets represent a unique situation. In considering the reconstruction of brick streets, the life cycle cost of a brick street will be compared to the life cycle cost of a typical asphalt street. If the property owners adjacent to the street desire a brick street and by majority petition to bear the cost difference between the brick and asphalt street as a special assessment, the brick street will be reconstructed in brick. If there is no special assessment for the life cycle cost difference, the street will be reconstructed with asphalt.

### 4. Special Assessments

When the City follows an Asset Management Plan, street and bikeway/sidewalk improvements can be scheduled into future years. Citizens may see that their street is not scheduled for improvements for 5 years. If that citizen and their neighbors do not want to wait on the City schedule, they could jump to the head of the line with a petition for a special assessment. All special assessments for streets would be standardized at 50% of the "residential equivalent." The assessments would include the necessary discretion for the City Assessor to address odd shaped lots and other irregularities that are in the current ordinance.

Only petitions representing majority support would be considered. If one or more property owners were willing to pay the one-half for all the neighbors by contract, that

would be treated the same way. The only reason a special assessment would be considered would be to jump to the head of the line, or in the case of local streets, for curb and gutter not included by the City. Property owners could petition for streets, curb and gutters, sidewalks, water and sewer system improvements and traffic calming not otherwise included in the City project or any public infrastructure.

This provision helps in the transition from a special assessment based financing system to an alternate system.

Greenfield Development would remain an exception to the policy. New developments would be expected to include all infrastructure costs in the development package. There will be tradeoffs with each new development that are unique to that development, so each would continue to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

#### 5. Residential and Commercial Alleys

In almost all cases, the alley represents a “double loading” of infrastructure. The City provides twice the access (with associated cost) compared to areas without alleys. Alleys are expensive to maintain.

All alley improvements will be special assessed. The City will participate with 50% of the necessary funding with 50% of the cost assessed to adjacent properties. Only petitioned improvements will be considered with majority support. Some alleys serve commercial businesses. Commercial users will be assessed disproportionately more as the benefit is higher, as determined by the City Assessor.

As a petitioned improvement and because alley improvements reduce the City’s maintenance cost, alleys will receive the same priority as petitioned street improvements.

The City Manager is directed to present ordinance amendments as may be necessary to implement the above infrastructure management strategies. This policy and all of its provisions are effective upon their adoption.

I hereby certify that the above policy was adopted by the City Commission of the City of Traverse City at its regular meeting of September 21, 2009, and amended at its regular meeting of July 19, 2010, and amended at its July 21, 2014, Regular Meeting, held in the Commission Chambers, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan.

  
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Benjamin C. Marentette, CMC  
City Clerk