

Planning Commission Goals updated 1/15/16

Accepted by the Planning Commission on X/X/16

The Planning Commission purpose is to prepare and adopt physical plans for the City; and review development proposals, both private and public regarding consistency with City plans.

- **Traverse City Master Plan**

The current Master Plan is more than 6 years old this year. To be in compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Master Plan Committee has reviewed the Master Plan and has recommended the Master Plan be revised. The Committee will guide an active public input engagement process and review the comments received regarding the proposed revisions. The formal process including public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Commission and adoption of the revised Master Plan will be completed this year. With the change in the composition of the members on the Planning Commission two of the three Master Plan Committee members were lost (Commissioners Bergman and Twietmeyer). New members Commissioners Howe and Weatherholt were appointed in January to join Commissioner Dow who will chair the meetings.

- **Corridors Master Plan**

A Corridors Master Plan was adopted by the City Commission in October 2013. This plan provides a framework to guide public projects and development patterns along 8th Street, 14th Street, Garfield Avenue and East/West Front Streets.

Since the adoption of the Plan, sections of West Front Street were rebuilt and a PlacePlans project is nearly complete for a four block area with design concepts for public lands. A draft form-based development ordinance is nearly complete and an economic feasibility report for two building sites have been included in the draft final report for the PlacePlans project.

A Michigan State Housing Development Authority grant was secured to help with the cost for a planning design charrette for seven blocks of 8th Street (Union to Barlow Streets). The scheduled May, 2016 charrette will produce a concept design for the rebuilding of 8th Street along with a draft form-based development.

Funding for neighborhood study for the Old Towne/West Boardman Lake area was recently approved and will commence in the very near future. This study will address the circulation system to support the preferred neighborhood design along with street connections to 8th Street.

A small planning grant will be used to coordinate capital projects along East Front Street from Park Street to Grandview Parkway.

- **Comprehensive Parking Plan**

A subcommittee of the Planning Commission met several times in 2015. The committee work is essentially complete. Outstanding work involves meeting with the neighborhoods in regards to residential parking permits. A report will address parking regulations, including adjusting parking maximums and minimums; shared parking and access requirements and; residential parking permits.

- **Bayfront Plan**

The Planning Commission will review proposed public projects for the waterfront for consistency with the Master Plan in terms of location, extent and character. The Planning Commission will rely on the Traverse City Bayfront 2010 (campus plan) to guide decisions. Project review for each implementation phase will be brought before the Planning Commission for review. Construction drawings for a public pier are complete. Prior to the City applying for Army Corp and DEQ permits for the pier the Planning Commission will need to determine if the pier project is consistent with the 2010 Bayfront Plan.

- **Boardman River Plan**

The Planning Commission formally accepted The [Boardman River Plan](#) as a general guide for the lower reach of Boardman River. A draft Boardman River Prosperity Plan currently does not include river projects downstream of the Union Street Dam. This plan is under review and the revisions will likely to include projects for the lower reach of the river to the mouth. The Planning Commission review of the Prosperity Plan is planned.

- **Form Based Codes**

Building height limits were increased by five feet in a number of zoning districts recently. By using a form-based code, the City can more precisely address building heights and massing by coding individual blocks, building types, building placement, scale and roof types. Implementation of a form based code along West Front Street and 8th Street corridor will provide local examples on how building heights can be addressed in context with the intended and desired setting. Reviewing this form of development regulations will take time to digest and understand all the nuances. Public education and engagement will also take considerable time before any such codes will get adopted.

- **Joint Meeting with Parks and Recreation Commission**

The Planning Commission will meet at least once per calendar year with the Parks and Recreation Commission to discuss and coordinate priorities for park projects for the Capital Improvement Plan. The Planning Commission will be asked to formally support the draft 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan.

- **Master Plan Elements Implementation**

Implementation strategies were created for a number of Planning Elements of the Master Plan. Prioritizing the long list of suggested implementation actions will help the Planning Commission and staff focus on the highest priorities. Scheduled study sessions are

opportunities to develop a priority list. A paired comparison chart has been suggested to help set general priorities.

- **Formal Planning Commission Training**

In-house training of the legal aspects of planning will be provided by the City Attorney, City Clerk and the City Planning Director. Throughout the year, the Planning Commission will be made aware of training programs available in the area and via the Internet. In 2016 the Congress for the New Urbanism will be held in Detroit from June 8-11. Planning Commissioners that have attended previous Congresses have found them to be inspirational and educational. An educational session on the City Stormwater Ordinance will be scheduled during the year.

Planning Department Projects

Not for acceptance by the Planning Commission

Mission Statement: *The Planning Department's primary purpose is to guide the City with land use and planning in order to enhance the quality of the community and ensure it remains a place where both citizens and businesses love to call home.*

The Planning Department:

- Helps to administer the City of Traverse City Master Plan, a document that guides City zoning, land use, urban design and physical improvements, such as buildings, streets and parks.
- Provides administrative staff for the Planning Commission, Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Historic Districts Commission.
- Administers and enforces the zoning, sign, and historic districts ordinances and other land use laws. Administers the Capital Improvement Program.
- Reviews building site plans and prepares reports and recommendations to the Planning Commission for zoning map amendments, zoning laws, special land use permits and planned unit developments.
- Answers zoning and land use questions and interprets land use principles, and planning and zoning laws.
- Works with property owners and developers, other agencies and other City departments to ensure that building plans are consistent with the Master Plan and laws regarding size and placement of buildings, signs, parking areas and landscaping requirements.
- Inspects multi-family rental dwellings, rooming houses, proper anchoring of boats on the near shore of Grand Traverse Bay and property maintenance code violations.

Goals/objectives include:

- **Grand Traverse Commons Zoning Ordinance-** Work continues on drafting a Zoning Ordinance in cooperation with Garfield Township Planning Department and the Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission. Several months ago a public hearing was held which generated many comments and concerns. Meetings continue with property owners to address concerns. Additional public hearing(s) will be held after the revised draft is complete and have been reviewed by the Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission.
- **Active Transportation Plan-** An Active Transportation subcommittee of the Planning Commission was formed to guide a process to create a Non-Motorized Plan and to reapply for Bicycle Friendly Community designation. A draft plan has been written and will be reviewed by planning firm that specializes in writing non-motorized plans for communities. The Committee will submit a recommended Active Transportation Plan to the Planning Commission.
- **Seek grants-** to implement adopted plans and City projects.
- **Redevelopment Ready Communities certification** – The Planning Department applied and for Redevelopment Ready Community certification in 2014. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation provided the City with a status report (Final Report [Findings](#) –City of Traverse City) which highlights areas where the City can revise or develop current practices into “best practices”. Since the City lacks a formal public participation plan, staff will develop a draft plan for Planning Commission/City Commission review. Certification will position Traverse City better to receive state grants for economic development. Progress has been made to move us towards certification as a Redevelopment Ready Community.
- **Boardman Lake Trail-** The Planning Department will work trail consultants and community partners on developing detailed conceptual plans for the Boardman Lake trail for the SW portion of the lakeshore. Before grants can be applied to construct the trail a feasible alignment for the trail along with control of the land via easements or ownership is necessary. This planning/design study will get us in position to apply for construction grants to finish the loop around the lake.
- **Bike Friendly City-** The Planning Department applied for and received the Bicycle Friendly City designation in 2009 at the Bronze level. Reapplication after we complete the Active Transportation Plan is desired to sustain our designation and possibly increase our status to Silver or a higher designation level.
- **Hannah Park-** with the completion of the Perry Hannah Plaza built with private dollars, the City Commission will be asked to match those dollars with Brown Bridge funds to additional improvements to Hannah Park. First order of business is to have concept plan approved by the Parks and Recreation. An informal group “Friends of Hannah Park” will serve as a sounding board for input as a draft concept plan is developed.

- **Hickory Hills Master Plan Improvements-** Planning Department is working on writing a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for implementation of trail development in Hickory Hills.
- **Clancy Park-** The City was successful in obtaining a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to make overall improvements to Clancy Park. Project management and grant administration will involve the Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department.
- **Lay Park-** Revised plans for Lay Park will be developed with the initial phase highlighted for construction.
- **Public Pier and Murchie Bridge-** Should the City Commission support applying for permits for the Public Pier, the Planning Department bring forth the plans for the pier to the Planning Commission to determine consistency with the adopted Bayfront Plan 2010. Staff will also work with the permitting agencies responding to questions and information. If the permits are sought and approved, staff may be involved with a funding strategy for the pier and the access routes to the pier.
- **Boardman River Boat Launch and Lot D Project-** This project was delayed when environmental issues were identified and a redesign of the project was necessary. The delay ultimately resulted in the loss of the Coastal Zone Management grant and now a smaller budget is available for this project. Site constraints also threaten the ability to use the Waterways grant. Keeping these funds is dependent on MDOT and Waterways being flexible on their standard guidelines. Some project elements have been eliminated and new revenue sources are being sought. Since so much time has been invested in this project, City staff will continue to look for creative ways to implement the project in 2016.
- **Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan Review-** The current Master Plan is 5 years old and requires review by the Joint Planning Commission.
- **All Planning Elements-** The Planning Elements have been approved, they will be prepared for publication using a unifying graphic design to stylize the Elements in a format that conforms to the Master Plan. The Elements will be printed and bound and to be incorporated as Sub Plans of the Master Plan.

Project titles with colored text have been submitted to the City Manager's office as being the most critical projects to complete in 2016.