



Annual Report

**City of Traverse City
Planning Department &
Planning Commission
Annual Report**

2025

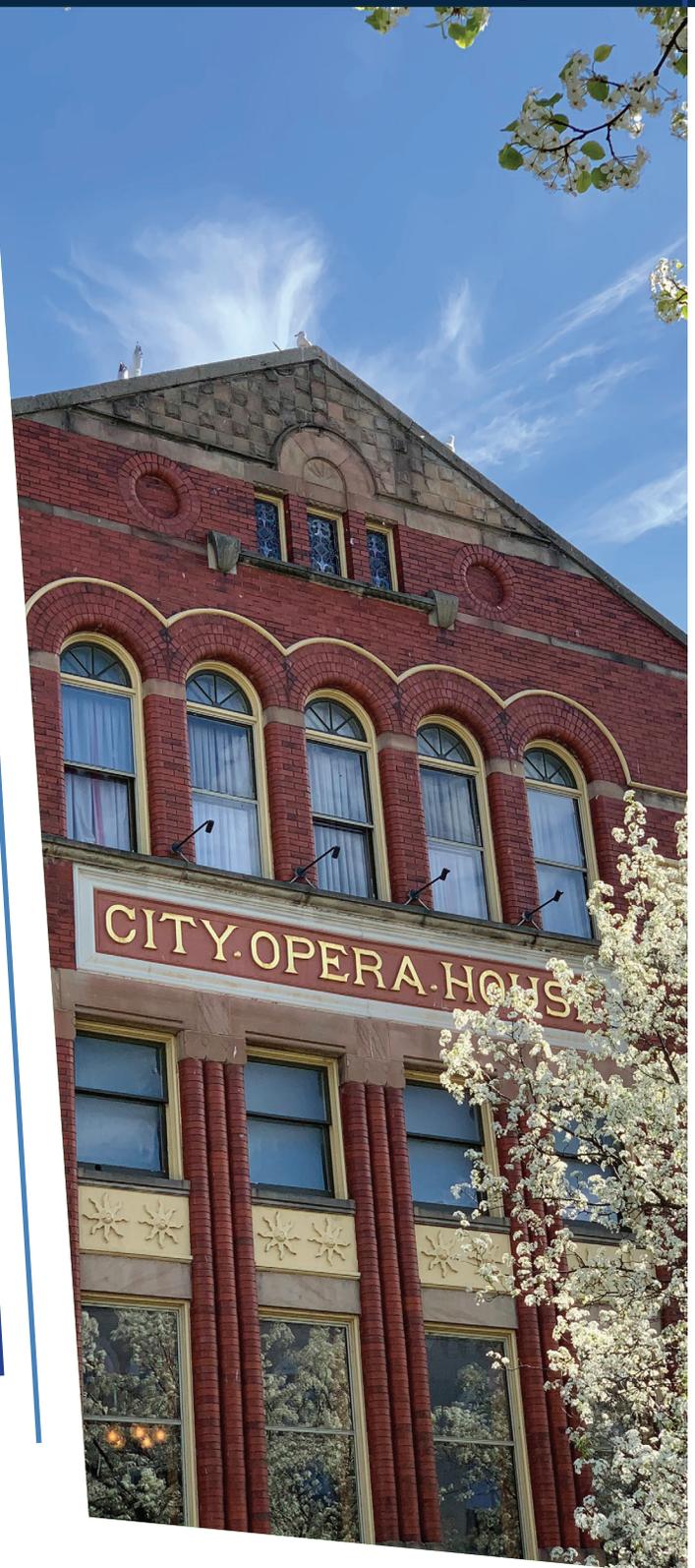
**Prepared For
City Manager
City Planning Commission
City Commission**

Planning & Zoning

The Planning & Zoning Department is responsible for preparing and implementing the City's Master Plan, which influences regulations & standards in the zoning ordinance, as well as future changes to it. The department administers the zoning ordinance, oversees code enforcement and approval of site plans.

The department is also responsible for ongoing land-use planning efforts, grant preparation and administration, strategic planning processes, comprehensive plans, neighborhood plans, campus plans, policy recommendations, implementation, and management.

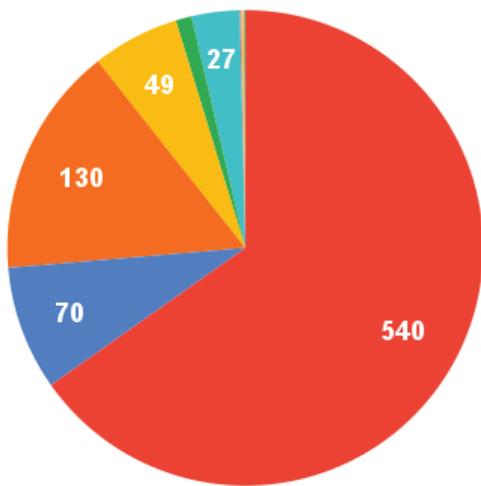
The Planning Department administers the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), working with city departments on project submissions. Additionally, department staff are members of the Design Team, Traffic Committee, and Complete Streets Committee—which are City-led groups—as well as the Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission, the NRAA Airport Zoning Board, and TTCl: Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative.





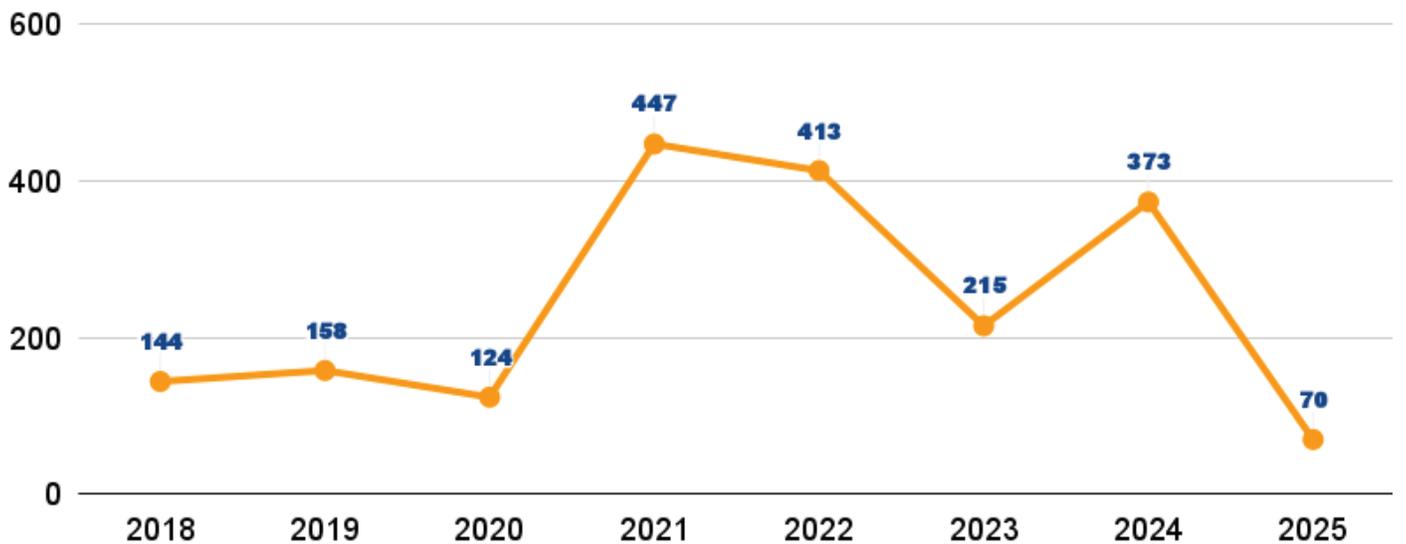
2025 Year End Totals

Planning Department Requests



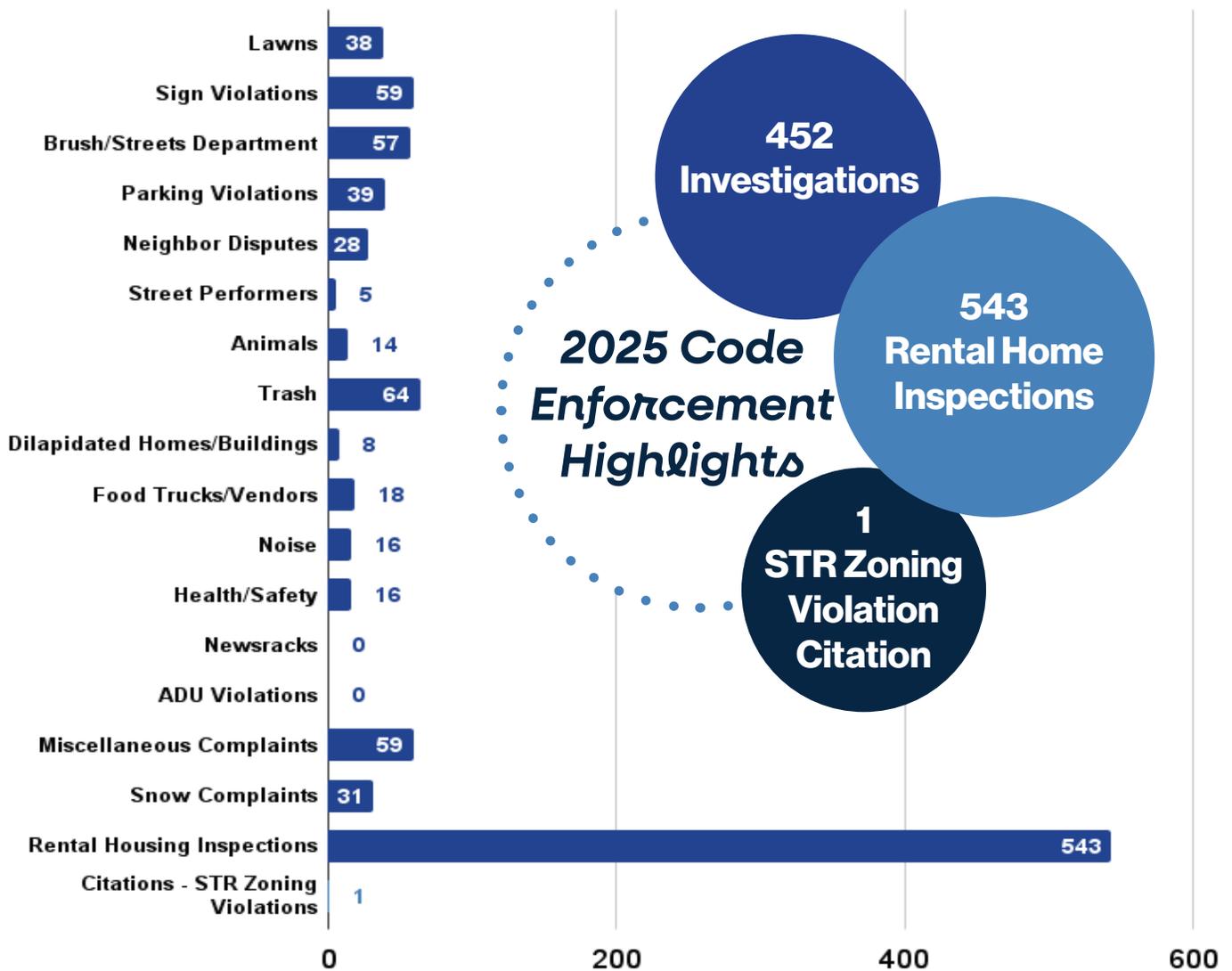
	2025	2024
VHR/STR License Approvals & Renewal	540	542
New Dwelling Units Permitted	70	373
Land Use Permits Issued	130	140
Sign Permits Issued	49	49
"Notice of Violation" Citations Issued	9	44
Historic District Commission Requests	27	6
Board of Zoning Appeals Requests	0	2
PUDs	1	0
SLUPs	1	0
PC Site Plan Reviews	1	0

Permitted Dwelling Units Per Year



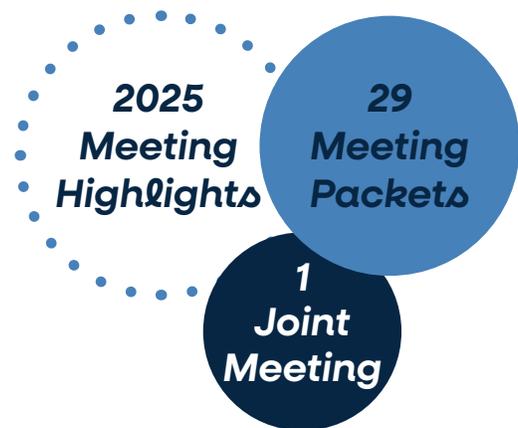
2025 Code Enforcement Investigations

The Code Enforcement Officer addresses the preservation, maintenance and aesthetics of all residential, commercial, and industrial properties throughout the City. Code Enforcement works with citizens to resolve issues affecting the quality of life in Traverse City by enforcing a broad range of public health and safety regulations including rental housing, zoning, health, parking, public nuisance, and other safety codes.





2025 Meeting Totals



- **Planning Commission: 15**
- **Historic District Commission: 9**
- **GT Commons Joint Planning Commission: 5**
- **Board of Zoning Appeals: 0**
- **Riparian Buffer Committee: 1**

The Department prepared a total of 29 packets for the following boards and commissions: Planning Commission, Historic Districts Commission, and Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission. For the first time in over 20 years, there was not a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting in the calendar year. The Planning Commission participated in one joint meeting with the City Commission in September 2025.

2025 Planning Commission

In 2025 the Planning Commission met a total of 15 times:

8 Regular Meetings — 3* Study Sessions — 4 Special Meetings

***1 Study Session was a joint meeting with the City Commission**

Commissioner	Attendance	Commissioner	Attendance
Jackie Anderson*	14 of 15	Brian McGillivary	15 of 15
Anna Dituri	14 of 15	Shea O'Brien	13 of 15
Jess Heller	10 of 15	Jerry Swanson***	13 of 15
Debbie Hershey	12 of 15	Mitch Treadwell*	13 of 15
David Knapp	11 of 15	Maxwell Cameron**	10 of 11

Planning Commission Representatives on Additional Committees/Commissions

- **GT Commons Joint Planning Commission** (Anna Dituri, Mitchell Treadwell)
- **Board of Zoning Appeals** (Debbie Hershey, Mitchell Treadwell)
- **Riparian Buffer Committee** (Anna Dituri, Shea O'Brien)

*Commissioners Treadwell and Anderson are City Commission representatives.

**Maxwell Cameron is the Community Development Coordinator for Grand Traverse County, and serves as a non-voting ex officio member of the City of Traverse City Planning Commission.

***Commissioner Swanson serves as the City Manager's Staff Appointee



2025 Planning Commission Meeting Discussions

- Election of officers, discussion of bylaws, and discussion of annual goals. (01/07/25)
- Presentation of 2024 annual report, discussion of proposed zoning amendment to increase the allowable density in R-2, continued bylaws and 2025 goals discussion, continued discussion of short-term rental regulations. (01/22/25)
- Adoption of bylaws changes and 2025 goals. Continued discussion of R-2 zoning amendment, introduction of the 2025/26-2030/31 CIP. (02/04/25)
- Public hearings for R-2 zoning change, City of Traverse City CIP, and TCLP CIP. Discussion of short-term rentals; finalized 2024 annual report. Conceptual introduction of Special Land Use Permit application for a year-round emergency shelter at current seasonal emergency shelter. (03/04/25)
- Public Hearing and approval of SLUP application for a year-round emergency shelter; request to extend previously approved conditional rezoning; introduction of PC-initiated zoning text amendment to further regulate short-term rentals. (03/18/25)
- Short-term rental discussion. (04/15/25,)
- Public hearing for short-term rental regulations, introduction of Planned Unit Development application, introduction of zoning map amendment for properties on Union St. (05/06/25)
- Consideration of public/private partnership for public park on City-owned property. (05/20/25)
- Public hearings for PUD application and rezoning of 300 and 400 blocks of Union St.; Discussion of amending conditional zoning requirements. (06/17/25)
- Public hearing for extending the duration of approval for conditional rezonings; natural features inventory presentation by summer interns; site plan review for 124 W. Front. (08/05/25)
- Further discussion of conditional rezoning regulations; consideration of a zoning text amendment; discussion of commercial facade materials; public office hours. (09/03/25)
- Joint Study Session with City Commission: fair housing training & housing discussion. (09/08/25)
- Public hearing & approval for removing density limits; in H-1, H-2, NMC-1, NMC-2 and HR; public office hours discussion; 2025 annual goals update. (10/07/25)
- Consideration of approval of easement on City property for 225 W. Grandview Parkway. (11/18/25)
- Consideration of reduction in minimum lot size for PUD app.; discussion of possible Boardman Lake joint planning effort; discussion of Attainable & Residential Housing Facilities Acts. (12/02/25)

2025 Planning Department Annual Report

2025 Planning Commission Actions

Action	Description	Planning Commission Action	City Commission Action
Zoning Amendment - Chapter 1334 - R-2 - Mixed Density Residential District	Public hearing in consideration of a Planning Commission-initiated zoning text amendment to R-2 - Mixed Density Residential District, and possible recommendation.	Recommended Approval 03/04/25 7-1-1	Approved 06/02/25 5-2-0
CIPs Public Hearings & Submission to City Commission	Approval of the City of TC & TCLP Capital Improvement Plans, and distribution of the plans to the City Commission.	Public Hearing & Approval to send to CC 03/04/25 7-1-1 (TC), 8-0-1 (TCLP)	Submitted 03/17/25 - No action Required
SLUP Public Hearing & Approval	Public Hearing for SLUP application for a year-round emergency shelter, and recommended approval to send to the City Commission.	Public Hearing & Approval to send to CC 03/18/25, 7-0-2	Approved 05/05/25 7-0-0
Zoning Text Amendments to further regulate STRs	Planning Commission-initiated amendments to further regulate Short-term Rentals, and recommend the CC preserve non-conforming status.	Introduced 03/18/25, approved & sent to CC 05/06/25 6-2-1	None at this time.
Public/Private Partnership Consideration	Affirmation a public/private partnership is consistent with the Master Plan, for a public park on City-owned property at 429 E. Front	Recommended for Approval 05/20/25 7-0-2	Approved 07/07/25 6-1-0
PUD - TC Millworks - 1032 Woodmere Ave.	Official submission of application, public hearing, and approval for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for property located at 1032 Woodmere Ave., TC Millworks.	Submitted 05/06/25, Recommended for Approval 06/17/25 8-0-1	Approved 08/04/25 7-0-0
Rezoning - 300 and 400 Blocks of South Union Street	Public hearing and application for rezoning the properties in the 300 and 400 blocks of Union St to C-4a, as prescribed by the Master Plan. Initiated via application, expanded by the PC.	Introduced 05/06/25, Recommended for Approval 06/17/25 7-1-1	Approved 08/19/24 5-0-2
Site Plan Review	Site plan review and approval of findings of staff report for 25-SPR-01, 137-room hotel with customary accessory uses.	Site Plan Staff Report Approval 08/05/25 4-3-2	N/A
Ordinance Amendments Removing Density Limits - Chs. 1338.03, 1356.03 & 1358.03	Public hearing & approval for removing density limits; in H-1, H-2, NMC-1, NMC-2 and HR	Introduced 09/03/25, Recommended for Approval 10/07/25	Approved 12/15/25 6-1-0
Public/Private Partnership Consideration	Affirmation a proposed public/private partnership for a public way at 225 Grandview Parkway is consistent with the Master Plan	Recommended for Approval 11/18/25 6-1-2	Approved 01/05/25 7-0-0



2025 Highlights

Riparian Buffer Committee

Following internal review and additional research, staff completed a preliminary report and proposed draft regulations for presentation to the Riparian Buffer Committee in August. The committee suggested extensive changes and also requested that staff explore ways to provide a map platform to better evaluate the potential real world impact of the proposed riparian regulations.

These requests were evaluated again internally by staff and additional revisions to the draft were completed by the end of the year. Once the City's GIS department was fully staffed at the end

of November, creating the requested riparian mapping experience was a top priority for new staff. By the end of the year, an early version was developed and continues to be refined so that the mapping experience can be shared broadly. This will aid in evaluating the proposed regulations and the possible impact on property owners throughout the City.

Next steps include a final review by the Riparian Committee and presenting their proposal for consideration by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has made completion of this effort as its highest priority for 2026.

CDBG Funding

The City has fully completed its first full year cycle for its new Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. In accordance with federal requirements administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City completed its second year Annual Plan for fiscal year 2025/26, sought proposals for and awarded its 2025/26 allocation, completed its first Consolidated Plan Evaluation Report (CAPER), and administered the awards to several awardees from both 2024/25 and 2025/26 program years.

The City will be embarking on amendments to prior year plans to shift spending where projects have not come to fruition and planning for the 2026/27 program year will be underway early in 2026.

Housing Reform Update

Housing availability and affordability continue to be a high priority for the City. The Planning Commission has continued its effort to address restrictive land use regulations that are a barrier to housing following the suite of housing reform zoning amendments passed in 2023. In 2025, the City Commission enacted the R-2 zoning amendment recommended by the Planning Commission to allow up to four dwelling units per lot, but to maintain the existing limit of two structures for residential uses in order to maintain neighborhood character.

Implementation under new zoning regulations tends to lag due to market realities and regulatory requirements. In 2024, a total of 373 dwelling units were permitted, including five dwelling units permitted under the housing reform zoning amendments, representing 1.3% of dwelling units permitted that year. 2025 saw a significant drop in permitted dwelling units at only 70. However, 10 of those dwelling units were permitted under the housing reform zoning amendments, representing 14.3% of all permitted dwelling units. This may signal continued challenges to the housing construction market posed by the high costs of land, labor and materials, and a market potentially shifting towards small scale infill development by existing property owners/residents made possible through the housing reform zoning amendments.

With the heavy lifting on the zoning aspect completed, the City continues to look for ways to address the housing need. This past year the City Commission approved policies for the implementation of the Attainable Housing Facilities Act and the Residential Housing Facilities Act. The two acts and associated policies are differentiated by project density. The Planning Commission was provided the opportunity to recommend where the incentives should be allowed based on zoning district regulations.

Short-term Rentals

In 2025, the Planning Commission continued their discussion to further regulate short-term rentals (STRs) that had begun in fall 2024. Commissioners engaged in thoughtful conversations about STRs over the first few months of 2025, and in May sent a package of recommendations to the City Commission. The City Commission began to dig in to the Planning Commission's recommendations, which brought forth questions for the City Attorney. She is working on responses to those questions, and we anticipate the City Commission will continue to STR discussions in 2026.



2026 Planning Commission Goals

Complete Riparian Ordinance

- a. Draft to be provided to Planning Commission
- b. Final recommendations from Committee
- c. Public input and education
- d. Complete public hearing, revisions, and final adoption process
- e. Fold into full zoning ordinance rewrite

Improve Communications/Staff Level Priorities

- a. Hold one or more Joint Planning Commission and City Commission meetings on topical issues of shared concern
- b. Seamless website advertising of public hearings and alternative ways of public to provide input or ask questions
- c. Create a development dashboard to publicly track new development progress

Expand Housing Opportunities

Lack of housing opportunities continues to be a pressing issue in the City. The Planning Commission has addressed many of the most urgently needed regulatory housing reforms. The Planning Commission will continue to pursue reforms and support initiatives to broaden housing opportunities throughout 2026.

Complete Studies and Enhanced Research to Inform Zoning Ordinance Rewrite and Address Community Goals

- a. Establish a Development (D) Zone along Fourteenth St. allow for more vibrant development and redevelopment opportunities ideally based on a focused 14th Street Corridor Plan
- b. Develop pre-approved plan sets (i.e. pattern book homes)
- c. Establish locations for community and economic hubs along corridors and/or intersections to better meet the day-to-day needs of residents in adjacent neighborhoods
- d. Evaluate zoning districts and uses allowed to determine if they continue to meet the needs of the community

2026 Planning Commission Goals

Complete Full Zoning Ordinance Rewrite/Reorganization

Objective 1: Include Targeted Zoning Amendments Called for Under the Master Plan

- a. Consider electric vehicle infrastructure in private site plan approval process
- b. Create zoning standards that require parking areas for new commercial and multiple family developments to be EV ready
- c. Rezone the West Front Street (west of Pine to Division, Not currently zoned D) to C4a

Objective 2: Include High Level Zoning Amendments Called for under the Master Plan/Other Sources

- a. Explore creating building design standards for new commercial development, including building materials (Planning Commission generated)
- b. Create an overlay district applicable to specific legacy redevelopment sites, which would eliminate the Planning Commission site plan approval process and allow for staff administrative review for uses permitted in the underlying zoning district if development/ redevelopment occurs.
- c. Setback considerations
- d. Evaluate current standards for drive thrus and other auto-centric uses to determine if uses are in proper zoning districts with appropriate standards
- e. Assess day care standards as part of an effort to expand affordable daycare options (Resiliency Plan)
- f. Update PUD regulations (Planning Commission generated)

Objective 3: Improve Zoning Ordinance Usability

- a. Consolidate regulations and use cross references to shorten ordinance length
- b. Improve ease of use by enhancing the presentation style of regulations, using tables, and similar techniques

Looking Towards 2026

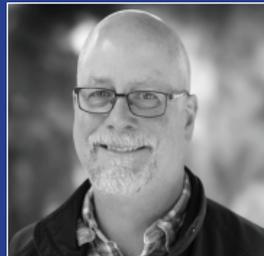
Planning Department staff looks forward to continuing to serve you in 2026!



Shawn Winter
Planning Director



Leslie Sickterman
Deputy Planning Director



Dave Weston
Zoning Administrator



Brad Kirkpatrick
Code Enforcement Officer



Katie Miller
Planning Assistant