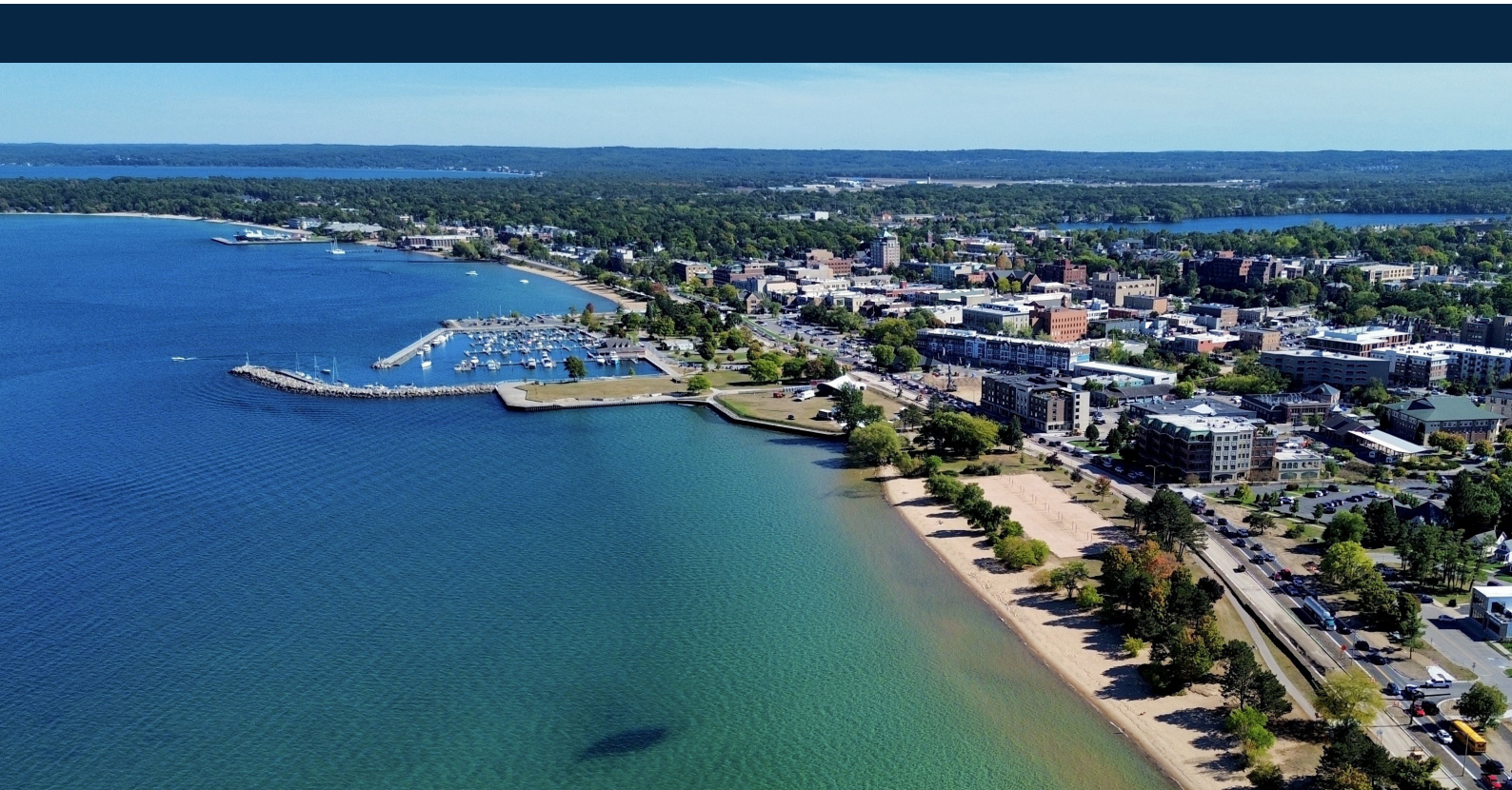




CITY OF
TRAVERSE CITY



PLANNING DIRECTOR

CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN



The Opportunity

LEAD | COLLABORATE | ENGAGE | INSPIRE

The City of Traverse City is seeking an exceptional planning leader to help shape the future of one of Michigan's most vibrant and distinctive communities. Nestled along the shores of Grand Traverse Bay, Traverse City is known for its unparalleled natural beauty, vibrant downtown, engaged residents, and commitment to thoughtful land use, environmental stewardship, and sustainable growth. This is an exciting opportunity to join a forward-thinking organization and make a lasting impact in a community that values innovation, collaboration, and quality of life.

The City is seeking an emotionally intelligent, progressive municipal planning executive to serve as its next Planning Director. The City is seeking a leader who listens with openness, respect, and a capacity to be changed, and who universally embraces the City Manager's desired culture, which is firmly rooted in feedback.

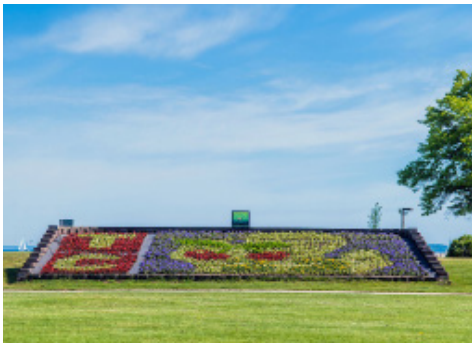
As a key executive leader, the Planning Director provides strategic direction and administrative oversight for the City's land use, sustainability, urban development, zoning, and code enforcement operations, while providing support and expertise to other departments in capital transportation and municipal infrastructure projects. Operating with a high degree of autonomy and sound professional judgment, the Director leads long-range planning initiatives, updates municipal codes, and aligns departmental operations with the City's Strategic Action Plan, Master Plan, and mission.

CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY

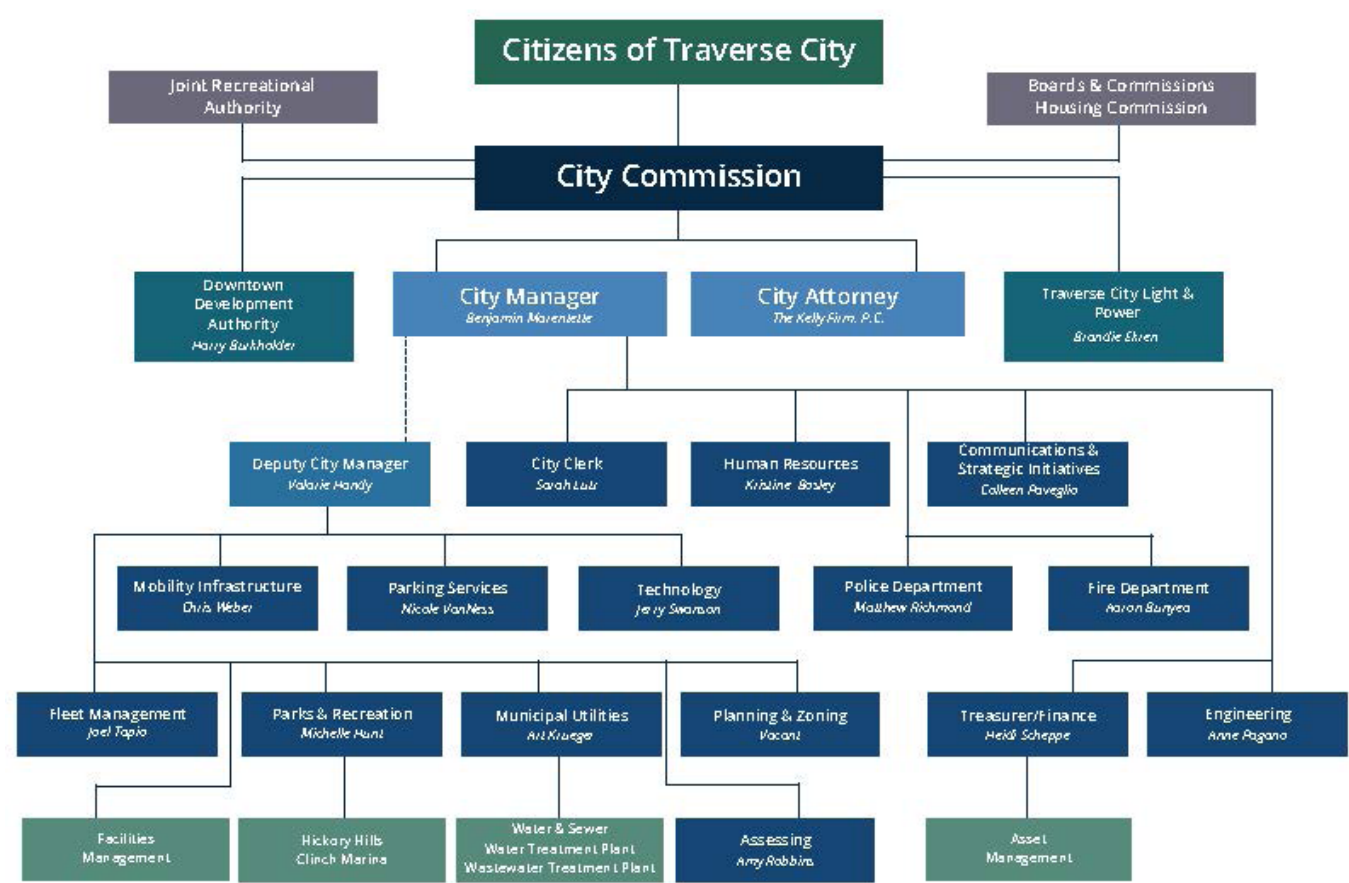
GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The City operates under a collaborative governance model, with strong engagement among elected officials, executive leadership, and the community. The Planning Director receives general supervision from the Deputy City Manager and exercises supervisory responsibility for the Planning and Zoning Department.

The successful candidate will be universally-adept at staying in uncomfortable, and at times emotionally charged, conversations with total professionalism. They will communicate sincerely, openly, clearly, and confidently while inspiring trust and engagement across the organization and community. By listening and interacting with empathy and genuine appreciation for passionate, divergent points of view, the Planning Director will embody a culture of feedback, embracing the valuable perspectives of residents, City Commissioners, Planning Commissioners, and regional stakeholders to inspire individuals to freely share ideas.

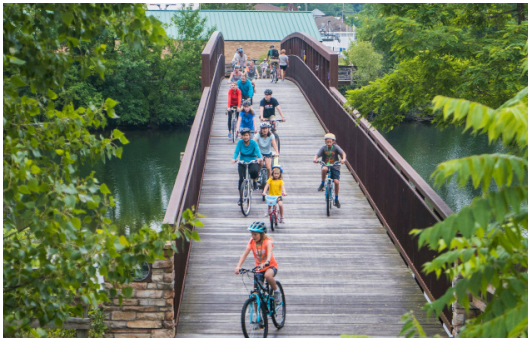


ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Why Traverse City

WE SERVE | COMMUNITY ORIENTED | SERVICE TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD



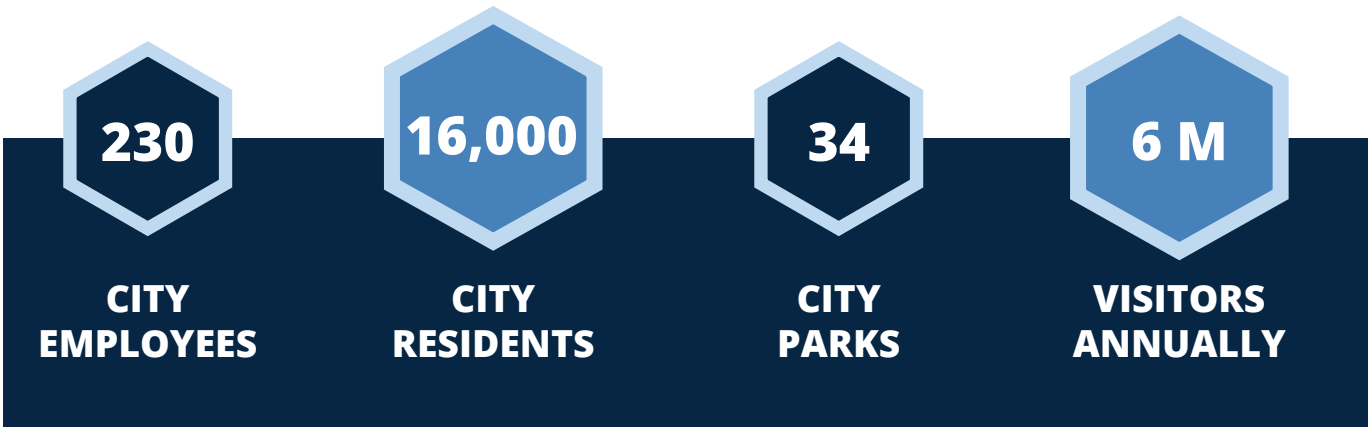
Traverse City, Michigan offers an exceptional opportunity for a leader who embodies a mindset of possibilities, seeking both professional impact and quality of life. Situated along the shores of Grand Traverse Bay on Lake Michigan, Traverse City is a four-season destination community and serves as the regional hub of Northern Michigan while maintaining a strong identity. Traverse City is connected to the world through its Cherry Capital Airport, the third busiest airport in Michigan, with direct flights to Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis and Denver, with seasonal direct flights to cities including Boston, Tampa, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, New York City, Dallas, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Houston.

The City has a year-round population of nearly 16,000, with daytime population more than doubling, and significant seasonal population fluctuations that create a dynamic and complex municipal service environment as a highly-sought destination community. (Traverse City experiences population over several hundred thousand at different points in the summer.). As the regional hub of Northern Michigan, Traverse City offers a unique blend of small-city character, regional influence, and destination-community demands. This provides an exceptional leadership opportunity for a Planning Director to contribute toward a progressive and forward-thinking organization through strategic growth, operational innovation, and long-term community investment.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Traverse City is widely recognized for its outstanding quality of life, featuring:

- Four-season outdoor recreation
- A vibrant downtown and waterfront
- A strong food scene, with nationally-recognized restaurants, wineries, breweries; and a bustling, seasonal farmer’s market and year-round markets with specialty foods
- Strong schools, healthcare, and community services
- An engaged and supportive community



The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate is a values-driven, collaborative leader dedicated to community stewardship, transparent communication, and responsive public service. The next Planning Director will be a skilled manager and communicator capable of allocating municipal resources effectively, establishing strategic priorities that promote sustainable growth, and maintaining executive support through authentic engagement.

- **Emotional Intelligence & Professional Poise:** Navigates high-profile or sensitive political situations with diplomacy, tact, strict confidentiality, sound judgment, and calm professionalism under public pressure.
- **Strategic Collaboration & Alignment:** Partners closely with executive leadership (including the Deputy City Manager and Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives) to execute Strategic Action Plan Objectives and Key Results (OKRs).
- **Feedback-Oriented Leadership:** Cultivates an inclusive environment that values input from residents, staff, and municipal boards while encouraging open idea-sharing.
- **Public Engagement & Executive Communication:** Acts as a primary spokesperson, convenes citizen and neighborhood forums, facilitates public meetings, and conveys complex planning concepts clearly to diverse audiences.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Master Planning

- *Vision & Policy:* Updates the Master Plan and develops short-/long-range land use studies.
- *Ordinance & Governance:* Modernizes zoning, sign codes, and development frameworks; establishes departmental goals, SOPs, and internal controls.

Operational Management & Interdepartmental Support

- *Department Administration:* Directs all operations, staff recruitment, evaluations, professional development, and budget administration.
- *Multimodal Infrastructure:* Partners with City departments to align complete streets and transit projects with the Mobility Action Plan.
- *Federal Grants & CDBG:* Oversees CDBG entitlement compliance and housing initiatives, delegating daily ops to the Deputy Planning Director.

Public Engagement & Board Representation

- *Board Liaison:* Serves as official representative to the City Commission, Planning Commission, and advisory committees (e.g., Active Transportation, Airport Zoning, Complete Streets Committee, Design Team, and others as assigned).
- *Community Relations:* Facilitates public/developer engagement, oversees site plan reviews, and collaborates with regional entities.

Sustainability & Growth

- *Climate Initiatives:* Supports implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) and promotes resilience strategies.
- *Funding Procurement:* Directs grant applications for transportation, capital projects, and community development.

Qualifications

EDUCATION, TRAINING, & EXPERIENCE

- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in Urban Planning, Urban Design, Public Administration, or related field (*Master's preferred*).
- **Planning:** 5+ years of progressive planning experience (master planning, placemaking, ordinance drafting, zoning).
- **Leadership & Grants:** 3+ years supervisory and budget management experience preferred; proven HUD CDBG/grant administration background.
- **Certification:** AICP certification required (*CNU-A, LEED AP, or CECd preferred*).
- **Schedule & Residency:** Must reside within 30 miles of city limits within 12 months; available for mandatory evening meetings and occasional weekend events.

Compensation & Benefits

The City of Traverse City provides a competitive executive package designed to attract top-tier talent.

- **Pay Range:** \$99,688 – \$131,271, commensurate with qualifications and experience.
- **Comprehensive Benefits:** Health, dental, and vision insurance packages.
- **Retirement & Leave:** Defined benefit pension, 457(b) match options, and generous paid time off.
- **Relocation:** Relocation assistance and potential temporary housing stipend for qualified out-of-area and national candidates, as applicable
- **Workplace Flexibility:** Flexible workplace culture with options for hybrid and flex time as appropriate.



Application Process

To be considered for this exceptional leadership opportunity, please submit your resume with references, cover letter, and salary requirements.

Email

jobs@traversecitymi.gov

Visit

traversecitymi.gov/jobs/

Mailing Address

City of Traverse City
Human Resources Office
400 Boardman Avenue

The City of Traverse City is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other protected status.