

Pillar 3 – Objective 1

Increase the participation of Traverse City representatives in key regional groups, to help build cross-connectivity.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Program A: Develop and participate in collaborative approaches with storm water permitting and management (MS4 Program)

Scope

- Finalize and implement the updated MS4 permit in collaboration with regional partners (Grand Traverse County, Northwest Education Services, Drain Commissioner, MDOT, and watershed organizations).
- Coordinate regional public outreach and intergovernmental stormwater compliance efforts.
- Update the Stormwater Master Plan in partnership with DDA, Grand Traverse County, EGLE, and watershed stakeholders.
- Integrate stormwater quality improvements into major capital projects (e.g., 11th Street/Kid's Creek, Boardman/Washington/State/Cass) and future corridor reconstructions.
- Embed early cross-department coordination (Engineering, Planning, DPS, Utilities) to ensure stormwater systems are durable, maintainable, winter-compatible, and operationally practical.
- Implement green infrastructure practices (bioswales, rain gardens, permeable surfaces) and strengthen riparian buffer protections.
- Support regional partners to advance water quality outcomes by reducing pollutant loading to the Boardman/Ottaway River and Grand Traverse Bay

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026 - 2027)

- Implement updated MS4 Permit (in progress February 2026)
 - Continue collaboration with Grand Traverse County and Northwest Education Services
 - Implement public outreach coordination under MS4
- Construct 11th Street / Kid's Creek Culvert (2026)
- Implement Riparian Buffer Ordinance (2026)

- Formalize cross-department stormwater coordination meetings
- Expand coordination with BPW and watershed partners
- Align stormwater investments with TIF-supported and downtown projects (if eligible)

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Initiate Stormwater Master Plan update (collaborative process)
- Develop shared standards for maintainable green infrastructure design
- Identify additional stormwater quality improvements from updated Master Plan

Long-Term (2029+ and Ongoing)

- Implement additional stormwater improvements identified in Master Plan
- Incorporate water quality improvements in Boardman/Washington/State/Cass reconstruction
- Expand regional collaboration framework
- Integrate stormwater compliance seamlessly into all major corridor projects
- Monitor and report MS4 compliance performance

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Programmed Projects

- General Fund
- Brownfield
- TIF-97 and Old Town TIF (eligible downtown projects)
- Enterprise Funds

Additional/Expanded Needs

- Dedicated stormwater funding for future water quality and capacity improvements
- Consultant support for Stormwater Master Plan update
- Training and maintenance support for green infrastructure
- Operating budget increases for inspection, reporting, and upkeep

Potential Sources

- Stormwater Utility Fund
- TIF (eligible districts)
- State/Federal water quality grant exploration (EGLE, GLRI, etc.)
- Regional cost-sharing agreements

- General Fund (if needed for match)

Estimated annual program range: \$500K–\$2M (dependent on infrastructure scope)

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Engineering, DPS, and DMU capacity
- Regulatory review workload
- Grant administration bandwidth

Primary Staff

- Engineering
- Department of Public Services
- Department of Municipal Utilities
- Planning
- DDA
- Finance
- Regional partners

Commission Direction Needed

- Adoption of updated riparian buffer ordinance
- Authorize consultant to pursue stormwater utility options
- Establish measurable pollutant reduction targets

Program B: Participate and actively collaborate in the development and planning of the future of the services at the Governmental Center and Law Enforcement Center with Grand Traverse County

Scope

- Participating in the joint facilities assessment led by Plante Moran Real Estate Investment Advisors (Real Point)
- Providing operational data and space needs assessments for City departments
- Evaluating long-term facility options, including renovation, relocation, or new construction
- Ensuring City technology, operational, and asset management requirements are incorporated into future facility planning
- Advising on Law Enforcement Center needs through TCPD participation
- Preserving strategic flexibility by evaluating City-owned properties and avoiding premature disposition of potential headquarters sites
- Coordinating ongoing information sharing with County facilities leadership

- Participation in County/City Committees for LEC and Governmental Center (Commissioners and Employee Team)

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- February 9, 2026: Initial meeting with Plante Moran Real Point
- Provide operational and facilities data to consultant
- Complete joint facilities assessment (City allocation: up to \$24,000)
- TCPD participation in LEC advisory discussions
- Continue coordination between Asset Management and County Facilities

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Review consultant recommendations
- Evaluate feasibility of renovation vs new construction scenarios
- Assess City space needs and technology infrastructure requirements
- Begin preliminary capital planning discussions
- Identify potential City-owned site strategies
- City Commission & City Manager Office participation in Joint County/City LEC and Governmental Center Committees

Long-Term (2028–2031)

- Determine preferred facility strategy (joint, separate, relocation, etc.)
- Develop capital funding plan (potential bond and major capital stack)
- Advance design and engineering (if project proceeds)
- Coordinate construction phasing to maintain service continuity

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Assessment Phase

- Up to \$24,000 (City share for Plante Moran assessment)

Potential Capital Phase

- Multi-million-dollar facility investment (renovation or new build)
- Consulting, architectural, engineering, and technology design services

- Potential major bond issuance

Potential Sources

- Bond financing
- Fund Balance
- General Fund
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing agreements
- Sale or repurposing of existing facilities

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Significant staff time required for:
 - Data collection and operational analysis
 - Cross-jurisdictional coordination
 - Participation in consultant-led workshops
- Engineering support once project advances
- Technology department involvement for infrastructure planning
- Police Department participation in LEC advisory planning
- Long-term capital project management capacity

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Engineering
- Facilities Manager
- Technology Department
- Department of Public Services
- Police Department (LEC advisory participation)
- Finance (capital modeling and bond strategy)
- Human Resources

Commission Direction Needed

- Clarify City's posture regarding joint vs independent facility development
- Provide direction on preservation of City-owned parcels for future headquarters consideration
- Establish expectations for long-term capital planning and bonding strategy
- Confirm continued engagement with County Board and consultant throughout assessment process
- Define reporting cadence to Commission as study progresses

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy A: Actively solicit opportunities to participate on other key groups (for example the airport board)

Scope

- Working with the City Commission to identify priority regional groups (e.g., Airport Board, transportation, sustainability, public safety, infrastructure councils)
- Expanding participation in regional transportation, planning, sustainability, and infrastructure collaboratives (e.g., TTCI/MPO, Materials Management Plan Committee, MMPC, Water Asset Management Council)
- Continuing representation on multi-jurisdictional boards (e.g., NRAA zoning board, joint zoning commission)
- Encouraging City departments (DPS, Planning, CSI, Police, Technology, Utilities) to serve in relevant regional forums, especially related to housing
- Inventorying existing staff participation on boards and recognizing this service as part of formal workload
- Strengthening coordination with the Grand Traverse Band and other regional partners
- Exploring annual joint meetings between City boards and regional partners to address shared planning challenges

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- City Manager and Commission identify priority boards/groups for representation
- Inventory existing staff participation in local, regional, and state groups
- Formalize recognition of board service as staff time
- Continue participation in:
 - TTCI (MPO)
 - Materials Management Plan Committee
 - Water Asset Management Council
 - Addiction Treatment Services Board
 - ALPACT
 - School partnerships through SROs and educational opportunities
- Evaluate potential Airport Board participation

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Expand participation in regional sustainability and infrastructure collaboratives

- Evaluate ongoing fee structures for joint initiatives (e.g., MMP)
- Establish annual coordination meeting between City and select regional partners
- Strengthen technology department engagement in regional public safety and dispatch boards

Long-Term (2028 - 2030+ and Ongoing)

- Institutionalize City participation in key regional groups
- Monitor regional collaboration effectiveness
- Adjust representation priorities based on emerging infrastructure and policy needs
- Evaluate long-term funding responsibilities tied to multi-jurisdictional efforts

Funding Requirement + Potential Sources

Primarily staff time

Potential Costs

- Membership or participation fees (if applicable)
- Travel and meeting expenses
- Consultant participation in joint initiatives (e.g., MMP initial cost model)
- Potential SRO funding exposure if school funding decreases

Potential Sources

- General Fund
- Department operating budgets
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing agreements

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Staff capacity and workload limitations across departments
- Time commitments for board service and meeting attendance
- Need to balance operational responsibilities with regional participation
- Technology and infrastructure representation may require additional coordination time
- Risk of overextension without clear prioritization of high-value groups

Primary Staff

- City Management
- All Departments
- Finance (where fiscal coordination is required)

Commission Direction Needed

- Identify and prioritize key regional boards/groups for active participation
- Clarify expectations for staff representation and reporting back to Commission
- Recognize board service as formal staff responsibility
- Provide direction on Airport Board or other specific board participation
- Clarify long-term funding posture for regional collaborations
- Establish reporting cadence on regional engagement outcomes

Policy B: Build a mindset of collaboration rather than competition.

Scope

- Amending or refining the City Commission mission/policy statement to emphasize collaboration over competition
- Reframing the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) as a component unit of the City rather than a separate entity
- Strengthening internal relationships between Commissioners, Employee Team, and component units
- Maintaining structured weekly coordination meetings between City Management and County Administration
- Identifying shared regional goals (safety, reliability, sustainability, cost efficiency) and aligning participation accordingly
- Encouraging early involvement of operational staff in regional planning to ensure practical, durable, people-first solutions
- Promoting joint problem-solving, transparency, and framing projects as shared successes
- Supporting adequate staffing levels to allow meaningful participation in collaborative initiatives

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Initiate discussion on amending Commission mission/policy statement
- Continue weekly City–County Management/Administration coordination meetings (initiated 2026)
- Formalize expectations that DDA is presented and treated as a component unit of the City
- Identify initial shared regional goals and participation priorities
- Evaluate public safety staffing needs to support sustained collaboration

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Integrate collaboration language into formal policies and reporting
- Expand structured engagement with neighboring jurisdictions and partner organizations
- Increase cross-department participation in joint initiatives
- Adjust staffing levels, as feasible, to maintain service delivery while enabling collaboration

Long-Term (2028 - 2030+ and Ongoing)

- Institutionalize collaboration mindset across departments and component units
- Establish recurring joint regional strategy discussions
- Monitor cultural shift through performance and engagement indicators
- Sustain staffing levels to support continued participation in regional initiatives

Funding Requirement + Potential Sources

Primarily staff time

Potential Additional Needs

- General Fund
- Administrative resources to support expanded regional coordination

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Current workload and competing priorities limit deeper engagement
- Leadership and operational staff capacity may constrain regional participation
- Additional public safety staffing may be required to maintain service levels while expanding collaboration
- Cultural shift requires sustained executive leadership attention

Primary Staff

- City Management

Commission Direction Needed

- Provide direction on amending or refining the Commission mission/policy statement
- Affirm DDA's role as a component unit of the City
- Confirm continuation and prioritization of weekly City–County coordination meetings
- Identify shared regional goals to guide participation
- Provide guidance on staffing investments needed to support sustained collaboration
- Establish reporting expectations on regional collaboration outcomes

Policy C: Traverse City Commissioners and senior staff provide a stronger public facing voice for the community, both internally in the city and externally in the region.

Scope

- Establishing shared expectations for civic engagement and visible leadership participation
- Actively participating in neighborhood forums, including the Neighborhood Association Presidents Council, and integrating department heads into these engagement efforts
- Encouraging consistent attendance and participation in surrounding municipal and regional meetings
- Supporting senior staff service on regional boards aligned with the Strategic Action Plan and recognizing that service as official work time
- Enhancing transparency through coordinated communication, public dashboards, interactive maps, and accessible reporting tools
- Investing in leadership and communications training to promote consistent, clear messaging across City departments and component units

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Q1 2026: Communications elevated to Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Q1 - Q2 2026: Finalize OKR Work Plan
- Q2 2026: Integrate OKRs into budget narrative
- Q3 2026: Add Communications staffing (reallocation FTE)
- Q3 2026: Launch public-facing SAP/OKR progress dashboard
- Q3 2026: Launch software for SAP/OKR for department work plans, employee evaluation, and measurability
- Q4 2026: Integrate OKRs CIP scoring
- Establish shared agreement on civic engagement expectations
- Integrate department heads into Presidents Council and neighborhood engagement forums
- Encourage Commissioner and senior staff participation in regional and municipal meetings
- Continue expanding transparency tools (e.g., dashboards such as PASER ratings)

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Conduct annual OKR recalibration during budget cycle
- Refine performance metrics for measurability
- Link employee performance reviews to strategic objectives

- Expand public-facing digital tools (interactive maps, dashboards, experience builders)
- Provide leadership and communications training for employee team
- Formalize expectations for regional board participation

Long-Term (Ongoing)

- Institutionalize OKR cycle as core governance framework
- Institutionalize consistent public-facing engagement across forums
- Maintain and update transparency platforms
- Monitor effectiveness of leadership engagement and messaging alignment

Funding Requirement + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Additional Communications & Strategic Initiatives Department personnel
- Technology consulting and development support
- Leadership training costs

Potential Sources

- General Fund
- Technology budget allocations
- Communications/Strategic Initiatives budget

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Time limitations for Commissioners and senior staff
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives Department capacity
- Technology development workload
- Balancing engagement expectations with operational responsibilities

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Technology
- Human Resources
- All Departments

Commission Direction Needed

- Support shared civic engagement by Commissioners with the community
- Recognize regional and board participation as official work time
- Support continued investment in public-facing transparency tools
- Establish reporting expectations on leadership engagement and regional participation

Pillar 3 – Objective 2

Increase the participation of Traverse City representatives in key regional groups, to help build cross-connectivity.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Program A: Help facilitate more collaboration on operational items at a regional level on areas of resource management, utilities and transportation

Scope

- Advancing regional coordination on MS4 compliance, water system reliability, and potential wastewater system planning
- Collaborating with regional partners (County, Drain Commissioner, MDOT, MPO, BPW, DDA, townships) on major infrastructure and corridor projects
- Strengthening regional transportation coordination and funding alignment
- Enhancing data-sharing, GIS integration, and operational coordination across jurisdictions
- Supporting regional public safety and emergency management collaboration

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Continue MS4 collaboration and compliance efforts
- Initiate Regional Water System Reliability Study (RFP coordination with BPW and adjacent townships)
- Coordinate with Drain Commissioner on County Drains affecting the City
- Continue design of 14th Street Mill & Fill (MDOT/MPO funding)
- Continue collaboration with first responders on large-scale public events
- Maintain leadership role in transportation coordination (TTCI/MPO participation)

Mid-Term (2–3 Years | 2027–2028)

- Advance Regional Water Systems Master Plan
- Explore scope and funding for Regional Wastewater Systems Plan
- Integrate regional coordination into 7th Street Reconstruction design
- Expand collaborative GIS and data-sharing systems
- Evaluate bulk water agreement updates
- Formalize recurring intergovernmental coordination meetings

Long-Term (2029+ and Ongoing)

- Implement findings from Regional Water and Wastewater planning efforts
- Construct 14th Street Mill and Fill MPO Project (2028)
- Establish long-term drainage district strategies (if pursued)
- Continue leadership in regional transportation and infrastructure funding coordination
- Monitor regional utility partnerships and service alignment
- Maintain City leadership presence in resource management discussions

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Programmed Projects

- Existing capital improvement funds
- MDOT/MPO transportation funding
- Federal HSIP funding
- Stormwater Utility funding
- Water and Sewer enterprise funds

Additional/Expanded Needs

- Funding for Regional Wastewater Systems Plan
- Consultant support for reliability studies
- Additional staff time for cross-jurisdiction coordination
- Potential drainage district establishment costs

Potential Sources

- Enterprise utility funds
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing agreements
- Federal/state infrastructure grant exploration and low interest loans
- Bond financing (for capital projects)
- TIF (eligible district improvements)

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Engineering and DMU workload tied to major capital projects
- Utility system aging infrastructure demands
- Limited staff capacity for expanded regional planning initiatives
- Technology integration and GIS data-sharing workload
- Public safety personnel demands during regional event coordination

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Department of Municipal Utilities (DMU)
- Engineering
- Department of Public Services
- Technology
- Police and Emergency Management
- City Attorney
- Finance (utility and capital modeling)
- Regional Partners

Commission Direction Needed

- Determine City's role in regional collaboration on utilities and infrastructure
 - Approve pursuit of Regional Water System Reliability Study and companion Wastewater Plan
 - Provide guidance on funding strategy for regional planning efforts
 - Confirm posture regarding bulk water agreements and township service relationships
 - Support continued regional transportation collaboration
 - Provide direction on potential drainage district exploration
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POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy A: : Convene (or help convene) leadership groups as needed, to address regional issues such as the housing crisis, childcare and long-term environmental sustainability (see also Pillar 5)

Scope

- Support development of a framework for convening leadership groups around priority regional issues such as housing, childcare, transportation access, and long-term environmental sustainability
- Continuing collaboration with regional stakeholders, including DDA, Networks Northwest, surrounding municipalities, and state partners

- Leading by example on environmental initiatives (e.g., regional chloride reduction efforts)
- Supporting transportation amenities and transit-supportive investments as part of regional mobility coordination
- Utilizing the Neighborhood Association Presidents Council to gauge resident interest and inform regional convening priorities
- Exploring employer-supported childcare strategies (e.g., Tri-Share program participation and potential employer participation model for Employee Team spots)
- Encouraging elevation of regional entities such as Networks Northwest to strengthen coordinated planning capacity

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- City Manager supports proposed regional convening framework
- Continue regional chloride reduction collaboration
- Integrate transportation and transit-supportive amenities into regional discussions
- Utilize Presidents Council to identify resident-supported regional priorities
- Evaluate feasibility of Tri-Share participation for City employees

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Formalize recurring regional leadership forums on priority issues (housing, childcare, sustainability)
- Engage Networks Northwest and local units of government in governance discussions
- Assess potential financial contribution models to support regional planning entities
- Expand coordination on parks and recreation usage in regional context

Long-Term (Ongoing)

- Institutionalize regional convening role
- Monitor measurable progress on shared regional priorities
- Adjust convening topics based on emerging community needs

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Modest funding to support facilitation or meeting coordination
- Potential financial contributions to regional entities (e.g., Networks Northwest)
- Employer participation costs if Tri-Share childcare program adopted

Potential Sources

- General Fund
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing agreements
- State programs (e.g., Tri-Share childcare cost-sharing)
- Partner organization contributions

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Leadership and senior staff time required for regional convening
- Capacity limitations across departments
- Potential administrative support needed for recurring leadership groups
- Recreation or administrative staff support for enhanced park usage initiatives
- Risk of overextension without clearly defined priorities

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Engineering (as needed support)
- Parks & Recreation
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Finance (for program cost evaluation)
- Human Resources (Tri-Share evaluation)

Commission Direction Needed

- Determine City's role in collaborating on housing, childcare, sustainability, and transportation
- Support development of regional convening framework
- Provide guidance on potential financial participation in regional entities (e.g., Networks Northwest)
- Confirm transportation and environmental sustainability as core regional leadership topics
- Establish reporting expectations on regional convening outcomes