Pillar 4 – Objective 1

Focus on building the year-round populations in the core neighborhoods.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Program A: Develop planning tools that allow more residential options, such as ADU's

Scope

- Utilizing existing regulatory reforms to enable ADUs and diverse housing types
- Developing planning tools such as pre-approved plans or prototype options for various lot sizes
- Using GIS analysis and demographic data to identify suitable locations for additional residential infill
- Evaluating supporting policy adjustments, including overnight on-street parking considerations
- Exploring partnerships with regional education and workforce organizations (e.g., NMC, ISD Career Tech Center, Home Builders Association) to address construction workforce bottlenecks
- Support convening of regional partners to align housing production strategies

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Conduct GIS analysis to identify suitable infill and ADU opportunity areas
- Develop prototype planning tools for various lot sizes
- Evaluate overnight on-street parking impacts

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- City Manager supports convening housing partners to discuss workforce constraints
- Refine planning tools based on market response and community input
- Explore legal framework and authority for workforce partnership initiatives
- Develop potential partnership strategies with education and industry stakeholders
- Monitor ADU uptake and neighborhood impacts

Long-Term (2028–2031)

- Expand infill tools if demand supports
- Implement workforce development partnerships (if legally feasible and supported)
- Evaluate long-term year-round population growth trends

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Third-party GIS or planning consultant support
- Legal review related to workforce partnerships
- Modest funding for prototype plan development

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- Planning Department budget
- Housing-related grant exploration
- Potential state or workforce development funding partnerships

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Planning staff capacity
- Technology/GIS analysis workload
- Legal review requirements for workforce engagement
- Limited authority of local government in workforce investment
- Monitoring and enforcement workload if residential density increases

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- Technology
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Finance
- City Attorney

Commission Direction Needed

- Affirm priority of expanding residential options in core neighborhoods
- Approve development of planning tools and GIS analysis
- Provide direction on evaluating overnight parking adjustments
- Provide guidance on exploring workforce partnership strategies

- Establish expectations for monitoring year-round population growth and housing production
- Review ADU ordinance

Program B: Host workshops for residents and small developers, that outlines options and approaches for creating more year-round occupancy options on properties in core residential areas

Scope

- Outline regulatory options for ADUs, duplexes, and other infill housing tools
- Clarify permitting processes, zoning requirements, and development pathways
- Explore policy considerations such as elimination of ADU annual licensing, owner-occupancy requirements, and overnight on-street parking adjustments
- Provide GIS-based maps and demographic data to identify opportunity areas
- Coordinate with the DDA when workshops intersect with downtown or mixed-use districts
- Utilize the Neighborhood Association Presidents Council to gauge interest and tailor workshop content
- Partner with MEDC and Housing North (who currently deliver similar programming) to avoid duplication and strengthen regional delivery
- Integrate workshops into existing housing-focused forums (e.g., Housing Summit) where feasible

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Coordinate with MEDC and Housing North to assess annual workshop schedule
- Support Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) recertification (due May 2026) to maintain MEDC services and grant eligibility
- Provide GIS maps and staff presentations at housing workshops
- Engage Neighborhood Association Presidents Council for feedback on workshop topics
- Evaluate policy topics for inclusion (ADU licensing, owner occupancy, parking considerations)

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Institutionalize annual workshop participation or co-hosting
- Integrate workshops into broader housing summit events and/or other city functions
- Explore partnerships with labor unions and workforce organizations to support small-scale builders
- Monitor participation rates and housing production impacts

Long-Term (Ongoing)

- Maintain collaborative delivery model with Housing North and MEDC
- Update workshop content based on regulatory changes and housing trends
- Track ADU and infill housing uptake over time

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Financial support for housing partners to sustain programming
- General Fund support for hosting space and materials (if contribution approved)
- Staff time for RRC recertification process
- Potential workforce partnership support (if pursued)

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- MEDC (through RRC certification benefits)
- Housing-related grant exploration
- Regional partner cost-sharing

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Staff capacity required for RRC recertification (May 2026 deadline)
- Planning and Communications staff time for workshop coordination
- Technology/GIS staff time for mapping and data preparation
- Avoiding duplication of existing regional efforts
- Monitoring and evaluation workload

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Technology
- Finance

Commission Direction Needed

- Affirm collaborative approach with Housing North and MEDC rather than standalone City program
- Support RRC recertification to maintain access to MEDC services and funding eligibility

- Provide direction on policy topics to be included in workshops (ADU licensing, owner occupancy, parking)
- Approve modest financial support for partner organizations (if desired)
- Establish expectations for measuring impact on year-round housing growth

---

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy A: Explore policy settings to help encourage more full-time residents in residential core neighborhoods and understand the limits of existing policy tools

Scope

- Reviewing short-term rental (STR) regulations (currently under legal review) and assessing impacts on long-term occupancy
- Continuing implementation of enacted zoning reforms that allow diverse housing typologies
- Exploring adoption or expansion of attainable housing and residential facilities programs
- Assessing how infrastructure, maintenance schedules, street design, and service delivery support full-time residential use
- Evaluating policy tools such as zoning, incentives, enforcement, and licensing to understand practical and legal limits
- Utilizing asset management data, service records, and residency patterns to assess infrastructure and operational impacts
- Engaging Neighborhood Association Presidents Council to gauge residential interest and neighborhood-level priorities

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Complete STR legal review and assess policy implications
- Review current housing reforms and year-round residency trends
- Engage Neighborhood Association Presidents Council for feedback
- Initiate cross-department analysis of infrastructure and service impacts

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Evaluate attainable housing and residential facilities programs
- Work with Attorney to clarify limits of local authority
- Analyze residency patterns using service delivery and asset data
- Identify targeted policy adjustments (if warranted)

Long-Term (2029+ and Ongoing)

- Monitor year-round occupancy trends
- Adjust policy tools based on measurable impacts
- Align infrastructure investment with increasing full-time use
- Continue supporting diverse housing typologies consistent with community input

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Legal review support
- Data tools to track residency patterns and service demand
- Policy development consulting (if needed)
- Operating or capital adjustments if increased year-round use impacts maintenance demand

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- Planning and Administration budgets
- Housing-related grant exploration (if program expansion pursued)

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Cross-department coordination workload (Planning, DPS, Asset Management, Code Enforcement)
- Legal review capacity
- Data analysis capacity
- Monitoring and enforcement workload if policy changes are adopted
- Balancing service expectations with operational sustainability

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- City Attorney
- Department of Public Services
- Finance
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives

Commission Direction Needed

- Provide direction following STR legal review
- Affirm support for continued diverse housing typologies
- Clarify appetite for attainable housing program expansion
- Provide guidance on balancing year-round residency goals with infrastructure capacity
- Establish expectations for monitoring and reporting year-round occupancy trends

Policy B: Use the pulpit of the Commission to encourage shifts in housing allocation – to longer-term residential for locally employed people and residents.

Scope

- Advocate for housing allocation that prioritizes long-term residency over short-term occupancy
- Encourage regional collaboration to support housing for locally employed residents
- Utilize the Neighborhood Association Presidents Council to gauge public sentiment and neighborhood priorities
- Support exploration of a regional Community Land Trust (CLT) model to create permanently attainable housing options for local residents
- Partner with Housing North and regional stakeholders to evaluate feasibility of a multi-jurisdictional CLT

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- City Manager works with Commission to define messaging and shared public stance
- Incorporate housing allocation messaging into public forums and regional discussions
- Engage Neighborhood Association Presidents Council for feedback

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Support Housing North and County-led exploration of a regional Community Land Trust
- Participate in regional discussions regarding structure, governance, and feasibility

Long-Term (2028 and Beyond)

- Support implementation of CLT model (if pursued)
- Continue public-facing advocacy for year-round housing allocation

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Future Needs (if CLT pursued):

- Financial contribution to regional CLT
- Administrative support for coordination

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- Regional cost-sharing agreements
- Philanthropic and housing-related grant exploration

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Staff time for coordination and regional engagement
- Limited City authority over private housing allocation
- Capacity constraints if formal financial participation is pursued

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- City Attorney
- Finance
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- City Commission

Commission Direction Needed

- Affirm public advocacy posture supporting long-term residential allocation
- Provide guidance on level of support for a regional Community Land Trust
- Confirm role of the City (advocacy vs financial participation)
- Establish expectations for regional coordination and reporting

Policy C: Explore and assess new and emerging policy and planning tools that could help broaden the housing mix and year-round occupancy levels

Scope

- Monitoring and assessing emerging housing models and policy tools that diversify housing types and tenure options
- Exploring potential amendments to STR regulations in commercial districts (C-3 and C-4) if Downtown is treated as a core neighborhood
- Partnering with regional organizations (e.g., NMC, Northwest Ed, Traverse Connect) to support workforce and housing ecosystem alignment
- Supporting existing external housing or workforce programs through use of City facilities and resources where appropriate

- Identifying practical limits of local authority and implementation feasibility

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Identify and catalog emerging housing tools and policy options
- Legal review and evaluate STR amendments
- Initiate conversations with regional workforce and education partners

Mid-Term (2027–2028)

- Support pilot partnerships or expanded use of City facilities for housing-supportive programming
- Analyze housing mix and occupancy trends
- Develop recommendations for potential policy adjustments

Long-Term (2029+ and Ongoing)

- Implement select policy tools if supported by analysis and Commission direction
- Continue monitoring housing diversity and year-round occupancy levels
- Adjust policies as needed based on measurable outcomes

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Additional Needs

- Legal review for STR amendments
- Consultant analysis for emerging housing tools (if required)
- Modest facility or program support costs

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- Housing-related grant exploration
- Partner organization cost-sharing

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Planning and legal review capacity
- Data analysis workload
- Cross-department coordination

- Limited authority over private market housing allocation

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- City Attorney
- Finance
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives

Commission Direction Needed

- Provide direction following STR legal review
- Affirm priority of exploring emerging housing tools
- Support regional partnership engagement
- Establish expectations for evaluation and reporting timeline

Pillar 4 – Objective 2

Expand the available childcare so it is not a constraint to participation in the workforce.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Program A: Re-establish summer camp at Hickory Hill for 2026

Scope

- Finalizing partnership with a third-party vendor (Grand Traverse Conservation District) to operate the program
- Coordinating facility use, staffing, and operations at Hickory Hills
- Securing required licensing and regulatory approvals
- Ensuring technology infrastructure supports registration and operations, and wifi at facility
- Potential employer participation model for Employee Team spots
- Aligning future registration and hiring timelines with other City summer programming

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Finalize operational plan and vendor agreement
- Secure licensing (HR coordination)
- Confirm staffing model and expectations
- Review and ensure adequate onsite technology
- Launch Summer 2026 camp

Mid-Term (2027-2028)

- Evaluate program performance and demand and consider adjustments
- Adjust registration timeline earlier in calendar year
- Refine staffing and facility coordination

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

- Staffing costs (seasonal personnel)
- Facility operations (Hickory Hills)
- Technology support (as needed)

Potential Sources

- Program registration fees
- General Fund (if subsidy required)
- Potential employer participation model for Employee Team spots

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Seasonal staffing recruitment and retention
- HR capacity for licensing and compliance
- Coordination between Parks/Hickory Hills operations and GTCD
- Long-term administrative oversight

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Parks & Recreation
- Human Resources
- Technology
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives
- Finance
- City Attorney
- Third Party Vendor

Commission Direction Needed

- Authorize necessary agreements for Summer 2026 program
- Support long-term operational framework for recurring program

Program B: Offer pilot programs for new childcare options and models

Scope

- Evaluating employer-based cost-sharing programs such as MI Tri-Share
- Supporting regional agencies in piloting new childcare initiatives
- Initiating zoning amendments to remove unnecessary barriers to group childcare homes (e.g., 150-foot separation requirement)
- Exploring feasibility of City-staff-only daycare options
- Identifying and assisting with grant opportunities through LARA and other state partners

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- City Manager supports convening relevant agencies to assess pilot opportunities
- Initiate zoning amendment to remove group childcare separation requirement
- Explore LARA grant opportunities

Mid-Term (2027-2028)

- Launch selected pilot programs (e.g., Tri-Share participation if approved)
- Evaluate feasibility of City-staff-only daycare

Long-Term (2029+ and Ongoing)

- Monitor pilot outcomes and workforce participation impact
- Expand successful models

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Time

Potential Costs

- Employer contribution (e.g., Tri-Share)
- Grant matching funds (if required and available)
- Administrative coordination

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- State programs (LARA, Tri-Share)
- Regional cost-sharing

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- HR and administrative capacity
- Legal and planning staff time for zoning amendment
- Oversight workload if pilots expand

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Human Resources
- Planning
- Finance
- Communications & Strategic Initiatives

Commission Direction Needed

- Authorize initiation of zoning amendment for group childcare homes
- Provide direction on evaluating Tri-Share participation
- Clarify appetite for City-staff-only daycare exploration
- Approve any required funding allocations

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Policy A: Explore potential millage to support investment in childcare

Scope

- Supporting exploration of a regional (county-wide) childcare millage initiative
- Assessing how millage funds could support facility enhancements, expanded Parks & Recreation staffing, after-school programs, teen centers, and youth "third spaces"
- Exploring partnerships with surrounding communities for shared facilities and program locations
- Evaluating workforce recruitment and retention benefits associated with expanded childcare access

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026-2028)

- Participate in county-wide discussions regarding childcare millage feasibility
- Identify potential program uses and facility needs
- Explore regional facility partnerships

Mid-Term (2028-2031)

- Refine scope of services supported by millage (if advanced)
- Coordinate with Clerk's Office on ballot preparation (if directed)
- Develop operational and staffing plans

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily staff time during exploration phase.

If Advanced

- Program staffing (Parks & Recreation or childcare personnel)
- Facility upgrades or leasing agreements
- Administrative oversight

Potential Source

- County-wide childcare millage
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing
- Supplemental grant exploration

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Staff time for feasibility analysis and regional coordination
- Parks & Recreation staffing capacity
- Administrative oversight if programs expand
- Facility availability constraints

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Human Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Finance
- Clerk's Office (if ballot action pursued)

Commission Direction Needed

- Affirm participation in county-wide childcare millage exploration
- Provide direction on City priorities if millage advances
- Clarify appetite for ballot placement (if applicable)
- Establish expectations for regional coordination and reporting

Policy B: Examine policy barriers to providing childcare options to help facilitate easier solutions, such as zoning changes or start-up subsidies

Scope

- Reviewing zoning standards impacting childcare facilities
- Initiating amendment to remove the 150-foot separation requirement for group childcare homes (7–12 children)
- Evaluating potential start-up incentives or subsidies to support providers
- Utilizing GIS and demographic data to identify suitable childcare locations
- Ensuring alignment with state licensing standards (LARA)

Sequenced Timeline

Near-Term (2026)

- Initiate zoning amendment for group childcare homes
- Begin policy barrier assessment

Mid-Term (2027-2028)

- Complete GIS site suitability analysis
- Evaluate feasibility of start-up incentives or subsidies
- Implement approved zoning changes

Funding Requirements + Potential Sources

Primarily Staff Tome.

Potential Additional Needs

- Third-party consulting support
- Modest incentive or subsidy funding (if pursued)

Potential Sources

- General Fund (if contribution approved)
- State childcare grant (LARA) exploration
- Workforce development fundinG

- County-wide childcare millage
- Intergovernmental cost-sharing

Staffing / Operational Constraints

- Planning and legal staff capacity for zoning amendment
- Technology staff time for site analysis
- Administrative oversight if subsidy programs are created

Primary Staff

- City Management
- Planning
- City Attorney
- Finance
- Technology

Commission Direction Needed

- Authorize initiation of zoning amendment removing separation requirement
- Provide direction on exploring start-up subsidy options
- Establish expectations for policy barrier review timeline