



Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Deputy Director

Job Description

The Traverse City Downtown Development (DDA) Authority serves as the lead agent and advocate for Downtown - focused on the development, construction and maintenance of critical downtown public infrastructure as well as placemaking, events, services and cultural amenities that support and promote job growth and economic development.

Like many downtowns in post-industrial cities throughout the Midwest in the second half of the 20th century, Downtown Traverse City suffered from a lack of private investment, job loss, empty storefronts, crumbling infrastructure, polluted properties and underutilized parcels. Looking to spark new investment and promote additional opportunities for community and economic development, city leaders established the DDA in 1978.

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority is considered a *component unit of government* within the City of Traverse City. The DDA is governed by an appointed 12-member Board of Directors. However, the DDA Budget and large public infrastructure projects must be approved by both the DDA Board of Directors and City Commission.

Over the last 40 years, the DDA has implemented a number of successful and transformative projects that have contributed to the overwhelming success of Downtown Traverse City. Today, Traverse City serves as the economic and cultural hub of Northwest Michigan. Its leafy and pedestrian-friendly streets, boutique shops, unique restaurants and microbreweries, signature celebrations and position on Lake Michigan attract over 3-million visitors each year, helping to routinely place Traverse City on several enviable “top-ten” lists every year. 2020 Census results revealed that the population of Traverse City grew by nearly 7% over the last ten years and Grand Traverse County grew by nearly 10%, making it the second-largest growing county in Michigan.

Despite its success, Downtown Traverse City and the Downtown Development Authority are at a critical juncture. Like many popular resort towns across the county, there is a shortage of affordable housing within the urban core. In addition, the significant increases in property value have forced many building owners to increase rents, which threaten to drive out small independent retailers. Although Traverse City weathered the COVID-19 pandemic fairly well, it is uncertain when (or to what degree) office workers will return. In addition, many downtown shops and restaurants continue to struggle to secure and retain workers. As a result, many businesses are operating with limited hours and service.

At the same time, there is a vocal, organized and active contingent of citizens who continue to push back on new development and openly question the value, intent and goals of the DDA. This group is actively fighting to terminate the Tax Increment Funding (TIF-97).

TIF 97, the largest source of funding revenue for critical infrastructure within the downtown, is scheduled to expire in 2027. There are a number of projects identified within the existing TIF 97 Plan that are currently in the planning and/or development phase and will require several years to fully mature and ultimately realized. In addition, there are a handful of projects that have not yet started, but are critical to the future development and growth of the downtown. In addition, several of the infrastructure projects that were implemented by the DDA near the inception of the organization, as well as older projects implemented under the two TIF plans, are showing signs of significant wear-and-tear and will either need to be repaired or replaced. The DDA plays a crucial role in creating solutions to these challenges.

Position Title: Deputy Director

Reports To: DDA Executive Director

Exemption Status: Exempt

Compensation: Hiring salary at \$85,000, but commensurate with experience and fit for the position; Comprehensive benefits package provided.

Position Responsibilities

The Deputy Director is responsible for developing, implementing and directing economic development and public infrastructure projects and support services within the Downtown District. Working closely with the Executive Director and other staff, they will also be involved in strategic planning, public messaging, DDA and City meetings/convening and the development of materials for board meetings and other communications to the DDA Board. They will also learn from downtown (and community) changemakers and implement best (and emerging) practices, make connections to community partners and resources and shape our work to be responsive to the needs of downtown and the community.

The Deputy Director serves as a champion, cheerleader and leader for downtown Traverse City. The Deputy Director must be a strong leader who invites and embraces engagement with all interests in fulfilling the annual and long-term goals and priorities of the DDA. The Deputy Director must help build and sustain relationships throughout the community and help provide services and programs that are valued by businesses, property owners, public officials and other organizations within the downtown district and the greater region. The Deputy Director must also help shape and contribute to the internal DDA team, assisting with a wide variety of initiative and activities.

Deputy Director Duties

- Build and sustain relationships with community partners and stakeholders and provide services and programs valued by business and organizations within the DDA District.
- Help ensure all stakeholders are engaged through effective communication that focuses on consensus building.
- Advance the goals and priorities of the DDA and provide forward thinking, innovative and actionable recommendations.
- Ensure close communication and coordination with City of Traverse City staff and leadership, including the engineering and planning office on capital projects within the downtown.
- Develop board packet and other communications to the DDA Board as necessary.

- Facilitate and manage economic development and infrastructure projects within the district – overseeing various stages from inception to completion. Responsibilities include coordinating with stakeholders and city staff, overseeing project timelines and budgets and ensuring alignment with the district’s goals and regulations.
- Help manage some contractual relationships to ensure alignment with the district’s goals and regulations.
- Work and communicate well with DDA Board members, City Commissioners and other appointed and elected members of the community.
- Help develop, deliver engaging, clear and informative presentations to officials, boards, commissions, civic groups and the public to effectively convey the DDA’s vision, initiatives and accomplishments
- Keep abreast of local, state and federal legislation and regulations related to downtown development, ensuring adherence, and adjusting strategies proactively to align with changing legal landscapes.
- Represent the DDA at key city/DDA functions, events and ceremonies such as business openings and other significant gatherings to foster relationships and community involvement.
- Provide oversight and management of the Traverse City Arts Commission.
- Management of the Farmers Market and food assistance programs.
- Research and implement trends, best practices and other industry-associated information into the organization.
- Assist with communications adherence.

Required Experience, Skills & Abilities

Education

- Minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in an area of concentration related to the position.

Experience

- At least seven (7) years of work experience with accomplishments that are relevant to this job description.
- Understanding and working knowledge of purposes and roles of DDA’s.
- Successful management of community-based programs.
- Established in leading and participating in outreach and community engagement processes, including use and application of multiple forms of media to reach and have two-way communications with stakeholders.
- Established in planning, development and implementation of strategies and operating plans that address downtown and community priorities.
- Familiarity with how to attain goals in communities of similar size and nature as Traverse City.
- Well versed in TIF, general funding sources available for communities and how to help develop new funding opportunities, including writing and securing grants.
- Experience in setting and attaining personal and organizational performance measures.
- Prior experience in implementing Tax Increment Financing plans a plus.

Skills and Abilities

- Demonstrated leadership, communication and team building skills.
- Project management and adhering to milestone and project completion.
- Understanding of municipal financing and budget development, oversight and tracking.
- Demonstrated ability and interest in collaboration and collective impact and in developing common agendas for addressing complex needs, issues and priorities. A “connector” between businesses, people, governments and other organizations.
- Outstanding communicator in all respects who demonstrates through example the positive influence of inclusiveness in attaining priorities.
- A modern thinker and communicator, adept in social media and modern communication channels. Capability and experience with educating various sectors on options and implications involving DDA programs and initiatives.
- Forward thinker and effective planner who deals with needs and priorities proactively.
- Enjoys and is comfortable dealing with concepts and large visions of the future.
- Successful management of and coping with stressful conditions.
- Enjoys working with people and can readily fit with and contribute to a small staff unit.
- Understanding of small-town dynamics.
- Ability to prioritize in short and long-term contexts.
- Familiarity with work and jobs that have elected officials as primary stakeholders.
- Experience with leveraging partnerships, affiliations, volunteers and staff to maximize productivity in ways that contain or reduce operation costs as a function of output.

How To Apply

We invite interested individuals to apply by submitting their resume and cover letter to liz@downtowntc.com by August 23, 2024