

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
LOWER BOARDMAN RIVER LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

5:30 p.m.

400 Boardman Avenue, Lower Level Cafeteria, Traverse City, MI 49684

www.dda.downtowntc.com

Information and minutes are available from the DDA CEO, 303 East State Street, Suite C, Traverse City, MI 49684, (231) 922-2050. If you are planning to attend the meeting and are handicapped requiring special assistance; please notify the DDA CEO as soon as possible.

1. Approval of October 16, 2019 Minutes
2. Brief update on FishPass (Frank and Brett)
3. Discuss Deliverables and Oversight Responsibilities
4. Review and Discuss Reformatted Preliminary Action Plan
5. Project Timeline and Next Steps
6. Arts Commission Project Update
7. Innovo Development
8. Riparian Setbacks
9. 2020 Proposed Schedule of Meetings
10. Public Comment
11. Adjournment

Any interested person or group may address the Leadership Team on any agenda item when recognized by the presiding officer or upon request of any Leadership Team member. Also, any interested person or group may address the Leadership Team on any matter of concerning the Lower Boardman River not on the Agenda during the agenda item designated Public Comment. The comment of any member of the public or any special interest group may be limited in time. Such limitation shall not be less than three minutes unless otherwise explained by the presiding officer, subject to appeal by the Leadership Team.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
LOWER BOARDMAN RIVER LEADERSHIP TEAM
Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
400 Boardman Avenue, Lower Level Cafeteria
Traverse City, MI 49684
dda.downtowntc.com**

Co-Chair Jay called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Elise Crafts, Christine Crissman, Jean Derenzy, Frank Dituri, Brett Fessell, Jennifer Jay, Pete Kirkwood, Rick Korndorfer, Deni Scrudato, Mike Vickery, Tim Werner

Absent: Tim Ervin, Russ Soyring

DDA Staff: Harry Burkholder, Colleen Paveglio

1. Meeting Minutes: **The meeting minutes from September 18, 2019 were approved as presented upon motion by Crafts, seconded by Crissman.**
Motion carried
Kirkwood abstained
2. Brief Update on Public FishPass Forums
 - a. Burkholder and Crafts reviewed the FishPass Forums
 - b. 183 questions and climbing
 - c. Online questions still open until October 20, 2019
 - d. Great Lakes Fishery Commission will facilitate answers for the forum on October 30, 2019
3. Review Value Statements
 - a. The Team reviewed the Value Statements
 - b. Actions and Goals to be linked to Value Statements
4. Review Comments Received and Additions to Draft Action Plan
 - a. Bob Doyle, SmithGroup, reviewed the Draft Action Plan
 - i. Linking to Value Statements
 - ii. Categorizing the River on a map regarding infrastructure, flood plain, vegetative bank
 - a. Flood plain edge: 10%, Low Vegetative Bank: 35%, High Vegetative Bank: 17%, Vertical Wall: 38%
 - b. SmithGroup: Research information of the percentages pre-development
 - iii. The Team to review and provide comments to SmithGroup by October 30, 2019

5. Begin Opportunity/Design Phase based on comments received
 - a. Public Engagement Draft for next phase
 - i. Meetings with experts and key stakeholders (refining action plan)
 - a. December & January with information to be presented at the February LBR Meeting
 - b. Team to confirm stakeholder list
 - ii. Public Workshop phase to follow (targeting April), Focus Group and Pop Up Meetings
 - iii. Key stakeholders and public workshops to be standing item on agendas moving forward
 - iv. Next Meeting: November 20th
 - a. Reviewing Draft Action Plan
 - b. Stakeholder groups and public workshops
6. Public Comment
 - a. Charlie Weaver, inquired on the Action Plan document being on the website, complimented the FishPass meetings, commented on the flood plain near Riverview Terrace
7. Adjournment. The meeting officially adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Paveglio

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. The DDA CEO has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the DDA office.

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Lower Boardman River Unified Plan

Action Plan

December 9, 2019

Introduction

The Action Plan outlined in this report is a first set of recommendations for the Lower Boardman River, based on the extensive public input gathered in the summer and fall of 2019, the professional recommendations from the consultant team, and the guidance of the Leadership Team. The Action Plan is an initial draft to be utilized to solicit further input from the community, key stakeholder organizations, and the governmental agencies that will ultimately be responsible for the plan's implementation.

As evidenced by the content of the public input gathered to date, the community is moving toward a "water centric" perspective of the river and downtown. The values expressed by the public have been integrated into this Action Plan. The plan provides for both the human use of the river and the potential for preserving and enhancing the natural habitat.

The Action Plan is based on the premise that the environmental value of the river corridor is central to the community; this value should be reflected and reinforced through the management of change in downtown. When the community considers all users of the river (including nature) in the design process for future downtown and riverfront projects, then the Lower Boardman will reflect the value placed on water, land, nature, health, and wellness.

The "water centric" values, best practices, and development guidelines integrated into this plan will translate, over time, into better designs for public places, such as streetscapes, public park spaces, pathways, and transportation facilities, and for ensuring that new development creates a better interface between the urban fabric and the river.

Core Values

The Leadership Team developed a set of Core Values for the project prior to the formal planning process in order to frame the community's basic goals for the river corridor. These Core Values were discussed and tested through an open public process. During the planning process the community reaffirmed the Core Values and provided a set of diverse and substantial ideas that are consistent with the Core Values.

Each chapter of this report includes the Core Values that provided the basis of the recommendations of that chapter.

Two of the sixteen Core Values speak to the broad vision for the Unified Plan and the Lower Boardman River, and these are-

1. *Reflect the City's commitment to the river as a public resource and asset to be passed to residents and visitors in perpetuity.*

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- 2. Contain public goals for the river and City, in keeping with the community's visions about what the River is and can become as a centerpiece for downtown identity and ethos.*

Moving forward will necessitate the development of key partnerships within local government agencies, non-profits, advocacy groups, other key public stakeholders, and the greater Traverse City community. The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Leadership Team will continue to build partnerships through an open and transparent public planning process, and ongoing connections with stakeholders of all types. The planning process will continue to engage the community and take direction from their input and guidance.

At the conclusion of this initial study the Leadership Team and DDA will lead the charge in the adoption of the Unified Plan and the practices and values it promotes. As the plan moves into the implementation phase, the DDA and its partners will continue the process of measuring needs, identifying new opportunities, and establishing priorities for moving forward. Given the strong participation by the community in the Unified Plan, the community will be pleased when all new projects on the river reflect these values and considers the value of natural habitat, as well as human use!

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I. River Conditions and Habitat

A. Intro

The river conditions in the project area have been assessed as to their overall condition and relative habitat value. The project area includes the urban core of Traverse City where historic development patterns did not fully capitalize the river's potential for recreation and access or recognize its environmental value. The impact of development has left a large percentage of the corridor with vertical walls and hardened, steep slopes but has also created some interesting urban places that the community values, such as the boardwalk and the coffee shops and restaurants that overlook the river.

The river corridor in the project area also includes some areas of natural beauty and value. Some of these areas have been impacted by community development in limited ways, while others seemingly natural areas are urban fill masked over by trees and vegetative growth.

The river corridor through the project area has been categorized or divided into six distinct river reaches, based on the flow characteristics and bank conditions. Refer to the Existing Conditions Map for a summary of the river reaches.

Community feedback from online surveys and at public workshops has strongly supported the idea of "greening" the riverbanks through downtown to create riparian habitat and improve water quality of the river. While human access and use and preserving and creating habitat are not mutually exclusive, most residents who have participated in the planning process are in support of habitat as a priority over public access. This bias has several contributing factors-environmental stewardship values, the desire to maintain a passive and quiet setting along the river, and relative beauty of trees and landscape over walls and paving, to name a few.

The section below outlines the basic direction for preserving and creating natural habitat in the project area.

B. Core Values

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning process, most align with the preservation and restoration of the environmental assets of the river:

1. *Be consistent with best riparian and aquatic science, best water and land management practices and must be harmonious with the river.*
2. *Be explicit to the commitment to improve, restore and protect the health and integrity of the riparian ecosystem of the lower river.*
3. *Manage invasive vegetation and protect and retain existing native vegetation and add native vegetation where possible.*
4. *Ensure that the natural flow of the river is enhanced and not curtailed or impeded by any element of the plan.*

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C. Projects

The Unified Plan will include a physical illustrated plan that outlines public improvement projects within the project area, including both habitat and access/open space enhancements. This plan will be developed later in the planning process; however, there are ideas for several broad categories of projects that evolved out of community input, including:

1. Improve degraded and hardened riverbanks on public property with green solutions and enhanced riparian habitat.

The Unified Plan will identify key opportunities along the corridor for habitat improvement, based on public land ownership, slopes, bank conditions, flow and depth characteristics of river, adjacent land uses, public activity along the river, and the general condition of the plant communities.

As noted above, much of the existing riverbank, though covered in vegetation, is compromised in its value for habitat. Degraded banks of the river should be restored with bioengineering solutions where possible, and include consciously placed habitat structures, such as bird houses and hibernacula.

Other reaches, including existing floodplains and low slope banks, provide opportunities to create a diverse mix of habitat types (including wetlands).

Vertical retaining walls are located throughout the project area, typically where space is limited or where past need for land uses such as parking were considered very important. In some places these walls are necessary to support existing buildings and are in good condition. In other locations the walls are in poor condition and are being undermined by the river. Finally, in some areas walls were installed to create more land or for convenience, but are not particularly necessary. In each case, vertical walls (as designed) offer no real habitat benefit.

The ongoing assessment of the walls between Union and Park Streets should be expanded in the future to assess the condition and purpose of other existing vertical walls on public property in the project area.

The Unified Plan advocates for the removal of vertical walls, where feasible, replacing the walls with bioengineered riparian edges. In places where vertical walls are required, but must be replaced, there are innovative wall design techniques that retain soil while offering some habitat value.

2. Where public land exists along the river corridor, create more green space with enhanced habitat and sustainable landscapes.

The public strongly believes that surface parking is not as valuable along the river corridor as green space would be. While the need for parking to support the downtown

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and the bayfront amenities is clear, the existing parking lot sites are an excellent opportunity to create more natural riparian and wetland habitat.

To implement a change in parking along the river, the DDA will need to collaborate with the City, local stakeholders, and the farmer's market to consider the best and highest use for the land where parking lots exist along the river, emphasizing the value of creating habitat and protecting water quality. Further, the community should consider new parking facilities (not adjacent to the river) that could allow the development of more green space along the river.

In the near-term, interim sustainable improvements to parking lots could be implemented to manage impacts of stormwater, such as enhanced landscape buffers.

For all publicly owned river edges, the Unified Plan will recommend habitat improvements including ideas for improving fisheries and aquatic resources, riparian bank improvements for birds, mammals and reptiles, and the potential for creating floodplain and wetland types likely present in pre-settlement times.

3. *Coordinate habitat enhancements with the FishPass (assuming implementation).*
The development of the FishPass Project, assuming it is implemented, offers an opportunity to enhance aquatic species habitat within the river, up and down-stream from the dam. These improvements should focus on the needs of the target fish species and contribute to the scientific research conducted by the FishPass. There is also an opportunity to improve riparian habitat between the Union Street and Cass Street bridges to balance any additional hardened edges built as part of the FishPass.

The DDA, Leadership Team, and City should continue to coordinate efforts with the FishPass project team.

4. *Encourage private development to also protect and create habitat, as outline in Section IV. Community and Development Policies in this report.*

D. Guidelines

1. *Use native landscape plants and habitat enhancement structures on new public projects.*
 - a) Develop a plant palette of desired native plants, based on slope stabilization characteristics, urban conditions compatibility, aesthetic value, and habitat value (e.g. for pollinators).
 - b) Develop a list of target species and habitat structure types to be incorporated into the corridor (e.g., osprey nesting).
 - c) Incorporate native plants and habitat structures (where appropriate) into each project.

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2. Include in each public habitat project a requirement for pre- and post-construction assessment.
 - a) Assess pre-planning habitat conditions and population surveys for larger scaled projects (over 1 acre in size and/or one block length).
 - b) Include habitat enhancements into the design of improvements to target deficits discovered during the pre-planning assessment.
 - c) Re-assess habitat conditions and population surveys one-year post construction to quantify habitat creation success.

3. Monitor water quality over time, as well as the efficacy of river habitat improvements.
 - a) Obtain and analyze water quality samples annually to establish a baseline, and monitor trends in water quality.
 - b) Prepare a base line assessment of riparian and aquatic habitat for the entire project area, including habitat quality and species population and extent.
 - c) Assess habitat improvement for each substantial project as outlined in "Best Practices."

4. Develop design and maintenance guidelines for riparian landscape for use in maintaining public sites and guiding private landowners.
 - a) Benchmark other communities' efforts to promote native landscape in the public and private realms.
 - b) Develop guidelines for design and maintenance based on Unified Plan and input from stakeholders.
 - c) Promote use of native landscape and guidelines through local advocacy organizations, garden clubs and related organizations.

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II. Access, Open Space and the Built Environment

A. Intro

There is a need to expand facilities on the river corridor to accommodate access, movement along the riverbank, and on-river recreation. However, actions to meet this need must be tempered within the larger desires to maintain a natural character of the river corridor (where it exists).

B. Core Values

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning efforts, most align with providing public access and open space along the river:

1. *Identify/prioritize opportunities for multi-modal access to the river.*
2. *Integrate existing river walks and pathways with new connections between sites and destinations that link the river to the City in ways that are physical, visual, aesthetic and psychological.*
3. *Enhance ecological and aesthetic river conditions, take advantage of and integrate iconic structures, and identify new sites and structures that serve as destination or centers of programming to attract year-round access.*
4. *Make nature-based stormwater best management practices (BMP's) a priority.*

C. Projects

The Unified Plan will include a physical illustrated plan that outlines public improvement projects within the project area, including access and open space enhancements. This plan will be developed later in the planning process; however, there are ideas for several broad categories of projects that evolved out of community input, including:

1. *Provide a clear, legible connected path system that allows users to find their way along the corridor, while providing for moments of discovery that feel unique.*

Currently there are gaps in the river trail system that dead end or leave the visitor confused as to how to continue their exploration of the river and community.

The DDA is currently establishing a wayfinding/water-trail signage plan that provides the visitor guidance, as well as information about the community and its history.

While wayfinding systems are an important component to a linear greenway, the path itself must be legible and clear, offering visual/physical clues that direct people to continue their exploration. The community is very clear in their desire to maintain contiguous stretches of the river that are not developed with paths but focus on natural habitat with limited human intervention. Having paths on both sides of the river would make the system very clear, but not as friendly to non-human species. In addition, such an approach would leave the river corridor looking excessively urban, which is not a community goal.

The challenge is to develop a path system that allows some continuity along the river but may move from one side of the river to the other in an adjacent segment. Such a

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system should also provide some diversity in experience where a path is provided, allowing for areas that are boardwalk over the river, walks along the top of the bank, and places where the public street is integrated.

When designing a particular path segment, the Unified Plan needs to consider the least impactful locations for new paths relative to riparian and aquatic habitat. This allows for the diversity of path experience noted above and honors the community's goal of providing meaningful natural habitat.

2. Connect the river path system to adjacent neighborhoods, downtown, bayfront, TART, and BATA stops.

The Unified Plan will identify key connection points along the river corridor that should be integral with a linear path system and develop strategies to improve connectivity to these community assets.

As each segment of the river is improved for public access, the Unified Plan must provide physical/universal access to the river corridor from community linkage points (e.g. the TART) as part of each improvement project.

The alley, service and parking area on the south side of the Boardman at the 100 and 200 block of Front Street is a critical segment where there is a need for vehicle use, as well as large volumes of pedestrians that desire access along the river and connection to Front Street. A creative solution that manages this blend of users, develops an interesting civic space and "greens" the banks of the river for habitat is required.

3. Consider a range of open space nodes and amenities along the river corridors of varying sizes, purposes, and characters, including:

- a) Water use amenities identified by the Boardman River Water Trail Study, such as accessible kayak launches, kayak racks (as needed), portage points (e.g., at Fish Weir) and marketing materials.
- b) Site furnishings such as trash and recycling stations, lighting, drinking water and water bottle filling stations, bicycle parking and signs to provide a safe and clean environment.
- c) Public restroom facilities along the corridor, and/or better wayfinding to publicly available restrooms at places like the Government Center and the TC Visitors Center.
- d) Fishing access points located at known places of angler activity. These places typically function the best when segregated from through pedestrian movement along the linear path.
- e) Resting and viewing places, spaced at key points of natural or architectural beauty, and where people watching is likely.
- f) Small scale community gathering places where groups can gather for photos, lunches, small performances, etc.
- g) Art installations at bridges and other key public areas along the river.

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4. Improve streets and bridges to create a more pedestrian friendly downtown and improve access to the river.

The DDA has coordinated with the City Engineering Department to review and collaborate on planned bridge improvement projects, and the projects have considered the need for pedestrian access. For example, the proposed bridge at Front Street will include a pedestrian underpass on the east side of the river, and the Eighth Street bridge will have an underpass connection on the west side of the river.

The downtown bridges that cross the river north of Front Street are limited in their ability to provide consistent underpass access due to the low bridge and road grades, which cannot be amended due to existing buildings and related constraints.

As the planned bridge improvements are made, the City and DDA should consider pedestrian access improvements in the area of the bridges as a priority to gain efficiencies in construction and phasing and enhance connections at-grade with the street and the available underpasses.

In addition, the City and DDA should consider the potential for creating sculptural gateways at the bridges to highlight the presence of the river and the removal of parking on bridges to increase pedestrian space. The sculptural gateways would not need to be directly attached to the bridge in order to be effective.

The planned reconstruction of the Grand View Parkway by MDOT provides a great opportunity to work with MDOT to make pedestrian safety, access, and crossing the corridor prominent features of the project.

D. Guidelines

1. Ensure universal access and consciously designed experiences for a range of abilities and aptitudes.

Universal access to facilities and experiences on the river is a baseline assumption.

Several facilities which offer access to the riverbank do not meet current guidelines for universal access, some of which is due to the significant constraints of land area and grades. As new (universal access conforming) facilities are put online, attention must also be paid to retrofitting existing paths, bridges, access points and overlooks.

Projects must consider universal access needs at all stages of the work, from the beginning of design to the final installation of railings. Even before design work is starting, the cost implications of universal access must be included in establishing project budgets.

In addition, the goal of universal access goes beyond providing safe and easy access, but includes providing facilities that engage all users and abilities.

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2. Establish design guidelines for public path facilities.

The linear path and public spaces along the river corridor currently include segments that are asphalt path, concrete walks, unit pavers, gravel, and wood boardwalks.

Further, several different light fixtures and site furnishing styles exist along the river.

The intent of the Unified Plan is not to impose strict conformity over the use of materials; however, some basic standardization is important to create enough consistency to provide visitors with the visual clues necessary to follow the corridor.

- a) Establish pavement material standards and width requirements.
- b) Identify typical locations where safety railings should be assumed, such as stairs, ramps, high volume walks along the water, intersections of paths, where fall potential exists over 30 inches.
- c) Consider the potential impacts of climate change and water level fluctuation in the design of new facilities. Examine the feasibility of floating docks, where possible, to provide flexible access and connections. Design walks and related facilities that are at a fixed elevation to include additional design freeboard than typically has been considered.
- d) Public launch/portage facilities should accommodate contemporary forms of non-motorized watercraft.
- e) Incorporate night sky lighting best practices into public and private improvement projects. The Unified Plan recommends that the City and DDA consult with lighting designers to create guidelines for required light levels for both private and public improvements in the river corridor and identify fixture types for typical locations.
- f) Consider value of trees and leafy vegetation to reduce heat island effect and in carbon sequestration and provide for human comfort.

3. Manage stormwater on new projects consistent with current best practices to protect the water quality of the river and the bay.

Simply put, all private and public developments should be designed to eliminate direct stormwater flow into the river and be required to use best practices to cleanse and filter stormwater such as rain gardens, stormwater treatment structures, pervious pavements, and landscape buffers.

A key element to achieving this directive is to adopt and follow the guidelines in the forthcoming "TIF 97 Stormwater Management Plan" for all projects within downtown.

For public improvement projects, the standard should be higher than "do not increase impervious surfaces and stormwater volume," such that each public project include best practices to avoid, where possible, point source contributions to the river in favor of ground water infiltration and filtered overland flow, to improve water quality released to the river and reduce the time of concentration and volume of water.

As public projects reconstruct the riverbanks and adjacent areas, existing roof drain outfalls into the river should be intercepted and treated. Projects should also consider the potential for storage and reuse of stormwater for irrigation.

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III. History, Culture and Learning

A. Intro

The development of a cohesive path system and improved habitat along the river is an incredible opportunity to engage the community and visitor in history, culture and learning focused on the downtown and the Lower Boardman River. The potential for learning and highlighting the uniqueness of the community should be integral into the early design stages for each reach of the river, so that the historic, cultural and natural assets drive the location the improvements made, when appropriate.

Efforts to fully develop the Lower Boardman River need to go beyond typical interpretive signage approaches and include thoughtful displays and landscape that engage the visitor in an active way. This approach to learning reaches the public in a deeper way and helps create a more exciting place to visit.

B. Projects

As the Unified Plan is implemented the projects described below are recommended:

1. *Honor the First People's heritage and cultural legacy through meaningful interpretive experiences throughout the project area.*

The first effort is to build on the existing knowledge base about the First People's relationship with the land along the Lower Boardman. Current sources of data should be reviewed, as well as developing an inventory of existing sites where the history and culture of the First People has been recognized. Cultural Resource specialists can assist in identifying additional sites of significance within the project area, and further defining the historic use of the area.

Once the study and data gathering are complete, the City and DDA should create a thematically linked interpretive system, consistent with the recent water-trail signage plan, located at sites of cultural significance.

A more ambitious goal to celebrate the First People's presence in the Traverse City area is to create a Tribal Cultural Center within the project area. In the months ahead the Unified Plan will identify potential alternative locations for a cultural center.

The City and DDA could coordinate with local tribal groups to develop the architectural, educational and funding program for the center, and locate and obtain an appropriate site.

2. *Note and interpret key sites of European settlement, and the role of the river for industry and transportation.*

Maps and related historic resources tell us much about the community through the early years of European settlement and industrial growth. As part of a comprehensive interpretive learning program, the City and DDA should coordinate with local historians to identify high priority sites for learning and the interpretive messaging.

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3. Provide interpretive theme about geology, the formation of the river, and the connection to lake levels.

As noted elsewhere in this Action Plan, one of the key steps moving forward is the full assessment of the current conditions related to aquatic and riparian habitat. For purposes of developing an interpretive learning program this natural features inventory would provide data on specific locations of rare and endangered species, and habitats of notable interest.

Knowledge of existing conditions will help guide future habitat goals and plans, and assist in the development of design ideas for displaying information and encouraging hands-on learning.

Other key goals in the learning program is to integrate water literacy into the public education outreach and provide interpretive themes about water stewardship and the impact of water quality on human and environmental health. In addition to discussing the Boardman's impact on safe and accessible drinking water, the interpretive education program can highlight measures the City has taken to promote water quality; e.g., the Waste Water Treatment Plants' membrane system.

C. Guidelines

1. Include cultural resource investigations into each publicly funded construction project.

A Cultural Resources Assessment should be prepared as a baseline understanding of the potential sites where it is likely that encampment areas and places of intense use by First Peoples may exist. This study will be helpful in developing the interpretive learning program discussed above, and it can be used to flag key areas of concern along the river where historic artifacts may be uncovered by projects that involve excavation of soils.

During the design and planning for projects being built, future project teams can identify potential construction impacts on historic cultural artifacts, determine where further investigation is required prior to construction, and monitor construction for potential discovery of cultural resources.

2. Continue to integrate the provision of art along the river corridor as it is improved.

During project planning, future design teams should consider art in locations identified in Unified Plan, as well as new suitable locations based on the attributes of the project area.

Efforts to place art should be coordinated with the Traverse City Arts Commission.

3. Engage the local learning community in using the LBR and FishPass for research and learning.

Given the great opportunity to use the Lower Boardman River as a source of learning, the City and DDA should create an outreach campaign to local educational institutions that encourages visits to the river and collaboration on learning objectives and curricula.

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Outreach partnerships could also include research, cultural resource investigations, and habitat monitoring that could be performed by, or with, local learning institutions.

4. Actively manage the interpretive system of the district to reflect new information and special programs and meets the needs of all users.

Interpretive learning systems are most effectively when they are flexible and change over time to reflect new data and understanding of the subject matter. We recommend a regular assessment of the efficacy of interpretive displays and facilities, and the use of interpretive learning systems that can be modified or adapted to new learning objectives and curricula, in addition to more permanent displays.

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IV. Community and Development Policies

A. What needs to change and why

Recognizing an explicit commitment to the principles of public trust in the protection of the river as a community commons, regulatory policies that guide building and development in the downtown area should be amended to reflect the vision and values of the Lower Boardman River Unified Plan.

Modifying public policy will impact private land development, as these are the regulations and guiding documents that shape the use of the land in our community. However, the intent in modifying these regulations and guiding documents is also to establish standards by which public improvements must abide.

B. Core Values

The following Core Values, established at the outset of the planning efforts, most align with the management of private and public development along the river:

1. *Help ensure that new or rehabilitated developments along the river are compatible with the City's renewable energy goals.*
2. *Establish that development sites, destinations and structures must protect the health, aesthetics, accessibility and health of the relationship between the river and residents/visitors.*
3. *Use the natural and cultural values of the river as a guide for decisions about the commercial, economic or utilitarian values to be leveraged for the public good.*
4. *Prohibit further hardening of the shorelines that are inconsistent with the Unified Plan.*

C. Zoning Ordinance Changes

1. *Adopt changes to zoning in collaboration with changes being considered by the Planning Commission.*

Currently the Planning Commission is reviewing potential changes to two ordinance sections-

- a) Landscaping and Trees Amendments which would modify various subsections of Part 13 Zoning Code to protect existing trees and require planting of new trees; and,
- b) Riparian Buffer Zone Ordinance, a new ordinance that would regulate activity within 10 feet of the Ordinary High-Water Line along the Boardman River and Boardman Lake.

The City and DDA should actively participate in the adoption process of these ordinances to represent the values of the community as enumerated by the Unified Plan.

2. *The Unified Plan supports the modification of zoning ordinances to manage the scale, placement and site improvements of new development consistent with the Core Values of the Unified Plan.*

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As part of the proposed Riparian Buffer Zone Ordinance or as a stand-alone ordinance, the Unified Plan advocates for the creation of a LBR Overlay District to manage development in the project area. The City and DDA should collaborate with the Planning Commission to propose a LBR overlay zoning district and modification of other zoning sections (in Part 13 Zoning Code) to manage setbacks, open space requirements, approval processes, and development practices.

The specifics of these changes required thoughtful debate and consideration. The following is recommended as a starting place:

- a) Through the Planning Commission, establish a new building setback, ranging from 15- to 40-feet depending on the reach of the river. Clarify allowed use of setback.
- b) As part of Chapter 1366, Site Plans and Site Development Standards, require the assessment of impacts to water quality and habitat for each new development project, mitigation for impacts, and establish criteria for approval.
- c) Encourage multi-story buildings (within zoning limits) to reduce building footprints along the river. This could also be accomplished through impervious surface limits and open space requirements.
- d) Amend the zoning ordinance to establish frontage recommendations (i.e.; buildings oriented to river with access, windows, and/or well-designed facades) for buildings adjacent to the river, to activate the river corridor and expose more downtown visitors to the river.
- e) Restrict the creation of public and private parking within the river corridor, create a (TBD) setback for parking from the OHW line, restrict direct stormwater flow from lots into the river, and/or reduce or eliminate parking space requirements for all riverfront (and DDA district?) developments.
- f) Adopt incentives to encourage the use of sustainable building materials, energy efficiency and production, and reuse of building water.
- g) Encourage the use of native plants (from preferred list within the riparian overlay district) and the preservation of healthy existing native trees.
- h) Establish policy in City development regulations that prohibit vertical wall construction as shoreline stabilization treatment, where feasible, and encourage habitat enriched walls where they are unavoidable.

D. Amend the Community Master Plan to be consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Lower Boardman River Unified Plan.

When adopting or modifying new ordinances, it is critical that the Community Master Plan supports the values and guidelines that are reflected in the new ordinances. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways:

- Adopt the Unified Plan as a "Sub Area Master Plan" as provided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008; or
- Integrate key findings of the Unified Plan into the next update of the Traverse City Comprehensive Plan, and incorporate the Unified Plan by reference; or
- Create a new Downtown Plan as a Sub Area Master Plan, integrating the Unified Plan.

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E. Regulatory Ordinance changes

A great deal of the public input gathered during the planning process supported ideas that are best implemented through changes to the Codified Ordinances of Traverse City. These ordinances are considered “regulatory,” since they are local laws enacted to regulate activity or set standards for the use and development of public facilities such as streets. These ordinances are adopted by the City Commission and are outside of Zoning Ordinances which are focused on regulating the use of land.

Recommended regulatory ordinance modifications for consideration include:

- Integrate lighting guidelines into the appropriate sections of the Codified Ordinances of Traverse City, under Part Ten-Streets, Utilities and Public Services, and Part Fourteen-Building and Housing Code.
- Amend the Codified Codes of Traverse City, Part 13 Zoning Code, Chapter 1372 Landscaping to reflect use of native plants and preservation of trees.
- Consult with City Attorney, Clerk, and Manager on the alternative approaches to regulating river use. Propose and conduct a fair and open process, working in cooperation with licensees. Propose and adopt changes to the Codified Codes of Traverse City, Part Ten Streets, Utilities and Public Services Code, chapter 1064 Parks, and related codes. Code changes could include volume limitations placed on licensees, Quiet Zones along the corridor, limitation on the use of alcohol, hours of operations, and disorderly conduct.
- As the need may arise, consider establishing outdoor eating guidelines for private use of public space, similar to those used by many communities for managing sidewalk dining.

F. Community Recreation Plan Changes

Funding grants through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are available for many of the projects outlined in the Unified Plan. To be fully eligible for these potential grants, the planned projects should be reflected in the Recreation Plan for Traverse City. Per DNR guidelines, the Recreation Plan is updated every five years, which in Traverse City’s case would be in 2021.

The Recreation Plan should include the Unified Plan recommendations to improve public parks in the project area and proposed trail connections. The City and DDA will need to coordinate Recreation Plan changes with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

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V. Implementation and Management

A. Intro

The City and DDA should establish a strategic plan to pursue the implementation of the Unified Plan, manage development of the public river corridor, monitor river conditions and development, and maintain the river corridor.

B. Core Values

The Core Values established at the outset of the planning efforts that most align with the implementation and management of the Unified Plan include:

1. *Foster and sustain partnerships with shared responsibilities among public and private stakeholders who share the value that the Boardman is a “common resource” that connects everyone.*
2. *Provide that the recommended initiatives contained in the Unified Plan will account for the impact of those initiatives on residents, habitats and the ecological status of the river.*

C. Assignment of Responsibilities

One of the most important set of decisions to be made in the planning process is the assignment of responsibilities for the future development, management, and maintenance of the Lower Boardman River district.

The City and DDA will need to collaboratively review the anticipated needs of the district and designate which government entity or sub-entity will provide management and maintenance oversight and assist in the funding of projects and maintenance.

Considerations include:

1. Who will define issues and establish criteria for managing and adapting the plan going forward?
2. Who will “own” the plan and the responsibility for its implementation, adaptation and success?
3. How will decision making responsibilities be distributed and coordinated?
4. How will enduring and adaptive structures for stakeholder involvement be established and ensured?

As a starting point for discussion we should consider the existing governmental structures in place to complete this work, as follows:

1. DDA
 - Parking (Part of City and DDA??)
 - Farmer's Market Advisory Board
 - Traverse City Arts Commission
 - Lower Boardman River Leadership Team
2. City Planning
 - Zoning and Development Regulations

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- Economic Development
- 3. Department of Municipal Utilities
 - Storm Sewers
 - Water
 - Sanitary Sewers and plant
- 4. Traverse City Light and Power
- 5. Department of Public Services (management and maintenance)
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Streets
 - Sidewalks
- 6. City Engineering (Design and Construction)
 - Street, Parking, and Bridge- Design and Implementation
 - Parks Implementation Administration
 - Traffic and Multi-jurisdictional outreach
- 7. City Police-public safety and emergency response
- 8. City Fire-public safety and emergency response

D. Funding of Improvements and Management

The City and DDA will need to engage sources for funding the construction and maintenance of improvements in order to implement the Unified Plan. There are three important tracks for this pursuit.

As the Unified Plan is being completed, the Leadership Team needs to identify potential grant sources, criteria for selection, and applicability to proposed projects, and then match these potential grant sources to the priority projects for implementation. Sources of grants may be non-profits, federal and state programs, community donations, or philanthropic individuals and organizations. To successfully implement the projects outlined in the Unified Plan, there will be a need for multiple grant sources and to manage the application for, and use of, the grants on an ongoing basis.

Prior to adoption of the Unified Plan, the DDA and City will need to determine how the Lower Boardman River project will move forward in terms of financial and management responsibilities, as noted elsewhere in this report. As part of this process, the DDA will need to consider how TIF funding can be used to fund improvements and management.

Each year the Planning and City Commissions develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which outlines anticipated budgetary spending for Traverse City. Some of the projects may be funded, at least in part, through the City, and so there needs to be effort invested to coordinate as the CIP is prepared each year.

E. Maintenance

The community is concerned about how the river corridor facilities and landscape will be maintained, citing two concurrent ideas- not wanting to burden government services and

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taxpayers, while also ensuring a safe, clean, healthy, and welcoming Lower Boardman. Recommendations for maintenance include:

1. *Provide for regular and timely maintenance to manage waste and cleanliness.*

Significant interest exists for the development of an "Adopt a River Reach" or "Friends of the LBR" program to encourage public and private partnerships to keep the riparian district clear of trash and otherwise well maintained. Organizations like this have been implemented in many communities to reduce the impact on city services, while creating a civic presence of active citizens on the riverfront.

Even with the presence of an active volunteer organization, the City and DDA may remain responsible for maintaining general trash, waste management stations, and bathrooms; the cost of providing these services needs to be considered.

To assist in managing trash in the corridor, the City and DDA should consider public outreach to promote responsible visitor behavior and take measures such as the prohibition on the use of plastic bottles within the Lower Boardman District.

2. *Maintain landscape plantings to provide shade, thriving plant communities, invasive control, recreation use, and views of the water.*

The community is ready to accept a native landscape along the river, (in lieu of manicured lawns.) However, this approach to landscaping is not free of maintenance requirements. The City and DDA should develop maintenance procedures and protocols consistent with community expectations and determine who will be responsible for this work. In some communities, maintenance of native landscapes is completed through volunteer organizations as discussed above, in other communities the work is completed through merchant associates.

Trees blocking access through the river corridor by kayaks and related craft can be an issue, particularly in the spring. In collaboration with kayak licensees, the City and DDA should set basic parameters which can guide tree maintenance to allow recreational use of the river without losing the value of shaded water and downed snags which enhance fish habitat.

Whether the landscape is maintained in a partnership with volunteer organizations or managed by the City and/or DDA, we recommend that the services of a trained arborist be retained to provide emergency services, as well as regular tree assessment, trimming, and maintenance.

3. *Maintain the condition of boardwalks and related facilities on a regular basis and ensure ADA compliance.*

Similar to trash, cleaning and landscape maintenance, the City and DDA must establish or assign an entity to be responsible for facility maintenance and should consider partnerships with private and non-profit community focused organizations.

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The goal is to develop maintenance procedures and protocols so that repairs are completed on a timely basis and facilities remain universally accessible.

Other communities have established a long-term, reliable and consistent funding stream for maintenance, based on steady governmental funding or endowments, or through a combination of sources.

4. Implement snow and ice maintenance plans which limit the impacts on water quality and habitat.

Visitors and community members are expected to use the walks and facilities along the river on a year-round basis. The City and DDA should identify current practices for maintaining walks and streets in downtown and along river, review the efficacy of current practices, and establish priorities for the future. As part of this assessment, the City and DDA should consider and test alternative means of snow maintenance, and logical limits for winter maintenance on paths and boardwalks.

Priorities for establishing future snow practices include pedestrian and user safety and the impact to water quality and the river environment. Consideration of planned maintenance practices should be considered and integrated into each improvement project for the river corridor.

F. Public Outreach

Community members have been actively engaged in the planning process and continue to guide the outcomes of the Unified Plan. As the plan is implemented, each key project and milestone should be completed with the expectation that the community engagement is a critical part of a successful project and community.

Community engagement should include an invitation to participate in the planning and design of future improvements; however, a public engagement strategy can go beyond involvement in specific projects, as outlined below.

The City and DDA can collaborate with existing education efforts in the local community in terms of best practices (e.g., not dumping fall leaves and parking lot snow in river, adopt a CB program.) In a similar educational vein, a website for the LBR should be maintained to promote open communication and information sharing with the public. The website should be utilized to regularly post technical data from the monitoring of habitat and water quality efforts on the river, including information coming out of the FishPass project.

Successful urban places often focus on encouraging community engagement with their waterfront through the programming of civic activity. Program activities along the river corridor can encourage appropriate use of the river, offer educational instruction, entertain visitors in creative ways, and promote the civic value of the space. A good first step is to establish a policy for events and activities along the river, bearing in mind the community value of the river as a quiet respite.

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Moving forward the City and DDA could collaborate with existing event organizations to further integrate the river corridor into the events. Also, the creation of a “friends” group that assists with activities and programming for the river should be explored, further expanding the role a volunteer organization could play.

Finally, the City and DDA should consider the use of enforcement officers or river guardians to help visitors orient to the community and to manage inappropriate behavior on the river (e.g., over-indulging in alcohol).

DRAFT

2020 Pitch Night

Project Name	2020 Pitch Night
Location	Lot B/Farmers Market
Type of Public Art	2-Dimensional or 3-Dimensional
TCAC Program Category	Temporary Exhibit

Project Background

Enriching lives through public art and increasing our quality of life in the Grand Traverse Region through public art programs is a goal of the Traverse City Arts Commission. Targeting a vast audience through a vibrant and engaging event, while working with local artists, will further strengthen the commitment the Arts Commission has made to supporting the arts and in turn grow support and excitement for the arts in the region.

Engaging with the area artists is a top priority for the Traverse City Arts Commission. Seeking the talent that lies within our backyard and growing relationships through our public art programs will only strengthen support for the arts regionally and truly emit an authentic public art program unlike any other.

Project Description

The Traverse City Arts Commission intends to launch Pitch Night, a one-night event that's purpose is to engage and inform artists and the community about public art through a fun, dynamic, fast paced, democratic event wherein one artist will be selected and funded for an art installation in Traverse City. Pitch Night is slated for Thursday, March 5, 2020 at Workshop Brewing Co. in Downtown Traverse City. The venue will accommodate a large amount of attendees and provide a delightful setting for an artful evening. Arts and crafts will be provided for the youth. Pitch Night will be free and open to the public.

Artist Selection

Artists from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau Counties are invited to submit proposals for a 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional art installation. Once the application process closes, the Traverse City Arts Commission's Art Selection Panel will select five artists to present their ideas at Pitch Night.

Each of the five selected artists will have up to five minutes to "pitch" their idea with five slides. The panel of judges and a live audience will have the opportunity to ask questions of artists

following the presentations. The audience will then participate in rounds of live voting to award an artist \$1,000 to realize their proposal in the selected location.

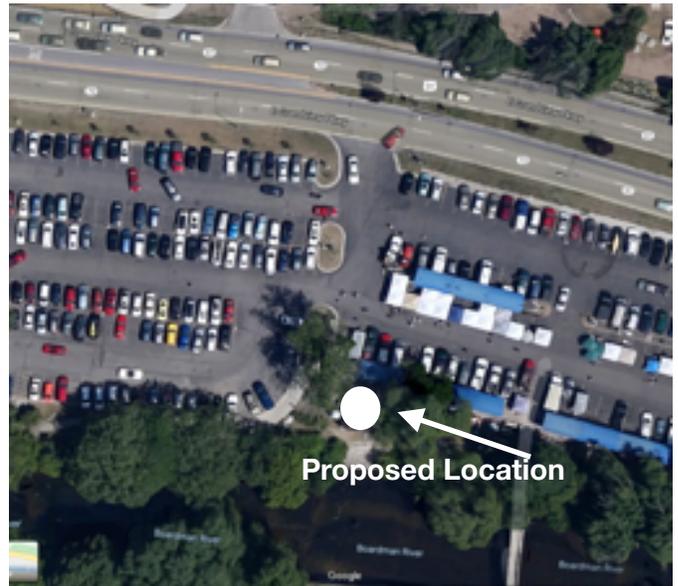
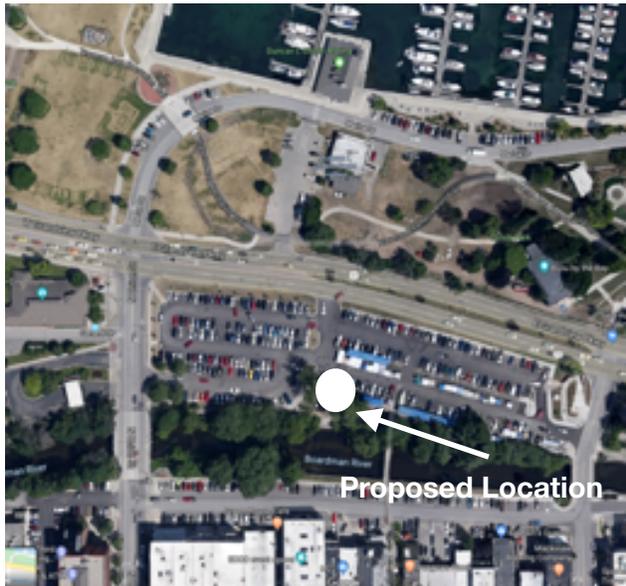
Art Location

Lot B/Farmers Market

The proposed location offers a variety of options for public art submissions, with the potential use of the concrete pad and/or the west wall of the “birdhouse” structure.

The installation is slated for Spring 2020 and to be on display for a minimum of one month or a longer defined period of time that will be determined based on the art submission and Arts Commission direction.

Lot B is parkland and the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the project in concept at their December 5, 2019 meeting.



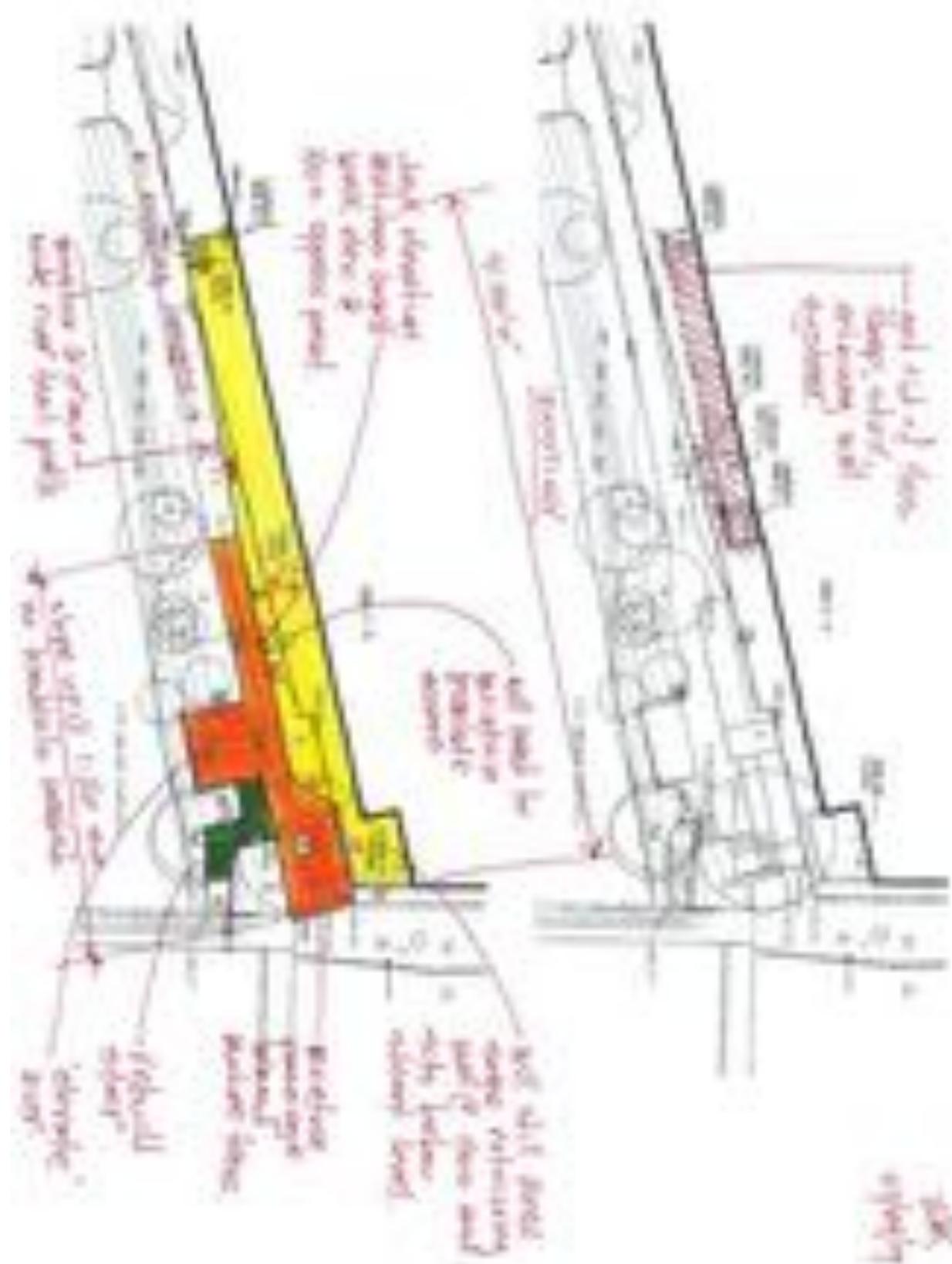
Budget

The estimated project budget is \$2,500 with \$750 from a Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs grant and \$1,750 from the Public Art Trust Fund. The selected artist would be provided \$1,000 to produce and install their art submission. Additional expenses for the project would be marketing and promotional materials.

Timeline

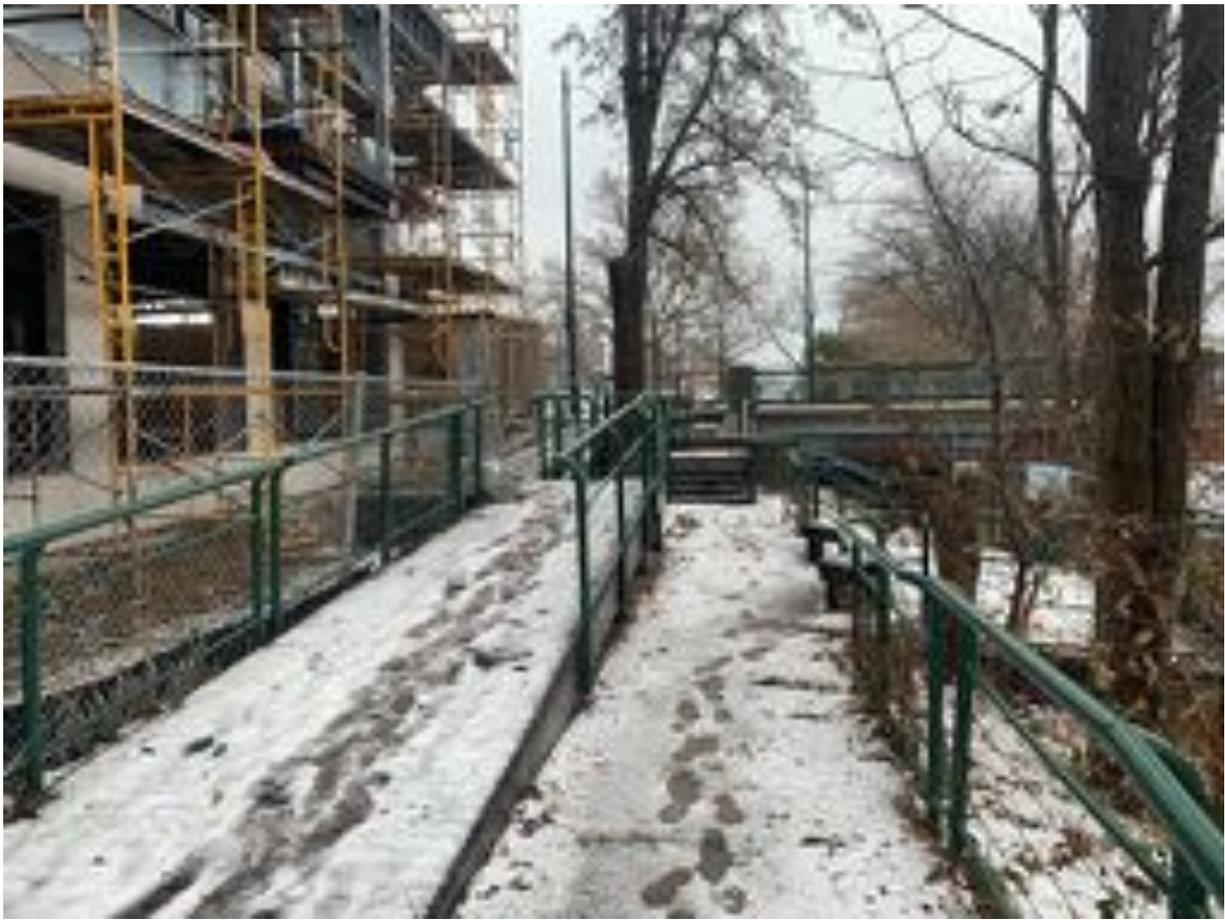
Following is a tentative schedule:

December 5, 2019	Parks & Recreation Commission
December 16, 2019	Farmers Market Advisory Board
December 16, 2019	City Commission
December 18, 2019	Lower Boardman River Leadership Team
January 21 - February 18, 2020	Application
February 2020	Art Selection Panel Meeting
February 2020	Finalists Notified
March 5, 2020	Pitch Night
April/May 2020	Art Installed



Labels
Sept.







Downtown Development Authority
303 E. State Street
Traverse City, MI 49684
harry@downtowntc.com
231-922-2050

Memorandum

To: Lower Boardman Leadership Team

From: Harry Burkholder, COO

For Meeting Date: December 18, 2019

SUBJECT: Text Amendment Consideration for Balcony Encroachment Into the Water Setback

Earlier this month, the Planning Commission discussed and considered a request to amend Chapter 1346 C-4 Regional Center Districts (of which the Boardman River is located), Section 1346.04(e) Water Setbacks to “allow a maximum 36” projection into the Waterback Setback for balconies located above the main level/floor.

During the discussion, the Planning Commission asked staff to get feedback from the Lower Boardman Committee on the request. I have included the staff report that was part of the December 3, 2019 Planning Commission packet related to this topic. The staff report provides an overview of the proposed amendment and a formal recommendation.

I know we are very early in our efforts to fine-tune the Action Plan and specific issues like this have not been discussed by the Leadership Team. However, this does provide an opportunity for the Leadership Team to discuss key zoning issues related to the Boardman and how they match/not-match our overall vision and values, and ultimately the Unified Plan. At this time, I would not suggest the Leadership Team provide a formal recommendation for the proposed text amendment. However, I am hoping the themes of our discussion could be summarized and relayed to the Planning Commission to help inform their future deliberation.

In addition, the Leadership Teams consideration and discussion on this topic demonstrates “proof of concept” for how the Leadership Team (or some type of yet to be created committee) could provide input on key land use/zoning issues facing the Boardman River in the future.



Staff Report

TO: City Planning Commission

COPY:

FROM: Russell Soyring, Planning Director

MEMO DATE: November 26, 2019

SUBJECT: Consideration of a text amendment request to allow for a balcony encroachment in 1346.04(e) - Setbacks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On November 21, 2019, staff received a paid text amendment request from Whiteford and Associates, Inc., to amend Chapter 1346 C-4 Regional Center Districts, Section 1346.04(e) Water Setbacks to "allow a maximum 36" projection into the Water Setback for balconies located above the main level/floor. That the maximum "length of balcony" on each level/floor cannot exceed half of the total length of the structure measure along the Water Setback".

The current ordinance reads as follows:

1346.04(e): Water setbacks: May build to the edge of a public easement; if no public easement, then 10 feet inland from the ordinary high water mark.

Enclosed with this memorandum is a map highlighting the applicable properties for this text amendment request. Some of these properties already have balconies in the water setback area. Also enclosed, is a drawing of 415 E. Front Street, depicting how this text amendment request could be applied to this property.

Staff believes that this is a reasonable request; however staff would recommend this text amendment request be placed in Section 1346.05: Encroachments into the setbacks. Currently in the C-4 Regional Center District, encroachments--building, balcony, porch or deck-- are allowed 5 feet into a rear setback provided they are 15 feet or more above grade. This section also allows for a 2.5 foot encroachment on front or rear setbacks for eaves, chimneys, sills, belt courses, cornices and ornamental features. Currently, there is no allowance for a water setback encroachment.

A water setback encroachment of 3 feet for balconies 15 feet or more above grade, would have very low impact on the riparian buffer zone between the high water mark and the building footprint. A balcony could also soften the exterior of a building by

providing a space for green vegetation and plants that could collect water runoff and beautify the exterior of a building. This amendment would not allow for any encroachment on grade level.

Attached you will find renderings of the planned building for 415 E. Front Street with balcony comparisons. Additionally, staff recommends the Riparian Buffer Zone Ordinance Committee review the request and report back to the Planning Commission prior to the January 7, 2020 Public hearing.

After discussion, the Planning Commission should make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the consideration of a text amendment request received from applicant Whiteford Associates to amend Section 1346.04 to allow for a 3 foot encroachment in the water setback for balconies 15 feet above grade and no longer than 50% of the length of a building, as amended by staff to be placed in Section 1346.05 be introduced and set for Public hearing on January 7, 2019.

415 E FRONT - VIEW FROM THE NORTHEAST
AS PERMITTED



415 E FRONT - VIEW FROM THE NORTHEAST
ILLUSTRATING 36" CANTILVERED
BALCONIES ON THE SECOND, THIRD
AND FOURTH FLOORS



415 E FRONT - HONOR BANK
TEXT AMENDMENT REQUEST
2019.11.21

WHITEFORD ASSOCIATES, INC.

328 Munson Avenue, Suite B
Traverse City, Michigan 49686
231.941.8900 P
231.947.4909 F



415 E FRONT - VIEW FROM THE NORTHWEST
AS PERMITTED



415 E FRONT - VIEW FROM THE NORTHWEST
ILLUSTRATING 36" CANTILVERED
BALCONIES ON THE SECOND, THIRD
AND FOURTH FLOORS

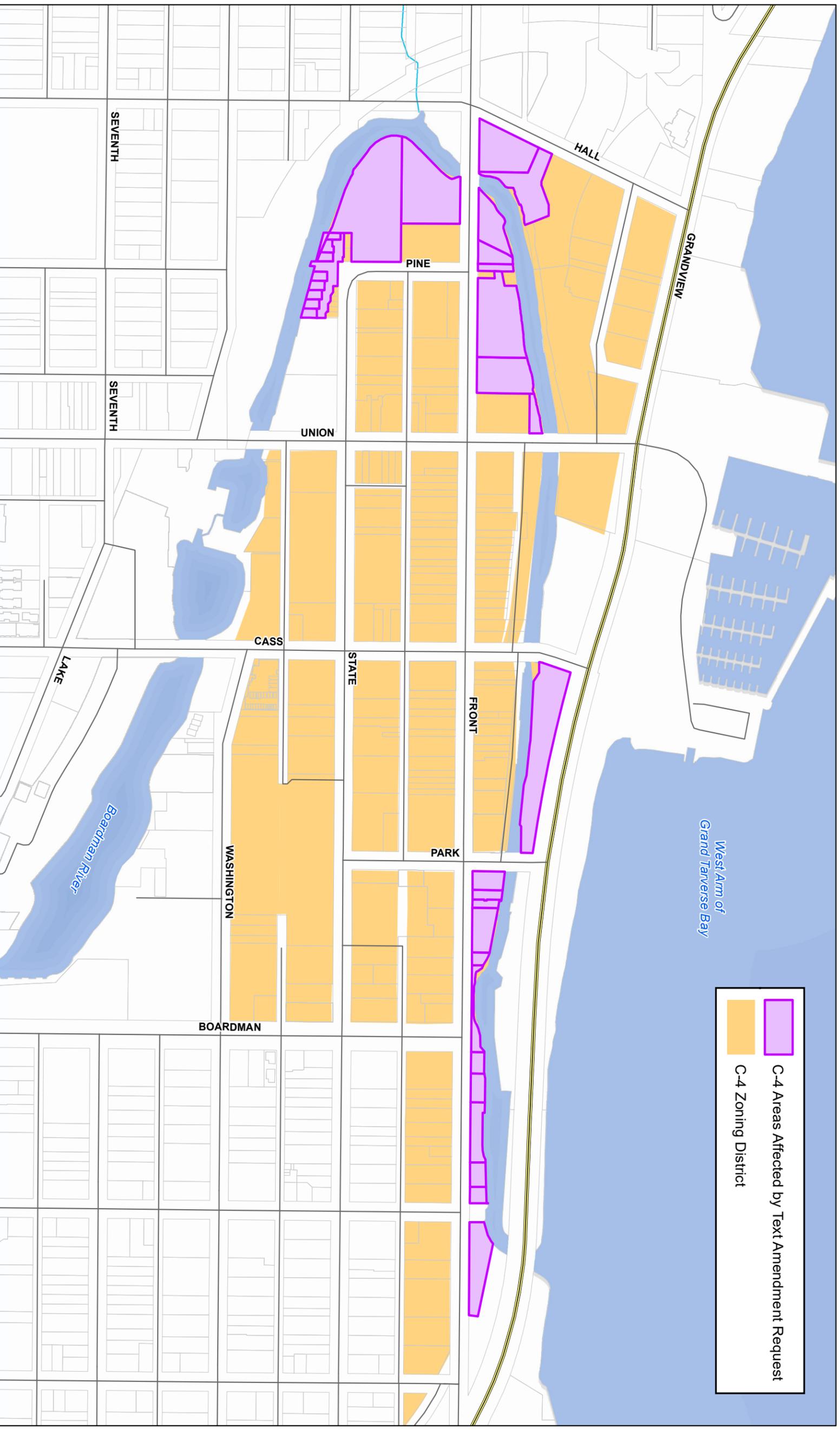


415 E FRONT - HONOR BANK
TEXT AMENDMENT REQUEST
2019.11.21

WHITEFORD ASSOCIATES, INC.

328 Munson Avenue, Suite B
Traverse City, Michigan 49686
231.941.8900 P
231.947.4909 F





- C-4 Areas Affected by Text Amendment Request
- C-4 Zoning District

C-4 Zoning Adjacent to Water Bodies



This map is based on digital databases from the City of Grand Terrace and cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions or positional accuracy. There are no warranties expressed or implied.

Planning Commission
December 3, 2019



TRAVERSE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT NO. _____

Effective date: _____

TITLE: Waterfront balcony encroachment

THE CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY ORDAINS:

That Chapter 1346, Section 1346.05 Encroachments into the setbacks be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

1346.05 - Encroachments into the setbacks.

No encroachments into setbacks are allowed except a building, balcony, porch or deck may project no more than 5 feet into a rear setback, and a balcony 3 feet into the water setback, provided these projections are not less than 15 feet above grade and provided they do not project into any public right-of-way and except eaves, chimneys, sills, belt courses, cornices and ornamental features not to exceed 2.5 feet are permitted to extend within the front or rear setbacks.

The effective date of this Ordinance is the _____ day of _____, 2019.

I hereby certify the above ordinance amendment was introduced on _____, 2019, at a regular meeting of the City Commission and was enacted on _____, 2019, at a regular meeting of the City Commission by a vote of Yes: ____ No: ____ at the Commission Chambers, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan.

James Carruthers, Mayor

Benjamin C. Marentette, City Clerk



Lower Boardman River Leadership Team Proposed Meeting Schedule

**400 Boardman Avenue
Lower Level Cafeteria
www.downtowntc.com**

Wednesday, January 15, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, February 19, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, March 18, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, April 15, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, May 20, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, June 17, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, July 15, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, August 19, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, September 16, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, October 21, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
5:30 pm

Wednesday, December 16, 2020
5:30 pm