



2022

ANNUAL REPORT

www.dda.downtowntc.com

Welcome!

As the lead champion for our downtown, the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority works in partnership with the City of Traverse City and many other local and regional partners to ensure that our community remains healthy and strong.

Our work is built on 40 years of investment in transformational projects and initiatives aimed squarely at building a sense of place, promoting economic growth and supporting our businesses, residents and visitors alike. In 2022, the DDA made investments in our aging infrastructure through the reconstruction of the West Front Street bridge and adjacent roadway. Over a three-year period, DDA financing will have contributed to the rehabilitation of four additional downtown bridges within our district.

The DDA also worked with the City of Traverse City to implement a two-way traffic pilot project on several one-way downtown streets and assemble property for a third parking structure on the west end of downtown. We were also thrilled to finally demolish an obsolete bank building to create and activate a new community gathering space – Rotary Square – in the heart of our downtown.

While we've taken some great steps forward, we can't stand on these past successes alone. We must ensure that we have a strong and vibrant future. That's why in 2022 the DDA embarked on a visioning process (Moving Downtown Forward) that identified guiding principles and key areas of focus that will guide our work in the months and years ahead. That work includes taking a plan for the lower Boardman/Ottaway River from conception to construction, along with making additional investments in stormwater, parking, mobility, housing and climate resiliency. We look forward to the implementation of the Moving Downtown Forward plan.

With so much going on in downtown Traverse City, it's hard not to be excited. We would like to thank the property owners, merchants, business owners, retailers, restaurateurs, residents and visitors for your passion and commitment to our downtown.



Without you, we could not continue to make the needed investments in our regional economic engine and ensure that we can continue to move downtown forward.

See you downtown!



Jean Derenzy, DDA Chief Executive Officer
Gabe Schneider, DDA Board Chair



DDA Board 2022

Gabe Schneider, Chair
Scott Hardy, Vice Chair
Jeff Joubran, Treasurer
Richard Lewis, Secretary
Michael Brodsky
Pete Kirkwood
Pam Marsh
Steve Nance
Todd McMillen
Pam DeMerle
Damian Lockhart
Katy Bertodatto
Audrey Michael*

*Student Liaison

Mission

Collaborate with all stakeholders to provide a world class downtown that is active, thriving, and inclusive. Through investments in sound, sustainable infrastructure and civic amenities, the DDA corrects and prevents deterioration in the Downtown District to encourage historic preservation, to create and implement development plans and to promote economic growth.

Vision

Traverse City is America's most inclusive, family-friendly fresh water destination – featuring world class dining and shopping, a growing economy, entrepreneurial opportunity, and all season recreation.

DDA Projects

Moving Downtown Forward

In December, the DDA Board of Directors adopted the Moving Downtown Forward Plan. This strategic plan was created through an extensive stakeholder and community engagement process, with input from nearly 1,300 community members across multiple public meetings and a detailed survey. The plan identifies priorities for downtown public infrastructure projects and services as well as five Guiding Principles (see right) that will serve as a framework for future DDA resource allocation and investment decisions.

The plan also includes a detailed market assessment, documentation of community interests and priorities, an examination of the DDA's operational structure and financial model, recommendations for future governance and financing tools and actions the DDA will take in the coming months and years.

Moving Downtown Forward Guiding Principles

- **Design a Great Place For all Ages and For Future Generations**
- **Protect and Preserve Small Independent Businesses**
- **Support Job Growth and Varied Career Opportunities**
- **Champion the Development of Attainable and Workforce Housing**
- **Advance Climate Action, Sustainability, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Resiliency**



Read the full
Moving Downtown
Forward report



SCAN ME

Boardman/Ottaway Downtown Riverwalk

In the fall, the DDA completed a conceptual design for a Downtown Riverwalk along the Boardman/Ottaway River, between Union Street and Park Street. The conceptual design was created through a robust stakeholder and community engagement process, including two day-long public open-house events along the river, a detailed survey and key stakeholder meetings with downtown business and property owners.

The conceptual design illustrates significant physical and placemaking amenities along the north and south edge of the river (as well as two new pedestrian bridges), allowing for greater pedestrian mobility and access along the river, improved storm water management and the preservation and enhancement of natural features. The design also establishes a physical framework for new year-round programming opportunities and future pedestrian/placemaking connections with the adjacent businesses.

A riverwalk along this stretch of the river was one of the top priorities listed in the Unified Plan for the Lower Boardman/Ottaway River (adopted in 2021) and represents the community's long-held desire to "turn and embrace" the river. Given the location and potential scope of the design, the riverwalk has the potential to be a truly transformational project for downtown.



Stakeholder engagement along the river in June.





Rotary Square

A longtime dream of creating a civic square in downtown took one huge step toward reality. In August, the DDA demolished a bank building on a lot at the corner of State and Union streets (which the DDA purchased in 2021) and then re-seeded and added irrigation, bringing what's now called Rotary Square to life!

In October, nearly 1,000 people attended the first public event at Rotary Square, a tailgate for the Michigan/Michigan State football game. In December, Santa's House (with additional holiday lighting) was located at the square.

We look forward to hosting additional events, including a concert series with the Traverse Symphony Orchestra throughout the summer.



Two-Way Pilot

In 2021, the DDA initiated a process to investigate and study downtown circulation, as well as the feasibility of converting one-way streets in downtown to two-way operation. The study came on the heels of a successful two-way conversion pilot project on a portion of State Street during the summer of 2020, as well as a review of similar circulation conversion projects in downtowns through the country.

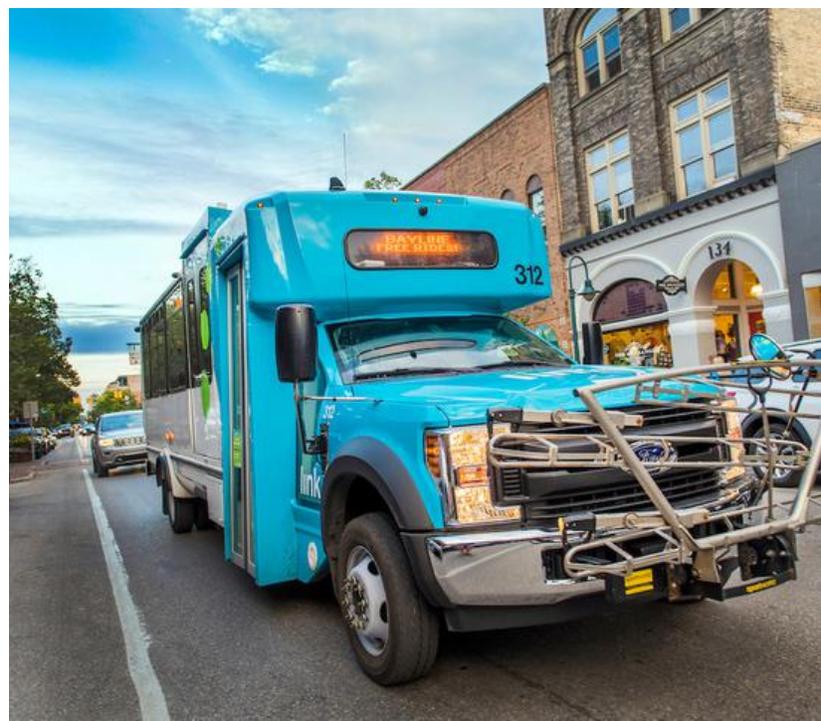
Based on the results of the study, the DDA (in cooperation with the city) converted State Street, Pine Street and Boardman Avenue to two-way traffic under a two-year pilot project beginning in November. The purpose of the pilot project is to continue DDA efforts to reinforce a “to” mobility strategy for downtown (versus a “through” strategy), slow traffic on State Street, support pedestrian movement, encourage better vehicular circulation through a more connected grid system of streets, encourage private investment and increase the vitality of commercial areas throughout downtown.

Mobility Action Plan

In the fall, the DDA and city kicked off a process to develop a Mobility Action Plan for the entire city. Stemming from the Reimagine East Front Street initiative, the Mobility Action Plan will identify opportunities to improve the multi-modal transportation network by evaluating how pedestrians, bicycles, cars and trucks move throughout the city, then developing a plan to make it better.

Parking

Parking Services implemented a non-premium rate in an effort to redistribute permit holders. The reduced cost of monthly permits encourages walking from nearby facilities while reducing traffic and circulation. It also benefits employees by offering reduced rate permits and encourages changes in behavior to park in structures as we continue efforts to reduce surface parking lots for in-fill development.



Investment & Growth

New Businesses

We were excited to welcome these businesses that opened their doors (or moved to downtown) in 2022:

Encore 201
Mundos 305
Rough Pony
Playa Bowls
Blessed Be Tea & Apothecary
Golden Swan Management
I.a. cool
Men's Emporium
Women's Emporium
Eternal Wellness Med Spa
Compass Rose Outpost
Bohme Beauty

Grants

The DDA secured the following grants for downtown. The first three came from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; the last was from the USDA.

\$1 Million for the Boardman/Ottaway Riverfront
\$400,000 for Golden Shoes façade improvement
\$25,000 for Northern Blooms Montessori
\$80,000 for a planned Retail Incubator



Beautifully renovated **Golden Shoes** removed its boxy white cover and reclaimed its historic brick façade. The Golden family also developed lofts above the store.

\$27.5
MILLION
IN NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2022

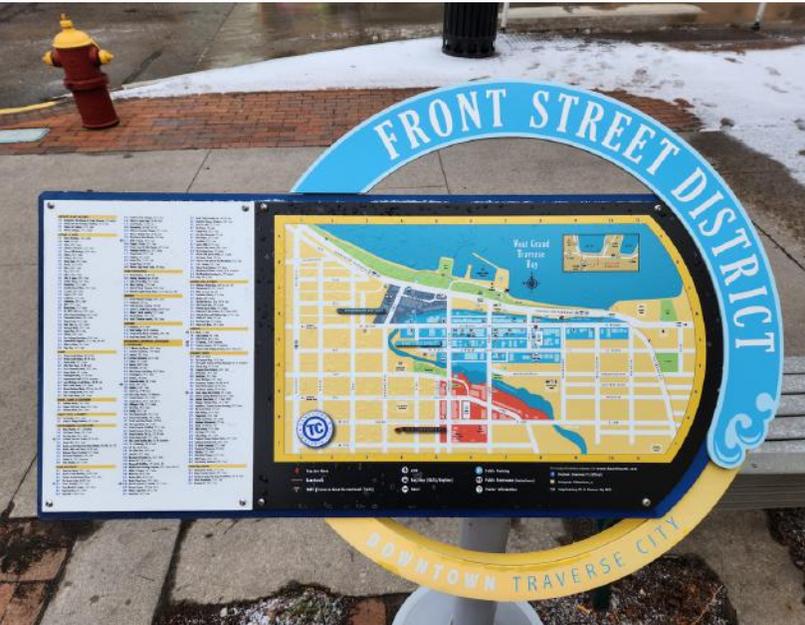


Socks Construction completed a new mixed used building on State Street that now serves as the proud home of **Playa Bowls** and **Cousin Jenny's Cornish Pasties**.

Public Capital Improvements

The DDA contributed TIF funds to the rehabilitation of the West Front Street bridge. The project included bridge removal and replacement as well as an extension of a watermain. The new bridge also included wider sidewalks and new streetscaping that included new pedestrian scale lighting and new trees.

Among other projects, TIF funds were also used for a much-needed resurfacing of East Front Street between Railroad Street and Boardman Avenue.



Wayfinding Signage

In the fall, the DDA worked with Corbin Design and Valley Hill Sign to update and install several new signs to the downtown wayfinding sign system. This heavily used system lets visitors find what they're looking for quickly and easily. Work included:

- Replacement of eight damaged wayfinding signs
- Updating and replacement of 13 wayfinding kiosk panels
- Addition of 12 new specialty wayfinding signs (for side streets).

Downtown Planters

In early summer, over 700 plants were planted in 48 planter boxes (including 21 new planter boxes) throughout downtown. The DDA partners with the Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Master Gardner Program to plan, purchase, plant and care for each planter box throughout the summer. MSUE also uses the planter boxes to monitor and track pollinators downtown. In addition, the DDA partners with the YouthWork program of Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan to help water the planter boxes throughout the summer.



Programs & Partnerships



Sara Hardy Farmers Market

It was another phenomenal year at the market! The DDA continued to partner with SEEDS to provide a physical and online market for dozens of local vendors to provide fresh, healthy food to residents and visitors alike.

\$38,379

Total value of food assistance programs

90+

Vendors (online and physical)

25+

Varieties of locally
grown produce

45+

Varieties of
value-added products



Traverse City Arts Commission



The Traverse City Arts Commission in 2022 was proud to partner with TART Trails to commission and install a beautiful new sculpture ("Wind") from Michigan artist Lois Teicher. The sculpture was placed near the Boardman Lake overlook at 16th Street, just off the new trail that loops the lake.





Partnerships

Among many partnerships throughout the year, a few highlights include:

YouthWork is a unique program of Child and Family Services designed to develop young people and their communities by completing critical projects for nonprofits and government agencies. This crew worked hard to keep our streets and sidewalks tidy (and our planters watered) all summer long!

Volunteers from the **MSU Extension Master Gardener** program worked diligently in the spring to help us plant hundreds of plants in dozens of planters throughout the downtown district.

We continue to receive great feedback from downtown residents and businesses about our designated downtown officer provided through a partnership with the **Traverse City Police Department**. Say hello to Officer Jon Culver next time you see him out walking the blocks!



DTCA/Events

In addition to yearly favorites like the Downtown Street Sale, Restaurant Week and more, we were thrilled to host a wildly popular MSU-UofM football game tailgate at the new Rotary Square!

Events are designed to support downtown businesses while engaging the broader community. As always, head to downtownc.com to stay in the loop on what's happening downtown!



Halloween Walk



Downtown Tailgate



Street Sale



Light Parade & Tree Lighting



Last Slice of Summer



Old Town Art Fair

Shop Your Community Day

Among our many yearly events is Shop Your Community Day, in which 15 percent of every sale goes to the nonprofit of the shopper's choice. In 2022, we are proud to have raised

\$24,794

for more than 30 local nonprofits!



Downtown Tailgate



Art Walk

Downtown Gift Certificates

Our Downtown Gift Certificate program allows people to purchase gift certificates that are good at almost all downtown restaurants and merchants. These make tremendous gifts, and their popularity has been increasing in recent years!

\$1,090,240

in 2022
sales!

How much has their popularity increased, you might ask? Well, we've sold nearly

\$3 million since 2020

Which is....

More than the prior 5 years combined!

We're thrilled to support our hard working downtown businesses by promoting and administering this phenomenal program. Certificates are available online or in our office, so get yours today!



Special Thanks!



Our business owners and their employees are what make downtown Traverse City *truly* special. We're talking about the people in the back, in the front and everywhere in between. The people grinding it out in the kitchen, the stock room, the sales floor. Behind the counter. Behind the scenes. Up early, home late. Hustling, serving, helping, guiding, cleaning, selling, stocking...and smiling. We thank you all for another great year, and wish you best of luck in 2023!





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