

Aspire North 2023 Traverse City Candidate Questionnaire

Full name: _____ Mitchell Treadwell _____

Office running for: _____ City Commission _____

Current position/occupation: _____ City Commissioner/fish wrangler _____

List previous campaigns, elected office(s), boards, commissions, etc.:

Elected to City Commission in 2021, previously appointed to Housing Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Parks&Recreation Commission.

Also serve on the Traverse City Planning Commission, Chair the Master Plan Leadership Team and the Mobility Action Plan, and BATA's Local Advisory Council.

Why are you running for office?

I am running to continue giving younger residents a voice in City Government, to protect our waterways and natural resources, to guide our City's development to facilitate sustainable growth and future economic opportunity.

Briefly describe your campaign strategy

I am working to meet with organizational, business, and community leaders in the Traverse City area, and attending neighborhood association meetings and other local events in each corner of the City. I have begun putting up yard signs with a priority on major roads and high-visibility locations. I intend to have 2 mailers, one in early October targeting absentee voters and another closer to the election day to a broader swath of voters. Furthermore, I plan on personally knocking ~4,000 doors in the 5 weeks leading up to the election to directly reach out to voters.

Why do you think you will win?

The last couple years of incumbency have increased my name recognition across Traverse City, and roughly monthly coverage in the Record Eagle, Ticker, TV, and other news outlets have allowed voters to hear about my views on important decisions facing the City. I strive to be an informed and conscientious decision-maker for the City, and I believe that shows in my public statements and the votes I have taken.

How many votes do you need to win?

___ City elections can be inconsistent and difficult to predict, but I am hoping to get at least 1600 votes or 40% of the electorate_____

Are REALTORS actively helping with your campaign?

[Empty text box for response]

Traverse City goes through an annual budgeting process. What do you think budget priorities should be?

We must ensure that our infrastructure (streets and bridges, stormwater, sewer, and water pipes, etc) are adequately maintained. Staff positions should receive appropriate compensation so that the City can competitively attract and retain quality employees. But the City should also look at how equity can be improved, in filling gaps in the sidewalk network, paving gravel roads and alleys, and improving street lighting in parts of the City that currently lack such amenities.



The shortage of housing inventory is a big topic among our Aspire North membership and the community at large across our area. Does local government have a role to play in this realm? If so, what do you think a local government can reasonably do to address housing supply concerns?

Local government absolutely has a role to play. Zoning can be improved to allow for new housing of a range of types and locations to be created. Through the Traverse City Housing Commission, direct public housing can be administered for those who qualify, and new projects are being developed on LaFranier and Eighth Street. Critically, the City can partner with private developers through tools like PILOTs to build critically needed multifamily housing. While the City does own land that could be developed for new housing, it could also better facilitate development of privately-owned land when it recognizes an opportunity that is particularly well-suited to the City’s long-term plans.

Land use continues to be a highly debated issue, including those elements centered around planning and zoning. Are there specific policies or zoning restrictions you support or oppose?

I am very hopeful about the proposed reforms to R1 and R2 zoning currently being discussed at the City Commission. They have the opportunity to provide gentle infill in City neighborhoods, allowing lots (and portions of lots) that appear vacant to be developed for new housing. Also, by allowing for the creation of (generally smaller) housing units they can help increase supply and address our housing crisis. I am also strongly in favor of a Riparian Buffer Ordinance and potentially strengthening our Tree Ordinance to better protect particularly sensitive habitat and greenspace in the City. I'm hoping that, after the Master Plan is completed, we can take a better look at where developments like new hotels and multifamily housing best fit in our City and encourage such future development.

Should local governments use zoning to prohibit the rental of a residential property on a short-term basis?

I don't believe municipalities should implement complete bans on short-term rentals. However, zoning can be judiciously used to guide the proper number, locations, form, and density of short-term rentals throughout the residential and commercial landscape to help balance the needs of the community.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been described as a regional taxation tool used by the Traverse City DDA to fund infrastructure repairs and improvements required by intense regional use of our downtown core. Do you support renewal of TIF? If not, who would/should ultimately pay for those required costs/repairs?

So far, TIF has proven to be the most effective tool to provide funding and economic investment in the beating heart of the Traverse City region—our Downtown. Renewing TIF would provide for this investment to continue, though it may lead to more opportunities for splitting costs for services that cover the downtown as well as other areas, and potentially revenue sharing.

How and on what issues would you utilize Aspire North's input?

Aspire North can be an important source of insight on issues of how and where new development can occur in Traverse City, for both commercial and residential property. They can provide critical data on the current state of the housing and real estate market in the area, so that we can better identify gaps and opportunities where the City could (or should) step in.