

Aspire North REALTORS® 2025

Traverse City Candidate Questionnaire

Peter Schous.

City Commission Candidate

Why are you running for office?

I am running for city commission because I am committed to preserving the unique communities that define our city. Traverse City is more than just a beautiful place, it's a network of neighborhoods filled with families, vibrant local businesses, and a spirit of community that sets us apart. I aim to support thoughtful development that reflects the needs and values of our residents and safeguard our natural resources. I also want to advocate for local businesses, encourage affordable housing options that do not degrade our city's character, and promote community engagement at every level.

As our city grows, I believe we must manage change in ways that best fit our citizens and protect the character of our city. We all want a Traverse City that remains welcoming, connected, and thriving for generations to come.

Why do you think you will win?

I am hopeful that Traverse City residents will see my common sense approach and commitment to ensure a viable and desirable community for our future generations.

How many votes do you need to win?

2000 +/-

Are REALTORS® actively helping with your campaign?

Yes.

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

1. Critical infrastructure (waste/storm water, streets, environmental....etc.)
2. Public Safety
3. Parks and recreation
4. Strategic initiatives for a more balanced economy

5. Affordable housing

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?

Yes, local government definitely has a role to play in addressing housing inventory shortages. It is important to recognize the housing crisis doesn't end at our city limits, we must strengthen our regional collaboration. Traverse City is only 8 square miles but it is the economic and service hub for a much broader region. A regional approach acknowledges this interdependence and enables shared responsibility, coordinated planning, and more effective use of resources.

An idea that is more city centered is to encourage more ADUs in our downtown neighborhoods to increase housing availability and density by offering tax incentives for home owners. It is important that we protect the character of our city by not overdeveloping low quality buildings to achieve an "affordable" price point.

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?

Continuing to explore reasonable zoning changes should always be explored as our city evolves. The recently proposed changes to the R2 district needs to be reconsidered as I believe it will promote undesirable development in that district. To expand the use of ADUs as potential long term rentals will help increase density in our existing neighborhoods but must be considered thoughtfully with citizen input.

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

I feel that STRs should not be allowed in our residential neighborhoods/districts. If the City would not have already had this in place we would not have the welcoming neighborhoods we have today. To promote primary homeownership and long term rentals is a key priority for me. STRs are great for many people and in many places but they don't belong in our residential districts, however; a residential house in a commercial district should not be restricted.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been described as a regional taxation tool used by the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (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?

I support the DDA TIF as it is a proven way to drive positive growth and improvements in out downtown area. It is the only regional tax sharing tool available. I view the Downtown as an asset to our community and the DDA has committed to improving infrastructure year over year.

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

Aspire North should be viewed as an invaluable resource the city can utilize and consult with regarding the expertise they offer in real estate trends. Promoting housing initiatives, identifying barriers, providing market insights and policy feedback are just a few ways Aspire North and Traverse City can benefit through collaboration.