

Aspire North 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

Full Name: Tracy Jane (TJ) Andrews

Office running for: Grand Traverse County Commission District 7

Current position/occupation: Public Interest Environmental, Energy & Land Use Attorney

List previous campaigns, elected office(s), boards, commissions, etc.: Watershed Center GT Bay Board (2005-2009); Grand Traverse County Soil Erosion Committee (2015-2016); Traverse City Tree Task Force (2017-2018); Traverse City Stormwater Ad Hoc (2018-2019); Traverse Area Women Lawyers Assoc President (2013-2018); Grand Traverse County Democratic Party Vice-Chair (2017-2020); Fair Lines GT (2021)

Why are you running for office? To help transform the Grand Traverse County Commission into a responsible board addressing real community challenges. No more political theater, we need a commission exercising its leadership role and responsibility to bring partners together and find solutions. The board must take public input and expert advice to develop actionable strategic plans and implement them within budget, while harnessing federal and state funding and programs. The ultimate goal is for the county to improve quality of life for GT county families, the local workforce, businesses, and everyone who calls GT county home.

Briefly describe your campaign strategy I work to earn votes in my district by demonstrating my genuine investment in, and commitment to, our local community. I've been an attorney for over 20 years representing non-profits and community groups working for clean air, clean water, clean energy, and a better quality of life. I connect with community through my passion for open water swimming, hiking, biking, coaching, and volunteering in this outstanding place. My *community-first* approach resonates with voters in this district.

Why do you think you will win? I will win because I lead by example and District 7 voters share my core values. Ours is a district with over 50 miles of shoreline along East Bay, West Bay, Boardman Lake, and the Boardman/Ottaway River and over 6,500 acres of protected land. District 7 voters value clean water, access to natural places, and quality of life, and I have the track record of working hard and getting results on these issues. District 7 voters expect a representative who is committed to ethical decision-making and the utmost transparency – they have a right to know everything about what their representatives do in their representative capacity. And they expect the county commission to serve the community above all else. I am confident they will vote for the candidate who shares their perspective and who has the energy and initiative to serve them well.

How many votes do you need to win? I need the majority of votes cast in District 7.

Are REALTORS actively helping with your campaign? REALTORS are hosting my events, displaying my yard signs, donating to my campaign, stuffing envelopes, and, most importantly, they are networking directly with friends and neighbors in support of my campaign.

What are your thoughts on the Grand Traverse County's municipal budget? Budget cuts, increases, or funding initiatives you support? Service you believe could be delivered more efficiently? The county budget is presently spending without sound strategy. The county budget should align with community priorities and reflect an evolving, comprehensive strategic plan describing our county's vision, goals, and short- and long-term plans. While critical community issues include lack of affordable childcare and housing, the current budget addresses neither.

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? Our housing shortage is a regional issue requiring serious county leadership. The county should be planning, building partnerships, expanding access to all resources, and advocating for the good of our community. Without a county strategic plan or coordinated regional planning, GT County lacks direction and is at risk for missing opportunities to build effective coalitions and promote work already underway by public and private entities. GT County should seriously consider our own county housing commission or partnering with the Traverse City Housing Commission to directly address housing challenges, access historic levels of state and federal dollars, and make substantive county improvements.

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? Zoning and its enforcement is the responsibility of townships, the city, and villages. Even so, GT County historically served as facilitator, bringing planners together and developing uniform policies and ordinances on regional matters. While local municipalities are best suited to develop their master plans and zoning ordinances, the county is well-suited to address regional planning, which, by definition, crosses municipal boundaries. Again, the county may also leverage state and federal funding for municipal parks, programs, and projects.

Should local governments use zoning to prohibit rental of a residential property on a short-term basis? It is appropriate for zoning to manage the location and number of short-term vacation and tourist homes, as many townships and Traverse City do. Short- and long-term rentals have different impacts, so it is reasonable to zone them accordingly.

Should the government be allowed to require a property owner to bring something up to code as a condition of property transfer? Property owners are not generally obligated to bring property into compliance with all new construction standards when transferring ownership. However, there are circumstances where it is reasonable to impose compliance costs to meet important public health and safety standards on the seller rather than the buyer of property.

How and on what issues would you utilize Aspire North's input? Aspire North and its members are important stakeholders who must be involved in county-led regional initiatives to address housing, infrastructure, transport, and other important community issues. I welcome your input through informal, direct conversations as well as through formal presentations and comments for meetings.