



November 6, 2018

Planning Commission
City of Traverse City
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684

Dear Planning Commissioners,

On behalf of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce and our business members, I want to thank you for your decision in October to allow more time while other stakeholders in the community had the chance to read and digest the tree protection and replacement proposal.

Allow me to reiterate that the Chamber and our members support a consistent and sustainable city tree canopy policy for the city. While we are still in the process of analyzing and evaluating the current draft, it appears that even with the amendments, this policy goes too far, too fast, especially in the absence of a city tree vision or canopy goal and no direct investment from the city.

We urge the city to postpone action on this proposal and start a stakeholder and expert-driven process over the next 6-8 months to set attainable goals and standards for the city's tree canopy. Through many conversations with members and other business stakeholders, we understand that while they share a vision that values the economic and environmental aspects of tree cover, we feel it must be done with the city's other goals and diverse property stakeholders in mind. Once a vision is in place, it then makes sense to set policies that determine how to reach those goals and standards. We could support a stakeholder and expert-driven process and outcomes that:

- Respect private property rights and values
- Incentivize property owners, rather than strictly penalizing
- Includes appropriate city investment and partnership
- Respects differences between industrial, commercial and residential zoning

After meeting with representatives of the tree task force, we understand in greater detail and respect the work that has gone into the proposed policy before you. We believe that taking some time through the winter and spring months with a diverse set of committed stakeholders can achieve a consensus tree canopy goal and vision for the future of the community. On behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, we will commit to being a willing participant in that process with the goal of identifying a vision the business community can rally around.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you and the city towards a sustainable tree cover vision for the community.

Sincerely,

Kent R. Wood
Director of Government Relations