



NCV Statement September 10, 2026

New Community Vision continues to be immensely grateful for the broad community support and partnership of the Grand Traverse Band in accomplishing our goal of protecting environmentally significant land as a nature preserve and setting aside an upland parcel to contribute to the need for attainable housing.

As we have stated from the outset, we support the ongoing stewardship of preserved lakeshore habitat and connecting people to nature. As part of NCV's continuing partnership with GTB, NCV has continued to conduct bird surveys on the nature preserve now called Mashkiigaki (the former Timber Shores) and is helping the GTB reach out to neighbors for the invasive species survey work that the GTB's Natural Resources Department is doing.

NCV continues to undertake a conservation-development approach for attainable housing through the optimal use of the 25 acres of the acquired property set aside – which means designing a community that fits in with its natural surroundings, with a human-scale and right-size approach, including open space and a focus on conservation.

Since the acquisition of the property in December 2024, NCV undertook and completed a professional conceptual planning process conducted by Urban Design Associates (UDA), a national land planning firm with an office in Suttons Bay. We are grateful for grant support for the conceptual planning work from the Leelanau Township Community Foundation and Rotary Charities. This work has built on our collaboration with Peninsula Housing and their experience with a similar site in Suttons Bay.

The UDA-led conceptual planning process in 2025 included a series of stakeholder focus group sessions, which continued NCV's commitment to community engagement.

These sessions attracted contributions from 75 people, from the following groups:

1. Area Employers – including representatives from the school, village and township governments and business owners in the food and beverage, agriculture, tourism, and construction fields
2. Employees/Those in need of Housing - This group represented fields including education, emergency services, construction, agri-business, township office functions, and restaurants
3. Neighbors/Nearby Property Owners - All neighbors within a .75-mile radius were contacted
4. NCV donors

Across the focus groups, significant consensus emerged related to the local need, desired types and scale, and the aspects of character and values important to incorporate. These included:

- A primary need is for what is sometimes referred to as ‘workforce housing’; housing for year-round residents with various family structures, for prospective employees that turn down employment because of the lack of housing and young people wanting to return to the area.
- Employers and employees conveyed that a significant portion of local salary levels fall within the 60% - 120% AMI range, matching the income range that local non-profit developers can accommodate in bringing new housing units to the local market.
- More stated interest in ownership compared to rental units; 2- and 3- bedroom units were seen as best, and some expressed the need for 4-bedroom units. A particularly prominent theme was the importance of storage and garages.
- Maintaining the rural/scenic character was emphasized as well as the importance of environmental standards and energy efficiency.
- Avoiding short-term rentals or that owned homes would be ‘flipped’; underscoring the need for a Homeowners Association and importance of appropriate deed restrictions and overall management of site to keep it affordable and to preserve community.
- Including open space in keeping with the conservation development approach and protection of neighboring Mashkiigaki. Several participants emphasized the importance of native landscaping for the open space and ideas for play spaces and a walking trail.

The conceptual planning process included initial site, zoning and civil engineering analysis. The analysis indicates that no more than 30 units – and likely somewhat less – are possible on the 25-acre site, including a possible mix of stand-alone single-family homes, duplexes and, possibly, two smaller-scale townhouses. Environmental research on the property regarding civil engineering and initial test pits have been conducted and reviewed with the County Environmental Health Department, identifying the northern area of the site as optimal for drainfields.

Taken together, this conceptual planning work is now serving as a planning baseline for NCV to explore partnership prospects and for more detailed planning.

NCV’s discussions exploring partnership prospects emphasize coordination and collaboration with Leelanau Township and Northport Village. This has included supporting and participating in special public meetings on housing convened by the township and village, including on April 28, 2026 where we shared the results of the conceptual planning process and also heard more information about the demand for rental as well as owned housing.

Currently there are multiple efforts underway in our community to meet the critical need for attainable housing and the need requires a mix of housing in terms of size, target income range and rental and ownership. In addition to NCV’s 25 acres, the township and the

village have both been taking steps to make small parcels they own available for attainable housing.

Our partnership prospect discussions are based on working entirely with the best intentions for our community and will seek to align and collaborate with the township and village towards the right mix of projects for the community. As a community organization we are open to other concepts for community consideration and ongoing conversation.

For more information see www.newcommunityvision.org