

Candidate to be Included on Slate

COMPONENT NAME: Michigan Chapter, American Planning Association

POSITION: At Large Board Member

CANDIDATE: Claire Karner, AICP

APA ID NUMBER: 287718

CANDIDATE POSITION STATEMENT

My interest in serving on the Michigan Association of Planning Board is rooted in a strong desire to serve my community and help shape places that are more resilient, equitable, and livable. Planning has given me the opportunity to combine my personal passions with meaningful public service, particularly through work focused on climate adaptation, community resiliency, and the relationship between policy and the built environment. I have always been fascinated by how state, local, and federal policy influences the way communities grow and develop, and I value the important role planners play in guiding that process. Throughout my career in the non-profit, private, and public sectors, I have been fortunate to work on projects that emphasize sustainability, social equity, and long-term community well-being. I am excited for the opportunity to serve on the MAP Board, learn more about how MAP influences planning and policy across Michigan, and contribute the perspective of a planner working in rural northern Michigan.

One of the aspects of planning I value most is the public process. While often complex and messy, I genuinely enjoy bringing people together, engaging diverse community members, and finding ways to make planning and decision-making more accessible, tangible, and meaningful. In recent years, I have had the opportunity to focus more directly on implementation, serving as the project manager for a new two-mile Safe Routes to School trail system, development of a civic plaza, and the establishment of a new Corridor Improvement Authority and related Development and TIF Plan for East Bay Township. These experiences have strengthened my understanding of how planning moves from vision to reality and reinforced my passion for creating safe, connected, people-centered communities. As a lifelong bicycle commuter and active transportation advocate, I look forward to bringing both a practical and values-driven perspective to the MAP Board while continuing to learn from planners across the state.

Work Experience

2019 – Present: Director of Planning & Zoning, East Bay Charter Township, Traverse City, MI
2016 – 2019: Associate Planner, Beckett & Raeder, Inc., Traverse City, MI
2013 – 2016: Community Planner, Land Information Access Association, Traverse City, MI
2011 – 2013: SmartTrips Program Coordinator, Lane Transit District, Eugene, OR

Education

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, Master of Community and Regional Planning, 2011
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Bachelor of Natural Resources and Environment, 2008

Achievements & Affiliations

Member of American Institute of Certified Planners, 2015 – Present
Member of Michigan Association of Planning, 2013 – Present
MAP Inclusive Design Toolkit Advisory Committee, 2026

MAP Conference Host Committee, 2023

MAP Conference presenter and award reviewer

Homestretch Nonprofit Board of Directors, 2018 – Present

Northwest Regional Airport Authority Zoning Board Member, 2021 – Present

Cherry Capital Airport Joint Zoning Commission, 2025 – Present

Northwest Regional Child Care Planning Coalition, 2023 – Present

Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI), Technical Committee

Roger Williams Planner Award, Grand Traverse County Chapter of the MTA, 2024

Voted one of the region's 40 most influential individuals under 40 by Traverse City Business News, 2021