

GROUNDWORK LEGACY

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities is a nonprofit organization that began in 1995 as the Michigan Land Use Institute (MLUI). Early projects still inspire the vision, spirit, and goals of Groundwork today. The organization's first project was working to improve environmental practices of oil and gas drilling in northern Michigan. Our advocacy resulted in new protections for waterways, forests, and farmland—and along the way we launched innovative communications strategies for citizen-led advocacy.

We were also involved in community livability and transportation issues from the earliest years. A hallmark victory was redirecting a highway project that would have degraded the Boardman River Valley by filling wetlands and creating a major new traffic artery that would have fueled sprawl. Groundwork responded by supporting a regional visioning process called the Grand Vision that continues to be a blueprint for community development in northwest Michigan and beyond.

One of the first groups to see the economic, health, and environmental connections of locally grown foods, Groundwork became a national leader in the farm-to-school movement. We also expanded markets for local food and elevated the culture of local food—vivid examples of how Groundwork vision, strategy, and advocacy helped reshape a food system for the better.

Groundwork's leadership in the push to shut down the Line 5 oil pipeline reveals the power of good research, strategic grassroots advocacy, coalition-building, and multi-platform communication—all while advancing clean energy throughout the state. This exemplifies our solutions-based approach to advocacy.



BECOME A MEMBER

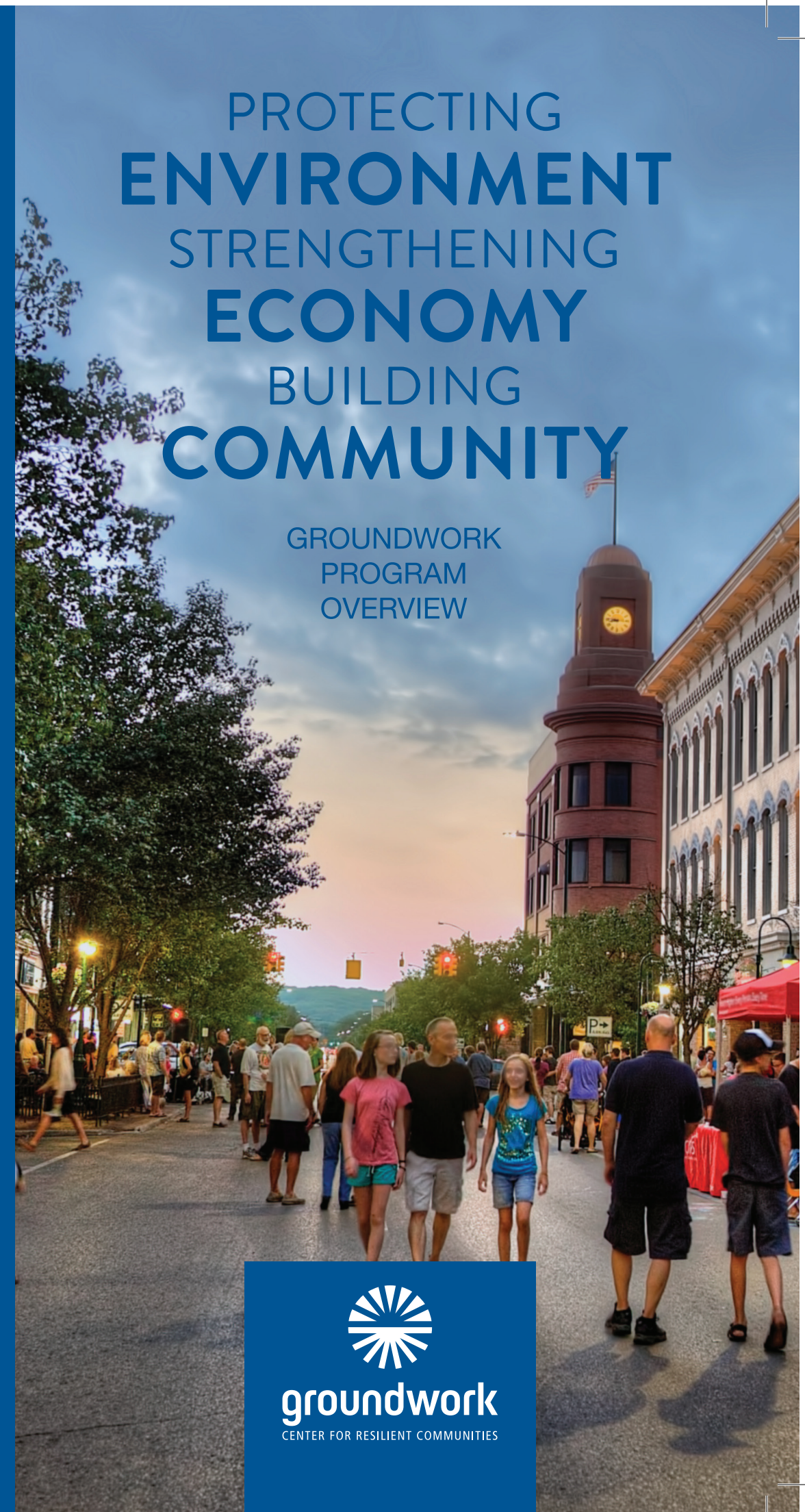
Join us in helping communities thrive throughout northwest Michigan and beyond. Sign up!

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities is a registered 501C3 nonprofit organization. We receive funding from memberships, individual donations, and foundation grants.

To become a member and learn more about supporting Groundwork broadly or specific programs, go to groundworkcenter.org, email info@groundworkcenter.org or call 231.941.6584.

PROTECTING
ENVIRONMENT
STRENGTHENING
ECONOMY
BUILDING
COMMUNITY

GROUNDWORK
PROGRAM
OVERVIEW



CLEAN ENERGY

PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

Groundwork has made clean-energy advocacy one of its pillar programs because locally generated renewable power can be a powerful tool that enhances community resilience.

Groundwork has raised the profile of clean energy statewide by hosting the Michigan Clean Energy Conference. First held in 2017, the annual event attracts a range of influential speakers, from those with international standing to people working to put solar on church roofs in Detroit. By connecting people, ideas, and capital, the conference is helping create new energy leaders in Michigan while furthering the state’s clean energy infrastructure.

Groundwork is also working locally in northwest Lower Michigan to increase local power generation by offering an innovative crowd-funding platform—SolaRISE—that helps schools, churches, farms, and nonprofits raise capital to build their own clean energy systems. For more than a decade, we have encouraged northern Michigan communities to become leaders in clean energy, and in August 2018, Traverse City became the first city in Michigan to commit to using 100% renewable energy, by 2040, in part as a result of our advocacy.

Groundwork has also been a leader in the campaign to shut down the Line 5 oil pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac. We organized the high-profile Oil and Water Don’t Mix campaign, and then partnered to create the Great Lakes Business Network. Our work to decommission Line 5 protects not only a globally rare environment, but also hundreds of businesses and thousands of Michigan jobs.

MOVING FORWARD, GROUNDWORK’S CLEAN ENERGY TEAM WILL BE ...

- Continuing to host the annual Michigan Clean Energy Conference
- Helping more schools, churches, and nonprofits invest in clean energy through the SolaRISE fundraising platform. SolaRISE.us
- Advocating and helping more communities commit to 100% clean energy
- Pushing hard to decommission Line 5
- Expanding the Great Lakes Business Network’s membership and environmental mission

STRONG CITIES & TOWNS

REDUCING TRAFFIC AND STRENGTHENING DOWNTOWNS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Research shows the most successful communities in America are comprised of stable downtowns paired with thriving, affordable neighborhoods nearby—neighborhoods designed for walking, biking and neighborly connection. Groundwork believes communities have the responsibility to create the structures, systems and culture that create that resilience.

Increasing transportation options within towns—walking, biking, busing, and car-sharing—is a central goal of our Strong Cities & Towns initiatives. By creating more transportation choices, increasing nearby affordable housing, and reducing a town’s reliance on cars, we can improve the quality of life and economic vitality of our communities.

As for transportation between towns, one of Groundwork’s recent high-profile projects has been partnering with the Michigan Department of Transportation to re-establish a passenger rail line between Ann Arbor and Traverse City. The train would benefit communities along the line by increasing economic development and helping communities attract young workers, who are more likely to prefer traveling by train. The line would also provide a strong economic link between southeast Michigan and northwest Michigan.

Groundwork is in the start-up phase of a transportation and mobility visioning process for the Traverse City area. Named the TC Mobility Lab, the project will assess new transportation-related technology and services that give communities more tools than ever for reducing traffic congestion, parking problems, and transportation expense and look for ways to introduce innovations here.

MOVING FORWARD, GROUNDWORK’S STRONG CITIES & TOWNS TEAM WILL BE ...

- Working to keep momentum in the Ann Arbor to Traverse City passenger rail project
- Exploring new transportation options that minimize traffic in and around Traverse City

LOCAL FOOD & FARMING

IMPROVING HEALTH AND FARM FAMILY INCOME

One of the most exciting and hopeful trends in America is a renewed appreciation for fresh, healthy food grown by local farm businesses. Groundwork saw the resilience-building value of this movement early on and became a strong advocate for local agriculture in northwest Lower Michigan.

We were one of the first organizations nationwide to launch a local-foods marketing company—called Taste the Local Difference—which helps families and businesses buy from local farms. Groundwork is also at the forefront nationally in helping schools find ways to serve local, healthy foods in cafeterias, and in educating children about where their food comes from. Our Farm to School advocacy, supported by FoodCorps service members, has become a national model. We are working to ensure that local food is accessible at food pantries and other agencies focused on food security.

A program we incubated in northern Michigan, 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms, has been adopted by the state to serve healthier lunches of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes to hundreds of thousands of children in 43 Michigan counties. (We are advocating for statewide coverage.) The increased school sales also puts money in the pockets of hundreds of Michigan farm families.

Groundwork is an early state leader in *culinary medicine*, a promising strategy that teaches physicians and other healthcare providers nutrition and cooking skills to enhance the health of providers themselves and their patients.

MOVING FORWARD, GROUNDWORK’S FOOD & FARMING TEAM WILL BE ...

- Focusing on expanding the 10 Cents a Meal program statewide
- Expanding farm to school programs to more schools and the culinary medicine program to more healthcare practitioners
- Hosting both a 1-day Culinary Medicine Workshop in March 2019 and a 3-day Farms, Food & Health Conference in September 2019
- Strengthening the relationships and systems that have made the Traverse Region’s local food economy one of the most renowned in the nation
- Celebrating our community at Groundwork’s Harvest at the Commons, one of the largest Farm to Table dinners in the country



Photo courtesy of Oryana