



City Manager Report

August 13, 2026

Park Street Planning

- The City is in the process of planning improvements on Park Street between Campbell Road and Mount Baldhead Park. The improvements currently being evaluated include:
 - Installing a pedestrian facility (sidewalk, widened shoulder, etc.)
 - Road resurfacing
 - Water service replacement as needed to comply with the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) Lead and Copper Rule (some to inside the home/building)
 - Sanitary sewer improvements
 - Drainage and stormwater management improvements
- The City's engineering consultant, Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V), has obtained topographic survey information for the corridor and is beginning to evaluate the various elements listed above.
- The City is seeking input to help guide the planning and design processes. The City is holding an open house on:
 - September 1st from 4PM - 7PM
 - Location: Mount Baldhead Park (Weather backup location: City Hall, 102 Butler Street, Saugatuck, MI 49453)
- F&V staff will have displays with the survey and other information to be able to review any concerns that you have currently and get your input on the future of Park Street.

City Files Motions to End Floating Home Litigation

- The City has filed five motions for summary disposition in Allegan County Circuit Court, asking the court to resolve nearly all remaining claims in the long-running lawsuit brought by Dune Ridge SA, LP over floating homes and a privacy screen on the Kalamazoo River adjacent to the Chain Ferry.
- A copy of the press release and answers to frequently asked questions can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/9yhbcm9>

Deer Management

- City Council has prioritized addressing deer overpopulation for FY 2026/2027, building on recommendations from the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee.
- The City has updated its firearms ordinance to allow for a City-sponsored deer cull and staff have had several meetings to identify options and review logistics. This

has included meetings with the Allegan County Sheriff's Office, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a private culling firm.

- Both the USDA and private firm offer potential cull options, with the private firm potentially available as soon as this winter. The City is also exploring a possible partnership with Douglas.
- Once potential locations and participation are clarified, a proposal will be developed for City Council consideration. Any cull would require Council approval and appropriate DNR permitting.

Kalamazoo River Greenway and Kayak Launch

- The Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) recently presented its annual update on implementation of the Lower Kalamazoo River Greenway Plan (KRG). The KRG is a regional effort focused on environmental restoration, recreation, conservation, education and improved connections along the Kalamazoo River.
- Over the past year, KRG efforts included removing more than 240 pounds of trash and invasive species, engaging 222 participants in 16 programs, managing invasive species at 20 sites, completing 10 restoration projects, installing nine native plant gardens, three educational campaigns, and bringing 13 organizations together through stakeholder meetings.
- The City has also contracted with ODC for invasive species management at the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, a city-wide invasive species survey and restoration work at Mt. Baldhead. Work is also continuing on development of the Lower Kalamazoo Water Trail, which is intended to better connect and guide paddlers between access points along the river.
- City Council approved a \$5,000 contribution to the ODC for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 to support continued implementation of the KRG Plan. Council also accepted the donation of a kayak launch secured by the ODC through the Saugatuck-Douglas Rotary Club. The Parks and Public Works Committee will review potential locations for the kayak launch and make a recommendation to City Council.
- The annual report and presentation can be viewed here:
<https://tinyurl.com/w9scu2jx>

Maple Street Construction Update

- Water main installation has been completed.
- Water service installation for the remaining residents on Maple Street will occur over the coming weeks.
- Concrete sidewalk placement on the west side of Maple Street is anticipated to begin soon and progress from south to north.
- Sidewalk grading will continue moving north, along with ongoing stormwater improvements and installation of the retaining walls.
- Paving is still anticipated to take place in October.
- Downtown Water Valve Work

- We are working on narrowing dates in October for the water valve work. As a reminder, this work will occur over two days. Based on feedback received to date, we will be avoiding events such as Halloween, Gallery Stroll, and Indigenous Peoples' Day. Work will be completed early in the week so boil water advisories can be lifted in time for the weekend. Unfortunately, there is no perfect day or time and we can't avoid all impacts. We have also reached out to the CVB for a recommendation.
- A reminder that if you have questions, please contact the following:
 - Public Works - Michelle Gibson, Project Coordinator - (269) 224-9504
 - Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering
 - Peter Tierney, P.E., Project Manager – (616) 914-8621

Other Project Updates

- **Lead Service Line Replacement** - The City submitted a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Project Plan seeking funding for approximately 135 known lead and galvanized service line replacements. Following a scoring correction, the City may be within the fundable range in EGLE's draft Intended Use Plan. The \$1.69 million project is anticipated to receive 10% principal forgiveness (effectively a grant), with the remaining balance financed through a 30-year, 0% interest loan.
- **Elizabeth Street Improvements (Allegan to Francis)** - City Council approved the design and engineering services proposal. Preliminary design is underway. Projected schedule is design in summer/fall 2026, bidding in late 2026 or early 2027 and construction in 2027.
- **Mt. Baldhead Upper Platform** – Preliminary design work is complete and a plan review meeting with staff was held August 10. Construction is likely in spring 2027.
- **Village Square Courts** – Preliminary design is nearly complete and will be reviewed with City staff soon. Construction is likely in spring 2027.
- **Wicks Park and Village Square Park Restroom Renovations** – Engineering developed a proposal for interior and exterior improvements. Council expressed interest in demolition and replacement of the Wicks restroom due to drainage and flooding problems. This continues to be explored further, including replicating the mural on the exterior of a new restroom. Replicating the mural is a clear priority.
- **Blue Star Trail** – Archeological survey work is scheduled for mid-August.
- **Logo and Branding** – A recommendation on a new logo will be presented at the August 19 Council workshop meeting.
- **Historic District Signage** – The Historic District Commission presented a recommendation for new signage to recognize the historic district. The design was approved by Council, and signage should be installed this fall.
- **Outdoor AEDs** - Saugatuck-Douglas HEARTSafe has raised funds to deploy several outdoor AEDs. They are working with Public Works on locations and logistics.

Civic Engagement

- Keith Kindred is a retired Michigan teacher who taught at the high school and college levels for over 33 years. He recently wrote an opinion piece for the *Holland Sentinel* titled [“Democracy is a skill we may be forgetting”](#). Some of his comments resonated with me, and I thought they would be worthwhile to share more broadly:
 - University of Michigan surveys show resident engagement declining over the past decade. Local officials increasingly report relying on the same small group of volunteers, struggling to recruit future leaders, and watching public trust weaken.
 - Instead of regularly interacting with the people who live nearby, many of us spend more time with algorithms that sort us by outrage instead of geography.
 - We exchange neighbors for followers. We trade local concerns for national controversies.
 - When the only public square many of us experience exists on a screen, we have fewer opportunities to solve ordinary problems with the people who live down the street.
 - That helps explain why discussions about culverts, sewer bonds or school budgets can suddenly feel like debates over national politics. We are asking people to use localized civic skills they have fewer chances to develop.
 - Rebuilding that habit doesn't require everyone to run for township supervisor or school board. It starts with something much smaller.
 - Attend one planning commission meeting. Volunteer for a community organization. Spend more time in places where neighbors still meet one another as neighbors instead of political opponents.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer Water Authority (KLSWA)

- KLSWA now has a Facebook page. Follow them here for the latest updates: <https://www.facebook.com/KLSWA>

Upcoming Meetings

Full meeting packets are posted on the City website and Facebook prior to each meeting. When available, they can be viewed by selecting the board/commission:

- August 18 at 6p – Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority
- August 19 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- August 20 at 6:30p – Planning Commission
- August 24 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- August 25 at 10a – Parks and Public Works Committee
- August 25 at 3p – Parking Improvements Task Force
- September 3 at 6p – Historic District Commission