



PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TASK FORCE

Meeting Agenda

June 30, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

This is an in-person meeting at Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453.

The meeting will also be available live, virtually on Zoom

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Please send questions or comments regarding meeting agenda items prior to meeting to:

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Participants

Name	Company	Email Address
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Gregory Muncey	Saugatuck City Council	gregory@saugatuckcity.com
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Cathy Brockington	Saugatuck Resident	cabrocking68@gmail.com
Wendy Colsen	Saugatuck Resident	saugatuckparkingstudy@gmail.com
Alec Payleitner	Saugatuck Restaurant Owner	alec@saugataco.com
Michael Gustaitis	Saugatuck Retail Business Owner	winesellersofsaugatuck@gmail.com
Gary Kott	Saugatuck/Douglas Area Convention and Visitors Bureau	indakott@aol.com
Becky Carten-Crandell	Interurban Transit Authority	beckycc@saugatuckinterurban.org
Ryan Cummins	City of Saugatuck	rcummins@saugatuckcity.com



WALKER
CONSULTANTS

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Agenda Changes
4. Public Comment on Agenda Items
5. Approval of Minutes
6. Topics for Discussion
 - A. Conversion of Butler Street & Lucy Street to One-Way Traffic – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment. Additional discussion.
 - B. Supplemental Field Outreach – Update from Wendy Colsen regarding employee counts, parking locations, and related observations from contact with downtown businesses.
 - C. ADA and 15-Minute Parking – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment.
 - D. Walker Final Deliverables Format – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment.
 - E. Walker In-Person Outreach. Music in the Park. Organizational discussion on date, process, and setup needs.
 - F. Remaining Field Data Collection Details – Peak season field data collection dates – week of July 13 (after July 4th, before Venetian Festival)
 - G. Remaining Task Force meeting dates – July 28 and August 18
 - H. Other items
 - I. Next steps
7. Correspondence
 - A. Brian Elmore email
 - B. Jeff Blandford email
8. Public Comments
9. Task Force Member Comments
10. Adjourn



PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

This is an in-person meeting at Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453.

The meeting will also be available live, virtually on Zoom

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Participants

Name	Company	Email Address
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Ryan Cummins	City of Saugatuck	rcummins@saugatuckcity.com

1. Call to Order

Chair Gregory Muncey called the meeting to order.



2. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was declared present.

3. Agenda Changes

The agenda was amended to add the following items under Topics for Discussion:

- Parking concepts submitted by Alec Payleitner for Task Force consideration, including remote parking, shuttle or trolley circulation, and related downtown traffic and parking ideas.
- Supplemental field outreach information from Wendy Colsen regarding employee counts, parking locations, and related observations from contact with downtown businesses.

The agenda, as amended, was accepted.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comments were received on agenda items.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous April 7, 2026, Parking Improvements Task Force meeting, as prepared by Walker Consultants and included in the meeting packet, were presented for approval. During review, members identified corrections to the reported total number of public parking spaces and to the description of Lauren Stanton's role.

- The draft minutes indicated approximately 1,168 public parking spaces; per the field data collection, there are 1,868 spaces.
- Lauren Stanton's role should be identified as a City Council member.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved as corrected by voice vote. Walker Consultants was directed to incorporate the identified revisions into the final April 7, 2026, meeting minutes.

6. Topics for Discussion

A. Parking Occupancy Field Work and Initial Mapping – Results

Julie Kroll presented the May 2 parking occupancy findings based on counts conducted at 10:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. for publicly available on-street and off-street parking throughout the study area. The results indicated the highest occupancy levels within the central business district, with lower utilization in the Hill, North Residential, and South Residential areas.

Within the CBD, the occupancy summary reflected off-street utilization of approximately 92 percent by late afternoon and on-street utilization of approximately 86 percent. Members concurred that the findings were consistent with the weekend conditions observed and noted that, at those levels, parking in the core area is generally perceived as full.



Ms. Kroll further reported that, outside the CBD, demand was limited to isolated pockets and that parking remained available in the Hill and residential areas. Accessible parking utilization was also reviewed; existing accessible spaces were in use but were not fully occupied during the observation periods.

In response to a member inquiry, Ms. Kroll advised that the same occupancy analysis will be repeated during the July field work to compare off-peak and peak-season conditions. She further reported that a separate turnover analysis is underway for approximately two blocks of Butler Street and will be presented at a future meeting.

An additional observation was made, indicating strong turnover at a downtown business frontage, which supports the importance of short-term parking availability within the core area.

B. Updates on Land Use, Commercial Vacancy, and Future Developments – Briefing provided by Walker for review and comment.

John Dorsett reviewed Walker’s future conditions analysis and stated that it was intended to evaluate parking demand by considering baseline conditions together with likely growth factors. He noted that, while the City’s resident population appears relatively stable, parking demand is also influenced by tourism, seasonal visitation, and other nonresident activity.

Mr. Dorsett reported that Walker reviewed known and proposed development projects using information provided by the City, Saugatuck Township, Douglas, and prior planning materials. He stated that the broader future conditions review informed Walker’s conclusion that parking demand is expected to increase by approximately 100 to 150 spaces.

Mr. Dorsett also noted that many of the identified projects are expected to accommodate a substantial share of their on-site parking demand. Members nevertheless questioned whether the analysis fully captured the effect of day visitors, seasonal activity, short-term rentals, nearby development, and lodging-related traffic, and noted that such factors may be more representative of parking conditions during peak periods.

City staff clarified that development information from neighboring jurisdictions had been provided to Walker, including campground, residential, mixed-use, condominium, and workforce housing projects. Members requested that future analysis more explicitly reflect the cumulative effect of these projects and tourism-related growth.

Potential indicators of tourism growth were also discussed, including CVB lodging data, beach attendance, visitation history, and third-party mobility data. Members agreed that additional quantitative information, if available, would strengthen the future demand analysis and better reflect seasonal conditions.

Members also discussed the effects of short-term rentals on neighborhood parking and whether parking requirements should better align with occupancy and vehicle demand. Staff noted that most uses remain subject to parking requirements, while downtown commercial districts are exempt from off-street parking minimums. Potential future recommendations discussed included revisiting parking minimums, reviewing zoning treatment for short-term rental conversions, and considering seasonal overnight parking controls.

C. Parking Enforcement – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment.



John Dorsett reviewed Walker’s parking enforcement memorandum and observed that a substantial share of public parking in Saugatuck is on-street parking under City control. He stated that the posted three-hour limits are intended to promote turnover, but that limited or inconsistent enforcement reduces their effectiveness and diminishes the value of the existing parking regulations.

Walker recommended consideration of a seasonal enforcement program during peak summer months, paired with a customer-service-oriented ambassador model to provide education, warnings, and visitor assistance. The discussion reflected general interest in an approach that would improve compliance while avoiding an unnecessarily punitive tone.

Members discussed the desirability of pairing enforcement with practical employee parking alternatives, noting that enforcement would be more workable if accompanied by convenient and reasonably proximate off-site employee parking. Potential locations discussed included the lot near the Saugatuck Center for the Arts and school-related parking areas.

Members also discussed accommodation for downtown residents if enforcement is expanded. Concepts discussed included resident stickers, employee permits, warning-based implementation, and advanced public communication.

Funding options were discussed, including whether certain parking-related revenues could be dedicated to enforcement or ambassador staffing. Staff noted that such revenues presently accrue to the general fund. Members also observed that signage would represent a significant implementation cost.

Members requested preparation of a future map identifying accessible spaces, 15-minute spaces, loading zones, and no-parking areas to assist in evaluating possible modifications.

D. Interurban, Shuttle Operations, Remote Parking, and Shared Parking Agreements – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment.

John Dorsett reviewed Walker’s memorandum regarding Interurban service, remote parking opportunities, and shared parking agreements. He stated that these strategies appear to be among the most practical and cost-effective means of expanding usable parking capacity without construction of a parking structure and could form a meaningful part of a broader parking management approach.

Becky Carten-Crandell reported that Interurban service is expanding hours and improving routes for the current season. She also reported progress on remote parking discussions, including school parking and ongoing conversations with Riverside Church and Dykstra Funeral Home regarding shared parking opportunities, and indicated that additional coordination is underway.

Ms. Carten-Crandell further reported that Interurban has vehicle capacity to support expanded service, but that funding remains the principal constraint. Members discussed current operating costs, the CVB contribution, and the remaining funding gap, and generally agreed that expanded shuttle service would remain significantly less costly than structured parking while offering a more immediate implementation path.

Members discussed whether visitor or non-resident fares should be considered, while emphasizing the importance of preserving affordability for year-round riders who rely on the service.



The importance of clear signage, rider communication, and ease of access to shuttle service was also discussed. Mr. Dorsett advised that Walker's current scope includes general wayfinding concepts, but not a detailed community-wide signage plan, which may require additional future direction if pursued by the City.

Ms. Carten-Crandell agreed to continue pursuing shared parking agreements and to discuss employee parking options with the school district. Members reiterated that any remote employee parking strategy would likely need to be paired with downtown enforcement measures.

E. Conversion of Butler Street to One-Way Traffic – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment.

John Dorsett summarized Walker's review of a possible one-way conversion for Butler Street. He reported that, although the street is not wide enough to support angled parking on both sides, a one-way configuration with angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other could be feasible and could yield approximately 60 additional spaces over roughly seven blocks.

Members discussed both the potential benefits and the potential drawbacks of the concept. Comments in support focused on the possible increase in parking supply at relatively low cost. Concerns raised included traffic circulation, driver confusion, deliveries, pedestrian safety, backing maneuvers, and possible effects on downtown business operations, particularly during the peak season.

Members also discussed whether a paired one-way system involving Butler and Water Streets would be more effective than a single one-way street, as well as possible traffic-control and design measures to manage speeds and enhance pedestrian safety.

By consensus, this item was continued to a future meeting for further discussion.

F. Discussion of Remaining Field Data Collection Details – Peak-Season Field Data Collection Dates – Week of July 13 (after July 4 and before Venetian Festival)

Julie Kroll confirmed that peak-season field data collection is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, and Saturday, July 18, using the same time periods applied during the May observations. The Chair also noted that Wendy Colsen's supplemental field outreach and employee count information had been distributed on the day of the meeting and remained in progress; accordingly, that material was deferred to a future agenda for more complete review and presentation.

G. Remaining Task Force meeting dates – June 30, July 28, August 18

The remaining Task Force meeting dates were confirmed as June 30, July 28, and August 18.

H. Other Items

Chair Muncey noted that Wendy Colsen had submitted additional field outreach information regarding employee counts, parking locations, and observations from contact with downtown businesses. Because the material was distributed on the day of the meeting and additional data was still being gathered, her discussion was deferred to



a future agenda for fuller review and presentation. Members agreed that her employee data and outreach findings should be scheduled for a subsequent meeting.

Alec Payleitner then summarized the parking concepts he proposed for the Task Force's consideration. He described a broader remote parking strategy centered on an outlying lot, using the Community Church of Douglas as an example, paired with a hop-on, hop-off trolley or shuttle to move visitors and enhance the visitor experience. He also described a route from the remote lot into downtown, including circulation along Butler Street and Water Street, potentially using one-way traffic patterns.

Mr. Payleitner detailed a phased approach that included one-way configurations for Butler Street, with angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other, while maintaining sufficient width for a seasonal trolley lane between July 4 and Labor Day, as well as a similar configuration on Water Street. He also described a future trolley trial supported by wayfinding, timed arrivals, and possible private sponsorship or advertising to offset costs. The concept was presented as an integrated system rather than a series of isolated parts.

Members discussed the concept for future consideration as part of the Task Force's broader review of parking management options.

I. Next Steps

Items identified for continued review at future meetings included Butler Street one-way conversion, accessible and short-term parking locations, restricted parking areas, employee parking options, enforcement concepts, and tourism- or growth-related data sources to support the future demand analysis. Members indicated that these matters should inform the development of the Task Force's eventual recommendations to the City.

7. Correspondence

Chair Muncey referenced a letter from Brian Elmore received after the distribution of the meeting packet and requested that it be included in a future packet. Members also encouraged submission of community correspondence before final recommendations are developed so that public input may be considered as part of the Task Force's deliberations.

8. Public Comments

No public comments were received.

9. Task Force Member Comments

Members offered brief closing comments and generally indicated that the meeting generated useful discussion and ideas for continued review.

10. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m. ET, there being no further business to come before the Task Force.

Parking Yield Analysis: Converting Butler Street to One-Way Traffic from Lucy Street to Culver Street

Purpose

This analysis evaluates the on-street parking impacts of converting Butler Street from two-way traffic with parallel parking on both sides to one-way traffic, with 60-degree angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other. The analysis covers the seven blocks of Butler Street between Lucy Street and Culver Street.

Key Design Assumptions

The curb-to-curb width along Butler Street is approximately 40 feet. Butler is presently used as a two-way street with parallel parking on both sides where permitted. As an alternative to increasing parking capacity in the Saugatuck Central Business District, this analysis considers a proposed condition featuring one-way traffic with angled parking at 60 degrees on one side and parallel parking on the other. Average usable curb length per block is approximately 300 feet. A parallel parking stall is approximately 22 feet long. All parking estimates reflect whole stalls only; fractional spaces are not counted. Intersection clearances, crosswalks, and curb ramps are assumed to be consistent between existing and proposed conditions.

Existing Parking Yield – Two-Way Traffic with Parallel Parking on Both Sides

Rounding down, parallel parking yields approximately 4 parking spaces per 100 feet on each side. With parallel parking on both sides, the effective yield is 8 spaces per 100 feet. Over a 300-foot block, this results in approximately 24 on-street parking spaces.

Proposed Parking Yield – One-Way Traffic with Angled Parking on One Side

60-degree angled parking on one side yields approximately 7 spaces per 100 feet. Parallel parking on the opposite side yields approximately 4 spaces per 100 feet. The combined yield is approximately 11 spaces per 100 feet, or approximately 33 on-street parking spaces per 300-foot block.

Block-by-Block Parking Impact

Existing conditions provide approximately 24 spaces per block. The proposed condition provides approximately 33 spaces per block, representing a net increase of approximately 9.

Total Parking Impact

Across the seven blocks between Lucy Street and Culver Street, existing conditions provide approximately 168 on-street parking spaces. The proposed one-way configuration would provide approximately 231 on-street parking spaces, representing a net increase of approximately 63 spaces¹.

¹ Math includes some conservative rounding to account for fire hydrants, driveways, no parking zones, loading zones, etc. Each 100 feet of curb space is enough to allow for 9, 60-degree angled spaces. However, with curb cuts and no parking areas, we are intentionally aiming low to manage expectations for this idea. A more detailed and accurate study is recommended if the city is interested in implementing this idea. What is presented here is at the conceptual level, not the design level.

Conclusion

Converting Butler Street to one-way traffic with 60-degree angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the opposite side would meaningfully expand on-street parking within the existing curb-to-curb width. The proposed configuration increases parking supply while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular circulation appropriate for a downtown environment.

Butler Street One-Way Conversion and Parking Analysis: Opportunity, Pros, Cons, Precedent, and Policy Rationale

The following summarizes the advantages, disadvantages, precedent, and policy rationale for converting Butler Street in downtown Saugatuck from two-way to one-way traffic to create room for additional on-street parking. The analysis is intended to support decision-making by City staff, elected officials, and advisory bodies in evaluating potential circulation and parking changes along one of Saugatuck's primary commercial corridors.

Advantages of Converting Butler Street to One-Way Traffic

1. Significant Increase in On-Street Parking

One-way traffic operations allow angled parking on both sides of Butler Street. However, in this case, Butler Street is only 40 feet wide, which is not wide enough to accommodate a through lane and angled parking on both sides. Therefore, this analysis considers parallel parking on one side of the street and 60-degree parking on the opposite side.

2. Improved Access to Downtown Businesses

Angled parking improves the visibility of available spaces and makes it easier for visitors to identify parking opportunities while driving through downtown. This supports business access, increases parking turnover, and benefits retail, restaurant, and gallery uses that depend on short-term parking convenience in a resort-oriented downtown.

3. Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Comfort

When properly designed, one-way streets with angled parking visually narrow the roadway and introduce frequent roadside activity, helping reduce vehicle speeds. These conditions improve pedestrian comfort and safety in a walkable downtown environment that experiences high seasonal foot traffic.

4. Operational and Maintenance Efficiency

One-way traffic reduces vehicle conflict points, simplifies turning movements, and can improve snow removal and street maintenance operations. Clear circulation patterns also enhance driver predictability during peak tourist periods.

Potential Disadvantages and Risks

1. Reduced Route Flexibility

One-way streets require drivers to follow a defined circulation pattern, which may initially feel less convenient to users accustomed to two-way travel. Some travel paths may require additional turns or slightly longer routes, particularly during early implementation.

2. Risk of Higher Speeds if Poorly Designed

If travel lanes are overly wide or lack visual constraints, one-way streets may encourage faster vehicle speeds. This risk can be mitigated through appropriate lane narrowing, angled parking geometry, marked crossings, and streetscape features.

3. Backing Movements from Angled Parking

Angled parking introduces vehicle backing movements into the travel lane. Proper stall angles, adequate buffer space, low design speeds, and clear striping are essential to managing visibility and safety. Some communities address this issue by using back-in angled parking.

Michigan Precedent in Similar Resort Communities

Other Michigan resort communities, including Harbor Springs, Holland, Petoskey, and Traverse City, have successfully implemented downtown circulation and parking strategies that feature some one-way streets and angled parking, as well as a combination of angled and parallel parking on the same block faces.

Policy Rationale for Butler Street

Butler Street serves local businesses rather than as a regional through route. Its land-use context favors convenient access, high parking turnover, and pedestrian activity over travel speed. Downtown traffic volumes are generally compatible with one-way operation, and multiple alternative routes exist within the downtown grid. Reallocating street space to increase on-street parking aligns with economic development objectives and visitor expectations.

Conclusion

Converting Butler Street from two-way to one-way traffic with angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other is a defensible, precedent-based strategy for downtown Saugatuck. While the change involves tradeoffs, these can be addressed through careful design and communication. The substantial parking gains, improved business access, and alignment with practices used in comparable Michigan resort communities provide a strong rationale for further study and potential implementation.

Parking Yield Analysis: Converting Lucy Street from Two-Way to One-Way Traffic

Purpose

This analysis estimates the potential parking impact of converting Lucy Street in downtown Saugatuck from two-way traffic with north-side parallel parking to one-way traffic with 60-degree angled parking along the same curb frontage. The evaluated segment extends more than 800 feet from Water Street to Holland Street.

Key Assumptions and Available Curb Frontage

For this planning-level analysis, Lucy Street is assumed to be approximately 30 feet wide, with parallel parking on the north side and two-way traffic operating as one eastbound lane and one westbound lane. One-way operation is assumed to allow the north-side parking area to be restriped for 60-degree angled parking. All estimates are rounded down to the nearest whole stall.

The existing conditions inventory identifies 20 parallel parking spaces, 11 driveways, one intersecting street, fire hydrants, and other curbside constraints. The curb-frontage segments identified as potentially available for conversion total 440 feet, consisting of segments measuring 66 feet, 66 feet, 22 feet, 66 feet, 22 feet, 22 feet, 44 feet, 22 feet, 88 feet, and 22 feet.

Existing and Proposed Parking Yield

The proposed yield was calculated by evaluating each available curb-frontage segment separately and rounding each result down before summing the totals. At approximately 7 angled spaces per 100 feet, the available segments yield 4 spaces, 4 spaces, 1 space, 4 spaces, 1 space, 1 space, 3 spaces, 1 space, 6 spaces, and 1 space, respectively, for a total of 26 angled spaces. Compared with the 20-space baseline, the conversion would add approximately 6 net spaces. A detailed design effort may identify opportunities to capture additional spaces beyond this conservative estimate.

Implementation Considerations

Before advancing, the concept should be confirmed through field measurement and traffic review, with specific attention to circulation, pedestrian visibility, emergency access, loading, driveway access, wayfinding, and curbside operations.

Conclusion

The segment-by-segment estimate indicates that converting Lucy Street to one-way operation with angled parking could add approximately 6 net parking spaces. Final yield should be confirmed through field measurement and detailed design.

AI ASSIST SUMMARY OF EMPLOYEE PARKING DATA

This document is a survey or report detailing employee parking habits, issues, and suggestions for a specific area or business district.

Employee Parking Locations and Practices

Overview of parking habits, locations, and suggestions for employees during summer shifts.

- Employees park on side streets, hill, or private lots; some are dropped off or walk.
- Many encourage parking far from storefronts; some use private or church lots.
- Parking on Water Street and Butler Street is common; some park in designated private lots.
- Employees often park where they can find space, with some parking on streets or hill.
- A policy exists to not park in front of stores; some park in church lots or side streets.
- Parking in the HS lot is limited; shuttle service is used but has issues like limited hours and signage.
- Some employees bike, walk, or use electric scooters; bike racks are needed.
- Parking enforcement, time limits, and meters are discussed but not uniformly implemented.
- Parking issues are seasonal, with a notable 55-day peak problem period.
- Suggestions include creating employee-only lots, a parking garage, and better signage.
- Off-season uses for parking ramps include boat storage and ice skating rinks to generate income.

Parking Challenges and Safety Concerns

Overview of safety issues, enforcement, and infrastructure needs related to parking.

- Yellow curbs pose sight and safety hazards; trucks can block views.
- Insufficient handicapped parking spots; safety at night is a concern.
- Streets are sometimes not marked clearly, causing confusion and unsafe conditions.

- Some streets may need to be converted to one-way with diagonal parking to increase capacity.
- Emergency vehicle access and street flow are considerations for street modifications.
- Off-season parking solutions like renting ramps for boat storage and ice rinks are proposed.
- Enforcement of parking time limits and use of meters are inconsistent.
- The cost of a parking study is questioned; enforcement and signage are priorities.
- Concerns about pedestrian safety, especially for employees walking late at night.

Recommendations for Parking Improvements

Overview of proposed solutions to enhance parking availability and safety.

- Build a small garage, possibly with employee-only spaces, similar to Holland.
- Create designated employee parking lots with shuttle services; consider underground parking.
- Extend shuttle hours and improve signage to inform employees and visitors.
- Implement parking meters and enforce parking time limits, especially during peak seasons.
- Remove or repurpose restaurant street parking to free up spaces.
- Use the Vista Mar area for a parking garage and connect via a walking bridge.
- Consider seasonal uses for parking ramps, such as boat storage and recreational facilities.
- Make Butler Street one-way to improve flow and parking capacity.
- Establish parking passes for employees in certain lots, charging a seasonal fee.
- Support alternative transportation like e-bikes and bike racks to reduce parking demand.
- Address safety issues with curb design and street lighting to improve pedestrian safety.

AI ASSIST EXTRACTED DATA

Compact frequency table (mentions in the document)

Topic	Evidence in entries
HS lot used (Yes) - 7	≥ 6 businesses explicitly “Yes”
HS lot conditional (sometimes/some) - 42	Multiple entries (midday full, summer only, adds time)
HS lot “No”/not feasible - 44	Multiple entries (safety, late hours, full, wait)
Shuttle issues (ends early, wait 15–20, lighting, awareness) - 4	Many mentions across entries + notes
Demand for dedicated employee lot - 45	Many mentions + “big demand” in notes
Safety concerns (night, cash, harassment, lighting) – 23	Many mentions
Not enough handicapped spaces - 46	Multiple mentions + notes
Support 3-hour limits - 27	Several explicit entries
Support meters (limited/seasonal, no employee charge) - 7	Several entries
Oppose meters/enforcement (number not provided)	Several entries

Topic	Evidence in entries
One-way + diagonal parking suggestions - 28	Multiple entries + notes

These extracted points consolidate the raw figures, categorical breakdowns, recurring locations, constraints, and direct quotes present in the Employee Parking Data. Where precise counts are absent, figures are provided as mention frequencies grounded in the document text.

AI ASSIST DETAILS ON PARKING AND SUGGESTIONS

To provide more details on employee and visitor parking issues and suggestions, I have synthesized the key points, examples, and direct feedback from the Employee Parking Data document. This summary covers both the challenges faced and the specific recommendations offered by employees, business owners, and visitors.

Employee Parking Issues

- **Lack of Designated Employee Parking:** Most employees park "wherever they can," often on side streets, up the hill, or in church/private lots. There is a high demand for a dedicated employee lot, as noted in both survey responses and discussion notes.
- **High School (HS) Lot Limitations:** While some employees use the HS lot, many avoid it due to:
 - The lot often being full, especially midday or in summer.
 - Shuttle service ending too early, causing safety concerns for late-night employees (e.g., bar staff leaving between 2–3 am).
 - Poor lighting and long wait times (15–20 minutes) for the shuttle, especially after shifts.
 - Not feasible for young employees or those carrying cash late at night.
- **Safety Concerns:** Multiple comments highlight poor lighting, unsafe sidewalks, and the risk of harassment or theft for employees walking to distant lots late at night.
- **Enforcement and Metering:** There are mixed views:
 - Some support enforcing 3-hour parking limits and seasonal metering (with employee exemptions).

- Others oppose meters, fearing it will harm the town's charm and customer goodwill.
- **Handicapped Parking:** There are not enough handicapped spots, which affects both employees and visitors with mobility issues.
- **Communication Gaps:** Some employees are unaware of shuttle options or parking rules due to limited signage and unclear policies.

Visitor Parking Issues

- **Competition with Employees:** Visitors often struggle to find parking, especially during peak times, as employees occupy many available spaces.
- **Missed Opportunities:** Some customers have missed events (e.g., boat rides) due to parking shortages.
- **Mobility and Accessibility:** Older tourists and families with young children find it difficult to park close enough to their destinations, especially when street seating or restaurant parking takes up prime spots.
- **Safety and Convenience:** Poor lighting, uneven sidewalks, and unclear signage also impact visitors, particularly those unfamiliar with the area.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- **Create Designated Employee Lots:** Multiple respondents suggest reserving lots (e.g., SCA, Dykstra, or bank lots) for employees, possibly with a seasonal pass system (e.g., \$10/season).
- **Improve Shuttle Service:** Extend shuttle hours (e.g., 8am–3:30am), increase frequency, improve lighting, and add clear signage. Consider using school buses or e-bikes at lots to reduce wait times.
- **Enhance Safety:** Add lighting to lots and walking routes, repair sidewalks, and address sightline issues at yellow curbs. Remove or reconfigure parking spots where trucks overhang and create hazards.
- **Increase Handicapped Parking:** Add more handicapped spaces, especially near downtown and popular destinations.
- **Reconfigure Street Parking:** Make some streets one-way with diagonal parking to increase capacity, but ensure emergency vehicle access is maintained.

- **Review Restaurant Parking Policies:** Remove or limit restaurant street seating and reserved parking where underused, especially outside peak months.
- **Promote Alternative Transportation:** Encourage use of Interurban, biking, and walking by adding bike racks and offering incentives (e.g., raffles for employees using remote lots).
- **Clarify and Enforce Policies:** Improve communication about parking rules, enforce time limits where appropriate, and consider seasonal metering for non-employees only.

Direct Quotes and Examples

- "They need designated lot for employees with shuttle."
- "HS lot needs to be better lit for the walk. The shuttle stops too early. Only one sign advertising. Extend shuttle hours for pick up."
- "There are not enough handicapped parking spots."
- "Make one way streets with diagonal parking and have more satellite lots."
- "3 hour parking needs to be enforced."
- "Don't charge for parking, the town will lose its charm."
- "At the end of a shift, you're tired and want to get home, not wait 15–20 minutes for shuttle."

These details reflect the most common and urgent issues as well as the practical, community-driven suggestions for improvement. The feedback emphasizes balancing employee needs, visitor access, safety, and the unique character of the area.

AI ASSIST PROPOSED PARKING SOLUTIONS

To propose actionable solutions for parking improvements, I analyzed the current state based on employee and visitor feedback, parking patterns, and recurring issues highlighted in the survey data. The main challenges include a lack of designated employee parking, safety concerns (especially at night), insufficient shuttle service, limited handicapped spots, and mixed opinions on enforcement and metering. Below are targeted solutions, each supported by examples and suggestions from the data:

1. Create Designated Employee Parking Lots

- **Why:** Many businesses and employees requested a dedicated lot to reduce competition with customers and improve reliability.
- **How:** Identify underutilized lots (e.g., SCA, HS, Dykstra, or Vista Mar area) and reserve them for employees. Issue parking passes (e.g., \$10/season as suggested) to control access.
- **Example:** "They need designated lot for employees with shuttle." "Consider creating an employee parking lot."

2. Improve and Extend Shuttle Services

- **Why:** The current shuttle is often full, ends too early, and is not well advertised. Employees dislike waiting 15-20 minutes, especially late at night.
- **How:** Extend shuttle hours (e.g., 8am–3:30am), improve lighting at lots, and increase frequency. Add clear signage and promote the service to all businesses.
- **Example:** "Extend shuttle hours for pick up." "HS lot needs to be better lit for the walk."

3. Enhance Safety and Accessibility

- **Why:** Safety is a concern, especially for employees leaving late or carrying cash. There are also not enough handicapped spots.
- **How:** Add lighting to lots and walking routes, increase the number of handicapped spaces, and repair sidewalks to reduce trip hazards.
- **Example:** "Not well lit for safety and sidewalks have trip hazards." "There are not enough handicapped parking spots."

4. Adjust Parking Enforcement and Metering

- **Why:** There are mixed views, but some support for time limits and metered parking (for non-employees) to increase turnover and availability.
- **How:** Enforce 3-hour parking limits in key areas, consider seasonal metering (high season only), and ensure employees are exempt from metered rates.
- **Example:** "3 hour parking needs to be enforced." "Use metered parking in high season only and only during certain hours."

5. Reconfigure Street Parking and Add Capacity

- **Why:** Suggestions include making streets one-way with diagonal parking to increase the number of spaces.
- **How:** Conduct a feasibility study for one-way conversions (e.g., Butler, Water Street), repaint lines, and remove unnecessary reserved spots (e.g., restaurant parking no longer needed post-COVID).
- **Example:** "Make one way streets with diagonal parking and have more satellite lots." "Repaint the spaces on the street too."

6. Promote Alternative Transportation

- **Why:** Some employees already bike, walk, or use public transit, but more could do so with better infrastructure.
- **How:** Add more bike racks, promote Interurban and e-bike options, and provide incentives (e.g., raffles for those who use remote lots or alternative transport).
- **Example:** "We need more bike racks." "Maybe cards for businesses and rentals for Interurban."

7. Communication and Policy Adjustments

- **Why:** Some employees are unaware of available options, and policies (like restaurant street seating) impact parking supply.
- **How:** Improve communication about parking options, shuttle schedules, and policy changes. Reassess temporary policies that reduce parking availability.
- **Example:** "Only one sign advertising [the shuttle]." "Remove restaurant parking."

Summary Table of Key Solutions:

Solution Area	Example Implementation
Employee Parking Lots	Reserve SCA/HS/Dykstra for employees
Shuttle Service	Extend hours, add signage, improve lighting
Safety & Accessibility	More lights, fix sidewalks, add handicapped spots

Solution Area	Example Implementation
Enforcement & Metering	3-hour limits, seasonal meters, employee exemptions
Street Reconfiguration	One-way streets, diagonal parking, repaint lines
Alternative Transportation	More bike racks, promote Interurban, e-bikes
Communication & Policy	Better signage, review restaurant parking policies

These solutions address the most common and urgent issues identified in the survey, balancing employee needs, customer access, and community character. Each recommendation is directly supported by feedback and examples from the employee parking data.

# OF EMPLOYEES/SHIFT (SUMMER)	WHERE DO EMPLOYEES PARK?	HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT USE?	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS
7	They park on side streets, not on water street	no	
3	Some parking on hill, one takes the Interurban from Douglas. They encourage employees to park far away from store front	no	Need more advertising and promotion for Interurban. Maybe cards for businesses and rentals.
3-5	They park on butler or on hill.	no	
2-3	They have private parking		Our guests struggle to find parking. Make one way streets with diagonal parking and have more satellite lots.
1-2	1 gets dropped off, 1 parks where they can	no	
1	They either get dropped off, park where they can , or park on hill and walk	no	
1-2	1 gets dropped off, others park where they can way down on butler	no	
2	They park on hill, street parking where they can find it	no	
5-10	They have policy to not park in front. park on sidestreets church when they don't charge or wherever they can.	No, they don't use the HS lot. It needs to be a free, easy and a quick shuttle.	
2	They have private parking	no	

1	They park anywhere he can	no	
1	They park up the hill, they tell employees not to park on Butler, they do tag-team parking	no	They need designated lot for employees with shuttle. Don't enforce parking with tickets.
10-15	They park anywhere they can, park on water street a lot	no	They need designated lot for employees
8 on weekends, 6 weekdays	1 bikes, 1 walks, the rest park on hill or in church lot	The HS lot can get full and it adds time to a shift to wait for the shuttle	Consider creating an employee parking lot, the Star of Saugatuck used to do a raffle for to encourage employees to park in in the HS lot, down on pay lot for employees, the parking issue is really only a 55-day problem, we need more bike racks, Air B and B's are adding to the problem with one house having a large number of cars present, consider e-bikes at lots so don't have to wait for shuttle
2-3	Anywhere they can, sometimes HS	Some use it when they have to, but there are women walking late to the lot after they close at 9.	
3	private spots	no	
5-10	They park where they can.	no	
1	some walk, some park where they can find spots	no	

1	They park where they can.	no	Build a small garage and make ceratin spaces for employees only. Do like Holland does and have lots dedicated to customer only and public where anyone can park, including employees. Maybe charge for parking on main streets, but the town may lose its charm.
12-13	Some bike, others park where they can.	some do and use electric scooters/walk	
4	Some walk, some park on hill	no	3 hour parking needs to be enforced
7	There are a few spots out back if you get there early enough. They park anywhere they can.	no	They need a spot so people can do a quick run in for pick up. Not all phones work with the pay-to-park lot.
5	They park in SCA lot	HS lot needs to be better lit for the walk. There are young employees. The shuttle stops too early. Some people don't know about it - only one sign advertising. Extend shuttle hours for pick up.	As a parent, she has concerns about the interurban using the DES lot because the Boys and Girls club is at DES all summer. The kids do activities up front. Strangers would be waiting for the shuttle with kids around.
6-8	They park anywhere they can.	no	Build a parking garage. Repaint the spaces on the street too - some like the DUCK parking doesn't need to be there anymore.
10-12	They do have a private lot.	no	They do have customers who miss the boat due to parking issues. The shuttle has helped for customers.

3	They park where they can	Not well lit for safety and sidewalks have trip hazards. At the end of a shift, you're tired and want to get home, not wait 15-20 minutes for shuttle.	Do not penalize employees with solutions.
15-20	They park close where they can. Sometimes they park at the HS and walk.	Yes	Make employee parking available.
1-2	They park out front since they get there early.	no	
50 daytime, 75 night time	They park where they can, also use HS and shuttle. Sometimes the HS is full midday and they panic because they're afraid they'll be late to work.	Yes	Create underground parking. Use the Vista Mar area for a garage and boat people over. Make a walking bridge from Douglas. Families with young kids get mad that there's no parking because it's tough to walk with young kids. Don't have metered parking for employees, but it's okay to have it for non-employees.
2	They park on side street or use HS lot and walk.	Yes	Build a parking ramp by the SCA. Off-season, rent it out for boat storage to make income for the city. Put an ice skating rink on the top floor with a concession stand to generate income in the off season. Remove the restaurant parking. It was done to help during COVID and it's no longer needed.
2	1 on hill, 1 parks closer due to mobility issues	the lot is full a lot	

6	Anywhere they can. Some use the HS lot.	sometimes	
15-17	They park up on the hill mostly to leave spots for customers, but if that's full, they	sometimes	
1	Anywhere they can. They come early on Sat .	They use the lot in the summer when it's not full.	In a FL town, they have a parking ramp outside of town and bus people in.
3-4	Park in 1/2 city lot, 1/2 private lot	no	
2	Owner has a private spot. Owner pays for Interurban to pick up employees at their houses. Not happy about Laketown decision since many of the employees live there.	no	This is a good problem to have and it's only a few months out of the year. It's not a big deal.
3	They either park at the church or HS, walk or get dropped off.	Yes	
1	They tag-team parking, park where they can, bike, scooter	they often have inventory to load, so it's not feasible	They need employee lot, need parking time limits with enforcement, need metered parking but not charge employees
1	tag-team parking, park where they can, bike, scooter	they often have inventory to load, so it's not feasible	They need employee lot, need parking time limits with enforcement, need metered parking but not charge employees
1	They walk	HS lot is full a lot	They're not sure where to park on hill on certain streets, not marked

1	They use the 1/2 city lot, some park on hill at church.	no	The yellow curbs are an issue with sight. Need to look at safety factor on some curbs. Trucks can also hang past the parking spot and create dangerous issues.
1	They either use a private spot or walk	no	3 hour parking needs to be enforced, need parking meters. Where does the restaurant patio money go? It should go towards enforcement. Restaurant seating should be limited to May-Sept since it goes unused much of the time during April and Oct due to weather. Those shoulder months are the months when older tourists who may have mobility issues come and they could benefit from parking closer to downtown.
2-3	They don't park on main streets, either park on hill or in church lot	no	
3-4	They park where they can.	no, there are no lights along the way and the sidewalks aren't even so it's not safe.	Make one way streets with diagonal parking. And do it in conjunction with the streetscape.
1	They open early so they park out front.	no	
25-35	some get there early and park out front, others park where they can	some may use it	Shuttle people in from another lot, maybe DSV back lot or weathervane mall. Have
1	They park out front		Make Butler one way.
4	They park out front if they get there early enough. The owner encourages them to use HS lot and walk down.	Yes	Stop weekend fundraising at SCA, so employees can park there without paying.

1	Owner lives upstairs, other parks where they can, another gets dropped off.	no	
9-10	They park where they can.	No, because we get out very late at night and have tip money on us. Some of them have been followed and harassed before while walking even a few blocks to their car.	
2	They have private parking	no	There is no enforcement, people park in front of their driveway and block it, needs clear signage
2-4	They park where they can.		
1	They park on butler	no	
2	Owner has a private spot. Owner pays for Interurban to pick up employees at their houses. Not happy about Laketown decision since many of the employees live there.	no	
1-2	They park farther down on Butler in residential area, walk.	no	Don't charge for parking, the town will lose its charm.
4	One walks, others use the 1/2 city lot, 1/2 private lot out back.	no	
2	Some park where they can, some walk, sonetimes when they need to load, they park out front.	HS lot is full a lot.	Don't put in parking meters, they need to enforce parking though. Remove restaurant street seating. Provide a free shuttle.
3-4	Some use HS lot, most park anywhere they can	HS lot is full a lot and you have to wait a bit for the shuttle.	It would be nice to have employee parking in the bank lot.

1	They park in front of store because of loading and unloading frequently	no	Eliminate restaurant parking at Charlie's, it gets used 1/2 the time because there is other seating around it, it takes up prime spots. Businesses are hurting, need to plan activities especially in off season to draw people, they lose money on air fair days, bring back the scavenger hunt.
2	They sometimes carpool, park on side streets mostly, sometimes hill	no	Eliminate restaurant parking, look into one way for butler and water streets to see if more parking can be gained
1-2	1 has a private spot, the other parks where they can.	no	
6	They park as close to shop as possible where they can	no	Use metered parking in high season only and only during certain hours. Enforce parking.
1	1 gets dropped off, 1 lives in town, when they do park, they park where they can except on butler.	no	
2-3	They park at the HS or behind SCA.	Yes	Give parking passes for employees to park in the SCA lot. Charge maybe \$10/season.

15	They park wherever they can find a spot or in church lot (owner rule, no park in front)	It's a safety issue for the employees who leave late at night between 2-3 and are carrying cash.	Cost of parking study is too much, who is driving this study? Owner has no complaints about parking just that stores aren't open. Any city you visit, you have to walk. Don't have meters or enforcement. Supports restaurant taking parking spots - would not be opposed to cutting April due to weather.
1	1 bike in summer mostly except on delivery days, 1 parks on hill or bikes	no	
5	2 spots in private lot, 3 on street	no	
2	They park anywhere they can	no	
10-12	They park anywhere they can or use HS lot and walk.	Yes	
2-3	They have one spot in back, they park by Wick's Park, high school, and church lot	If they use it, they walk because waiting for the shuttle can add 15-20 minutes, it's a safety issue at night	There are not enough handicapped parking spots. Remove restaurant street seating to open up spots.
4-5	They park where they can	You have to wait for the shuttle	Need employee lot downtown

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION
* Some employees work 2 jobs, so they park once, but may be counted twice in the employee tally.
* Merchants park as close to their place as possible when they have to load or unload.
* HS not feasible option for young employees or employees who carry cash. Some bar shifts end in the early hours of the morning. Shuttle ends too early, need better lit streets. Lot is often full, have to wait.
* There aren't enough handicapped spots.
* Most are parking where they can.
* Big demand for employee lot
*Mixed views on enforcement, meters, time limits, restaurant street parking
*Question if emergency vehicles can get through if the streets are moved to one-way.
*Dedicated employee shuttle - open 8am to 3:30am, school buses?
*Is Dykstra lot available this year? Will the new building on Water Street have dedicated parking?

*The yellow curbs are an issue with sight. Need to look at safety factor on some curbs. Trucks can also hang past the parking spot and create dangerous issues.

From: Brian Elmore [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 7:14 PM
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: Jamie Wolters
Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Parking Ambassador Program

CAUTION: External Email: Do not click links or attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Members of the Saugatuck City Council and Parking Improvements Task Force,

I am writing as a Saugatuck City homeowner to share concerns about the proposed parking ambassador program currently being discussed as part of the City's parking improvement efforts.

I appreciate the work that has gone into studying Saugatuck's parking challenges. The packet includes several ideas that seem worthy of further exploration, including improved signage, shared parking agreements, remote parking partnerships, and potentially piloting changes to Butler Street. However, I am concerned that the proposed ambassador program may be a costly solution in search of a clearly demonstrated problem.

As I understand it, the ambassador program is premised largely on the assumption that employees and business owners are occupying time-limited downtown parking spaces for extended periods, thereby reducing turnover and contributing meaningfully to parking frustration. That may be happening to some degree. However, I do not see clear data in the packet showing that this behavior is occurring at a scale large enough to justify a seasonal enforcement program costing approximately \$94,000 per year.

For a city with roughly 865 permanent residents, that is a significant recurring expense. The projected citation revenue of approximately \$41,650 would not cover the program's cost, and if the program is successful in increasing compliance, citation revenue would presumably decline over time. That means taxpayers could be asked to subsidize an ongoing enforcement program without clear proof that it will solve the actual parking pain points residents, homeowners, visitors, and businesses experience.

My concern is not that parking rules should never be enforced. Rather, my concern is that enforcement should not become the central solution unless the City can first demonstrate that time-limit abuse is truly one of the primary causes of the parking problem. Many of Saugatuck's parking challenges appear to be driven by peak tourism periods, summer weekends, restaurant rushes, special events, and the natural constraints of a small historic downtown. Ambassadors do not create new parking spaces. They do not solve event surges. They do not solve beach or dinner-hour demand. They may simply result in more tickets and more frustration.

I am also concerned about the message this could send to visitors. Saugatuck's appeal depends heavily on feeling welcoming, relaxed, and easy to enjoy. If visitors return to their cars to find tickets, or feel that

downtown parking is being actively policed, the City risks creating the perception that Saugatuck is hostile or punitive toward tourists. That perception could harm the very businesses the program is intended to support. A visitor who has a frustrating parking experience may choose Douglas, Holland, South Haven, or another lakeshore community the next time they plan a trip.

The employee and business-owner issue also deserves more careful thought. If the City intends to push long-duration parkers out of prime downtown spaces, it must first provide realistic alternatives. Many downtown employees work late into the evening, including restaurant, retail, bar, and service workers. Some may leave after dark, alone, and potentially carrying tip cash. Asking these workers or business owners to park in remote lots and walk back late at night raises real safety and practicality concerns. Remote parking is only a fair solution if it is safe, well-lit, reliable, and supported by transportation that matches actual business closing hours.

Without that, the ambassador program risks punishing the people who keep downtown operating.

Before committing to a seasonal ambassador program, I urge the City to prioritize lower-cost, capacity-oriented, and visitor-friendly solutions.

If the City still wishes to consider ambassadors, I would encourage a much narrower approach: a limited pilot, warning-first, focused only on the highest-demand blocks and accompanied by clear success metrics. The City should define in advance what the program is expected to achieve, how success will be measured, and when it will be discontinued if it does not materially improve parking availability.

In short, I support practical parking improvements. But I do not support spending nearly six figures per season on an enforcement-centered program when the underlying problem has not been clearly proven, the expected benefits are uncertain, and the potential negative impacts on visitors, residents, employees, and local businesses are significant.

Saugatuck should remain welcoming, practical, and thoughtful in how it addresses parking. I urge the City to focus first on solutions that add usable capacity, improve communication, and support the people who live, work, own property, and visit here—rather than defaulting to a program that may primarily create more tickets, more frustration, and more expense.

Respectfully,

Brian Elmore
Saugatuck City Homeowner



Dorsett, John

From: Ryan Cummins [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 1:20 PM
To: Wendy Colsen; Gregory Muncey; Jamie Wolters
Cc: Dorsett, John
Subject: RE: Parking thoughts from Jeff

CAUTION: External Email: Do not click links or attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Thanks Wendy! We will include as correspondence in the next meeting packet.

Thank you,

Ryan Cummins
City Manager

City of Saugatuck
102 Butler St
PO Box 86
Saugatuck, MI 49453
Ph: (269) 224-9443

From: Wendy Colsen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 7:29 AM
To: Gregory Muncey [REDACTED]; Ryan Cummins [REDACTED]; Jamie Wolters [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Parking thoughts from Jeff

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. DO NOT click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Here's some community input to pass along to the committee. 🚗

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Wendy Colsen [REDACTED]
Date: May 25, 2026 at 9:23:36 AM EDT
To: Jeff Blandford [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Parking thoughts from Jeff

Thanks, Jeff. I'll pass this along!
Sent from my iPhone

On May 15, 2026, at 3:23 PM, Jeff Blandford
[REDACTED] wrote:

With 24 years of observing parking in Saugatuck, I have witnessed a lot. My thoughts are unbiased to the best of my abilities.

The conversation has different parts.

1. Customer Parking
2. Employee Parking
3. upstairs tenants (downtown residents)

Concerns:

1. People give up and leave Saugatuck: I'm told this often by customers.
2. Blocking driveways/hydrants: Neighbor driveway often illegally blocked for hours at a time.
3. Angry conflicts over parking: I have seen many shouting matches and a couple shoving matches over parking.
4. Little to no Authoritative presence
5. Restaurant sales in closed off public parking spaces

Only recently has there been any kind of enforcement of parking. There are many signs posted "3 hour parking" but I've never seen them enforced before. The posted signs might as well be taken down if we are telling people that we don't even try to enforce our "rules". Enforcement is an obvious place to start. It should be done consistently and often, with a phone number for people to call that brings a quick response.

The expensive answer would be to turn the SCA parking lot (or other space) into a 2-3 story parking complex. Retail and coffee on the bottom level... solar panels and wind turbines could make it off-grid and eco friendly. Done artfully to be a Saugatuck Version of a parking garage. Likely too expensive, but the only significant solution to adding parking.

I understand the Covid-time need for outdoor dining, but those parking spots belong to all customers, not just that of a particular business. Permanently blocking off parking for these spaces, while the restaurant is only open for around 8 hours per day seems illogical and unfair to me, in the post-covid world. 10+ parking spots could easily turn over 5-10 times each in a single day... resulting in a parking spot for 50-100 different vehicles per day. This is potentially hundreds of "lost" shoppers for both retail and restaurants.

In town we have businesses of many sizes. My own gallery has a single employee at a time, requiring one parking space to open my business to the public. Businesses that have many employees per shift should be conscientious of this, and encourage employees to leave the "easy" parking for customers. There is a lot that falls onto individual business conduct and willingness to help with parking gains.

My last thought is Biking:

Our town is small and very bikeable. We should be encouraging biking by having consistent City Bike Racks in obvious places. It is surprisingly challenging for bikers to leave their bikes, and they often step on my gallery landscaping in order to lock their bikes to a tree (or sometimes my gallery door handle)!! Encouraging biking will make available a few more parking spaces each day.

I'd be happy to chat more with anyone if there is a desire. Thanks for your time with helping to figure out improvements.

Jeff

Saugatuck Loading Zone and ADA Parking

This narrative addresses two related curb-management priorities in downtown Saugatuck: providing very short-term on-street parking in the CBD for unloading, quick pickups, and short visits, and improving accessible parking for residents and visitors with mobility limitations. A limited number of designated very short-term spaces is needed for deliveries, on-demand pickups, and quick transactions. The downtown parking study identified 1,868 total spaces, including 761 on-street spaces in the CBD, of which 561 are time-restricted, most for 3 hours. In that context, a small number of very short-term spaces can meet specific operational needs without materially reducing the overall public parking supply.

Very Short-Term Loading and Pick-Up Parking

This section outlines a framework for determining when and where very short-term parking is warranted, identifies business uses most likely to generate that demand, and concludes with a recommendation for implementation.

Decision Framework

Very short-term on-street parking should be used selectively to accommodate brief, operationally necessary activity such as pickups, carry-out transactions, and short service stops. When appropriately located, these spaces can reduce double parking and curbside conflicts while improving turnover and usability along active commercial frontages.

In most cases, 15 minutes should be sufficient for a customer to enter a food, beverage, or service establishment, complete a transaction, and return to the vehicle. Because Saugatuck is a tourist-oriented destination where many visitors park once and stay for several hours, the city may need fewer very short-term spaces than a more conventional downtown business district. Table 1 provides a practical screening process for determining where those spaces are warranted.

Table 1: Very Short-Term Parking Decision Process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Is the location adjacent to a high-demand use, such as a restaurant, retail corridor, grocery store, library, event space, or dense housing? If yes, move to Step 2. If no, a short-term zone is not recommended.	Are adjacent businesses requesting a short-term space? If yes, move to Step 3. If no, a short-term zone is not recommended.	Collect peak-season utilization, vehicle type, and dwell time data. A short-term space is warranted when: - Utilization exceeds 85 percent during peak periods - At least 60 percent of uses are under 15 minutes, including 20 percent under 5 minutes

Source: Walker Consultants.

Business Uses Most Likely to Require Very Short-Term Parking

This inventory identifies downtown businesses whose operating models are most likely to generate recurring demand for very short-term curb access, including customer pick-up, quick transactions, and limited-service loading. It is intended to inform parking and curb-management planning and should be reviewed periodically by the Parking Improvements Task Force as conditions evolve.

Table 2 identifies the downtown businesses most likely to generate recurring demand for very short-term curb access and helps illustrate where additional 15-minute spaces may be justified. Other locations may also warrant consideration as conditions evolve.

Table 1: Downtown Businesses with Very Short-Term Parking Needs

Business Name	Address	Business Type
Uncommon Coffee Roasters	127 Hoffman St	Coffee shop/bakery
The Annex Coffee Shop	104 Hoffman St	Coffee shop / light food
Saugatuck Tea Company	360 Water St	Beverage shop
Il Forno Cafe	220 Water St	Coffee & quick food
Fresh Basil Cafe	313 Water St	Carry-out restaurant
Scooter's Cafe & Pizzeria	322 Culver St	Pizza / carry-out
Pumpnickels	202 Butler St	Sandwich & take-out restaurant
Boardwalk Deli	311 Water St	Quick-service deli
Butler Pantry	439 Butler St	Specialty grocery/convenience retail
American Spoon Foods	308 Butler St	Specialty food retail
Kilwins	152 Butler St	Confectionery/impulse retail

Source: Walker Consultants.

Recommendation

Walker recommends that the city retain authority to designate 15-minute parking where the evaluation process outlined in Table 1 demonstrates a clear operational need. This approach preserves flexibility to respond to business demand while avoiding unnecessary conversion of longer-term public parking. The city should also periodically review the location and performance of these spaces and adjust signage when conditions change, or a very short-term designation is no longer warranted.

In addition to managing short-term curb access for loading and quick-turnover activity, the city must ensure that on-street parking remains accessible to residents and visitors with mobility limitations. The following section addresses whether the existing supply and distribution of accessible on-street parking in downtown Saugatuck is adequate.

Accessible On-Street Parking

Local Need and Existing Supply

Saugatuck’s permanent resident and tourist populations are older than those in Michigan and the United States, and older populations are more likely to require accessible parking. At present, only 10 of the city’s 761 on-street parking spaces in the CBD, or 1.3 percent, are accessible. This falls below both the long-established 2 percent off-street benchmark and the 4 percent on-street guidance reflected in the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Survey responses and stakeholder interviews also indicate that accessible parking is perceived as insufficient in both quantity and location.

Demographic and Stakeholder Evidence

The demographic and stakeholder record supports the conclusion that accessible parking demand in Saugatuck is likely higher than in many comparable communities. Both resident and visitor age profiles skew older than state and national benchmarks, and survey respondents and interview participants raised concerns about the number, location, enforcement, and usability of accessible spaces in the CBD.

Demographic Evidence

The following table compares the age distribution of the resident population in Saugatuck, Michigan, the State of Michigan, and the United States. Data are based on the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2019–2023), which are commonly used for planning-level analysis in small communities.

Table 3 illustrates why accessible parking demand in Saugatuck is likely to exceed that of many comparable communities by comparing the city’s older resident age profile with state and national norms.

Table 3: Resident Age Distribution — Saugatuck, Michigan, and the U.S.

Age Group	Saugatuck (%)	Michigan (%)	United States (%)
Under 18 years	11.9	20.8	21.5
18–34 years	8.8	22.1	20.5
35–54 years	23.4	25.2	25.0
55–64 years	19.0	17.6	15.0
65 years and over	36.9	19.6	18.0

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019–2023).

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding. Age groupings were structured to highlight differences between Saugatuck’s older population and state and national norms.

The next table compares the age distribution of Saugatuck visitors with that of the general populations of Michigan and the United States. Visitor age data are based on responses to the City of Saugatuck Master Plan and parking survey and reflect the demographic profile of people actively visiting or engaging with the community. State and national comparison data are drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

Table 4 reinforces the same conclusion from a visitor perspective, showing that Saugatuck’s tourist population also skews older than broader state and national populations.

Table 4: Visitor Age Distribution — Saugatuck, Michigan, and the U.S.

Age Group	Saugatuck Visitors (%)	Michigan Population (%)	U.S. Population (%)
Under 18 years	—	20.8	21.5
19–39 years	22	22.1	20.5
40–59 years	38	25.2	25.0
60 years and over	40	19.6	18.0

Source: City of Saugatuck Master Plan and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019–2023).

Key observation: Saugatuck’s visitor population skews significantly older than both the Michigan and national populations. Visitors age 60 and over account for roughly two-fifths of survey respondents, more than double the statewide and national shares. This older visitor profile has important implications for accessibility, walk-distance tolerance, ADA parking demand, and curbside management in the CBD.

Survey and Stakeholder Findings

The online parking questionnaire administered for this study supports the conclusion that accessible parking is insufficient in downtown Saugatuck. Among 618 responses reviewed, 17 respondents, or about 2.8 percent, explicitly mentioned accessible, ADA, or handicap parking as a challenge or concern. This is notable because the survey did not include a specific question about accessible parking.

Respondents raised concerns related to the availability, location, enforcement, and usability of accessible parking. Common themes included insufficient ADA spaces, difficulty finding handicap parking during peak periods, the need for closer parking for individuals with mobility limitations, and a lack of enforcement when ADA spaces are blocked or misused.

Illustrative ADA-related comments included the following:

- More accessible.
- More accessible alternate ways, bike lanes, or larger shoulders for bikes or walking.
- Handicapped.
- I am disabled. Not enough handicapped parking. I always find them in Holland, but not in Saugatuck.
- Outdoor patios in the street need to go away. Enforce timed parking. We also need more handicaps.
- Need for more handicap spaces.
- Fine for me, but harder with a stroller or my kids and my mother with a cane.
- I have considered using the interurban, but I am disabled. Not sure I can get on.
- I use a walker, so a short distance or handicap spot is essential, or I leave and have to go elsewhere.
- More handicapped less restaurants using up parking spots.
- More handicap parking.
- Handicap if available.
- More handicap parking. Elderly ppl spend money too, but can't walk blocks to and from a parking.

- So little handicap parking is available.
- One thing lacking in this survey is asking about handicap parking.
- Designated free public parking lots that are easily accessible.
- Mobility issues.
- More handicap parking.
- Handicap if able to find. Would be nice if businesses didn't put picnic tables in the handicap spot.
- One should never have to pay for Handicapped parking (or be in a position to ask if there is a post which isn't ideal if it's a handicapped parking sign, for example.
- About parking in the handicap spots many times, and their reply is "well, there's nowhere else to.
- Charge for handicapped parking.)
- Handicap parking is ideal.
- Handicapped and require handicapped parking, and it is basically nonexistent in downtown.
- Better enforcement of the handicap parking spots is needed. I have confronted tourists.
- More considerate of out-of-towners and the elderly & disabled, families with small children, etc.

Additionally, 2 of the 10 stakeholders interviewed for this study stated, without prompting, that accessible, ADA, or handicap parking in downtown Saugatuck was insufficient.

- Insufficient accessible spaces.
- I also do not believe there are enough accessible/handicap spaces.

Taken together, these comments reinforce concerns about the adequacy, location, enforcement, and usability of accessible parking in the downtown area.

Regulatory Context and Practical Application

Accessible on-street parking in Saugatuck should be evaluated within a practical regulatory framework that combines ADA program-access obligations with the more detailed technical guidance now available through PROWAG. While the 2010 ADA Standards do not establish explicit technical design standards for on-street parking, Title II of the ADA applies to on-street parking programs operated by state and local governments. In other words, on-street parking is a public program and must be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities as part of overall program accessibility.

The Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), issued as a final rule by the U.S. Access Board in 2023, now provide the primary federal technical guidance for accessible on-street parking and curbside facilities. They are increasingly used by federal and state agencies as the baseline for ADA compliance in the public right-of-way. For Saugatuck, PROWAG should be understood as both a design reference and a policy benchmark for determining whether the current number and distribution of accessible spaces is adequate.

- Number of spaces: Generally, at least one accessible space is required for every 25 on-street parking spaces on a block face up to 100 spaces, with additional spaces required as the total supply increases. Where more than 200 spaces are provided, approximately 4 percent must be accessible. Walker understands that this requirement applies to new projects under construction and restorations or reconfigurations of existing block perimeters or block faces. Therefore, until Saugatuck falls into one of these two categories, this 4 percent rule is not mandated. However, Saugatuck may elect to use this as

guidance. Based on 761 on-street parking spaces in the CBD, 4 percent would be 30 ADA spaces. At present, 10 accessible on-street parking spaces were identified as follows in the CBD:

- 100 Block of Hoffman Street (1)
- 100 Block of Mary Street (1)
- 100 Block of Main Street (1)
- 100 Block of Mason Street (1)
- 200 Block of Mason Street (1)
- 100 Block of Griffith Street (1)
- 100 Block of Water Street (2)
- 00 Block of Butler Street (2)
- Design and access: Accessible on-street spaces should be reasonably level and connected to the sidewalk network by a continuous accessible pedestrian route. Where sidewalk width allows (typically 14 feet or more), a street-level access aisle at least 5 feet wide should be provided.
- Signage and markings: Accessible spaces should be clearly designated using the International Symbol of Accessibility and appropriate pavement markings to discourage encroachment and ensure visibility.

In Michigan, accessible on-street parking is generally implemented through Title II obligations interpreted in conjunction with PROWAG. MDOT and local jurisdictions commonly use PROWAG to guide curbside design while allowing flexibility in older downtowns, historic districts, and resort communities where physical constraints may complicate full retrofit. Even where those constraints exist, the governing principle remains that accessible parking should be provided to the maximum extent feasible and distributed in a way that preserves meaningful access to key destinations.

Recommendation

Walker recommends that the city use PROWAG as the guiding framework for expanding accessible on-street parking in the CBD and increase the current supply from 10 spaces to approximately 30 spaces over time. Additional spaces should be distributed across the core business district, including Water, Butler, Main, Hoffman, Mason, and Culver Streets, to improve access to key destinations. This expansion should be paired with regular enforcement, utilization monitoring, and periodic reassessment so the city can refine the program as demand patterns and physical conditions evolve.

Proposed Final Deliverable Framework

This document presents the proposed framework for the final parking study deliverable. It is intended to include a comprehensive executive summary and a digital binder organized around the white papers and supporting materials prepared for Parking Improvement Task Force meetings. The outline below identifies the proposed structure and content of the final deliverable.

1. Executive Summary and Recommended Actions

- a. Refrain from Advancing Paid Parking or Structured Parking at This Time and Why
- b. Strengthen Enforcement Practices and Ambassador Presence
- c. Expand Remote Parking, Shared Parking Arrangements, and Interurban Operations
- d. Improve Signage, Wayfinding, and Public Information

2. Study Purpose and Background

- a. Scope of Services
- b. Background

3. Existing Conditions and Key Findings

- a. Parking Inventory
- b. Occupancy Study Results
- c. Questionnaire Results
- d. Stakeholder Interview Findings
- e. Peer Community Review
- f. Framing Parking Challenges in Saugatuck
- g. Wayfinding, Signage, and Communications Review
- h. Future Growth and Parking Impacts

4. Alternatives Considered

- a. Paid Parking Considerations for Saugatuck
- b. Cost to Build and Operate a Parking Structure in Saugatuck
- c. Saugatuck Remote Parking, Interurban Expansion, and Shared Parking
- d. Increased Parking Enforcement and Ambassador Approach
- f. Employee Parking Management
- g. Butler Street One-Way Conversion

Appendix

- a. Parking Improvements Task Force Meeting Minutes