



**Planning Commission Rescheduled Regular Meeting
September 8, 2026, 6:30PM
City Hall
102 Butler Street, Saugatuck, MI**

- 1. Call to Order/Roll Call:**
- 2. Approval of Agenda:** (Voice Vote)
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** (Voice Vote)
 - A. Regular Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2026
- 4. Public Comments on Agenda Items:** (Limit 3 minutes)
- 5. New Business:**
 - A. 1165/1169 Bridge St. – Major Waterfront Construction Public Hearing
Pg. 6
 - B. 510 Butler St. – Zoning Ordinance Amendment “Boutique Inn” Public Hearing
Pg. 28
 - C. Comprehensive Plan Chapters 4-6 Draft Review & Discussion
Pg. 51
- 6. Old Business:**
- 7. Communication:**
- 8. Reports of Officers and Committees:**
- 9. Public Comment:** (Limit 3 minutes)
- 10. Commissioner Comments:**
- 11. Adjourn** (Voice Vote)

NOTICE:

This public meeting will be held in-person. The public can join via Zoom video/audio conference technology.

Join online by visiting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2698572603?omn=83088957018>

Join by phone by dialing:

(312) 626-6799

-or-

(646) 518-9805

Then enter “Meeting ID”:

269 857 2603

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

gmoore@saugatuckcity.com

Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact Saugatuck Deputy Clerk at (269)224-9507 or sara@saugatuckcity.com for further information.

***Public Hearing Procedure**

- A. Hearing is called to order by the Chair
- B. Summary by the Zoning Administrator
- C. Presentation by the Applicant
- D. Public comment regarding the application
 - 1) Participants shall identify themselves by name and address
 - 2) Comments/Questions shall be addressed to the Chair
 - 3) Comments/Questions shall be limited to **three** minutes
- 1. Supporting comments (audience and letters)
- 2. Opposing comments (audience and letters)
- 3. General comments (audience and letters)
- 4. Repeat comment opportunity (Supporting, Opposing, General)
- E. Public comment portion closed by the Chair
- F. Commission deliberation
- G. Commission action



Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes Draft – DRAFT

July 16, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Manns.

Members Present: Baldwin, Bagierek, Gardner, LaChey, Manns, Marineau, Raphael

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning Director Moore, Deputy Clerk Williams

Others Present: David Jirousek (Horizon Planning)

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by LaChey, supported by Bagierek, to approve the agenda as presented for the July 16, 2026, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Baldwin, supported by LaChey, to approve the June 18, 2026, minutes as presented. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

None

5. New Business

A. Planning Commission Survey Summary:

The Planning Commission's discussion of the survey summary focused on how closely commissioners' responses aligned around key themes and where they diverged. Planning & Zoning Director Moore noted strong consensus on preserving existing neighborhood character while still allowing appropriate growth, and especially strong agreement on expanding walkability and non-motorized transportation. Commissioners were more divided, however, on "intensification" in and around downtown – some favoring "maintain current scale and intensity, others supporting "moderate intensification where appropriate." In the discussion, they unpacked what those phrases mean in practice: small, context-sensitive projects and possible use of transition zones, but not high-rise or out-of-scale buildings. Several members also tied their survey answers to broader pressures from substantial new housing in Douglas and the township, emphasizing the need to balance Saugatuck's role as a commercial hub and resort community with protection of its small-town, historic character and quality of life for year-round residents.

B. Comprehensive (Master) Plan Chapters 1-3 Draft Review & Discussion:

During the review of the Comprehensive Master Plan Chapters 1-3, the Planning Commission focused on refining both content and structure. Commissioners agreed the overall direction was solid and appreciated having a narrative “first draft” that will later be made more visual and user-friendly. They asked for a richer history section that better reflects Saugatuck’s evolution – from industry and agriculture to resort community – and more prominently acknowledges the LGBTQ+ community’s historic and ongoing role. They made detailed map and text corrections to the “planning areas” (e.g. reclassifying parts of Mason and Griffith as mixed-use, recognizing bed-and-breakfasts and motor courts on South Riverfront, updating parking and sidewalk descriptions, and flagging conservation lands on the coastal dunes). The group also flagged anomalies (household and housing counts, poverty figures, vacant units, and renter-occupied trends) for verification and requested added explanation of population decline and housing dynamics. Finally, they supported the proposed chapter structure (clear goals, topic sections, and planning principles) and emphasized future priorities such as wayfinding, walkability, public engagement (including business and history stakeholders), and clarifying Saugatuck’s role as the commercial hub within a growing tri-community region.

6. Old Business

None

7. Communication

None

8. Reports of Officers and Committees

A. Parking Improvements Task Force:

Commissioner Marineau reported that the Parking Improvements Task Force has two meetings left (July & August) and that their consultant has just completed the final parking inventory to capture habits and turnover, so data will be available soon. He explained the likely recommendations to City Council: avoid both paid parking and structured parking for now; instead, strengthen enforcement and create an “ambassador” program with uniformed personnel who can direct visitors to parking and enforce three-hour limits where applicable; expand remote parking and improve/expand Interurban operations, potentially through shared-parking agreements; and place a strong emphasis on improved signage and wayfinding. He notes that nothing “drastic” is expected to be proposed at this stage, but a larger packet of alternative ideas (such as one-way street concepts and raised parking) will be provided for Council’s longer-term consideration.

9. Public Comments

None

10. Commissioner Comments

Raphael offered a brief positive comment, stating that he thought the comprehensive plan work was a good project, that the Planning Commission made good progress on the three chapters reviewed, and that he liked how it was going.

Gardner says his main focus has been on the Parking Improvement Task Force. He appreciates that the emerging recommendation is that Saugatuck does not have a parking capacity problem but a management problem, and that the task force is emphasizing better management rather than major new

infrastructure. He notes this aligns with his long-held position and says he looks forward to seeing the final report and conclusions.

Marineau thanked everyone for the strong discussion, then used the recent birth of his daughter, Daphne, as a reminder of the longer time horizon the master plan must address. He notes that while he grew up in Saugatuck and hadn't planned to return, there is a "magic" or "it factor" that draws people back, and he stresses that the Commission's work should protect that quality for the next generation as well as for current residents and visitors.

LaChey appreciates Auston's long-term perspective and thought the first three comprehensive plan chapters were very good and was impressed with the work. He adds that this kind of focused, month-after-month work on the comprehensive plan is exactly what the Planning Commission is supposed to be doing, and he's pleased that it's happening.

Baldwin shares Mark LaChey's view: the first three comprehensive plan chapters are strong, and staff did great work on them. He adds that it was a relief to have a meeting focused almost entirely on the comprehensive plan with no major other agenda items, noting they used all the available time and that any additional business would have undercut the depth of that review.

Bagierek agrees it was a very good, well-focused meeting on the master plan and specifically compliments Grayson's pre-meeting survey and question packet. He says that format worked well for this exercise, gave commissioners time to review and respond thoughtfully, and that he looks forward to seeing more of that approach in future chapters.

Manns echoed the other commissioner's comments, saying it was a good meeting, and he appreciated being able to devote the entire session to the master plan without needing a special meeting. He noted they used the full two hours productively and made substantial headway on the first three chapters. He also acknowledges and celebrates Saugatuck's "newest resident," Auston's newborn daughter Daphne, joking that the city's population has increased by one, and he congratulated Auston & Olivia.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Gardner, supported by Raphael, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by:
Sara Williams
Deputy Clerk
City of Saugatuck



MEMORANDUM

City of Saugatuck Planning Commission

Memo Date:	August 12, 2026	Meeting Date:	September 8, 2026
Request:	Maj. Water. Cons.	Applicant:	Kameron Jordan
Address:	1165 & 1169 Bridge Street	Project Name:	Dock Project
Parcel:	03-57-016-004-10/20	Plan Date:	Not specified
Lot Size:	5.65 acres	Zoning District:	Community Residential R-1
Complete:	Yes	Recommendation:	Table
City Staff:	Grayson Moore	Consultant:	David M. Jirousek, AICP

Overview

The applicant proposes a major waterfront construction project, including a 175-foot boardwalk and dock structure with an associated L-shaped finger pier and mooring piles within the backwaters of the Kalamazoo River. The purpose of this memo is to provide a compliance review related to all applicable zoning standards and requirements in Section 154.205.

Background

The proposed structure begins as an elevated boardwalk extending approximately 25 feet across a wetland to the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM). From the OHWM, the structure extends approximately 90 feet as an elevated dock before transitioning to a floating dock for approximately 60 feet. The entire structure is approximately 175 feet long, with 150 feet extending waterward of the OHWM. The walking surface is five feet wide, and two mooring piles are proposed adjacent to a 30-foot finger pier.

The applicant has secured a permit from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). An application has been filed with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the permit is pending.

Applicability

In accordance with Section 154.205 (A), before commencing any major waterfront construction, a permit must be secured. Major waterfront construction is defined as follows in Section 154.205 (B). The proposed project qualifies as major waterfront construction as it extends beyond 45 feet from the OHWM.

- (1) The construction of a bulkhead, dock, pier, boat hoist and/or other structure extending into or located on the waters of the Kalamazoo River or Kalamazoo Lake where the purpose is to rent, lease or otherwise make available to the general public space for the securing or mooring of watercraft for commercial purposes, or in conjunction with a commercial establishment, a condominium or a marina.*
- (2) Major construction shall also include any pier or dock, whether for commercial or private use, which extends into the waters of the Kalamazoo River or Kalamazoo Lake more than 45 feet as measured from the Ordinary High Water, elevation 581.5 International Great Lakes Datum (IGLD). A major construction permit shall always be required for waterfront construction in connection with the establishment, use or expansion of a private or commercial marina where permitted under §§ 154.023 through 154.041 of this code.*

Zoning Review

Piers and docks are subject to the following requirements:

Section 154.205 (D), Pier or Dock Construction

- 1. Piers or docks constructed pursuant to this subchapter shall not extend outboard more than 100 feet from the bulkhead, or at a location on the bottom of the ordinary high water, elevation 581.5 International Great Lakes Datum (IGLD). The only exception to the length restriction is as stated in division (D)(9) below for the Neighborhood Marine district (NHM).*

Comment: The structure extends approximately 150 feet into the river from the OHWM (elevation of 581.5 feet). As such, it exceeds the requirement by 50 feet, and a variance is required which has been applied for. It appears that the proposed length is necessary given the gentle slope of the lake bottom, as the waterline measured on April 3, 2026, was 90 feet from the OHWM, and the depth at the end of the dock was only 19 inches on the same date.

- 2. The main pier extending from the shoreline shall have a minimum width of four feet. A main pier may be "L" shaped so long as any finger piers do not exceed the maximum distance from the shore/bulkhead as specified in division (B) above.*

Comment: The proposed width of primary dock walking surface and finger pier is five feet. As stated earlier, the total structure length, including the finger pier, exceeds the 100-foot maximum.

3. *Finger piers less than four feet wide extending from the main pier shall not exceed 30 feet in length, and shall have a minimum width of three feet.*

Comment: The finger pier extends west from the dock for 12 feet and is 30 feet long in a parallel manner to the main dock. The finger pier does not extend out into the water any further than the main dock and maintains the same five-foot width.

4. *Pier or docks shall allow for the flowage of littoral materials and water in such a manner as to preclude detrimental impact in adjacent properties and environment.*

Comment: The spacing of the pilings, as well as compliance with EGLE and USACE requirements, are anticipated to prevent detrimental impacts to the environment and adjacent properties.

5. *All piers or docks shall be located so as not to infringe on the riparian rights of other property owners or recorded water access or use easements.*

Comment: The placement of the dock does not extend beyond the riparian rights area of the landowner.

6. *Pier or dock construction must be substantial and the design and materials must be consistent with established construction standards as required by the State Construction Code.*

Comment: The dock system appears appropriate for the intended use; however, construction must comply with all applicable state and local codes.

7. *All piers or docks constructed under a major construction permit shall have the capacity to carry a live load of 100 pounds per square foot and shall have located thereon adequate lighting in areas available for public use in periods of darkness.*

Comment: Capacity information was not provided; however, construction must comply with all applicable state and local codes. Lighting is not required as the dock is not intended for public use.

8. *No piers or dock shall be placed within the parcel's required side yard setbacks nor may they be placed within the extension of the required setback into the riparian rights area (one and one-half times the allowed boat length). Boats, boat hoists and spring pilings shall be located within the owners riparian rights area.*

Comment: The proposed dock does not fall within the required side yard setbacks or an extension of the setback into the riparian rights area. All docking materials are located within the owner's riparian rights area.

Section 154.205 (G), Wetlands

(G) No major construction shall be allowed in wetland areas.

Comment: The plans indicate a 25-foot wetland system between the upland area and the OHWM. The Zoning Ordinance does not anticipate the presence of wetlands along river shorelines and the need to cross them to access deeper water.

Standards of Approval

In accordance with Section 154.205 (L) 1-2, the Planning Commission shall consider the application at a public hearing and shall approve, approve with conditions, deny, or require modification of the proposed major construction. In reviewing an application, the Planning Commission shall consider the following criteria:

(a) The impact on the ecological aspects of the waters and the adjacent properties located at the waterfront construction site;

Comment: Impacts to the environment and adjacent properties are not anticipated if the dock is constructed in accordance with EGLE and USACE regulations.

(b) The impact the construction would have on the use of the water by recreational boaters and adjacent property owners, and any hazard or interference to navigation the waterfront construction might create;

Comment: Impacts on other boaters and adjacent property owners are not anticipated. Although the proposed length exceeds what is allowed by the Zoning Ordinance, the water is very shallow at this location, and the dock would not impede common navigable routes.

(c) Compliance with the requirements of this chapter;

Comment: Two major compliance issues were noted earlier in this report, including the maximum length from the OHWM and the wetland crossing.

(d) Compliance with §§ 154.023 through 154.041; and

Comment: These sections relate to several zoning districts. There are no requirements related to docks within the applicable R-1 Community Residential District.

(e) Objections by the general public or nearby property owners, submitted in writing or in person at the public hearing.

Comment: TBD.

Recommendation

The dock cannot be approved as submitted based on its proposed length, as measured from the OHWM, and because wetlands are proposed to be crossed. The Planning Commission may wish to table consideration of the project to give the applicant a chance to apply for a variance based on the compliance issues noted in this report. Sample motions are included below.

I move to conditionally approve the major waterfront construction project for a 175-foot dock at 1165 and 1169 Bridge Street, provided that the approval shall not become effective unless and until the Zoning Board of Appeals granting both of the following variances:

- 1. A 50-foot dimensional variance from Section 154.205(D)(1) of the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a 150-foot residential use dock extending waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.*
- 2. A dimensional variance from Section 154.205(G) of the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a 150-foot residential use dock extending waterward of the ordinary high-water mark that passes through areas classified as wetlands*

I move to table consideration of the major waterfront construction project for a 175-foot dock at 1165 and 1169 Bridge Street until the applicant applies for variances and a decision is rendered by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

I move to deny the major waterfront construction project for a 175-foot dock at 1165 and 1169 Bridge Street due to a failure to comply with Sections 154.205 (D)(1) and 154.205 (G).

Fee: \$1,000
Escrow Deposit: \$2000



MAJOR WATERFRONT CONSTRUCTION PERMIT APPLICATION

See Zoning Ordinance for further details.

*Failure to answer all pertinent questions and to supply all of the requested information could delay processing of this application.
Attach additional sheets if necessary.*

PROPERTY ADDRESS 1169 Bridge Street Saugatuck MI 49453-9802

PROPERTY OWNER Robert Elhenicky

EMAIL [REDACTED] PHONE [REDACTED]

ADDRESS / PO BOX [REDACTED]

I hereby authorize that the applicant listed below is authorized to make this application for proposed work as my agent and we agree to conform to all applicable laws and regulations of the City of Saugatuck. I additionally grant City of Saugatuck staff or authorized representatives thereof access to the property to inspect conditions, before, during, and after the proposed work is completed.

SIGNATURE [Signature]

Date 6/30/26

APPLICANT NAME Kameron Jordan

EMAIL [REDACTED]

ADDRESS / PO BOX [REDACTED]

SIGNATURE [Signature]

PHONE [REDACTED]

Proposed waterfront construction, its purpose and intended use:

Construction of a boardwalk and dock to access open water for boat mooring and fishing.

Dates the proposed waterfront construction is intended to commence and be completed:

August 1 through August 15 20206

Location where proposed construction activity will occur:

Parcel B (57-016-004-20) which is street address 1169 Bridge Street Saugatuck MI 49453-9802.

Legal description of upland property at the waterfront construction site:

(Find legal discription for parcel B)

Statement as to why construction will not cause pollution, impair or destroy the water, or any natural resources:

This is the most environmentally sensative way to cross floodplain/wetland to access open water.

Clean non-polluting construction material will be used. No dredging or filling is proposed.

Description of any alternatives to the proposed waterfront construction if any have been considered:

A much longer structure, extending all the way to the Kalamazoo River proper.

Names and addresses of adjacent property owners, and a statement as to whether any objections have been made to the applicant concerning the proposed waterfront construction:

To east Robert Elhenicky 1165 Bridge Street Saugatuck MI 49453-9802

To west Thomas L Harrington 6720 M-89 Fennville MI 49408

Identify whether an application to the other appropriate federal or state agency, as required by law, has been made, and the date the application has been submitted:

Applications were made to EGLE (SOM), and the US Army Corp of Engineers on 3/7/2026.

Statement as to whether the proposed construction has been approved or denied or not acted upon by other state or federal agencies as required by law:

Permit from EGLE (State of Michigan) issued on June 15, 2026.

Permit application with the US Army Corps of Engineers is pending.

Statement as to whether the facility is to be leased, rented or made available to the general public, or is to be used in conjunction with any other commercial facility available for use by the general public:

The structure will be for private use only by the owner and his family. It will not be rented or leased.

CHECKLIST

☐ SURVEY

☒ SITE PLAN (MEETING §154.205 AND OTHER ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS)

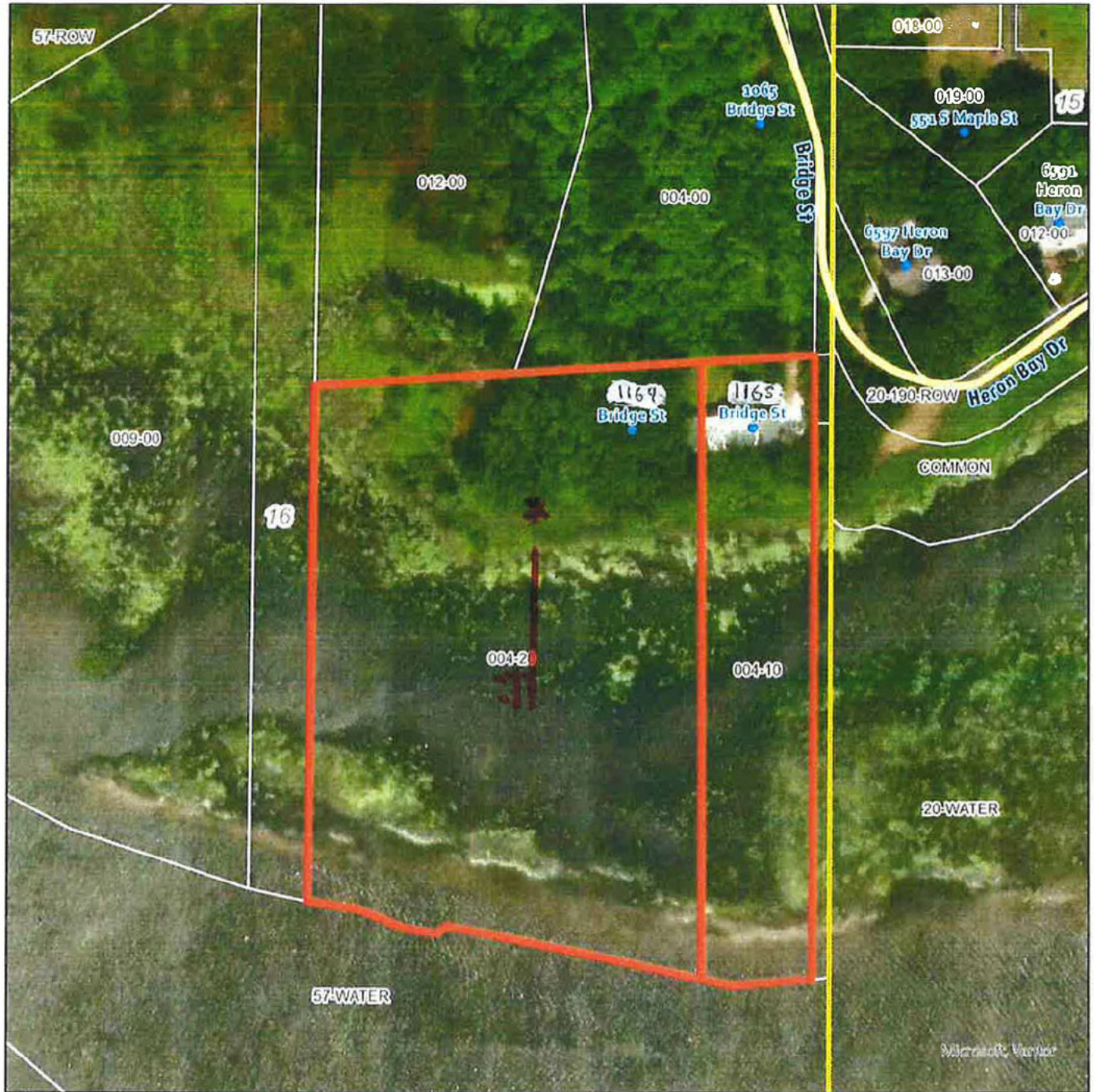
☐ CURRENT SITE IMPROVEMENTS

☒ PROPOSED WATERFRONT CONSTRUCTION AND DIMENSIONS, INCLUDING DISTANCES FROM OTHER IMPROVEMENTS/PROPERTY LINES

☒ LOCATION OF ORDINARY HIGH WATER, FLOOD PLAINS, WATERSHED, WETLANDS, EASEMENTS, CRITICAL DUNES

☒ COPIES OF STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCY REVIEWS/APPROVALS/DENIALS

Parcel Numbers: 57-016-004-20 & 57-016-004-10



0 112.5 225 450 US Feet

Address:

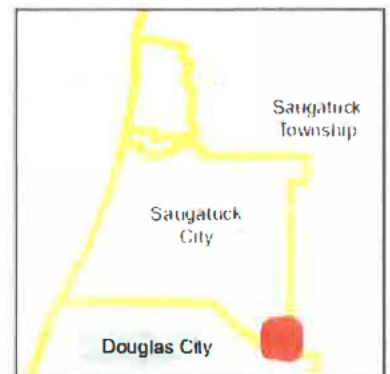
Owner: - Dock/Boardwalk

Acres:



The information contained herein is derived from recorded deeds, maps, tax maps, air photos, and other public records. It is not intended to constitute a warranty, and is not intended to be used for any purpose other than for general information only. The information is provided as is, without any representation or warranty.

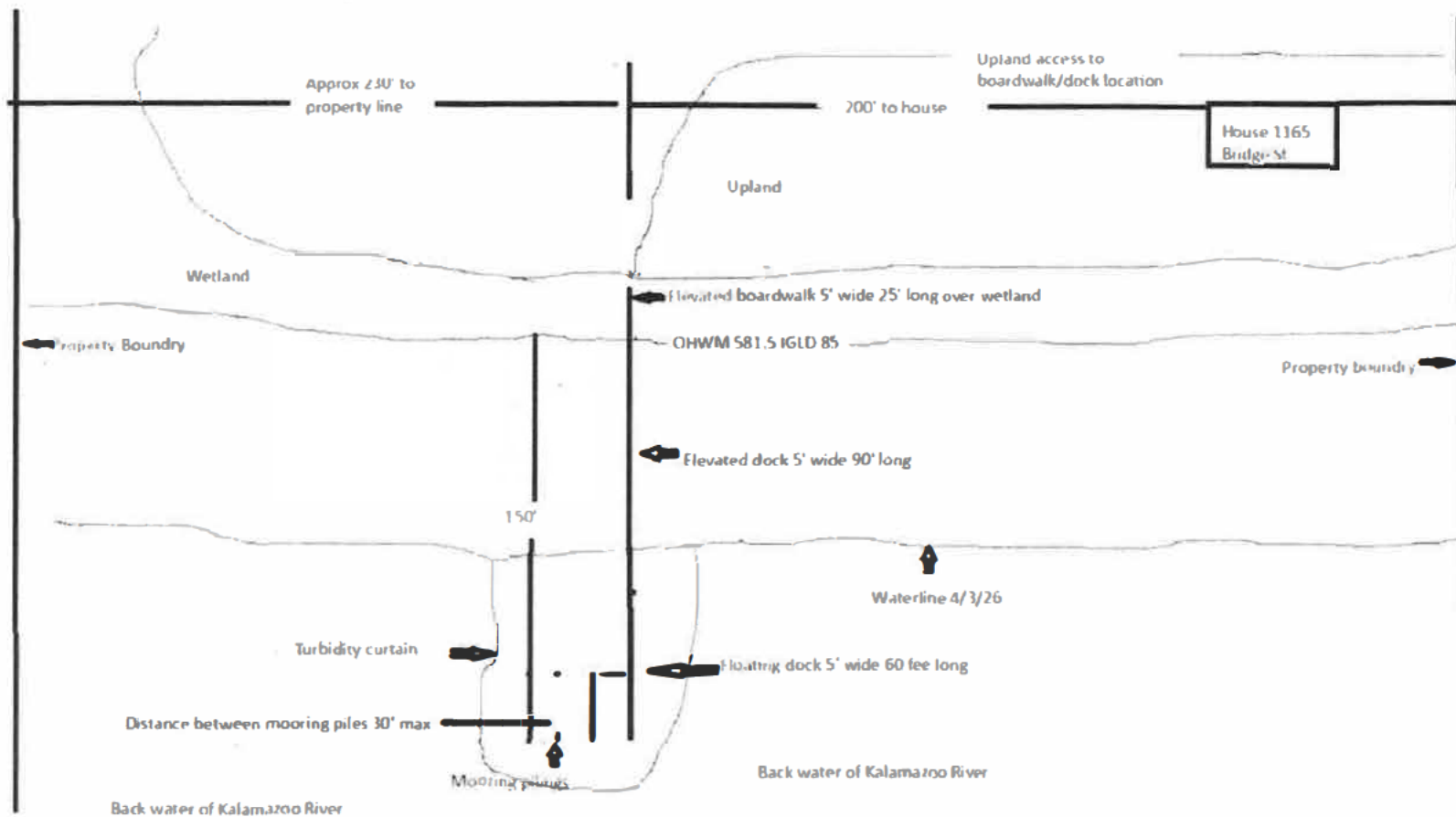
Map Date: December 1, 2010; Base Data: Parcel Data: 12/1/2010; Map Date: 12/1/2010



1 RI 2021 00877 52
Elhenicky



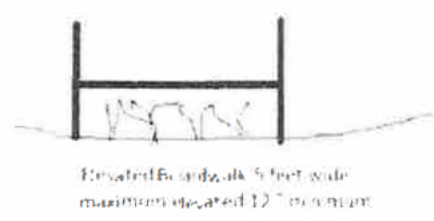
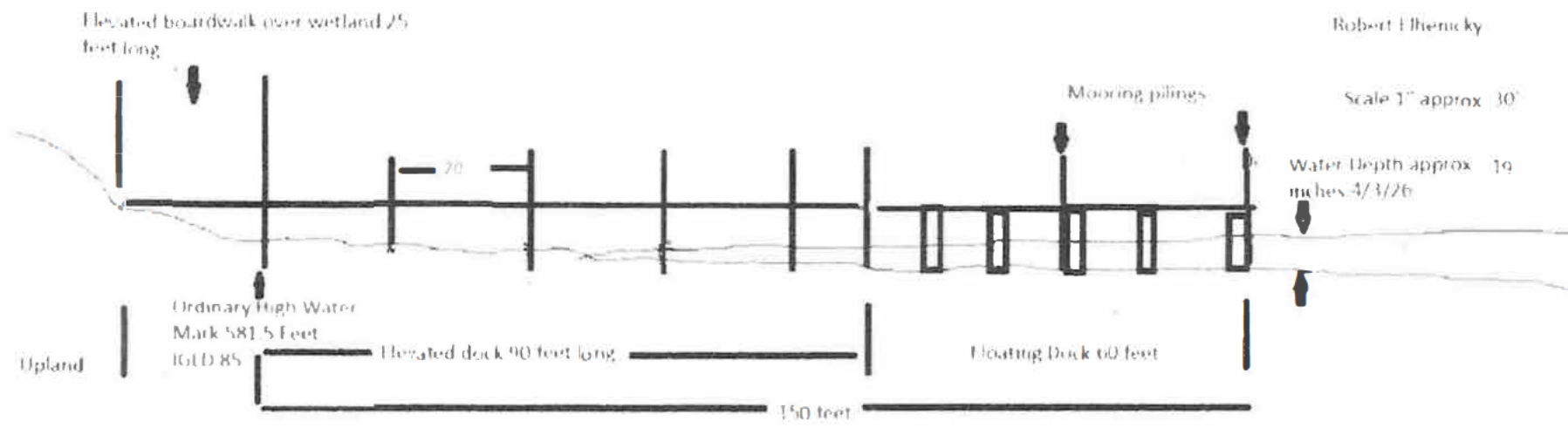
Scale 1" approx 60'



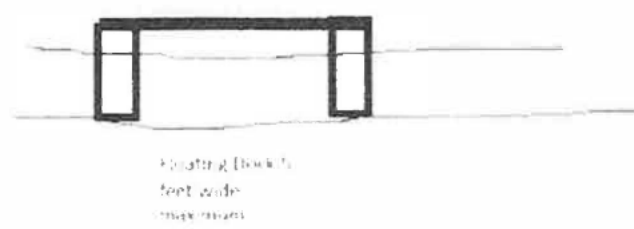
Robert Elhencky

Scale 1" approx 30'

Water Depth approx 19 inches 4/3/26

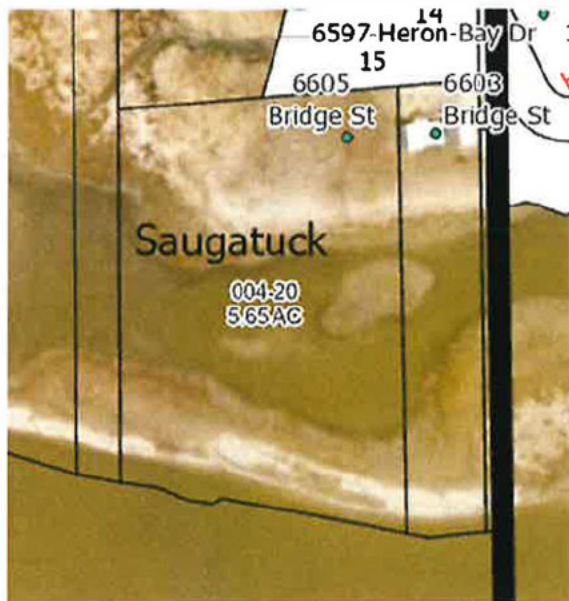


Scale 1" approx 5'



Description for 57-016-004-20:

COM NE COR TH S 982'; TH W 33' TO POB; TH S 165'; TH S 85DEG 30'00" W 343'; TH N 16DEG 30'00" E 176'; TH N 85DEG 30'00" E 297' TO POB EX BEG SE COR LOT 15 PANZER'S ADDITION; TH S 85DEG 30'00" W 120'; TH S PARALLEL WITH E SEC LN TO WATER'S EDGE KALAMAZOO RIVER; TH E'LY ALONG SAID WATER'S EDGE TO A PT 33' W OF E SEC LN; TH N PARALLEL WITH E SEC LN TO POB SEC 16 T3N R16W SURVEY: 0.7 AC / TAX MAP: 5.65 AC (2023)



Christian Parkes, MCAT

Allegan County Equalization

Equalization Technician / Mapper



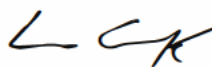
To whom it may concern:

Please note that Robert Elhenicky and Lyndsay Cook, a married couple, who own 1165 and 1169 Bridge Street, Saugatuck Michigan acknowledge and appoint Kameron Jordan as their representative and consultant on all matters pertaining to permitting of a dock and structure. This representation is valid for all matters pertaining to any permit and in front of any local, state or federal body.

Acknowledged January 26, 2026.



Robert Elhenicky



Lyndsay Cook





NOTICE OF AUTHORIZATION

Permit Number: WRP049169 v. 1
Site Name: 03-Harrison on Bridge-Saugatuck

Date Issued: June 15, 2026
Expiration Date: June 15, 2031

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Water Resources Division, P.O. Box 30458, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7958, under provisions of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended; specifically:

- ☒ Part 31, Floodplain Regulatory Authority of the Water Resources Protection.
- ☒ Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams.
- ☒ Part 303, Wetlands Protection.

Authorized activity:

Install a turbidity curtain around the waterward perimeter of the entire project area. Construct 175-linear feet of 5-foot-wide dock and boardwalk within floodplain, wetlands, and the Kalamazoo River, with a 5-foot-wide L-shaped finger pier measuring 12 feet long off the main pier and 30 feet long parallel to the main pier. The structure shall include approximately 40-linear feet of open pile boardwalk through wetlands. Install two mooring pilings approximately 12 feet from the 30-foot-long segment of dock. All work shall be completed in accordance with the attached plans and terms and conditions listed herein.

To be conducted at property located in: Allegan County, Waterbody: Kalamazoo River and adjacent wetland
Section 16, Town 03N, Range 16W, City of Saugatuck

Permittee:
Robert Elhenicky

Frances Whalen
Kalamazoo District Office
Water Resources Division

This notice must be displayed at the site of work.
Laminating this notice or utilizing sheet protectors is recommended.
Please refer to the above permit number with any questions or concerns.

EGLE
WRP049169 v.1.0
Approved
Issued: June 15, 2026
Expires: June 15, 2031



**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
PERMIT**

Issued To:

Robert Elhenicky


Permit No: WRP049169 v.1
Submission No.: HQK-VNHT-B5HM6
Site Name: 03-Harrison on Bridge-Saugatuck
Issued: June 15, 2026
Revised:
Expires: June 15, 2031

This permit is being issued by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Water Resources Division, under the provisions of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended (NREPA); specifically:

- ☒ **Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams**
- ☒ **Part 303, Wetlands Protection**
- ☒ **Part 31, Water Resources Protection (Floodplain Regulatory Authority)**

EGLE certifies that the activities authorized under this permit are in compliance with the State Coastal Zone Management Program and certifies without conditions under the Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401 that the discharge from the activities authorized under this permit will comply with Michigan's water quality requirements in Part 31, Water Resources Protection, of the NREPA and associated administrative rules, where applicable.

Permission is hereby granted, based on permittee assurance of adherence to State of Michigan requirements and permit conditions, to:

Authorized Activity:

Install a turbidity curtain around the waterward perimeter of the entire project area. Construct 175-linear feet of 5-foot-wide dock and boardwalk within floodplain, wetlands, and the Kalamazoo River, with a 5-foot-wide L-shaped finger pier measuring 12 feet long off the main pier and 30 feet long parallel to the main pier. The structure shall include approximately 40-linear feet of open pile boardwalk through wetlands. Install two mooring pilings approximately 12 feet from the 30-foot-long segment of dock. All work shall be completed in accordance with the attached plans and terms and conditions listed herein.

Waterbody Affected: Kalamazoo River and adjacent wetland
Property Location: Allegan County, City of Saugatuck, Town/Range/Section 03N16W16,
Property Tax No. 03-57-016-004-00 & 03-57-016-009-00

EGLE
WRP049169 v.1.0
Approved
Issued 06/15/2026
Expires 06/15/2031

Authority granted by this permit is subject to the following limitations:

- A. Initiation of any work on the permitted project confirms the permittee's acceptance and agreement to comply with all terms and conditions of this permit.
- B. The permittee, in exercising the authority granted by this permit, shall not cause unlawful pollution as defined by Part 31 of the NREPA.
- C. This permit shall be kept at the site of the work and available for inspection at all times during the duration of the project or until its date of expiration.
- D. All work shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications submitted with the application and/or plans and specifications attached to this permit.
- E. No attempt shall be made by the permittee to forbid the full and free use by the public of public waters at or adjacent to the structure or work approved.
- F. It is made a requirement of this permit that the permittee give notice to public utilities in accordance with 2013 PA 174 (Act 174) and comply with each of the requirements of Act 174.
- G. This permit does not convey property rights in either real estate or material, nor does it authorize any injury to private property or invasion of public or private rights, nor does it waive the necessity of seeking federal assent, all local permits, or complying with other state statutes.
- H. This permit does not prejudice or limit the right of a riparian owner or other person to institute proceedings in any circuit court of this state when necessary to protect his rights.
- I. Permittee shall notify EGLE within one week after the completion of the activity authorized by this permit by completing and forwarding the attached preaddressed postcard to the office addressed thereon.
- J. This permit shall not be assigned or transferred without the written approval of EGLE.
- K. Failure to comply with conditions of this permit may subject the permittee to revocation of permit and criminal and/or civil action as cited by the specific state act, federal act, and/or rule under which this permit is granted.
- L. All dredged or excavated materials shall be disposed of in an upland site (outside of floodplains, unless exempt under Part 31 of the NREPA, and wetlands).
- M. In issuing this permit, EGLE has relied on the information and data that the permittee has provided in connection with the submitted application for permit. If, subsequent to the issuance of a permit, such information and data prove to be false, incomplete, or inaccurate, EGLE may modify, revoke, or suspend the permit, in whole or in part, in accordance with the new information.
- N. The permittee shall indemnify and hold harmless the State of Michigan and its departments, agencies, officials, employees, agents, and representatives for any and all claims or causes of action arising from acts or omissions of the permittee, or employees, agents, or representative of the permittee, undertaken in connection with this permit. The permittee's obligation to indemnify the State of Michigan applies only if the state: (1) provides the permittee or its designated representative written notice of the claim or cause of action within 30 days after it is received by the state, and (2) consents to the permittee's participation in the proceeding on the claim or cause of action. It does not apply to contested case proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, 1969 PA 306, as amended, challenging the permit. This permit shall not be construed as an indemnity by the State of Michigan for the benefit of the permittee or any other person.
- O. Noncompliance with these terms and conditions and/or the initiation of other regulated activities not specifically authorized shall be cause for the modification, suspension, or revocation of this permit, in whole or in part. Further, EGLE may initiate criminal and/or civil proceedings as may be deemed necessary to correct project deficiencies, protect natural resource values, and secure compliance with statutes.
- P. If any change or deviation from the permitted activity becomes necessary, the permittee shall request, in writing, a revision of the permitted activity from EGLE. Such revision request shall include complete documentation supporting the modification and revised plans detailing the

proposed modification. Proposed modifications must be approved, in writing, by EGLE prior to being implemented.

- Q. This permit may be transferred to another person upon written approval of EGLE. The permittee must submit a written request to EGLE to transfer the permit to the new owner. The new owner must also submit a written request to EGLE to accept transfer. The new owner must agree, in writing, to accept all conditions of the permit. A single letter signed by both parties that includes all the above information may be provided to EGLE. EGLE will review the request and, if approved, will provide written notification to the new owner.
- R. Prior to initiating permitted construction, the permittee is required to provide a copy of the permit to the contractor(s) for review. The property owner, contractor(s), and any agent involved in exercising the permit are held responsible to ensure that the project is constructed in accordance with all drawings and specifications. The contractor is required to provide a copy of the permit to all subcontractors doing work authorized by the permit.
- S. Construction must be undertaken and completed during the dry period of the wetland. If the area does not dry out, construction shall be done on equipment mats to prevent compaction of the soil.
- T. Authority granted by this permit does not waive permit requirements under Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, of the NREPA, or the need to acquire applicable permits from the County Enforcing Agent (CEA).
- U. Authority granted by this permit does not waive permit requirements under the authority of Part 305, Natural Rivers, of the NREPA. A Natural Rivers Zoning Permit may be required for construction, land alteration, streambank stabilization, or vegetation removal along or near a natural river.
- V. The permittee is cautioned that grade changes resulting in increased runoff onto adjacent property is subject to civil damage litigation.
- W. Unless specifically stated in this permit, construction pads, haul roads, temporary structures, or other structural appurtenances to be placed in a wetland or on bottomland of the water body are not authorized and shall not be constructed unless authorized by a separate permit or permit revision granted in accordance with the applicable law.
- X. For projects with potential impacts to fish spawning or migration, no work shall occur within fish spawning or migration timelines (i.e., windows) unless otherwise approved in writing by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division.
- Y. Work to be done under authority of this permit is further subject to the following special instructions and specifications:
 - 1. Authority granted by this permit does not waive permit or program requirements under Part 91 of the NREPA or the need to acquire applicable permits from the CEA. To locate the Soil Erosion Program Administrator for your county, visit <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/soil-erosion/sesc-overview> and select "Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Agencies".
 - 2. The authority to conduct the activity as authorized by this permit is granted solely under the provisions of the governing act as identified above. This permit does not convey, provide, or otherwise imply approval of any other governing act, ordinance, or regulation, nor does it waive the permittee's obligation to acquire any local, county, state, or federal approval or authorization necessary to conduct the activity.
 - 3. No fill, excess soil, or other material shall be placed in any wetland, floodplain, or surface water area not specifically authorized by this permit, its plans, and specifications.
 - 4. This permit does not authorize or sanction work that has been completed in violation of applicable federal, state, or local statutes.

5. The permit placard shall be kept posted at the work site in a prominent location at all times for the duration of the project or until permit expiration.
6. This permit is being issued for the maximum time allowed and no extensions of this permit will be granted. Initiation of the construction work authorized by this permit indicates the permittee's acceptance of this condition. The permit, when signed by EGLE, will be for a five-year period beginning on the date of issuance. If the project is not completed by the expiration date, a new permit must be sought.
7. The project is located within a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As a participant in the NFIP, the community must comply with the Michigan Building Code (including Appendix G and listed supporting materials); the Michigan Residential Code; and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 60, Criteria for Land Management and Use. The community is also responsible to ensure that its floodplain maps and studies are maintained to show changes to flood elevations and flood delineations as described in 44 CFR, Part 65, Identification and Mapping of Special Hazard Areas.
8. The design flood or 1.0% annual chance (100-year) floodplain elevation at this location on Kalamazoo River is 583.5 feet NAVD88.
9. Any other filling, grading, or construction within the 100-year floodplain will require a separate EGLE permit before starting the work.
10. All structures constructed within the floodplain or floodway shall be firmly anchored to prevent flotation or lateral movement.
11. Filling is not authorized by this permit.
- 12. No work or dredging within the water authorized by this permit is allowed from March 15 to June 30 and September 1 to December 15, due to critical spawning, migration, and/or recreational use periods in the Kalamazoo River, unless written approval is requested and obtained by EGLE in coordination with MDNR Fisheries Division**
13. Boardwalk and dock shall be of open construction without fill, maintaining free water movement and circulation.
14. The proposed structure shall not unreasonably interfere with the navigability or boatability of the water involved or interfere with the riparian rights or use of the waters by others.
15. All pilings shall be driven in. Jetting or dredging is not authorized by this permit.
16. Prior to commencing installation of the dock, the entire lakeward perimeter of the project site shall be isolated with a turbidity curtain to prevent movement of suspended sediments. The turbidity curtain shall be installed to extend from the bed of the waterbody to a point above the existing water's surface. The turbidity curtain shall be maintained for the duration of the project and shall be left in place after completion until all disturbed sediments have settled.

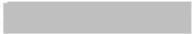
17. This permit authorizes construction of the dock for private, non-commercial use for individuals residing at 1165 Bridge Street, Saugatuck.
18. Additional permanent attachments to permitted structures, including but not limited to cantilevered or other extensions, roofs, sidewalls, handrails, decks, docks, piers, are not authorized by this permit unless specifically stated in the authorized activity, and depicted on the attached plans.
19. The permittee and contractors shall take steps to minimize the risk of spreading terrestrial and aquatic invasive species during this project where feasible, including:
- Visually inspecting footwear (boots, hip-boots, and waders), and removing and properly disposing of any plants or mud.
 - Visually inspecting field equipment (nets, shovels, rakes, etc.) and vehicles, and removing and properly disposing of any plants and mud.
 - Draining all water from vehicles and equipment prior to leaving the site and before entering a new waterbody.
 - Thoroughly drying equipment (5-7 days, if possible) between sites, when possible.
 - Disinfecting vehicles and equipment between sites (e.g. diluted bleach solution, heated pressure washer), when possible. Disinfection shall be conducted away from surface waters, where the disinfecting solution will not enter any storm sewers and/or surface waters.
 - Typical diluted bleach solution treatment is one half cup (4 fluid ounces) bleach to 5 gallons of water, applied by spraying or sponge so that the surface is thoroughly exposed to bleach solution for 10 minutes.
 - Typical heated pressure wash is 140°F water temperature, sprayed for 5-10 seconds.
 - Thoroughly washing vehicles and boats between sites (e.g. drive-through car wash).
 - Using only native plants and seed for restorations and best management practices.

If invasive aquatic or terrestrial plants are removed from a site, the permittee will take steps to minimize the spread of these species. Dispose of invasive plant material by bagging and transporting to a landfill, composting, or burning, as appropriate and in compliance with local and state laws.

A "Watch List" of Michigan's high priority aquatic invasive species along with how to report sightings can be found at <https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/id-report/watchlist>

Issued By:



Frances Whalen
Kalamazoo District Office
Water Resources Division


THIS PERMIT MUST BE SIGNED BY THE PERMITTEE TO BE VALID.

I hereby assure that I have read, am familiar with, and agree to adhere to the terms and conditions of this permit.

Permittee Signature

Date

cc: City of Saugatuck Clerk
Allegan County Drain Commissioner
Allegan County CEA
April Champion, USACE
Kameron Jordan, Agent



ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health 269-673-5415



System Type:

Label: 1169 BRIDGE ST

Property Information

Address: 1169 BRIDGE ST

City: SAUGATUCK

State: MI

Zip: 49453

Township: City of Saugatuck

County: Allegan County

Tax ID: 57-016-004-20

Parcel accessible to Public Sewer System:

Parcel accessible to Public Water System:

Owner Information

Owner Name: ELHENICK ROBERT S & COOK LYNDAY M

Owner Address: SAME AS PROPERTY

Owner City:

Owner State:

Owner Zip:

Owner Phone:

Owner Email:

PERMIT

Permit Type: Soil Erosion

Permit Status: Issued

Permit Number: 154580

It is the responsibility of the applicant/homeowner to ensure that all components of the proposed and approved earth change(s) be located within the legal boundaries of the property being served unless otherwise approved by the Allegan County Health Department.

Stormwater Operator

Company Name: Robert Elharminy

Company Address:

Company Telephone: [REDACTED]

Company License Number:

Project Information

Start Date: 07/01/2026, 11:58 AM

End Date: 07/15/2026, 11:58 AM

Earth change size (sqft): 200

Earth change size (acres): >1 acre

Earth change within 200ft of storm water catch basin which discharges into body of water: Yes

Earth change within 500ft of body of water: Yes

Project Description: Elevated Boardwalk, Dock, Floating Dock, Pilings.

Soil Erosion Permit Instructions:

Waiver Granted.

Sanitarian Signature:



Issued By: Owain Braddock

Issued Date: 07/08/2026

Expiration Date: 07/08/2027

Permit Conditions

1. The permitted activity shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and specification, and the attached general and specific conditions.
2. This permit does not waive the necessity for obtaining all other required federal, state, or local permits.
3. Applicant shall notify the permitting agency within one week after completing the permitted activity or one week prior to the permit expiration date, whichever comes first.

In accordance with Rule 1709 promulgated under the authority of Part 91, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, and in addition to the information on the attached plan(s) and special conditions, the following general conditions apply to the earth change authorized by this permit:

Design, construct, and complete the earth change in a manner that limits the exposed area of disturbed land for the shortest period of time.

Remove sediment caused by accelerated soil erosion from runoff water before it leaves the site of the earth change.

Temporary or permanent control measures shall be designed and installed to convey water around, through, or from the earth change at non-erosive velocity.

Install temporary soil erosion and sedimentation control measures before or upon commencement of the earth change activity and maintain the measures on a daily basis. Remove temporary soil erosion and sedimentation control measures after permanent soil erosion measures are in place and the area is stabilized. ("Stabilized" means the establishment of vegetation or the proper placement, grading, or covering of soil to ensure its resistance to soil erosion, sliding, or other earth movement.)

Complete permanent soil erosion control measures for the earth change within five calendar days after final grading or upon completion of the final earth change. If it is not possible to permanently stabilize the earth change, then maintain temporary soil erosion and sedimentation control measures until permanent soil erosion control measures are in place and the area is stabilized.

THIS PERMIT MUST BE POSTED AT THE PROJECT SITE



MEMORANDUM

City of Saugatuck Planning Commission

Memo Date:	September 1, 2026	Meeting Date:	September 8, 2026
Request:	Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment	Applicant:	Christopher Khorey/ McKenna
Complete:	Yes	Recommendation:	N/A
City Staff:	Grayson Moore	Consultant:	David M. Jirousek, AICP

Overview

On behalf of the Wickwood Inn, the applicant has requested a zoning text amendment to establish a new lodging use, identified as a "boutique inn." The proposed use is intended to function as a specialized accommodation use that is less intensive and less obtrusive than a hotel/inn and less auto-oriented than a motel, motor court, or motel/motor court, while allowing a broader range of services and amenities than are allowed under a bed and breakfast. The primary purpose of the amendment is to allow accessory services, amenities, expanded dining options, and event spaces that may serve both overnight guests and the general public.

Revisions

Based on the June meeting discussion and follow-up with City Staff and advisors, the applicant has revised their request. These changes are outlined and tracked in the applicant's submittal. The more significant changes include the following:

- **Definitions.** Revises the definition of boutique inn to allow the use to consist of multiple buildings rather than a single building.
- **Location.**
 - Removes boutique inns from all previously proposed zoning districts except R-4.
 - Limits boutique inns to R-4 lots abutting properties with C-1 or C-2 zoning designation.
- **Use Designation.** Changes boutique inns from a permitted use to a special land use, requiring review and approval by the Planning Commission.
- **Parking.** Retains the parking requirement of one parking space per three sleeping units.

- **Signs.** Removes the boutique inn-specific sign provisions and relies on the existing applicable sign regulations in Section 154.140.
- **Nuisance Mitigation.** Adds a reference requiring compliance with applicable nuisance ordinance requirements.
- **Screening.** Requires screening where a boutique inn is adjacent to a residential use.
- **Accessory Guest Building Requirements.** Includes similar requirements for accessory guest buildings, generally consistent with the existing requirements for accessory guest buildings associated with bed and breakfast uses (includes them in the boutique inn section rather than a reference to bed and breakfast requirements).
- **Restaurant Use.** Clarifies requirements related to restaurant use.
- **Event Attendance.** Reduces maximum event attendance from six (6) times to four (4) times the number of guest rooms.

Analysis

These changes will result in an overall reduction of the potential impact to the R-4 district compared to the initial proposal, primarily related to allowable guest attendance. Most importantly, classifying boutique inns as a special land use provides an additional level of review to evaluate site-specific impacts and impose appropriate conditions to protect surrounding properties.

Limiting the geographic area to the R-4 district does not necessarily impact the other previously considered zoning districts, as most already include commercial accommodation uses. However, it allows the Planning Commission to focus its discussion on qualifying lots- those that are zoned R-4 and are “abutting” C-1 and C-2 zoning districts:

1. 149 Lucy Street- Abuts C-1 WSN: Single-Family Residential Dwelling (4,356 s.f. lot)
2. 153 Lucy Street- Abuts C-1 WSN: Two-Family Residential Dwelling (3,049 s.f. lot)
3. 650 Butler Street- Abuts C-2 WSE: Single-Family Residential Dwelling (7,275 s.f. lot)
4. 620 Butler Street- Abuts C-1 WSN: Vacant (10,149 s.f. lot)
5. 620 Butler Street- Abuts C-1 WSN: Single-Family Residential Dwelling (8,233 s.f. lot)
6. 606 Butler Street- Abuts C-1 WSN: Single-Family Residential Dwelling (9,191 s.f. lot)
7. 546 Butler Street- Abuts C-2 WSE: Commercial Building (8,712 s.f. lot)
8. 526 Butler Street- Abuts C-2 WSE: Single-Family Residential Dwelling (8,712 s.f. lot)
9. 120 Mary Street/510 Butler Street (Combined Lot)- Abuts C-2 WSE: Bed and Breakfast Establishment- Wickwood Inn (26,136 s.f. lot)

Note: Zoning definition of Abutting (Lot or Parcel): A lot or parcel which shares a common border with the subject lot or parcel.

Recommendation

At this stage, the applicant is seeking formal review and consideration of the revised zoning text amendment. The Commission may choose to use one of the following motions:

I move to approve the proposed zoning text amendment to establish a new lodging use, boutique inn, permitted in the R-4 Residential Transitional Zoning District, as presented.

I move to table consideration of the proposed zoning text amendment to establish a new lodging use, boutique inn, permitted in the R-4 Residential Transitional Zoning District, to allow the applicant an opportunity to address the following:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I move to conditionally approve the proposed zoning text amendment to establish a new lodging use, boutique inn, in the R-4 Residential Transitional Zoning District, with the following modifications:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I move to deny the proposed zoning text amendment to establish a new lodging use, boutique inn, permitted in the R-4 Residential Transitional Zoning District, based on the following considerations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exhibit 1: Qualified Lots

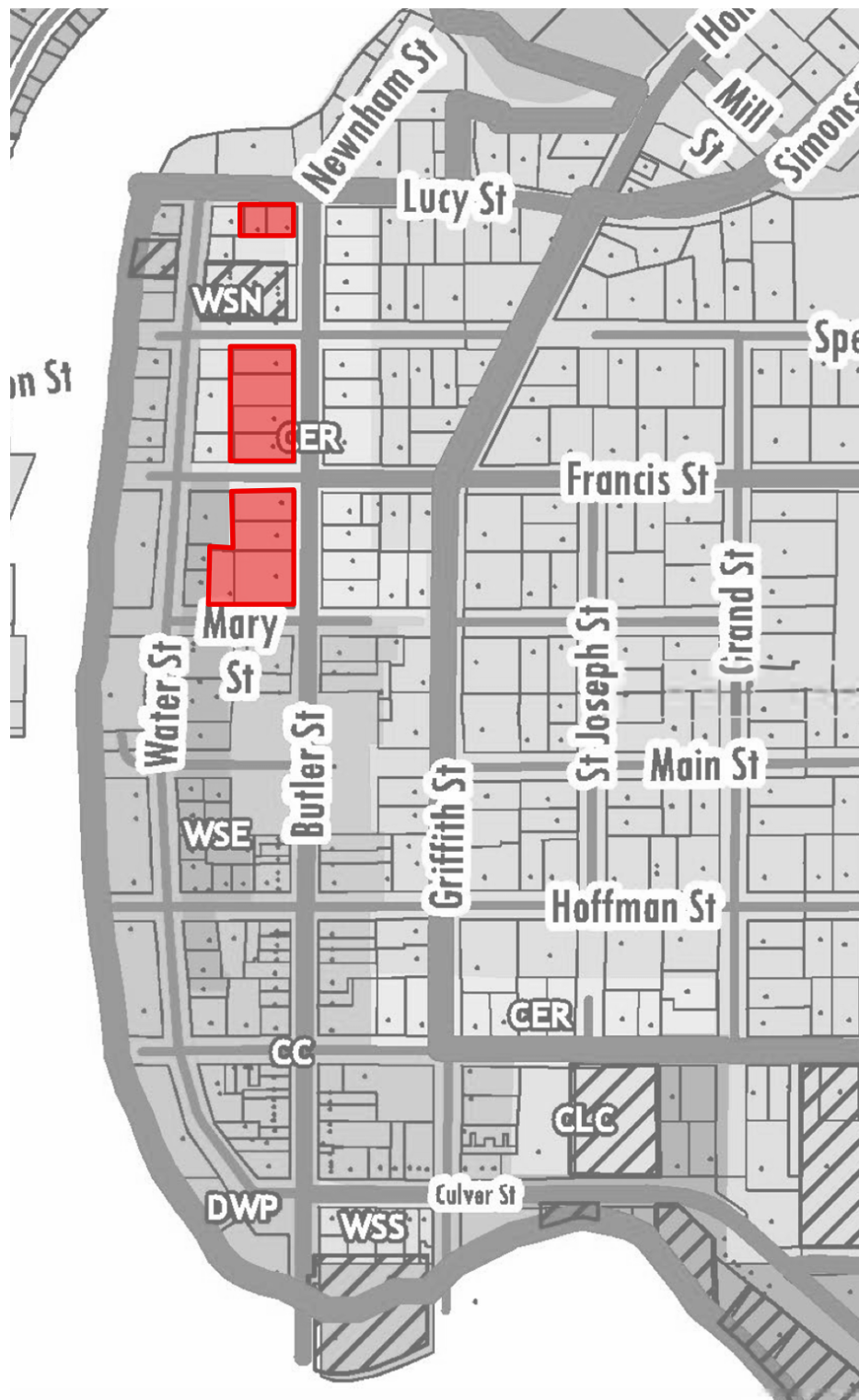


Exhibit 2: Qualified Lots

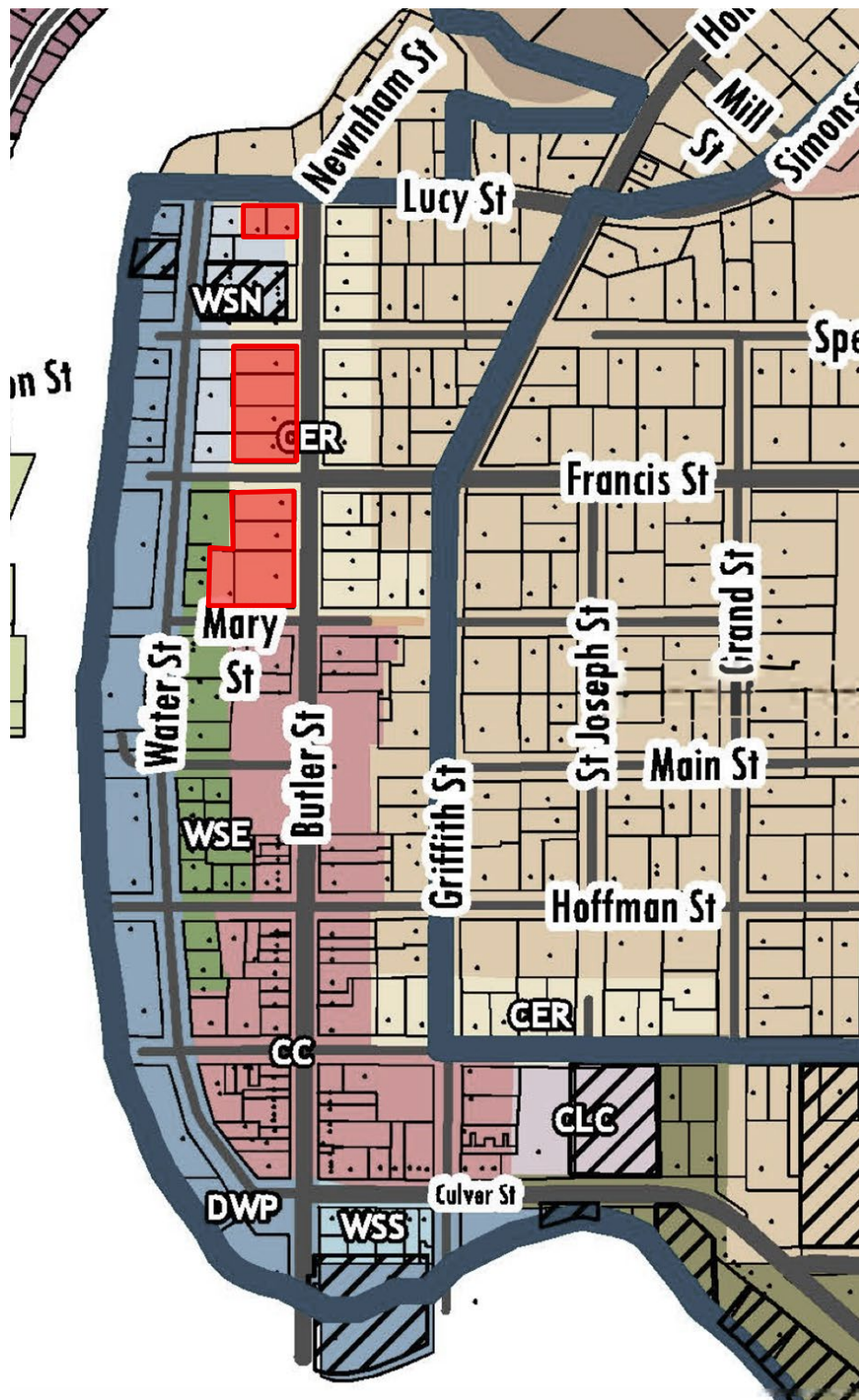
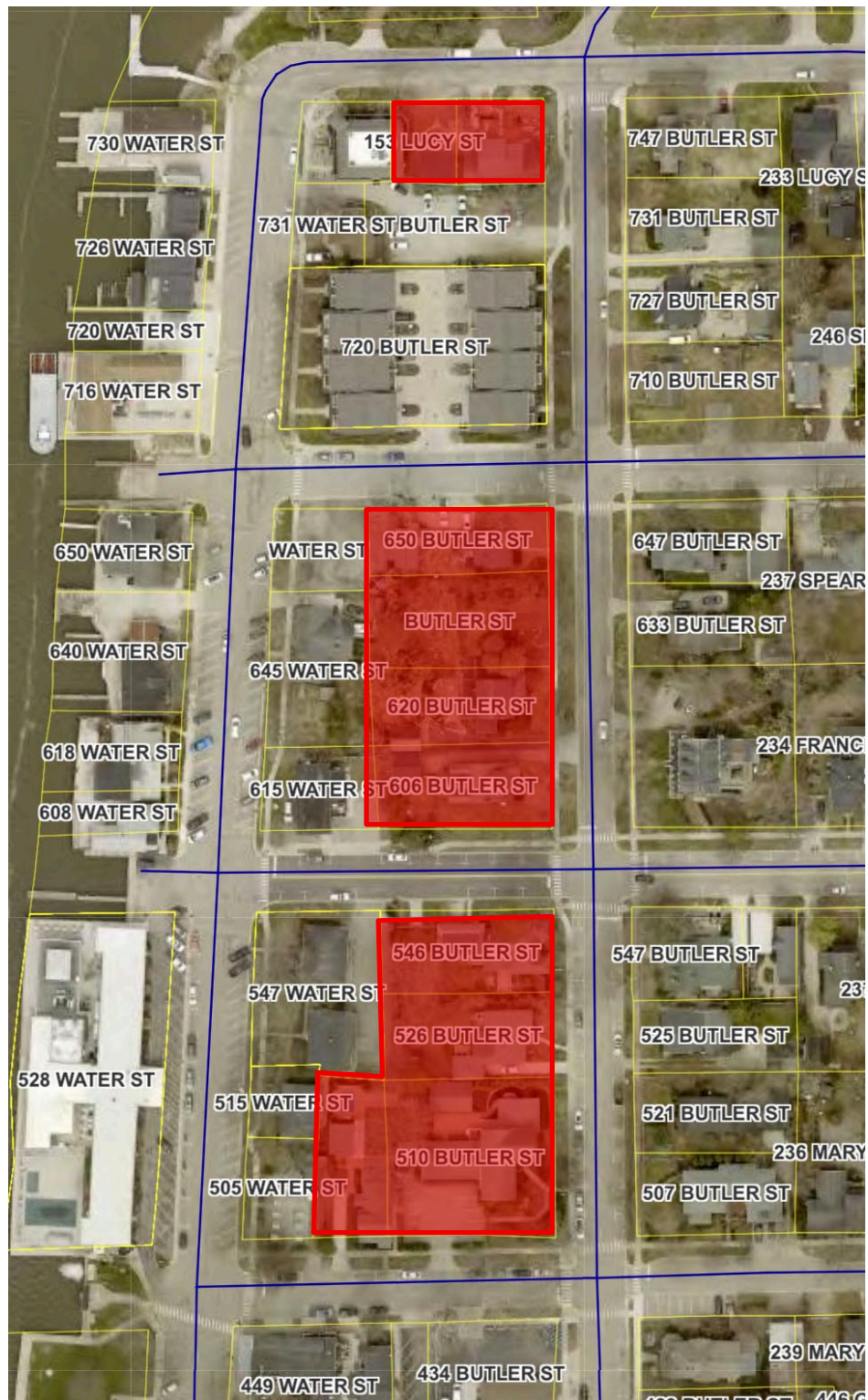


Exhibit 3: Qualified Lots





July 2, 2026

Planning Commission
City of Saugatuck
102 Butler Street
Saugatuck, MI 49453

Subject: Revised Text Amendment to Create “Boutique Inn” Land Use Classification under the Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Wickwood Inn (510 Butler Street and 120 Mary Street), we have revised the proposed amendment to the City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance to create a new type of lodging use, called “**Boutique Inn**.” The purpose of this new use would be to create a “middle ground” between Bed and Breakfast Establishment and Hotel(Inn).

The following revisions have been made to the proposed amendment, based on feedback from the Planning Commission and City staff and consultants:

MAJOR POLICY CHANGES

- Boutique Inns would only be permitted by **Special Use** in the **R-4 District** on lots abutting a **C-1, C-2, or C-4 District**.
- The limit on event capacity has been reduced from six times the number of guest rooms to **four times the number of guest rooms**. Because the number of adult overnight guests is limited to two per guest room, the event limit is **two times the number of overnight guests**.

WORDING REVISIONS

- The food and beverage provision has been re-worded to be more clear and concise. The limit on seating capacity for non-guest dining remains unchanged at **two times the number of guest rooms**.
- The signage provision has been re-worded to be consistent with the new sign ordinance. In practical terms, the allowable signage is the same as previously proposed, and the same as what is allowed for Bed and Breakfasts in the R-4 District. Wickwood’s current signage is in compliance with those requirements.
- The amendment now explicitly states that **screening (either landscaping or a fence)** as described in Section 154.142.D would be required between Boutique Inns and adjacent residential uses. This was already implied, but now it is made clear and explicit.
- The definition has been altered slightly to clarify that Boutique Inns may consist of multiple buildings, and that the resident manager or on-site owner may have family members that also live on site, rather than being the only allowable permanent resident.





- A cross reference to the Noise Ordinance (Ordinance 94) has been added to confirm that it applies to Boutique Inns.
- The standards for Accessory Guest Units have been brought over from the Bed and Breakfast section, then revised slightly to correct cross references and otherwise make it consistent with the proposed Boutique Inn language. Previously, this section contained only a cross reference to the Accessory Guest Unit standards in the Bed and Breakfast section.

We look forward to further discussions on this proposed Text Amendment with the Planning Commission on August 20. Wickwood understands that that meeting will not be noticed as a public hearing, and that no vote on the proposal will take place. Instead, we seek feedback and direction from the Planning Commission, after which we can make further revisions in preparation for an eventual public hearing and vote.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,

McKenna

Christopher Khorey, AICP
Vice President

Kyle Mucha, AICP
Principal Planner

**CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
ORDINANCE NO. _____**

At a meeting of the City Council of the City of Saugatuck, Allegan County, Michigan, held at the City of Saugatuck Hall on _____, 2026, at _____ p.m., City Council Member _____ moved to adopt the following ordinance, which motion was seconded by City Council Member _____.

An ordinance to amend the City of Saugatuck's Zoning Ordinance to create a new definition for Boutique Inn and to regulate Boutique Inns to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK, ALLEGAN COUNTY, ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.005: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.005 is amended to add the definition of “Boutique Inn,” which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.005 shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

Inn, Boutique: A lodging use, consisting of one or more buildings on the same lot, which has sleeping rooms available for rent by transient people on a short-term basis. A Boutique Inn shall include a residential dwelling unit, to be primarily occupied by the property owner or an on-site resident manager. A Boutique Inn may contain amenities, including, but not limited to swimming pool, game room, exercise facilities, or similar amenities, which are for the exclusive use of guests. A Boutique Inn may also contain restaurant and/or event facilities, which shall be operated primarily, though not necessarily exclusively, for the benefit of the overnight guests. A Boutique Inn shall not be considered or construed to be a Hotel (Inn), motel, bed and breakfast establishment, multiple-family dwelling, or similar facility.

~~**SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.024(B):** The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.024(B) is amended to add Section 154.024(B)(9), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.024(B) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~_____(9) Boutique Inn.~~

~~SECTION 3. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.039(B): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.039(B) is amended to add Section 154.039(B)(10), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.039(B) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(10) Boutique Inn.~~

~~SECTION 4. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.040(B): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.040(B) is amended to add Section 154.040(B)(12), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.040(B) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(12) Boutique Inn.~~

~~SECTION 5. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.041(B): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.041(B) is amended to add Section 154.041(B)(11), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.041(B) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(11) Boutique Inn.~~

~~SECTION 6. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.037(C): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.037(C) is amended to add Section 154.037(C)(12), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.037(C) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(12) Boutique Inn.~~

~~SECTION 7. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.042(C): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.042(C) is amended to add Section 154.042(C)(5), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.042(C) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(5) Boutique Inn.~~

SECTION 8. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.025(B): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.025(BC) is amended to add Section 154.025(B)(7), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.025(BC) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

(7) Boutique Inns ~~located within existing buildings~~ on lots abutting a C-1 or C-2 Zoning District.

~~SECTION 9. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.025(C): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.025(C) is amended to add Section 154.025(C)(5), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.025(C) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~————(5) New construction for Boutique Inns OR Boutique Inns on lots not abutting a C-1 or C-2 District.~~

~~SECTION 10. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.032(C): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.032(C) is amended to add Section 154.032(C)(7), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.032(C) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:~~

~~(7) Boutique Inn.~~

SECTION 11. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.135: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.135 is amended to add the following row pertaining to “Boutique Inns” to the table of off-street parking requirements. The remainder of section 154.135, including the remainder of the table, shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein.

Boutique Inns	1.0	Per 3 sleeping units
---------------	-----	----------------------

SECTION 12. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.022: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.022 is amended to add Section 154.022(S), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.022 shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

(S) *Boutique Inns*. All Boutique Inns shall meet the following criteria:

- (1) Rooms utilized for guest sleeping shall not exceed two occupants per room not including children under the age of 12. Each room for guest sleeping shall contain at least 100 net square feet of room size.
- (2) The Boutique Inn facility and operation shall meet all applicable building, health and related safety codes. All sleeping rooms shall contain a separate smoke detector in proper working order. Each floor of the dwelling shall contain

a fire extinguisher in proper working order in conformance with all applicable fire codes.

(3) No separate or individual cooking facilities shall be provided for the use of guests, including existing cooking facilities.

(4) Boutique Inns shall be subject to the applicable sign regulations in Section 154.140. ~~The Boutique Inn operation may include a wall sign, attached flat against the front face of the dwelling, not to exceed two square feet in area. The sign shall be non-illuminated and designed and constructed consistent with the architectural and aesthetic character of the dwelling to which the sign shall be affixed. In lieu of a wall sign, the Planning Commission may permit a free-standing sign, not to exceed four square feet. (See § 154.140 and Chapter 152).~~

~~(5)~~ No guest shall reside on the premises for more than 14 consecutive days, and not more than 30 days in any one year.

~~(6)~~ Boutique Inns shall be subject to all applicable regulations of Ordinance 94, regarding nuisance. The use of outdoor yard areas, open decks, pools and the like shall not result in the production of excessive off-site noise, odor and other external disturbances. ~~Said determination to be based on the judgement of the Zoning Administrator.~~ Approval of the Boutique Inn operation may be conditioned upon the installation of screening, fencing, plantings and/or other such installations and conditions to help ensure compatibility of the Boutique Inn operation with the surrounding area and compliance with Ordinance 94.

~~(5)(7)~~ Boutique Inns that are adjacent to residential uses shall be subject to the screening requirements of Section 154.142.D.

~~(6)(8)~~ An existing residential structure may be converted to a Boutique Inn and exterior additions to an existing residential structure for the purpose of providing additional rental rooms shall only be allowed if the parcel of property meets all of the provisions of this chapter for the particular zone in which the proposed Boutique Inn is located.

(9) An accessory building or buildings on the same lot as a principal building used as a Boutique Inn may be used as accessory guest buildings, provided the following requirements are met:

a. Special land use approval shall be required, as described in Sections 154.080 through 154.092. The Planning Commission shall

also consider the following supplemental special land use standards related to accessory guest buildings:

1. The overall site plan shall not detract from the cohesive appearance and layout of the subject block and surrounding neighborhood.
 2. Accessory guest buildings shall be designed to be compatible with the existing built character of the block in which they are located, as well as nearby blocks that are similar in character, including consistency with prevailing building density, mass, bulk, scale, and design.
- b. All requirements of Section 154.022.S.1-8 must be met.
 - c. There shall be no more than two accessory guest buildings per principal Boutique Inn building.
 - d. An individual accessory guest building shall include no more than three guest rooms.
 - e. The total number of guest rooms within accessory guest buildings shall not exceed 50% of the total number of guest rooms within the principal building or six, whichever number is less.
 - f. Any newly constructed accessory guest building must meet all requirements of Section 154.022(H).

~~(7) Accessory Guest Units shall be permitted accessory to Boutique Inns, subject to the approval of a Special Use Permit and compliance with the requirements of Section 154.022(R)(10).~~

~~(8)(10)~~ Boutique Inns shall be limited to no more than one guest unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area, inclusive of Accessory Guest Units.

~~(9)(11)~~ A Boutique Inn may contain an accessory restaurant. ~~A restaurant accessory to a Boutique Inn may be open to the general public.~~ The seating capacity of the restaurant, including both indoor and outdoor seating, shall not exceed two times the number of guest rooms. The restaurant shall not operate after 10 PM, and shall not be open to ~~the general public~~ anyone other than overnight guests at the Boutique Inn before 8 AM. ~~A Boutique Inn may provide food or beverage~~

~~service to overnight guests in locations other than an accessory restaurant, but shall not serve food or drink to the general public outside of an approved accessory restaurant space.~~

~~(10)~~(12) A Boutique Inns may contain an accessory event facility. For any event at the facility, the person named in the reservation for the event space must be an overnight guest, but the event itself may include non-guests. The maximum number of guests at an event shall not exceed ~~six~~four times the number of guest rooms. ~~No event shall begin before 9 AM and no event shall extend beyond 10 PM. Events shall be conducted in such a manner as to maintain compliance at all times with Ordinance 94.~~

SECTION 13. REPEAL. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 14. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this Ordinance are declared severable. If any part of this Ordinance is declared invalid for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, that declaration does not affect or impair the validity of all other provisions that are not subject to that declaration.

SECTION 15. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall take effect seven (7) days after publication of a notice of adoption of this Ordinance, unless referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402. If referendum procedures are initiated, this Ordinance will take effect in accordance with MCL 125.3402.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

Holly Anderson
City of Saugatuck, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that:

1. The above is a true copy of an ordinance adopted by the City of Saugatuck at a duly scheduled and noticed meeting of the City Council held on _____, _____ 2026, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.
2. A summary of the above ordinance was duly published in the _____ newspaper, a newspaper that circulates within the City of Saugatuck, on _____, 2026.
3. Within 1 week after such publication, I recorded the above ordinance in a book of ordinances kept by me for that purpose, including the date of passage of the ordinance, the names of the members of the City Council voting, and how each member voted.
4. I filed an attested copy of the above ordinance with the Allegan County Clerk on _____, 2026.

ATTESTED:

Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk

**CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

NOTICE OF ADOPTION

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

ORDINANCE NO. ____

Please take notice that on _____, 2026, the City Council of the City of Saugatuck adopted Ordinance No. ____, which amends the City of Saugatuck's Zoning Ordinance to create a new land use for Boutique Inns, to regulate Boutique Inns, and to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck. Copies of the ordinance may be obtained from Jamie Wolters, City of Saugatuck Clerk, at 102 Butler Street, P.O. Box 86, Saugatuck, Michigan 49453, during regular business hours.

The Zoning Ordinance Amendment has the following sections and catch lines: Section 1: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.005; Section 2: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.024(B); Section 3: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.039(B); Section 4: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.040(B); Section 5: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.041(B); Section 6: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.037(C); Section 7: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.042(C); Section 8: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.025(B); Section 9: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.025(C); Section 10: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.032(C); Section 11: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.135; Section 12: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.022; Section 13: Repeal; Section 14: Severability; and Section 15: Effective Date, which is seven days after publication of this notice of adoption unless referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402.

Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk
(269) 558-9495
JWolters@saugatuckcity.com

Publication Date: _____, 2026

**CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
ORDINANCE NO. _____**

At a meeting of the City Council of the City of Saugatuck, Allegan County, Michigan, held at the City of Saugatuck Hall on _____, 2026, at _____ p.m., City Council Member _____ moved to adopt the following ordinance, which motion was seconded by City Council Member _____.

An ordinance to amend the City of Saugatuck's Zoning Ordinance to create a new definition for Boutique Inn and to regulate Boutique Inns to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK, ALLEGAN COUNTY, ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.005: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.005 is amended to add the definition of “Boutique Inn,” which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.005 shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

Inn, Boutique: A lodging use, consisting of one or more buildings on the same lot, which has sleeping rooms available for rent by transient people on a short-term basis. A Boutique Inn shall include a residential dwelling unit, to be primarily occupied by the property owner or an on-site resident manager. A Boutique Inn may contain amenities, including, but not limited to swimming pool, game room, exercise facilities, or similar amenities, which are for the exclusive use of guests. A Boutique Inn may also contain restaurant and/or event facilities, which shall be operated primarily, though not necessarily exclusively, for the benefit of the overnight guests. A Boutique Inn shall not be considered or construed to be a Hotel (Inn), motel, bed and breakfast establishment, multiple-family dwelling, or similar facility.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.025(B): The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.025(C) is amended to add Section 154.025(B)(7), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.025(C) shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

(7) Boutique Inns on lots abutting a C-1 or C-2 Zoning District.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.135: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.135 is amended to add the following row pertaining to “Boutique Inns” to the table of off-street parking requirements. The remainder of section 154.135, including the remainder of the table, shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein.

Boutique Inns	1.0	Per 3 sleeping units
---------------	-----	----------------------

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SECTION 154.022: The City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance, Section 154.022 is amended to add Section 154.022(S), which shall read as follows. The remainder of section 154.022 shall remain the same unless expressly amended herein:

(S) *Boutique Inns*. All Boutique Inns shall meet the following criteria:

- (1) Rooms utilized for guest sleeping shall not exceed two occupants per room not including children under the age of 12. Each room for guest sleeping shall contain at least 100 net square feet of room size.
- (2) The Boutique Inn facility and operation shall meet all applicable building, health and related safety codes. All sleeping rooms shall contain a separate smoke detector in proper working order. Each floor of the dwelling shall contain a fire extinguisher in proper working order in conformance with all applicable fire codes.
- (3) No separate or individual cooking facilities shall be provided for the use of guests, including existing cooking facilities.
- (4) Boutique Inns shall be subject to the applicable sign regulations in Section 154.140.
- (5) No guest shall reside on the premises for more than 14 consecutive days, and not more than 30 days in any one year.
- (6) Boutique Inns shall be subject to all applicable regulations of Ordinance 94, regarding nuisance. The use of outdoor yard areas, open decks, pools and the like shall not result in the production of excessive off-site noise, odor and other external disturbances. Approval of the Boutique Inn operation may be conditioned upon the installation of screening, fencing, plantings and/or other

such installations and conditions to help ensure compatibility of the Boutique Inn operation with the surrounding area and compliance with Ordinance 94.

- (7) Boutique Inns that are adjacent to residential uses shall be subject to the screening requirements of Section 154.142.D.
- (8) An existing residential structure may be converted to a Boutique Inn and exterior additions to an existing residential structure for the purpose of providing additional rental rooms shall only be allowed if the parcel of property meets all of the provisions of this chapter for the particular zone in which the proposed Boutique Inn is located.
- (9) An accessory building or buildings on the same lot as a principal building used as a Boutique Inn may be used as accessory guest buildings, provided the following requirements are met:
 - a. Special land use approval shall be required, as described in Sections [154.080](#) through [154.092](#). The Planning Commission shall also consider the following supplemental special land use standards related to accessory guest buildings:
 - 1. The overall site plan shall not detract from the cohesive appearance and layout of the subject block and surrounding neighborhood.
 - 2. Accessory guest buildings shall be designed to be compatible with the existing built character of the block in which they are located, as well as nearby blocks that are similar in character, including consistency with prevailing building density, mass, bulk, scale, and design.
 - b. All requirements of Section 154.022.S.1-8 must be met.
 - c. There shall be no more than two accessory guest buildings per principal Boutique Inn building.
 - d. An individual accessory guest building shall include no more than three guest rooms.

- e. The total number of guest rooms within accessory guest buildings shall not exceed 50% of the total number of guest rooms within the principal building or six, whichever number is less.
- f. Any newly constructed accessory guest building must meet all requirements of Section [154.022](#)(H).

(10) Boutique Inns shall be limited to no more than one guest unit per 1,500 square feet of lot area, inclusive of Accessory Guest Units.

(11) A Boutique Inn may contain an accessory restaurant. The seating capacity of the restaurant, including both indoor and outdoor seating, shall not exceed two times the number of guest rooms. The restaurant shall not operate after 10 PM, and shall not be open to anyone other than overnight guests at the Boutique Inn before 8 AM.

(12) A Boutique Inn may contain an accessory event facility. For any event at the facility, the person named in the reservation for the event space must be an overnight guest, but the event itself may include non-guests. The maximum number of guests at an event shall not exceed four times the number of guest rooms. Events shall be conducted in such a manner as to maintain compliance at all times with Ordinance 94.

SECTION 5. REPEAL. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this Ordinance are declared severable. If any part of this Ordinance is declared invalid for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, that declaration does not affect or impair the validity of all other provisions that are not subject to that declaration.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall take effect seven (7) days after publication of a notice of adoption of this Ordinance, unless referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402. If referendum procedures are initiated, this Ordinance will take effect in accordance with MCL 125.3402.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

Holly Anderson
City of Saugatuck, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that:

1. The above is a true copy of an ordinance adopted by the City of Saugatuck at a duly scheduled and noticed meeting of the City Council held on _____, _____ 2026, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.
2. A summary of the above ordinance was duly published in the _____ newspaper, a newspaper that circulates within the City of Saugatuck, on _____, 2026.
3. Within 1 week after such publication, I recorded the above ordinance in a book of ordinances kept by me for that purpose, including the date of passage of the ordinance, the names of the members of the City Council voting, and how each member voted.
4. I filed an attested copy of the above ordinance with the Allegan County Clerk on _____, 2026.

ATTESTED:

Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk

**CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

NOTICE OF ADOPTION

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

ORDINANCE NO. ____

Please take notice that on _____, 2026, the City Council of the City of Saugatuck adopted Ordinance No. ____, which amends the City of Saugatuck's Zoning Ordinance to create a new land use for Boutique Inns, to regulate Boutique Inns, and to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck. Copies of the ordinance may be obtained from Jamie Wolters, City of Saugatuck Clerk, at 102 Butler Street, P.O. Box 86, Saugatuck, Michigan 49453, during regular business hours.

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Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk
(269) 558-9495
JWolters@saugatuckcity.com

Publication Date: _____, 2026

Chapter 4: Housing and Neighborhoods

Introduction and Goal

Housing is an essential component of Saugatuck's community character, economy, and ability to support a year-round population. The City's housing stock reflects its dual role as a small residential community and a cherished seasonal destination. Given this role, the community has expressed strong interest in maintaining the physical qualities of established neighborhoods while also recognizing the needs associated with year-round housing, workforce housing, aging in place, and a broader range of housing choices. As such, respecting the existing context and character of neighborhoods is essential when considering the introduction of new housing types.

The pressure of a national housing crisis hits home in Saugatuck, with low housing inventory and high prices. The demand for second homes, seasonal-use properties, and commercial rental opportunities further exacerbates this pressure. One of the primary future housing challenges is to respect the development rights of landowners as a destination location but find opportunities to support housing needs for potential year-round residents, locally employed individuals, and long-time residents desiring to age in place. Determining the City's local share of responsibility for addressing the local, state, and nationwide housing crisis is of the utmost importance.

This chapter examines Saugatuck's existing housing conditions and the broader regional housing context, including the influence of seasonal housing, housing costs, and workforce needs. It also considers opportunities to support aging in place, preserve neighborhood character, and expand housing choices through context-sensitive infill, missing-middle housing, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use development. Together, these topics provide a framework for considering how Saugatuck can respond to changing housing needs while maintaining the qualities that define the community's character.

Goal: *Provide a range of housing choices that support year-round residents, changing household needs, and the local workforce while preserving Saugatuck's established neighborhood character and unique role as a seasonal destination.*

Existing Conditions and Housing Types

Saugatuck contains established neighborhoods of single-family homes and cottages, a substantial seasonal housing inventory, limited multifamily development, and residential units within and around the downtown area. According to 2024 American Community Survey estimates, Saugatuck contains approximately 910 housing units, including 676 single-family homes (74.3%) and 234 units (25.7%) in multifamily structures. Community survey results similarly reflect the predominance of detached housing among full-time and part-time residents. Of 236 respondents, 184 (78.0%) live in single-family detached homes, while 16 (6.8%) live in apartments or multifamily buildings and 14 (5.9%) live in attached homes such as duplexes or townhouses.

Saugatuck's zoning framework accommodates several housing products, but authorized locations for these products vary considerably. The greatest range of opportunities is provided for detached single-family housing, while attached and multifamily housing is concentrated in fewer locations. For instance, single-family detached housing is the most widely accommodated housing type throughout most residential districts and within several commercial, waterfront, and mixed-use districts.

Two-family dwellings have more limited geographic availability. They are permitted in the R-4 City Center Transitional Residential, R-1 Maple Street, R-3 Multi-Family Residential, and C-1 Water Street North districts. Upper-floor apartments and mixed-use residential units are primarily accommodated in commercial and waterfront areas. First-floor and upper-floor apartments are permitted in the City Center Commercial, Water Street East, Water Street North, and Water Street South districts. However, traditional multifamily housing is more geographically limited. The R-3 Multi-Family Residential District is specifically intended to accommodate traditional apartment buildings and other lesser-density housing types.

Overall, the zoning framework provides extensive opportunities for detached single-family housing but comparatively fewer locations for attached and multifamily housing.

Regional Housing Context

Housing conditions in Saugatuck are part of a broader housing market extending throughout Allegan County and the West Michigan lakeshore. Residents and employees routinely cross municipal boundaries for housing, employment, shopping, services, and recreation. Housing availability within Saugatuck is therefore influenced not only by local conditions, but also by housing supply, costs, employment patterns, and demographic changes throughout the surrounding area.

The 2023 Allegan County Housing Needs Assessment identifies a substantial need for additional housing throughout Allegan County. The assessment estimates a potential housing gap of more than 6,200 additional units over the five-year projection period, including both rental and ownership housing. Importantly, the identified need extends across multiple income levels and housing products. The assessment demonstrates that regional housing needs are influenced not only by household growth, but also by affordability, existing housing availability, housing conditions, commuting patterns, pent-up demand, and the housing development pipeline.

With these needs in mind, planning for housing does not stop at municipal boundaries. Saugatuck, Douglas, Saugatuck Township, Allegan County, and other nearby communities have different land supplies, development patterns, environmental conditions, and capacities for residential development. Although there are few suitable development areas left within the City and land values are significantly impacted by seasonal housing influences, Saugatuck can certainly contribute by supporting incremental infill opportunities, downtown mixed-use development, and redevelopment efforts. At the same time, its neighbors may be better positioned to accommodate larger residential developments. As the City of Saugatuck is a destination with a regional draw, the greater area's housing needs should therefore be considered with its neighboring communities.

Key Challenges

Seasonal and Year-Round Housing

An important characteristic of Saugatuck's dual role as both a small residential community and a cherished destination is the prevalence of seasonal housing. As mentioned in Chapter 2, just over half of the City's 910 housing units are classified as vacant, with most of these vacant units used seasonally, recreationally, or occasionally. Of the remaining occupied housing units, most are owner-occupied.

These conditions create an important distinction between total housing supply and year-round housing availability. The City of Saugatuck has a substantial physical housing inventory relative to its permanent population, but a significant portion of that inventory does not serve the year-round housing market. For example, if 100% of the 910 housing units were occupied, the total existing housing supply would be able to accommodate:

- *A population of 1,638 using the City's 1.8 persons per household*
- *A population of 2,184 using the State of Michigan's 2.4 persons per household*
- *A population of 2,2275 using the United States' 2.5 persons per household*
- *A population of 2,366 using the Holland MI Micro Area's 2.6 persons per household*

Seasonal housing will remain an important part of Saugatuck's identity and visitor economy. At the same time, maintaining opportunities for year-round residency will be important to supporting a balanced community, local businesses, community institutions, and the City's long-term vitality.

Housing Affordability and Workforce Housing

Housing costs and availability affect the ability of individuals and households at various income levels to live in the City of Saugatuck, especially given that the median value of owner-occupied housing units (\$650,800) is more than double the state median and about double the national median. Although the per capita (\$106,555) and median household income (\$121,178) levels are significantly higher than state and national levels, this data alone does not reflect the circumstances of local and area employees working in local hospitality, service, retail, government, and other sectors. The combination of relatively high housing values, substantial vacancies (seasonal housing), and a limited long-term rental supply creates a challenge for providing housing opportunities at a range of price points. Housing affordability, including for purchase or rent, is a broad conversation concerning options that are attainable to households with a range of incomes.

Additionally, affordability and attainability affect local businesses, as limited housing options can make it more difficult for employers to attract and retain employees. This is especially problematic considering the City's concentration of tourism, hospitality, restaurant, retail, service, and seasonal employment. As housing options worsen, workers' commutes increase, and the feasibility of maintaining a workforce decreases. Aligned with these concerns, participants in the community survey indicated support for further consideration of workforce housing strategies, with 66.5% of respondents agreeing that the City should investigate ways to make workforce housing more affordable.

Given the City’s limited land area and established development pattern, workforce housing strategies may require multiple approaches rather than reliance on large-scale residential development. Smaller housing units, accessory dwelling units, upper-floor apartments, rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings, and appropriately scaled infill housing may each contribute to a broader range of housing opportunities.

Aging in Place and Changing Housing Needs

Aging in place refers to the ability of individuals to remain in their home and community as they grow older while maintaining independence, safety, and quality of life. According to AARP’s 2024 Home and Community Preferences Survey, 75% of Americans age 50 and older hope to continue living in their current home, and 73% would like to remain in their existing community as they grow older. This perspective is certainly evident in Saugatuck, and aging in place is another important element of housing choice- of 284 community survey respondents, approximately 60.2% agreed that options for aging in place should be explored, including downsizing, senior housing, and other opportunities that allow residents to remain within the community.

A housing stock dominated by detached single-family homes may provide fewer options for residents seeking to downsize or transition to housing that is more accessible or requires less maintenance. However, supporting aging in place could involve providing opportunities for residents to remain in Saugatuck as their housing and mobility needs change. Strategies may include expanding opportunities for smaller, lower-maintenance housing, supporting multigenerational living, providing reasonable flexibility for accessory dwelling units and home modifications, encouraging accessible and adaptable housing design, and maintaining safe, accessible connections to community services and amenities. A broader range of housing choices and flexible living arrangements can enable residents to downsize, accommodate family members or caregivers, or transition to a more appropriate housing type without leaving the community.

New Housing In Saugatuck

Character of New Residential Neighborhoods and Housing

Saugatuck’s residential neighborhoods are an important part of the City’s identity. As outlined in the Community Character Analysis, the scale of homes, historic structures, cottages, mature landscaping, walkable streets, and varied development patterns contribute to the character that residents and visitors associate with the community. The community survey further demonstrates the connection between housing and Saugatuck’s broader small-town character, with quaint, small-scale cottages and homes, as well as historic preservation, identified as important community characteristics.

This preference is also evident in responses to housing-specific community questions. Of 284 respondents, 87.0% agreed that preserving existing neighborhood character should be a priority. There was also substantial support for maintaining compatibility between new and existing residential development, with 72.2% agreeing that the design of new homes should be consistent with and compatible in scale with existing homes in the vicinity.

This perspective indicates that future housing policies and zoning regulations should recognize building scale, mass, placement, and design as important considerations when accommodating

new development and redevelopment. Opportunities to expand housing choices should be balanced with maintaining the established physical qualities that distinguish Saugatuck's neighborhoods.

Infill and Missing-Middle Housing

With an established development pattern and limited undeveloped land, infill and redevelopment will likely play an important role in Saugatuck's future housing supply. The community survey indicates openness to additional housing types within neighborhoods, particularly when designed to be compatible with existing neighborhood scale and character. Approximately 57.4% of respondents agreed that townhouses and row houses are appropriate within neighborhoods when designed to fit the surrounding scale and character, while 50.7% expressed similar support for small apartment buildings.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) provide another form of small-scale infill that can increase housing opportunities within established neighborhoods. Depending on their design and location, ADUs can accommodate extended family members, caregivers, older residents, local employees, or others seeking smaller rental units. Approximately 59.2% of community survey respondents agreed that it should be easier to rent an ADU on a long-term basis of 30 days or more. Rented ADUs are currently accommodated through special land use review in many of the City's residential and other zoning districts.

Together, ADUs and missing-middle housing can provide alternatives between conventional detached single-family homes and larger apartment developments. Duplexes, townhouses, row houses, cottage-style development, small apartment buildings, and ADUs can expand the range of housing sizes and types available while maintaining a relatively small residential scale. Building height, mass, setbacks, architecture, parking, landscaping, and transitions to neighboring properties will be important considerations when integrating these housing types.

For Saugatuck, these smaller and context-sensitive housing options may be particularly appropriate because they can expand housing choice, support long-term rental and multigenerational living opportunities, and make more efficient use of existing land and infrastructure without requiring large-scale development or substantial changes to established neighborhoods.

Downtown and Mixed Use Housing

Downtown represents one of the clearest opportunities to expand housing choices while reinforcing the existing development pattern. Residential uses within mixed-use buildings can add housing, support year-round downtown activity, and make efficient use of existing development and infrastructure. Community support is particularly strong, with 92.6% of survey respondents agreeing that upper-floor apartments are appropriate in the downtown area.

Existing zoning already accommodates first- and upper-floor apartments within several commercial and waterfront districts, with limitations on first-floor residential uses along public street frontages to maintain active commercial areas. Continued use of upper floors for housing, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and appropriately designed mixed-use redevelopment can expand year-round rental opportunities while supporting downtown businesses and maintaining the traditional mixed-use character of the City Center.

Conclusion

Saugatuck's housing strategy should recognize that no single housing type or initiative will address the community's changing needs. A balanced approach should preserve the qualities residents value while creating appropriate opportunities for year-round housing, workforce housing, aging in place, and greater housing choice. Through targeted infill, adaptive reuse, downtown housing, ADUs, and other context-sensitive approaches, the City can contribute to broader housing needs without compromising the character that makes Saugatuck distinctive.

Planning Principles

1. ***Maintain and Expand Housing Choices.*** Maintain a range of housing types and evaluate opportunities to expand housing choices where appropriate within the City's established development pattern.
2. ***Coordinate on Regional Housing Needs.*** Recognize Saugatuck as part of a broader regional housing market and coordinate with neighboring communities and regional partners to address housing needs at an appropriate scale.
3. ***Balance Seasonal and Year-Round Housing.*** Balance Saugatuck's important role as a seasonal destination with opportunities to maintain and expand year-round housing options.
4. ***Expand Affordable and Workforce Housing Opportunities.*** Support a range of housing types, sizes, and price points that expand housing opportunities for the local and regional workforce and households with varying incomes.
5. ***Support Aging in Place and Changing Housing Needs.*** Support housing choices, adaptable homes, multigenerational living arrangements, and accessible community environments that allow residents to remain in Saugatuck as their needs change.
6. ***Protect Neighborhood Character.*** Ensure that new residential development and redevelopment are compatible with the scale, form, and established character of surrounding neighborhoods.
7. ***Encourage Infill and Missing-Middle Housing.*** Encourage context-sensitive infill, accessory dwelling units, and appropriately scaled missing-middle housing that expand housing choices while fitting within established neighborhoods.
8. ***Expand Downtown and Mixed-Use Housing.*** Encourage upper-floor housing, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use residential development that expand year-round housing opportunities while supporting the vitality and traditional character of downtown.

Chapter 5: Mobility and Connectivity

Introduction and Goal

Mobility provides freedom and connection, allowing residents and visitors to safely and conveniently reach places important to daily life and the Saugatuck experience. Saugatuck's mobility network and transportation system plays an important role in connecting neighborhoods, downtown, the waterfront, parks, beaches, businesses, and regional destinations. While the City's compact development pattern supports walking and relatively short trips, transportation needs vary considerably by location and season.

This chapter considers transportation as an interconnected system that includes sidewalks, pathways and bicycling, transit, streets, and parking. Priorities include addressing gaps in pedestrian connections, improving safety and accessibility, strengthening connections between neighborhoods and key destinations, supporting regional pathway opportunities, and maintaining transportation options such as the Interurban and Chain Ferry.

Goal: *Provide a safe, connected, accessible, and efficient mobility network that expands transportation choices, strengthens connections between neighborhoods and destinations, and responds to Saugatuck's community character and seasonal transportation needs.*

Sidewalks

Sidewalks as a Defining Characteristic

The City's sidewalk network is a defining component of Saugatuck's walkability and small-town character. The community survey found that "walkable downtown" was identified by 57.27% (193 of 337) of respondents as one of the top three characteristics that define the community, making it the highest-ranked characteristic overall. "Walkable neighborhoods" were also identified by 28.19% (95 of 337) of respondents as a defining characteristic of the community.

Pedestrian Activity

Survey responses indicate that sidewalks support an active pedestrian environment throughout the City. Downtown, 77.63% (229 of 295) of respondents reported walking daily or weekly. However, approximately 55% indicated they would not walk downtown more frequently even if sidewalks and crosswalks were improved, suggesting that the existing pedestrian environment generally functions well. In neighborhoods, 65.19% (191 of 293) of respondents reported walking daily or weekly, while approximately 50.5% indicated they would walk more frequently if sidewalks and crosswalks were improved. These responses suggest that additional sidewalk connections, improved continuity, and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure within neighborhoods could increase walking activity and connectivity.

General Accessibility

The survey also identified opportunities to improve accessibility. While 43% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that downtown is safe and convenient for disabled individuals, approximately 30% somewhat or strongly disagreed, and 27% were unsure, suggesting that accessibility may warrant further evaluation and improvement. Overall, respondents expressed strong support for continued investment in sidewalks, with 66% (188 respondents) agreeing that additional sidewalk improvements and extensions are needed throughout the community.

Connections and Pedestrian Safety

Survey participants also frequently identified missing sidewalk gaps and incomplete pedestrian connections within residential neighborhoods and along major corridors. Repeated comments referenced the need for additional sidewalks or improved crossings along Lucy Street, Griffith Street, Holland Street, Maple Street, North Street, Water Street, Park Street, Perryman Street, Lake Street, and Blue Star Highway. Several responses specifically noted the importance of improving connections between neighborhoods and downtown, as well as improving access to schools, parks, and commercial areas.

In addition to physical infrastructure improvements, many comments focused on pedestrian safety and visibility. Common concerns included vehicle speeds, lack of driver yielding behavior, poor crosswalk visibility, limited lighting, narrow sidewalks, and conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists in busy areas. Respondents frequently referenced intersections and crossings along Water Street, Butler Street, Blue Star Highway, Park Street, Griffith Street, and Lake Street as areas where improved crossings, signage, traffic calming, lighting, or enforcement may improve safety and comfort for nonmotorized users.

Transportation safety improvements should focus on locations where conflicts, visibility limitations, or other safety concerns are most evident. Potential projects may include targeted intersection improvements, enhanced pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, improved signage and pavement markings, lighting, sidewalk and pathway connections, and measures to improve sight distance. Improvements should be prioritized based on documented needs, roadway conditions, and opportunities to improve safety for all users.

Pathways and Cycling

Pathways

The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a nationwide network of signed bicycle routes that connects communities across state lines using designated roads and trails. The system is intended to support long-distance bicycle travel while also encouraging bicycling for transportation, tourism, and recreation. Michigan includes three designated U.S. Bicycle Routes: U.S. Bicycle Route 10, U.S. Bicycle Route 20, and U.S. Bicycle Route 35. U.S. Bicycle Route 35 extends approximately 500 miles from New Buffalo to Sault Ste. Marie, generally following the Lake Michigan shoreline. Locally, within

the City of Saugatuck, the route follows Holland Street, Lucy Street, Butler Street, Culver Street, Lake Street, and Blue Star Highway.

Despite relatively low bicycling participation overall, there was strong support for certain pathway improvements. Of 294 respondents, 232 participants (79%) somewhat or strongly agreed that multi-use pathways should be constructed along Perryman Street and Park Street to improve walking and bicycling access to Oval Beach.

Another recurring theme involved improving regional and recreational pathway connectivity. Respondents referenced completing or extending the Blue Star Trail, improving bicycle and pedestrian access along Blue Star Highway, creating additional nonmotorized connections to Douglas and surrounding townships, and developing trail or pathway connections between parks, beaches, and natural areas. Several responses also supported broader “greenway” or corridor-style connections linking downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and waterfront destinations.

Bicycling

The community survey found that bicycling activity is substantially lower than walking activity, with 62.12% (182 of 293) of respondents indicating they do not bike within the City. Among those who do bicycle, only 15.3% reported biking downtown daily or weekly, while a similar 15.3% reported biking in neighborhoods daily or weekly. Survey responses also suggest that infrastructure improvements alone may not substantially increase bicycling activity, as 66.5% (195 of 293) of respondents indicated they would not bike downtown more frequently, and 65.5% (190 of 290) stated they would not bike more frequently in neighborhoods even if street markings, signage, or pathways were improved.

Transit

Saugatuck Interurban Transit Authority

Transit service within the area is currently provided by the Saugatuck Interurban Transit Authority. The Interurban operates as a curb-to-curb, on-demand transit service rather than a traditional fixed-route bus system. Riders can request pickups and drop-offs throughout the service area, which includes the City of Saugatuck, the City of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, Laketown Township, and portions of the Fennville area.

The service is intended to provide affordable and accessible transportation for residents, employees, visitors, and seasonal tourists traveling throughout the area. The Interurban is particularly important during the peak summer season when parking demand and traffic congestion increase within downtown and waterfront areas. In addition to serving visitors and tourists, the system supports mobility for senior residents, individuals without personal vehicles, employees commuting to local businesses, and visitors traveling between lodging establishments, beaches, downtown destinations, and other attractions.

Chain Ferry

The Saugatuck Chain Ferry is one of the City's most distinctive transportation and cultural assets. Owned by the City and operated seasonally, the hand-cranked ferry provides pedestrian and bicycle access across the Kalamazoo River between downtown Saugatuck and the west side. It is believed to be the only remaining hand-cranked chain ferry of its kind in the United States and has served the community since the mid-1800s. The ferry operates on demand during the season, typically departing every 10 to 15 minutes, weather permitting.

In addition to its transportation function, the Chain Ferry is a historic landmark and visitor attraction that reinforces the City's identity, supports tourism, and strengthens connections between downtown, the waterfront, and the City's recreational and natural resources by providing access to destinations such as Mount Baldhead Park, the John Woollam Trail, and Oval Beach. The community survey also found that the Chain Ferry is widely recognized as an important component of Saugatuck's transportation system, with 80.21% (235 of 293) of respondents somewhat or strongly agreeing that it plays an important role.

Streets and Parking

Streets

Blue Star Highway serves as the City's primary gateway and principal transportation corridor, providing regional access to Saugatuck from Interstate 196 and U.S. Highway 31. Within the City, the major street network consists of Holland Street, Lucy Street, Butler Street, Culver Street, Francis Street, Elizabeth Street, and Allegan Street. These streets provide the primary connections between neighborhoods, downtown, commercial areas, and the waterfront. The remainder of the City's roadway network consists of local streets and a limited number of private streets that primarily serve adjacent properties and residential neighborhoods.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a transportation planning approach that considers the needs of people walking, bicycling, driving, using mobility devices, and other roadway users when streets are planned or improved. The approach does not require every street to accommodate every mode in the same manner. Instead, improvements should respond to the function of the street, surrounding land uses, available right-of-way, community character, and the needs of likely users.

In Saugatuck, Complete Streets improvements should be focused on priority routes where they provide the greatest benefit, including connections to Downtown, neighborhoods, parks, waterfront areas, public facilities, and other destinations, as well as locations with pedestrian or bicycle network gaps or safety concerns. A targeted network of priority routes can improve connectivity and safety without requiring sidewalks, bicycle facilities, or similar improvements on every street in the City.

Parking

Parking availability emerged as a significant concern among survey participants. Approximately 68% of respondents somewhat or strongly disagreed that parking is convenient and available when

needed, indicating ongoing concerns regarding parking supply, convenience, or seasonal demand pressures.

Survey participants also identified parking wayfinding as an issue. Approximately 60% agreed that improved signage and identification of parking areas are needed, suggesting that improved parking information, directional signage, or wayfinding systems may help address some parking-related concerns.

The Downtown Saugatuck Planned Development and Future Parking Impacts report, prepared by Walker Consultants, anticipates that future development will result in a modest, manageable increase in parking demand. Residential infill and housing diversification are expected to have limited impacts on public parking because most associated demand will be accommodated on-site. Downtown reinvestment and mixed-use development may increase parking activity and turnover, particularly in the evenings and on weekends, while tourism will remain the primary driver of peak parking demand.

Walker Consultants estimates that peak public parking demand could increase by approximately 50 to 100 spaces over the long term, primarily during summer weekends, festivals, and special events. The report indicates that this additional demand can largely be addressed through improved management and utilization of the existing parking supply, shared parking, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections rather than substantial expansion of public parking capacity.

Conclusion

Saugatuck already benefits from a compact development pattern and a variety of transportation choices that contribute to the community's walkability, accessibility, and character. Future improvements should build upon these strengths by addressing specific gaps, safety concerns, accessibility needs, and seasonal pressures rather than applying uniform solutions throughout the City. By strategically investing in sidewalks, pathways, transit, priority Complete Streets routes, and effective parking management, the City can strengthen connections among neighborhoods and destinations while preserving the qualities that make Saugatuck distinctive.

Planning Principles

1. **Maintain and Improve Sidewalks.** Maintain existing sidewalks, close priority gaps, and improve accessibility and pedestrian safety.
2. **Strengthen Pedestrian Connections.** Improve connections between neighborhoods, downtown, parks, schools, commercial areas, and other key destinations.
3. **Expand Nonmotorized Connections.** Develop pathways and bicycle routes that connect community destinations and regional trail systems.
4. **Prioritize Strategic Improvements.** Focus pedestrian and bicycle investments on locations with demonstrated demand, connectivity benefits, recreational value, or safety needs.
5. **Support Transit Options.** Maintain and strengthen the Interurban as an accessible transportation option for residents, employees, and visitors.
6. **Preserve the Chain Ferry.** Maintain the Chain Ferry as an important transportation connection and distinctive historic and cultural asset.

7. **Maintain Safe and Context-Sensitive Streets.** Focus safety and Complete Streets improvements on priority routes and locations where they provide the greatest benefit.
8. **Manage Parking Strategically.** Improve utilization, wayfinding, shared parking, and multimodal connections to address peak seasonal demand before substantially expanding public parking capacity.

Chapter 6: Natural Environment and Resiliency

Introduction and Goal

The City of Saugatuck is home to an exceptional natural environment. Held by Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River, the City's identity, economy, and quality of life are closely tied to its surrounding natural resources. Destinations such as Oval Beach, the Saugatuck Natural Harbor Area, Mount Baldhead Park, the Mildred A. Peterson Nature Preserve, and the City's network of parks and natural areas provide opportunities for recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat, and environmental education while contributing to the unique character that makes Saugatuck special to all who experience the City.

While these natural resources are assets to the community, certain considerations are needed to maintain, regulate, and enrich them. Shoreline erosion, fluctuating Great Lakes water levels, harbor sedimentation and dredging, invasive species, stormwater management, water quality, habitat protection, and development patterns all present ongoing challenges. As climate patterns continue to change, the City must also prepare for more frequent and intense storm events, increased flooding potential, and other environmental impacts that could affect infrastructure, public safety, wildlife habitats and the long-term health of its natural systems.

Building resiliency means planning for these challenges while protecting the environmental assets that define the community. By balancing conservation with responsible growth, investing in sustainable infrastructure, preserving sensitive natural areas, and strengthening partnerships with local, regional, and state organizations, the City can better adapt to changing conditions while maintaining the environmental quality that residents and visitors value.

Goal:

Water Resources

Water is one of Saugatuck's defining natural assets. The City's location along the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan has shaped its history, economy, ecology, and identity for generations. These waterways have and continue to support recreation, tourism, navigation, wildlife habitat, and public access while contributing to the City's scenic character. In addition to these major water bodies, wetlands throughout the community provide important ecological functions, including flood storage, water filtration, and habitat for native plants and wildlife.

Protecting water resources requires balancing environmental stewardship with recreation, navigation, and responsible development. Coordination with local, regional, state, and federal partners continues to be essential in preserving water quality, maintaining ecological health, and improving the community's resilience to changing environmental conditions.

Kalamazoo River

The Kalamazoo River is one of Saugatuck's most significant natural, recreational, and economic resources. Flowing through the heart of the community before entering Lake Michigan, the river supports boating, paddling, fishing, tourism, wildlife habitat, and the City's distinctive waterfront character. It is also home to a diverse array of aquatic species, including freshwater mussels, which serve as important indicators of water quality and ecosystem health.

Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan is the largest freshwater resource entirely located within the United States and covers 22,300 square miles. Derived from the Ojibwa word Michi Gami meaning “large lake” it embraces its name and spans the entire west coast of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula (more than 1,600 miles of shoreline). Similar to the Kalamazoo River, Lake Michigan provides an abundance of recreational and economic opportunities.

Wetlands

Many of the wetlands located within Saugatuck are connected, including through groundwater, to Lake Michigan or the Kalamazoo River. Wetlands are important environmental systems which store floodwater, recharge groundwater, filter sediments and other pollutants, and provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals including a large rookery of Great Blue Herons along the Kalamazoo River.

An inventory of wetlands, based on the XXXX Land Use/Land Cover Inventory, is illustrated on Map X. While mapped wetland data provides a useful indication of the location and distribution of wetlands within the City, site-specific field investigations are necessary to determine the presence, boundaries, and extent of wetlands on an individual property.

Natural Features

The City of Saugatuck’s natural features are an important part of the community’s character and quality of life. In addition to being located along Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River, the wooded areas, wetlands, open spaces, and diverse habitats located within the City’s boundaries create a landscape able to support a wide variety of plants and wildlife while also enhancing opportunities for recreation.

Natural features provide a number of important environmental functions. Trees and vegetation help manage stormwater, reduce erosion, provide shade, improve air quality, and moderate temperatures. Open spaces and natural areas provide habitat and help maintain ecological connections throughout the community, while wetlands, woodlands, and other sensitive areas

contribute to flood management and water quality. Protecting and maintaining these resources will aid in strengthening resilience to changing environmental conditions.

Tree Canopy

Trees are an important component of Saugatuck's natural environment and contribute to the community's character, ecological health, and overall quality of life. Urban tree canopy provides numerous benefits, including shade and cooling, stormwater mitigation, air-quality improvements, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and protection from the urban heat island effect. Trees also contribute to the visual character of streets and neighborhoods and can improve the comfort and attractiveness of pedestrian-oriented areas.

Available tree canopy data indicate that Saugatuck and the surrounding area maintain a relatively substantial tree canopy. The Census Block Group containing much of the City (GEOID 260050308011) experienced a 0.5 percentage-point increase in canopy coverage between 2016 and 2022. As of 2022, approximately 53.9 percent of the area was covered by tree canopy, corresponding to an Urban Heat Island (UHI) Index of 1, representing the lowest UHI risk category. Because the Census Block Group extends beyond the City's boundaries, these figures should be viewed as an indicator of the broader landscape rather than a precise measure of canopy within the City itself.

Tree canopy is not distributed uniformly throughout the community. Canopy coverage is greatest west of the Kalamazoo River, particularly in the wooded areas surrounding residential neighborhoods, natural areas, and the City's western portions. The City's parks and natural areas—including Saugatuck Wilds, Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, and other public green spaces—provide substantial areas of continuous vegetation and contribute to the larger regional tree canopy. In contrast, the more intensely developed portions of the community, particularly downtown and areas characterized by extensive pavement, buildings, and limited planting areas, have fewer opportunities for large-canopy trees.

This difference is particularly important as Saugatuck continues to emphasize a vibrant, walkable downtown. Trees can provide shade over sidewalks and gathering areas, reduce the heat associated with paved surfaces, and create a more comfortable pedestrian environment during the summer months. Strategic tree planting can therefore complement the City's investments in sidewalks, streetscapes, parks, and other public spaces while reinforcing the community's small-town character.

The community has expressed strong support for maintaining and expanding the City's tree canopy. As part of the 2025 Master Plan community survey, 91.8 percent of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that existing tree canopy should be preserved and new street trees should be planted. This was one of the more strongly supported environmental and community-design priorities identified through the planning process.

Open Space

Open spaces are an important component of Saugatuck's natural character and contribute to the City's environmental health, scenic quality, and resilience. Natural and undeveloped areas provide habitat for wildlife, support groundwater recharge and stormwater management, protect sensitive

wetlands and coastal resources, and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the community's natural landscape.

The City maintains a substantial network of publicly owned lands that contribute to its overall open-space system. Approximately 500 acres of parkland and natural areas were identified in [2026](#) including both developed recreational properties and larger areas of relatively undeveloped land. This represents a significant community asset, particularly given Saugatuck's compact, developed character. The City's open-space resources include wooded areas, coastal dunes, wetlands, beaches, waterfront lands, and other natural landscapes.

Some of the City's most significant open-space resources are associated with the Lake Michigan shoreline and Kalamazoo River. The 173-acre Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, for example, protects a large and relatively undeveloped landscape containing Great Lakes dunes, interdunal wetlands, Great Lakes marsh, and shoreline. The property also forms an important connection between the City's terrestrial and aquatic natural systems.

Open space is not distributed evenly throughout the City. Larger contiguous areas of natural land are concentrated along the City's western and northern edges and around the Kalamazoo River, while the downtown and other developed areas contain smaller and more fragmented areas of vegetation and open land. Maintaining connections between these areas is important for wildlife movement, stormwater management, and ecological function.

As development and redevelopment continue, the City should consider open space not only as individual parks or preserved properties, but as part of a connected network of natural areas, wetlands, tree canopy, waterways, and other green infrastructure. Opportunities to preserve existing natural areas, incorporate open space into redevelopment, protect environmentally sensitive lands, and strengthen connections between existing resources can help maintain Saugatuck's natural character while improving long-term environmental resilience.

Wildlife and Habitat

The City's coastal and riverine environments are particularly important for wildlife. The Lake Michigan shoreline, Kalamazoo River, and wetlands areas provide habitat for aquatic and land-dwelling species while serving as important areas for feeding, nesting, breeding, and seasonal movement. Species such as Great Blue Herons and Bald Eagles can be found throughout the area's waterways and wetlands.

Saugatuck's forested areas and tree canopy also provide an important habitat. Mature trees provide nesting and roosting sites for birds, cover for mammals, and food resources for a variety of insects and other wildlife. Forested areas can support species such as Red-bellied Woodpeckers and a variety of migratory songbirds, particularly during spring and fall migration.

The City's location along the Lake Michigan shoreline also places it along an important regional bird migration route (Michigan DNR). Migratory birds rely on a variety of habitats throughout the region during seasonal movements, making the preservation of forests, wetlands, shoreline areas, and other natural features important beyond the City's boundaries. The Saugatuck Dunes Natural Area, for example, provides forested dunes and interdunal wetlands that are used by migrating birds.

Wildlife habitat within Saugatuck is not limited to large natural areas. Backyards, gardens, street trees, vacant or undeveloped parcels, wetlands, drainage areas, and other smaller patches of vegetation can collectively provide habitat and connections between larger natural areas. Maintaining this network can reduce habitat fragmentation and provide wildlife with opportunities to move through developed portions of the community safely.

As development and redevelopment occur, the City should seek to balance growth with the protection of important habitat and ecological connections. Preserving mature trees and native vegetation, protecting wetlands and riparian areas, and incorporating native landscaping and green infrastructure to help maintain wildlife habitat while providing additional environmental and community benefits.

Climate Resiliency

Weather and climate conditions affect the community's economic base. Variations in temperature, precipitation, and seasonal conditions can significantly influence tourism, outdoor recreation, and other activities that contribute to the local economy. At the same time, changes in temperature, precipitation, and Great Lakes water levels can increase risks to infrastructure, natural resources, and properties. Understanding these trends and their potential impacts can help the City plan for a resilient community while protecting its economic and environmental resources.

Flooding

Areas adjacent to streams and rivers are susceptible to periodic flooding that can cause extensive damage to buildings and can pose a substantial threat to public safety. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has mapped the boundaries of the 100 year floodplain in the Tri-Community area. Flooding can be particularly significant during periods of heavy precipitation, rapid snow melt, or elevated Great Lakes water levels, when rivers and drainage systems may have reduced capacity for stormwater.

Flooding can affect roads, utilities, buildings, and other infrastructure, while contributing to the erosion and degradation of natural areas. As precipitation patterns and the frequency and intensity of severe storms change, potential for flooding and stormwater related impacts increase.

Flood risks can be addressed through measures such as directing new development away from flood-prone areas, considering flood elevations when planning or improving roads, utilities, and other public infrastructure, and incorporating localized stormwater management measures. These measures can include rain gardens, reducing impervious surfaces, using native plantings, and ensuring appropriate drainage is incorporated into new or improved homes.

Shoreline Impacts

Prevailing winds, wave action, and fluctuations in Great Lakes water levels influence shoreline conditions and can cause rapid and extensive erosion along beaches and sand dunes. High water levels can increase the amount of shoreline exposed to waves, while major storms can accelerate erosion and cause significant changes to beaches and dunes in a relatively short period of time.

Erosion can threaten structures, roads, utilities, recreational areas, and other development located near the shoreline. Dunes and other natural shoreline features provide an important buffer against waves and storm impacts, making their preservation a key component of community resiliency. Changes in water levels, storm intensity, and precipitation patterns may increase pressure on these resources.

The City can also utilize technical assistance and planning resources available through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to better understand shoreline hazards and identify appropriate management strategies. These resources include coastal planning and zoning guidance, shoreline management best practices, hazard and water-level information, and assistance with identifying potential resilience and mitigation strategies. Strategies such as preserving natural shoreline areas, improving stormwater management, and incorporating green infrastructure can provide multiple benefits by reducing shoreline erosion while also helping to manage flooding, runoff, and other impacts associated with intense precipitation events. Coordination with regional and state partners can further help the City identify appropriate approaches and potential funding opportunities for future shoreline and resilience projects.

Infrastructure Resilience

Reliable infrastructure is essential to all communities. Roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, stormwater infrastructure, utilities, and public facilities must be maintained and periodically improved to provide reliable service and withstand changing environmental conditions. Aging infrastructure, severe weather, and increased demands on existing systems can create vulnerabilities and increase the potential for service interruptions, flooding, and property damage.

Maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure will be an ongoing priority as the City works to improve system reliability and prepare for future needs. The City has identified galvanized water lines and lines of unknown material for replacement as part of its ongoing water system improvements. Infrastructure planning also benefits from coordination across the Tri-Community area, including the City's work with the City of the Village of Douglas and Saugatuck Township to establish a long-term framework for the management and improvement of shared water and sewer infrastructure. Coordinating utility, drainage, and other infrastructure improvements with major capital projects can further improve efficiency and reduce the need to revisit recently completed improvements. The reconstruction of Maple Street provides one example of this approach, incorporating improvements to multiple infrastructure systems as part of a larger street reconstruction project.

Infrastructure resilience also includes the City's natural and community assets. Trees and other vegetation can function as green infrastructure by providing shade, reducing stormwater runoff, stabilizing soils, and helping to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat. Maintaining and expanding the City's tree canopy can therefore complement traditional stormwater and infrastructure improvements. The City has also continued to expand its modern utility infrastructure, including the installation of fiber throughout the community, which improves access to reliable communications technology.

Saugatuck also contains several unique public assets that support transportation, recreation, tourism, and community identity, including the Chain Ferry and the Mount Baldhead stairs and viewing platform. While these facilities may not fit within traditional definitions of infrastructure, their maintenance and long-term resilience are important to the community. Planning for their

continued operation, maintenance, and eventual repair or replacement can help ensure that these distinctive community assets remain available to residents and visitors.

Sustainability

Sustainability involves managing the community's natural, built, and financial resources in a manner that supports the needs of current residents while preserving those resources for future generations. For Saugatuck, sustainability is closely connected to the characteristics that define the community, including its compact development pattern, walkable neighborhoods, tree canopy, natural areas, waterfront resources, and historic buildings. Protecting and building upon these characteristics can provide environmental benefits while also supporting the City's long-term economic vitality and quality of life.

The City can advance sustainability through land use and development practices, resource conservation, efficient infrastructure and public facilities, and the protection of natural systems. Opportunities include expanding the use of green infrastructure and native landscaping, improving energy and water efficiency, encouraging reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings, and supporting walking, bicycling, and other alternatives to automobile travel. These approaches can reduce resource consumption and environmental impacts while helping to maintain the community's character and reduce long-term infrastructure and operating costs.

Focus Area	Key Considerations	Local Opportunities
Natural Resources & Green Infrastructure	Protection of trees, vegetation, dunes, wetlands, habitat, and natural systems	Tree canopy, native plantings, dunes, rain gardens, permeable surfaces
Energy & Resource Efficiency	Reducing energy consumption and improving efficiency of buildings and public facilities	Energy-efficient municipal buildings, LED lighting, residential renewable energy/solar incentives, encourage EV charging options
Water Conservation & Water Quality	Reducing water consumption and protecting surface and groundwater resources	Water-efficient landscaping (reducing the number of full grass lawns), stormwater runoff reduction with rain gardens/barrels and encourage permeable pavement
Waste Management	Reducing waste and encouraging recycling and responsible material management	Explore yard and food waste composting opportunities, encourage construction waste recycling or require a construction waste management plan for larger developments, explore event waste-reduction guidelines for special events, assess public waste receptacle locations and accessibility

Sustainable Development & Land Use	Using land efficiently and reducing environmental impacts associated with development	Encourage infill and redevelopment, mixed-use areas, adaptive reuse of existing buildings
Municipal Operations	Incorporating best practices into City operations, purchasing, maintenance, and capital planning	Landscaping practices, fleet efficiency, facility improvements

Conclusion

Saugatuck's natural resources are among the community's greatest assets and will continue to play an important role in the community's environmental health, economy, character, and quality of life. As environmental conditions and community needs continue to change, protecting these resources requires an approach that recognizes the connections between water resources, natural areas, wildlife habitat, infrastructure, and the built environment.

The City's relatively compact core development pattern and extensive network of parks, natural areas, waterfronts, and public spaces provide a strong foundation for continued environmental stewardship. Planning efforts should build on these existing assets rather than treating sustainability and resiliency as separate from inevitable growth and development. Preserving natural systems, maintaining existing infrastructure, improving resource efficiency, and directing new investment in ways that complement the City's established character can allow Saugatuck to accommodate change while limiting unnecessary impacts on its natural environment.

Many actions identified throughout this chapter can also address multiple community priorities at the same time. Protecting trees and natural areas can improve habitat, manage stormwater, and provide shade; maintaining healthy wetlands and shorelines can support water quality while reducing flood and erosion risks; and reinvesting in existing infrastructure and buildings can reduce resource consumption while supporting the City's established neighborhoods and commercial areas. By recognizing these connections and incorporating environmental considerations into everyday planning and investment decisions, Saugatuck can continue to protect the natural resources that make the community distinctive while preparing for the needs of future generations.

Planning Principles

1. **Protect Water Resources.** Protect the Kalamazoo River, Lake Michigan, wetlands, and associated natural systems while balancing recreation, navigation, public access, and responsible development.
2. **Preserve Natural Areas and Habitat.** Protect important natural areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, dunes, woodlands, and ecological connections that contribute to the City's environmental health and character.

3. **Maintain and Expand Tree Canopy.** Preserve mature trees where feasible and encourage strategic tree planting, particularly in developed areas and locations where trees can provide shade, stormwater management, habitat, and other community benefits.
4. **Strengthen Green Infrastructure.** Incorporate natural and nature-based approaches such as native vegetation, rain gardens, permeable surfaces, and other green infrastructure to manage stormwater, reduce heat, protect water quality, and improve resilience.
5. **Manage Flooding and Stormwater.** Reduce vulnerability to flooding and stormwater impacts by directing development away from high-risk areas, improving drainage, reducing impervious surfaces, and incorporating appropriate stormwater management practices.
6. **Protect and Strengthen Shoreline Resiliency.** Preserve natural shoreline features, including dunes, wetlands, and other coastal resources, and use appropriate planning and management practices to reduce erosion and other impacts associated with changing water levels and severe storms.
7. **Invest in Resilient Infrastructure.** Maintain and improve water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, utility, and public infrastructure to improve reliability, address aging systems, and prepare for changing environmental conditions.
8. **Promote Sustainable Development.** Encourage infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, efficient land use, and resource-conscious development practices that support the City's established character while reducing environmental impacts.
9. **Improve Resource Efficiency.** Promote energy and water conservation, efficient public facilities and operations, responsible waste management, and other practices that reduce resource consumption and long-term costs.
10. **Coordinate for Long-Term Resilience.** Work with local, regional, state, and federal partners to address environmental challenges, coordinate infrastructure and natural resource management, and pursue technical assistance and funding opportunities.