



PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

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

The meeting will also be available live, virtually on Zoom

NOTICE:

Join online by visiting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2698572603>

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

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Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact Saugatuck City Clerk at 269-857-2603 or jwotlers@saugatuckcity.com for further information.

Participants

Name	Company	Email Address
John Dorsett	Walker Consultants	jdorsett@walkerconsultants.com
Bobby Mordenti	Walker Consultants	rmordenti@walkerconsultants.com
Julie Kroll	Fleis & Vandenbrink	jkroll@fveng.com
Gregory Muncey	Saugatuck City Council	gregory@saugatuckcity.com
Auston Marineau	Saugatuck Planning Commission	auston.j.marineau@gmail.com
Cathy Brockington	Saugatuck Resident	cabrocking68@gmail.com
Wendy Colsen	Saugatuck Resident	saugatuckparkingstudy@gmail.com
Alec Payleitner	Saugatuck Restaurant Owner	alec@saugataco.com
Michael Gustaitis	Saugatuck Retail Business Owner	winesellersofsaugatuck@gmail.com
Gary Kott	Saugatuck/Douglas Area Convention and Visitors Bureau	indakott@aol.com
Becky Carten-Crandell	Interurban Transit Authority	beckycc@saugatuckinterurban.org
Ryan Cummins	City of Saugatuck	rcummins@saugatuckcity.com

1. Call to Order

Chair Gregory Muncey called the meeting to order and welcomed Task Force members, consultants, staff, and members of the public.



2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

3. Agenda Changes

The agenda was reviewed. No changes or additions were requested, and the agenda proceeded as published.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comment was offered on agenda items.

5. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the previous Parking Improvements Task Force meeting, prepared by Walker Consultants and included in the meeting packet, were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The motion was carried by voice vote.

6. Topics for Discussion

A. Parking Inventory Field Work and Initial Mapping Results

John Dorsett of Walker Consultants presented findings from the recently completed parking inventory and field mapping. The inventory identified approximately ~~1,168~~ **1,868** public parking spaces citywide, with roughly 80% located on-street. This percentage is unusually high for a community of Saugatuck's size and indicates that the City maintains significant control over the majority of its parking supply. The total number of spaces was noted to be large relative to the City's year-round population, though appropriate given seasonal tourism demand. Accessible (ADA) parking spaces were inventoried separately. Mr. Dorsett noted that while there may be opportunities to expand or better distribute accessible parking, care must be taken to avoid disproportionately reducing general-use parking. The Task Force discussed employee parking as a contributing factor to perceived shortages and considered potential methods to better quantify employee parking behavior during peak season, including a volunteer-led field count.

B. Online Parking Survey Results

Mr. Dorsett reviewed results from the online parking survey, which received participation from more than 600 respondents. Survey participation was primarily from year-round residents and local stakeholders. Results showed strong opposition to paid on-street parking, particularly among residents. A majority of respondents indicated they are typically able to find parking within five minutes during off season, and many reported willingness to walk one to two blocks to their destination. The survey also confirmed that parking challenges are largely seasonal. Task Force members discussed the importance of education, messaging, and better communication regarding parking options, shuttle services, and remote parking locations. Several members expressed that enforcement of existing parking regulations and improved turnover should be explored before considering paid parking.

C. Stakeholder Interviews



Mr. Dorsett summarized the findings from 10 stakeholder interviews with representatives from property management companies, arts organizations, marina operators, and event organizers. Interview responses were varied but generally aligned with survey findings, reinforcing that parking pressures are most acute during the peak season and are concentrated in the downtown core. Interviews were anonymized to encourage candid feedback.

D. Cost to Build and Operate a Parking Structure

Walker Consultants presented cost estimates for the construction and operation of a parking structure in Saugatuck. Estimated construction costs ranged from approximately \$7 million to \$10 million, with significant ongoing maintenance and operational expenses. The Task Force expressed strong consensus that a parking structure would not be cost-effective, would add relatively few new spaces compared to the cost, and would negatively impact community character. Members agreed that pursuing a parking structure should not be recommended.

E. Paid Parking Considerations

Paid parking options were discussed within the context of peer tourist communities, many of which do not charge for on-street parking. Task Force members expressed concern regarding the cost of infrastructure, enforcement, and public acceptance. The Task Force's general sentiment favored first exploring the enforcement of existing time limits, improved signage, and employee parking strategies before considering paid parking.

F. Signage and Wayfinding Assessment

Bobby Mordenti of Walker Consultants presented a signage and wayfinding assessment focused on the experience of first-time and infrequent visitors. Identified issues included sign clutter, inconsistent messaging, and insufficient gateway and directional signage to parking resources. Recommendations emphasized developing a clear signage hierarchy, increasing the use of universally recognized parking symbols, and improving online parking information on the City and CVB websites. The Task Force strongly supported pursuing signage and wayfinding improvements as a near-term solution.

G. Remote Parking Options

Potential remote parking locations were discussed, including church properties, school parking lots, City-owned property near Public Works and the Fire Department, and other privately owned sites. Expansion of shuttle service routes, including coordination with Douglas, was also discussed. Members agreed to further investigate the feasibility, capacity, and potential agreements for remote parking locations before the next meeting.

H. Framing the Parking Challenges

The Task Force discussed the importance of clearly framing Saugatuck's parking challenges, including competing needs among residents, visitors, employees, and business owners. Walker Consultants emphasized that the City's challenge is largely one of communication rather than supply. Members also requested a concept-level review of potential one-way street conversions and diagonal parking configurations on Butler Street, Water Street, and possibly Lucy Street to determine feasibility.

I. Field Data Collection Schedule



Walker Consultants reviewed upcoming field data collection dates. Off-season data collection is scheduled for the week of May 2, 2026, with a backup week of May 9, dependent on weather. Peak season data collection is scheduled for the week of July 13, 2026. While acknowledging that results may confirm existing assumptions, members agreed the data would strengthen the credibility of future recommendations.

J. Remaining Task Force Meeting Dates

There are four remaining scheduled Task Force meeting dates. The May 12 date was changed to May 13 from 3-5 p.m. ET. The last three meetings are scheduled for June 30, July 28, and August 18.

K. Other Items

Wendy Colsen volunteered to conduct a 'snapshot-in-time' count of downtown employees, provided that the city could provide a business list. The targeted timing for this is to have these results available for the June 30 meeting.

John Dorsett stressed that strong communications are essential to addressing the city's parking challenge. Complaints about parking, while acknowledged and real, can be combatted with data and information about parking resources and availability. The group agreed that clear public messaging includes what was considered, what is not recommended, what is recommended, and why, for both.

L. Next Steps

The field parking occupancy studies will proceed during the week of May 2. These results will be available at the next Task Force meeting per Julie Kroll.

Task Force members were asked to prepare 5–6 individual draft recommendations to narrow the options before final recommendations and to begin sharing them at future meetings.

7. Correspondence

Correspondence from ~~State Representative Lauren Stanton~~ **City Council Member Lauren Stanton** regarding parking strategies and experiences in other resort communities was received and acknowledged.

8. Public Comments

Denise Barrowitz, a Saugatuck resident, provided public comment. She noted that she generally does not have difficulty finding parking, acknowledged the impact of employee parking, supported creative, clear signage, and expressed strong opposition to paid parking and parking structures based on experiences in other communities.

9. Task Force Member Comments

Task Force members expressed appreciation for the thorough discussion. Members were encouraged to begin identifying draft recommendations and potential action items ahead of future meetings.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Muncey at approximately a quarter past 5 p.m. ET.