



City Manager Report

September 16, 2026

Park Street Planning

- We had a great turnout for the Park Street open house! Thank you to those who attended.
- During the open house, our engineers at F&V had displays with the survey and other information to review any concerns and get input on the future of Park Street.
- The improvements currently being evaluated include:
 - Installing a pedestrian facility (sidewalk, widened shoulder, etc.)
 - Road resurfacing
 - Water service replacement as needed to comply with the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) Lead and Copper Rule (some to inside the home/building)
 - Sanitary sewer improvements
 - Drainage and stormwater management improvements
- Here is a link to view the information that was displayed. **Please note it's just for illustrative purposes to generate discussion. No design work has started yet:**
<https://tinyurl.com/5axb8pxz>
- F&V is reviewing the comments and will be working to compile a report with options.



Deer Management Update

- City Council approved moving forward with a professional deer cull at Oval Beach. Council approved an agreement with Berg's Animal & Bug Control at a cost of \$495 per deer, with total expenditures not to exceed the \$30,000 included in the City's FY 2026/27 budget.
- **What happens next?**
 - Before any culling can occur, the contractor and City must obtain the required Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) authorization and complete

final operational and safety planning. Under the City's weapons ordinance, the Allegan County Sheriff's Office must approve. Specific dates, locations, closures, notification procedures, and other safety measures will be finalized in coordination with the contractor, City staff, Sheriff's Office, and DNR.

- The cull is anticipated to take place this winter. Operations are expected to occur during authorized hours when public activity is lowest, commonly at night, with controlled access to operational areas and established safety zones and backstops. The contractor's procedures also require operations to stop if unauthorized people or pets enter a restricted area. Additional information will be shared with the community before operations begin.
- **We need the community's help**
 - Deer management takes a community effort. A cull is one tool for addressing an overabundant deer population, but it cannot bring the deer population and available habitat into better balance by itself. Deer move throughout the community without regard to property or jurisdictional boundaries, making participation and cooperation beyond City-owned property important.
 - Residents and property owners can help by not intentionally feeding deer. Providing food can encourage deer to congregate and remain in residential areas, undermining broader efforts to manage the population. Property owners can also make their yards and gardens less attractive to deer by using deer-resistant plantings and other deterrence techniques.
 - The City's website has additional information and resources on ways to deter deer and lists of deer-resistant plants that residents can incorporate into landscaping: <https://www.saugatuckcity.com/invasive-speciesdeer-resistant-plantings.html>

Mize Rose Garden Warming Station

- City Council approved the proposed warming station and associated improvements at the Mize Rose Garden. The project, led and funded by the Saugatuck/Douglas Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), is intended to create a welcoming, year-round gathering space and support increased activity during the shoulder season. Improvements include a custom natural gas fire feature, low masonry seating walls, new entryways, and improved accessibility while preserving the existing garden and plantings.
- The CVB will continue to manage the project and is responsible for the costs associated with design, permitting, construction, and completion. Once construction is satisfactorily completed and inspected, the improvements will be accepted as a donation to the City.
- The CVB is aiming for construction this fall, with a goal of completing the project before the holiday season.

Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Improvements

- City Council approved a conservation services proposal from ODC Network for improvements at the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, with costs reimbursed from the SHNA Endowment Fund.

- The project will include trail remediation and habitat restoration, consolidating the existing trail system into a more clearly defined primary loop and restoring redundant or informal trails to better protect sensitive dune and wetland habitats. New signage and wayfinding will also improve visitor navigation and education. Signage design and trail work are expected to continue through spring/summer 2027, with habitat restoration planned for spring 2027.

Maple Street Construction Update

- Maple Street underground utilities have been installed and road reconstruction is underway. Asphalt (HMA) base paving is currently scheduled for September 23, 2026, though this is subject to change. Remaining concrete work will be finished shortly after HMA base course paving. Residents will be notified if their driveway is affected by the remaining concrete work. Grass restoration has begun behind the new sidewalk. The grass between the road and the sidewalk will be restored after the top HMA paving. The contractor will be utilizing standard CL A seed mix.

Water Valve Work (Downtown)

- Water valve work on Water Street is scheduled for October 19 & 20. This project is necessary to improve the City's water system and help limit the scope of future water outages. Water service will be temporarily interrupted for approximately two to four hours each day while the system switch is completed.
- Once water service has been restored, a boil water notice will be issued for all affected properties. Additional information regarding the boil water notice, including when it is expected to be lifted, will be provided at that time.
- Notice has gone out via e-mail and on City's social media. Those who will be affected should have received a separate notice as well. If you are unsure whether your property will be affected, please contact Michelle for more information: Public Works - Michelle Gibson, Project Coordinator - (269) 224-9504

Other Project Updates

- **Elizabeth Street Improvements (Allegan to Francis)** - Preliminary design continues. Projected schedule is design in summer/fall 2026, bidding in late 2026 or early 2027 and construction in 2027.
- **Parking Improvements** - The Parking Improvements Task Force has completed their work. Walker Consultants has prepared a presentation for Council's September 23 workshop meeting. All of the Parking Improvements Task Force reports, presentations, meeting packets, and other study materials are available on the City's website: <https://www.saugatuckcity.com/parking-improvements-task-force.html>
- **Logo and Branding** – City Council has adopted a new logo for the City. Our design firm is now preparing brand guidelines and numerous templates for implementation. If you are interested in learning more, we encourage you to watch the presentation here: <https://youtu.be/Yu58Q8cpuLk?si=6Jol1AL-DWQu6NST&t=207>
- **Mt. Baldhead Upper Platform** – Plans have been reviewed by staff and Tribal Nations. Our engineers are making revisions based on comments received. Once revisions are complete, permit applications will be submitted. Bidding is anticipated in late 2026

with construction in spring 2027, depending on the timeframe for final design and permitting.

- **Village Square Courts** – Improvement plans were recently reviewed by staff and Council. Projected schedule is bidding in late 2026 or early 2027 and construction in spring 2027.
- **Wicks Park and Village Square Park Restroom Renovations** – Engineering developed an initial proposal for interior and exterior restroom improvements. Due to ongoing drainage and flooding concerns at the Wicks Park restroom, City Council expressed interest in pursuing demolition and replacement of the facility. The Parks and Public Works Committee subsequently reviewed and recommended the same approach. Preserving and replicating the existing mural is a clear priority as part of any replacement project. Engineering is now preparing an updated proposal focused on interior improvements at the Village Square restroom and demolition and replacement of the Wicks Park restroom.
- **Blue Star Trail** – Archeological survey work continues.
- **Outdoor AEDs** - Saugatuck-Douglas HEARTSafe has raised funds to deploy several outdoor AEDs. City Council approved an AED installation at the Mt. Baldhead bathroom. Additional AEDs at the top of Mt. Baldhead and at Wicks and Village Square Parks are anticipated in conjunction with future platform and restroom improvements.
- **Kayak Launcher** – City Council approved the acceptance of a kayak launcher donation from the Rotary Club of Saugatuck-Douglas, as well as its installation at the Spear Street launch.
- **Comprehensive Plan** – The Planning Commission (PC) and staff continue to work on an updated land use master plan. All of the drafts can be viewed in the PC packets on our website: <https://www.saugatuckcity.com/planning-commission.html>
- **AT&T** – Has received first level of internal approvals from their leadership for small cell installations. The next level of internal approval is pending.
- **Verizon** – Verizon continues to evaluate installing fiber out to Oval Beach. They are talking with Consumers about using their poles.
- **New Website** – A draft RFP has been prepared and will be reviewed with Council soon.

Upcoming Meetings

Full meeting packets are posted on the City website and Facebook prior to each meeting.

When available, they can be viewed by selecting the board/commission:

- September 17 at 6:30p – Planning Commission
- September 22 at 10a – Parks and Public Works Committee
- September 23 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- September 28 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- October 1 at 6p – Historic District Commission
- October 7 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- October 13 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting