City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, City Manager

MEETING DATE: March 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Township Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant

DESCRIPTION:

Saugatuck Township has submitted a request for a letter of support for their application to the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund program to fund the acquisition of a 119-acre property on the Kalamazoo River.

The intention is to develop the property as a community park and nature preserve with kayak launch, fishing pier, trails, habitat restoration, and more.

Attached is a draft letter for consideration.

BUDGET ACTION:

None at this time.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Legal will be at your meeting for any questions.

SAMPLE MOTION:

Motion to approve a letter of support for Saugatuck Township's application to the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund program to fund the acquisition of a 119-acre property on the Kalamazoo River.

March 10, 2025

Dear Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board,

The City of Saugatuck is writing to express our strong support for Saugatuck Township's application for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant to acquire a 119-acre property with frontage on the Kalamazoo River for use as a future township park. This acquisition presents an exceptional opportunity to enhance recreational access, preserve valuable natural habitat, and provide much-needed community amenities.

Saugatuck Township is a regional partner of the City of Saugatuck. Recently, the communities completed a joint 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan that, among other things, prioritizes the preservation of high-quality environments and expansion of green spaces.

The proposed park property consists of woodlands, extensive river frontage, and coastal marsh areas. These natural features offer potential for the development of scenic trails, non-motorized boat access, fishing pier, wildlife observation areas, and habitat restoration initiatives.

The property's location directly across from an existing park and adjacent to DNR owned land presents an opportunity to create a contiguous network of public land on both sides of the river. This would enhance conservation efforts, expand recreational access, and further the community's vision of safeguarding its natural assets for future generations.

The property also features a large, clear and level area ideal for athletic fields—something the Saugatuck-Douglas community currently needs. The addition of such facilities would offer residents, particularly youth and families, opportunities for outdoor recreation, fitness, and organized sports.

The acquisition of natural land for preservation and outdoor recreation along the Kalamazoo River aligns with both local and regional planning documents, including the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan, the Strategic Plan for Land Conservation and Public Access Expansion, and the Lower Kalamazoo Greenway Plan.

I strongly urge the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board to support Saugatuck Township's grant application for the acquisition of this property.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Anderson
Mayor
City of Saugatuck