



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, City Manager

MEETING DATE: February 4, 2026

SUBJECT: Review of Goals and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2026/2027

DESCRIPTION:

On January 14, City Council and staff worked with a facilitator to review progress on this fiscal year's priorities, master plan survey results, and discuss priorities for next fiscal year. Attached are the following:

- Graphic of the draft goals and priorities for fiscal year 2026/2027
- Report from the facilitator
- Copy of the presentation of progress on this year's priorities

The master plan survey results can be viewed here:

https://www.saugatuckcity.com/uploads/1/3/3/9/133977444/saugatuck_master_plan_survey_results_2025.pdf

Staff is asking Council to further discuss, finalize, and approve the goals and priorities for next year.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Legal will be at your meeting if you have any questions.

SAMPLE MOTION:

Motion to approve the goals and priorities for fiscal year 2026/2027.

Fiscal Year 26/27

Vision

Saugatuck is an inclusive waterfront community that welcomes all. City residents enjoy a **great quality of life** living in one of the country's highest-rated tourist destinations.

Saugatuck is a **vibrant, inviting community** with a talented and dedicated staff, great schools, an active tourist-based economy, stable property values, and sense of **history** as the community moves into the future.

Residents and visitors enjoy a **unique, small-town** atmosphere, exceptional parks, and access to **beautiful natural resources**.



Operations, Public Health & Safety

Goal: We will maintain a culture of fiscal responsibility and friendly, honest, and transparent government. We will partner with the Fire District and Sheriff's office to ensure we take the right measures to keep our community safe.

Priorities

- Evaluate Parking Improvements Task Force recommendations and implement solutions (*essential*)
- Update website, including the addition of online payments. (*essential, regulatory*)
- Finish update to Land Use Master Plan, including non-motorized (pathways, biking) plan (reg.)
- Roll out new logo and branding
- Finish new water-sewer agreement and as necessary, update water-sewer infrastructure fees (*regulatory*)
- Manage Dune Ridge litigation
- Implement deer cull
- Begin full zoning code update
- Install outdoor AED stations
- Conduct Town Halls: One with businesses and another on taxes



Infrastructure

Goal: We will focus on maintaining and improving current infrastructure while planning and saving for future needs

Priorities

- Complete Maple Street construction (*essential*)
- Complete Elizabeth Street design; begin construction (*essential*)
- Complete feasibility and plan for Park Street improvements; begin design (*essential*)
- Renovate City Hall interior
- Make further sidewalk repairs
- Maintain and resurface roads
- Finalize plan for lead service line replacement (*regulatory*)
- Update signage and wayfinding
- Evaluate long-term funding options for CIP/AMP
- Encourage AT&T cellular antenna installation and other telecommunication improvements from private sector



Parks & Recreation

Goal: We understand that our natural resources are the foundation of residents' quality of life and our tourism economy and will invest to sustain and enhance them.

Priorities

- Monitor and mitigate low water level impacts (*essential*)
- Complete Mt. Baldhead platform and retaining wall design; begin construction
- Refresh Village Square Courts
- Continue to advance Blue Star Trail
- Restore Mt. Baldhead vegetation
- Continue invasive species treatment
- Begin planning for replacement of Mt. Baldhead stairs and river deck
- Upgrade restroom interiors at Village Square and Wicks Park



City Council/Leadership Team Planning Work Session

January 14, 2026

Leadership Team Annual Planning Work Session

Report of Generated Ideas

Overview of Planning Process

The Leadership Team of The City of Saugatuck: The City Council, The Mayor, City Manager, and Senior Staff of the City of Saugatuck conducted their annual workshop to revisit current Goal Areas for relevancy, review progress made on initiatives set in 2025, and prioritize projects for fiscal years 2026/2027.

OBJECTIVES

- ♦ Review of 2025 Agreed Upon Governing Behaviors/ Team Performance
- ♦ Identify learning opportunities for 2026
- ♦ Status Report of Progress of Priorities in Pillar Areas Set in 2025
- ♦ Review Master Plan Survey Results
- ♦ Review of the Strategic Framework: Current Vision and Goal/Pillar Areas
- ♦ Discuss of Proposed Refinements
- ♦ Identify any Additional FY26/27 Priorities & Prioritize Projects for Upcoming Year
- ♦ Next Steps

REVIEW OF TEAM PROGRESS MADE ON AGREED UPON BEHAVIORS in 2025

Since our last planning session, January 2025 what are you doing well or have improved?

- ♦ More empathetic (Roy as an example)
- ♦ Increased our support for each other and the team
- ♦ An intentional increase in our ability and willingness to see both sides of an issue
- ♦ Easy to approach; safe
- ♦ Effective communications – 262 ENEWS blast and increase **aves 10 yrs**
- ♦ Perspective; curiosity
- ♦ Part of the solution rather than the problem
- ♦ Active listening – evident in the STR changes
- ♦ Increased productivity
- ♦ More discussion in Council
- ♦ Increased respectful debate/active listening
- ♦ Turn & Burn: Getting results, increasing productivity
- ♦ Transparency
- ♦ Better communication (public)
- ♦ Increased collaboration
- ♦ Less non-verbal negative messages / more respectful
- ♦ Increase in supportiveness

Where can we still improve?

- ♦ Collaboration
- ♦ Collaboration (tri-community):
 - Dredging
 - Waste water
 - Master Plan
- ♦ Delegate in way that effectively build the team
- ♦ Still have room for improvement in active listening
- ♦ Organizational distress

NOTE: Conversations about continuous improvement included:

- ♦ Remind each other to “stay in your lane” when needed
- ♦ Remember to not abuse staff time
- ♦ Remember that ONE Council member DOES NOT direct City Manager or staff

When asked “What would increased collaboration look like?” responses were:

- ♦ Increased productivity: “Turn and Burn” when it comes to getting results
- ♦ More understanding residents: Our residents see both sides of an issue when we do
- ♦ Steps in becoming an even more functioning leadership team
- ♦ Addresses organizational distress: How can I support the city manager & staff to implement the abundance of priorities?
- ♦ Can help us be intentional about not adding additional stress to those already under enormous pressure
- ♦ We could do a better job of communicating and collaborating with the community occasionally with town halls or Q & A meetings on topics such as STR

The true measure of a team is that it accomplishes the results it set out to achieve.

~ Patrick Lencioni

COUNCIL FY26: WHAT TRAINING, GUEST SPEAKERS, OR COMMUNITY SESSION WOULD BE BENEFICIAL?

- ♦ Stakeholder Meetings / Town Halls / Meeting with Business & STR Leaders
- ♦ Annual or semi-annual Tri-community joint sessions - Managers & Council members
- ♦ Create a centralized Knowledge Base
 - Website: Tutorials / Videos / Capitol Improvement Plan on website / Q & A on taxes
 - You Tube
- ♦ Headley Amendment, Property Taxes, Millage rates
- ♦ Elizabeth & Park Street community sessions

NOTE: There were conversations about economic development and the business community. Although there is a desire to engage the business community in economic development efforts, the business community has not initiated any movement in the area. Perhaps the CVB is satisfying their needs? Learning more about what the business community wants can be included in our 2026 learning. Consider a work session to discuss.

HIGHEST PRIORITIES: INDIVIDUAL #1 PRIORITY for the NEXT 12-18 MONTHS

Each participant shared their individual #1 priority for the team focus in 2025/26:

- Website (3)
- Master Plan
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Park Street
- General Safety (bike/pedestrian/vehicle hot spot risks)
- Dredge (Address low water level impacts)
- Practice Servant Leadership

NOTE: Conversations surfaced items to capture and not forget:

- ♦ Website:
 - Ensure it is intuitive and easy to navigate
 - Include explanation about where tax dollars actually go ("Put meat on the bones")
 - Include information about how priorities are selected (ie. roads, sidewalks, upgrades, etc, sometimes projects move based on funding, grants, donations, etc.)
 - Investigate the cost of beneficial tutorials to be provided on website
- ♦ Address any struggles with Council, Commission processes
- ♦ Requests for detailed information and timelines for projects have been made by Council members. Please remember: Municipal governments typically do not have a department with the responsibility to provide such information. What daily tasks will not be met when efforts and resources required for such data are reallocated? Do we have the resources to hire to satisfy the desire for such information and would that hire be value-added?
- ♦ Remember to be realistic about what can be done in any project given available resources

Citizen Survey: Mayor Anderson

City Manager Cummins and Mayor Anderson shared results of citizen survey.

Congratulations on high scores and positive feedback from the survey participants.

Conversation followed regarding citizen survey:

- ♦ It was surprising that improving walkability was not noted by citizens
- ♦ The power outage had a significant impact on tourist experiences, business, and residents, with a "trickle down" effect. Therefore, when redoing Butler Street, consider burying the lines; make the infrastructure as resilient as possible to benefit the community
- ♦ We need to continue to lean forward on infrastructure, a priority noted in the survey (roads, sidewalks, paths)
- ♦ The economic impact of the low water level extends beyond the community of Saugatuck (a tri-county issue). We will need solid data when working with neighboring governments since they may not be identifying the economic impact on their communities
- ♦ We will need to continue to stand strong and communicate the need for improvements and grant funding available while progressing with the street

- improvement with trip hazards
- ♦ Discuss what we can do when we do not own the property, yet improvements are needed (such as trip hazards)
 - Upcoming assessment management plan can be a guide

Where is the survey telling us we can improve the most?

- ♦ Code enforcement, street maintenance, administration
- ♦ People still wanting to see more progress with STRs
- ♦ Want to see improvements with bathrooms in parks, trees and more benches

NOTE: In 2025, unlike many Councils in Michigan municipalities, the City of Saugatuck Council has done a stellar job of maintaining respectful, productive, non-partisan language with no grandstanding at meetings. Municipalities across Michigan have stopped televising their Council meetings because they have become disrespectful and nonproductive, increasing dysfunction with and in the community.

BLUEPRINT FOR ANNUAL PLANNING

To facilitate smooth and productive annual planning, the leadership team returned to their Key Goal Areas - “buckets” or natural categories – where progress is required year-after-year to achieve progress in direction set by the Council. The categories were reviewed and discussion about edits or refinements of the Key Prioritization Areas.

There was a suggestion to create “sub-categories” in the Key Prioritization Areas. Following Albert Einstein's suggestion: *Genius is making the complicated simple*, and a check-in with the Staff about what works best for them to implement, the team selected to keep the document clean, clear, and concise and remain with the current Key Prioritization Areas.

Before each participant voted on their highest priorities among the list of priorities, we reviewed what to keep in mind:

THINK:

MUST

SMART: Clear ROI by taking on this project

NICE, yet deferrable

Priority 1: Essential

Urgent, high-priority projects that should be done if at all possible. These include projects that are required to complete a major public improvement; projects that would address an emergency or remedy a dangerous condition to public health, welfare and safety; projects that would provide facilities for a critically needed community program; projects that needed to correct an inequitable distribution of public improvements in the past; and projects vital to the economic stability of the City. A special effort is made to find sufficient funding for all the projects in this group.

Priority 2: Desirable

High-priority projects that should be done as funding becomes available. These include projects that would benefit the community, and projects whose validity of planning and validity of timing have been established and are appropriate for a progressive community to pursue.

Priority 3: Acceptable

Worthwhile projects to be considered if funding is available. These are projects that are adequately planned, but not absolutely required, and should be deferred to a subsequent year if budget reductions are necessary.

Priority 4: Deferrable

Lower-priority projects which are desirable but not essential and can be postponed without detriment to preset services.

For each and every NICE that might be deferred, there may be solid reasons why each was SMART rather than NICE, such as, a donation has already been accepted, significant progress has already been made and is in motion toward completion, or the project requires minimal resources.

PRIORITIES IN KEY RESULT AREAS

VOTES: (#) = Number of Votes C=Council / S=Staff

Operations Public Health & Safety	Infrastructure	Parks & Recreation
Update Website, including online payments (7) 3 C / 4 S	Renovate City Hall Interior (5) 2C / 3S	Monitor & mitigate low water level impacts (5) 4C / 1 S
Evaluate Parking Improvements Task Force Recommendations & Implement Solutions (6) 3C / 3S	Complete Maple Street Construction (4) 4C	Complete Mt Baldhead platform & retaining wall design; begin construction (3) 2C / 1S
Finish Update to Land Use Master Plan (5) 1C / 4S	Complete Elizabeth Street Design: Begin Construction (4) 4C	Village Square courts refresh construction (2) 2S
Roll out new logo & branding (3) 2C / 1S	Complete feasibility plan for Park Street Improvements: Begin Design (4) 3C / 1S	Restore Mt Baldhead vegetation (1) 1S
Finish new water-sewer agreement & as necessary update water-sewer infrastructure fees (2) 2C	Evaluate long-term funding options for CIP/AMP (3) 3S	Continue invasive species treatment
Deer Cull (2) 1C / 1S	Make further sidewalk repairs (2) 2C	Continue to advance Blue Star Trail
Manage Dune Ridge Litigation	Finalize plans for lead service line replacement (2) 2S	
	AT&T Cellular antenna installation & encourage telecommunications improvements from the private sector (1) 1C	
	Maintain & resurface roads (1) 1C	
	Update signage & wayfinding	
ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES TO CONSIDER		
Begin full zoning code update	Business Community: Learning 2026: Work session, including November Stakeholder Meeting (2) 2C	Interior restroom upgrades at Village Square & Wicks (6) 2C / 4 S
Outdoor AED Stations		Begin planning for Mt Baldhead stair replacement & river deck (3) 1C / 2 S

WORK/STUDY SESSION SUGGESTIONS MADE IN PLANNING SESSION

- ♦ Economic Development
 - Learn more about what the business community desires & how to engage them
 - Stakeholder Meeting (perhaps in November). “We’re deeply aware of the value of our business community and, a result of our strategy session this year . . .”
 - What are we currently doing for you that helps & you want us to continue?
 - What do you need/expect from the Council to enrich your efforts?
 - Suggested topic: Discuss what we want to become: A mom & pop business community or a more corporate set of businesses, owned by conglomerates?
- ♦ Discuss a plan to address “hot spots”
 - Identify & prioritize locations shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
 - Revisit speed limits in hot spots; review signage effectiveness
 - Identify master plan inserts regarding results of work session discussions and later decisions, connecting pathways in the safest ways possible
- ♦ Continue work to improve telecommunication bandwidth

NEXT STEPS

City Manager, Cummins and Mayor Anderson will review the report of generated ideas to ensure accurate inclusion of items noted from the work session. Once reviewed, the report will be sent to Council members and Staff. After review and approval, the City Staff will align Council priorities to annual budget and report back to the Council.

Once again, I commend your service to your exceptional City and your investment of time and energy in planning and prioritizing. And, I applaud your commitment to creating and sustaining a high-functioning leadership team and intentionally creating a culture of respect, civility, and collaboration – a legacy that will live beyond your years.

It is a complete pleasure to assist you in your commitment to efficiently, effectively, and productively serve your community.

Respectfully, Marilyn Semonick



Summary of Progress on FY 25/26 Priorities and Additional 2025 Accomplishments

Smile! you're in



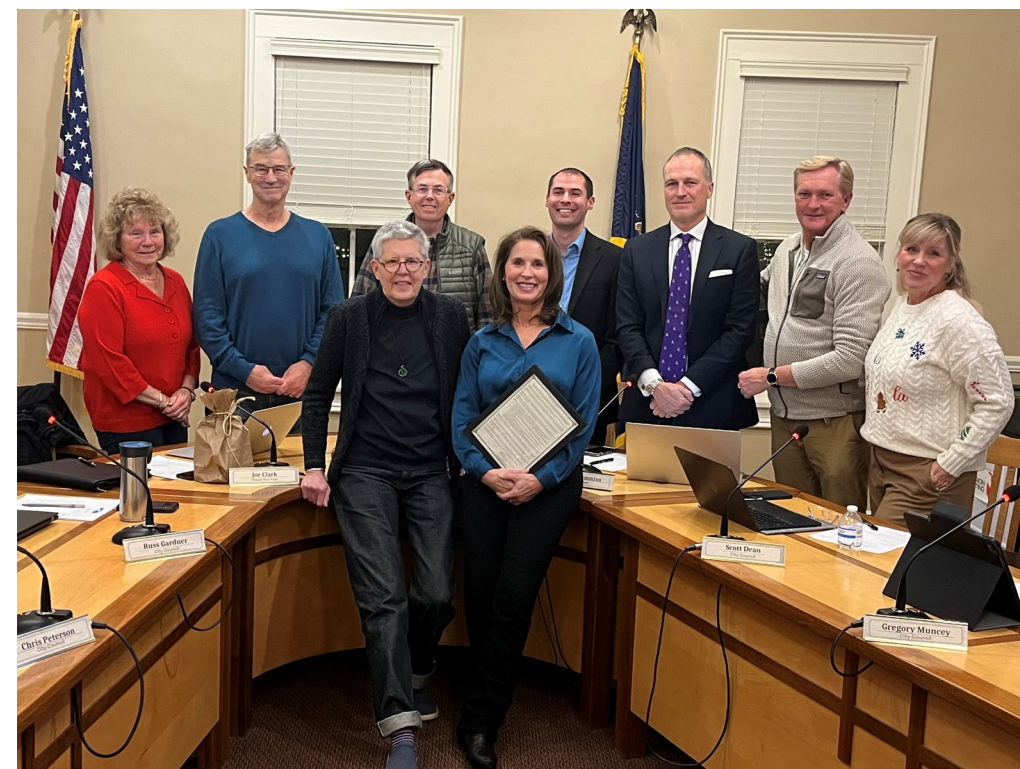
@todrawattention











Summary of Progress on FY 25/26 Council Priorities

Priorities for Operations, Public Health and Safety	Progress	Estimated Completion
Finish new water-sewer agreement	Significant Progress	Expected end of 2026
Update water-sewer infrastructure fees	Partial Progress	Water – Completed June 2025. Further in 2026 Sewer - 2027
Manage Dune Ridge litigation (potentially multi-year)	Significant Progress	COA/Supreme Court – Completed 2025 Hope to resolve in 2026
Evaluate and implement solutions to parking issues (multi-year)	Partial Progress	Task Force – August 2026 Solutions – 2027
Evaluate and implement Wildlife Committee recommendations	Partial Progress	Updated Weapons Ordinance – Completed 2025 Deer Cull – Winter 2027
Negotiate sale or lease of old landfill	No Progress	Not likely to occur
Update Land Use/Tri-Community Master Plan (multi-year)	Significant Progress	Survey and Open House – Completed 2025 New Plan - End of 2026
Improve profits from Oval Beach concessions	Completed/Ongoing	Completed in 2025 RFP – Spring 2026
Update zoning districts and signage regulations	Significant Progress	Signs – First Half of 2026 Zoning Districts - 2027
Refresh website	Not yet started	End of 2026
Review and update older policies	Significant Progress	Completed some and ongoing
Develop and implement safety protocols. including for parades	Completed	Completed in 2025

Summary of Progress on FY 25/26 Council Priorities

Priorities for Infrastructure	Progress	Estimated Completion
Complete Maple Street design and construction	Significant Progress	Design – Completed in 2025 Construction – Fall 2026
Finalize AT&T cellular agreement and installation	Partial Progress	Agreement – Spring 2026 Installation – Hope for 2026
Make repairs to seawall, sidewalks, and stairs	Significant Progress	Seawall – Spring 2026 Sidewalk and Stairs – 2025. Further in 2026
Inspect culverts	Significant Progress	Maple Street – Completed Fall 2025
Plan for Park Street improvements	Partial Progress	Grant – Awarded in 2025 Planning – End of 2026
Renovate City Hall interior	Partial Progress	Plans – End of 2026
Develop more comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	Partial Progress	CIP Updates – 2025 Further Updates – February 2026 and ongoing
Evaluate long-term funding options for CIP	Partial Progress	End of 2026
Maintain and resurface roads	Significant Progress	Completed Some Work Fall 2025. Further in Spring 2026
Repair Chain Ferry landing and arbor	Significant Progress	Winter 2026
Plan for lead service line replacement	Partial Progress	Inventory – Completed 2025 Replacement Plans – 2026
Begin planning for Elizabeth Street design and construction	Partial Progress	Conceptual Plans – Spring 2026 Designs/Bids – End of 2026
Update signage and wayfinding	Partial Progress	Logo/Branding – July 2026 Designs – End of 2026

Summary of Progress on FY 25/26 Council Priorities

Priorities for Parks and Recreation	Progress	Estimated Completion
Construct Mt. Baldhead bathroom	Significant Progress	Spring 2026
Complete Mt. Baldhead platform design; begin construction	Partial Progress	Design – End of 2026 Construction – Spring 2027
Restore Mt. Baldhead vegetation	Partial Progress	Plan – February 2026 Restoration – Fall 2026
Treat invasive species	Significant Progress	Milfoil – Completed 2025. Further in summer 2026 SHNA – Summer and Fall 2026
Refresh Village Square Courts (donor funded)	Significant Progress	Concepts – Completed in 2025 Grant – Awarded in 2025 Design – Spring 2026 Construction – Fall 2026
Continue to advance Blue Star Trail (multi-year)	Significant Progress	Tribal Walk Through – Completed 2025 Grant Extensions – Completed 2025 Further Assessments/Final Design – End of 2026 Construction – Hoping Spring 2027
Monitor and mitigate low water level impacts	Partial Progress	Further Harbor Authority Work – Throughout 2026
Evaluate community foundation options to accept citizen donations	Not yet started	June 2026
Expand holiday lighting to Water and Griffith streets	Completed	Water Street – Completed in 2025 Griffith – Not approved by Council

Additional Accomplishments in 2025

In addition to the accomplishments covered in the department head presentations, here are some more:

- Improved Communication - Regular community reports from City Manager, Increased Facebook posts, Surveys (slow no wake, wildlife, master plan)
- Personnel Manual Updates including New Earned Sick Time Act Requirements, AI, Social Media, Remote/Hybrid Work, Disability Accommodations
- Formed Logo and Branding Refresh Committee and Issued RFP
- Formalized Park Rules
- Clean Audit and Added Significant Sums to Fund Balances
- Conducted Annual Reviews and Merit Increases
- Updated Staff Wage Scales
- Updated Health Insurance Offerings to Save Costs and Offer Employees More Options
- Updated Purchasing Policy Ordinance
- Worked with CVB on Temporary Placemaking Installation at Cook Park
- Supported History Center with Additional Historic Markers
- Updated Ethics Policy
- Navigated an Area Wide Natural Gas Outage for Several Days
- Built Positive Working Relationship with Tribal Nations
- Extended Law Enforcement Agreement with Allegan County Sheriff's Office
- Phone Improvements - Connected City Hall and DPW Phone Systems, Promoting Direct Lines
- Added Invasive Species and Deer Resistance Planting Education from PPW to Website
- Joined Area Partners in Investing in the Kalamazoo River Greenway plan.

Honoring Staff's Professional Development

Jamie – Completed Year Three of Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Institute and Earned the Michigan Professional Municipal Clerk Designation.

Sara – Completed Year Two (of Three) of Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Institute which will lead to Michigan Professional Municipal Clerk Designation. Attended Bureau of Elections Updates Training.

Scott – Completed Michigan Infrastructure Council Asset Management Champion Program.

Grayson – Completed the following trainings: Floodplains 101, Historic Preservation 101, inland lakes, and site plan reviews. Attended Michigan Association of Planning Conference.

Nikki – Completed Plante Moran Government Accounting Professionals University Program. Completed Year One (of Three) of Michigan Municipal Treasures Association Basic Institute which will lead to Michigan Certified Professional Treasurer (MiCPT) certification.

Angela and AJ – Beginning CDL training.

Ryan – Attended Michigan Municipal Executives Winter Institute, Michigan Municipal League Annual Convention, and Michigan Municipal League Capitol Conference.