



City Manager Report

August 24, 2026

Deer Management

- City Council has prioritized addressing deer overpopulation for FY 2026/2027, building on recommendations from the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee.
- The City has updated its firearms ordinance to allow for a City-sponsored deer cull and staff have had several meetings to identify options and review logistics. This has included meetings with the Allegan County Sheriff's Office, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a private culling firm.
- Both the USDA and private firm offer potential cull options, with the private firm potentially available as soon as this winter.
- I hope to have a proposal ready for City Council consideration at a September workshop.

Maple Street Construction Update

- Water main installation has been completed. North end tie ins will occur soon.
- Water service installation for the remaining residents on the northern end of Maple Street should be completed soon.
- Installation of additional sanitary sewer laterals has started.
- Installation of a concrete sidewalk on the west side of Maple Street and curbs at intersections have begun.
- Crushing the east lane is scheduled for September.
- Work on the Public Works lot is expected to begin in September.
- Paving is still anticipated to take place in October.
- Downtown Water Valve Work
 - At your last regular meeting, I reported that we were working on narrowing dates in October for the water valve work. As you know, this work is to provide additional valving along Water Street so that, in the case of a water main break and shutdown (like the one a few years ago), it will limit those that are impacted. As a reminder, this work will occur over two days, include a 2-4 hour water shutdown each day, followed by a boil water notice. Based on feedback received to date, we are trying to avoid events such as Halloween, Gallery Stroll, and Indigenous Peoples' Day. Work will be completed early in the week so boil water advisories can be lifted in time for the weekend. Unfortunately, there is no perfect day or time and we can't avoid all impacts.

- We checked the CVB events calendar and also reached out to them for a recommendation. Their recommendation was for the work to occur on October 19 and 20. The Public Works team is working on providing notice of the planned work on those dates. As you know, the work is dependent on the weather and subject to change. If we have weather issues our last realistic opportunity following the planned dates will be October 24 and 25.
- A reminder that if your constituents have questions, please have them contact the following:
 - Public Works - Michelle Gibson, Project Coordinator - (269) 224-9504
 - Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering
 - Jon Moxey, P.E., Project Manager – (616) 588-1925
 - Peter Tierney, P.E., Project Manager – (616) 914-8621

Park Street Planning

- A reminder of the upcoming open house!
- We continue the process of planning improvements on Park Street between Campbell Road and Mount Baldhead Park. 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
- Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V), has obtained topographic survey information for the corridor and is beginning to evaluate the various elements listed above.
- The City is seeking public input to help guide the planning and design processes. **An open house will be held on:**
 - **September 1st from 4PM - 7PM**
 - **Location: Mount Baldhead Park (Weather backup location: City Hall, 102 Butler Street, Saugatuck, MI 49453)**
- F&V staff will have displays with the survey and other information to be able to review any concerns and get input on the future of Park Street.

Parking Improvements Task Force

- The last Parking Improvements Task Force meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 25, at 3:00 p.m. The agenda includes:
 - Downtown Employee Parking Plan
 - City of Saugatuck Parking Study: Executive Summary and Action Plan
 - Plan Ownership and Implementation
- The group is expected to present its recommendations to City Council in late September.

- 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>

Open Public Works Equipment Operator-Maintenance Worker Position

- Noah Aramendi has accepted a position with the Holland Department of Public Works.
- The open Public Works Equipment Operator-Maintenance Worker position is posted. If you know anyone who may be interested, please encourage them to learn more and apply here: <https://www.saugatuckcity.com/employment.html>

Miscellaneous

- **Blue Star Trail** – Archeological survey work began this week.
- **Mt. Baldhead Upper Platform** – Preliminary design work is complete and a plan review meeting with staff was held August 10. A meeting is scheduled with the tribal nations. Construction is likely in spring 2027.
- **Kalamazoo Lake Sewer Water Authority (KLSWA)** - KLSWA now has a Facebook page. Follow them here for the latest updates: <https://www.facebook.com/KLSWA>
- **Meetings**
 - Held one on one meeting with Director of Planning and Zoning
 - Held one on one meeting with Director of Public Works
 - Held Department Head team meeting
 - Attended Blue Star Highway Roundtable
 - Held one on one meeting with City Treasurer/Finance Officer
 - Met with Shoreline Technology
 - Attended Elizabeth Street design and Maple Street construction meeting
 - Held one on one meeting with City Clerk
 - Prepared for and attended Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority meeting
 - Met with Director of Public Works and Oval Beach Manager
 - Attended Convention and Visitors Bureau Board Meeting
 - The CVB provided the Chili Cookoff with a \$1,000 cash sponsorship and \$500 in kind marketing.
 - Met or talked with various residents.

Civic Engagement

- I shared the following in my community report and thought Council may also be interested.
- Keith Kindred is a retired Michigan teacher who taught at the high school and college levels for over 33 years. He recently wrote an opinion piece for the *Holland Sentinel* titled [“Democracy is a skill we may be forgetting”](#). Some of his comments resonated with me:
 - University of Michigan surveys show resident engagement declining over the past decade. Local officials increasingly report relying on the same small

group of volunteers, struggling to recruit future leaders, and watching public trust weaken.

- Instead of regularly interacting with the people who live nearby, many of us spend more time with algorithms that sort us by outrage instead of geography.
- We exchange neighbors for followers. We trade local concerns for national controversies.
- When the only public square many of us experience exists on a screen, we have fewer opportunities to solve ordinary problems with the people who live down the street.
- That helps explain why discussions about culverts, sewer bonds or school budgets can suddenly feel like debates over national politics. We are asking people to use localized civic skills they have fewer chances to develop.
- Rebuilding that habit doesn't require everyone to run for township supervisor or school board. It starts with something much smaller.
- Attend one planning commission meeting. Volunteer for a community organization. Spend more time in places where neighbors still meet one another as neighbors instead of political opponents.