

Ryan Cummins

From: wend [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 19, 2025 2:59 PM
To: Ryan Cummins; Holly Anderson; lstanton@saugatuckcity.com; Joe Clark; Russ Gardner; Chris Peterson; Scott Dean; Gregory Muncey
Cc: Brandon Simon; Meyer, Christian; Scott Herbert; Jon Moxey
Subject: Background Information for Voting on Maple Street Project

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Hi everyone,

Before you vote on whether or not to include drainage repairs on the Maple Street project, please review the background of the drainage and erosion problem at the corner of Maple and Mason Streets, and also access the photos and videos of a current rain event on the Dropbox link below.

I was hoping the recent repairs to the drainage along the side streets abutting Mason Street would help, but unfortunately, they have not.

I invite the new members of the council and the new city manager to walk my property at 208 N. Maple Street in order to get a feel for the true extent of the problem. Those who have already walked the property are welcome to see it again.

The Dropbox link below gives you access to a few photos and videos of current rain events in progress for a clearer picture of the problem. PLEASE, AT THE VERY LEAST, WATCH THE VIDEOS. Your city email addresses will be linked to the access.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/qzon6mvpb81lr62ajkgv0/ABSHqHeSKcoSBGPSKIQpWcE?rlkey=m5zslq6cgoy6hdoov2q1ujr4n&st=4a503e5v&dl=0>

To assist in your decision, included is a summary and rough timeline of the issue.

Summary of the Problem

To summarize, as a result of streetscape modifications over the past years along Maple and Mason Streets (including adding a lip to the edge of the road to direct the runoff to the spillway on the corner by my house and filling in drainage ditches) the amount of water and the velocity at which it flows during heavy rainstorms has increased significantly in the stream alongside my house.

With the increase in volume and velocity of the runoff, coupled with the removal of natural features that contain run off and slowly drain water, the water is completely undercutting the bank on which my house

sits and the other side as well. I've had to remove trees on the other side of the bank, so they don't fall on the house when the soil disappears under the roots. You'll notice the large tree on a 45 degree angle along Mason Street that has been impacted by the erosion.

A lip that was added to Mason Street removed the natural water shedding process, and instead created a rush of water down both sides of the street and into the drain area on the corner of Maple Street and Mason Street. Natural water shedding was further interrupted when a storm sewer was installed in the ditches along Maple Street and directed to the base of the spillway, again at the corner of Maple Street and Mason Street.

This enormous influx of water during heavy downpours comes from the top of the Mason Street hill, a couple of side streets along Mason Street, and Maple Street (from Allegan Street to Mason Street). This collection of water rushes at such a force that it's undercutting the stream bank on both sides and putting my house in jeopardy either from the bank collapsing under my porch or trees falling on the other side.

I sought help from Kirk Harrier in 2019 to help find a solution. Over the past years the city has altered the drain and spillway on the corners of Maple Street and Mason Street, installed rip rap at the drain entrance, and most recently completed some changes to the side streets along Mason Street. At my own expense, I have installed rip rap on a section of the bank closest to my house and gutters, cut down trees, and also hired an engineer and lawyer to help.

Though this was a start to help mitigate the problem, I was told by Janelle Hohm from EGLE, "The most effective way to deal with this situation is to address the problem at the source. Streambank stabilization is just a 'band aid' if the stream has flashy flows that are not controlled."

I thought the most recent street work was going to be the magic bullet, but unfortunately the erosion continues despite the "fixes." Thankfully, we had a dry year.

With the upcoming discussion and vote regarding Maple Street construction, I would like to appeal to the City Council to include drainage solutions to finally put an end to the erosion problem.

Again, I appreciate the time and effort the city has put in to help me fix this problem. Please vote to continue working toward a solution to the problem. I look forward to working together to find a solution.

Thank you,

Wendy Colsen

TIMELINE (2002-2025)

(*Information received from F&V via former city manager)

2002 – Built house. Did not alter course of stream at all to accommodate. Builders worked with EGLE (DEQ or DNR at that time) regarding permitting.

***2009/2010** – City improved Allegan Street, including replacement of the culvert under Allegan on the west side of Maple Street (15317-C1&3).

***2011** – City improved Mason Street from Elizabeth to Maple, including adding asphalt valley gutter between Takken and Maple and replacement of the culvert under Mason on the west side of Maple (3187-C1).

***2014** – the City installed storm sewer beneath the ditch on the west side of Maple Street between Allegan and Mason to replace the drive culverts (814890-C7).

2014 - 2018 – Noticed higher waters during heavy rainstorms. Began seeing problems with erosion. Kept an eye on it. In the meantime, the DPW dumped asphalt on the edge of the street near the spillway, also changing the course of the run off and subsequently, the stream.

***2018** – City repaired an inlet section on the south side of Mason Street near Takken that had settled (831450-C3).

March 2019 – Continued to notice more issues with erosion and saw it was a bigger issue than just the spillway.

May 2019 – Noticed more issues with erosion. Contacted Kirk Harrier to have him take a look at the problem. He stated this was not an Allegan County drain and sent drain atlas map.

Contacted EGLE for assistance too.

May 31, 2019 – Met with Kirk Harrier. He said the city would remedy the asphalt and drain issue on the city property, but that the erosion on my property was my issue because they didn't want to set a precedence.

July, 2019 – Work was done by DPW to try to fix the washout.

April, 2020 – Erosion was worsening. Began contacting companies to help shore up erosion where house sits on bank. Receive quotes. Hard to get anyone to help because of lake levels and pandemic.

May 18, 2020 – Contacted Kirk again. Sent videos and pictures of increasing erosion. I ask for a meeting.

May 28, 2020 – Received information from EGLE about shoreline permit applications.

June, 2020 – Continued getting bids from companies.

Mid June, 2020 – Finally meet with Kirk regarding the issue again. City would have DPW work on drain and install riprap.

September, 2020 – Rip rap installed, south side drain lowered, elevation of spillway altered.

I start contacting engineers to get input. Three of them do not want to help because they're afraid of taking on projects that might lose them favor with the city. Two never return my phone calls.

End of November, 2020 – I contracted with a company to install rip rap along the bank where my house sits, apply for permit waiver from the county, and submit the permit form for EGLE.

December, 2020 – The bank is stabilized on my side.

2021

April, 2021 – Riprap is sinking near the spillway. I contact Ryan Heise to give him the background and see if we can get a resolution to the problem. He suggests I contact the City Council.

May, 2021 – City Council members conduct site visit.

EGLE puts me in touch with new contact, Janelle Hohm, who passes along watershed grant information. I pass that information along to the city.

2022 – City conducts study, I also hire engineer to conduct study.

My engineer's note to mention at the meeting:

As noted in the report attached to this meeting's agenda, there have been a number of road improvement projects conducted within the drainage area that flows to the property in question. While all of these projects addressed ongoing issues of their own, it appears that each improvement has likely had the unfortunate side effect of increasing the volume and velocity of water that reaches Ms. Colsen's property contributing to the bank erosion.

To help offset this, the attached engineering report has provided multiple potential solutions. Of these solutions, it is my opinion that a detention system is the only appropriate measure to offset the increased erosive water present on site without simply pushing the erosion to a neighboring property owner.

January 9, 2023

Taken from the meeting minutes:

Maple Street Erosion Concern: City Engineer Jon Moxey from Fleis & Vandenbrink presented his study of the drainage in the area of Maple Street & Mason Street. He presented eight mitigation alternatives and a cost analysis of each.

No Vote, discussion only.

February 7, 2023

Email from city engineer:

Hi Wendy,

I've been working with Scott on spillways and ditching for Mason Street. He is in the process of getting quotes. We are at the mercy of the asphalt plans opening for this (usually mid-April) but hope to get it implemented this spring. At the same time, we're hoping to add some larger stone at the outlet area to create some additional pooling and help slow things down that way as well.

Hope this helps!

Jon

February 28, 2023

Included in packet for 2-8-23 meeting

*Ryan Heise, City Manager City of Saugatuck
102 Butler Street Saugatuck, MI 49453*

RE: 2023 Street Improvements – Design & Bidding Phase Proposal

Dear Ryan,

As part of the recent capital improvements planning process, high priority road improvements were identified on several streets that do not have urgent sanitary sewer or water main/service needs. These road improvements can thus be implemented in 2023, not being connected to potential outside funding for utility work. The scope of work identified includes limited drainage improvements with crushing, shaping and resurfacing the asphalt pavement on the following streets:

- West Street, from Allegan Street to Mason Street*
- East Street, from Allegan Street to Mason Street*
- Takken Street, from Allegan Street to Mason Street ▪ Taylor Street, from Allegan Street to Mason Street*

The project would also include drainage modifications on Mason Street between Takken Street and Maple Street, which would be an initial step to address the erosion issues occurring downstream of the City's stormwater outlet on the northwest corner of Maple and Mason. We anticipate those improvements would include constructing a series of asphalt spillways to allow water off the road prior to (west of) Maple Street and ditching improvements along Mason Street. These improvements would be expected to slow the rate of flow that reaches the area of concern and potentially redirect some of it to bypass that area completely.

April 6, 2023

Received note that city will be installing more rip rap the following week. As of 1-19-2025, the rip rap has completely sunk and shifted due to the volume and velocity of the run off.

June 7, 2023

City workshop meeting. Minutes are unavailable online.

August 30, 2023

City begins construction on street repairs.

My rock retaining wall begins to shift.

As per my phone conversation with city engineer explaining new construction:

There will be a new storm sewer installed on East (which will discharge along Mason), Takken (which will discharge along the North side of Mason), and Taylor (which will discharge along Mason). Corner of Taylor and Mason will take the discharge up to Takken.

All will have leach basins to slowly discharge. Storm surges may overload. No guarantee.

April/May 26, 2024

Construction is complete. Gutter silt covers are removed.

Spring/Summer/Fall 2024

Maple Street construction is under discussion for possible drainage remediation.

I'm not seeing significant changes to water volume and velocity (see videos)

January, 2025

City will discuss drainage options for Maple Street project.

Dear City Council Members,

On Friday, January 3rd, after cleaning our rental, we checked our mailbox and found a mailing from the City of Saugatuck. It was a letter about the recent Caps on STR's and reminding owners to check their permits. We scanned the QR code and found our property number. To our great anxiety, our permit was expiring January 4th. The office was already closed and we emailed Luke Thompson right away. We also left a phone message, and Luke returned our call that Tuesday. We explained the situation and were told that there was not much he could do. Luke was very respectful and asked us if we had received an email from the village. After speaking with him I searched for City of Saugatuck to check this, and nothing came up about our property. I searched again for Luke's name, and did find an email that had been sent in August.

We have had our rental since 2015. We have met every deadline, passed every fire inspection, asked our neighbors every season if there were any issues, which there were none. We are teachers and have enjoyed spending the summer in the cottage and renting it out to repeat guests when we are not there. At this point we have close to 30 families booked for the next year, my wife is a super host, most are repeat guests, some attending weddings, some doing business in the area, and others just enjoying Saugatuck as we do.

Yes, this was an oversight on our part and it was our responsibility to not miss the deadline. During COVID, when our permit was coming up for renewal, we called several times and were told not to worry at this time. Due to the circumstances, inspections were backed up. With the new caps, we realize that the situation has changed immensely. We are human. Humans are not perfect. We have taken great pride in maintaining an awesome place for our guests to stay. We have a plethora of pamphlets relating to local businesses left for our guests. We refer them to restaurants, entertainment and shops downtown. We have even had an article written about our cottage in Gather & Go Travel – Where to Stay in Saugatuck? 8 Amazing Areas. (11/21/24)

<https://gatherandgotravel.com/saugatuck-family-friendly-lodging/>

In closing, this is our Hail Mary. Pardons, passes and warnings are given daily in our society. We are hoping that we could be forgiven for this oversight and there is some way we could continue the renewal of our license. We really appreciate your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Tim and Tracey Leffler

 Saugatuck