City Manager Report

November 4, 2026

Summary of Progress on Fiscal Year 26-27 Priorities

- During the City Council's recent workshop meeting, I provided them with a first quarter progress report on their FY 26-27 priorities. The update slides can be viewed here: https://tinyurl.com/yrh3d2c7

Maple Street Project – Significant Cost Savings

- Some great news to share regarding the Maple Street reconstruction project! At its October 26 meeting, City Council approved a change order reducing the construction contract by $767,451, bringing the total contract amount from approximately $4.33 million to $3.57 million.
- Of that reduction, **$522,818 represents savings for the City of Saugatuck**, while $244,634 represents savings for Saugatuck Township.
- According to project engineers Fleis & VandenBrink, construction has progressed smoothly, with very little of the contingency funding needed. Several cost-saving measures were also identified and implemented during construction. Savings resulted from fewer water service replacements being necessary than anticipated, reuse of existing road materials, adjustments to sanitary sewer connections, and lower-than-anticipated quantities of several construction materials.
- While the project is still ongoing and final costs will be determined upon completion, this is an excellent outcome for both communities.

Lead Service Line Replacement Funding

- The City continues to make progress toward replacing lead and galvanized water service lines throughout the community. Some excellent news is that the City has qualified for $1.69 million in funding through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.
- The funding includes $169,000 in principal forgiveness, which effectively serves as a grant, and a $1,521,000 loan at 0% interest for up to 30 years. These favorable financing terms will allow the City to make important investments in its drinking water infrastructure without incurring interest expenses.
- At its October 26 meeting, City Council approved professional services for the project, including engineering, bond counsel, and financial advisory services.
- The project is expected to replace approximately 135 known lead and galvanized service lines, with additional investigation of service lines with unknown materials. Design and permitting are anticipated to be completed by May 2027,

with construction scheduled to begin in October 2027 and continue through June 2028.

Six-Month Pilot Program – Modified Staff Work Schedules

- Based on positive feedback from City staff and City Council, the City will move forward with a six-month pilot program modifying employee work schedules beginning January 4, 2027, through July 2, 2027.
- The pilot schedules will be:
  - **City Hall:** Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
  - **Department of Public Works:** Monday–Thursday, 6:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.; Friday, 6:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.
- The pilot maintains the same 40-hour work week while expanding access to City Hall services earlier in the morning and later in the evening, Monday through Thursday.
- Seasonal Public Works staff will continue to maintain public restrooms, collect trash, and perform other necessary services on Fridays and weekends. Full-time Public Works employees will remain available for emergency call-ins, including snow removal and other urgent needs.
- City Hall's drop box will also remain available for payments, ballots, and other materials outside regular business hours.
- Throughout the pilot, the City will monitor customer service, operational efficiency, and employee feedback to determine whether the modified schedules should continue, be adjusted, or return to the previous hours.
- Further details can be viewed in this workshop meeting packet: https://www.saugatuckcity.com/uploads/1/3/3/9/133977444/p_10-21-2026_workshop.pdf

Coghlin Park Rain Garden and Mason Street Native Plant Restoration

- City Council approved a native plant restoration project at Coghlin Park and along the Mason Street hillside near the Saugatuck Center for the Arts.
- The project will convert approximately 6,560 square feet of existing turfgrass into native grasses, wildflowers, and other plantings that will support pollinators, provide wildlife habitat, and reduce long-term mowing and irrigation needs.
- The work will be completed by Outdoor Discovery Center Conservation Services and includes site preparation, installation of native plantings, and monitoring and maintenance during the establishment period.
- The total estimated project cost is $14,400, funded entirely through donations from Friends of Saugatuck Parks and the Rotary Club of Saugatuck-Douglas. Thank you donors!

Business Town Hall

- The recent Business Town Hall went very well. We received positive feedback, and heard many great suggestions and ideas.
- Staff is working on compiling what we heard, and we will discuss potential recommendations and report back to City Council at a future meeting.

- A huge thank you to all the businesses that participated in the planning process, completed the survey, or attended the event. I also want to recognize Grayson for his excellent work in planning and coordinating the event!

Thank You to Our Election Workers

- A special thank you to the City Clerk, Deputy Clerk, election workers, and everyone who helped make this election season a success! From the extensive preparation and coordination leading up to the election to early voting and Election Day itself, a tremendous amount of work goes into ensuring elections run smoothly, securely, and efficiently. We appreciate their hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving our community and supporting the democratic process!

4th of July Fireworks

- The CVB has secured the same fireworks vendor for next year, and the fireworks will take place on July 4th itself!
- A big thank you to the CVB for their continued efforts to make this happen.

Travel + Leisure Article

- Some more exciting news! Saugatuck was recently recognized by *Travel + Leisure* as one of the 10 Most Beautiful Lake Towns to Visit Around the U.S.

Additional Updates

- **Milfoil Treatment for 2027 -** The City has continued its efforts to manage invasive Eurasian watermilfoil in the Kalamazoo Lake and Harbor area. At its October 26 meeting, City Council approved a three year agreement with Aquatic Doctors to continue treatment efforts. Aquatic Doctors has reported positive results from the ongoing treatment program and anticipates that treatment areas may be reduced in 2027, depending on growing conditions.
- **Archery Deer Hunting -** At its recent meeting, City Council approved archery deer hunting on approximately 6.5 acres of private property at 70 Park Street. The approval follows a 2025 ordinance amendment allowing Council to authorize archery hunting on a case-by-case basis. The property owner submitted a safety plan, which was reviewed by the Allegan County Sheriff's Office without concerns. The approval requires compliance with the safety plan and all applicable laws. This approval supports the community's broader deer management efforts.
- **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
- **Logo and Branding –** Staff will begin rollout of the new logo and branding on November 5.
- **New Website –** Staff received several proposals for the new website. We will provide a recommended firm to Council in late November or December.

- **Sidewalk Repairs & Installation -** Sidewalk repairs are complete on Lake Street. DPW crews are now focusing on other locations with sidewalk differences.
- **Mt. Baldhead Observation Platform Replacement -** Bidding is still anticipated in late 2026 with construction in spring 2027.
- **Village Square Court Renovation -** Historic District review is scheduled for November 5. Projected schedule is bidding in late 2026 or early 2027 and construction in spring 2027. Most of the project is donor and grant funded.
- **Elizabeth Street Improvements -** Design work is nearly complete and permit applications have been submitted. Projected schedule is bidding in late 2026 and construction in 2027.
- **Village Square Restroom Interior Renovations and Wicks Park Restroom Replacement –** Engineering is working on design. Construction is planned for fall 2027.
- **AED Installation -** The AED at Mt. Baldhead is now installed. Thank you Saugatuck-Douglas HeartSafe!

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:

- November 9 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- November 19 at 6:30p – Planning Commission
- November 18 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- November 23 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- November 24 at 10a – Parks and Public Works Committee
- December 3 at 6p – Historic District Commission
- December 9 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- December 14 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting