



City Manager Report

February 12, 2026

Maple Street and Other Street and Utility Improvements

- On Monday, City Council approved the bid award and construction engineering services for the 2026 Street and Utility Improvement Project, centered on Maple Street. This represents the implementation of projects identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan and addresses long-standing infrastructure needs, improves pedestrian safety, replaces aging underground utilities, and makes targeted waterfront repairs.
- Following a public bid opening, Council awarded the project to Schippers Excavating as the lowest qualified bidder. Bids came in very close to the engineer's estimate.
- This nearly \$5 million project represents a significant investment in core infrastructure and includes:
 - Replacement of aging water main along Maple Street
 - Replacement of lead and galvanized water services into homes (where applicable)
 - Stormwater improvements, including detention enhancements near Mason & Maple
 - Installation of a new 5-foot sidewalk on the west side of Maple
 - Resurfacing of Mary Street (Water Street to Butler Street)
 - Installation of additional gate valves on Water Street to better isolate future water leaks
 - Seawall and concrete repairs at Coghlin Park, Wicks Park, the Spear Street boat launch, and the Francis Street end
- Construction is anticipated to run from spring through late fall 2026. Work in the downtown area (including Mary Street and related seawall improvements) will be completed before Memorial Day to minimize impacts during peak season.
- Funding for the project comes from a combination of the Water Fund, Sewer Fund, Local Streets Fund, General Fund, contributions from Saugatuck Township and a state grant.
- We appreciate the community's patience during construction and will continue to provide updates as the project moves forward.

Park Street Planning & Conceptual Design

- City Council approved a proposal for engineering and landscape architecture services to begin the planning and conceptual design phase for Park Street improvements (Campbell Road to Mt. Baldhead), along with a Michigan Coastal Management Program (MCMP) Grant Agreement.

- This phase will include updated survey work, identification of right-of-way constraints and encroachments, development of multiple design options, cost estimates, renderings, and public engagement.
- The City was awarded an MCMP grant that will reimburse up to 50% of eligible planning costs. This effort advances priorities identified in prior studies and the City's Capital Improvement Plan, and is an important step toward improving this key corridor.

Village Square Park Improvements

- City Council approved a proposal for design and construction engineering services for improvements to Village Square Park.
- The project is supported by a \$100,000 private donation and a \$150,000 DNR Recreation Passport Grant, along with a \$10,000 City match. Planned improvements include resurfacing the full basketball court, including expansion to standard dimensions, upgrades to the tennis/pickleball court area, accessibility enhancements, stormwater improvements, and related site upgrades to better serve residents and visitors.
- Further review of the tennis and pickleball court configuration will be conducted with the Parks & Public Works Committee before a final decision is made by City Council. Options under consideration include multi-use layouts and the possible addition of shuffleboard, recognizing both current recreation trends and historical amenities at the site.
- Surveying the area and design work on the basketball court will now move forward. Construction is anticipated this fall.

Logo & Branding Refresh Project

- City Council approved a proposal from Concept A Creative Studio to lead the City's Logo and Branding Refresh Project.
- Concept A was selected following a competitive RFP process that drew 26 proposals from firms across Michigan and beyond. Their experience with municipal branding and familiarity with the Saugatuck area will help streamline the discovery process and ensure the final product reflects the community's identity.
- The project will begin with a discovery and public engagement phase, with design concepts and recommendations from the logo and branding advisory committee brought back to Council for review before final adoption.

Parking Study Survey

- The City is currently undertaking a parking study to identify ways to improve access to businesses and attractions, reduce vehicle traffic, and enhance the pedestrian experience. The following short survey aims to help us better understand your travel and parking experiences in Saugatuck.
- The parking study will be ongoing throughout most of 2026, and there will be additional opportunities to provide feedback.
- The survey closes on Friday, February 27, 2026. We appreciate your time and feedback!
- Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SaugatuckParking>

Mt. Baldhead Restroom

- The new restroom is largely complete. Here is an update from Midwest Construction:
 - Exciting news! The permanent doors for the restrooms have been installed. Caulk and paint touchups are lined up this week to finish them up.
 - Remaining items for project completion: Drinking fountain, north concrete sidewalk, and landscaping.



Mt. Baldhead Upper Platform and Retaining Walls

- The Mayor, City Engineer, and I recently met with the Tribal Nations to review survey results and next steps for replacing the Mt. Baldhead upper platform and repairing or removing retaining walls.
- Based on the feedback we received, design engineering will begin and we believe we will be able to keep much of the same footprint that exists today.
- We are still aiming for construction in either fall 2026 or spring 2027.

Updates to Short Term Rental Ordinance and Notice of Available Licenses

- City Council has approved amendments to the STR licensing ordinance. Amendments include:
 - Fixed License Renewal Date: All short-term rental licenses will now take effect on the same date as the expiration of the prior license, establishing a consistent renewal cycle.
 - Application Window: Renewal applications may be submitted no earlier than sixty (60) days and no later than thirty (30) days prior to the license expiration date.
 - One-Time Amnesty: A one-time amnesty is provided for some license holders who lost licenses for failing to apply timely. To qualify, they must meet all of the following criteria:

- The short-term rental license expired between April 24, 2025, and the effective date of the proposed ordinance.
- The license holder submitted a renewal application after the original renewal deadline but before the license expired.
- The renewal application otherwise complied with all applicable City Code requirements.
- Amnesty Application Period: Applications under this amnesty must be submitted no later than March 3, 2026.
- Amnesty Fee: In addition to the standard application fee, applicants submitting under the amnesty provision will be subject to a late penalty fee (\$525) previously determined by the Council.
- Enforcement Discretion: The enforcing officer may excuse compliance with deadlines if a license holder can demonstrate that the untimely submission was caused by extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, such as natural disasters, public health emergencies, documented medical issues, or military service or deployment, but not by the license holder's or agent's own action, inaction, or negligence, or other reasonably foreseeable circumstances.
- A link to the Public Notice of available licenses can be found here:
<https://tinyurl.com/mr35w7k7>

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:

- February 17 at 3p – Parking Improvements Task Force
- February 18 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- February 19 at 6:30p – Planning Commission
- February 23 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- February 24 at 10a – Parks and Public Works Committee