



City Manager Report

March 12, 2026

Approved Priorities for Fiscal Year 2026/2027

- Following a review of master plan survey results, full day strategic planning meeting, and workshop meeting, City Council has approved priorities for fiscal year 2026/2027. The approved list of priorities can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/24c94xy3>
- Staff is now working to build a budget to support the priorities. The draft budget will be presented to City Council at their April 22 workshop meeting. We welcome everyone to attend to hear the presentation and learn more.

Prioritization Process for Capital Improvements

- Each year the City reviews and makes necessary adjustments to our five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- The City has a long and costly list of capital improvement needs, and we have to prioritize our needs with available resources. Here are the elements we evaluate:
 - Asphalt condition (PASER rating).
 - Utility needs: Sanitary sewer, water main, water service replacement needs.
 - Traffic volume: Dead end vs. corridor used by entire community and visitors.
 - Traffic type: Primarily residential vs. commercial/trucks.
 - Non-motorized facilities: Does the corridor already have appropriate sidewalks, trail, shoulders, etc.
 - Drainage issues, storm system condition and size.
 - Maintenance cost/effort vs. project cost.
 - Outside funding availability/opportunities.
- The latest draft of the plan will be reviewed again with City Council at their March 18 workshop meeting.

Village Square Park Improvements

- Following several reviews by the Parks and Public Works Committee and City Council, the City Council has approved a concept for improvements at Village Square Park. The concept can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdeu5eu7>
- 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, keeping the tennis/pickleball court combo but upgrading the area, adding a shuffleboard court and additional seating, accessibility enhancements, stormwater improvements, and related site upgrades to better serve residents and visitors. Construction is anticipated this fall or next spring.

Mt. Baldhead Revegetation and Invasive Species Management

- City Council recently approved a contract with the Outdoor Discovery Center to begin ecological restoration work on the slope of Mt. Baldhead that was previously impacted by invasive species treatment.
- The approved project will focus on restoring native dune habitat and stabilizing exposed areas of the slope through several coordinated efforts, including:
 - **Invasive species management** targeting plants such as garlic mustard, Asian bittersweet, Japanese barberry, and other invasive species.
 - **Revegetation of the dune slope** with approximately **500 native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants** selected for erosion control and dune compatibility.
 - **Deer protection measures**, including tree tubes and fencing to protect young plantings.
 - **Native seed installation** to improve biodiversity and stabilize exposed soils.
 - **Educational and protection signage** to encourage visitors to stay on designated trails and protect
- Work will take place throughout the 2026 growing season, with invasive species treatment occurring first, followed by phased planting and seeding through early fall.

Sheriff's Office Annual Report

- The Allegan County Sheriff's Office recently presented their annual report which can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdcna7wt>
- Highlights include 1,134 incidents, an average response time for all call types of 11 ½ minutes, 371 traffic stops, and 232 school contacts.

AT&T Update

- The project manager for the cellular antennae installation in the Mt. Baldhead radome has advised they haven't been successful with getting the necessary historical approvals. As a result, their leadership team decided they are no longer going to pursue the "macro" project.
- However, they advised they are working to move their project budget to install small cell towers. The project manager has reiterated with the leadership team that small cell coverage should be evaluated for Oval Beach as well as the other parts of town. They are assigning a small cell project manager, and they will connect with me once they are in place.
- This is certainly a huge disappointment for both the City and AT&T. We all have a ton of time and resources into pursuing this re-use project. I am grateful that AT&T remains engaged and committed to improving service through small cell options. That has worked well for Verizon, and I am hopeful it will for them too.

Direct Contact Numbers for Staff

- We have made improvements to our phone system. Instead of using a phone tree, you can now reach staff directly. Public Works also has a dedicated line and improved voicemail features.

- The direct staff and DPW lines can be viewed on our website here:
<https://www.saugatuckcity.com/contact.html>

Plastic Pellet Spill Cleanup

- I have been in contact with EGLE about the plastic pellet spill off I-196 and into the Kalamazoo River.
- EGLE recently issued a press release about the cleanup which can be viewed here:
<https://www.michigan.gov/egle/newsroom/press-releases/2026/02/26/i-196-plastic-pellet-spill-cleanup-allegan-county>
- EGLE has subsequently advised that because of legacy sediment contamination, “removal of pellets on the riverbed should not be attempted by volunteer organizations or citizen groups. If observed, please notify EGLE at 517-331-0122 of location and extent of pellets observed.”
- EGLE is providing weekly updates to the managers of the tri-community as well as the tribal nations. I am grateful that EGLE is staying on top of this and working to make sure the responsible party cleans things up properly.

Ever wonder where your curbside plastic recycling goes?

- Much of the plastic collected in our area is processed through the Indianapolis Polymer Center, a state-of-the-art Republic Services facility that manages plastics from curbside collection all the way to high-quality recycled resin used in new packaging.
- Here’s how it works:
 - Collected from your recycling cart
 - Sorted and baled by material
 - Processed into recycled PET flake and other resins
 - Manufactured into new consumer packaging
- The center produces approximately 160 million pounds of recycled resins per year, helping create a more circular economy where items like water bottles can be remade into new bottles. Learn more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yn94fptm>
- Last year, the City increased residential recycling pickup to twice per month to make participation easier and expand our community’s impact. Your continued effort to recycle properly truly makes a difference. Thank you for doing your part!

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:

- March 18 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- March 19 at 6:30p – Planning Commission
- March 23 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- March 24 at 10a – Parks and Public Works Committee
- March 24 at 6p – Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority
- April 2 at 6p – Historic District Commission