

## Framing Saugatuck's Parking Challenges and Potential Remedies

### Parking Conditions and Challenges

- Peak-season congestion from June through September leads to difficulty finding parking, with many days operating at or near capacity.
- Enforcement is widely viewed as inconsistent or non-existent, resulting in overstays, illegal parking, and reduced turnover.
- Employees often occupy prime parking spaces, reducing availability for visitors.
- Safety concerns include angled parking encroaching into travel lanes and insufficient accessible spaces.
- Shuttle services and Interurban transit are perceived as limited in schedule, reach, and reliability.
- Survey results show that over 70% of respondents require more than 5 minutes to find parking in peak season, and most rely on personal vehicles.

### Options Under Consideration

- Paid on-street parking (seasonal or year-round).
- Construction of a parking structure.
- Remote parking lots with shuttle service.
- Improved or expanded Interurban service.
- Enhanced enforcement of existing time limits.
- Employee parking management (remote lots or restrictions).
- Bicycle and multi-modal infrastructure upgrades.
- Low-speed vehicle (golf cart) system.

### Pros and Cons of Options

- Paid Parking – Pros: Improves turnover, generates revenue, reduces reliance on strict enforcement.
- Paid Parking – Cons: Unpopular with many residents; may burden workers; could impact small-town character.
- Parking Structure – Pros: Adds supply; may support long-term growth; reduces circulation from drivers searching for spaces.
- Parking Structure – Cons: Very high capital and operating cost; limited seasonal usefulness; aesthetic concerns.
- Remote Parking/Shuttles – Pros: Low cost; scalable; reduces congestion downtown.
- Remote Parking/Shuttles – Cons: Requires reliable frequency; may inconvenience employees; needs strong communication.
- Improved Enforcement – Pros: Increases turnover without infrastructure costs; clarifies expectations.
- Improved Enforcement – Cons: Could be perceived as punitive; requires staffing resources.
- Bike & Multi-Modal Enhancements – Pros: Reduces vehicle demand; improves safety and community character.
- Bike & Multi-Modal Enhancements – Cons: Requires capital investment; adoption may be gradual.

- Low-Speed Vehicle System – Pros: Reduces short car trips and demand for downtown parking.
- Low-Speed Vehicle System – Cons: Requires regulation, designated areas, and multi-jurisdictional coordination.

### Additional Findings from Recent Studies

- Parking supply totals 1,868 spaces citywide, with 1,502 on-street and 366 off-street. Zones 1 and 2 account for the majority of the supply. (Inventory Summary)
- Accessible spaces total 28 citywide—only 1.5% of supply, indicating a shortage. (Inventory Summary)
- Wayfinding evaluation identifies a lack of arrival signage, inconsistent pedestrian/vehicular direction signs, and cluttered on-street signs. (Wayfinding Report)
- City website lacks clear parking information; visitors rely on third-party sites. (Wayfinding Report)
- Recommended improvements include new gateway signage, facility naming conventions, simplified parking signage, added kiosks, and better online resources. (Wayfinding Report)

### Additional Findings: Parking Structure Cost and Feasibility

- Parking structure costs estimated at \$35,000 per space to construct; 200-space cost ~\$7M, 300-space >\$10M. (Cost Summary)
- Soft costs add ~20%, raising per-space cost to ~\$42,000; total project likely near \$10M. (Cost Summary)
- Annual operating costs estimated at \$156k–\$235k for a 200–300 space structure. (Cost Summary)
- Lifecycle costs are high; need a reserve fund of at least 1% of the construction cost annually. (Cost Summary)
- Saugatuck's seasonal demand means a structure would be underutilized much of the year; unlikely to be revenue-sustaining. (Cost Summary)
- Break-even monthly cost per space ~\$309 at \$42k/space and \$1k annual O&M—higher than typical Michigan parking rates. (Cost Summary)

### Summary of Paid Parking Considerations

- Peer Michigan resort communities often rely on 2–3 hour time limits with enforcement rather than paid parking. (Paid Parking Considerations)
- Paid parking can increase compliance, generate revenue, improve turnover, promote alternative transportation, and reduce punitive enforcement. (Paid Parking Considerations)
- Cons include resistance to changing free parking norms, potential burden on residents and workers, negative public perception, enforcement costs, and concerns about clutter from meters. (Paid Parking Considerations)
- Implementation costs include meter equipment (\$1,200–\$10,000 per unit), data fees, credit card fees, maintenance, and labor. Estimated annual cost ~ \$300,000, including enforcement. (Paid Parking Considerations)
- Potential revenue: \$450k–\$600k annually at \$2/hr for ~300 spaces during peak season; half at \$1/hr. (Paid Parking Considerations)
- Paid parking improves compliance and turnover but may not address all design issues. Works best with signage, communication, and multimodal improvements. (Paid Parking Considerations)