



## PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TASK FORCE

### Meeting Agenda

**May 13, 2026, 3:00 p.m.**

*This is an in-person meeting at Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453.*

*The meeting will also be available live, virtually on Zoom*

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## Participants

Name	Company	Email Address
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Gary Kott	Saugatuck/Douglas Area Convention and Visitors Bureau	<a href="mailto:indakott@aol.com">indakott@aol.com</a>
Becky Carten-Crandell	Interurban Transit Authority	<a href="mailto:beckycc@saugatuckinterurban.org">beckycc@saugatuckinterurban.org</a>
Ryan Cummins	City of Saugatuck	<a href="mailto:rcummins@saugatuckcity.com">rcummins@saugatuckcity.com</a>



1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Agenda Changes
4. Public Comment on Agenda Items
5. Approval of Minutes *Pg. 3*
6. Topics for Discussion
  - A. Parking Occupancy Field Work and Initial Mapping – results *Pg.7*
  - B. Updates on Land Use, Commercial Vacancy, and Future Developments – briefing provided by Walker for review and comment.
  - C. Parking Enforcement – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment. *Pg.11*
  - D. Interurban, Shuttle Operations, Remote Parking, and Shared Parking Agreements – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment. *Pg.14*
  - E. Conversion of Butler Street to One-Way Traffic – Attachment provided by Walker for review and comment. *Pg.25*
  - F. Discussion of Remaining Field Data Collection Details – Peak season field data collection dates – week of July 13 (after July 4th, before Venetian Festival)
  - G. Remaining Task Force meeting dates – June 30, July 28, August 18
  - H. Other items
  - I. Next steps
7. Correspondence
8. Public Comments
9. Task Force Member Comments
10. Adjourn



## PARKING IMPROVEMENTS TASK FORCE

### Meeting Minutes

**April 7, 2026, 3:00 p.m.**

*This is an in-person meeting at Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453.*

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## Participants

Name	Company	Email Address
John Dorsett	Walker Consultants	<a href="mailto:jdorsett@walkerconsultants.com">jdorsett@walkerconsultants.com</a>
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## 1. Call to Order

Chair Gregory Muncey called the meeting to order and welcomed Task Force members, consultants, staff, and members of the public.



## 2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

## 3. Agenda Changes

The agenda was reviewed. No changes or additions were requested, and the agenda proceeded as published.

## 4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comment was offered on agenda items.

## 5. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the previous Parking Improvements Task Force meeting, prepared by Walker Consultants and included in the meeting packet, were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The motion was carried by voice vote.

## 6. Topics for Discussion

### A. Parking Inventory Field Work and Initial Mapping Results

John Dorsett of Walker Consultants presented findings from the recently completed parking inventory and field mapping. The inventory identified approximately 1,168 public parking spaces citywide, with roughly 80% located on-street. This percentage is unusually high for a community of Saugatuck's size and indicates that the City maintains significant control over the majority of its parking supply. The total number of spaces was noted to be large relative to the City's year-round population, though appropriate given seasonal tourism demand. Accessible (ADA) parking spaces were inventoried separately. Mr. Dorsett noted that while there may be opportunities to expand or better distribute accessible parking, care must be taken to avoid disproportionately reducing general-use parking. The Task Force discussed employee parking as a contributing factor to perceived shortages and considered potential methods to better quantify employee parking behavior during peak season, including a volunteer-led field count.

### B. Online Parking Survey Results

Mr. Dorsett reviewed results from the online parking survey, which received participation from more than 600 respondents. Survey participation was primarily from year-round residents and local stakeholders. Results showed strong opposition to paid on-street parking, particularly among residents. A majority of respondents indicated they are typically able to find parking within five minutes during off season, and many reported willingness to walk one to two blocks to their destination. The survey also confirmed that parking challenges are largely seasonal. Task Force members discussed the importance of education, messaging, and better communication regarding parking options, shuttle services, and remote parking locations. Several members expressed that enforcement of existing parking regulations and improved turnover should be explored before considering paid parking.

### C. Stakeholder Interviews



Mr. Dorsett summarized the findings from 10 stakeholder interviews with representatives from property management companies, arts organizations, marina operators, and event organizers. Interview responses were varied but generally aligned with survey findings, reinforcing that parking pressures are most acute during the peak season and are concentrated in the downtown core. Interviews were anonymized to encourage candid feedback.

#### D. Cost to Build and Operate a Parking Structure

Walker Consultants presented cost estimates for the construction and operation of a parking structure in Saugatuck. Estimated construction costs ranged from approximately \$7 million to \$10 million, with significant ongoing maintenance and operational expenses. The Task Force expressed strong consensus that a parking structure would not be cost-effective, would add relatively few new spaces compared to the cost, and would negatively impact community character. Members agreed that pursuing a parking structure should not be recommended.

#### E. Paid Parking Considerations

Paid parking options were discussed within the context of peer tourist communities, many of which do not charge for on-street parking. Task Force members expressed concern regarding the cost of infrastructure, enforcement, and public acceptance. The Task Force's general sentiment favored first exploring the enforcement of existing time limits, improved signage, and employee parking strategies before considering paid parking.

#### F. Signage and Wayfinding Assessment

Bobby Mordenti of Walker Consultants presented a signage and wayfinding assessment focused on the experience of first-time and infrequent visitors. Identified issues included sign clutter, inconsistent messaging, and insufficient gateway and directional signage to parking resources. Recommendations emphasized developing a clear signage hierarchy, increasing the use of universally recognized parking symbols, and improving online parking information on the City and CVB websites. The Task Force strongly supported pursuing signage and wayfinding improvements as a near-term solution.

#### G. Remote Parking Options

Potential remote parking locations were discussed, including church properties, school parking lots, City-owned property near Public Works and the Fire Department, and other privately owned sites. Expansion of shuttle service routes, including coordination with Douglas, was also discussed. Members agreed to further investigate the feasibility, capacity, and potential agreements for remote parking locations before the next meeting.

#### H. Framing the Parking Challenges

The Task Force discussed the importance of clearly framing Saugatuck's parking challenges, including competing needs among residents, visitors, employees, and business owners. Walker Consultants emphasized that the City's challenge is largely one of communication rather than supply. Members also requested a concept-level review of potential one-way street conversions and diagonal parking configurations on Butler Street, Water Street, and possibly Lucy Street to determine feasibility.

#### I. Field Data Collection Schedule



Walker Consultants reviewed upcoming field data collection dates. Off-season data collection is scheduled for the week of May 2, 2026, with a backup week of May 9, dependent on weather. Peak season data collection is scheduled for the week of July 13, 2026. While acknowledging that results may confirm existing assumptions, members agreed the data would strengthen the credibility of future recommendations.

#### J. Remaining Task Force Meeting Dates

There are four remaining scheduled Task Force meeting dates. The May 12 date was changed to May 13 from 3-5 p.m. ET. The last three meetings are scheduled for June 30, July 28, and August 18.

#### K. Other Items

Wendy Colsen volunteered to conduct a ‘snapshot-in-time’ count of downtown employees, provided that the city could provide a business list. The targeted timing for this is to have these results available for the June 30 meeting.

John Dorsett stressed that strong communications are essential to addressing the city’s parking challenge. Complaints about parking, while acknowledged and real, can be combatted with data and information about parking resources and availability. The group agreed that clear public messaging includes what was considered, what is not recommended, what is recommended, and why, for both.

#### L. Next Steps

The field parking occupancy studies will proceed during the week of May 2. These results will be available at the next Task Force meeting per Julie Kroll.

Task Force members were asked to prepare 5–6 individual draft recommendations to narrow the options before final recommendations and to begin sharing them at future meetings.

## 7. Correspondence

Correspondence from State Representative Lauren Stanton regarding parking strategies and experiences in other resort communities was received and acknowledged.

## 8. Public Comments

Denise Barowitz, a Saugatuck resident, provided public comment. She noted that she generally does not have difficulty finding parking, acknowledged the impact of employee parking, supported creative, clear signage, and expressed strong opposition to paid parking and parking structures based on experiences in other communities.

## 9. Task Force Member Comments

Task Force members expressed appreciation for the thorough discussion. Members were encouraged to begin identifying draft recommendations and potential action items ahead of future meetings.

## 10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Muncey at approximately a quarter past 5 p.m. ET.

## Downtown Saugatuck Planned Development and Future Parking Impacts

This narrative provides context and analysis of future parking demand in downtown Saugatuck. Included is a review of Saugatuck’s population, its master plan, and planned development projects. As reported herein, Saugatuck’s future growth and development strategy is centered on balancing preservation, tourism, housing needs, and environmental stewardship. Rather than pursuing rapid expansion, the city is intentionally guiding incremental growth that protects its historic character, natural assets, and small-town coastal identity while responding to evolving economic and residential needs.

### Context: Historical Population

**Table 1: Historical Saugatuck Population**

Census	Pop.	%±
1870	1,026	—
1880	794	-22.6%
1890	799	0.6%
1900	707	-11.5%
1910	621	-12.2%
1920	526	-15.3%
1930	696	32.3%
1940	628	-9.8%
1950	770	22.6%
1960	927	20.4%
1970	1,022	10.2%
1980	1,079	5.6%
1990	954	-11.6%
2000	1,065	11.6%
2010	925	-13.1%
2020	865	-6.5%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

Population can serve as a proxy for parking demand, particularly for trend analysis. It is reasoned that a community with a steady population, neither increasing nor decreasing in a measurable way, is unlikely to see significant changes in its parking demand.

As shown in the table to the left, Saugatuck’s permanent resident population peaked in 1980 at 1,079, decreased in 1990 to 954, and then increased to 1,065. In 2010, the resident count decreased to 925, and by 2020, it had decreased to 865.

Although no official projections are available, it is reasonable to expect that the 2030 population will fall in the 850-950 range.

The takeaway here is that the steady population suggests stable parking demand and modest or no growth.

### The Master Plan as the Primary Policy Framework

The City of Saugatuck is updating its Master Plan, which serves as the primary long-range policy document guiding land-use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, and economic development decisions. Building upon the 2016 Tri-Community Master Plan shared with Douglas and Saugatuck Township, the updated plan provides more city-specific direction. Key objectives include preserving historic neighborhoods, focusing development in already-served areas, strengthening year-round residency, and ensuring new development aligns with community character.

## Growth Approach: Infill and Redevelopment

Future growth in Saugatuck is expected to occur primarily through infill development and redevelopment rather than outward expansion. The city discourages sprawl into surrounding rural and agricultural lands, instead prioritizing underutilized parcels, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and modest increases in density in targeted areas. This approach allows the community to accommodate growth while maintaining its physical footprint and scenic setting.

## Housing and Workforce Challenges

Housing availability and affordability are among the most pressing issues shaping future development policy. The area's strong tourism economy and second-home market have contributed to limited year-round and workforce housing options. In response, planning policies support a broader mix of housing types, including smaller units, duplexes, and low-scale multifamily housing. Regional partnerships and private initiatives are also being pursued to expand workforce housing opportunities without altering neighborhood character.

## Downtown and Economic Development

Saugatuck's downtown is envisioned as a vibrant, walkable mixed-use center that supports local businesses, arts, and cultural activities. Economic development efforts emphasize reinvestment, building preservation, and small-scale improvements rather than large new commercial projects. Tourism will remain a cornerstone of the local economy, but future strategies seek to balance visitor activity with resident quality of life and encourage more consistent, year-round economic vitality.

## Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

Planned infrastructure investments focus on enhancing pedestrian safety, improving streetscapes, expanding bicycle and trail connectivity, and maintaining efficient local circulation. Emphasis is placed on traffic calming and multimodal access rather than road widening. These improvements support infill development, reduce congestion, and reinforce Saugatuck's pedestrian-oriented character.

## Environmental Protection and Open Space

Environmental conservation is a foundational element of Saugatuck's growth strategy. Policies strongly protect dunes, wetlands, river corridors, and wooded areas while integrating stormwater management and resilience planning into development standards. Coordination with regional parks and recreation planning ensures public access to natural areas while safeguarding sensitive landscapes.

## Overall Outlook

Over the next several decades, Saugatuck's development pattern is expected to remain cautious, deliberate, and community-focused. Growth will likely manifest as small-scale projects, housing diversification, infrastructure upgrades, and continued reinvestment in existing areas. Large-scale commercial development and dramatic changes to the city's form are unlikely. The guiding vision is to accommodate thoughtful changes while preserving the qualities that make Saugatuck distinctive and desirable.

## Will Future Plans Increase Parking Demand?

Future plans are expected to modestly increase parking demand; however, the increase is expected to be incremental, seasonal, and manageable. The City's growth strategy emphasizes infill development, redevelopment of existing sites, and small-scale housing diversification rather than large-scale expansion. As a result, parking impacts are expected to be limited compared to communities experiencing rapid growth.

## Key Drivers of Parking Demand

### 1. Residential Infill and Housing Diversification

Future residential growth is expected to occur primarily through infill and redevelopment, including smaller housing units, duplexes, and low-scale multifamily development. Based on comparable planning benchmarks, this level of growth could result in approximately 20–40 new housing units over the next 10–20 years.

Using an average parking demand of 1.0–1.5 spaces per unit, this translates to an estimated increase of approximately 25–60 parking spaces. Most of this demand would be accommodated through on-site parking, shared driveways, or on-street parking within residential neighborhoods, with limited impact on municipal parking lots.

### 2. Downtown Reinvestment and Mixed-Use Activity

Downtown development is expected to focus on reinvesting in existing buildings, fostering small-scale business growth, and promoting mixed-use activity within a walkable setting. This type of development typically increases parking turnover rather than overall demand, with modest increases during peak employee hours and during peak dining or event hours.

Overall, under the most optimistic scenario, downtown reinvestment is estimated to generate additional demand for up to a few dozen additional spaces, concentrated during evenings, weekends, and special events.

### 3. Tourism and Seasonal Peak Demand

Tourism will remain the primary driver of parking demand in Saugatuck. Annual visitation has evolved over decades and is reported to exceed one million. The planning framework does not anticipate a significant increase in total visitor volume, but rather continued seasonal peaks during summer weekends, festivals, and special events.

Any increase in parking demand related to tourism is expected to be modest—generally single digits and likely less than a 10 percent increase on peak days. This equates to an estimated need for 50-100 additional parking spaces during the busiest periods, with little to no change in off-season demand.

### 4. Planned Development

As part of the parking study effort, Walker asked the city to identify known planned development projects. The city identified the following two projects:

Table 2: Planned Saugatuck Development Projects

Address	Parcel	Zoning	Description
<b>250 MASON ST</b>	57-300-152-00	CER R-4 TRANS, ICE & SNOW	Change of use to Bed & Breakfast. Proposing 12 private parking spaces.
<b>640 WATER ST</b>	57-300-030-00	DWP DTN WATR PRV	PUD - new build - 2 story building - 2 STR units on 2nd floor - retail/kitchen space on ground floor - 3 parking spaces proposed.

Source: City of Saugatuck

Both planned developments are expected to provide their own parking. As shown, the 250 Mason Street project is a proposed change of use to a bed-and-breakfast with 12 private parking spaces. The 640 Water Street project is a planned unit development with two storage units, retail and kitchen space on the ground floor, and three parking spaces.

### Overall Parking Impact Estimate

When combining residential, downtown, and tourism-related factors, the total long-term increase in parking demand is estimated to be approximately 100–150 spaces. Based on the conservative growth assumptions in the Master Plan, the lower end of this range is considered the most realistic planning scenario.

### Why the Impact Is Manageable

Several planned policy initiatives help moderate parking demand, including improvements to walkability and pedestrian safety, expanded bicycle and trail connectivity, traffic calming measures, and an emphasis on compact, mixed-use development. Together, these strategies reduce short vehicle trips, increase parking turnover, and lessen the need for new large-scale parking facilities.

### Conclusion

In summary, Saugatuck’s future growth plans will result in a gradual and modest increase in parking demand, primarily during peak tourism periods. The scale of anticipated growth does not suggest the need for significant additional parking capacity. Instead, targeted management of peak-day demand, shared parking strategies, and incremental adjustments to existing parking supply are likely to be sufficient.

## Parking Enforcement, Ambassador Program, and Revenue Options

### Parking Enforcement Rationale

Downtown parking in the City of Saugatuck experiences its highest demand during the summer season, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, when visitor activity peaks and parking occupancy approaches capacity. Of the 906 on-street parking spaces in the Central Business District (CBD), 561 are governed by posted time limits intended to promote turnover and ensure short-term parking availability for customers, visitors, and service trips. However, the City currently relies on complaint-based enforcement rather than routine patrols, which significantly limits the effectiveness of these time limits. Without consistent enforcement, extended and all-day parking occurs in prime downtown locations, reducing access for short-term users and diminishing the credibility of posted parking regulations. Routine, visible enforcement is necessary to ensure that time-limited parking functions as intended and supports downtown economic activity.

Without enforcement, there is no effective mechanism to prevent business owners and employees from using time-limited spaces. They know that enforcement is not taking place, and so, in many cases, time limits are ignored. The consequence is that many time-limited spaces are occupied for eight or ten hours by a single vehicle, which defeats the purpose of the time limits, blocks visitor and customer access, and reduces the turnover and use of these spaces.

### Enforcement Period and Operational Assumptions

This assessment assumes a seasonal parking enforcement program operating daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, an estimated 98-day period. Enforcement is assumed to occur seven days a week between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., for a total of 12 hours per day. The analysis focuses exclusively on the 561 time-limited on-street parking spaces within the CBD. All cost and revenue estimates represent planning-level assumptions intended to support policy discussion and should be refined during implementation planning.

### Estimated Annual Cost of Parking Enforcement

Rather than relying on sworn law enforcement, the City could implement a dedicated parking enforcement or parking ambassador model similar to those used in peer seasonal and resort communities. For effective downtown coverage, two staff members would be required on duty at any given time to circulate through time-limited areas, provide visibility, and monitor compliance.

Based on this approach, total seasonal staffing would equal approximately 2,352 hours (two staff multiplied by 12 hours per day over 98 days). Assuming a fully loaded hourly cost of \$40 per hour, inclusive of wages, benefits, payroll taxes, uniforms, supervision, and basic equipment, the estimated annual seasonal cost of parking enforcement would be approximately \$94,080.

### Estimated Citation Revenue

In recent years, the City has issued relatively few parking citations due to limited enforcement. With the introduction of consistent daily enforcement, citation volumes would be expected to increase initially. A conservative planning assumption is that 2-4% of time-limited spaces generate 1 citation per day. Using a

midpoint assumption of 3 percent, approximately 17 citations per day would be anticipated across the 561 regulated spaces, resulting in an estimated 1,666 citations during the 98-day enforcement season.

At an average citation value of \$25, this level of enforcement would generate approximately \$41,650 in gross seasonal citation revenue. Over time, citation volumes would likely decline as compliance improves, which represents a desired operational outcome rather than a performance shortfall.

## Parking Ambassador Program

A parking ambassador program would combine enforcement, customer service, and public education. Ambassadors would be uniformed, highly visible staff who patrol downtown on foot or bicycle, monitor time limits, issue warnings and citations, answer parking-related questions, assist with wayfinding, and serve as a visible point of contact for visitors. This approach emphasizes compliance and visitor experience rather than punitive enforcement alone and supports downtown businesses by maintaining turnover while preserving a welcoming atmosphere.

The benefits of a Parking Ambassador Program are as follows:

1. Improves Parking Turnover Without Over-Policing. Parking ambassadors provide consistent and visible enforcement of time-limited parking. This discourages all-day parking in short-term spaces and helps ensure turnover, making spaces available for customers, visitors, and service trips without relying on sworn officers.
2. Enhances Visitor Experience and Downtown Image. Ambassadors serve as a friendly, approachable point of contact. In addition to monitoring parking, they assist with wayfinding, answer questions, explain parking rules or technology, and provide information about local businesses and attractions.
3. Increases Voluntary Compliance and Reduces Conflict. Because ambassadors emphasize education and communication first, drivers are more likely to comply voluntarily. This approach reduces confrontational interactions and helps build public understanding and acceptance of parking management.
4. Frees Police Resources and Controls Costs. Using non-sworn ambassadors for parking management allows police departments to focus on higher-priority public safety needs. Ambassador programs are also less costly and can be scaled seasonally to match demand.
5. Supports Economic Vitality of Downtown Businesses. By keeping prime spaces available for short-term use, ambassador programs support downtown merchants and restaurants by improving customer access and encouraging repeat visits.
6. Provides a Platform for Education and Phased Implementation. Ambassadors are especially effective during the rollout of new parking programs. Warning periods, education campaigns, and on-street assistance can be used to ease the transition and build goodwill while reinforcing long-term expectations.

The following Michigan cities use a parking or downtown ambassador program:

- St. Joseph. Operates a seasonal Downtown Ambassador Program to support its paid parking system. Ambassadors explain parking rules, assist with pay stations and mobile apps, and provide visitor information during peak tourism months.

- Kalamazoo. Downtown Kalamazoo employs ambassadors who provide wayfinding, visitor assistance, and on-street presence seven days a week, supporting parking and general downtown functionality.
- Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids operates one of Michigan’s most established downtown ambassador programs. Ambassadors assist with wayfinding, answer visitor questions, provide event support, and coordinate with parking facilities and parking rules.
- Petoskey. Petoskey uses downtown ambassadors focused on customer service, education, and greeting visitors in managed parking and commercial areas, particularly during peak seasons.
- East Lansing. East Lansing employs parking ambassadors to oversee city parking lots, garages, and meters while assisting customers and supporting compliance.
- Ann Arbor. Parking ambassadors combine enforcement, wayfinding, and customer service in high-demand visitor environments, demonstrating the effectiveness of the ambassador model outside of traditional policing.

### Warning and Amnesty Program Options

To ease implementation and build public support, the City could establish a structured warning-and-amnesty policy. First-time violations during a defined introductory period, such as the first 30 days of the enforcement season, may result in written warnings rather than citations. In addition, the City could offer a limited amnesty period during which outstanding parking citations may be reduced or dismissed if paid within a specified timeframe. Such programs encourage compliance, improve the collection of older citations, and foster goodwill without permanently weakening enforcement effectiveness.

### Improving Citation Collection and Compliance

Currently, the City lacks a formal citation-tracking and collection process, and there is no mechanism to pursue out-of-state violators. To improve outcomes, the City should adopt a structured citation management system that tracks unpaid citations, issues reminder notices, applies late fees, and escalates delinquent accounts where legally permitted.

For out-of-state visitors, the City could contract with a third-party parking citation processing and collections firm capable of interstate follow-up and mailed notice programs. Implementing basic citation management software or outsourced collections would significantly improve compliance rates, reduce administrative burden, and ensure that enforcement efforts result in actual payment and behavior change.

### Summary

This assessment notes that downtown Saugatuck's peak summer parking demand is undermined by complaint-based enforcement, which allows all-day parking in prime spots and reduces turnover for visitors. It suggests a seasonal program from Memorial Day to Labor Day, employing visible, non-sworn staff to enforce limits, educate the public, and assist visitors. Estimated costs are \$94,080, with projected citation revenue of \$41,650, expecting citations to decline as compliance improves. The ambassador program aims to enhance customer service, support local businesses, and free police resources. The plan emphasizes warning and amnesty options during rollout, along with better citation tracking and collections, especially from out-of-state visitors, to ensure long-term success.

## Saugatuck Remote Parking, The Interurban, and Shared Parking Agreements

### Introduction

This narrative provides an accounting of remote parking efforts in downtown Saugatuck and the Interurban, which provides on-demand service and connects the Saugatuck High School parking lot to various downtown points.

### The Interurban

The Interurban Transit Authority (ITA) operates the Interurban, a demand-response public bus system serving Saugatuck Township, including the cities of Saugatuck and Douglas, Laketown Township, and limited downtown Fennville locations. The Interurban’s mission is to provide safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable transportation that connects the community, promotes sustainability, and enhances quality of life.

Rides may be scheduled on demand as early as 15 minutes, or reservations may be made for a specific date and time in the future. Curb-to-curb service means that the Interurban may be summoned to pick up and drop off passengers anywhere in its service area.

Operating hours for 2026 are as follows:

**Table 1: Interurban 2026 Operating Hours**

Season	Days	Hours	Notes / Special Conditions
September – June 5	Monday–Friday	7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	—
September – June 5	Saturday–Sunday	9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	—
June 6 – August 31	Monday–Thursday	7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	—
June 6 – August 31	Friday	7:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Late-night rides from 7:00–11:00 p.m. cost \$3
June 6 – August 31	Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Late-night rides from 7:00–11:00 p.m. cost \$3
June 6 – August 31	Sunday	9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Select Sundays extended to 9:00 p.m.

Source: <https://www.saugatuckinterurban.org/>

Holiday and Special Event Notes:

- Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day
- Closed at 2:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve
- New Year’s Eve: Free rides from 6:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.
- Independence Day, Venetian Festival, and Halloween Parade feature extended hours

Ridership fares are \$1 for adults and children 12 and older, and \$0.50 for senior citizens 62 and older, children under 12, or persons with disabilities.

The table below summarizes remote parking and shuttle services available offered by the ITA for downtown Saugatuck, including seasonal operations, pickup and drop-off locations, and fare information.

Table 2: Interurban Service Summary for Downtown Saugatuck

Service	Months in Service	Days / Hours of Operation	Pickup Locations	Drop-off Locations	Fare / How to Ride
<b>Weekend Downtown Shuttle (Remote Parking ⇄ Downtown)</b>	Peak season (summer); weekends	Weekends; aligns with Interurban seasonal hours (late evening service Fri/Sat during peak months)	Saugatuck High School (designated remote park-and-ride lot)	Downtown Saugatuck (multiple central drop-offs as directed by driver)	Free shuttle; operated through the Interurban system via phone (269-857-1418) or mobile app
<b>Interurban Demand-Response (Curb-to-Curb)</b>	Year-round (seasonal hours)	Variable by season; typical service operates daily with extended hours during the summer months	Curb-to-curb pickup anywhere within the service area (advance request required)	Any address within the service area	\$1 adult fare; discounted fares for seniors, children, and persons with disabilities

Source: <https://www.saugatuckinterurban.org/>

Figure 1: Photograph of an Interurban Bus in Use



The ITA owns eight buses, seven of which provide consistent service, and one that serves as a spare or maintenance backup. The vehicle shown to the left is a typical vehicle, a cutaway shuttle bus, a small transit vehicle commonly used for demand-response and paratransit service. Based on its size and ADA ramp configuration, this type of bus typically seats approximately 12 to 14 passengers, with seating capacity reduced when wheelchair positions are in use. The exact capacity depends on the interior layout selected by the operator.

Federal Transit Authority records show that the ITA system provided about 75,000 annual passenger trips in 2024, spread over 191,191 vehicle revenue miles and 14,489 vehicle revenue hours. Operating expenses in 2024 were reported to be \$1,184,664. Fare revenues in 2024 were reported to be \$61,657. The sources of 2024 operating funds expended are as follows: \$109,025 from direct generation, \$216,406 from the federal government, \$383,378 from local government, and \$475,855 from state government. Capital funds expended in 2024 include \$134,181 by the federal government and \$33,545 by the state government.

Enhanced shuttle service is planned for the summer. The interurban has been run as a hop-on/hop-off, demand-based service. Over the last couple of years, ridership has reportedly been declining.

### ITA Operational Notes

1. Currently, the ITA does not have a written parking agreement with Saugatuck Public Schools; however, discussions are underway to create one.
2. ITA can increase remote parking options. It recently added three used transit vans to its fleet, and these will be in service by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.
3. ITA would need additional funds to increase parking options and the fleet size for the parking shuttle service.
4. ITA can provide a standard route with specific stops and times (hop-on, hop-off). For example, ITA would need additional funding to add the following serviceable route: 200 Blue Star to DES to Berry Field (Douglas), crossing the bridge to Saugatuck, stopping at Riverside Church of Saugatuck (6591 Old Allegan), continuing to SPS High School, then onto Saugatuck Drug Store at the corner of Mason and Butler. Returning to 200 Blue Star to start the loop again. (Adding remote parking for Oval Beach access may also be beneficial.)
5. Operating cost (March 2026): \$142.39 per vehicle-hour (with FY25/26 average cost of \$105.39 per vehicle-hour).

**Table 3: ITA Non-Financial Operations Summary (March 2026 and FY25/26 Average)**

Metric	March 2026	FY25/26 Average
Vehicle hours	1,365	1,227
Vehicle miles	20,190	44,144
Total passengers	4,842	5,086
Days operated	31	30
System vehicles operated	9	9
Fuel gallons consumed	3,077	2,241
Revenue vehicle operators	15	15
Number of accidents	0	0
Number of road calls	0	1
Farebox revenue	\$3,813	\$8,976
Eligible operating expenses	\$194,362	\$129,333
Farebox recovery (farebox revenue/expenses)	1.96%	6.94%

Notes:

- Cost and revenue: March 2026 cost was \$142.39 per vehicle-hour versus \$2.79 revenue per vehicle-hour (farebox recovery of 1.96%).
- Service productivity: March 2026 carried 4,842 passengers, averaging 3.55 passengers per vehicle-hour (and 0.24 passengers per vehicle-mile).
- Scale of service: March 2026 operations totaled 1,365 vehicle-hours and 20,190 vehicle-miles over 31 operating days, using 9 vehicles and 15 operators.

Source: ITA

## Remote Parking – Saugatuck High School

The ITA has an agreement with the Saugatuck School District to use the 116-space high school parking lot during summer weekends<sup>1</sup>. Motorists may park their vehicles in this lot at no charge and then walk or ride the Interurban to downtown Saugatuck. At present, this is the sole remote parking option that is formally advertised and serviced by the Interurban.

## Alternative Remote Parking Locations

The Saugatuck Parking Improvements Task Force is exploring expanding the number and capacity of remote parking locations for employee and visitor usage. The following are some options with a brief discussion of each:

- Dykstra Funeral Home. This property is located at 520 Lake Street in Saugatuck. It offers cremation services and burials, with visitation rooms and an on-site chapel. A parking lot is located on the premises, with an estimated capacity of 30 spaces. The funeral home has allowed its lot to be used for public parking in the past. However, there is no active agreement or practice to make this lot available for public use.
- Riverside Church of Saugatuck. This church is located at 6591 Old Allegan Road in Saugatuck and has about 72 spaces.
- Saugatuck Department of Public Works (DPW) – Located at 3338 Blue Star Highway, the DPW occupies an estimated three-acre site that includes an open area that may be partially available for parking about 30 cars. DPW is performing additional analysis.
- Douglas Elementary School. Located at 261 West Randolph in Douglas, this property has about 75 parking spaces.
- St. Peter’s Catholic Church. Located at 100 St. Peters Drive in Douglas, this church has about 100 spaces.

## Shared Parking Agreements

The remote parking options identified above are regularly available and are candidates for remote parking that could be coupled with a shuttle service, such as the one offered by the ITA. As a result, we encourage the city to consider opportunities for shared parking between public and private lot owners. This collaborative approach could substantially increase downtown Saugatuck’s parking capacity without the cost of building additional spaces, help address parking challenges, improve walkability, and distribute parking demand more effectively across the area.

Shared parking is a cost-effective solution that allows the city to lease or acquire access to additional spaces while providing owners with a steady monthly income for surplus spaces (if a financial arrangement is established). There are several benefits to this approach:

1. From a land use and environmental standpoint, utilizing existing parking resources is preferable to constructing new ones.

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<sup>1</sup> There are 180 parking spaces at the high school. These 116 spaces constitute the largest parking lot at the high school.

2. Financially, owners may reduce insurance and operating costs while the city gains parking access without incurring upfront capital expenses for new resources.

Many municipalities nationwide utilize shared parking. Lease agreements can address concerns about ensuring tenants have access to spaces and the liability associated with public parking on private lots. In such agreements, the leaseholder assumes liability, carries insurance for public parking, and covers expenses like lighting and maintenance. A limitation of liability is crucial.

The city can negotiate with private property owners to make their parking available to the public. While this will incur costs, it is substantially more economical than building new parking lots or a multi-level parking structure. The city would manage liability and compensate owners for any wear and tear on their property. To make the offer attractive to owners, the agreements should specify when parking will be unavailable to the public. Owners should also have the right to limit public usage during specified times, such as special events, funerals, weddings, or other occasions.

Once agreements with private property owners are in place and the owner consents, public parking signage could be erected, and a parking communications program advertising the public availability of these spaces through parking maps and websites can help identify shared-use parking as available to the public.

Attached is a sample shared parking application used by the City of Ferndale, Michigan. Although this agreement form addresses assisting a private owner in gaining access to another private owner's parking spaces to meet its parking minimums (which do not apply in downtown Saugatuck), the principals of this agreement could be amended to apply to Saugatuck. The value of this application is that it provides evidence that shared parking agreements have precedent in the State of Michigan.

Following the Ferndale shared parking application is a suggested contract outline for a shared parking agreement between the City of Saugatuck and a private property owner. The city attorney could amend and finalize.

## Summary

This narrative describes existing and potential strategies to address parking demand in downtown Saugatuck through a combination of remote parking and shuttle service provided by the Interurban Transit Authority (ITA). The Interurban is a demand-response, curb-to-curb public transit system serving Saugatuck, Douglas, and surrounding townships, with service hours that vary by season and expand during peak summer months. Riders may schedule trips on demand or in advance, with generally low fares and occasional free or extended service during special events and holidays.

The Interurban currently serves as the primary link between remote parking and downtown. The most established remote parking facility is the Saugatuck High School parking lot, which provides 116 spaces available for public use during summer weekends at no cost. Patrons may walk or ride the Interurban from this lot to downtown destinations. At present, this is the only formally advertised and Interurban-served remote parking location in Saugatuck.

The narrative identifies several additional properties that could potentially function as remote parking locations if agreements are reached, including churches, schools, municipal properties, and a large vacant

parcel along Blue Star Highway. These sites vary in size and could substantially expand parking capacity without the need to construct new downtown facilities.

In addition to remote parking, the narrative emphasizes the value of shared parking agreements between the City and private property owners. Shared parking allows underutilized private lots to be made available to the public during defined days and hours, offering a cost-effective alternative to building new parking infrastructure while addressing liability and insurance considerations through formal agreements.

Overall, the narrative concludes that a coordinated approach combining expanded remote parking, enhanced shuttle service, and shared parking agreements could increase parking availability, reduce congestion, support walkability, and avoid significant capital expenditures, while maintaining flexibility for private property owners.



## Shared Parking Agreement Application

Private parking facilities may be shared by multiple users whose activities are not normally conducted during the same hours, or when hours of peak use vary. No reduction in the number of spaces reserved for persons with disabilities is permitted. A waiver of the maximum allowable distance between the user and associated shared parking may be approved by the CED Director (up to 500-feet), with written justification and supporting information provided by the applicant. Users sharing a parking facility must provide for safe, convenient walking between land uses and parking, including safe, well-marked pedestrian crossings, signage, and adequate lighting. Pedestrian paths must be as direct and short as possible, without compromising safety. A pedestrian circulation plan that shows connections and walkways between the parking facilities and subject uses must be provided.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Email:

Phone:

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Email:

Phone:

**A. Proof from Applicant.** Evidence must be submitted that demonstrates shared parking will not result in inadequate parking. Below is a list of required application information:

1. Please provide an analysis of available and used parking spaces based on parking counts taken at certain time intervals and days to verify parking usage patterns. (May be included as an attachment)

2. The type and hours of operation and parking demand for each land use.



**A. Proof from Applicant.** Evidence must be submitted that demonstrates shared parking will not result in inadequate parking. Below is a list of required application information:

3. A description of the character of land use and parking patterns of adjacent land uses

4. An estimate of anticipated turnover in parking space use over the course of 12 - 24 hours at the site.

Please attach the following information in separate attachments along with this application:

1. A sketch or site plan displaying shared use spaces in the lot and walking distance to the uses sharing the lot, indicating the area of the parking lot, pedestrian and drive circulation.
2. Provide a legal description of the land upon which the parking area(s) and building(s) appurtenant to the parking areas are located.
3. Provide details regarding the maintenance of the shared parking areas, including snow removal.

**NOTE:** Should any of the shared parking uses be changed or should the CED Department find that any of the conditions described in the approved shared parking study or agreement no longer exist, or if insufficient parking is an issue due to complaints, the owner can submit a revised shared parking study and an amended shared parking agreement or provide the number of spaces required for each use as if computed separately. If the CED Department determines that the revised shared parking study or agreement does not satisfy the parking needs of the uses, the shared parking request will be denied.

## PROPOSED SHARED PARKING AGREEMENT FRAMEWORK (City of Saugatuck Use of Privately Owned Parking)

This Shared Parking Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into as of [Effective Date], by and between:

City: The City of Saugatuck, a Michigan municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of Michigan, with offices at [City Address] (“City”), and

Owner: [Owner Name], the fee simple owner of certain real property located at [Property Address], [City/Village], Michigan (“Owner”).

The City and Owner are sometimes referred to individually as a “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.”

### 1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

This Agreement is entered into pursuant to the City’s authority under Michigan law to regulate parking, manage transportation facilities, and enter into contracts for public purposes. The purpose of this Agreement is to expand the supply of publicly available parking by allowing the City to utilize privately owned parking spaces during specified days and hours while preserving the Owner’s primary use of the property.

### 2. PROPERTY AND PARKING SPACES

Property Address: [Full Address]

Parking Spaces: [Number] existing, legally conforming parking spaces

Exhibit A: Site plan identifying approved parking spaces

### 3. DAYS, HOURS, AND CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC USE

The Owner grants the City a revocable, non-exclusive license to allow public parking in the designated spaces during the following periods:

Days: [Days]

Hours: [Hours]

Seasonal Limits (if any): [Dates]

#### 4. CITY MANAGEMENT, REGULATION, AND ADVERTISING

During authorized public-use periods, the City may advertise the spaces as public parking, regulate parking use and duration, enforce parking rules, and install signage subject to Owner approval of placement.

#### 5. COMPENSATION

The City shall pay the Owner \$[Amount] per [Month/Season/Year] as compensation for shared use of the parking spaces.

#### 6. LIABILITY, INDEMNIFICATION, AND IMMUNITY

During authorized public-use periods, the City assumes responsibility for public use of the parking spaces, subject to the Michigan Governmental Tort Liability Act (MCL 691.1401 et seq.). The City shall indemnify and hold the Owner harmless from claims arising from public use, except for claims caused by the Owner's gross negligence or willful misconduct.

#### 7. INSURANCE

The City shall maintain commercial general liability insurance with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, naming the Owner as an additional insured during public-use periods.

#### 8. MAINTENANCE

The Owner shall maintain pavement, lighting, and structural integrity. The City shall be responsible for cleanliness and damage attributable to public use during City-controlled periods.

#### 9. OWNER PRIORITY AND BLACKOUT PERIODS

The Owner may restrict parking availability for special events or operational needs with reasonable notice to the City.

#### 10. TERM AND TERMINATION

Initial Term: [Term]

Termination: Either Party may terminate with [30–60] days written notice. Immediate termination is permitted for safety or insurance lapses.

#### 11. NO PROPERTY INTEREST CREATED

This Agreement grants a license only and does not create a lease, easement, or dedication of property.

#### 12. GOVERNING LAW AND VENUE

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Michigan, with venue in the Circuit Court of Allegan County.

#### 13. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and may be amended only in writing signed by both Parties.

#### SIGNATURES

##### CITY OF SAUGATUCK

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

##### [PROPERTY OWNER NAME]

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parking Yield Analysis: Converting Butler Street to One-Way Traffic from Lucy Street to Culver Street

### Purpose

This analysis evaluates the on-street parking impacts of converting Butler Street from two-way traffic with parallel parking on both sides to one-way traffic, with 60-degree angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other. The analysis covers the seven blocks of Butler Street between Lucy Street and Culver Street.

### Key Design Assumptions

The curb-to-curb width along Butler Street is approximately 40 feet. Butler is presently used as a two-way street with parallel parking on both sides where permitted. As an alternative to increasing parking capacity in the Saugatuck Central Business District, this analysis considers a proposed condition featuring one-way traffic with angled parking at 60 degrees on one side and parallel parking on the other. Average usable curb length per block is approximately 300 feet. A parallel parking stall is approximately 22 feet long. All parking estimates reflect whole stalls only; fractional spaces are not counted. Intersection clearances, crosswalks, and curb ramps are assumed to be consistent between existing and proposed conditions.

### Existing Parking Yield – Two-Way Traffic with Parallel Parking on Both Sides

Rounding down, parallel parking yields approximately 4 parking spaces per 100 feet on each side. With parallel parking on both sides, the effective yield is 8 spaces per 100 feet. Over a 300-foot block, this results in approximately 24 on-street parking spaces.

### Proposed Parking Yield – One-Way Traffic with Angled Parking on One Side

60-degree angled parking on one side yields approximately 7 spaces per 100 feet. Parallel parking on the opposite side yields approximately 4 spaces per 100 feet. The combined yield is approximately 11 spaces per 100 feet, or approximately 33 on-street parking spaces per 300-foot block.

### Block-by-Block Parking Impact

Existing conditions provide approximately 24 spaces per block. The proposed condition provides approximately 33 spaces per block, representing a net increase of approximately 9.

### Total Parking Impact

Across the seven blocks between Lucy Street and Culver Street, existing conditions provide approximately 168 on-street parking spaces. The proposed one-way configuration would provide approximately 231 on-street parking spaces, representing a net increase of approximately 63 spaces<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Math includes some conservative rounding to account for fire hydrants, driveways, no parking zones, loading zones, etc. Each 100 feet of curb space is enough to allow for 9, 60-degree angled spaces. However, with curb cuts and no parking areas, we are intentionally aiming low to manage expectations for this idea. A more detailed and accurate study is recommended if the city is interested in implementing this idea. What is presented here is at the conceptual level, not the design level.

## Conclusion

Converting Butler Street to one-way traffic with 60-degree angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the opposite side would meaningfully expand on-street parking within the existing curb-to-curb width. The proposed configuration increases parking supply while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular circulation appropriate for a downtown environment.

## Butler Street One-Way Conversion and Parking Analysis: Opportunity, Pros, Cons, Precedent, and Policy Rationale

The following summarizes the advantages, disadvantages, precedent, and policy rationale for converting Butler Street in downtown Saugatuck from two-way to one-way traffic to create room for additional on-street parking. The analysis is intended to support decision-making by City staff, elected officials, and advisory bodies in evaluating potential circulation and parking changes along one of Saugatuck's primary commercial corridors.

### Advantages of Converting Butler Street to One-Way Traffic

#### 1. Significant Increase in On-Street Parking

One-way traffic operations allow angled parking on both sides of Butler Street. However, in this case, Butler Street is only 40 feet wide, which is not wide enough to accommodate a through lane and angled parking on both sides. Therefore, this analysis considers parallel parking on one side of the street and 60-degree parking on the opposite side.

#### 2. Improved Access to Downtown Businesses

Angled parking improves the visibility of available spaces and makes it easier for visitors to identify parking opportunities while driving through downtown. This supports business access, increases parking turnover, and benefits retail, restaurant, and gallery uses that depend on short-term parking convenience in a resort-oriented downtown.

#### 3. Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Comfort

When properly designed, one-way streets with angled parking visually narrow the roadway and introduce frequent roadside activity, helping reduce vehicle speeds. These conditions improve pedestrian comfort and safety in a walkable downtown environment that experiences high seasonal foot traffic.

#### 4. Operational and Maintenance Efficiency

One-way traffic reduces vehicle conflict points, simplifies turning movements, and can improve snow removal and street maintenance operations. Clear circulation patterns also enhance driver predictability during peak tourist periods.

### Potential Disadvantages and Risks

#### 1. Reduced Route Flexibility

One-way streets require drivers to follow a defined circulation pattern, which may initially feel less convenient to users accustomed to two-way travel. Some travel paths may require additional turns or slightly longer routes, particularly during early implementation.

#### 2. Risk of Higher Speeds if Poorly Designed

If travel lanes are overly wide or lack visual constraints, one-way streets may encourage faster vehicle speeds. This risk can be mitigated through appropriate lane narrowing, angled parking geometry, marked crossings, and streetscape features.

### 3. Backing Movements from Angled Parking

Angled parking introduces vehicle backing movements into the travel lane. Proper stall angles, adequate buffer space, low design speeds, and clear striping are essential to managing visibility and safety. Some communities address this issue by using back-in angled parking.

#### Michigan Precedent in Similar Resort Communities

Other Michigan resort communities, including Harbor Springs, Holland, Petoskey, and Traverse City, have successfully implemented downtown circulation and parking strategies that feature some one-way streets and angled parking, as well as a combination of angled and parallel parking on the same block faces.

#### Policy Rationale for Butler Street

Butler Street serves local businesses rather than as a regional through route. Its land-use context favors convenient access, high parking turnover, and pedestrian activity over travel speed. Downtown traffic volumes are generally compatible with one-way operation, and multiple alternative routes exist within the downtown grid. Reallocating street space to increase on-street parking aligns with economic development objectives and visitor expectations.

#### Conclusion

Converting Butler Street from two-way to one-way traffic with angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other is a defensible, precedent-based strategy for downtown Saugatuck. While the change involves tradeoffs, these can be addressed through careful design and communication. The substantial parking gains, improved business access, and alignment with practices used in comparable Michigan resort communities provide a strong rationale for further study and potential implementation.