



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA
November 8, 2023 – 4:00 pm

*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.*

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Agenda Changes** (*Additions/Deletions*)
4. **Guest Speaker**
5. **Public Comment on Agenda Items Only** (*Limit 3 minutes*)
6. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. Airport Property Recommendation
 - B. Park Street Stop Sign Requests
 - C. Expanded Outdoor Area
 - D. Expanded Outdoor Area Ordinance Repeal
 - E. STR Presentation
7. **Public Comments** (*Limit 3 minutes*)
8. **Correspondence**
9. **Council Comments**
10. **Adjourn**

NOTICE:
Join online by visiting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2698572603>

Join by phone by dialing:
**(312) 626-6799 -or-
(646) 518-9805**

Then enter "Meeting ID":
2698572603

Please send questions or comments regarding meeting agenda items prior to meeting to:
ryan@saugatuckcity.com

Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact Saugatuck City Clerk at 269-857-2603 or Wolters@saugatuckcity.com for further information.



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Heise

MEETING DATE: 11/8/23

SUBJECT: Airport Property Parks and Public Works Committee recommendation.

DESCRIPTION:

The City of Saugatuck revisited a discussion that has been ongoing for nearly 15 years and beyond, ('09 study included in the packet, page 37) about how to best utilize a large parcel of land that they have owned for generations; it's commonly referred to as the airport site. The city Parks and Public Works Committee, chaired by council-member Helen Baldwin, continues to spearhead the most recent community conversation. The city hired some excellent help to assist when the Council unanimously accepted a proposal from the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) based in Holland, MI, to facilitate. The ODC hosted a Strengths, Opportunity, Aspiration, Results (SOAR) meeting. All reports conducted by the ODC are also included in the packet.

The Parks and Public Works Committee reviewed the results of the SOAR meeting and made a recommendation, to be presented to City Council, allowing staff to conduct due diligence on allowing the public to access existing trails.

If approved by Council, staff will review and make recommendations on several items, including but not limited to:

- Is the property currently insured and at what levels?
- ADA requirements and accommodation.
- Standards for trail maintenance, including signage.
- Parking accommodation and standards of maintenance.
- Hours of operation and gate closures.

BUDGET ACTION REQUIRED:

None

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REVIEW

Reviewed with Parks and Public Works Committee

LEGAL REVIEW:

Forthcoming

SAMPLE MOTION:

Allow staff to prioritize the airport property trail system and conduct due diligence on the site. Return to Council with recommendations for the safe and efficient utilization of the existing trail system.

Ecological Evaluation of “Former Airport Property”



This report was created for:

City of Saugatuck
102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

Project Background

The ODC Conservation Services team conducted an ecological evaluation of the City of Saugatuck-owned “Former Airport” property (parcel #'s: 20-002-027-00 and 20-260-002-00). Survey work for the ecological evaluation began on **June 2, 2023** and continued through **July 31, 2023**. The purpose of the ecological evaluation was to assess the current state of ecological health of the existing natural communities and to provide direction for future land-use decisions on the property. The ecological evaluation process involved the identification of distinct natural communities on the site, along with outlining the following criteria for each unit:

- General ecological site description and inventory of natural features
- Description of each natural community including:
 - Landscape context and natural processes
 - General inventory of native plant communities including canopy, understory, and forb/graminoid layer
 - Documentation of high-quality native plant species (coefficient of conservatism rankings between 7-10)
 - Documentation of observed (and potential) wildlife including: state threatened (T), endangered (E), and species of special concern (SC)
 - Documentation of invasive species, pests, and ecological threats
 - Identification of potential ecological restoration and outdoor education opportunities

Executive Summary

The reviewed property consists of 169.1 total acres located along a significant mosaic of greenspace within the Kalamazoo River corridor. The site offers a diverse range of habitats including mature expanses of Mesic Southern Forest, Floodplain Forest, a biodiverse river corridor, several vernal pools, and multiple non-natural communities facing substantial anthropogenic disturbance. Based on our findings detailed below in this report, we recommend any future development and/or recreational amenities should remain on the western half of the property which is of lower ecological quality. The eastern half of the property consists almost entirely of high-quality habitat that should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Pockets of invasive species should be prioritized for management throughout the entire property in order to prevent the eventual displacement of these high quality plant communities.

Site Description

The property under review is situated directly east of the intersection of 63rd St and 134th Ave in Saugatuck. The property has a long history of anthropogenic disturbance including a brief stint as an airport, a snowmobile club and trail system, as well as a current storage area for DPW lawn waste and other materials. The extensive history of anthropogenic disturbance is most obvious on the western half of the property, where a plethora of invasive and noxious, disturbance-prone species can be found. Despite this concern, the property also harbors several high-quality natural areas as we move east throughout the property including a rich creek corridor, hemlock-dominated slopes leading to the creek, large tracts of mature forest with old growth oaks, multiple vernal pools, and several pockets of high-quality wet woods. Although invasive species are dense on the western half of the property, the presence of this wide range of high-quality habitats warrants a concerted management effort to discourage the spread of invasive species and preserve the integrity of the high-quality natural areas of the property.

Site Information

Property Size:

169.1 acres

Topography:

Substantial elevation changes from upland (680') to lower-lying areas of Silver Creek (600') on the east side of the property

Watershed:

Kalamazoo

Corridor Component:

One of a number of connected recreational areas along Silver Creek

Historical Land Use:

Previously owned and operated as a small airport in the 1920's

Former snowmobile/UTV recreation club for a period of time (trails throughout)

Active storage area for DPW on SW corner of the property

Disturbance Comments:

Frequent anthropogenic disturbance has led to an increase in invasive and noxious species in the DPW storage area, the old airport runway, and in general on the western half of the property

Ecological Community Information

Pre-settlement Communities:

Hemlock-Beech-Sugar Maple Forest, Mixed Hardwood Swamp

Present Communities:

Mesic Southern Forest, Floodplain Forest, Ruderal Pine Forest, Disturbed Wet Prairie

Maturity:

Mature canopy on eastern half of the property with pockets of middle-aged and early successional on the western half

Total Species Recorded:

102 in less disturbed areas

88 in heavily disturbed areas

***NOTE:** FQI recorded in two separate units due to the high prevalence of non-native species in the disturbed areas on the western half of the property

Floristic Quality Index (FQI):

41.4 in less disturbed areas

12.2 in heavily disturbed areas

***General scale:** 1-19 = low quality, 20-35 high quality, 35+ = exceptional

Notable Elements:

16 plants with a coefficient of conservatism (CC) of 7 or higher

Ecological Site Description and Natural Features

1. Topography

The property has notable changes in elevation as we move east through the property. The peak elevation is 680' on the NW portion of the unit, with 600' being the low point of Silver Creek. The creek corridor is prone to frequent flooding events due to the presence of the creek, a high-water table, and notable elevation changes.

2. Hydrology

Silver Creek flows south through the eastern transect of the property meandering through the pockets of floodplain forest. Several ravines and seepage areas dot the slopes leading down to Silver Creek.

3. Present Natural Communities (see Appendix A)

- Mesic Southern Forest
- Floodplain Forest/Hemlock Transitional Zone
- Disturbed & Non-natural Communities:
 - Disturbed Wet Prairie
 - Ruderal Pine Forest
 - Disturbed Storage Lot

4. High Quality Plant Species (*CC = Coefficient of Conservatism)

- Fox grape (*Vitis labrusca*) *CC of 7
- Red trillium (*Trillium erectum*) *CC of 7
- Blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*) *CC of 7
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) *CC of 7
- Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) *CC of 7
- Red baneberry (*Actaea rubra*) *CC of 7
- Spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) *CC of 8
- Plaintain-leaf sedge (*Carex plantaginea*) *CC of 8
- Rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*) *CC of 8
- American cancer root (*Orobanche uniflora*) *CC of 8
- Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) *CC of 8
- Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*) *CC of 8
- Lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*) *CC of 9
- Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) *CC of 9
- Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*) *CC of 9
- Toadshade (*Trillium sessile*) *CC of 9
- American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) *CC of 9

5. Non-native/Invasive Species

- Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
- Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*)
- European privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
- Japanese barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)
- Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)
- Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*)
- Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
- Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)
- Creeping myrtle (*Vinca minor*)
- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)
- Glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)
- Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- Sweet clover (*Melilotus spp.*)
- Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)

Description of Natural Communities (see Appendix A for map):

1. Mesic Southern Forest

- **Landscape Context/Natural Features:**

Mesic Southern Forest is a beech-maple dominated community that typically occurs on moraine and glacial outwash areas in close proximity to the Great Lakes. Gap phase dynamics from periodic severe weather events is the main process that promotes canopy regeneration in this system. The mosaic of old growth oaks in conjunction with recent recruitment of primarily younger beech and maple saplings supports this history of small-scale weather related disturbance. A matrix of long-lived, middle-aged, and early successional forest is found throughout this system.

- **Native Plant Community:** Mesic-Southern Forest occupies the majority of the property until the terrace/Hemlock transitional zone of the floodplain forest is reached on the eastern

portion. It is situated along on the upland portions of the slopes west of the creek following the areas of more well-drained soil. The canopy layer is quite diverse here with the dominant species observed being American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Abundant canopy associates include: yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), blue beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*), and ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*). Young saplings of beech, maple, elm, and ironwood trees are common. American-cancer root (*Conopholis americana*), and beech-drops (*Epifagus virginiana*) are native, beneficial, parasitic species that are also quite common. The soil is dense with leaf litter and organic matter which harbors a rich network of fungi as well. The shrub layer consists mainly of witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), prickly gooseberry (*Ribes cynosbati*), with a few scatterings of both pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) on the east side. Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), green briar (*Smilax spp.*), and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) make up the majority of woody vine species. The ground/forb layer offers several high-value native species and a variety of spring ephemerals including: squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), Dutchman's breeches (*D. cucullaria*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), yellow trout lily (*E. americanum*), sharp-lobed hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*), May apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), common trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*), sessile trillium (*Trillium sessile*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), and Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*). Several sedge species (*Carex albursina*, *C. arctata*, *C. blanda*) and fescue/bluegrasses fill in pockets of the understory during summer months. Baneberries (*Actaea pachypoda* and *A. rubra*), wreath goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*), and several fern species are also common later in the growing season. The problematic invasive species that have infiltrated this community are autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*).

- **High Quality Plant Species:**

- Blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*) *CC of 7 (state special concern)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) *CC of 7
- Red baneberry (*Actaea rubra*) *CC of 7
- Spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) *CC of 8
- Plantain-leaf sedge (*Carex plantaginea*) *CC of 8
- Rue anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*) *CC of 8
- American cancer root (*Orobancha uniflora*) *CC of 8
- Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) *CC of 8
- Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) *CC of 9
- Toadshade (*Trillium sessile*) *CC of 9 (state threatened)
- American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) *CC of 9 (state endangered)

- **Observed and Potential Wildlife Habitat:**

- This high-quality plant community provides habitat for wood thrush, warblers, tanagers, barred owl, pileated woodpecker, hawks, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, white-tailed deer, fox, raccoon, opossum, turkey, as well as diverse array of songbirds. Salamanders, frogs, aquatic invertebrates, and other amphibians seek refuge in the scattered vernal pools.
- Habitat is suitable for a variety of potential rare wildlife including:
 - *Accipiter cooperii* (Cooper's hawk, state special concern)
 - *Accipiter gentilis* (northern goshawk, state special concern)
 - *Ambystoma opacum* (marbled salamander, state threatened)
 - *Ambystoma texanum* (small-mouthed salamander, state endangered)
 - *Buteo lineatus* (red-shouldered hawk, state threatened)
 - *Dendroica cerulea* (cerulean warbler, state special concern)
 - *Elaphe o. obsoleta* (black rat snake, state special concern)
 - *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's turtle, state special concern)

- *Microtus pinetorum* (woodland vole, state special concern)
- *Nicrophorus americanus* (American burying beetle, federal/state endangered)
- *Protonotaria citrea* (prothonotary warbler, state special concern)
- *Seiurus motacilla* (Louisiana waterthrush, state special concern)
- *Terrapene c. carolina* (eastern box turtle, state special concern)
- *Wilsonia citrina* (hooded warbler, state special concern)
- **Potential Invasive Species, Pests, Ecological Threats:**
 - Small pockets of invasive species pose the largest threat that could reduce biodiversity if left unchecked.
 - Management of Japanese barberry and Asian bittersweet.
 - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is imminent and should be prepared for treatment.
- **Outdoor Education Opportunities:**
 - Hiking/biking trails – existing infrastructure footprint could be utilized.
 - Pole barn could be retrofit into a welcome area/parking/restrooms/etc. and would be separate from DPW storage area.
 - Bird watching opportunities.
 - Plant identification/interpretive signage throughout.
 - Connection to other nearby trails.
- **Ecological Restoration Opportunities:**
 - Removal of non-native/invasive plant species to help protect the high-quality Mesic Southern Forest and Floodplain Forest on the east side of the property.
 - Especially Asian bittersweet, considering its ability to spread rapidly and to girdle trees causing eventual mortality.



Figure 1: Photo of Mesic Southern Forest community with high-quality ephemeral forb layer consisting of May apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) and wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*).

2. Floodplain Forest / Hemlock Transitional Zone

- **Landscape Context/Natural Features:** Floodplain forests are a dynamic interface community that bridge the gap between terrestrial and aquatic systems. The lower zone of the floodplain experiences dynamic interactions of over-the-bank flooding, sediment deposition, streambank erosion, and ice scour in the winter months. As expected with moving water and dynamic fluctuations in water level, the plant communities are quite diverse with variable species composition throughout different levels of inundation. Multi-stemmed trees are common due to this process of bank-scouring, deposition, and erosion. Shade from nearby trees and shrubs helps shade the creek from excessive sun exposure during the summer months which creates pockets of water with unique plant and wildlife components.

Plant Community: The dominant canopy species of the low-lying, creek adjacent zone of this unit are silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*), and a few standing-dead green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*). As we continue the transition away from fluvial landforms and reach soil above the influence of seasonal inundation, the species composition begins to shift. Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) trees dominate a majority of the slope/terrace region. Hemlock trees should be closely monitored for the presence of the invasive tree pest Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) trees become more common as we continue to increase in elevation up the terrace/slope back into Mesic Southern Forest. The shrub layer is scattered and consists mainly of dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.) and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Several high-quality species, including royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), wood fern (*Dryopteris* spp.), cut grass (*Leersia oryzoides*), wood reedgrass (*Cinna arundinacea*), jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), jumpseed (*Persicaria virginiana*), Virginia waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum virginianum*), and white avens (*Geum canadense*) are all common in the forb layer. Moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) are the most abundant woody vines in this community.

- **High Quality Plant Species:**
 - Blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*) *CC of 7 (state special concern)
 - Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) *CC of 7
 - Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) *CC of 7
 - Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*) *CC of 8
 - Lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*) *CC of 9
 - Toadshade (*Trillium sessile*) *CC of 9 (state threatened)
 - Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*) *CC of 9
- **Observed and Potential Wildlife:**
 - This community provides important habitat for cavity-nesting birds, canopy-dwelling birds, woodpeckers, and migratory birds. Ducks, owls, herons, egrets, songbirds, hawks, bats, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, white-tailed deer, and raccoon are also common. Turtles, invertebrates, frogs, snakes, and other reptiles/amphibians are scattered throughout differing levels of inundation. Various species of creek-dwelling fish occupy pools of deeper water throughout the creek.
 - Habitat is suitable for a variety of potential rare wildlife including:
 - *Accipiter cooperii* (Cooper's hawk, state special concern)
 - *Ambystoma opacum* (marbled salamander, state threatened)
 - *Ambystoma texanum* (small-mouthed salamander, state endangered)
 - *Buteo lineatus* (red-shouldered hawk, state threatened)
 - *Clonophis kirtlandii* (Kirtland's snake, state endangered)
 - *Dendroica cerulea* (cerulean warbler, state special concern)
 - *Dendroica dominica* (yellow-throated warbler, state threatened)
 - *Elaphe o. obsoleta* (black rat snake, state special concern)
 - *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's turtle, state special concern)
 - *Glyptemys insculpta* (wood turtle, state special concern)

- *Myotis sodalis* (Indiana bat, federal/state endangered)
- *Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta* (copperbelly watersnake, federal threatened and state endangered)
- *Protonotaria citrea* (prothonotary warbler, state special concern)
- *Seiurus motacilla* (Louisiana waterthrush, state special concern)
- *Sistrurus c. catenatus* (eastern massasauga, federal candidate species and state special concern)
- *Tachopteryx thoreyi* (grey petaltail, state special concern)
- *Terrapene c. carolina* (eastern box turtle, state special concern)
- *Wilsonia citrina* (hooded warbler, state special concern)
- **Potential Invasive Species, Pests, Ecological Threats:**
 - Creek has potential to carry in unwanted aquatic invasive species including reed canary grass, purple loosestrife, and phragmites.
 - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) will cause eventual mortality to Eastern Hemlock trees if left untreated.
- **Outdoor Education and Recreational Opportunities:**
 - Hiking trails to observe creek corridor plant community and topography.
 - Plant identification signage.
 - Bird watching opportunities.
 - Recommend minimalist trails in this area and avoiding bike paths here to limit disturbance and protect high quality plant communities.
- **Ecological Restoration Opportunities:**
 - HWA control to prevent eventual loss of slope-stabilizing Eastern Hemlocks.
 - Prioritization of Asian bittersweet control to prevent mortality of mature trees through girdling and displacement of native plant communities.



Figure 2: Photo of Floodplain Forest community documenting the shift of the understory plant community at the beginning of the Hemlock transition zone.

3. Disturbed Wet Prairie

- **Landscape Context/Natural Features:** The disturbed wet prairie section is a highly disturbed and neglected area that appears to be the remnants of the old runway or possibly the remnants of the large white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) planting that occurred following the abandoning of the airport. A clay topsoil is covering the area that creates unconventional plant communities; with ruts in the clay being most similar to a wet prairie. The intense microtopography as a result of the rutted clay topsoil has formed a wetland matrix throughout the unit with the majority of the wetland pockets along the treeline to the northeast. Tree species exhibit stunted growth due to the seasonal inundation from the hard clay topsoil.
- **Plant Community:** The plant community throughout the disturbed wet prairie is highly disturbed and impacted by dense populations of invasive species. Native tree species throughout the area are primarily early successional trees including; boxelder (*Acer negundo*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), and cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*). Encroaching populations of autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) are a non-native liability on the surrounding landscape and should be controlled if a native, high-quality habitat is the primary goal. Woody vegetation is much more abundant at higher elevations along the southwest edge of the wet prairie plant community. As you go to the northeast and elevation starts to drop, the hard packed clay soil holds onto more water which has prevented a lot of the woody invasive plants from encroaching too much. The forbs throughout this area mirror the same pattern as the woody vegetation, with drier species like black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), blackberry (*Rubus spp.*), and meadow garlic (*Allium canadense*) growing along the southwest line, and wetter species like bulrush (*Scirpoides holoschoenus*), phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), and meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) growing at the lower elevations. This wetland spectrum is further complicated by the microtopography throughout the area, which allows wetland species to be located at the higher elevations where pockets of clay allow for water retention.
- **High Quality Plant Species:**
 - Fox grape (*Vitis labrusca*) *CC of 7
 - Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*) *CC of 8
- **Observed and Potential Wildlife:**
 - Suitable habitat for woodpeckers, hawks, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, white-tailed deer, raccoon, opossum, turkey, and songbirds. Turtles, snakes and other amphibians are found throughout the scattered wet pockets.
 - Habitat is suitable for a variety of potential rare wildlife including:
 - *Acris crepitans blanchardi* (Blanchard's cricket frog, state special concern)
 - *Ambystoma texanum* (smallmouth salamander, state endangered)
 - *Ammodramus savannarum* (grasshopper sparrow, state special concern)
 - *Asio flammeus* (short-eared owl, state endangered)
 - *Botaurus lentiginosus* (American bittern, state special concern)
 - *Circus cyaneus* (northern harrier, state special concern)
 - *Clemmys guttata* (spotted turtle, state threatened)
 - *Clonophis kirtlandii* (Kirtland's snake, state endangered)
 - *Dorydiella kansana* (leafhopper, state special concern)
 - *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's turtle, state special concern)
 - *Flexamia reflexus* (leafhopper, state special concern)
 - *Meropleon ambifusca* (Newman's brocade, state special concern)
 - *Neoconocephalus lyristes* (bog conehead, state special concern)
 - *Neoconocephalus retusus* (conehead grasshopper, state special concern)
 - *Neonympha m. mitchellii* (Mitchell's satyr, federal/state endangered)
 - *Orchelimum concinnum* (red-faced meadow katydid, state special concern)
 - *Orphulella pelidna* (green desert grasshopper, state special concern)
 - *Papaipema cerina* (golden borer, state special concern)

- *Papaipema maritima* (maritime sunflower borer, state special concern)
- *Papaipema speciosissima* (regal fern borer, state special concern)
- *Paroxya hoosieri* (Hoosier locust, state special concern)
- *Phalaropus tricolor* (Wilson's phalarope, state special concern)
- *Sistrurus c. catenatus* (eastern massasauga, federal candidate species and state special concern)
- *Spartiniphaga inops* (spartina moth, state special concern)
- *Spiza americana* (dickcissel, state special concern)
- *Tyto alba* (barn owl, state endangered)
- **Potential Invasive Species, Pests, Ecological Threats:**
 - Proximity to large populations of autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) will continue to encroach into the community over time.
 - Absence of fire has allowed other non-native species like phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) to outcompete native vegetation in pockets.
- **Outdoor Education Opportunities**
 - Wet prairies are incredibly educational because of the dynamic water relationships that exist seasonally within the plant community.
 - A trail should be planned on the outskirts of the community to avoid waterlogged clay soil.
- **Ecological Restoration Opportunities:**
 - Invasive species management should be the top priority in this plant community. Removal of early-successional trees and invasive shrubs will allow for better light penetration and will drastically improve the biodiversity throughout the unit.
 - Reintroduction of fire would also have a massive impact on plant community diversity by removing species that are not adapted to fire like blackberry (*Rubus spp.*), bentgrass (*Agrostis spp.*), phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), and clovers (*Trifolium spp.*).



Figure 3: Invasive phragmites (*Phragmites Australis*) pictured invading pockets of disturbed wet prairie.

4. Ruderal Pine Forest

- **Landscape Context/Natural Features:** Monoculture stands of purposefully-planted pine trees are scattered throughout the property and appear to coincide with historic deforestation and replanting in the 1940's. The logging companies would usually plant a monoculture of a fast-growing timber species. In this case, red pines were the majority planted. While a naturally spaced stand of red pines can survive for ~400 years, a reforestation with spacing maximized for commercial lumber production will generally fail after ~80 years. Due to the age of the stand, the red pines are starting to fail. Topographically the areas are uniformly flat with sandy soil. Water retention in these areas is non-existent.
- **Plant Community:** The canopy is dominated by red pines that were obviously planted as part of a large-scale reforestation project. The size of the trees would suggest the trees were planted ~80 years ago. This was a common practice in the mid 20th century following large-scale logging projects. A major issue with tightly-spaced red pine stands is their prevention of sunlight from reaching the understory, which leads to poor replacement of trees. The understory is non-existent in the center of these red pine stands. Pre-deforestation, this community would have mimicked the surrounding Mesic Southern plant community, as is evident by the forbs observed within pockets of dappled sunlight. Virginia creeper, wild geranium, Canada Mayflower, spicebush and wood fern are found sporadically throughout this unit. There are large populations of Asian bittersweet along areas with historic disturbance (remnant snowmobile trails). This bittersweet is quickly colonizing the area, girdling red pines, and eventually pulling them down.
- **Observed and Potential Wildlife:**
 - Suitable habitat for spillover of typical inhabitants of the surrounding Mesic Southern Forest including: songbirds, owls, woodpeckers, hawks, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, white-tailed deer, raccoon, opossum, turkey, and snakes
 - Habitat is suitable for a variety of potential rare wildlife including:
 - *Accipiter gentilis* (northern goshawk, state special concern)
 - *Falco columbarius* (merlin, state threatened)
 - *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (bald eagle, state threatened)
 - *Pandion haliaetus* (osprey, state threatened)
 - *Picoides arcticus* (black-backed woodpecker, state special concern)
- **Potential Invasive Species, Pests, Ecological Threats:**
 - Asian bittersweet is a problem as it continues to shade out and smother the small pockets of native species.
 - As Asian bittersweet continues to pull down the dying red pines, exposing the forest floor to sunlight, there is potential for invasive shrub species like honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, autumn olive, and common buckthorn to establish quickly in the vacant space.
 - There is minimal hardwood replacement occurring within the community which will create an ecological void as the red pines continue to die off.
- **Outdoor Education Opportunities**
 - In its current state, there are minimal educational opportunities through this community.
 - Trails connecting access points directly to higher quality areas could potentially run through this area.
 - Special care should be taken along these trails to prevent the spread of invasive species (mainly bittersweet) via the trail system.
- **Ecological Restoration Opportunities:**
 - Focus on invasive species along the trail system to prevent spread - containment should be the first priority.
 - Strategic thinning of the red pines would allow for large-scale reforestation to occur in this unit, returning it to its pre-settlement community type.
 - Broad-scale invasive species management.



Figure 4: Photo of Ruderal Pine Forest documenting red pine monoculture with minimal understory.

5. Disturbed Storage Lot

- **Landscape Context/Natural Features:** The storage lot area is a highly disturbed community that experiences consistent disturbance and non-native plant material inputs. Decades of municipal yard waste and fill dirt have been placed into an area that likely mirrored the surrounding mesic southern forest. This has created an inhospitable soil structure littered with gravel, large rocks, and partially decayed woody plant material. The soil appears to be consisting of heavy clay which is not consistent with the surrounding landscape or soil maps (which show a much sandier parent material.) The area also appears to be growing outwards towards pockets of wetlands to the east; likely a result of clearing the yard to accommodate more waste material at the end of the growing season.
- **Plant Community:** The plant community found within the storage lot is highly disturbed; consisting of 95% non-native and invasive plants. This is likely the result of dumping yard waste from throughout the city in one common place in conjunction with a high disturbance regime. The usual invasives are found throughout the unit including thistles (*Cirsium spp.*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) and yellow rocket (*Barbarea spp.*). There also a few exotic escaped landscaping plants including a mature mimosa tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*), and bermuda-grass (*Cynodon dactylon*); which are typically found in much warmer climates to the south. Several large colonies of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) are scattered throughout as well which have the potential to spread even further with soil disturbance and/or mowing. The presence of these species is more concerning and would require a faster response than the more common invasive plants to keep with the state strategy of early detection and rapid response. *No high quality plants are found within this unit.*

- **Observed and Potential Wildlife:**
 - Minimal opportunities for wildlife habitat with the exception of the wetland along the eastern edge of the lot as a potential nesting habitat for wood ducks if disturbance and human impact slows dramatically
- **Potential Invasive Species, Pests, Ecological Threats:**
 - Absinthium (*Artemisia absinthium*)
 - Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)
 - Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*)
 - Moth Mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*)
 - Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
 - Horse Nettle (*Solanum carolinense*)
 - Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*)
 - Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
 - Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)
 - Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
 - Sow Thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
 - Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
 - Canada Goldenrod (*Solidago Canadensis*)
 - Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*)
 - Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)
 - Sweet Clover (Yellow) (*Melilotus officinalis*)
 - Sweet Clover (White) (*Melilotus albus*)
 - Miscanthus Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
 - White Mulberry (*Morus alba*)
 - Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*)
 - Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
 - Yellow Foxtail (*Setaria pumila*)
 - Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*)
 - Yellow Rocket (*Barbarea vulgaris*)
 - Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*)
 - Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
 - Dames Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)
 - Myrtle (*Vinca minor*)
 - Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)
 - Asian Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
- **Outdoor Education Opportunities**
 - Outdoor education is not recommended in this area in its current state due to the presence of several extremely noxious and poisonous plants. These plants include poison hemlock, jimsonweed, poison ivy, and absinthium.
- **Ecological Restoration Opportunities**
 - The most obvious path forward for this unit is to get control of the invasive species by focusing on poisonous and exotic plants first through intensive chemical application
 - The secondary focus would be on perennial invasive plants including Canada thistle, Phragmites, Canada goldenrod, and Asian bittersweet.
 - If disturbance and further plant inputs are minimized there should be a reduction in the annual and biennial non-native plants.
 - Yard waste could be hot composted in a concentrated area to reduce seed spread into surrounding natural communities. This would require a more formal “pad” for yard waste to be deposited and turned to ensure sufficient temperatures to kill seed.
 - Effort should be made to prevent further spread of the yard towards the east to reduce the likelihood of wetland destruction.

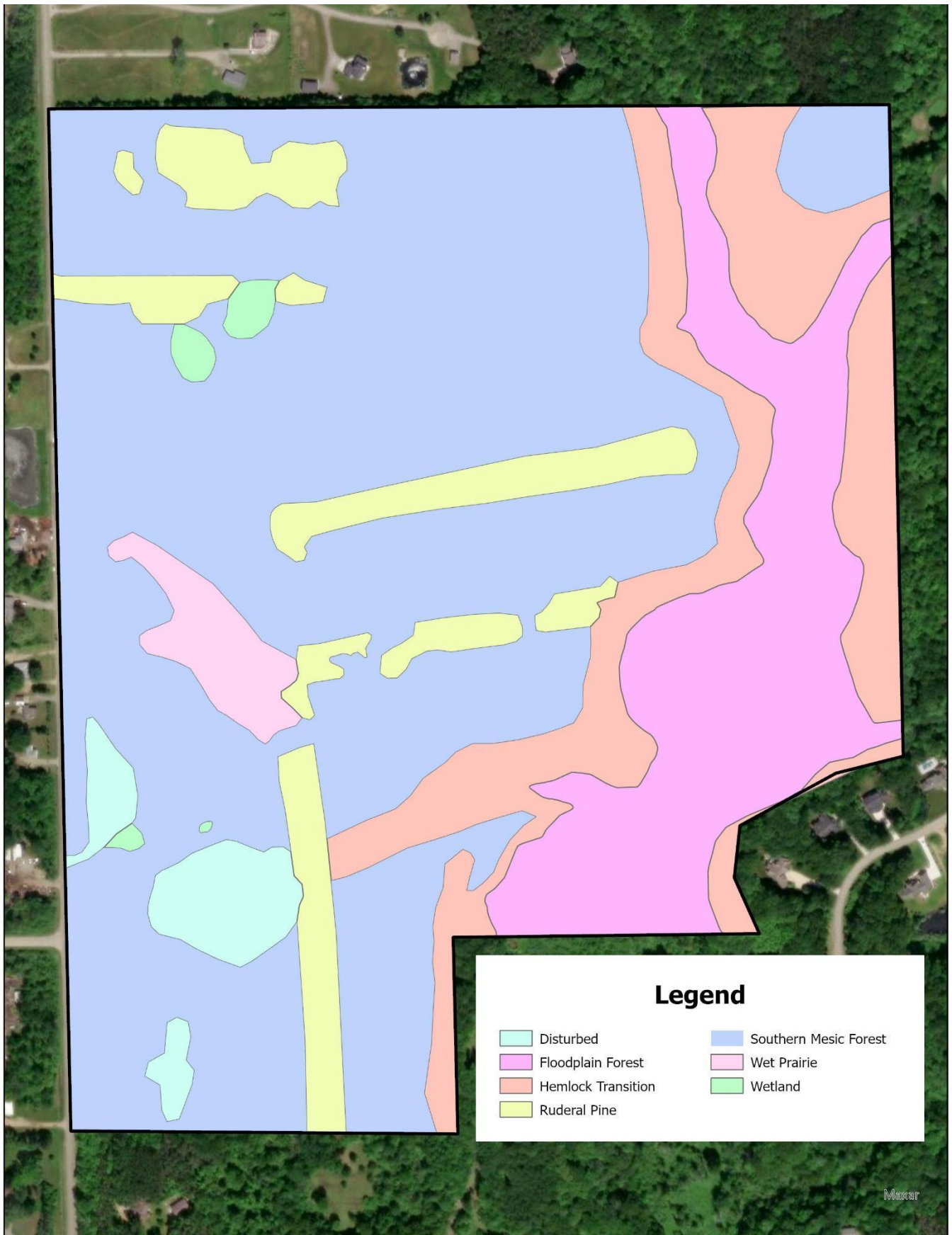


Figure 5: *Photo of disturbed storage yard showing frequent soil disturbance and predominantly invasive and noxious plant species.*

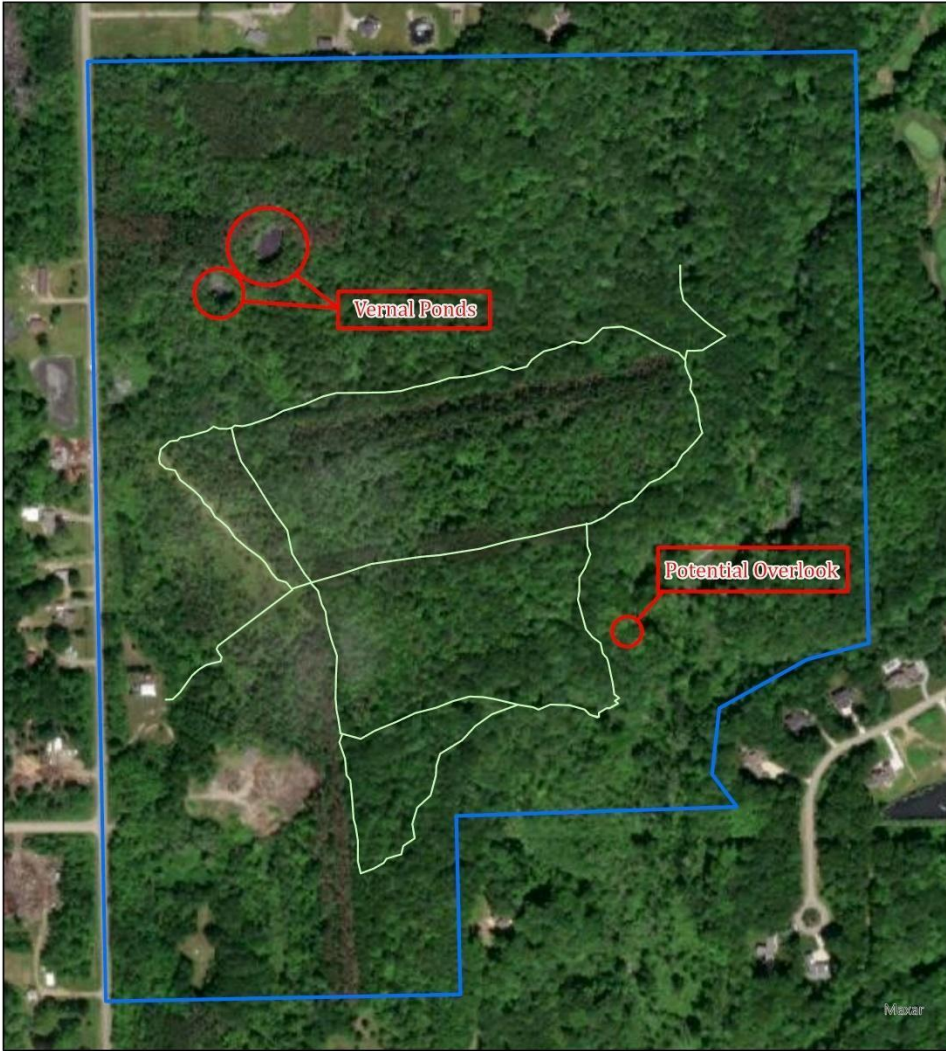



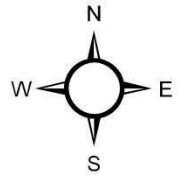
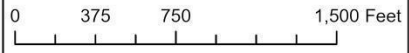
Figure 6: *Photo of large invasive Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) colony. Japanese knotweed has already gained a massive foothold in this area and should be prioritized for management in the near future due to its aggressive nature of growth and ability to quickly outcompete native plant communities.*

Appendix A: Map of Natural Communities

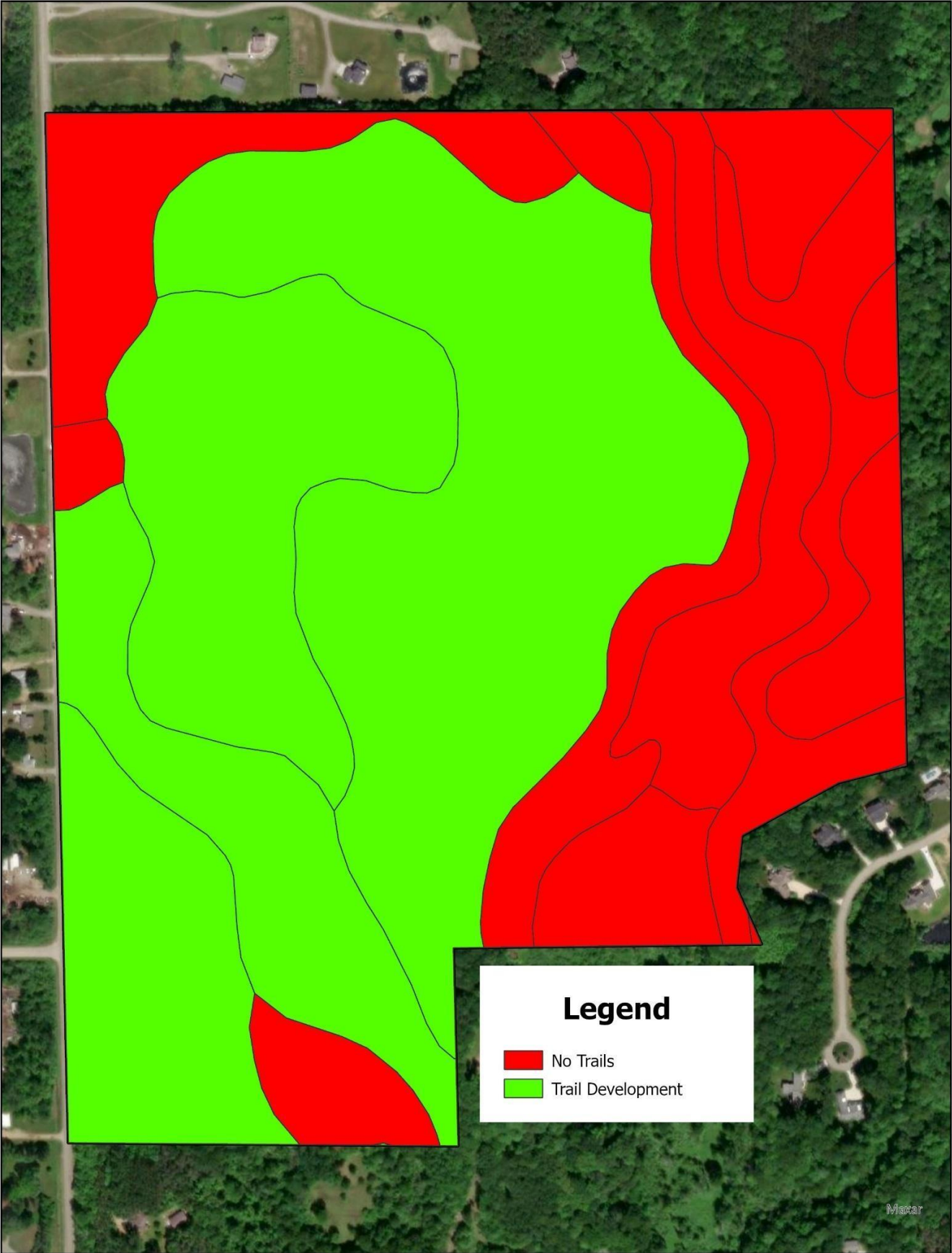


Appendix B: Existing Trail Footprint



63rd Street Former Airport Trail Map
ODC Conservation Services Map Created by: Ben Heerspink Map created on: 3/20/23 Trail marked with GPS on: 3/20/23



Property was assessed on March 20, 2023 by ODC Conservation Staff. Remnant trails were mapped utilizing GPS points. The trail as it stands is 2.5 miles long with many opportunities to expand by blazing new trails along the northernmost trail expanding north towards a seasonal pond.

Appendix C: Recommended Trail Development Areas



Appendix D: Plant Inventory & Floristic Quality Index Results – Natural Communities (Eastern half):

Former Airport Natural Area								
Practitioner:	ODC Network							
Conservation-Based Metrics:								
Total Mean C:	4.1	Species Richness:						
Native Mean C:	4.7	Total Species:		102				
Total FQI:	41.4	Native Species:		89 87.30%				
Native FQI:	44.3	Non-native Species:		13 12.70%				
Adjusted FQI:	43.9	Species Wetness:						
% C value 0:	13.7	Mean Wetness:		1.4				
% C value 1-3:	24.5	Native Mean Wetness:		1.2				
% C value 4-6:	45.1							
% C value 7-10:	16.7							
Native Tree Mean C:	4.9							
Native Shrub Mean C:	5.7							
Native Herbaceous Mean C:	4.5							
Physiognomy Metrics:								
Tree:	25	24.50%		Annual:		3 2.90%		
Shrub:	10	9.80%		Perennial:		94 92.20%		
Vine:	9	8.80%		Biennial:		5 4.90%		
Forb:	46	45.10%		Native Annual:		3 2.90%		
Grass:	4	3.90%		Native Perennial:		85 83.30%		
Sedge:	4	3.90%		Native Biennial:		1 1%		
Rush:	0	0%						
Fern:	4	3.90%						
Bryophyte:	0	0%						
Species:								
Scientific Name	Family	Acronym	Native?	C	W	Physiognomy	Duration	Common Name
Acer platanoides	Sapindaceae	ACEPLA	non-native	0	5	tree	perennial	norway maple
Acer rubrum	Sapindaceae	ACERUB	native	1	0	tree	perennial	red maple
Acer saccharinum	Sapindaceae	ACESAI	native	2	-3	tree	perennial	silver maple
Acer saccharum	Sapindaceae	ACESAU	native	5	3	tree	perennial	sugar maple
Actaea rubra	Ranunculaceae	ACTRUB	native	7	3	forb	perennial	red baneberry
Adlumia fungosa	Papaveraceae	ADLFUN	native	4	5	vine	biennial	climbing fumitory
Agrimonia parviflora	Rosaceae	AGRPAR	native	4	0	forb	perennial	swamp agrimony
Alisma subcordatum; a. plantago-aquatica	Alismataceae	ALISUB	native	1	-5	forb	perennial	southern water-plantain
Alliaria petiolata	Brassicaceae	ALLPET	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	garlic mustard
Amphicarpaea bracteata	Fabaceae	AMPBRA	native	5	0	vine	annual	hog-peanut
Anemone virginiana	Ranunculaceae	ANEVIR	native	3	3	forb	perennial	thimbleweed
Apocynum androsaemifolium	Apocynaceae	APOAND	native	3	5	forb	perennial	spreading dogbane
Arctium minus	Asteraceae	ARCMIN	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	common burdock
Arisaema triphyllum	Araceae	ARITRI	native	5	0	forb	perennial	jack-in-the-pulpit
Asimina triloba	Annonaceae	ASITRI	native	9	0	tree	perennial	pawpaw
Atropa belladonna	Solanaceae	ATRBEL	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	deadly nightshade
Berberis thunbergii	Berberidaceae	BERTHU	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	japanese barberry
Betula alleghaniensis	Betulaceae	BETALL	native	7	0	tree	perennial	yellow birch
Betula papyrifera	Betulaceae	BETPAP	native	2	3	tree	perennial	paper birch
Carex intumescens	Cyperaceae	CXINTU	native	3	-3	sedge	perennial	sedge
Carex pallescens	Cyperaceae	CXPALL	native	5	0	sedge	perennial	pale sedge
Carex plantaginea	Cyperaceae	CXPLAN	native	8	5	sedge	perennial	sedge
Carex radiata; c. rosea	Cyperaceae	CXRADI	native	2	0	sedge	perennial	straight-styled wood sedge
Carya glabra	Juglandaceae	CARGLA	native	5	3	tree	perennial	hickory
Carya ovata	Juglandaceae	CAROVA	native	5	3	tree	perennial	shagbark hickory
Castanea dentata	Fagaceae	CASDEN	native	9	5	tree	perennial	american chestnut
Celastrus orbiculatus	Celastraceae	CELORB	non-native	0	5	vine	perennial	oriental bittersweet
Centaurea stoebe; c. maculosa	Asteraceae	CENSTO	non-native	0	5	forb	biennial	spotted knapweed
Chimaphila maculata	Ericaceae	CHIMAC	native	8	5	shrub	perennial	spotted wintergreen
Circaea canadensis; c. lutetiana	Onagraceae	CIRCAN	native	2	3	forb	perennial	enchanters-nightshade
Conium maculatum	Apiaceae	CONMAC	non-native	0	-3	forb	biennial	poison-hemlock
Cornus florida	Cornaceae	CORFLO	native	8	3	tree	perennial	flowering dogwood
Dichanthelium clandestinum; panicum c.	Poaceae	DICCLA	native	3	-3	grass	perennial	panic grass
Diphasiastrum complanatum; lycopodium c.	Lycopodiaceae	DIPCOM	native	5	3	fern	perennial	ground-cedar
Dryopteris intermedia	Dryopteridaceae	DRYINT	native	5	0	fern	perennial	evergreen woodfern
Elaeagnus umbellata	Elaeagnaceae	ELAUMB	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	autumn-olive
Elymus hystrix; hystrix patula	Poaceae	ELYHYS	native	5	3	grass	perennial	bottlebrush grass
Elymbia macrophylla; aster m.	Asteraceae	ELURMAC	native	4	5	forb	perennial	big-leaved aster
Eutrochium fistulosum; eupatorium f.	Asteraceae	EUTFIS	native	8	-3	forb	perennial	hollow-stemmed joe-pye-weed
Eutrochium maculatum; eupatorium m.	Asteraceae	EUTMAC	native	4	-5	forb	perennial	joe-pye-weed
Fagus grandifolia	Fagaceae	FAGGRA	native	6	3	tree	perennial	american beech
Fraxinus americana	Oleaceae	FRAAME	native	5	3	tree	perennial	white ash
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Oleaceae	FRAPEN	native	2	-3	tree	perennial	red ash
Galium circaezans	Rubiaceae	GALCIR	native	4	3	forb	perennial	white wild licorice
Geranium maculatum	Geraniaceae	GERMAC	native	4	3	forb	perennial	wild geranium
Geum canadense	Rosaceae	GEUCAN	native	1	0	forb	perennial	white avens
Geum virginianum	Rosaceae	GEUVIR	native	6	3	forb	perennial	pale avens
Hamamelis virginiana	Hamamelidaceae	HAMVIR	native	5	3	shrub	perennial	witch-hazel
Laportea canadensis	Urticaceae	LAPCAN	native	4	-3	forb	perennial	wood nettle
Leersia oryzoides	Poaceae	LEECOR	native	3	-5	grass	perennial	cut grass
Ligustrum vulgare	Oleaceae	LIGVUL	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	common privet
Lindera benzoin	Lauraceae	LINBEN	native	7	-3	shrub	perennial	spicebush
Liriodendron tulipifera	Magnoliaceae	LIRTUL	native	9	3	tree	perennial	tulip tree
Maianthemum canadense	Convallariaceae	MAICAN	native	4	3	forb	perennial	canada mayflower
Maianthemum racemosum; smilacina r.	Convallariaceae	MAIRAC	native	5	3	forb	perennial	false spikenard
Menispermum canadense	Menispermaceae	MENCAE	native	5	0	vine	perennial	moonseed
Mimulus ringens	Phrymaceae	MIMRIN	native	5	-5	forb	perennial	monkey-flower
Mitchella repens	Rubiaceae	MITREP	native	5	3	forb	perennial	partridge-berry
Monotropa uniflora	Ericaceae	MONOUN	native	5	3	forb	perennial	indian-pipe
Onoclea sensibilis	Onocleaceae	ONOSEN	native	2	-3	fern	perennial	sensitive fern
Orobancha uniflora	Orobanchaceae	OROUNI	native	8	5	forb	perennial	cancer root
Osmorhiza berteroi; o. chilensis	Apiaceae	OSMBER	native	5	3	forb	perennial	sweet-cicely
Parthenocissus quinquefolia	Vitaceae	PARQUI	native	5	3	vine	perennial	virginia creeper
Persicaria punctata; polygonum p.	Polygonaceae	PERPUN	native	5	-5	forb	annual	smartweed
Persicaria virginiana; polygonum v.	Polygonaceae	PERVIR	native	4	0	forb	perennial	jumpseed
Phalaris arundinacea	Poaceae	PHAARU	native	0	-3	grass	perennial	reed canary grass

<i>Phryma leptostachya</i>	Phrymaceae	PHRLEP	native	4	3	forb	perennial	lopseed
<i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Phytolaccaceae	PHYAME	native	2	3	forb	perennial	pokeweed
<i>Pilea pumila</i>	Urticaceae	PILPUM	native	5	-3	forb	annual	clearweed
<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	Pinaceae	PINRES	native	6	3	tree	perennial	red pine
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Pinaceae	PINSTR	native	3	3	tree	perennial	white pine
<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Berberidaceae	PODPEL	native	3	3	forb	perennial	may-apple
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Dryopteridaceae	POLACR	native	6	3	fern	perennial	christmas fern
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Rosaceae	PRUSER	native	2	3	tree	perennial	wild black cherry
<i>Quercus alba</i>	Fagaceae	QUEALB	native	5	3	tree	perennial	white oak
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Fagaceae	QUERUB	native	5	3	tree	perennial	red oak
<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Fagaceae	QUEVEL	native	6	5	tree	perennial	black oak
<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Rosaceae	ROSMUL	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	multiflora rose
<i>Rubus allegheniensis</i>	Rosaceae	RUBALL	native	1	3	shrub	perennial	common blackberry
<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>	Caryophyllaceae	SAPOFF	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	bouncing bet
<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Lauraceae	SASALB	native	5	3	tree	perennial	sassafras
<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	Saururaceae	SAUCER	native	9	-5	forb	perennial	lizards-tail
<i>Smilax rotundifolia</i>	Smilacaceae	SMIROT	native	6	0	vine	perennial	common greenbrier
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Solanaceae	SOLDUL	non-native	0	0	vine	perennial	bittersweet nightshade
<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Asteraceae	SOLCAN	native	1	3	forb	perennial	canada goldenrod
<i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>	Asteraceae	SOLFLE	native	6	3	forb	perennial	zigzag goldenrod
<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Asteraceae	SOLGIG	native	3	-3	forb	perennial	late goldenrod
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	Asteraceae	SOLRUG	native	3	0	forb	perennial	rough-leaved goldenrod
<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>	Araceae	SYMFOE	native	6	-5	forb	perennial	skunk-cabbage
<i>Thalictrum thalictroides; anemone l.</i>	Ranunculaceae	THATHA	native	8	3	forb	perennial	rue-anemone
<i>Tilia americana</i>	Malvaceae	TILAME	native	5	3	tree	perennial	basswood
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>	Anacardiaceae	TOXRAD	native	2	0	vine	perennial	poison-ivy
<i>Trientalis borealis</i>	Myrsinaceae	TRIBOR	native	5	0	forb	perennial	star-flower
<i>Trillium erectum</i>	Trilliaceae	TRIERE	native	7	3	forb	perennial	stinking benjamin; red trillium
<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>	Trilliaceae	TRIGRA	native	5	3	forb	perennial	common trillium
<i>Trillium sessile</i>	Trilliaceae	TRISES	native	9	3	forb	perennial	toadshade
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Pinaceae	TSUCAN	native	5	3	tree	perennial	hemlock
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	Ulmaceae	ULMAME	native	1	-3	tree	perennial	american elm
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Adoxaceae	VIBACE	native	6	5	shrub	perennial	maple-leaved viburnum
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Adoxaceae	VIBPRU	native	7	3	shrub	perennial	black-haw
<i>Viola sororia</i>	Violaceae	VIOSOR	native	1	0	forb	perennial	common blue violet
<i>Vitis labrusca</i>	Vitaceae	VITLAB	native	7	3	vine	perennial	fox grape

Disturbed Communities (Western half of the property):

Disturbed Former Airport								
Practitioner:	ODC Network							
Conservation-Based Metrics:			Species Richness:					
Total Mean C:	1.3	Total Species:	88					
Native Mean C:	2.8	Native Species:	39	44.30%				
Total FQI:	12.2	Non-native Species:	49	55.70%				
Native FQI:	17.5	Species Wetness:						
Adjusted FQI:	18.6	Mean Wetness:	2.2					
% C value 0:	60.2	Native Mean Wetness:	1					
% C value 1-3:	23.9							
% C value 4-6:	15.9							
% C value 7-10:	0							
Native Tree Mean C:	3.7							
Native Shrub Mean C:	3							
Native Herbaceous Mean C:	2.4							
Physiognomy Metrics:			Duration Metrics:					
Tree:	18	20.50%	Annual:	9	10.20%			
Shrub:	8	9.10%	Perennial:	71	80.70%			
Vine:	6	6.80%	Biennial:	8	9.10%			
Forb:	49	55.70%	Native Annual:	3	3.40%			
Grass:	3	3.40%	Native Perennial:	36	40.90%			
Sedge:	3	3.40%	Native Biennial:	0	0%			
Rush:	1	1.10%						
Fern:	0	0%						
Bryophyte:	0	0%						
Species:								
Scientific Name	Family	Acronym	Native?	C	W	Physiognomy	Duration	Common Name
<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	Malvaceae	ABUTHE	non-native	0	3	forb	annual	velvet-leaf
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Sapindaceae	ACENEG	native	0	0	tree	perennial	box-elder
<i>Acer nigrum; a. saccharum</i>	Sapindaceae	ACENIG	native	4	3	tree	perennial	black maple
<i>Acer glabroides</i>	Sapindaceae	ACEPLA	non-native	0	5	tree	perennial	norway maple
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sapindaceae	ACESAU	native	5	3	tree	perennial	sugar maple
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Asteraceae	ACHMIL	native	1	3	forb	perennial	yarrow
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Brassicaceae	ALLPET	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	garlic mustard
<i>Allium canadense</i>	Alliaceae	ALLCAN	native	4	3	forb	perennial	wild garlic
<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	Asteraceae	AMBART	native	0	3	forb	annual	common ragweed
<i>Ambrosia trifida</i>	Asteraceae	AMBTRI	native	0	0	forb	annual	giant ragweed
<i>Apios americana</i>	Fabaceae	APIAME	native	3	-3	vine	perennial	groundnut
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Asteraceae	ARTABS	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	absinth wormwood
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Apocynaceae	ASCSYR	native	1	5	forb	perennial	common milkweed
<i>Atropa belladonna</i>	Solanaceae	ATRBEL	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	deadly nightshade
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	Brassicaceae	BARVUL	non-native	0	0	forb	biennial	yellow rocket
<i>Campsis radicans</i>	Bignoniaceae	CAMRAD	non-native	0	0	vine	perennial	trumpet-vine
<i>Carex palleseus</i>	Cyperaceae	CXPALL	native	5	0	sedge	perennial	pale sedge
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Cyperaceae	CVXVUL	native	1	-5	sedge	perennial	sedge
<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Celastraceae	CELORB	non-native	0	5	vine	perennial	oriental bittersweet
<i>Centaurea stoebe; c. maculosa</i>	Asteraceae	CENSTO	non-native	0	5	forb	biennial	spotted knapweed
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Amaranthaceae	CHEALB	non-native	0	3	forb	annual	lambs-quarters
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Asteraceae	CICINT	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	chicory
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Asteraceae	CIRARV	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	canada thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Asteraceae	CIRVUL	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	bull thistle
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Convolvulaceae	CONARV	non-native	0	5	vine	perennial	field bindweed
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Rosaceae	CRAPHA	non-native	0	0	tree	perennial	washington thorn
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Poaceae	CYNDAC	non-native	0	3	grass	perennial	bermuda grass
<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	Cyperaceae	CYPESC	native	1	-3	sedge	perennial	yellow nutsedge
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Solanaceae	DATSTR	non-native	0	5	forb	annual	jimson-weed
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Apiaceae	DAUCAR	non-native	0	5	forb	biennial	queen-anne's-lace
<i>Dianthus armeria</i>	Caryophyllaceae	DIAARM	non-native	0	5	forb	annual	deptford pink
<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Elaeagnaceae	ELAUMB	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	autumn-olive
<i>Erechtites hieracifolius</i>	Asteraceae	EREHIE	native	2	3	forb	annual	fireweed
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Asteraceae	EUPPER	native	4	-3	forb	perennial	boneset
<i>Euthamia graminifolia</i>	Asteraceae	EUTGRA	native	3	0	forb	perennial	grass-leaved goldenrod
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Rosaceae	FILULM	non-native	0	0	forb	perennial	queen-of-the-meadow
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Rosaceae	FRAVIR	native	2	3	forb	perennial	wild strawberry
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Oleaceae	FRAPEN	native	2	-3	tree	perennial	red ash
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Rosaceae	GELURB	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	avens
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Lamiaceae	GLEHED	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	ground-ivy
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Brassicaceae	HESMAT	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	dames rocket
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Hypericaceae	HYPPER	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	common st. johns-wort
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Juncaceae	JUNART	native	3	-5	rush	perennial	jointed rush
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Cupressaceae	JUNVIR	native	3	3	tree	perennial	red-cedar
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare; chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	Asteraceae	LEUVUL	non-native	0	5	forb	perennial	ox-eye daisy
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Oleaceae	LIGVUL	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	common privet
<i>Lonicera maackii</i>	Caprifoliaceae	LONMAA	non-native	0	5	shrub	perennial	amur honeysuckle
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Fabaceae	LOTCOR	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	birdfoot trefoil
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Lythraceae	LYTSAL	non-native	0	-5	forb	perennial	purple loosestrife
<i>Maianthemum racemosum; smilacina r.</i>	Comvalliaceae	MAIRAC	native	5	3	forb	perennial	false spikenard
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Lamiaceae	MARVUL	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	horehound
<i>Matricaria chamomilla; m. recutita</i>	Asteraceae	MATCHA	non-native	0	5	forb	annual	false chamomile
<i>Mellilotus albus</i>	Fabaceae	MELALB	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	white sweet-clover
<i>Mellilotus officinalis</i>	Fabaceae	MELLOF	non-native	0	3	forb	biennial	yellow sweet-clover
<i>Morus alba</i>	Moraceae	MORALB	non-native	0	3	tree	perennial	white mulberry
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Vitaceae	PARQUI	native	5	3	vine	perennial	virginia creeper
<i>Phragmites australis var. americanus</i>	Poaceae	PHRAUM	native	5	-3	grass	perennial	reed
<i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Phytolaccaceae	PHYAME	native	2	3	forb	perennial	pokeweed
<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	Pinaceae	PINRES	native	6	3	tree	perennial	red pine
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Pinaceae	PINSYL	non-native	0	3	tree	perennial	scotch pine
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Plantaginaceae	PLALAN	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	english plantain
<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Salicaceae	POPDEL	native	1	0	tree	perennial	cottonwood
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Lamiaceae	PRUVUL	native	0	0	forb	perennial	self-heal
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Rosaceae	PRUSER	native	2	3	tree	perennial	wild black cherry
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Fagaceae	QUERUB	native	5	3	tree	perennial	red oak
<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Fagaceae	QUEVEL	native	6	5	tree	perennial	black oak

Rhamnus cathartica	Rhamnaceae	RHACAT	non-native	0	0	tree	perennial	common buckthorn
Rhus typhina	Anacardiaceae	RHUTYP	native	2	3	shrub	perennial	staghorn sumac
Robinia pseudoacacia	Fabaceae	ROBPSE	non-native	0	3	tree	perennial	black locust
Rosa multiflora	Rosaceae	ROSMUL	non-native	0	3	shrub	perennial	multiflora rose
Rudbeckia hirta	Asteraceae	RUDHIR	native	1	3	forb	perennial	black-eyed susan
Rumex crispus	Polygonaceae	RUMCRI	non-native	0	0	forb	perennial	curly dock
Salix discolor	Salicaceae	SALDIS	native	1	-3	shrub	perennial	pussy willow
Salix nigra	Salicaceae	SALNIG	native	5	-5	tree	perennial	black willow
Sassafras albidum	Lauraceae	SASALB	native	5	3	tree	perennial	sassafras
Solanum carolinense	Solanaceae	SOLCAR	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	horse-nettle
Solidago canadensis	Asteraceae	SOLCAN	native	1	3	forb	perennial	canada goldenrod
Solidago gigantea	Asteraceae	SOLGIG	native	3	-3	forb	perennial	late goldenrod
Solidago juncea	Asteraceae	SOLJUN	native	3	5	forb	perennial	early goldenrod
Sonchus oleraceus	Asteraceae	SONOLE	non-native	0	3	forb	annual	common sow-thistle
Sorghum halepense	Poaceae	SORHAL	non-native	0	3	grass	perennial	johnson grass
Taraxacum officinale	Asteraceae	TAROFF	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	common dandelion
Toxicodendron radicans	Anacardiaceae	TOXRAD	native	2	0	vine	perennial	poison-ivy
Trifolium pratense	Fabaceae	TRIPRA	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	red clover
Trifolium repens	Fabaceae	TRIREP	non-native	0	3	forb	perennial	white clover
Verbascum thapsus	Scrophulariaceae	VERTHA	non-native	0	5	forb	biennial	common mullein
Viburnum acerifolium	Adoxaceae	VIBACE	native	6	5	shrub	perennial	maple-leaved viburnum
Vinca minor	Apocynaceae	VIMMIN	non-native	0	5	shrub	perennial	periwinkle

Sustainability Evaluation of “Former Airport Property”



This report was created for:

City of Saugatuck
102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

Sustainability Evaluation

ODC Network sustainability staff evaluated the sustainability performance of the City of Saugatuck-owned “Former Airport” property (parcel #'s: 20-002-027-00 and 20-260-002-00), both in its current state and potential future uses. This assessment involved an examination of carbon sequestration and mitigation potential, air pollution, hydrological benefits, EV charging feasibility, and solar development opportunity. The primary purpose of this work was to identify opportunities for improving sustainability performance and strategies to balance and support social, environmental, and economic needs of the community.

Executive Summary

The forest cover of this site represents the bulk of its value as a sustainability asset to the community. The ecological services provided by the large areas of mature, biodiverse, and healthy forests should be preserved and emphasized in any future use plans for the property. In addition to its intrinsic value as high-quality habitat and natural area, the property has a measurable impact on factors directly associated with human health, wellness, and prosperity. Unless significant redevelopment of the parcel and surrounding area were to occur, opportunities to leverage the property for electric vehicle charging and/or solar development are non-existent.

Valuation of Existing Canopy

The data presented here provided a quantitative assessment of the properties role in combating climate change, enhancing air quality, and sustaining the water balance within the region.

Sequestration Value of Existing Canopy

Healthy forests capture and store large quantities of CO₂, the primary greenhouse gas associated with human-caused emissions and climate change. This relatively large tract of forest acts as a significant carbon sink in the community. At the time of this report, the tree cover alone stores over 5,000 metric tonnes of carbon or the equivalent to approximately 20,000 metric tonnes of CO₂. The US Forest Service estimates the social cost of this quantity of carbon to be upwards of \$900,000. Each year, the property is projected to sequester an additional 200+ metric tons of carbon, the equivalent to 100 homes’ energy use for one year (**Appendix B**)

Description	Carbon (T)	±SE	CO ₂ Equiv. (T)	±SE	Value (USD)	±SE
Sequestered Annually in Canopy	217.94	±3.98	799.11	±14.58	\$37,169	±678
Stored in Trees (Not Annual)	5,473.24	±99.85	20,068.55	±366.13	\$933,465	±17,030

Soil-based carbon sequestration values were not included in this report (standard measurement practices and tools are still in development), however, it is highly likely that this represents an additional carbon sink and ecosystem service provided by the property in its current state.

Air Pollution Value of Existing Canopy

In addition to carbon sequestration, healthy forests also play a critical role in the moderation of air quality and air pollution. At the time of this report, the existing canopy of this property has the potential to remove over 12,000 lbs. of air pollution each year. Notably, this includes particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), one of the primary concerns associated with the increased presence of wildfire smoke in West Michigan.

Abbr.	Description	Annual Removal (lbs.)	±SE	Value (USD)	±SE
CO	Carbon Monoxide	142.56	±2.60	\$2	±0
NO2	Nitrogen Dioxide	776.85	±14.75	\$3	±0
O3	Ozone	7,822.81	±142.72	\$185	±3
SO2	Sulfur Dioxide	494.87	±9.03	\$1	±0
PM2.5	Particulate Matter <2.5 Microns	379.38	±6.92	\$373	±7
PM10	Particulate Matter <10 Microns	2,635.50	±48.08	\$150	±3
Total		12,251.98	±223.52	\$714	±13

Hydrological Value of Existing Canopy

Forests are also a key component of the water cycle and healthy watersheds. The trees alone on this property help to filter and manage over 20,000 gallons of water (the size of an average swimming pool in the United States) each year.

Abbr.	Benefit	Amount (gal)	±SE
AVRO	Avoided Runoff	34.83	±0.64
E	Evaporation	5,935.62	±108.29
I	Interception	5,967.80	±108.88
T	Transpiration	8,496.19	±155.00
Total		20,434.44	±372.81

*Data calculated using I-Tree software, A product produced through the collaboration of the US Forest Service, Davey, Arbor Day Foundation, Society of Municipal Arborists, Casey Trees, International Society of Arboriculture. See **Appendix A** for more information.*

EV Charging Evaluation

Public entities including parks, beaches, and nature preserves represent increasingly popular locations for EV chargers as demand rises for charging options that provide entertainment and recreation opportunities while drivers and passengers refuel (Appendix C). At the time of this report, the charging infrastructure of the Saugatuck is considered underdeveloped and ripe with opportunity for additional public charging facilities. The portion of Interstate 196 passing through the Saugatuck area does not yet meet the US Department of Energy’s minimum distance or fuel-specific station requirements to qualify as an electric-vehicle ready corridor.

Although demand at this property could increase depending on future-use plans and public accessibility, investment in publicly available EV charging facilities should be prioritized elsewhere in the community before focusing on this area. The property is ineligible for the Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy’s Charge Up Michigan program and will likely be ineligible for other funding sources due to its distance from local thoroughfares and population centers. (The current driveway is 1.59 miles from exit 41, 4.58 miles from exit 36)

Solar Evaluation

As it stands, the property does not lend itself to solar development satisfying only one of four priorities typically considered in site selection:

- **Three-phase power:** Close proximity (less than 1 mile) to 3-phase power is a minimum requirement for solar development, which is conveniently present along 63rd street.
- **Substation:** Close proximity (less than 3 miles) to an electrical substation is commonly preferred for solar development. The nearest substations are located 6.89 miles and 8.15 miles away.
- **Ecological loss:** Current solar developments prioritize land that has already been cleared and leveled. In addition to the logistical issue of clearing the land, the social and environmental cost of site preparations for a ground-mount solar array (minimum of 20 acres) would likely outweigh the potential returns (Annual lease rates currently hover between \$600 - \$1,500 per acre).

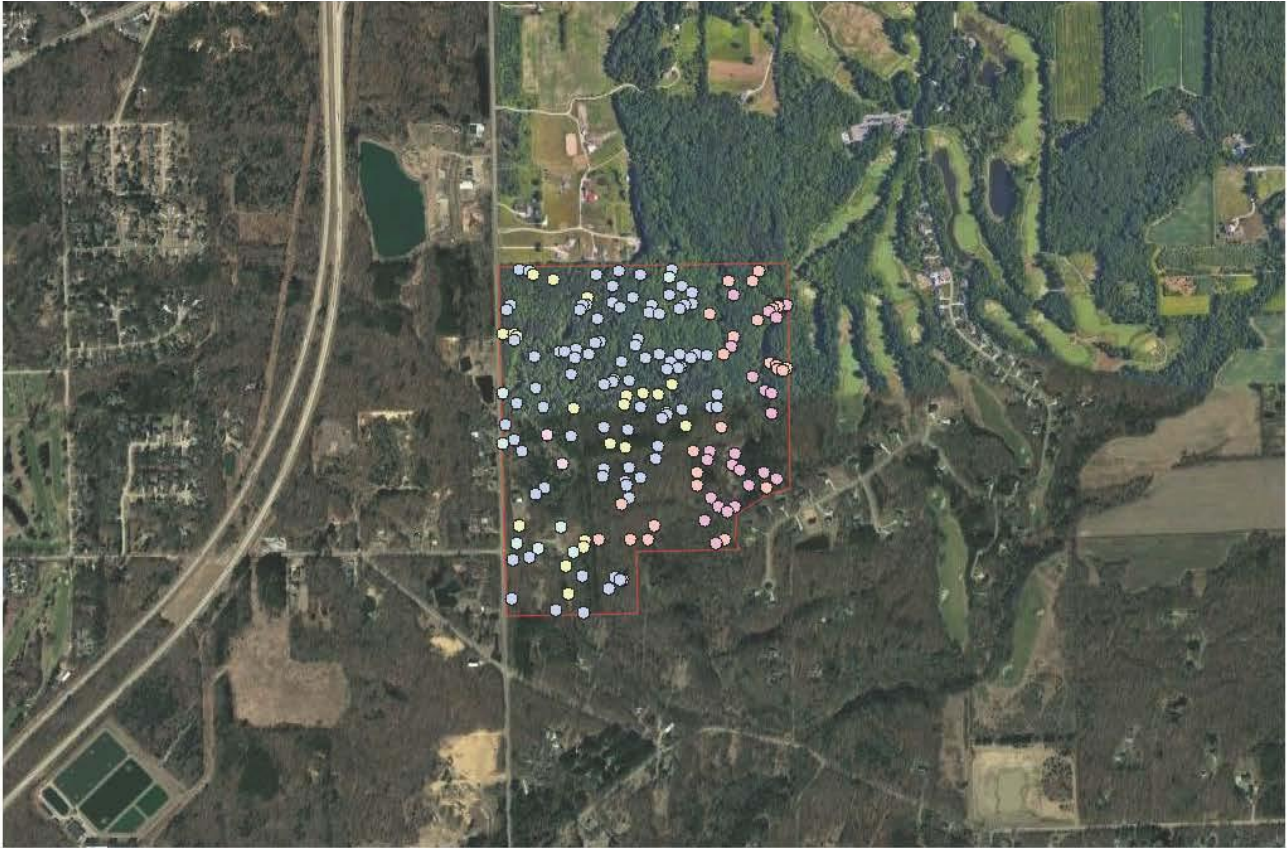
- **Competitive Alternatives:** The presence of numerous alternative sites in the region with a lower opportunity cost for solar development (parking lots, rooftops, vacant property, agricultural land) pose significant competition making this property an unlikely candidate.

Composting/Yard Waste Material Management

The disturbed area of property currently used to manage DPW lawn waste appears compliant with Section 11521(4)(b)(i) and (ii), of Part 115, Solid Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451 requirement for use as a Commercial Composting facility. If demand for a larger local composting facility to serve residential needs exists, many aspects of this location make it a good candidate for consideration. The western half of the property is well-buffered from required setbacks and is visually isolated from major residential and commercial areas. The eastern half of the property could serve as an olfactory buffer to any neighbors downwind of the operation. If this opportunity were pursued, caution should be taken to avoid the introduction of invasive species to the surrounding natural areas through the translocation of yard and lawn waste. If co-developed with a trail system and other recreational opportunities, careful planning would be necessary to isolate operations from public-use areas.

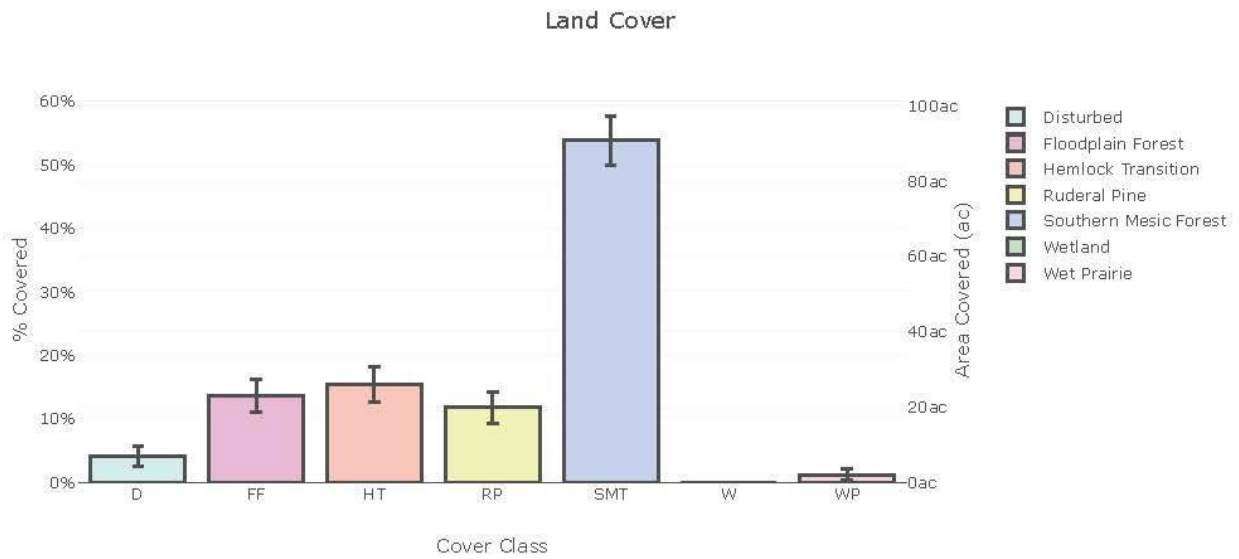
Appendix A: Canopy Valuation Results

Data calculated using I-Tree software. A product produced through the collaboration of the US Forest Service, Davey, Arbor Day Foundation, Society of Municipal Arborists, Casey Trees, International Society of Arboriculture.



Google

Imagery ©2023, CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies, NOAA, USDA/FPAC/Geo Report a map error



Appendix B: Canopy Sequestration Equivalencies













Calculated using EPA [Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator](#)

799 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) equivalent

This is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from:

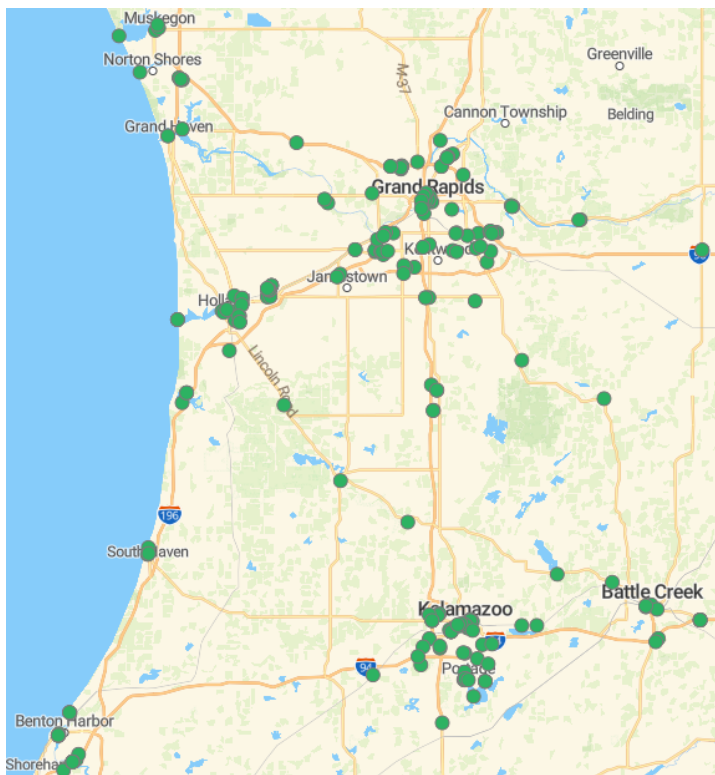
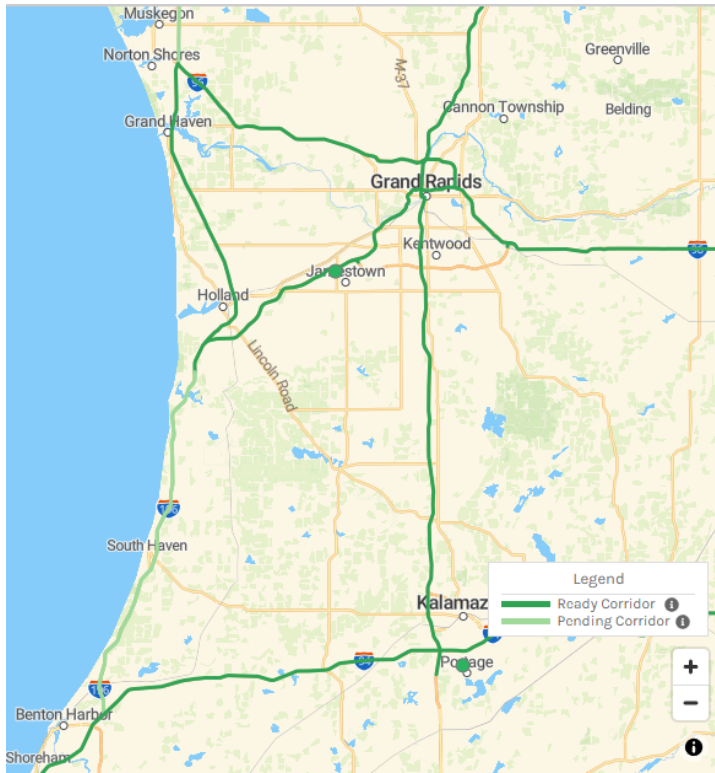
178 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year 	2,048,557 miles driven by an average gasoline-powered passenger vehicle 
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This is equivalent to CO₂ emissions from:

89,919 gallons of gasoline consumed 	78,498 gallons of diesel consumed 
895,126 pounds of coal burned 	10.6 tanker trucks' worth of gasoline 
101 homes' energy use for one year 	155 homes' electricity use for one year 
4.4 railcars' worth of coal burned 	1,848 barrels of oil consumed 
36,710 propane cylinders used for home barbeques 	0.0002 coal-fired power plants in one year 
0.002 natural gas-fired power plants in one year 	97,205,855 number of smartphones charged 

Appendix C: EV Charging Supporting Data

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center



Appendix D: Commercial Composting Regulatory Requirements

[Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Commercial Composting](#)

Yard Waste Composting Isolation Distances (feet)

According to Section 11521(4)(b)(i) and (ii), of Part 115, Solid Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, registered composting sites must maintain certain isolation distances to property lines, residences, surface water, wells, and sensitive receptors. The following table contains these requirements.

	Facility in operation before December 1, 2007	Facility in operation after December 1, 2007
Property line	50	50
Residence	200	200
Surface water	100	100
Type I or IIA water supply well	NA	2,000
Type IIB or III water supply well	NA	800
Sensitive receptor	NA	500
Groundwater	NA	4

SOAR Analysis of “Former Airport Property”



This report was created for:

City of Saugatuck
102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

The following is the written account of the third part of a strategic analysis for the former airport site. The previous components included both an ecological evaluation and sustainability evaluation completed by the ODC Network in August of 2023.

On October 20, 2023, from 3-4:15pm, Dave Nyitray and Sarah Irvin of the ODC Network conducted a SOAR Analysis to gather public comment about future plans for the City of Saugatuck-owned “Former Airport” property. This meeting took place at Saugatuck City Hall with 14 participants. A zoom recording of the meeting is on record at the City of Saugatuck, and [available on YouTube](#).

Goal: Use the SOAR Model to analyze the Former Airport property site

- Expectations for the activity:
 - This activity will not result in a list of concrete tasks to move forward with, but 1.) starts the conversation to make sure multiple perspectives are considered and 2.) shows City Council what the predominant wishes, priorities, and interests from the attending group are that should be considered throughout this planning process.
- The analysis:
 - Following the SOAR model, questions were posed to the group that prompted the submission of answers via sticky notes. Sticky notes were gathered, sorted, and emerging themes were voted on to measure overall priority/ interest, (regardless of the number of sticky notes that contributed to the creation of each individual theme). After the meeting, the ODC compiled notes and feedback discussed, and synthesized with existing Ecological and Sustainability reports for City review to inform their decision-making process.
- Conclusions:
 - Top Strength: The natural state of the park: the existing trees, and the past and present value to humans as a carbon sink, and to organisms as habitat.
 - Top Opportunity: Creating connectivity within the trails and community for the purpose of low-impact recreational use. While inherently beneficial, this option balances the preservation of the area for habitat and future generations with granting residents and tourists sustainable access to a large, continuous natural space.
 - Top Aspiration: Connecting nearby organizations and natural properties: many people care about and would use this land so relevant groups should be included in the planning process. In addition, as wonderful as this continuous property is, it could be made larger by connecting trails with surrounding natural properties.
 - Top Result: Activating the property + Build out/ Define trails: In the immediate future, make the property safe and alluring to visit by building out trails/ infrastructure, offering educational opportunities, and letting residents and visitors know that it’s available as a low-impact recreational space.
- Follow-up needed:
 - Complete an analysis on the monetary value of keeping compost and yard waste drop-off/ storage active here, even if the logistics/ rules must change slightly to better protect the

environment, with the purpose of comparing that value to what it would cost to haul the material elsewhere.

- Engage with the following groups for additional input and/or collaboration:
 - Tri-Communities
 - Surrounding school districts
 - Township (not limited to, but at least to discuss whether the new trail system could connect to neighboring Trails n Trails routes to create longer continuous trails)

Note: Anything in italics below is a direct quote from a sticky note submitted by a participant.

Strengths

Answering the questions:

- What do we build on?
- What do we excel at / are most proud of?
- What makes the property unique?
- What are our values?

Emerging Themes

- Ranked by priority of participants (*Votes/Total Participants*)
- 1. Existing Forest as habitat (*7/14*)
 - a. *Huge carbon sink*
 - b. *Mature forest*
 - c. *Value of existing canopy to: 1.) combat climate change and 2.) enhance air quality*
 - d. *Keep it natural*
 - e. *Save habitat for animals*
 - f. *Protect from trash, etc*
 - g. *Preserve rustic nature*
- 2. Size/Location/ physical attributes of the property as they pertain to people (*3/14*)
 - a. *Last existing continuous parcel that's undeveloped in that area*
 - b. *Large portion of undeveloped environment*
 - c. *Large parcel for animals and plants to co-exist*
 - d. *Large piece of natural, undeveloped land*
 - e. *Minimize trails to keep wild*
 - f. *Size*
 - g. *Location*
 - h. *Out of the way*
- 3. Existing Trails (*2/14*)
 - a. *Existing foot trails*
 - b. *Trails*
 - c. *Existing building & utilities*
- 4. Partnership + Connecting/ Tri-Communities Plan (*2/14*)
 - a. *Current interest in sustainability*
 - b. *PPW commission to move ideas forward*
 - c. *Parks Committees in Saugatuck & Township working together*
 - d. *Helps link City to Township + our trails*
 - e. *Need for expansion of park system for S'tuck & Township & Douglas*
 - f. *Tri-Community Master Plan supports environmental stewardship and park development*

- g. *Hiking communities in Tri-Community area*
 - h. *Can partner with Township Park to create an amazing outdoor area*
 - i. *Cross country ski & run trail*
 - j. *Connect to other parks*
 - k. *Property available for park development*
 - l. *Maybe consider joint venture with nearby Tails n Trails area (although dogs may not be good for species of concern)*
 - m. *Current interest in connecting trails*
 - n. *Education value*
5. Natural Beauty (0/14)
- a. *Property is stunningly beautiful!*
 - b. *Supports the natural beauty that's integral to what makes Tri-Communities unique and beautiful*
 - c. *Residents and visitors are here because of the natural beauty of this area*
 - d. *Beautiful natural site...a shame no one much goes there*
6. Existing Compost/ Yard Waste (0/14)
- a. *Composting*

Opportunities

Answering the questions:

- What's happening around us?
- What changes and gaps in the community align with identified strengths?
- What threats do we see that we could reframe as opportunities?
- What needs and wants are we currently not fulfilling for our residents?
- What partnerships would lead to greater success?

Emerging Themes

- Ranked by priority of participants ([Votes/Total Participants](#))
1. Connectivity of the trails for the purpose of low-impact recreational use by people (connecting trails/ Tri-Community Plan/ Hiking) (10/14)
- a. *Partnership with Township in trails*
 - b. *Tri-Community environmental projects*
 - c. *Build on tri-community planning and connections*
 - d. *Meet growing demand for green spaces/ parks that provide a variety of experiences*
 - e. *Healthy lifestyle for residents*
 - f. *Open hiking trails for health and recreation*
 - g. *63rd is relatively quiet (traffic-wise) for access to property via bicycle*
 - h. *Working to connect all our trails*
 - i. *Relieve pressure from Saugatuck Dunes St. Park & Mt. Baldhead Park PLUS create variety for hikers to enjoy*
 - j. *More local trails*
 - k. *Connect trails*
 - l. *Tri-Community interest in trails*
 - m. *Supporting the schools through education*
 - n. *Tree & wildlife education*

2. Prioritizing the Protection/ Restoration of the property for the purpose of protecting habitat for wildlife (Plants/Animals/Old forest) (3/14)
 - a. *Control invasive species from choking out canopy, etc*
 - b. *Protecting environment*
 - c. *Interest in preserving natural habitat*
 - d. *Protecting forest and habitat*
 - e. *Protecting habitat*
 - f. *Protect plant life from insects etc - ex: Hemlocks*
 - g. *Keep sky dark at night*
 - h. *Protect natural land from development*
 - i. *Protect space for animals*
 - j. *Preserving old forest*
 - k. *Create a large chunk of undeveloped (or minimally developed) green space for native plants and animals (who don't get to vote)*
 - l. *Preserve such a large piece of land*
 - m. *Once it's gone we won't ever have that much land again*
 3. Use designed for medium-high impact recreation (biking/ tourism) (0/14)
 - a. *Use as marketing for tourism*
 - b. *Winter sports lacking - could help with that*
 - c. *Create natural space to attract people to the area (trails, etc)*
 4. Art (0/14)
 - a. *Art and Nature meet*
 - b. *Sculpture Trail*
 5. Else (Not easily sorted into an above category, not voted on)
 - a. *Create a place for people (residents) to collect composted humus for their landscape to hold rainwater*
 - b. *Composting revenue*
 - c. *A nature-sensitive site for affordable housing*
-

Aspirations

Answering the questions:

- What does the future look like?
- What is our vision for the future, what do we want to achieve?
- How can we make a difference?
- What are we passionate about?

Emerging Themes

- Ranked by priority of participants ([Votes/Total Participants](#))
1. Connecting existing organizations/ nearby natural properties (6/11)
 - a. *Restore trails to connect communities*
 - b. *Positive intra community connection*
 - c. *Accessibility for all- universal trail access*
 - d. *Connect to Blue Star non-motorized trails*
 - e. *Tails linked to Tails n Trails property*
 - f. *Connect to landfill property for trails and sports*
 - g. *Community gardens for part of land*

- h. *Start land match gesture to neighbors*
 - 2. Create year-round recreation (3/11)
 - a. *Sports fields in disturbed areas*
 - b. *Winter sports haven to make Saugatuck a 4 season destination*
 - c. *Cross Country running*
 - d. *Cross country skiing*
 - e. *Cross-country, snowshoeing in winter*
 - 3. Preserving/ conservation (3/11)
 - a. *Safely preserved - no threat of development in the future*
 - b. *Nature preserved*
 - c. *Maintain the last piece of untouched land. Light Activity?*
 - d. *Promote protection of nearby parcels*
 - e. *Encourage more conservation*
 - f. *Awed by nature*
 - 4. Benefit people (0/11)
 - a. *A place for families to spend time in nature*
 - b. *Area known Art Coast & nature destination*
 - c. *Compost facility for our residents*
 - d. *A use that benefits the greatest number of Saugatuck citizens while maintaining the natural beauty*
 - e. *A local attraction used daily by Tri-Community residents*
 - f. *Trail signage to educate about plants, animal habitat, forest, birds, etc*
 - g. *Awesome trails!!*
 - h. *Love the ODC buildout @ RidgePt- trails like that would be amazing here*
 - i. *Shelter with picnic tables, grills*
-

Results

-Note: Tackled this from the perspective of, "What can we focus on in the immediate future?"

Answering the questions:

- How do we know what success looks like?
- What measures will tell us we are on track to achieve success?
- How do we know when we've achieved our goals?
- How do we measure impact, change or improvement?

Emerging Themes

- Ranked by priority of participants ([Votes/Total Participants](#))
- 1. Activating the property + Build out/ Define trails: Make the property safe and alluring to visit by building out trails/ infrastructure and offering educational opportunities (8/11)
 - a. *Work with township to develop plan for trails that could [be] more easily connected*
 - b. *Plan to groom existing trails, and potentially expand where it is easy*
 - c. *More trails*
 - d. *Clear/ mark distinct trails*
 - e. *Open trails for hiking - minimal impact on nature*
 - f. *Let residents know they may hike there - at their own risk*

- g. Guided walks/ hikes*
 - h. Restore trails with educational markers*
 - i. Open park*
 - j. Clear trails*
 - k. Gravel parking lot*
 - l. Porti pottys*
 - m. Open to the public*
 - n. Create parking area*
 - o. Legitimize the existing trails*
 - p. Communicate about the property & trails*
 - q. Connect to township park for cross-country team to practice and host meets*
 - 2. Do more homework: Continue the conversation with other groups of people (3/11)
 - a. A broad range of community members participating in envisioning the future for the land, including those who might prefer options this group wouldn't suggest*
 - 3. Conserve land: Set aside land to be conserved solely for the protection of the plants and animals that live there (0/11)
 - a. Buy and conserve surrounding land*
 - b. Cost estimate to deal with invasive species*
 - c. Conserve large portions*
 - d. Identify areas to keep conserved NOW based on ODC report and restrict access*
-

Final question: What haven't we captured that should be considered throughout this process?

- Mid/Long Term
 - Compost Study/ Act: Could we have a cost analysis done on the value of keeping compost and yard waste in part of this property as opposed to shipping that material elsewhere?
- Engage Tri-Community
- Look at other models
 - ODC Network's Nature Preserve was cited as an example of what the management and conservation of a natural property with access for low-impact recreation and self-guided education/ exploration could look like
- School District Engagement
 - Already communicate for sports, could also communicate here

Verbally communicated from the participants:

- Thankfully these discussions are going to preserve the land regardless of whether it is for use by people or habitat conservation—developing it into something other than a natural space is not even on the table
- These suggestions are intended to be the lasting impact that a room full of older folks can contribute both to the environment itself, as well as subsequent generations

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kirk Harrier, City Manager
City of Saugatuck

FROM: Jay Kilpatrick, AICP
Michael Clark, AICP

DATE: June 18, 2009

RE: Initial Review: 63rd Street Site (aka “Airport Property” parcel #20-002-027-00)

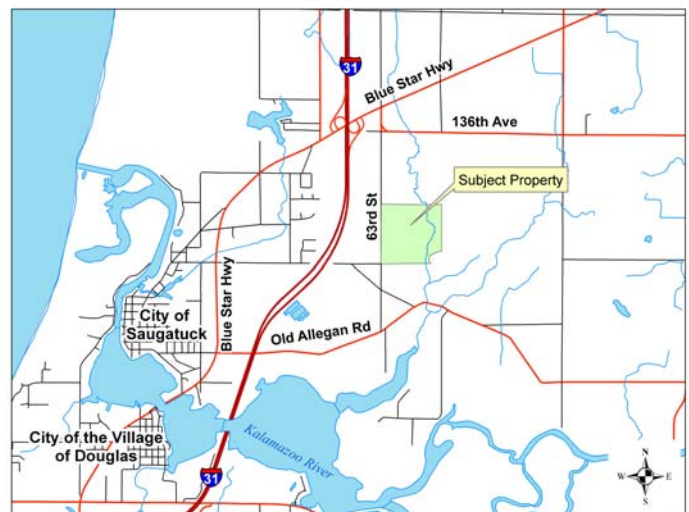
As directed, we have conducted a review and evaluation of the property commonly referred to as the “Airport Property”, located in Saugatuck Township at the northeast intersection of 134th Avenue and 63rd Street (property parcel #03-20-002-027-00). Our purpose has been to evaluate the existing condition of the property and to consider potential uses for the site. This analysis may be helpful to the City’s decision-makers in determining whether the site could be put to better use either for the benefit of the public, or to allow the City to capitalize on the asset the land represents.

It must be understood that the scope of this review was meant as exploratory and likely further research and analysis will be necessary before a final disposition of the site is determined. The intent of this effort was to enable the City of focus on the most viable options.

As part of this review we have walked a majority of the property, taken photographs, analyzed the city’s property files related to the site, interviewed local Realtors for an assessment of potential value on the open market given the zoning restrictions and provided an outline of some potential options for the site. In addition, we evaluated the existing structure on the site, the current use of the site, surrounding land uses and available utility services.

Physical Conditions:

The site is approximately 154 acres in size and is currently occupied by a single frame construction structure on the southwest corner of the property. The 2,600 square-foot building is approximately 50 years old and contains banquet style facilities with a commercial kitchen, serving buffet, and a large open area containing tables.



Originally constructed as the meetinghouse for a snowmobile club, the building was most recently used as a senior center facility. Although currently unused, the structure is has been winterized and is in good condition. It would only require light maintenance to be brought back into service.



The former Senior Center Occupies the southwest corner of the meadow area parallel to 63rd Street

A grass and gravel parking area has been maintained to the south of the Senior Center structure and appears to be able to accommodate between 40 and 50 parking spaces depending upon layout and site maneuverability. The existing parking area is nearly 15,000 square feet in size (105 ft by 140 ft). The remainder of the property is host to gently rolling hills, older pine forest plantation, meadowlands, new growth forest (deciduous trees, mostly 4" to 12" in diameter) and steep ravines.



Although currently unused, the structure has been winterized and is in good condition. It would only require light maintenance to be brought back into service.

Upon entering the site at the southwest corner, the existing senior center is immediately north of the entry drive. An adjoining area is used by the City's Department of Public Works as a disposal area for street sweepings, construction debris and other inert materials.

The area adjacent to the Senior Center building and to the east and north is characterized by meadowlands occupying approximately 35 acres of the western most portion of the site. Some sapling evergreens have begun to take root within the meadowlands and currently range from four to twelve feet in height. A path, ranging from eight to twelve feet in width has been maintained throughout many portions of the site, extending from the Senior Center parking area and winding eastward through several portions of the 154-acre property. There is evidence of 4-wheeler ORV use in many portions of the site and it is clear that the site has been used for hunting.

To the east of the meadowlands are two dense plantings of mature pine plantation forest, planted in simple rows of eighty feet in width and 1,000 to 1,500 feet in length. Most trees exceed eighty

to one hundred feet in height. A pathway has been maintained to the south of these plantings and extends in a straight line to the west until forced to wind north around the ravine. An additional path winds around the north side of these plantings. Attachment A is an aerial photo on which some of the key elements are noted and Attachment B reflects the existing contours on the site.



A hunter's tree stand found in the central portion of the site.

A significant portion of the east and southeast portion of the property is occupied by steep, wooded ravines and/or seasonal streambed. These features extend southerly off the property eventually becoming a part of a bayou formation of the Kalamazoo River in the vicinity of 61st Street and Old Allegan Road. The FEMA 100 year flood plain follows the ravine in a generally north-south configuration, effectively bisecting the property.¹ The topography on site drops from approximately 650 USGS datum to 592 feet over 100 to 120 feet, creating slopes of 50% or more. The streambed ranges from approximately 175 feet in width to nearly 700 feet in width in some areas. Immediately to east of the streambed, in the southeastern most corner of the site, a portion of the Ravines site condominium

development is perched upon the opposite bluff.

Surrounding Land Uses.

The general vicinity is characterized by very low density residential and rural residential development. Along 63rd Street immediately to the west are scattered residences and some light industrial, storage or contractor facilities, some of which appear to be abandoned, or suffering from deferred maintenance, at the very least. To the north and south, rural residential uses predominate. To the east is The Ravines golf course and residential condominium development. This luxury community includes a large restaurant and clubhouse serving the Arnold Palmer signature golf course. The residential lots on the site range upwards from about one acre with significant areas of open space and, of course golf course access. A recent count showed this development was about 50% built-out with high-value homes each with significant surrounding open space.

The Tri-Community reflects the site in the Rural Low Density Single-Family Residential/Agricultural future land use designation. The areas to the north, east and south are similarly planned. The area immediately to the west is planned for industrial uses, extending to the US-31 right-of-way. The site is reflected on the Saugatuck Zoning Map as A-2 Rural Open Space, while the area to the west across 63rd Street is zoned I-1, Light Industrial.

¹ Saugatuck Township Zoning Map

The Site's Assets and Limitations.

The chief asset of the property is its rugged natural beauty. Although the site has little standing water, its heavy woods and steep ravines give it a compelling beauty. Even though the photos that accompany this report were taken in early March 2009 after the snowmelt and before the vegetation had regenerated, it is clear that most of the site offers an inviting natural environment. The steep ravines, however, also present a significant limitation, as this feature, which includes the FEMA 100-year flood plain, effectively divides the property. About 40 to 50 acres of the site are cut-off from the remainder by the ravine and flood plain and could only be accessed with an expensive bridge or filling the floodplain with its attendant permitting limitations.



The chief asset of the property is its rugged natural beauty

The site is not served with public water, although service is located in Gleason, about 1,200 feet to the south. In addition, Public sewer service is not readily available to serve the site, according to officials from the Kalamazoo Lake Water and Sewer Authority.

The existing Senior Center building may have some potential for re-use. In its current condition, the building would require some maintenance and updates as it has been winterized, however it appears to be in good overall condition, and may not be difficult to be brought back into use. At 2,600 square feet, there are a number of possible uses for the building including a rest or warming building for recreation, banquet facility, or a possible education center.

A further limitation of the site is its location. The property is located about 4 miles by road from the City of Saugatuck which is west of the US-31 right-of-way. As such, it is too far removed to be an effective part of any tourism-related impulse commercial activity, although with proper marketing it might have some potential as a tourism destination, as discussed below.

A final limitation on the potential use of the site is the current depressed economy. One of the real estate agents interviewed in the conduct of this analysis estimated that there are well over 200 single family home sites either in existence or approved but not constructed in the local market place. In addition, new commercial and industrial investment in the region is at a virtual standstill, making speculation in a site with such limitations unlikely in the short term.

Potential Options for Future Use:

Nevertheless, there may be a number of possible uses for the site. In considering those options, it is helpful to review local zoning requirements and the range of uses that are permitted. In addition, any division of the site would be governed by the Michigan Land Division Act. At about 154 acres, the parcel may be divided into as many as thirteen parcels without platting.

In any case, the property is zoned A-2 (Rural Open Space) where there are a limited number of permitted uses:

- ◆ Farming, General
- ◆ Single-Family Dwellings
(including Mobile Homes)
- ◆ Home Occupations
- ◆ Planned Unit Developments
(residential and mixed use)
- ◆ Wind and Telecommunication Towers
(not more than 30-foot in height)
- ◆ Sale of Agricultural Products
- ◆ Duplex Dwellings
- ◆ Horse Stables (commercial or not)
- ◆ Public Utility Buildings

In addition, this zoning district includes several Special Approval Uses:

- ◆ Auto and Boat Sales
- ◆ Campgrounds
- ◆ Dumps and Sanitary Landfills
- ◆ Funeral Homes
- ◆ Golf Courses
- ◆ Helicopter Landing Pads
- ◆ Hotels and Motels
- ◆ Inns and B&Bs
- ◆ Mineral Extraction, rock crushing plants
- ◆ Nursing/Convalescent Homes
- ◆ Professional Offices
- ◆ Restaurants
- ◆ Sports Facilities
- ◆ Wind and Telecommunication Towers
(more than 30-foot in height)
- ◆ Gas and Oil Wells
- ◆ Boarding Houses
- ◆ Dog Kennels
- ◆ Foster Care Facilities
- ◆ Public Garages
- ◆ Government Buildings
- ◆ Hospitals
- ◆ Hunting Preserves
- ◆ Juice, Cider, Wine Manufacture
- ◆ Childcare Facilities
- ◆ Private Clubs and Lodges
- ◆ Racetracks
- ◆ Schools and Colleges
- ◆ Tourist Homes
- ◆ Triplex Dwellings

The minimum lot area for single and two-family dwellings is required to be 2.5 acres with 150 feet of lot frontage. For all other uses the minimum lot size is required to be 5 acres with 150 feet of lot frontage.

The potential options for the site are presented below.

NO COST OR LOW COST OPTIONS.

Option 1 – Status Quo. Currently, the site is largely vacant and used by hikers and hunters on an informal basis. The City also makes use of a small portion of the site for street sweeping and construction debris disposal.

Advantages. Of course, the “do-nothing” option is easiest to implement and it would not preclude a future decision to undertake another approach. The current uses could simply be regarded as interim in nature until a more productive use of the site may be realized. In addition, like any municipality, the City must have a viable option for disposal of street sweeping and construction debris, so the site serves a useful purpose. The City might consider whether a modest revenue stream could be generated by allowing other units of government to make similar use of the site for a fee. This could be taken a step further by considering whether to expand the operation by obtaining MDEQ licensure for a compost facility that would take in yard waste from private haulers. This could be operated either by City personnel or by a licensed third party. Finally, the City might consider harvesting some or all of the timber on the site. The pine plantations may have economic value for structural lumber or pulp and there could be some hardwoods of value on the property. The proper evaluation of the timber on site would require consultation with a forester.

Disadvantages. Certainly the status quo does not respond to the City’s objective to maximize the value of this asset. Even with the possible expansion to include a licensed compost facility and timber harvesting, it is unlikely that the City would achieve the highest use of the site. In addition, there may be some liability exposure to the City as a result of the casual use of the site for 4-wheelers and hunting. In our site visit we did not note any signage that would limit these activities and it is possible that this “tacit approval” could expose the City to liability if someone were injured. Finally, if the timber on the site is marketed, the residual value of the site could be significantly compromised.

Option 2 – Sell it as-is. The property’s current value is estimated at between \$350,000 and \$550,000, based on recent large-acreage sales in Ottawa and Allegan Counties and on the records of the Township Assessor for nearby properties.² The City could simply place the property on the market, either handling the marketing itself or using a local Realtor. Any potential buyer would likely consider the range of uses permitted, the market for any such use, the cost of financing and any competing properties and present an offer that the buyer considers advantageous. The City would be under no obligation to sell the site, unless a bona fide full price offer is presented. In the meantime, the current activity on the site may continue.

Advantages. Like the “do-nothing” option, this option is relatively easy to implement. With a Realtor handling the land, there is usually little expense for marketing and, as indicated, there is little risk to the City because only a full-price offer must be accepted.

² Note that many variables can influence market value and a proper evaluation of the site would require a professional appraisal. One real estate professional observed that the buyer for a large acreage site would typically be a developer and current market conditions have severely dampened that segment of the market.

Disadvantages. The outcome of this option is very difficult to predict. Vacant parcels can remain on the market for many years. The site's limitations in terms of its location and lack of public utilities are handicaps that will restrict the number of potentially interested buyers. In addition, conveying the site to a private party would mean the City DPW will need to find an alternate site for its current activities on the property.

Option 3 – Rent the building as a residence or an office. This option may be regarded as an interim use of the property to generate some revenue. In its current state the senior center could not be used as a residence as it lacks shower or bathing fixtures. However it could be used as an office or institutional building.

Advantages. Relatively simple to implement, this approach would offer the City a modest income stream (probably on the order of up to \$500 monthly). A tenant on the site may also be asked to observe and report trespassers and others on the land, helping to reduce the City's liability. In addition, a short term rental of one year, or less, would not significantly reduce the City's flexibility in implementing any of the other options outlined.

Disadvantages. The role of "small-time landlord" is seldom rewarding and the City must be prepared to devote staff time to issues such as small repairs, marketing and collections, leasing and (potentially) evictions. Of course, these activities could be contracted to a third-party property management firm, but this will significantly reduce the income to the City. Before this option is embraced, further analysis of the cost and benefit should be undertaken.

Option 4 – Lease the land for wind energy systems. This option assumes that the property's location only about 2½ miles inland from Lake Michigan means that there is a fairly significant wind resource about 200 to 400 feet aloft. With the State of Michigan's emphasis on the renewable energy, there is growing interest in large-scale wind farm operations. The recently-released report of the Wind Energy Resource Zone Board³ recommends an area of higher wind harvest potential surrounding the site, but excluding Saugatuck Township. The report explains that some areas with good wind resources were excluded due to the proximity of development, roads, residential development or other features. Nevertheless, large commercial scale wind energy turbines (i.e., greater than 1 MW), are gaining acceptance as a viable alternative to further combustion of fossil fuels. While there are a number of aesthetic and siting issues to be considered, there is reason to believe that this site could accommodate between one, two or three large scale systems. Lease payments to farmers in similar situations have been reported as ranging anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000 annually per turbine.⁴



Wind Energy Resource Zone Board recommends an area of higher wind harvest potential surrounding the site

³ Draft report of the Wind Energy Resource Zone Board, by Public Sector Consultants and the MSU Land Policy Institute, issued June 2, 2009

⁴ See <http://www.windustry.org/sites/windustry.org/files/LandECompPackages.pdf> there are many variables in determining the lease rates that might be expected from wind systems.

Advantages. This alternative would certainly not preclude other continuing uses on the site, although it is likely that a utility company would want long lease terms (20 years, or more), so the City would probably not be able to sell the property for any other use that does not incorporate the windmill(s).

Disadvantages. This analysis assumes the wind resource aloft is sufficient to make an installation feasible. And this is based on some general wind energy mapping conducted by U.S. Department of Energy⁵ and the Wind Energy Resource Zone Board report. However, without an extended wind monitoring effort, this is somewhat speculative. The City might invest in this monitoring activity, but that would entail a significant expense which would be better absorbed by the wind energy firm. Towers taller than 30 feet are treated as Special Approval Uses in Saugatuck Township, so an extended approval process may be required. It is likely that some resistance will be mounted from property owners that would object to the aesthetic impacts on the community.

Option 5 – Form a public-private development entity. This option would place the City in the position of the landowner in a joint venture land development structure. It is not uncommon, especially in strong markets, for a landowner and development company to form a partnership in which the landowner contributes the value of the land and the private developer contributes the expertise and financial resources necessary to implement a development. As the development is constructed and profits are realized, they are divided in accordance with a pre-determined formula. This approach could be used for any development form. The most likely approach would focus on a mid- to upper-market single-family development on the entire property. However, other uses, such as an RV Park and Campground, an Equestrian Stable and Riding Facility, or Day Camp might also be considered. These options would certainly require a development partner with specialized expertise in the successful operation of such facilities.

Advantages. Depending on the firm or individual that the City would partner with, the potential end use and the state of the economy, this option offers the greatest potential return. In addition, the City would not be required to invest significant resources, as its investment would be limited to the land, which it already owns.

Disadvantages. Even under the best of circumstances, real estate development is fraught with risk. The City would need to carefully select its development partner and work carefully to mitigate as much of the risk as possible. Of course, the more risk the private developer is expected to accept, the greater share of the return he/she will demand. In addition, the City may not have sufficient development expertise within its administrative or elected representatives and to overcome this difficulty, it may be necessary for staff or contractors (such as the City Attorney) to devote significant effort to monitor the status of the partnerships and to protect the City's interests.

⁵ National Renewable Energy Inventory, 50-meter wind power map, indicates an area of "Fair" potential (i.e., wind speeds of 14.3 – 15.7 mph) at 50 meter (about 162 ft) elevation, south of Holland and north of the Kalamazoo River.

OPTIONS REQUIRING INVESTMENT

Option 6 – The City as developer. The City could take steps to develop the property for any permitted or special approval use. Some of those uses would require greater investment than others, but the use that would most likely find favor in the marketplace is a single-family development. The site is adjacent to the Ravines residential site condominium association and golf course, which is immediately to the east. The proximity to a well-known and well-maintained golf course may create additional demand for residential property in the area. The minimum lot size within this zoning district would be 2.5 acres with 150 feet of lot frontage. Due to the limitations imposed upon the site by natural and topographical features, it is estimated that the total residential development yield on site could be up to approximately 40 to 50 homes, after accommodating necessary infrastructure for roads and utilities and depending upon the location of required open space.

Advantages. Local market experts estimate a potential market value of approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000 per residential lot created, although this figure will largely depend upon the layout of the site, nature of a condominium association responsible for installation of roads, utilities and common infrastructure, and whether such infrastructure is installed and available for use upon the date of purchase. Thus the site could have a potential developed value ranging up to \$5 million. The site has many natural advantages that could help it achieve market acceptance.

Disadvantages. Achieving the maximum potential yield in a weak economy with significant inventory already on the market must be regarded as risky, at best. Furthermore, the City staff and decision-makers probably do not have the technical expertise to undertake an effort such as this. If the City hired experts to complete a development, it would need land planners, engineers, marketing specialists, finance specialists, and eventually builders. The expense of these consultants and specialists will be incurred long before the project generates any return and these expenses and the carrying costs could erode much of the return to the City.

Option 7 – A public recreation facility. The natural features of much of the site make it ideal for recreational use. The Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance allows “Community Buildings, parks and public recreational areas and cemeteries” by right within the A-2 (Rural Open Space) District. The City might explore the local demands for a number of both active and passive uses on the site. This could be done alone or in combination with the County, the Township and/or Douglas. Some of these might include Cross-Country Skiing, Hiking and Jogging, Off-road Cycling, Equestrian Trails, Snow-mobile or ATV trails. A related alternative might be the establishment of a Day Camp or a City-Owned Recreational Vehicle Park (campground).

Under these options, the Senior Center building could be employed in a number of ways. It might serve as park headquarters, a trail head where ski or bicycle rentals are provided, a limited concessions area, an information center, and/or caretaker’s residence. Similar recreational uses can be found in West Michigan at the Yankee Springs Recreational Area operated by the MDNR near Hastings, MI; or Pigeon Creek Park in Ottawa County, operated by the Ottawa County Parks Department.

Measuring the demand for and feasibility of such operations is beyond the scope of this analysis, but these (and other) recreational would seek to capitalize on the attractive features on the site in the context of the tourism marketplace in the Saugatuck-Douglas community. The City would need to examine whether there is additional area demand for recreational resources beyond that provided within the Saugatuck Dunes State Park, Mt. Baldhead and Oval Beach recreational areas. The benefits of this site as opposed to the Saugatuck Dunes State Park would be the ability to provide equestrian, biking and snow-mobile trails, which are not permitted at the State Park, as well as additional protection from the elements in a wooded setting. Concession revenues for equipment rental (either by the City or through a third-party contract) may help to offset some operating costs.

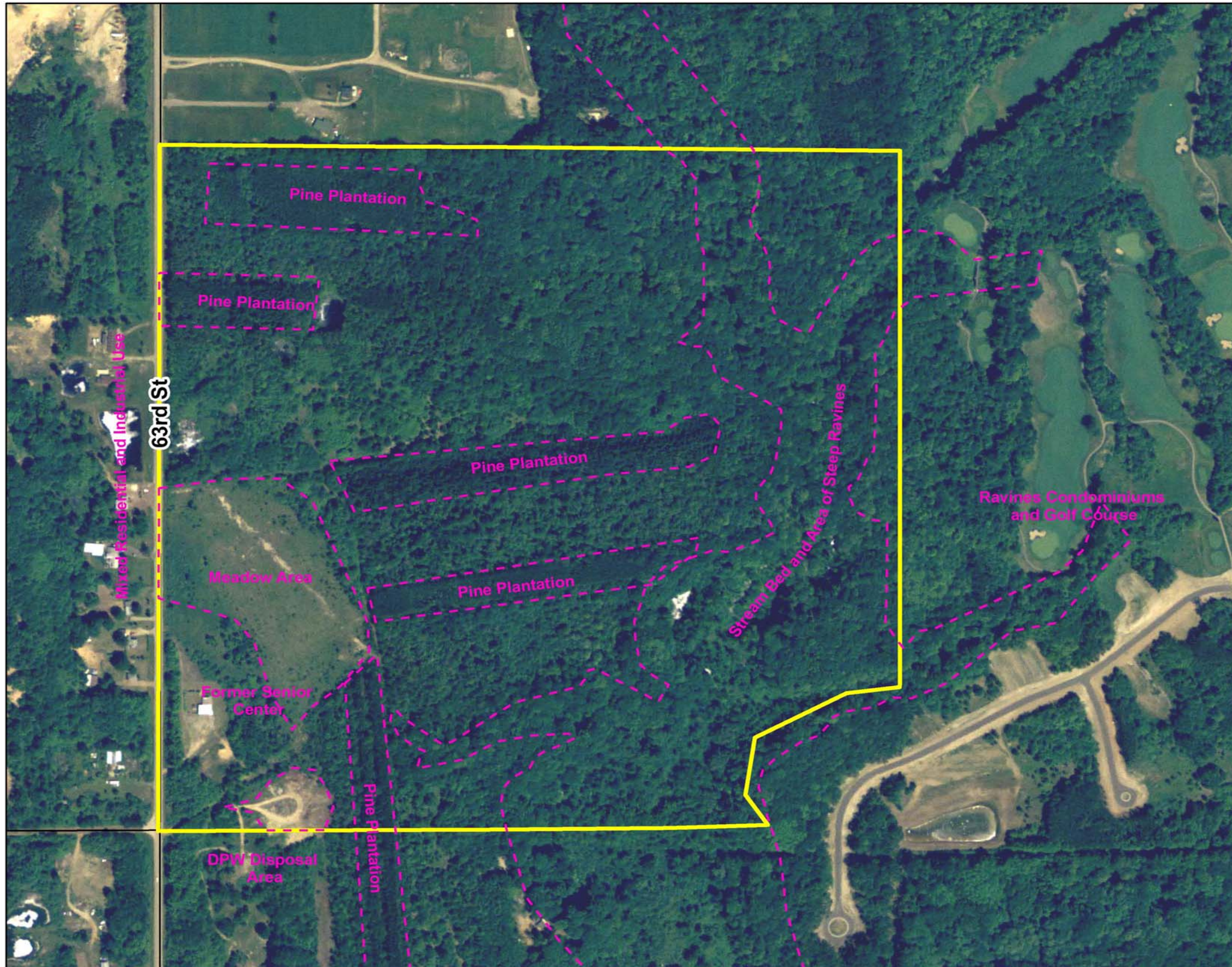
Advantages. This option would preserve the site in public ownership as park land, while realizing some potential income. It would offer local residents and visitors with an additional recreational option and help to make the area even more attractive. Depending on the ultimate design, it may also be possible to continue the limited use of the site by the DPW even as the balance of the property is employed for recreation.

Disadvantages. This option does not address directly the City's objective of capitalizing on the asset value of the land. In fact, it may be that it would result in net added costs, depending on likely revenue and operation and maintenance expense.

Attachment A

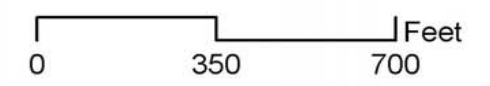
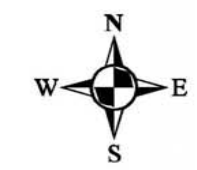
City of Saugatuck

63rd Street Property Site Features

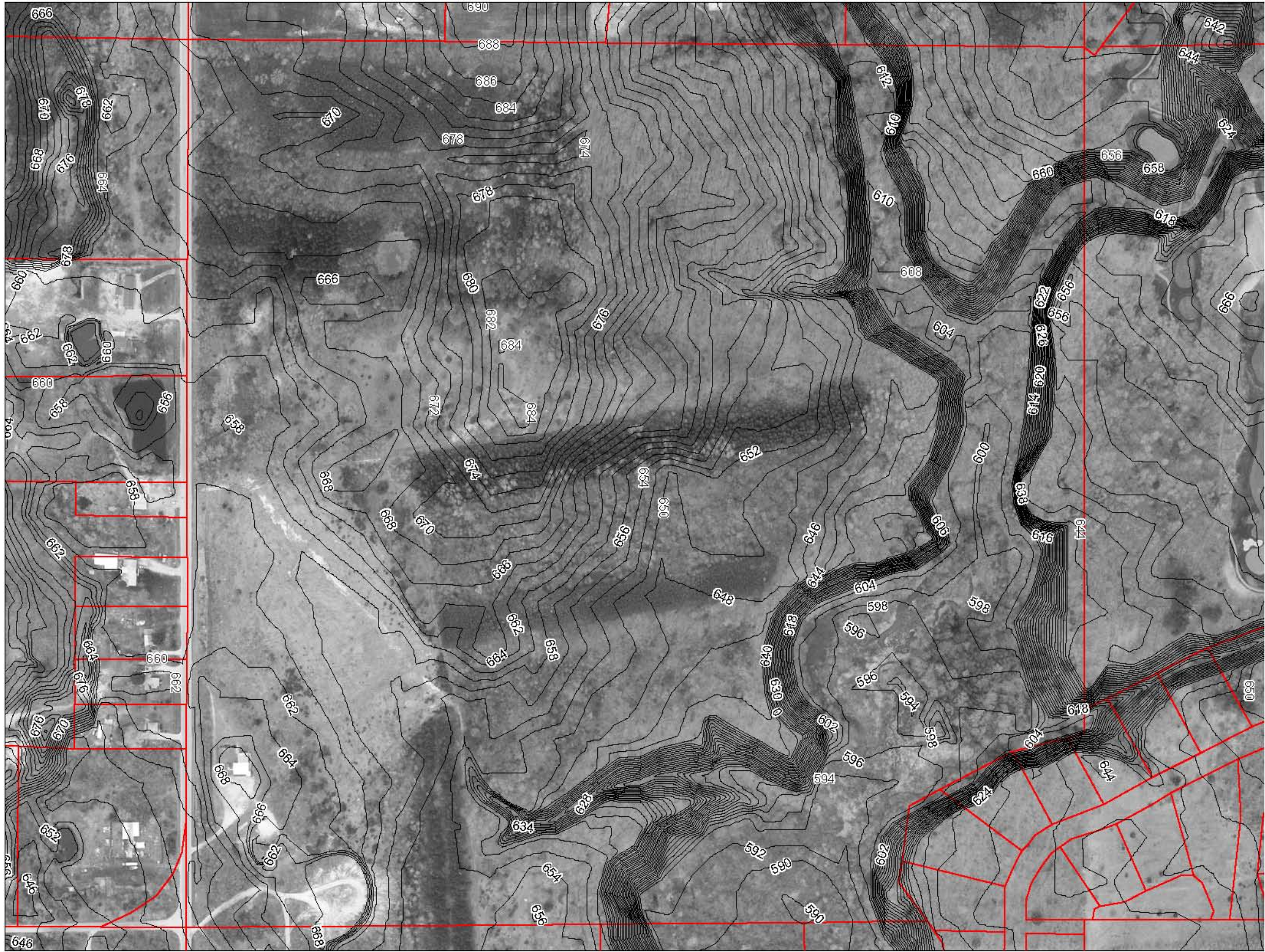


Legend

-  Site Features
-  Property Lines



Williams & Works



ATTACHMENT B
SITE
TOPOGRAPHY



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Heise

MEETING DATE: 11/8/23

SUBJECT: Stop Sign Request from Parks and Public Works Committee

DESCRIPTION:

The City of Saugatuck’s Parks and Public Works Committee have been discussing safety on Park Street. An item that they have identified as “low-hanging fruit,” for traffic calming is the placement of stop signs at major intersections. They are recommending to City Council that they allow staff and consultants to review the placement of stop signs at- Park and Campbell, and Park and Perryman.

BUDGET ACTION REQUIRED:

None

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REVIEW

Reviewed with Parks and Public Works Committee

LEGAL REVIEW:

NA

SAMPLE MOTION:

Allow staff to conduct due diligence on the installation of stop signs on Park Street at major intersections, focusing on Park and Campbell, and Park Perryman. Staff will report back to council to discuss any engineering concerns and cost.



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, Director of Planning and Zoning

MEETING DATE: November 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Zoning Ordinance Amendment No.231113-A – Outdoor Dining

DESCRIPTION:

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City and many other local governments declared emergencies which allowed measures, including suspending specific ordinance requirements, to reduce the risk and spread of the virus. This included creating flexibility to expand dining outdoors. Part of this flexibility allowed restaurants to expand dining onto sidewalks and into the street.

Following the emergency measures and during a time of unknowns as it related to what would happen with the viral spread, the City Council continued to offer flexibility by adopting an expanded outdoor dining ordinance and policy in February 2022. This allowed for a licensee to temporarily occupy City streets.

The Zoning Ordinance considers expansion of restaurant seating into the right of way (which would include streets) as a special land use. A special land use requires a public hearing and site plan review by the Planning Commission. During the pandemic, because of the emergency and continued need for flexibility, zoning approvals were not required.

In March, staff discussed the following with the City Council:

- Three summers of licensing approvals and expanded outdoor use by establishments downtown has created a hybrid of approvals, as well as likely some confusion on the necessary approvals for outdoor dining.
- Some establishments obtained prior special use permit approval for expanded dining on the sidewalks, received additional expanded dining on sidewalks under temporary licenses issued during 2020-2022, and additionally received licenses for the use of City streets or parking spaces under temporary approvals.
- Others may only have first started expanded outdoor dining areas based on the temporary licenses authorized during 2020-2022, and have no zoning approval.
- As COVID-19 is no longer at high levels of transmission, many communities are now working through how to bring restaurants with expanded outdoor dining into compliance with zoning code requirements.

On March 27, City Council approved continued flexibility and staff discretion for temporary expanded outdoor dining during the 2023 spring/summer/fall tourist season. This included following the same application process for temporary expanded outdoor dining licensing that occurred in 2022. After November 1, 2023 all city codes, including zoning, will have to be followed.

Staff worked with legal counsel over the summer to draft proposed changes to the zoning and other code requirements for outdoor dining so they are aligned.

The following is a summary of the proposed amendments:

- Require every expanded outdoor dining area obtain: 1) a special use permit; 2) site plan review; and 3) a revocable license agreement from the City, regardless of whether the expanded outdoor dining area occupies a sidewalk, right-of-way, or other public property.
- Omits the prior restrictions on signage in expanded outdoor dining areas, but otherwise it incorporates substantially all of the requirements for expanded outdoor dining areas that would have been required by the planning commission's review via existing SUP process, administrative review via the emergency policy, or as part of Council's review in issuing a revocable license pursuant to Section 96.33.
 - Note that the amended SUP section still contains a subsection of outdoor dining areas on restaurant premises, rather than on public property, and these regulations are very basic and largely unchanged from what was previously in the code.
- Allow the expanded outdoor dining area to operate between April 1 and November 1 (consistent with existing regulations) and require all items to be removed no later than November 10 and allow items to be reinstalled no earlier than March 20.
- Require payment of an annual fee for the privilege of using public property (previously a component of the revocable license agreement), which is established by resolution of the Council.
- Allow the SUP to be revoked by the City for failing to comply with the requirements of the zoning ordinance, maintain a valid revocable license agreement, or pay the annual fee. It also notes that it can be terminated as necessary to accommodate public work, the City's use of its public places, or otherwise in the City's discretion.
- Added language noting that if the SUP was terminated for reasons outside the applicant's control, the annual fee would be prorated and refunded.

As the proposed zoning ordinance amendments would now require a revocable license agreement with the City as a prerequisite to obtaining an SUP for an expanded outdoor dining area, Section 96.33 of the City Code is no longer necessary. If the zoning ordinance is amended, City Council will be asked to amend the City Code to delete that section.

PLANNING COMMISSION REMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the proposed changes at its September 21 meeting and set a public hearing. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on October 19 and discussed the proposed changes.

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended adoption of the amendments to Section 154.092(O) of the zoning ordinance to provide expanded regulations pertaining to restaurants with

outdoor seating and expanded outdoor dining areas occupying public rights away, or public sidewalks as submitted with the changes of:

- The date to be from May 1 through October 31.
- Removal of any period for tear down and set up.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney prepared the draft zoning ordinance amendment. The City Attorney will be at your meeting to answer any questions you may have.

SAMPLE MOTION:

Motion to adopt zoning ordinance amendment no.231113-A and its amendments to Section 154.092(O) of the zoning ordinance to provide expanded regulations pertaining to restaurants with outdoor seating and expanded outdoor dining areas occupying public rights-of-way or public sidewalks.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
ORDINANCE NO. 231113-A

At a meeting of the City Council of the City of Saugatuck, Allegan County, Michigan, held at the City of Saugatuck Hall on _____, 2023 at _____ p.m., City Council Member _____ moved to adopt the following ordinance, which motion was seconded by City Council Member _____.

An ordinance to amend the City of Saugatuck Zoning Ordinance to provide expanded regulations pertaining to restaurants with outdoor seating and expanded outdoor dining areas occupying public rights-of-way or public sidewalks, to provide flexibility to the restaurants operating within the City and enhance the public’s downtown experience, to ensure such uses are conducted in a safe, orderly, and conscientious fashion without unreasonably disrupting or disturbing traffic or pedestrians, to ensure that such uses will not impede City functions, and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK, ALLEGAN COUNTY, ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT OF SECTION 154.092(O) OF THE CODE. The City of Saugatuck Code of Ordinances, Section 154.092(O), shall be amended to read as follows:

(O) Restaurants with outdoor seating and Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas.

(1) *Outdoor Seating on Restaurant Premises.* The inclusion of outdoor seating within the premises of an existing restaurant shall be viewed as an expansion of a commercial business and shall comply with the following standards:

- a. Outdoor seating shall be on a fully improved surface of concrete, paver brick, or other solid material.
- b. If alcohol is served, the outdoor seating area shall meet all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
- c. Any illumination shall be appropriately shielded and directed so as to not disturb adjacent uses.

(2) *Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas.* Any lawfully permitted restaurant may utilize an Outdoor Dining Area in a public property or right-of-way (hereafter, “Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas”) upon receipt of special land use approval and site plan review pursuant to this Section, regardless of the zoning district. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas shall be permitted within public rights-of-way or public sidewalks notwithstanding any setback requirements in this chapter to the contrary, provided the standards of this subsection are satisfied.

- a. *Standards:* Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas shall comply with the following supplemental special use standards:
- i. The restaurant seeking to utilize the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be in full compliance with this chapter.
 - ii. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not pose any safety or health concerns and shall be consistent with the general character of the surrounding area.
 - iii. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall only be located in the areas of the public property or public right-of-way authorized by the City (the “Permitted Space”). The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not extend past the building frontage of the Applicant’s business.
 - iv. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the general character of the surrounding area. Planters, plants, and organic materials are required parts of the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area.
 - v. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be adequately lit by electrical lighting 24 hours per day. Overhead and underground electrical cords are permitted. Electrical cords may not run along the ground and onto the sidewalk. All illumination shall be appropriately shielded and directed so as to not disturb adjacent uses or vehicular traffic.
 - vi. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas occupying public streets or parking spaces shall be marked with traffic reflectors to promote visibility for traffic.
 - vii. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be on a fully improved surface of concrete, paver brick, or other solid material. No carpeting or ground coverings of any kind are permitted.
 - viii. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not interfere with required fire access or any fire department equipment. Fire lanes, fire hydrants, and other fire department connections will not be blocked by the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area.
 - ix. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not disrupt street or sidewalk drainage or impound water.
 - x. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be arranged to not interfere with pedestrian travel or the opening of car doors, and the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not unreasonably interfere with the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or the use of adjacent parking spaces.

- xi. For all Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas, a five-foot wide, unobstructed space must be maintained on the sidewalk at all times to prevent pedestrian traffic obstruction.
 - xii. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas occupying public streets or parking spaces shall have a barrier which clearly defines the perimeter of the area to prevent pedestrians from entering or exiting from the street. Barriers must be made of non-flexible materials, including wood, plastic or metal, but excluding concrete or cinder blocks. Flexible materials, such as rope and canvas, are not permitted.
 - xiii. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas within parallel parking spaces shall not extend more than 8 feet from the face of the curb or exceed 40 feet in length.
 - xiv. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas within angled street parking zones shall not extend more than 15 feet from the face of the curb or exceed 40 feet in length.
 - xv. No tents or enclosures are permitted within the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area.
 - xvi. If alcohol is served, the area shall meet all additional applicable local, state, and federal regulations.
 - xvii. No Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall operate between November 1 and April 1 of each year. All items used in the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be removed from the Permitted Space no later than November 10 of each year and may not be reinstalled until March 20 of each year.
 - xviii. Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas shall comply with all additional applicable local and county ordinances, applicable State laws, applicable building, electrical, and mechanical codes, COVID limitations, and City policies.
 - xix. The City's Department of Public Works shall be allowed access to the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area for any maintenance purposes.
 - xx. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall be kept free of debris and in a neat, clean, safe, reasonable, and orderly condition, and all objects and items located thereon shall be kept in good and safe maintenance and repair.
 - xxi. The Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall not create a nuisance of any kind.
- b. *Application Requirements:* In addition to the standards set forth in Section 154.083(B), an application for an Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall include the following:
- i. A site plan.

- ii. An executed Revocable License Agreement between the City and Applicant.
 - iii. A one-time application fee and annual fee.
 - iv. Current photos of the front of the business, including the curb strip and parking area.
 - v. Description or photos of proposed barriers, tables, or chairs to be used in the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area.
 - vi. Certificate of Insurance, demonstrating general and product liability coverage in the amount of \$500,000 per person/\$500,000 per incident with the City listed as a named insured.
 - vii. Certificate of umbrella insurance with policy limits of at least \$1,000,000, with the City listed as a named insured.
 - viii. Michigan Liquor Control Commission License (if applicable).
 - ix. Health Department Food Service License (if applicable).
 - x. Attestation form from Applicant, indicating that the Outdoor Dining Area will be lit 24 hours per day by both electrical lighting and traffic reflectors.
 - xi. Written approval from the Fire Department for heating equipment (if applicable).
 - xii. Attestation from Applicant that all property taxes, including personal property taxes, are current.
- c. *Site Plan*: In addition to the requirements of Section 154.061, a site plan must include both a bird's eye view map and street level view map of the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area, each depicting in detail the seating layout of the Expanded Outdoor Dining Area, location of trash container and sanitation station; indication/location of any manhole covers within the Permitted Space; barriers used to separate diners from the right-of-way; heating equipment (if applicable); any and all lighting; location of planters, plants, and organic materials; location of any fire hydrants, lanes, or other fire department connections; location of any handicapped parking spaces; and other related facilities or appurtenances.
- d. *Annual Fee*: Recognizing that Expanded Outdoor Dining Areas occupy public property, the Applicant for a special land use permit for an Expanded Outdoor Dining Area shall pay a fee for each month the Applicant wishes to operate an Expanded Outdoor Dining Area (the "Annual Fee"). Such payment shall be assessed on a yearly basis and constitutes payment for the number of months the Applicant wishes to operate in the City between April 1 and November 30. Payment shall be made at the time of application, as well as by March 1 of each year, and shall be in an amount established by the City Council.

- e. *Revocation of Special Use Permit:* The City may revoke any approved special use permit for an Expanded Outdoor Dining Area if no Revocable License Agreement is in effect, the Applicant fails to pay its Annual Fee, the Applicant fails to comply with any requirements of this section, or for any other reason, including but not limited to, the City’s need or desire to use the Permitted Space for parking infrastructure, utilities, or other City needs, as determined in the City’s sole discretion. If a special use permit for an Expanded Outdoor Dining Area is revoked for reasons completely beyond the Applicant’s control, the City shall refund some or all of Applicant’s Annual Fee to account for the months Applicant will be unable to operate.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY: Should a court of competent jurisdiction find any provision, clause, or portion of this ordinance amendment to be invalid, the balance or remainder of this ordinance amendment shall remain valid and in full force and effect and shall be deemed “severable” from the portion, clause, or provision deemed to be invalid by the court.

SECTION 3. REPEAL: All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE: This Ordinance shall take effect seven days after publication of a notice of adoption of this Ordinance, unless referendum procedures are initiated under MCL 125.3402. If referendum procedures are initiated, this Ordinance will take effect in accordance with MCL 125.3402.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

Scott Dean
City of Saugatuck, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that:

1. The above is a true copy of an ordinance adopted by the City of Saugatuck at a duly scheduled and noticed meeting of the City Council held on _____, _____ 2023, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

2. A summary of the above ordinance was duly published in the _____ newspaper, a newspaper that circulates within the City of Saugatuck, on _____, 2023.
3. Within 1 week after such publication, I recorded the above ordinance in a book of ordinances kept by me for that purpose, including the date of passage of the ordinance, the names of the members of the City Council voting, and how each member voted.
4. I filed an attested copy of the above ordinance with the Allegan County Clerk on _____, 2023.

ATTESTED:

Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, Director of Planning and Zoning

MEETING DATE: November 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Code of Ordinances Amendment – Ordinance No.231113-B Removal of Temporary Licensing Provisions

DESCRIPTION:

This item is directly related to the previous agenda item. Full details can be viewed as part of that report.

If the zoning ordinance amendments related to outdoor dining are adopted, they will require a revocable license agreement with the City as a prerequisite to obtaining a special land use for an expanded outdoor dining area. As a result, Section 96.33 of the City Code will no longer be necessary. Accordingly, attached is a City Code amendment deleting that section.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney prepared the draft ordinance amendment. The City Attorney will be at your meeting to answer any questions you may have.

SAMPLE MOTION:

Motion to adopt ordinance no. 231113-B, an amendment to the code of ordinances to remove the temporary licensing provisions for expanded outdoor dining areas from Section 96.33 to ensure consistency in the City's regulation of expanded outdoor dining areas.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

AMENDMENT TO THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES
ORDINANCE NO.231113-B

At a meeting of the City Council of the City of Saugatuck, Allegan County, Michigan, held at the City of Saugatuck Hall on _____, 2023 at _____ p.m., City Council Member _____ moved to adopt the following ordinance, which motion was seconded by City Council Member _____.

An ordinance to amend the City of Saugatuck Code of Ordinances to remove the temporary licensing provisions for expanded outdoor dining areas from Section 96.33 to ensure consistency in the City’s regulation of expanded outdoor dining areas and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Saugatuck.

THE CITY OF SAUGATUCK, ALLEGAN COUNTY, ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. DELETION OF SECTION 96.33 OF THE CITY CODE. The City of Saugatuck Code of Ordinances, Section 96.33 shall be deleted in its entirety.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY: Should a court of competent jurisdiction find any provision, clause, or portion of this ordinance amendment to be invalid, the balance or remainder of this ordinance amendment shall remain valid and in full force and effect and shall be deemed “severable” from the portion, clause, or provision deemed to be invalid by the court.

SECTION 3. REPEAL: All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE: This Ordinance shall take effect immediately after publication.

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: _____

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

Scott Dean
City of Saugatuck, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that:

1. The above is a true copy of an ordinance adopted by the City of Saugatuck at a duly scheduled and noticed meeting of the City Council held on _____, _____ 2023, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.
2. A summary of the above ordinance was duly published in the _____ newspaper, a newspaper that circulates within the City of Saugatuck, on _____, 2023.
3. Within 1 week after such publication, I recorded the above ordinance in a book of ordinances kept by me for that purpose, including the date of passage of the ordinance, the names of the members of the City Council voting, and how each member voted.
4. I filed an attested copy of the above ordinance with the Allegan County Clerk on _____, 2023.

ATTESTED:

Jamie Wolters
City of Saugatuck, Clerk

Jamie Wolters

From: Daniel Fox <danielwfox101@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 7:32 PM
To: Jamie Wolters
Subject: Could you please add this as correspondence...

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

... for the coming workshop as well as the ensuing council meeting?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Do due diligence on Old Airport Land

To the editor,

At the Saugatuck City Council's Parks & Public Works public meeting last week, it appeared that our local government has their cart well ahead of their horse.

Mention what's locally known as the "airport property" to most any resident and expect a blank stare in return. Even the few who may know something about it likely have no idea where it's located, let alone having ever set foot there.

For all of us, this newspaper gave these directions and description: "The land, surrounded by Saugatuck Township, lies east off 63rd Street bordering on an old landfill where 134th Avenue ends east of the expressway." For

the 100 years the city's owned the property, it's been largely unused.

So what is city government suddenly thinking about doing with this 170-acre real estate relic? Apparently, there's enthusiasm for turning it into a nature reserve of some sort.

Per official statement, "City Manager Ryan Heise, is thrilled: 'If there is one thing, or a thing, that most people can agree on in Saugatuck, it's protecting the environment and promoting healthy living through outdoor activities.'"

Alas, this quick bias in favor of a particular course of action is the "cart" that's leapt ahead of the horse. That "horse" would be an answer to a fundamental

question: "What's this taxpayer-owned property worth?"

Citizens should demand an unbiased, upfront, professional real estate appraisal. If, as some say, the undeveloped, unconnected tract is worth \$1 million, might that suggest a broader look at what the best course forward might be?

Once we know the site's value, council should start a thoughtful, focused, strategic process to identify and evaluate alternatives for the land's future.

Doing less — especially in haste — would be poor planning and even worse government transparency.

Dan Fox
Saugatuck

Thanks.

Dan

Short-Term Rental Task Force Action Report

City of Saugatuck, Michigan





Short-Term Rental Task Force Action Report

City of Saugatuck, Michigan

September 27, 2023

Prepared with the assistance of:



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Acknowledgments

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Steven Manns

Lauren Stanton

Sean Steele

Kevin Tringali

Elizabeth Boerema

Cathy Hart

Anne Gudith

Joe Clark

With special thanks for City staff members:

Ryan Cummins, Director of Planning, Zoning, & Project Management

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk

Ryan Heise, City Manager

And the McKenna Team:

John Jackson, AICP; President

Chris Khorey, AICP; Project Director

Kyle Mucha, AICP; Project Manager

Danielle Bouchard, AICP; Project Planner

Maya Baker, Project Planner

Emily Huhman, Project Planner

Lauren Sayer, GIS Mapping Specialist

Raphael Kasen, AICP; Public Engagement Specialist

Jeff Keesler, Public Engagement Specialist

Erin Raine, Graphic Designer

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Purpose & Summary

This report communicates the efforts undertaken by the City of Saugatuck's Short-Term Rental Task Force to identify and prioritize current short-term rental concerns, issues, opportunities, and objectives held by residents, property and business owners of the City, schools, public safety and other community stakeholders.

The City of Saugatuck's Short-Term Rental Task Force (also known as the Task Force), was established by Saugatuck City Council on February 16, 2023. The Task Force purpose and priorities include identifying and prioritizing current short-term rental concerns, issues, opportunities, and objectives held by the residents and community stakeholders. For a full listing of the Council's findings, refer to City Resolution No. 230216-A located within this report.

The following report details the analysis, findings, public comment and recommendations as it pertains to the City of Saugatuck's short-term rentals.



OVERVIEW

The City of Saugatuck Short-Term Rental Task Force consists of nine members, who represent a balance of different stakeholders within the community, including:

- One member from City Council
- Two members from the Planning Commission
- One member from the retail, restaurant or lodging business owner community
- One member from a short-term rental property management group
- One member from a residential zone who holds a short-term rental license and/or is positive about short-term rentals
- One member from a commercial zone who is not the owner of a short-term rental
- One member from the real estate/Realtor community with no short-term rental ownership
- One member from a residential zone who is not a short-term rental owner and who feels negatively impacted by short-term rentals in their neighborhood

The City of Saugatuck's Short-Term Rental Task Force began meeting in May of 2023 to implement the purposes and priorities outlined by the Council Resolution. During monthly meetings, the Task Force reviewed and undertook the following generalized topics:

- Reviewed Michigan communities' policies towards short-term rentals.
- Analyzed state-level data on housing markets.
- Discussed City of Saugatuck ordinances, regulations and policies;
- Engaged in discussions pertaining to the City of Saugatuck assessing & zoning data.
- Listened to public comments from residents and stakeholders.
- Hosted a community-wide Town Hall and online public engagement survey.

In order to assist in the above-listed items, the City of Saugatuck partnered with the Michigan planning firm **McKenna**, in order to aid in facilitation and in-depth data analysis pertaining to the short-term rental objectives. McKenna is a Michigan based regional planning firm that specializes in municipal planning, development and building services. The McKenna team consisted of professional planners who bring an array of expertise, with backgrounds ranging from municipal policy to design to commercial construction.

Objectives

Aid & Support the City of Saugatuck's Tourism Industry

The Task Force acknowledges that short-term rentals support the tourism industry in the City of Saugatuck, City of Douglas, and Saugatuck Township. The Task Force has expressed the opinion that short-term rentals permit tourists alternative temporary housing options within the City, as compared to a traditional hotel/motel.

Pathways Forward

Potential avenues to assist in achieving this objective are listed below. These pathways are not all-encompassing, however, are intended to be broad in nature.

- Promote tourist accommodations that offer short-term lodging.
- Encourage underutilized residential dwellings to become short-term lodging options.
- Encourage second homeowners to offer short-term lodging during non-use times.
- Conduct market analyses to determine impact of short-term rentals on the commercial sector in Saugatuck.

Preserve the Character of Saugatuck by Enhancing the Small-Town Feel

Beginning in May of 2023, the City of Saugatuck Short-Term Rental Task Force has listened to public comment as it pertains to the character of the City of Saugatuck. Some residents and secondary homeowners state short-term rentals detract from the neighborhood feel. Other supporters of short-term rentals believe it helps encourage a higher standard of property maintenance. As such, the Task Force has defined the following objective as it pertains to maintaining the character of the community:

Pathways Forward

Potential avenues to assist in achieving this objective are listed below.

- Encourage the preservation of the existing residential housing stock by limiting commercial development.
- Encourage short-term lodging in appropriate areas of the City, such as near Butler Street, to aid in supporting the tourism industry.
- Seek to limit the occupancy of residential short-term lodging dwellings.
- Encourage high occupancy short-term lodging in appropriately zoned areas of the City.
- Review the goals and objectives of the City's Master Plan to ensure alignment with maintaining the small-town character of the City.



Effectively Enforce Short-Term Rental-Regulated Ordinances

A key takeaway from the Task Force, public engagement (survey & Town Hall) and public comment during meetings has been centered on ordinance and regulation compliance from patrons and property owners of short-term rentals. A significant consensus has been that existing ordinances and regulations need to be followed as it pertains to noise, trash, parking and occupancy limits of short-term rentals.

Pathways Forward

Potential avenues to assist in achieving this objective are listed below.

- Encourage proactive monitoring of short-term rentals within the City.
- Begin an informational campaign pertaining to regulations on short-term rentals.
- Publish common violations noted by the Allegan County Sheriff's Office and ways to mitigate such issues.
- Create and publish a "frequently asked question" as it relates to short-term rentals on the City website.

Recommendations

Good Neighbor Guide

A good neighbor guide sets expectations and regulations for those who rent a home within the Saugatuck area. Such a guide helps ensure residents’ quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their neighborhoods. The Task Force has discussed the need to adopt a city wide “good neighbor guide.” Provisions could include:

- Noise considerations
- Trash disposal
- Parking considerations—off-street versus on-street parking
- Owner/Operator of the short-term rental post the occupancy limits as established by the Township Fire Authority.

Noise

Noise is a common concern that has been raised since the Task Force began meeting in May of 2023 to discuss short-term rentals. As such, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration.

Recommendation #1: Request that City Council review the existing noise ordinance (Section 94.04) to determine if increasing the time of “quiet” hours is appropriate. A partnership with the Allegan County Sheriff’s office may be appropriate in review of the noise ordinance.

Recommendation #2: Request that the Planning Commission encourage City Council to review the ability to create a noise ordinance for residential districts. Such an ordinance may limit the hours of operation for activities as construction, sound amplifiers, radio and musical instruments. This review would seek to enhance the existing city-wide noise ordinance to aid in further protecting residential districts.



Fire Safety

The Saugatuck Township Fire District presented recommendations to the Task Force regarding life safety improvements as it pertains to short-term rentals. The following recommendations are provided:

Recommendation #1: Request that the Saugatuck Fire Department transition to annual inspections of short-term rental units.

Recommendation #2: Explore reducing the occupancy limits that aligns more with single-family residential dwellings. Such reduced occupancy would entail allowing two (2) persons per bedroom, with a maximum of 12 persons per dwelling.

Recommendation #3: Encourage collaboration between the City of Saugatuck, the City of the Village of Douglas and Saugatuck Township to ensure rental ordinances, fee structures and programs mirror each other.

Recommendation #4: Explore requiring a local agent or management company to be located within 15 road miles of the short-term rental property. Such local agent or management company shall be knowledgeable about the property and accountable for responding to the property 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Recommendation #5: Encourage regulating short-term and long-term rentals identically [in a similar manner].

Recommendation #6: Require the short-term rental certificate to be posted in a window visible from the public roadway in order to identify the property as having been issued a permit to operate as an STR.

Recommendation #7: Encourage the review of assessing monetary fines/fees to property owners who are in violation of the short-term rental ordinance and Saugatuck Township Fire District requirements. Such fines/fees would be tracked in an enforcement database.

Recommendation #8: Review the existing Fire District fee structure and recommend amendments where applicable.

Recommendation #9: Require documentation from the short-term rental property insurance company identifying and acknowledging the property is insured as a rental dwelling.

Recommendation #10: Acknowledge that the short-term rental properties were originally built and issued certificates of occupancy as “single-family dwellings” under the Michigan Residential Code. Renting a single-family dwelling to the public on a transient basis mirrors a commercial or business-like change-of-use that can trigger other requirements.

Trash

The Task Force has heard from citizens, residents and community stakeholders regarding a buildup of trash and general refuse that accumulates near short-term rentals. Residents believe short-term rentals are increasing the amount of discarded items above and beyond what is witnessed from non-short-term rental properties. The following items are recommended for consideration:

Recommendation #1: Encourage the Planning Commission to explore modifying the short-term rental ordinance (Section 154.022.V.) to require all short-term rentals—certified—to have an additional residential dumpster for every four (4) persons of occupancy. Example—if a STR has an occupancy limit of eight (8) persons, two containers shall be required. If an STR has an occupancy limit of 10 persons, three (3) containers would be required.

Recommendation #2: Encourage City Administration to review the existing trash and recycling policies to determine if additional pickups from the waste-hauler are warranted.

Recommendation #3: Encourage City Administration to review increasing the recycling pickup from once-a-month to twice-a-month to reduce the buildup of materials on residential properties.

Recommendation #4: Encourage City Administration to review the existing recycling policy and determine if additional pickups in the peak tourist months (May to September) are feasible with the waste management company.

Compliance Officer

The Task Force has heard months of public comment and engaged with stakeholders who have expressed the need to have a dedicated code enforcement officer on staff to deal with concerns arising from short-term rentals. The following are offered for consideration:

Recommendation #1: Encourage the City Administration to explore hiring a dedicated code enforcement/code compliance officer to address short-term rental concerns. Such staff members would be able to respond to resident comments arising from noise, trash, occupancy and other ordinance violations.

General Modifications

The following recommendations are general comments and directions that the Task Force has explored. These recommendations are broad in nature and are not specific to any one category:

Recommendation #1: Encourage the creation of a short-term rental registration public database in which the property owner and management company (if applicable) contact information is made available. Such contact information can be a general number, but one in which concerned residents can reasonably be expected to reach an agent or representative of the property.



Recommendation #2: Encourage the creation of a general call-line in which residents may leave non-time-sensitive concerns with city officials regarding short-term rentals.

Recommendation #3: Encourage the City Administration to review areas within residential districts in which “no parking this side of the street” signs could be installed to aid in emergency services access. This could be dedicated north/south roadways and east/west roadways to offer an emergency service pathway.

Recommendation #4: Encourage City Administration to review the ability to revoke a certificate for a short-term rental if multiple complaints are validated within a 12-month period. Further, encourage such a review to establish what is classified as a violation and the documentation process to the property owner to inform of the validated violation complaint.

Recommendation #5: Request that City Administration review the feasibility of requiring short-term rental properties to post their certificate numbers when listing the rental on popular platforms, such as AirBnB and VRBO.

Recommendation #6: Request that City Administration explore hiring a third-party agency to support the City in managing its short-term rental program.

Residential Caps

The Task Force has heard from residents, stakeholders and members of the community at large on the topic of instituting a cap on the number of short-term rentals. The following analysis is provided as it pertains to instituting caps on the number of short-term rentals within the City of Saugatuck.

Short Term Rental Caps

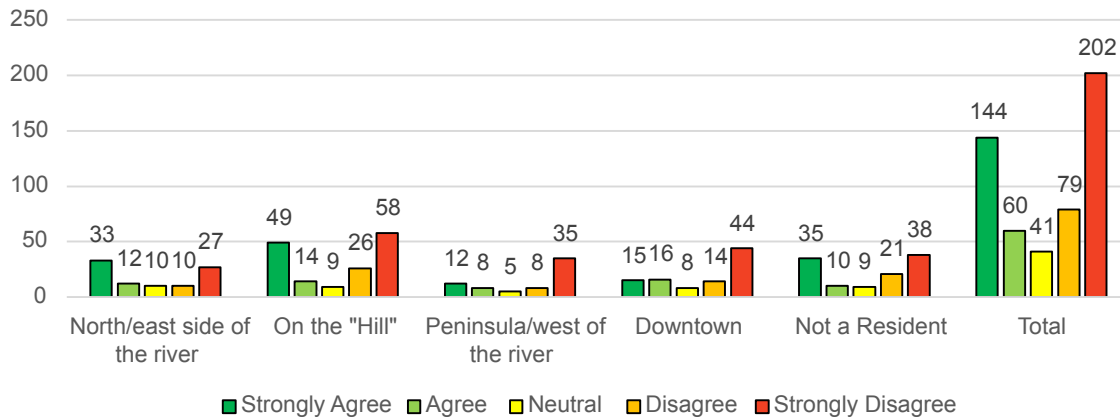
The following outlines proposed recommendations and analysis as stipulated by the City of Saugatuck’s Short-Term Rental Task Force as it pertains to residential “caps” on the number of rental units. The analysis is based on discussions during Task Force meetings, community input via a Town Hall, public comment during regularly scheduled meetings and a comprehensive public engagement survey.

The following graphics are based on the community survey conducted in July and August of 2023. The responses are listed as a total, and also distilled further into neighborhoods (north/east side of the river; peninsula/west of the river; on the “hill”; downtown). Additionally, the below analysis reviewed responses based on full-time/primary home residents, part-time/second home residents and non-residents.

City-Wide Cap Response

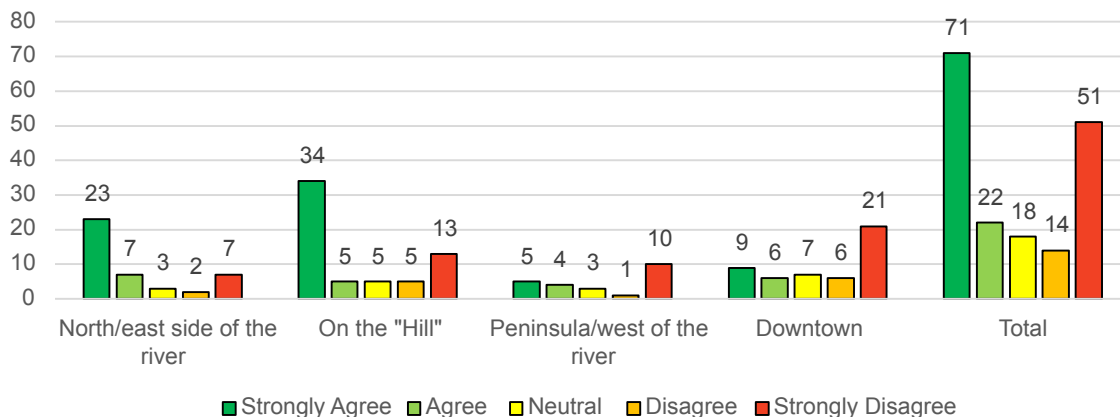
The public engagement survey solicited feedback from residents and community stakeholders as to the temperament of a city-wide cap on short-term rentals. Of the total number of responses received, 144 respondents were indicated they strongly agreed with a city-wide cap, while 202 respondents strongly disagreed with a city-wide cap. When combined with the agree/disagree respondents, 281 were opposed and 204 were in favor.

Implement a Cap on STRs Citywide—All Responses



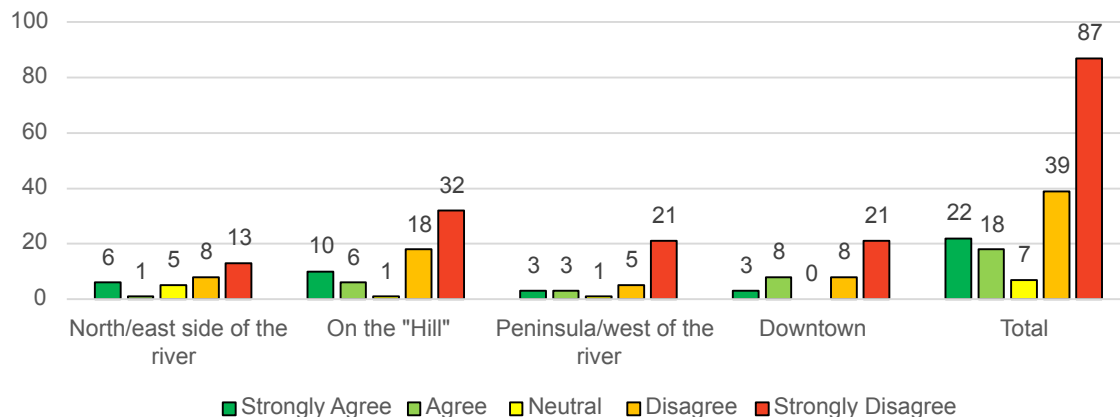
A further analysis of the survey responses indicated that full-time residents were more in favor of a city-wide cap particular for the areas classified as “the Hill” and the north/east side of the river.

Implement a Cap on STRs Citywide—Full Time Residents



Part-time residents found a cap city-wide to be less agreeable. Part-time residents are more inclined to offer their property in Saugatuck as a short-term rental than full-time residents due to the number of days each year the residential dwelling is being occupied.

Implement a Cap on STRs Citywide—Part Time Residents



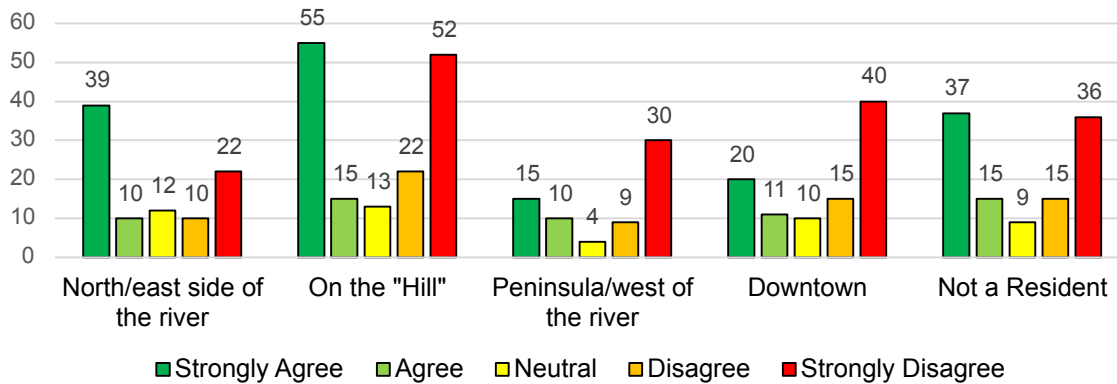
SUMMARY

When viewed as a whole, a city-wide cap policy was not overwhelmingly supported by those who responded. The response data indicates that full-time residents viewed a city-wide cap more favorably than those who identified as being part-time residents. Public comment has further supported the statement that a city-wide cap would potentially have negative impacts on the economic well-being of the City. The public at large has indicated that short-term rentals provide temporary lodging for tourists, who further support the local businesses of the area. Therefore, placing a city-wide cap on short-term rentals has a potential negative connotation.

Residential District Cap Responses

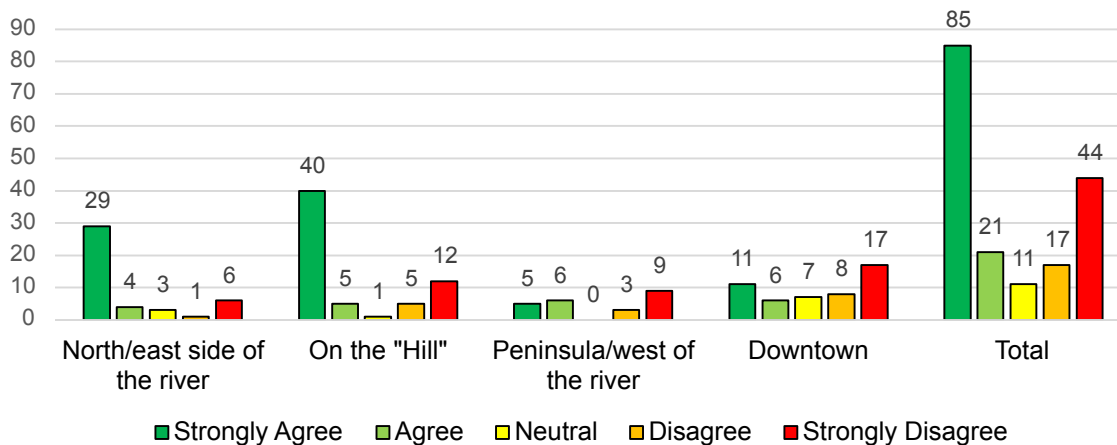
The public engagement survey inquired with respondents about their view on placing caps on short-term rentals in residential districts only, leaving out downtown and other commercial areas. As referenced in the previous section, there are four distinct regions of the City that were reviewed for cap placement. As additional background, “The Hill” region in the summer of 2023 had a significant amount of short-term rental certificates issued.

Implement a Cap on STRs in Residential Districts—All Responses



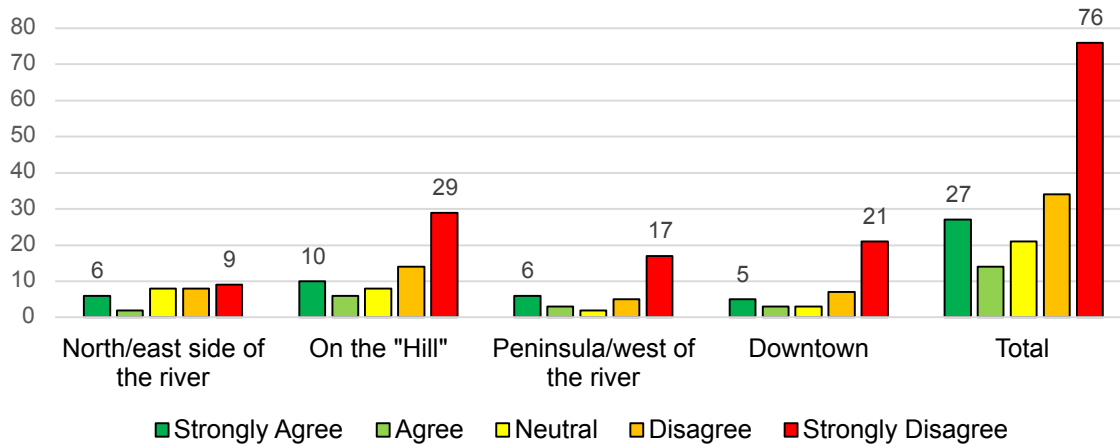
The following table provides the response rate for full-time residents as it pertains to caps within residential districts. Full-time residents were in favor of establishing caps in the north/east side of the river and “The Hill” area of the City. Over 100 respondents were in favor of establishing caps in the residential districts as compared to 61 respondents who were not.

Implement a Cap on STRs in Residential Districts—Full Time Residents



Part-time residents responded in the opposite trend than those of full-time residents. A significant number of part-time residents were opposed to placing caps on short-term rentals in the residential districts.

Implement a Cap on STRs in Residential Districts—Part Time Residents



SUMMARY

When viewed as a whole, a city-wide cap policy was not overwhelmingly supported by those who responded. The response data indicates that full-time residents viewed a city-wide cap more favorably than those who identified as being part-time residents. Public comment has further supported the statement that a city-wide cap would potentially have negative impacts on the economic well-being of the City. The public at large has indicated that short-term rentals provide temporary lodging for tourists, who further support the local businesses of the area. Therefore, placing a city-wide cap on short-term rentals has a potential negative connotation.

Inversely, public comment has been expressed that placing a cap on short-term rentals would stop the decline of available housing stock in the City. Further, supporters of placing a cap on short-term rentals have indicated that such a policy change would encourage part-time residents to become full-time residents. Additionally, an increase in permanent residents would also increase the talent pool for boards and commissions within the City.

The survey responses are relatively split between full-time and part-time residents: full-time residents are more in favor of placing caps on short-term rentals, while part-time residents are opposed to such a policy change. The next section provides potential avenues that could be explored by the Planning Commission and City Council.



Potential Short-Term Rental Cap Policies

The City of Saugatuck’s Short-Term Rental Task Force has acknowledged the role short-term rentals play in the tourism industry, local economy, and residential quality of the neighborhood districts. Further, the Task Force understands that short-term rentals can be a challenging topic to address to the satisfaction of residents, property owners, community stakeholders, and other key personnel. Therefore, with these factors predominate, the following **potential** policies were presented. These policies were not designed as a “be all, end all” to the short-term rental topic.

Policy #1: City-Wide Cap

Explore the creation of a city-wide cap on short-term rentals. Such a cap would be applied to all zoning districts. The cap limit would be an estimated 10 certificates higher than what is on record at the time of the policy adoption. Once the cap limit is received, no new certificates will be issued.

Residential properties that are in good standing and currently have a short-term rental certificate would be permitted to renew, subject to complying with all applicable zoning regulations and fire-safety stipulations.

Once the number of short-term rental certificates falls below the established cap number, new certificates could be issued up to the cap limit.

Policy #2: Residential District Cap

Explore the creation of a residential district cap limit. Such a limit would be applicable to all residential districts, exempting out the downtown area/commercial areas. The cap limit would be an estimated 10 certificates higher than what is on record at the time of the policy adoption.

Residential properties that are in good standing and currently have a short-term rental certificate would be permitted to renew, subject to complying with all applicable zoning regulations and fire-safety stipulations.

Once the number of short-term rental certificates falls below the established cap number, new certificates could be issued up to the cap limit.

Policy #3: Neighborhood Cap

Explore the creation of a neighborhood cap. Each neighborhood would have a given number of certificates that could be issued. Once that number is reached, no new certificates would be issued until such a time as the recorded certificates falls below the established cap.

Residential properties that are in good standing and currently have a short-term rental certificate would be permitted to renew, subject to complying with all applicable zoning regulations and fire-safety stipulations.

Once the number of short-term rental certificates falls below the established cap number, new certificates could be issued up to the cap limit.

Policy #4: Lottery

Explore the creation of a lottery system that would require all short-term rental seekers to submit an application for entry into a lottery. The City would host a lottery drawing, in which a set amount of certificates would then be awarded. The lottery would be held every year or, alternatively, every other year. Therefore, certificates would expire after a two-year period. Each former certificate holder would need to re-apply to be entered into the lottery system.

Policy #5: No Action

An alternative to creating a cap on the number of short-term rentals within the City would be to not establish a maximum number. Market data and other housing markers are trending towards a stabilization of the housing stock and a reduction in the number of new short-term certificates. So long as a property owner can comply with the established zoning and fire-safety regulations, a certificate would be issued. Additionally, an increase in active enforcement measures that address noise, trash and parking concerns could be undertaken, which may alleviate some of the adjacent residential concerns.



Task Force Discussion On Short-Term Rental Caps

The City of Saugatuck Short-Term Rental Task Force discussed the above potential policies in detail during a public meeting in September 2023. The task force does not support a city-wide cap (limit) on short-term rentals or a lottery. Some members of the Task Force felt strongly about seeking to impose a cap (limit) on the number of short-term rentals within residential zones or neighborhoods within the City. Other members opined that placing such a cap would not have the anticipated outcome that may be expected. Members felt that placing a cap on the number of rentals would not address concerns with noise, debris, parking and occupancy loads within residential dwellings.

In the discussion of caps, task force members did not agree about whether the views of part-time residents should carry as much weight as those of full-time residents. The task force also stressed the importance of involving legal counsel in any decisions made about caps.

The Task Force discussed placing caps on residential areas of the City to help alleviate the number of rentals in a given geographic area. The Task Force further discussed the potential for extreme challenges on establishing neighborhood districts for cap implementation. Some of the questions posed were as follows:

- Would such neighborhood caps be placed block by block?
- Would one side of a street be classified in one neighborhood, with the other side in a separate neighborhood?
- Would instituting a cap in residential neighborhoods then begin to push rentals into other areas of the city, thus exacerbating the issue and not solving for resident concerns regarding the number of rental units?

After discussion on the policies outlined above, the Task Force acknowledged that further review and analysis of instituting a cap on the number of rentals may be required. However, for the purpose of the Short-Term Rental Task Force, a consensus from the members was given that no definitive direction on caps was achieved. The Task Force acknowledged the amount of work and level of data analysis that was conducted since May 2023 and that continued discussions pertaining to caps should continue.

The Task Force found a consensus among members that addressing the initial concerns pertaining to noise, trash and occupancy from an enforcement perspective should be a top priority for the City Administration moving forward. The Task Force opined that by enforcing the existing regulations, while reviewing the recommendations provided within this report, would be beneficial to both residents and stakeholders in the community.

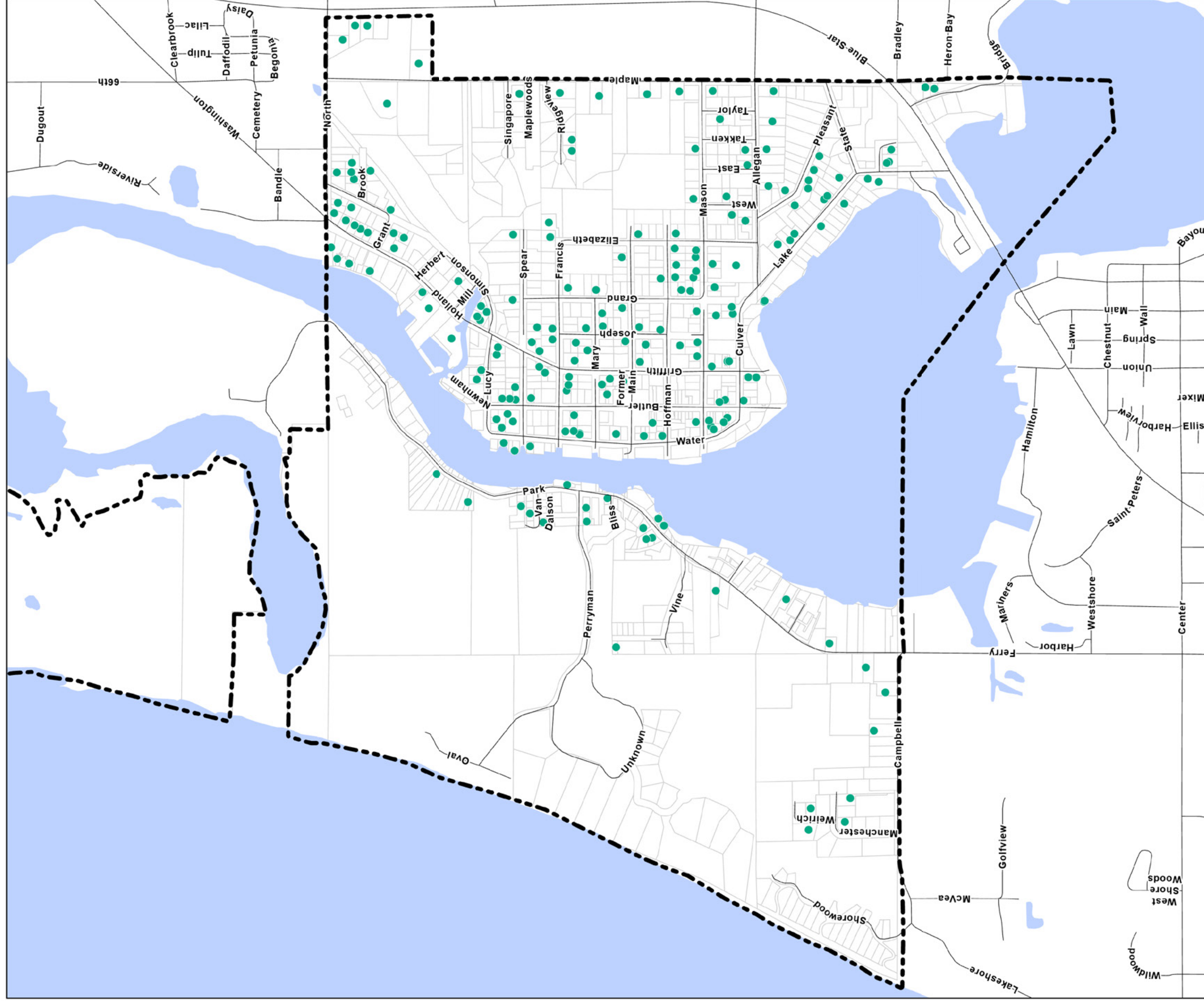
Analysis

Local Data Analysis

In partnership with the City of Saugatuck, the McKenna team utilized parcel data and current short-term rental certificates to geographically represent where the short-term rentals are within the City. Further analysis of city data showcased which residential properties were occupied by full-time residents and part-time residents by reviewing the Principal Residential Exemption (PRE) status of city parcels.

The following table provides a total parcel count for each residential zoning district, property classification as established by the City Assessor, PRE status and the number of short-term rentals (STRs) in each district.

District	Residential Classified Parcels	STR Parcels	STR Percentage
Center Residential R-4	23	16	69.57%
Community Residential R-1	343	111	32.36%
Lake Street R-2	120	17	14.17%
Maple Street R-1	36	8	22.22%
Multi-Family Residential R-3	6	4	66.67%
Peninsula North (Duneside) R-1	14	2	14.29%
Peninsula North (Riverside) R-1	7	0	0.00%
Peninsula South R-1	47	7	14.89%
Peninsula West R-1	60	15	25.00%
Grand Total	656	180	27.44%



Certified Short Term Rentals

City of Saugatuck, Michigan

July 17, 2023

LEGEND

- Certified Short Term Rentals (259 Total)
- Parcels
- Saugatuck Boundary

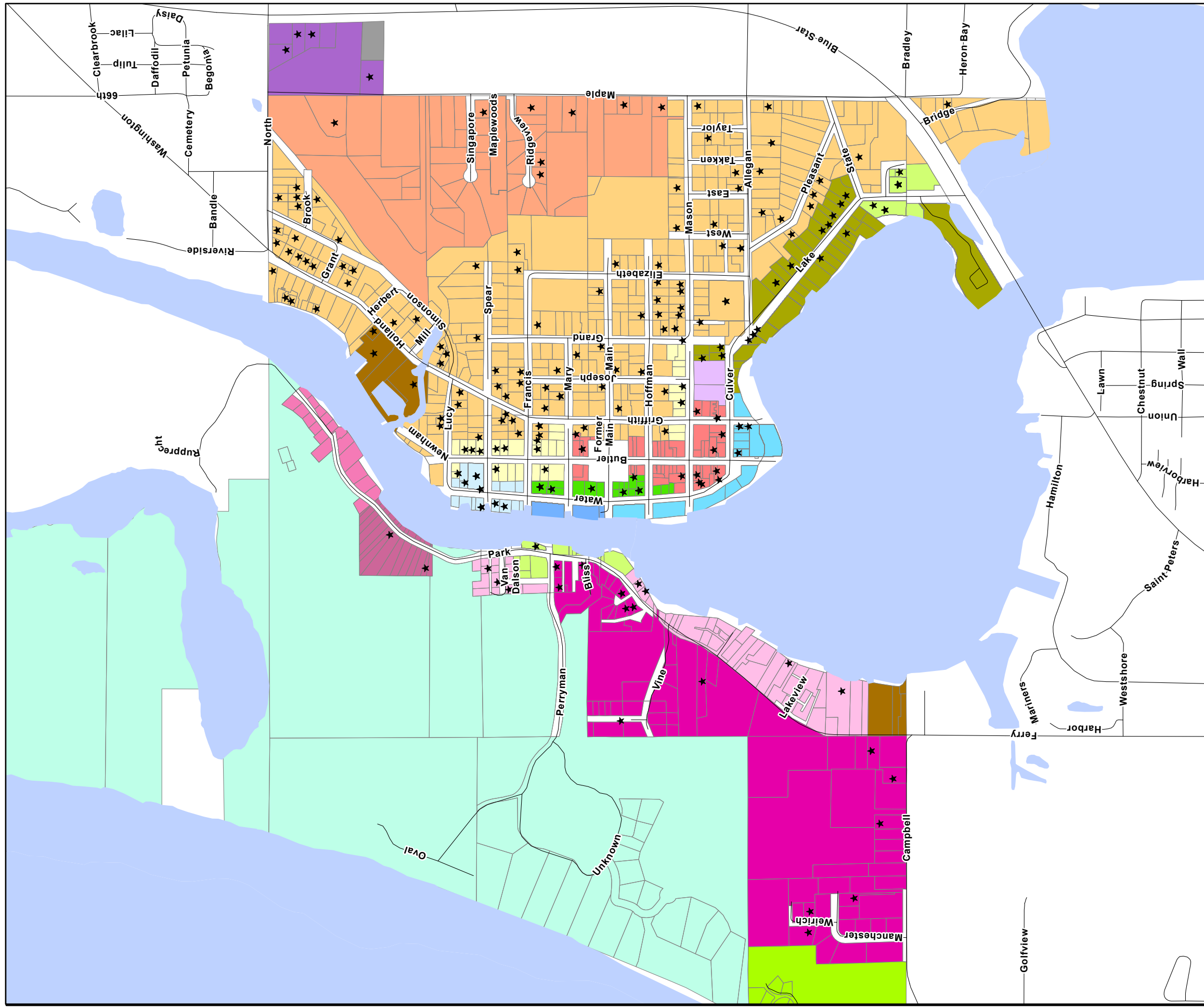


Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Allegan County, 2023. McKenna, 2023.



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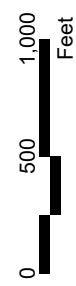
Certified STR Locations

City of Saugatuck, Michigan

June 29, 2023

LEGEND

- ★ Short Term Rental (269 total)
- Blue Star District - LI1
- Center Residential - R-4
- City Center - C-1
- Community Residential - R-1
- Conservation, Recreation, & Camp
- Cultural Community
- Lake Street - R-2
- Maple Street - R-1
- Multi-Family Residential - R-3
- Neighborhood Marine
- Peninsula North (Duneside) - R-1
- Peninsula North (Riverside) - R-1
- Peninsula South - R-1
- Peninsula West - R-1
- Resort District - C-4
- Summer Resort & Park Association
- Water Street Commercial - C-2
- Water Street East - C-2
- Water Street North - C-1
- Water Street South - C-2



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Allegan County, 2023. McKenna 2023.



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Community Comparison Analysis

In order to aid the Task Force in enhancing their understanding of short-term rental policies and regulations in communities across the state of Michigan, the McKenna team analyzed local ordinances and presented four communities for consideration by the Task Force. The community review analyzed the following topics:

- Short-Term Rental Caps
- Zoning Vs. General Ordinance for regulations pertaining to short-term rentals
- Owner residency requirements
- Tenant code of conducts
- Unit type & parking requirements
- Occupancy limits
- Registration policies
- Penalty stipulations for violations of local ordinances

The following table presents further details:

City of Charlevoix	City of Grand Haven	City of St. Ignace	Suttons Bay Township
Total Housing Units			
2,148	6,066	1,324	1,629
STR cap			
80 ^{1,2}	No maximum number, only permitted in certain districts.	50 ²	150*
Zoning vs. General Ordinance			
Zoning	General Ordinance & Zoning Ordinance	Zoning	General Ordinance
Owner Residency Requirement			
Personal units: rented out no more than 28 days per year with owner off-site, unlimited with owner on-site. Owner or designated agent within 60-minute drive.	Owner or designated agent within 60 miles of City.	Owner or designated agent within 30-minute drive, available 24/7 for emergencies.	Owner or designated agent within 45-minute drive, available 24/7 for emergencies.
Tenant Code of Conduct?			
Yes	Post local rules for tenants to see.	Post local rules for tenants to see.	Post local rules for tenants to see.

1 80 Business Rentals—units rented more than 28 days per year without owner on-site. No cap on “personal units”.

2 Exception for rentals registered before adoption of ordinance, maximum 16 if compliant with the 2xbedroom + 2xfloor rule.

City of Charlevoix	City of Grand Haven	City of St. Ignace	Suttons Bay Township
Unit Type Requirements?			
2 types of STRs Personal units: rented for 7-28 days/year Business units: rented more than 28 days/year	Persons not required to acquire an ownership interest. Shall not include dwellings that are occupied only by members of the owner's immediate family.	2 types – "Owner-occupied" and "Not owner-occupied"	
Special Parking Requirements?			
Enforcement may require parking on-site (discretionary)	2 spaces per unit (up to six occupants), plus one space for every three occupants over six, based on approved occupancy for all structures on the site.	Single Family: 2 per dwelling unit. Non-family apartments and houses, boarding or employee housing: One space for each dwelling plus one space per bedroom (sleeping room) must be provided by the rental dwelling owner	Parking on-site only
Occupants			
2 people per bedroom + 2 per finished floor. 10 Max ³ .	Comply with building code capacity—no max. # of occupants.	Comply with building code capacity—no max. # of occupants.	Comply with building code capacity—no max. # of occupants.
STR Definition			
Rented for 1 to 29 interrupted or uninterrupted nights per year in the R-1, R-2, and R-2A zoning districts. Those rented for more than 14 days a year must register.	Providing transient accommodations for less than 1 month more than 3 times per year.	Renting for less than 30 consecutive days.	Renting for less than 30 consecutive days. No registration if renting for less than 2 weeks in a year.
Registration Preference			
1. Properties registered before adoption. 2. Properties that have been rented as an STR w/i the past year. 3. Applicants with PRE in City limits 4. All others.	N/A	Chronological waiting list.	Renewal guaranteed each year if owner has not violated ord. Chronological waiting list.
Registration Schedule			
Yearly registration. Inspection every other year. Schedule not specified in ord.	Rental property registered annually.	Permit Year lasts from June 1st—May 31st. Property must be listed and available for rent at least 4 months of the year and within 30 days of permit issuance.	Renewal applications open Oct. 1 through Feb 28th. All applications after March 1st, applications processed as they come (no more preference for renewals).

³ Exception for rentals registered before adoption of ordinance, maximum 16 if compliant with the 2xbedroom + 2xfloor rule.

City of Charlevoix	City of Grand Haven	City of St. Ignace	Suttons Bay Township
Registration Fees			
License: \$300 Registration w/ inspection: \$300 Registration w/o inspection: \$150 Waiting List Deposit: \$50	\$140 per unit. \$50 late fee per unit per month.	Owner-Occupied: \$250 Not Owner-Occupied: \$350	\$200 per permit
Penalties			
1st or 2nd violation in 1 year period: \$100 fine 3rd violation: registration revoked, no re-application for 1 year. 4th violation in 2 years: registration revoked, no re-application for that owner ever. Appeal hearing held by STR Appeals Board	1 violation within 36 mo. Period: \$250 2nd violation: \$500 3rd violation: \$1,000, suspension of certificate. Revoked for repeated violations, cannot reapply for 1 year.	Violations are municipal civil infractions. Each day of violation is a separate infraction. 3 separate violations, City can revoke permit. Appeal to ZBA. Cannot reapply for 1 year. 3 citations against the same tenant counts as 1 civil infraction against the owner.	1st violation in 1 year: verbal/written warning 2nd violation: \$250-\$500 3rd: 2x the initial fine or \$500, whichever is less. Permit revoked, cannot reapply for 1 year. 1 or more violations each year in a 3 year period, permit can be revoked. Can appeal revocation to Township Board.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In review of the communities presented in the above table, the following common elements were observed:

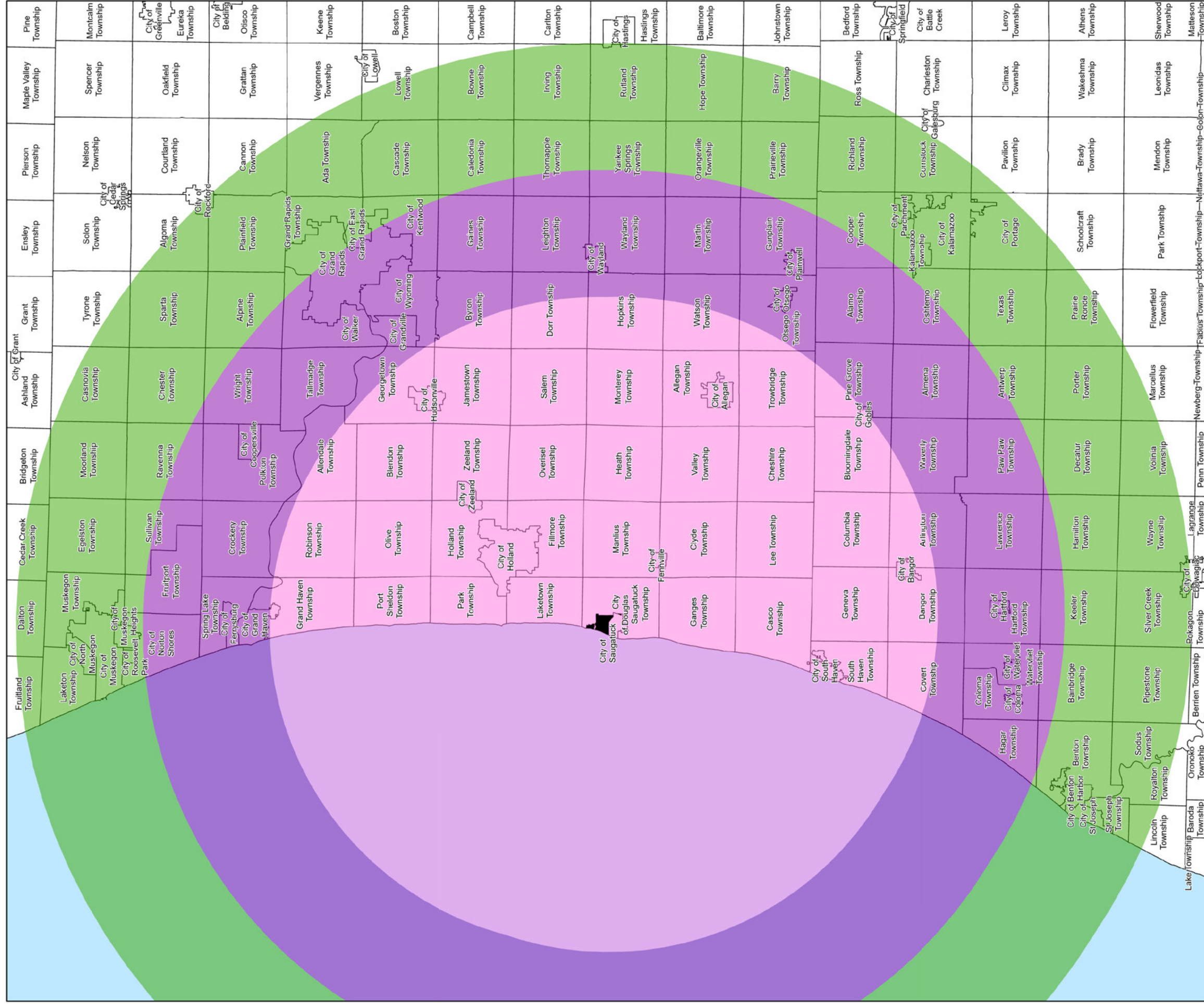
Residency Requirements: Each community that was reviewed required the property owner or a designated agent to live within a geographical region of the municipality. A residency map has been generated to showcase a radius around the City of Saugatuck for 25, 35 and 45 miles.

Occupancy: Of those communities that were sampled, occupancy limits were set by the State of Michigan Building Code. One community, City of Charlevoix, capped the number of occupants at ten. Charlevoix permitted two people per bedroom plus two per finished floor.

Registration Schedule: The communities presented in the earlier table require short-term rental renewal yearly. This differs from the City of Saugatuck, in which certificates are valid for a three-year period.

Tenant Code of Conduct: Sampled communities require short-term rental operators to post a tenant code of conduct. Typical conducts include provisions for noise restrictions, trash disposal and other courtesy items to ensure cohesion with adjacent property owners.

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25, 35, and 45 Mile Radius from Saugatuck

City of Saugatuck, Michigan

August 9, 2023

LEGEND

-  Saugatuck Boundary
-  25 Miles
-  35 Miles
-  45 Miles



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Allegan County 2023, McKenna 2023.



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Regional Comparison Analysis

Further examination of regional communities that draw tourists and visitors from a wider geographical area was also compared with the same standards as provided previously. The regional destinations included the City of South Haven, Michigan, Traverse City, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois.

City of South Haven	City of Chicago	City of Traverse City
Total Housing Units		
3,360	1,272,191	7,851
STR cap		
1 STR certification available for every 4 residential units.	No maximum number, only permitted in certain districts.	No maximum number, only permitted in certain zoning districts
Zoning vs. General Ordinance		
General Ordinance & Zoning Ordinance	General Ordinance & Zoning Ordinance	General Ordinance & Zoning Ordinance
Owner Residency Requirement		
Must have a designated local agent.	<p>If building is less than 4 units, the building must be the owner’s primary residence.</p> <p>If STR is in a dwelling with 5 or more units, owner does not need to be a resident of the building. Must have a listed local contact person.</p> <p>If renting out more than one unit as an STR, owner must obtain a Shared Housing Unit Operator License (SHUOL).</p>	No owner residency requirement for vacation rentals. Tourist rentals must be owner-occupied.
Tenant Code of Conduct?		
Yes -- City of South Haven has a “Good Neighbor Guide” that owners are required to provide to all tenants.	N/A	Owner must post noise ordinance enforcement hours and consumer fireworks ordinance in a visible location.
Unit Type Requirements?		
<p>2 types of STRs—Personal units: limited to 6 rental terms of 28 days or fewer</p> <p>Business units: unlimited yearly rentals of 28 days or fewer</p>	<p>One type of STR available. If a multifamily building, no more than 6 units or</p> <p>25% of all units in the building can be used as STRs, whichever is less.</p>	<p>2 types –</p> <p>“Vacation Rental”: unhosted rental for under 30 days; and “Tourist Rental”: single family unit owned and occupied by the host that is not renting out more than 3 rooms to guests staying no more than 7 days</p>
Special Parking Requirements?		
<p>Single Family: 2 spaces per dwelling unit of 3 bedrooms or less; 1 additional space required for each bedroom over 4 or more bedrooms</p> <p>Multiple Family: 2 spaces for each dwelling unit</p>	<p>No specific parking requirements for STR.</p> <p>Single Family: 2 spaces per unit.</p> <p>Two-Flat/Townhomes: 1.5 spaces per unit.</p> <p>All other residential uses: 1 space per unit.</p>	<p>No specific parking requirements for vacation or tourist rentals.</p> <p>No minimum parking requirement for residential uses.</p>

City of South Haven	City of Chicago	City of Traverse City
Occupants		
<p>For existing STRs, maximum occupancy of 16 total occupants or 2 occupants per bedroom plus 2 additional occupants per story.</p> <p>For newly constructed STRs, maximum occupancy of 12 total occupants, or 2 occupants per bedroom plus 2 additional occupants per story.</p>	No more than 2 persons, not including guests' children, per bedroom, or 1 person per 125 square feet, or the allowed capacity based on the applicable building code, whichever is less.	Comply with building code capacity—no max. # of occupants.
STR Definition		
Rented for 2 to 29 nights.	Unit containing 6 or less bedrooms that is rented for "transient occupancy". Transient occupancy is defined as occupancy for 31 consecutive days or less. A unit cannot be rented for less than 2 consecutive nights.	Dwelling unit is rented for less than 30 consecutive days.
Registration Preference		
N/A	N/A	N/A
Registration Schedule		
<p>Personal STRs: Annual registration required. Bi-annual inspections required. Schedule not specified in ordinance.</p> <p>Business STRs: Annual registration and inspections required. Schedule not specified in ordinance.</p>	Rental properties registered annually.	Licenses expire on December 31st. Must submit renewal application between 30 and 90 days before license expires. Fire Department inspection is required every 3 years.
Registration Fees		
<p>Personal STRs: Bi-annual fee \$125 to be paid to schedule inspection.</p> <p>Business STRs: Annual \$600 fee to be paid to schedule inspection.</p>	<p>Annual fee of \$125.</p> <p>SHOUL fee: \$250 annually.</p>	<p>New License: \$220</p> <p>Renewal License: \$150, \$220 when an inspection is required</p>
Penalties		
<p>Violations are a municipal code infraction.</p> <p>Unregistered STR: 1st violation—\$750; Additional violations—\$1,000</p> <p>Maximum occupancy: 1st violation—\$500; Additional violations—\$1,500</p> <p>Other provision violations: 1st violation—\$100; 2nd violation—\$500; Additional violations—\$1,500</p> <p>License may be revoked after 3 separate violations within 1 calendar year and cannot reapply for 1 year.</p>	<p>Violations are a municipal code infraction.</p> <p>Unregistered STR: No less than \$1,500 and no greater than \$5,000 per violation.</p> <p>Maximum occupancy: No less than \$5,000 and no greater than \$10,000 per violation.</p> <p>Nuisance violations: No less than \$2,500 and no greater than \$5,000 per violation.</p> <p>Operating without a license: No less than \$1,500 and no greater than \$3,000 per violation.</p> <p>Each day that the violation continues represents a separate violation.</p>	<p>Violation of the ordinance is a municipal infraction with a \$500 fine. City Clerk can immediately revoke license if the owner is found to have violated ordinance requirements or has made a false statement on their application.</p>



Master Plan Analysis

GOALS & POLICIES

In this section, we examine goals and policies related to residential and commercial uses in the City and determine if the current regulations regarding short-term rentals meet the stated goals and policies. This memo explores goals and policies that can reasonably be connected to short-term rentals, however, it does not include all goals and policies from the Tri-Community Master Plan.

Overarching Goal: Improve the quality of life for all citizens in the Tri-Communities through implementation of policies and best practices that preserve the existing small town/rural character of the area and that achieve sustainable development—that is, which meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Community Character

- **Goal:** Retain and enhance the quiet, scenic, and small town/rural character of the Tri-Communities.
 - » **Policy:** Preserve the character of the Tri-Communities area by encouraging land uses and densities of development that are consistent with maintaining its small town/rural nature.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Yes—A single-family short-term rental may be more appropriate to maintain the small town character than a motel or hotel. Further, the use of existing residential properties for short-term rentals does not require the construction of large motel/hotel sites. Applicants seeking short-term rental approval more commonly have residential dwellings already established.

- **Goal:** Preserve the established character of neighborhoods and rural areas within the Tri-Communities.
 - » **Policy:** Preserve the character of the area by encouraging land uses and densities/intensities of development which are consistent with and complement the character, economic base, and image of the area.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Maybe—Short-term rentals may support the character, economic base, and image of the area as a tourism-driven City but may also be too dense/intense of a land use in low-density residential areas.
 - » **Policy:** Increase enforcement of existing ordinances and regulations to better preserve the established character of the Tri-Communities and promote the goals and policies of this Plan.

Land Use and Community Facilities

- **Goal:** Promote the balanced, efficient, and economical use of land in a manner which minimizes land use conflicts within and across municipal borders, and provides for a wide range of land uses in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of area residents.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Maybe—short-term rentals promote an economical use of land by permitting property owners to gather supplemental income from the rental rate. However, short-term rentals can be more of an intensive land use than a single-family residential use due to the commercial nature that short-term rentals are. Further analysis should be conducted to determine if short-term rentals are classified as an intensive commercial land use, within a residential district, or if they are more in line with single-family dwellings.

Economic Development

- **Goal:** Strengthen and expand upon the area’s economic bases through strategies, which attract new businesses, strengthen existing businesses, and enhance the tourism potential of the area.
 - » **Policy:** Support efforts to foster tourism by preserving the scenic beauty of the environment, expanding recreation opportunities, improving tourist attractions, preserving the historic character of the communities through the preservation of historic structures, expanding cultural and arts opportunities and encouraging development of promotional materials which highlight the attractions of the Tri-Communities.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Yes—short-term rentals support tourism by providing a wider variety of lodging accommodations. Short-term rentals also permit tourists and other visitors to vacation near the shops, entertainment and the beach. Further, short-term rentals are being established within existing residential structures which encourage continued upkeep and maintenance of residential properties.

Commercial

- **Goal:** Encourage the development of commercial land uses in appropriate locations which serve the current and future needs of residents and tourists, are of a character consistent with community design guidelines, and which promote public safety through prevention of traffic hazards and other threats to public health, safety, and general welfare.
- » **Policy:** Encourage continued concentration of tourist-oriented businesses in Saugatuck and the City of the Village of Douglas, general commercial businesses in the City of the Village of Douglas and Saugatuck Township, and highway service activities that serve regional markets and passenger vehicles at the highway interchanges.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Yes—Short-term rentals offer an additional lodging option close to downtown Saugatuck, where vacant land is sparse and would not support a larger hotel or motel.

- » **Policy:** Encourage retention of existing downtown businesses in order to preserve those functions within Saugatuck and the City of the Village of Douglas because they are so central to the character and function of those downtowns.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Yes—Short-term rentals increase the variety of lodging accommodations available to tourists, which supports downtown businesses. Further, short-term rentals are promoted as a means to vacation near the businesses and other public assets of the community.



Housing/Residential

- **Goal:** Encourage a variety of residential dwelling types in a wide range of prices which are consistent with the needs of a changing population and compatible with the character of existing residences in the vicinity.
 - » **Policy:** Explore alternative measures to reduce housing costs and make home ownership more affordable, such as zoning regulations and other programs which are designed to reduce the cost of constructing new housing, provided the exercise of these measures still preserves the character of the area in which the housing is to be built.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Maybe—Allowing short-term rentals can help homeowners, especially part-time residents, pay for homeownership costs such as property taxes, but may increase housing prices as investors purchase housing for short-term rentals. Data analysis indicates a correlation between short-term rentals and housing prices.

- » **Policy:** Allow only quiet, low traffic, low intensity home occupations in residential areas to preserve the stability of existing neighborhoods.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? No—Increased traffic, noise, and refuse/debris may make short-term rentals too high of an intensity for most residential neighborhoods.

- » **Policy:** Require absentee homeowners to maintain their properties in a manner that is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Maybe—Short-term rentals may help part-time owners maintain their properties by increasing the amount of time it's occupied and encouraging the property's upkeep for renters but can lead to increased maintenance on the property which is inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood.

- » **Policy:** Encourage the preservation and retention of older homes to maintain community character and history and utilize zoning regulations to prevent homeowners from splitting older homes into multiple family apartment or condominium units.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? Maybe—Current zoning regulations prohibit short-term rental owners from renting out individual rooms, preventing a historic home from being split into multiple short-term rentals. However, consistent transient occupancy may harm the upkeep and preservation of a historic building.

- » **Policy:** Discourage the development of high intensity residential uses along the waterfront.

Do Short-Term Rentals support this policy? No—Short-term rentals are permitted uses in both single-family and multi-family residential districts, so the encouragement or discouragement of short-term rentals would not directly impact whether high intensity residential uses are developed along the waterfront.

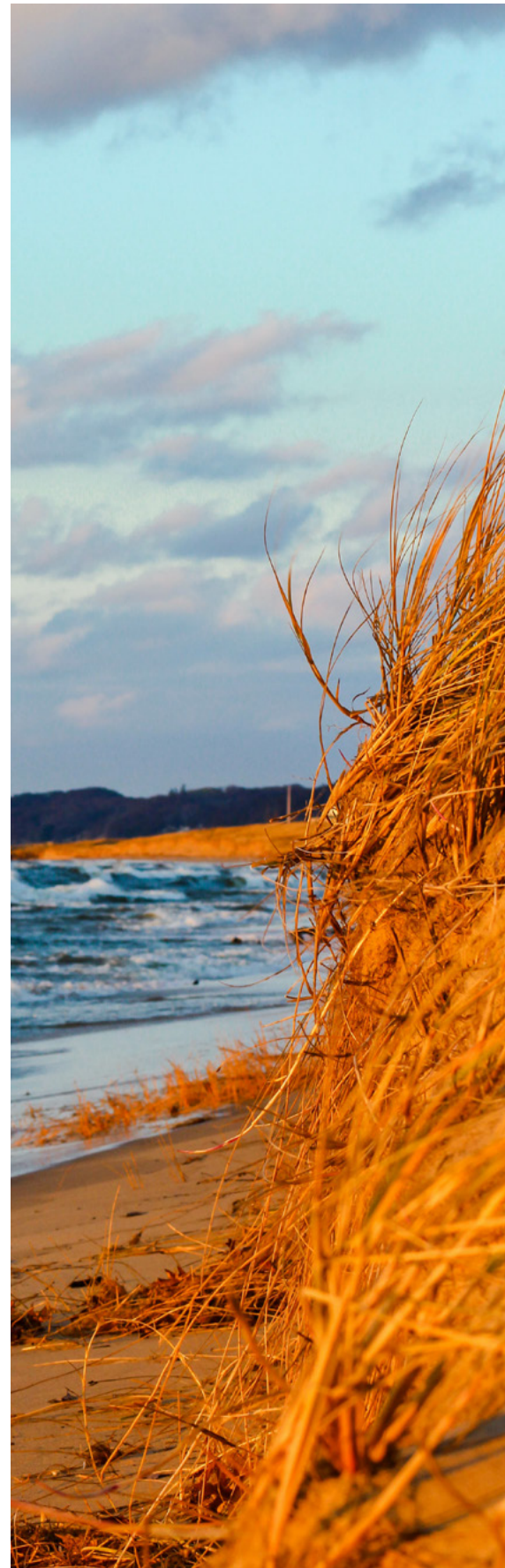
EXISTING LAND COVER AND USE

Residential

- “Single family structures are the predominant residential type. The “hill” in Saugatuck and the neighborhood surrounding the Village Center in the City of the Village of Douglas are other distinct residential areas. Most multiple family structures are concentrated in Saugatuck and the City of the Village of Douglas, with only one such development in the Township (Section 3). There are four mobile home parks in the Tri-Community area: two in the City of the Village of Douglas and two in the southern half of the Township.”
- “Saugatuck Condominiums line the shore of Kalamazoo Lake along Lake St. and block a scenic view of the lake. Most of the City’s year-round residents live above the steep ridge (“the hill”) which separates the waterfront area from the rest of the City. Small cottages on very small lots line the west shore of Kalamazoo Lake along Park St. Tearing down smaller, older homes to be replaced by larger, newer homes will become a larger challenge in the next few years to retaining a “quaint small town” atmosphere.”

Commercial

- “Commercial uses in downtown Saugatuck are primarily oriented to tourists and seasonal residents. Many of the businesses occupy large, older residential structures. Others occupy the old and historic buildings lining Butler Street. This business district has few parking spaces due to the compact arrangement of the area’s original design and heavy pedestrian traffic. Parking is a seasonal problem and a permanent solution has not yet been formulated. There is a shuttle service between the downtown and the High School parking lot during peak use periods to help alleviate the situation. Businesses include bed and breakfasts, small and large restaurants, clothing stores, art galleries and numerous specialty shops, with boat service and marina facilities located along the waterfront. This commercial district has a unique historic character worth preserving and further enhancing and represents a great asset to the Tri-Community area as well as to the region and the state.”



FUTURE LAND USE

Residential

In discussing the future residential land use in the City of Saugatuck, the Tri-Communities Master Plan identified one potential challenge:

- “The challenge in the next twenty years will be maintaining the older housing stock and ensuring that the growing ranks of part-time residents and absentee owners does not result in housing deterioration. The preservation of neighborhood character should be done by maintaining scale, context and materials of the community.” (Tri-Communities Master Plan 2016, 10-5).

Do Short-Term Rentals address this challenge? Maybe—Short-term rentals may encourage full-time residents to become part-time residents to gain economic benefits from short-term rentals. However, it may provide an opportunity for part-time residents to better upkeep their home by increasing the number of days a year it’s occupied and provide an incentive to upkeep the property for short-term renters. Additionally, some part-time residents may become full-time residents within the City.

The future land use map categorizes the entirety of residential areas in the City as Medium to High Density Single and Multi-Family Residential. This classification supports 2-4 dwelling units per acre.

Commercial

The future land use map outlines Downtown Saugatuck as continuing to be the commercial area of the City. Additional future land uses in Downtown Saugatuck include Mixed Use Residential Commercial and Waterfront Mixed Use. “Downtown Saugatuck will continue to serve as the major center for commercial tourist activities. This should be encouraged. However, the downtown area should not be permitted to expand outside the area presently zoned for downtown commercial use. Appropriate measures should be instituted as necessary to mitigate impacts of the city center on adjoining residential areas.”

Waterfront Mixed Use

“The waterfront should continue to be maintained and where necessary, redeveloped with a mix of single and multiple-family residential uses along with waterfront-related commercial developments such as marinas and other ship/shore activities. Condominiums line the shore of Kalamazoo Lake along Lake St. and block a scenic view of the lake. New development along the shore should preserve a view of the lake from the public right-of-way and consist of single-family residences.”

ZONING PLAN

Commercial Districts

- LI-1 Blue Star District
 - » **Purpose:** Serves as a transitional zone between residential and commercial districts.
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Yes—Short-term rentals are higher-intensity residential uses, but lower-intensity than most commercial uses, so they may be appropriate in a transitional zone between residential and commercial districts.
- C-1 City Center Commercial District
 - » **Purpose:** Promote and preserve the Central Business District character of the city and permits intense retail and commercial uses.
- C-4 Resort District
 - » **Purpose:** Provides compatible zoning for existing and future hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Yes—As a type of temporary lodging, short-term rentals are similar in use to hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.
- C-2 Water Street Commercial Districts
 - » **Purpose:** Provide an area for waterfront retail and commercial land use, provide for a less intense commercial use than the City Center District and promote visual access to the Kalamazoo River.
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Maybe—Short-term rentals may be less intensive commercial use, but lack of public access may reduce access to the Kalamazoo River.

Residential Districts

- C-4 City Center Residential District
 - » **Purpose:** Serve as a transitional zone between the high intensity City Center Commercial District and the low intensity Community Residential zone
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Yes—Short-term rentals are higher-intensity residential uses, but lower-intensity than most commercial uses, so they may be appropriate in this district.
- R-1 Community Residential District
 - » **Purpose:** Protect and promote low density single-family residential uses and development in the city.
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Not applicable—short-term rentals are operating via established residential dwellings. Further, short-term rentals are a secondary use to that of the residential dwelling and not the principal function throughout the entire year.

- R-2 Lake Street District
 - » **Purpose:** Enhance low density single-family land use and promote visual access to the Kalamazoo River.

Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Not applicable—short-term rentals as a land use occupy existing residential structures. It is our understanding that most of the residential lots within the City are built out and have been prior to a short-term rental use being established.

- R-1 Maple Street District
 - » **Purpose:** Promote single-family residential land use in a low density setting and preserves the rural character of the district and its natural resources.

Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? No—short-term rentals do not preserve rural character due to the amount of “foot traffic” that can be generated. Further, short-term rentals are more likely to be viewed as a commercial endeavor and not that of a rural residential setting.

- R-1 Park Street West District
 - » **Purpose:** Protects the natural environmental features of the area such as dunes and open spaces through the encouragement of larger lots.

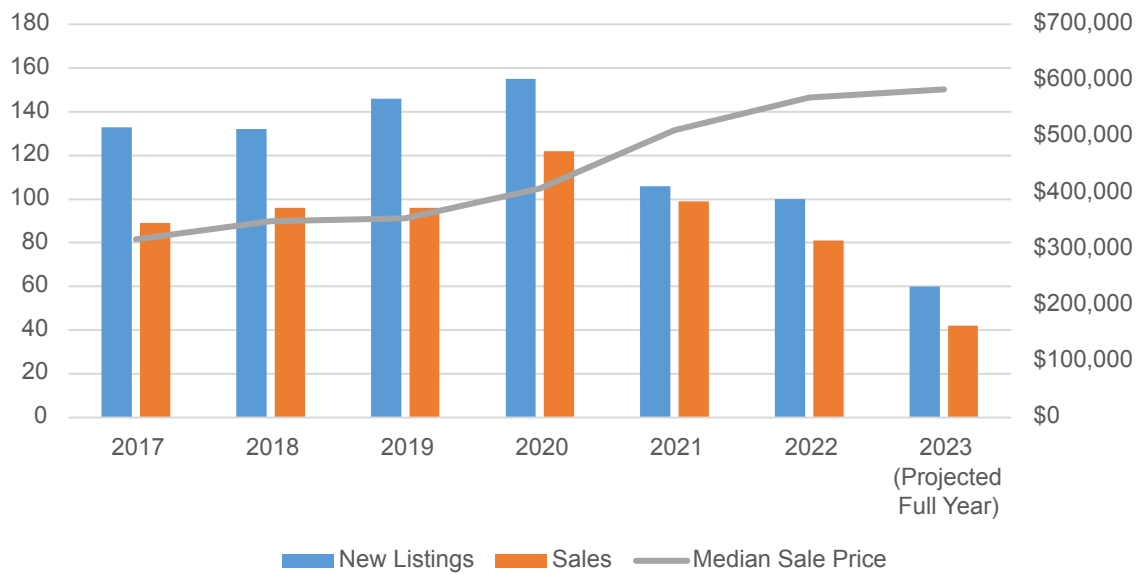
Do Short-Term Rentals meet this purpose? Not applicable—short-term rentals are typically associated with existing residential dwellings.

Market Analysis

The following charts and analysis pertain to several topics within the Saugatuck Housing Market, including the short-term rental sector. Where applicable, potential causes of the market trends have been discussed. A more in-depth market analysis may be of benefit in future years to determine the full economic impact short-term rentals have on the tourism industry within Saugatuck.

Overall Homeownership Market Trend

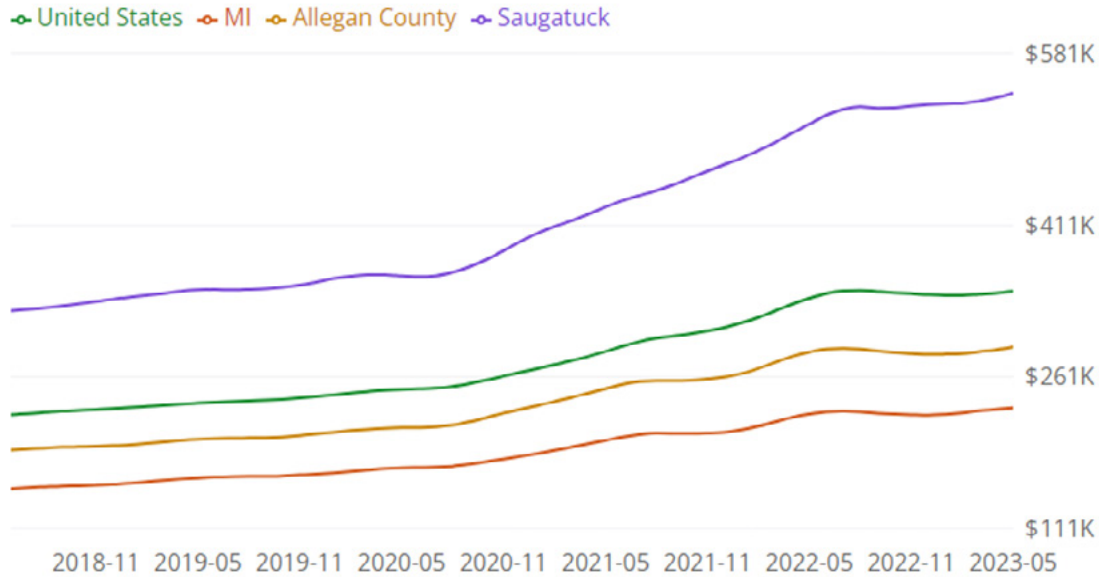
Saugatuck Homeownership Housing Market, 2017-2023



Source: MLS, provided to the City by Dick Waskin

The market for for-sale homes in Saugatuck saw an inflection point in 2020. Since that year, the number of homes for sale in the City has declined and the median sale price, which was already rising, increasing to almost \$600,000. While there is some evidence the price increases are returning to a level similar to 2017-2019, inventory continues to be low, with 2023 on pace to offer fewer homes for sale in the City than 2022.

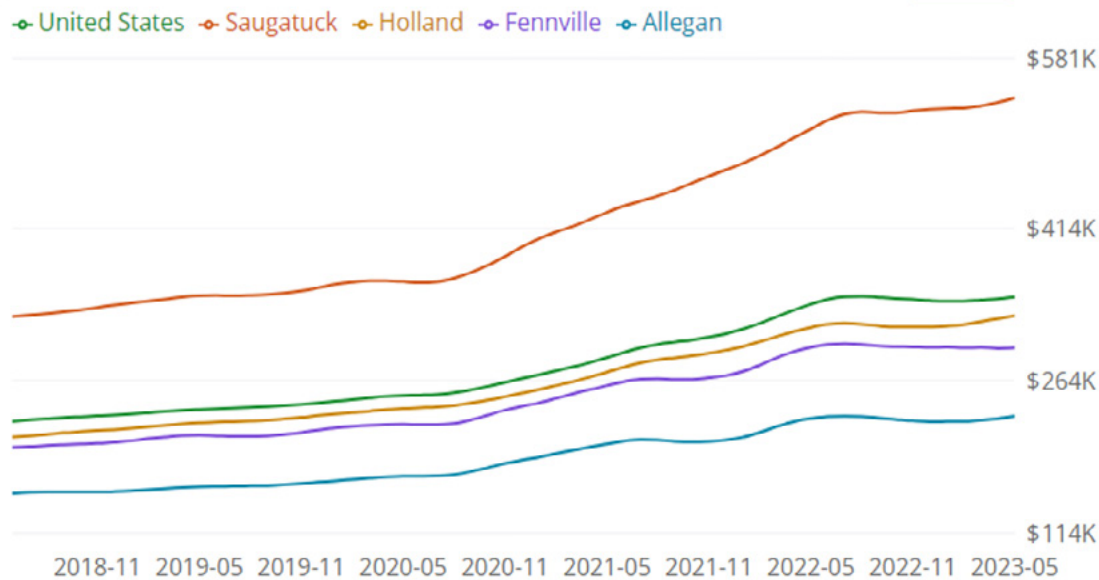
Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Allegan County, Michigan, and United States



Source: Zillow Home Value Index

While Saugatuck’s trend of rising home prices follows a similar trajectory to national, statewide, and County-wide trends, it has been more dramatic. Saugatuck was already a high value, expensive housing market, but its spike in 2020 and subsequent years was larger than other places, increasing the gap between the City and County-wide, State-wide, and National averages.

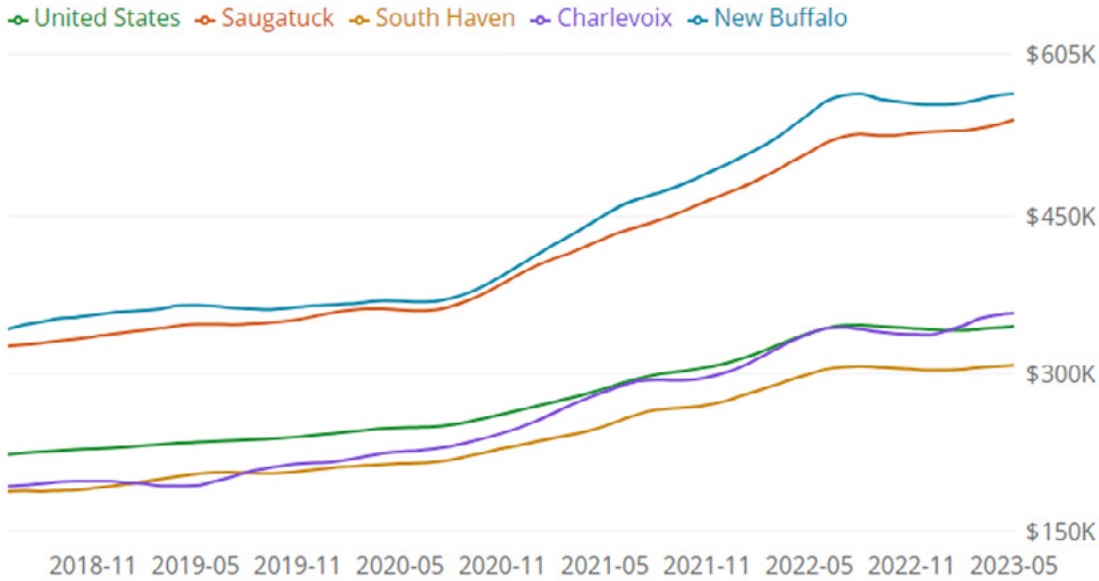
Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Nearby Communities



Source: Zillow Home Value Index

Saugatuck’s home values have also risen faster than its neighbors, with a larger 2020 spike than Holland, Fennville, or Allegan.

Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Lakefront Communities

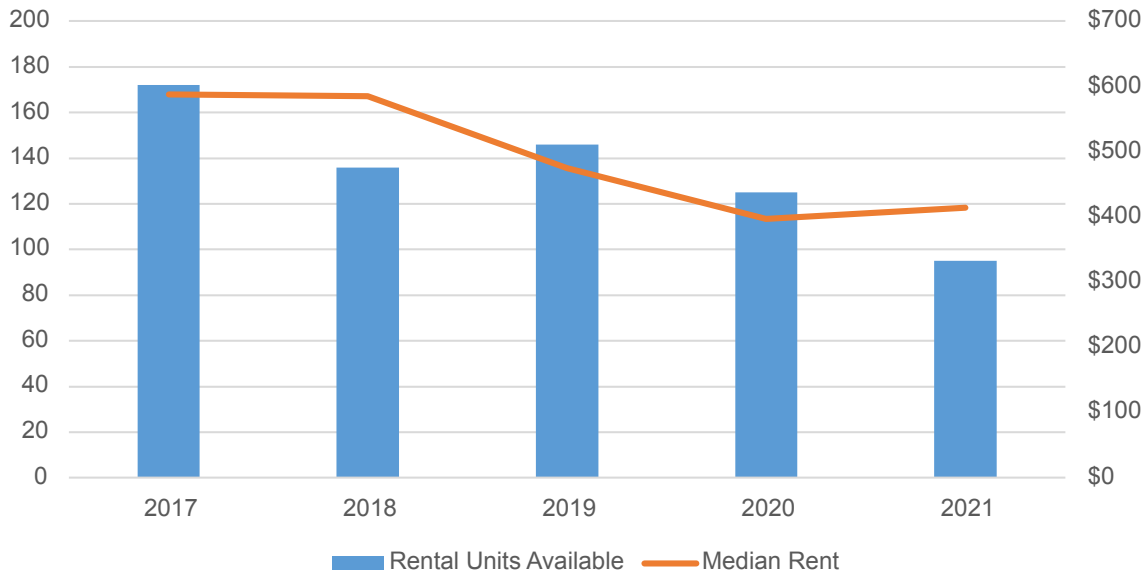


Source: Zillow Home Value Index

Saugatuck’s housing trend is similar to other lakefront resort communities. New Buffalo had an even bigger 2020 spike in prices. Charlevoix went from below the national average for median sale price to above it.

South Haven saw a smaller increase in prices, though still more growth than inland communities.

Saugatuck Rental Housing Market, 2017–2023



Source: US Census Bureau (no data available for 2022 and 2023)

The data suggests that the increase in short-term rentals has caused a decline in the number of units available for conventional rental in the City. Since 2017, the number of units available for rent in Saugatuck has dropped from 172 to 95. Some of this drop may be due to rental homes being converted to owner-occupancy, but with 57% of parcels in the Multi-Family zoning district and 27% of parcels in the City Center

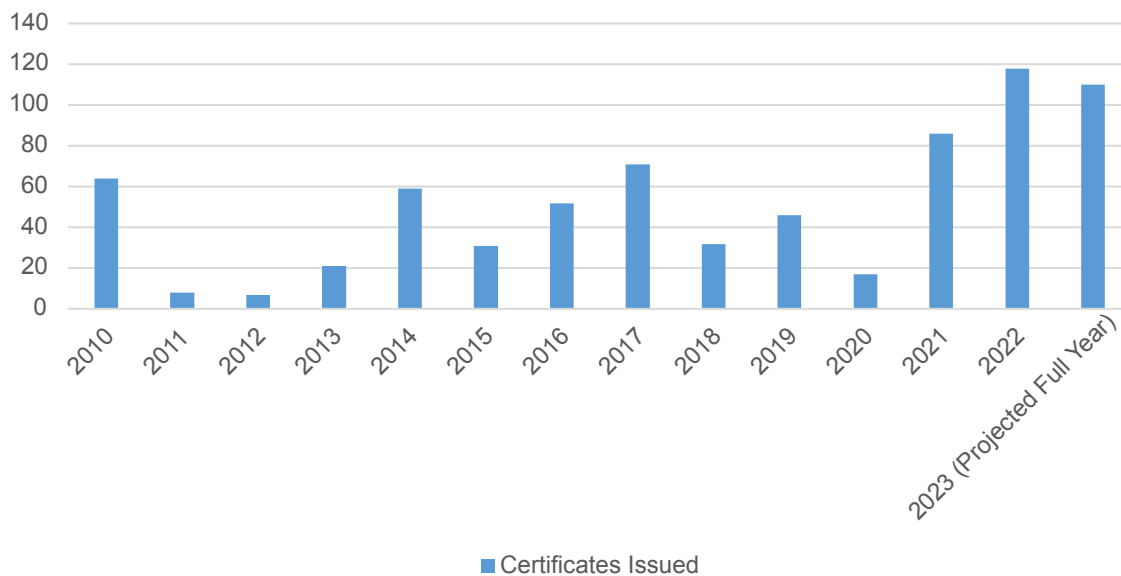
zoning district containing short-term rentals, evidence suggests that conventional rentals have been converted to short-term rentals.

The decline in the number of rental units has been accompanied by a decline in the median rent. This may be caused because luxury and highly desirable rentals are being converted from long-term to short-term, leaving only the less expensive and less desirable units as conventional rentals.

Short Term Rental Market Trend

Short-term rentals have been popular in Saugatuck since vacation rental websites first arrived on the scene in the late 2000's. The City began its short-term rental certification program in 2010, though there have been several changes to the program since then.

Short Term Rental Certificates Issued by Year



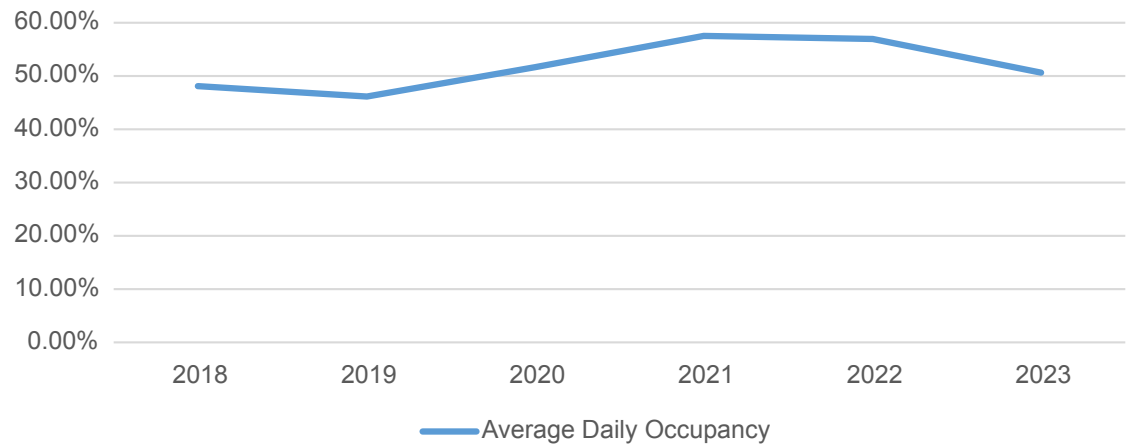
Source: City of Saugatuck

From 2010 to 2019, the number of short-term rental certificates issued by the City followed a regular pattern. A group of 64 short-term rentals was certified in 2010, at the beginning of the program. Many of those rentals were re-certified in the coming years, after the multi-year terms of the certificates expired. This caused spikes in 2014 and 2017. In other years, a smaller cohort of rentals were certified and renewed on a regular cycle.

Taking this cycle into account, there was an inconsistent but clear trend of increasing short-term rentals in the City from 2010 to 2019. In 2020, the number of new certificates dropped substantially, likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, the number of new certificates shot up—but that would fit the pattern of renewals of the original cohort.

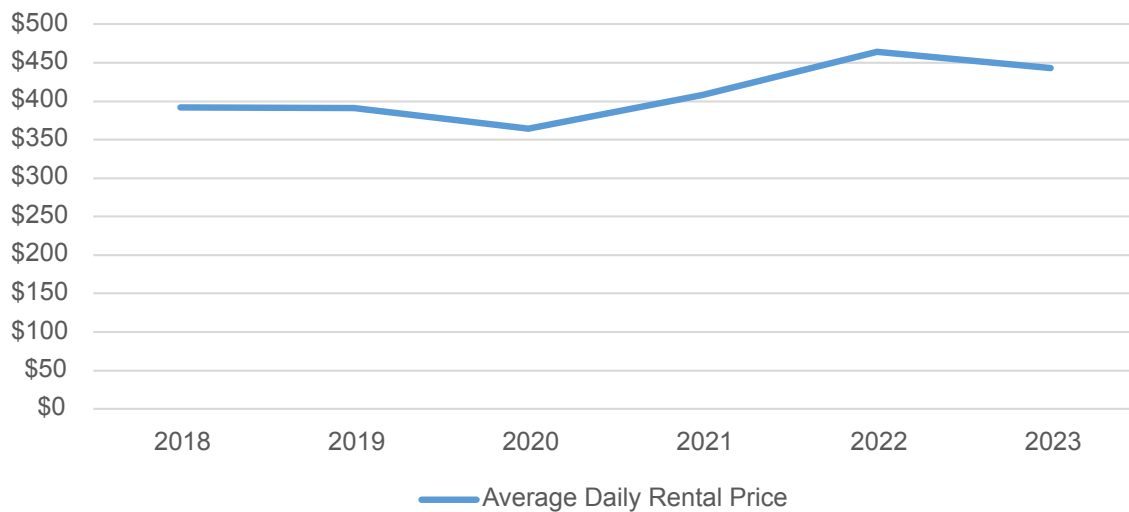
In 2022, the cycle broke. Despite only 42 certificates coming up for renewal, 118 certificates were issued. That pattern has continued this year. To date in 2023, 11 certificates have come up for renewal. But 55 certificates have been issued.

Average Daily Occupancy of Short Term Rentals



Source: AirDNA

Average Daily Short Term Rental Price



Source: AirDNA

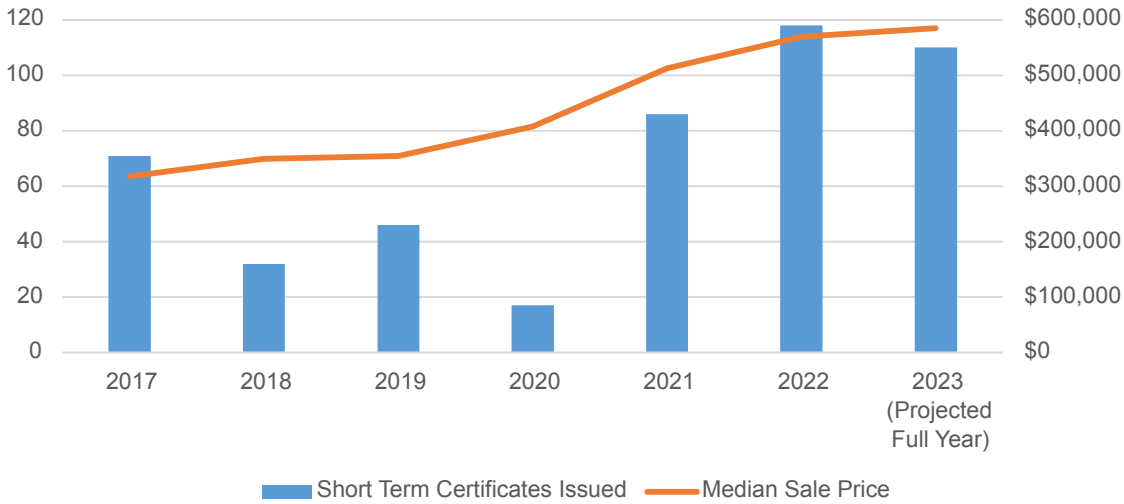
Some national analysts (including Newsweek and Market Watch) have noted a decline in occupancy and prices in short-term rentals, with large Sun Belt metropolitan areas like Austin and Phoenix hit hardest. It is not clear yet if this decline is actually occurring, nor is it clear if Saugatuck has experienced any significant decline. Occupancy peaked in 2021, amid a spike in people traveling to small towns or rural areas, and staying in vacation rentals. But 2022 was only slightly lower in terms of daily average occupancy (57.0% in 2022 vs 57.5% in 2021). 2023 has seen lower occupancy so far (50.7%), but the data does not include the entire summer season, nor does it include the holidays, and the average will likely increase before the end of the year.

Prices peaked in 2022, likely because hosts responded to the very high demand in 2021. Prices are down slightly in 2023 (\$443 per night, compared to 2022's \$464 per night), but again most of the summer season and the holidays are not yet included in the 2023 data.

Short Term Rental Market Vs Overall Housing Market

The following charts compare trends in the overall housing market to trends in the short-term rental market, to determine if there are any correlations.

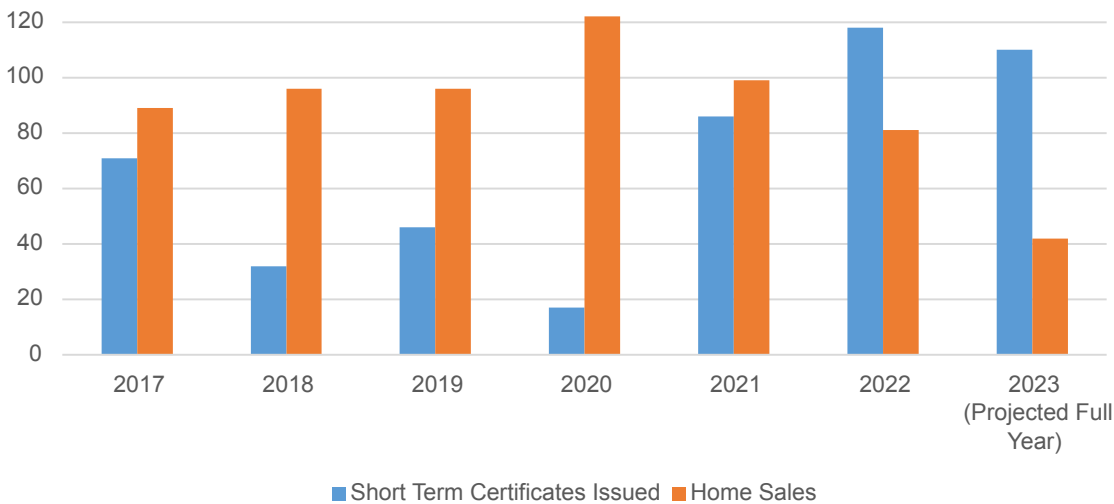
Short Term Rental Certificates vs Home Sale Prices



Source: MLS, City of Saugatuck

Home prices have risen along with the spike in the number of short-term rentals. It is likely that there is a correlation since short-term rentals remove units from the supply of homes that might otherwise be available.

Short Term Rental Certificates vs Home Sales

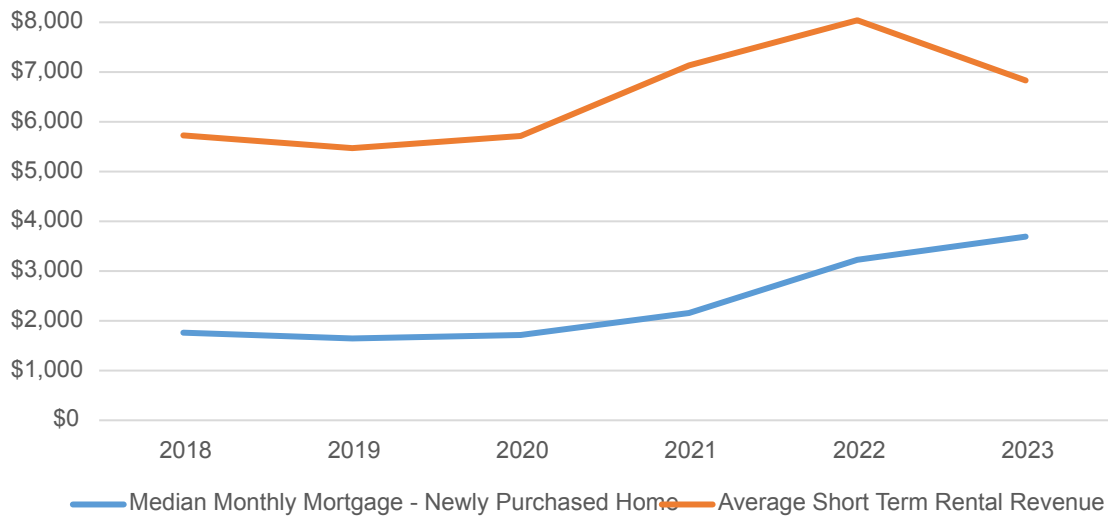


Source: MLS, City of Saugatuck

The trend in homes for sale, compared to the trend in short-term rental certificates, supports the hypothesis that short-term rentals are constraining the housing supply in the City. As the number of certificates has increased, the number of homes listed for sale has dropped. It is possible that this trend

has been accelerated by increasing interest rates, which may be incentivizing homeowners to keep their lower-interest mortgages and offer their homes as short-term rentals, rather than selling them.

Monthly STR Income vs Monthly Mortgage

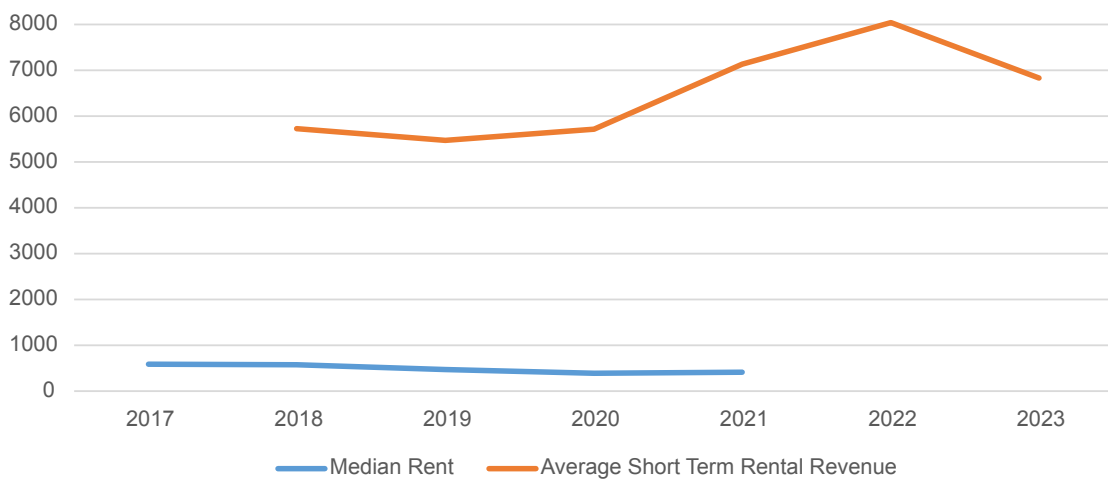


Source: MLS, AirDNA, Federal Reserve

If homeowners have decided to hold onto homes and rent them as short-term rentals, rather than selling, the data suggests that is a profitable choice—though profit margins are likely shrinking. While there are many more costs to running a short-term rental than mortgage payments, monthly revenue from a short-term rental outpaces mortgage costs, even for a newly purchased home in the current market. However, with both home prices and interest rates rising, mortgage costs are increasing as short-term rental revenues are falling.

It is not clear whether the lines on this graph will continue to converge, but if they do, short-term rental hosting may become less financially attractive in the coming years.

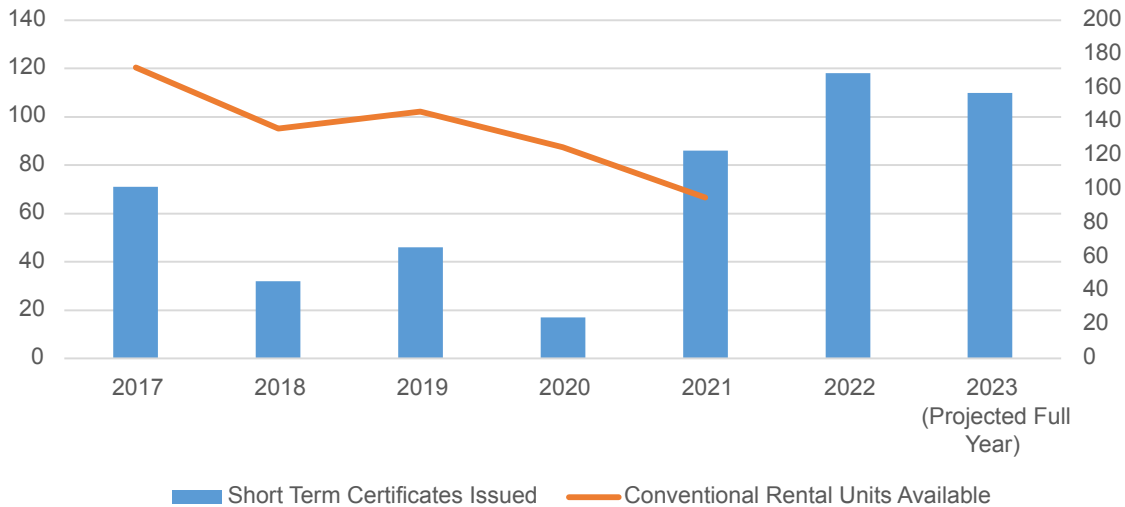
Monthly STR Income vs Monthly Conventional Rental Income



Source: MLS, AirDNA, US Census

It is also clear that hosting a short-term rental is more lucrative than owning a conventional rental property in Saugatuck. Notably, this graph shows average versus median (because that is the data available), but the difference in revenue is clear and substantial.

Short Term Rental Certificates vs Number of Rental Properties



Source: US Census Bureau, City of Saugatuck

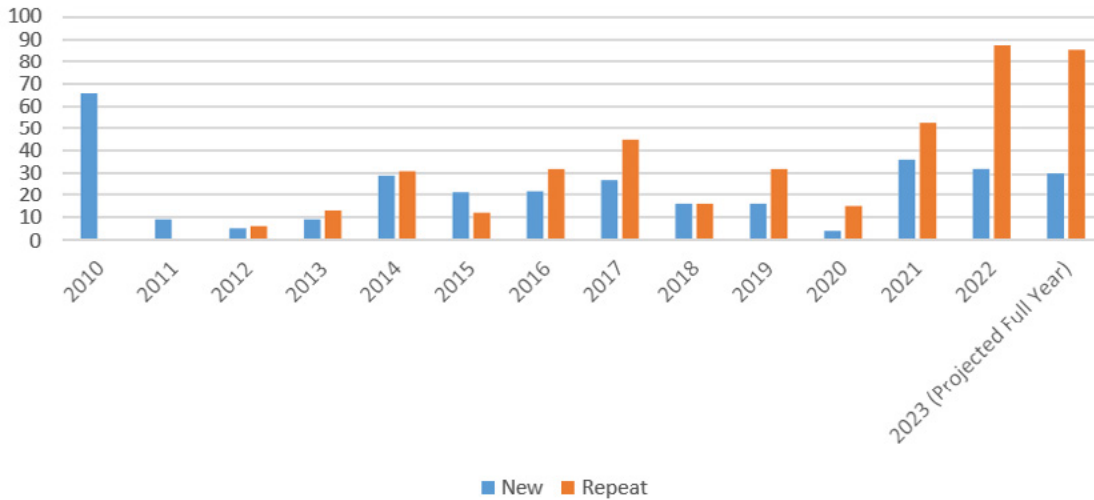
Because of the revenue disparity, the data suggests that property owners are converting conventional rentals to short-term rentals. While the data is incomplete, the drop in conventional rentals appears to have begun before the spike in short-term rentals, possibly because of a time lag in preparing the property for listing to vacationers.

Another factor in this trend is likely that increasing home values in Saugatuck have resulted in former rental properties now being owner-occupied.

New vs Repeat Short Term Rentals

The graph below shows the Short-Term Rental Certificates by year that were issued to first-time short-term rental properties compared to properties that had previously been short-term rentals. The term “repeat” is used instead of renewal because some properties had their certification lapse before being certified again later.

Short Term Rental Certificates vs Number of Rental Properties



Source: City of Saugatuck

The data suggest that some of the increase in Short Term Rental Certificates since 2020 has been caused by a higher rate of renewal among existing short-term rentals, as well as homes that were previously short term rentals being certified again after a hiatus (perhaps during the pandemic lock downs). There has also been an increase in the number of first-time short-term rental certificates.

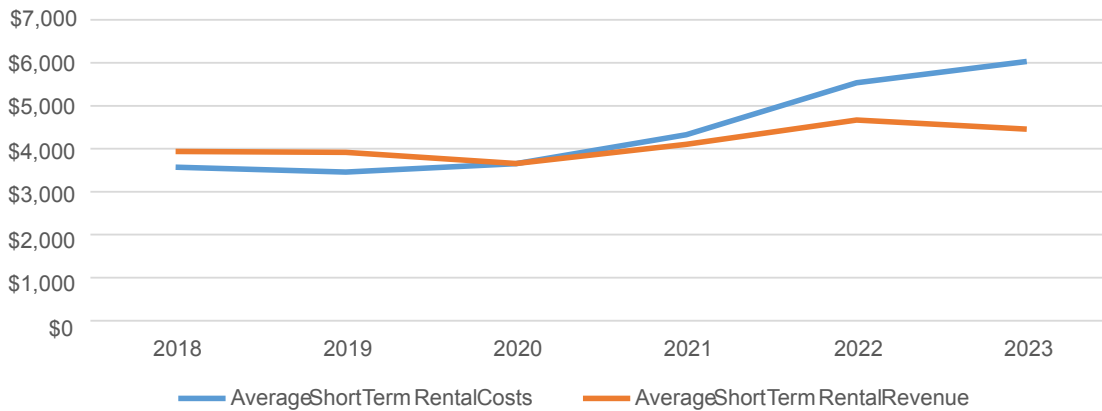
2023 also shows a small downward trend from 2022. It is not clear if this trend will continue.

Short Term Rental Profitability

The chart below shows the average monthly income for a short-term rental in Saugatuck compared to the estimated costs of owning a short-term rental in the City. The inputs for this chart are as follows. Notably, this analysis shows the profitability of buying a house in Saugatuck for the purposes of operating it as short-term rental. Mortgages and tax costs may be lower for properties that have been owned for a longer period.

- The average daily rental rate in the Saugatuck market for each year, as reported by AirDNA.
- An average daily occupancy of 33%, as estimated by members of the Task Force.
- The average monthly mortgage payment (principal and interest) for the median home sold in Saugatuck in a given year, broken down into monthly payments. City of Saugatuck non-PRE property owners pay 54.3048 mills, including County, School, and other taxes, in addition to the City.
- The taxes owed on a non-PRE property in the City of Saugatuck valued at the median sale price in each year.
- \$1,000 per month in insurance, maintenance, utilities, and other expenses, based on data from BuildYourBNB. This number could be altered based on the experiences of Task Force and community members.

Monthly STR Income vs Estimated Costs (Newly Purchased Homes)



Source: McKenna Calculation as Described Above

The data suggest that buying a home in Saugatuck for the purposes of creating a short-term rental was likely to be a profitable endeavor up until 2020. However, in the years since, home prices have increased to the point where buying the median home for sale to offer as a short-term rental would not be profitable, due to increased mortgage and tax costs. This trend is likely the cause of the dip in new short-term rental certifications, and, if it continues, could cause that trend to accelerate.

However, homes with capped property taxes and low-interest mortgages continue to be financially attractive as short-term rental opportunities.

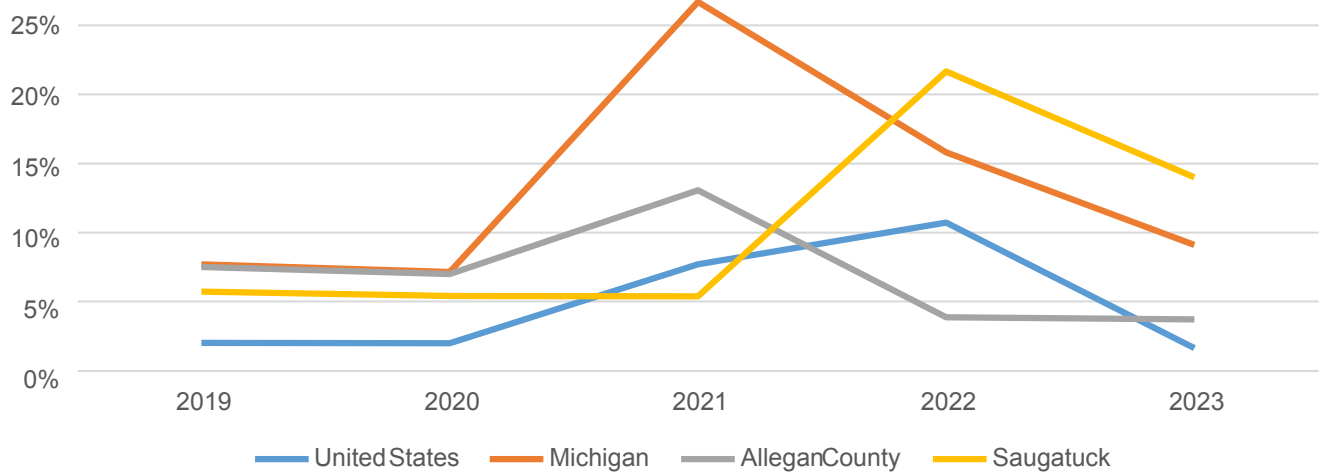
Home Value Increase By Percentage

The three charts below show the percentage change in median sale price for Saugatuck and several comparison geographies—the United States, State of Michigan, Allegan County, three nearby cities (Holland, Fennville, and Allegan) and three lakefront resort communities (New Buffalo, South Haven, and Charlevoix).

The trend lines all follow a similar pattern, though with different degrees of intensity. All experienced a sharp increase in values between 2019 and 2021, with geographies with lower starting points (Michigan, Allegan, South Haven, etc) experiencing earlier and more substantial increases, on a percentage basis. The lakefront communities experienced longer and more intense growth periods, especially New Buffalo and Saugatuck.

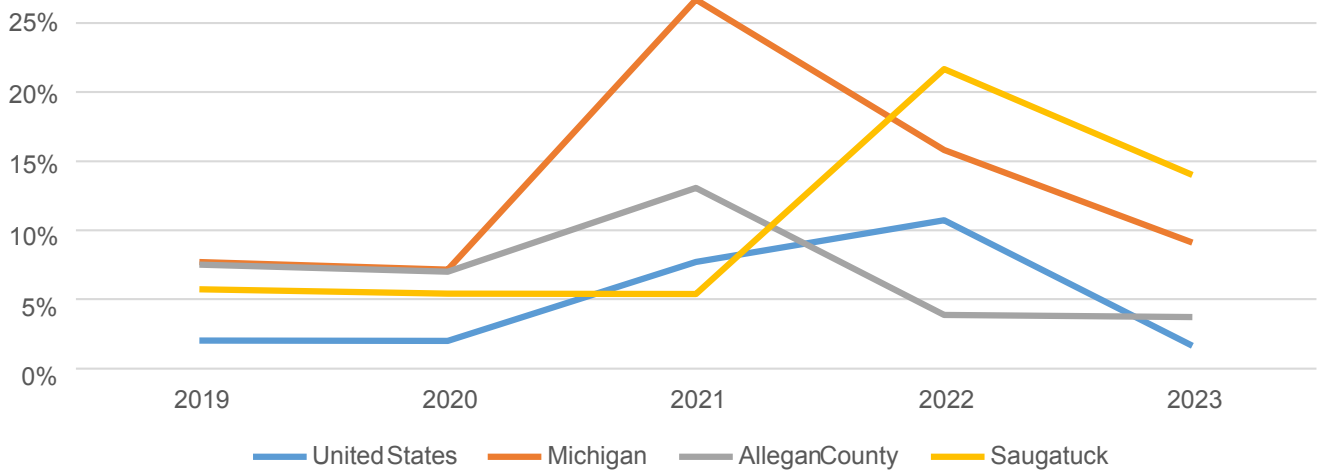
All geographies have seen housing value growth slow in 2023, though none has seen its median home value decline.

Percentage Change in Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Allegan County, Michigan, and United States



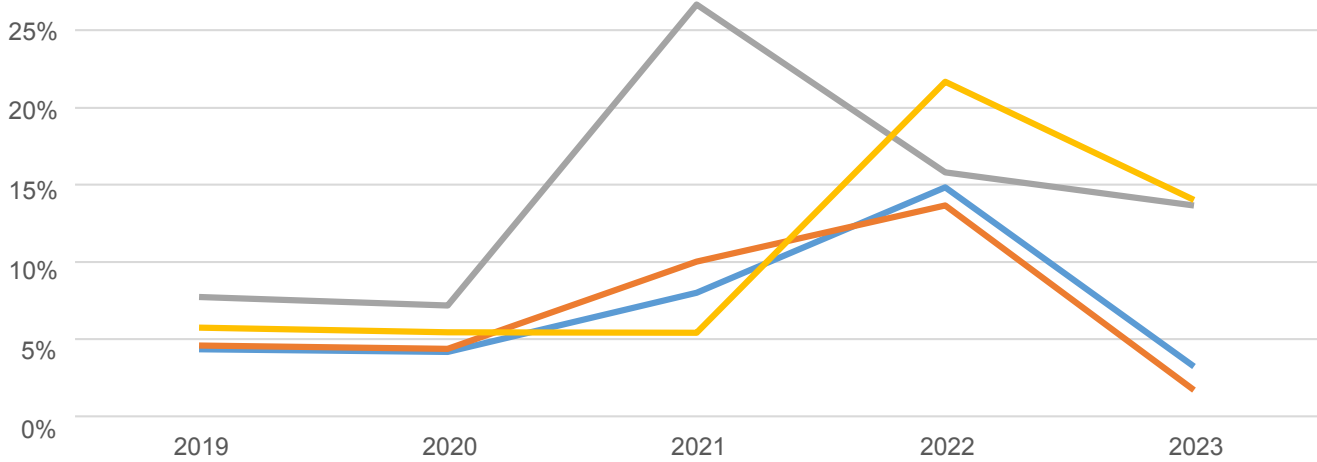
Source: Zillow Home Value Index

Percentage Change in Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Nearby Communities



Source: Zillow Home Value Index

Percentage Change in Median Sale Price: Saugatuck vs Lakefront Communities



Source: Zillow Home Value Index



Key Findings

Reasons for data trends are not always clear, and correlation does not always equal causation, the following observations about the data presented:

- The City of Saugatuck currently processes over 100 requests for short-term rental certificates each year. Before 2020, the number of requests was generally under 50.
- The increase in interest in short-term rentals has been concurrent with the median sale price for homes in the City nearly doubling.
- The increase in short-term rentals has been accompanied by a decrease in conventional rentals available in the City, though this has not resulted in a price increase for conventional renters. In fact, median rent has decreased.
- Some evidence suggests that property owners are listing their homes as short-term rentals instead of selling them when they leave Saugatuck.
- Revenues from short-term rentals in Saugatuck easily cover mortgage payments, despite increasing home values and interest rates. However, the gap is decreasing, making short-term rentals less profitable.
- Owning a short-term rental in Saugatuck is far more lucrative than owning a conventional rental.

Public Engagement

The City of Saugatuck's Short-Term Rental Task Force has engaged extensively in seeking public input from residents and community stakeholders regarding short-term rentals. Residents and stakeholders were encouraged to either attend the task force meetings or submit written communication to city staff. The following further details the public engagement that was undertaken to solicit as much feedback as possible from residents and stakeholders.

Town Hall

In addition to attending task force meetings, residents and stakeholders had the option to attend a Town Hall-style engagement session in July 2023. Planning professionals, city staff, task force members, and the general public gathered at Saugatuck High School to discuss short-term rentals. The Town Hall provided two engagement styles; an open house relaxed dialogue and a full recorded public comment session.

The open house style engagement presented those in attendance a means to leave their thoughts and ideas on visual preference and discussion boards. Participants were asked to place sticky notes with their comments onto the boards. The following board topics were utilized to facilitate discussion with those in attendance.

Opportunities in Short-Term Rentals

This engagement display asked "What opportunities do you think short-term rentals bring to the City?" Attendees could write any benefits or opportunities they believed short-term rentals brought to the City, or if they did not think short-term rentals brought any benefits or opportunities to the City.

- Allows property owners to create generational wealth.
- STRs support the City's tourist-based economy and bring more tourists to Saugatuck.
- People who stay in an STR may decide to move to Saugatuck full-time.
- Full-time new residents are not attracted to Saugatuck because of the number of STRs.
- Helps people afford taxes/expenses on generational family cottages.
- STRs bring money and employment opportunities.
- STRs support restaurants, bars, and entertainment in the downtown area.
- People buy a property and rent it as an STR to be able to retire in Saugatuck in the future.
- There are no opportunities.
- [STRs] Hinders affordable housing by inflating property values.
- Increases tax income for the City, which supports the schools.
- Leads to more part-time residents that do not support businesses year-round.
- Helps 2nd homeowners afford non-homestead taxes.
- Keeps chain businesses out of Saugatuck.
- None—STRs ruin the charm that attracts tourists to Saugatuck.

“Good Neighbor” Policy

Should the City consider creating a “Good Neighbor” policy for short-term rentals?

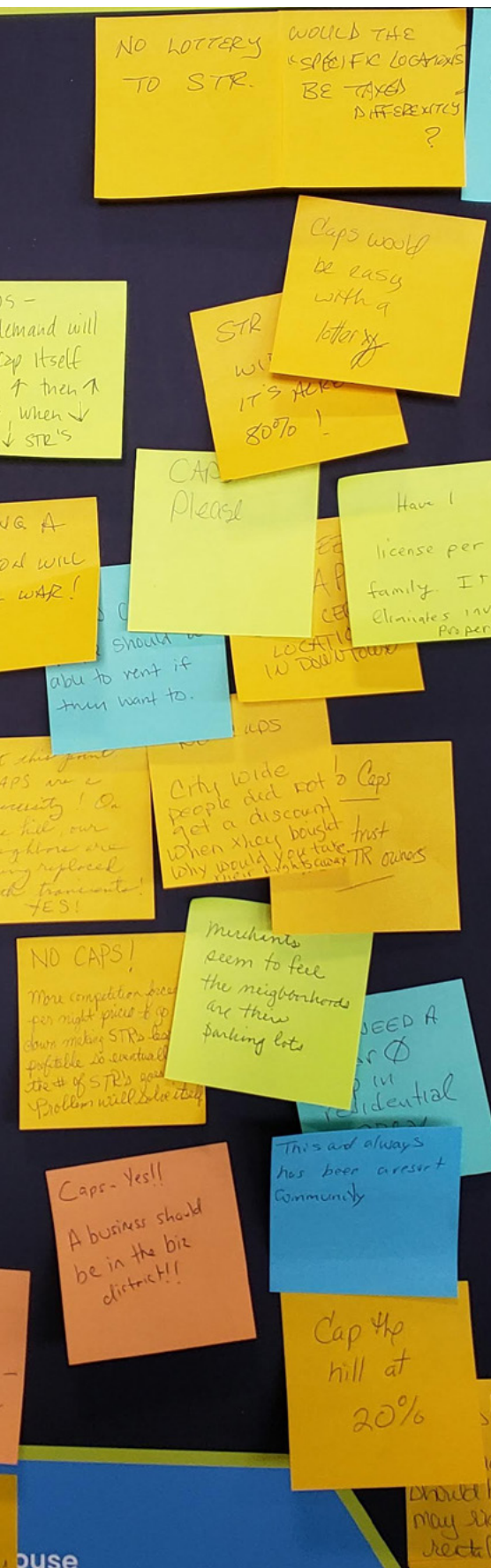
- Yes, but needs to be enforced.
- Unsure what a “Good Neighbor” policy means.
- Yes, reduces the need for police response.
- Police do not respond to STR issues when called.
- The City does not enforce existing rules.
- No, a “Good Neighbor” policy may be dangerous to enforce.
- There needs to be communication between the City and the owner any time there is a problem.
- A “Good Neighbor” policy appears great on paper. How would it be enforced?

Caps

Should the City place caps on short-term rentals? Should short-term rentals be permitted citywide, or in specific locations—if so, where?

- Not enough data to support caps.
- More background knowledge is needed to support caps, but supports policies that encourage residency.
- Caps hurt property values, the tax base, and create winners and losers.
- No caps. Current noise and parking ordinances need to be enforced first.
- Need a cap at some percentage, maybe 20% or 25%.
- No caps and no restrictions on location for STRs.
- The city’s infrastructure, like cell service, cannot handle volume of people.
- The market will regulate itself—eventually we will have saturation, if we don’t already.





General Comments

Place any additional comments you may have on short-term rentals.

- STRs should be managed by a local on-call company.
- Consider hiring an enforcement officer that could be paid using STR fees.
- Limiting STRs will decrease property values.
- Increase the number of trash cans available.
- Without STRs, tourists will take their business elsewhere.
- Increase hotels by highway exits in commercial zones.
- STRs are not essential for tourism as people came to Saugatuck before STRs.
- Need caps on STRs in residential areas.
- Offer incentives to people who offer long-term rentals.
- Create an ascending fee structure for owners whose renters violate policies.
- Implement an occupancy capacity of 3 persons per full bath and 1-2 persons per half bath.
- Limit owners to one rental per address and limit parcel splitting.
- Recommend limits on large property acquisition to discourage large chain businesses.
- Consolidate/coordinate STR policy with Douglas.
- Create more jobs outside of tourism.
- Concerned that STR owners in Saugatuck Township will eventually need to abide by the City's rules when the Township adopts them.
- Zoning matters and businesses need to be kept in business districts.
- Guests should pay "rental tax" to the CVB like other businesses.
- Do not support the CVB.
- STR owners already pay higher taxes and don't receive a PRE exemption.
- Per the police, 2/3 noise complaints are against homeowners/residents.
- Please don't make changes that will affect current STR owners, as they have already made business decisions under current regulations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

24 people spoke during the public comment period. These points represent themes brought up by attendees during the public comment period and are not verbatim. Themes that multiple attendees brought up may be consolidated and only appear once. The City Clerk, present during the public comment period, may have additional verbatim wording on the public comments received during the engagement event. Those interested in more detailed notes taken during the public comment period are recommended to reach out to the City Clerk.

- Partial vacancies have increased due to STRs.
- STRs do not support the City's schools or community organizations.
- High concentrations of STRs degrade the neighborhood.
- Limits or caps should be considered in residential districts.
- STRs help Saugatuck's tourism industry, and if the city loses STRs it will lose business.
- Fees do not cover current administration costs and should be raised to cover the enforcement costs of STR regulations.
- STR operators should lose their license after 3 violations.
- Better communication between the City and the Sheriff's Department to improve enforcement.
- Engagement Survey should have only been made available to voting residents.
- Caps are a bad thing because it creates winners and losers and will decrease property values.
- Concerned about raising taxes and fees on STRs because STR owners already pay more in taxes to the City and pay additional sales tax to the State.
- Appreciation is provided regarding non-resident's having the ability to address the Task Force.
- More long-term rentals are needed in the City and some STRs should be converted into long-term rentals to support low-income people in Saugatuck.
- Require inspections and license renewals annually rather than every 3 years to improve safety in STRs.
- Fees should be increased for repeat violations.
- Add an enforcement officer or a summer intern that can patrol STRs.
- Disregarding occupancy limits and overuse are a big issue.
- The market may be changing and will reduce the number of STRs.
- Put the compliance burden on STR tenants and increase fees for tenants.
- Support a "Good Neighbor" policy and improve enforcement.
- Task Force membership should have been voted on by residents.
- Without a limit on STRs, there won't be enough residents to serve on Boards and Commissions.
- Limit the number of STRs a person can own.
- Look at different types of licensing structures, like what South Haven does.
- Housing costs are prohibiting families from moving to Saugatuck, and renting their home as an STR is necessary in order to live there.



TOWN HALL SUMMARY

The public engagement Town Hall/Open House event had an estimated total of 103 persons in attendance. As described in previous sections, comments ranged from taking a soft-hand approach (letting the market on short-term rentals regulate itself) to a firmer approach (limiting the numbers, increased enforcement, annual inspections, increased application fees). McKenna planning staff, Planning Director Cummins and members of the Task Force were present to engage with participants.

While no official count was taken in regard to a specific comment received, McKenna staff noted the following:

1. Short-term rentals provide tourism opportunities and housing, which increases spending at local businesses.
2. Further education on a "Good Neighbor" policy is encouraged.
3. Participants are seeking increased enforcement of the current regulations pertaining to short-term rentals: noise disturbances; refuse/debris scattered across a property; occupancy limits.
4. Participants support reviewing the current fee schedule for short-term rentals. An optimistic consensus of the participants indicated positive feedback on increasing short-term rental application fees to cover staffing costs.
5. The concentration of STRs is perceived to reduce the "neighborhood feel" of the residential areas.
6. STRs should be classified as a business and not a residential use.
7. Further regulations should be reviewed for residential properties but open up commercial areas for STRs.

Community Engagement Survey

The following report outlines results from the Saugatuck Short-Term Rental Task Force Community Engagement Survey. The survey was open from July 18, 2023, until August 7, 2023. In total, 626 responses were received. 5 responses were determined to be duplicates and were subtracted from the data for this analysis, leaving a total of 621 responses. The process for eliminating duplicate responses is explained later in this report. Respondents had the option to skip questions, and as a result, percentages are based on the number of responses to that question. Below, takeaways on respondent demographics, benefits and concerns of short-term rentals, and policies about short-term rentals are discussed.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Residency

- 39% of respondents were Full-time/primary home residents (242responses)
- 39% of respondents were Part-time/second-home residents (240responses)
- 21% of respondents were Not a resident (132 responses)

Residents lived:

- 27% lived on the "Hill" (168responses)
- 20% lived Downtown (122responses)
- 16% lived on the North/east side of the river (100 responses)
- 12% lived on the Peninsula/west of the river (76 responses)
- 22% were not residents (138 responses)

Short-term rentals within a few houses of their home:

- 68% of residents have a short-term rental within a few houses of their home (77 responses)
- 31% of residents do not have a short-term rental within a few houses of their home (36 responses)

Those who were not residents were:

- 35% were a resident of Saugatuck Township (41 responses)
- 30% were a resident outside of Allegan County (36 responses)
- 17% were a resident of Douglas (21 responses)
- 16% were a resident outside of Saugatuck, Douglas, and Saugatuck Township, but within Allegan County (19 responses)

Business or STR ownership:

- 10% of respondents own a business in Saugatuck (13 responses)
- 90% of respondents do not own a business in Saugatuck (107 responses)
- 77% of respondents do not own any short-term rentals in Saugatuck (92 responses)
- 21% own 1 to 2 short-term rentals in the city (25 responses)
- 1% own 3 or more short-term rentals in the city (2 responses)
- 0.84% have rented their home as a short-term rental in the past, but don't currently (1 response)

Respondents' views on the number of short-term rentals in their neighborhood:

- 34% of respondents feel There are too many (184 responses)
- 31% feel It's about right (171 responses)
- 27% would be okay if there were more (149 responses)
- 7% were not residents (38 responses)

BENEFITS OF SHORT-TERM RENTALS

All Respondents

- 89% of respondents believe short-term rentals support the City's tourism industry (473 responses)
- 78% of respondents believe short-term rentals support businesses in Saugatuck (416 responses)
- 61% of respondents believe short-term rentals increase the City's tax base (326 responses)

Full-Time/Primary Home Residents

- 71% of full-time residents believe short-term rentals support the City's tourism industry (173 responses)
- 60% of full-time residents believe short-term rentals support businesses in Saugatuck (144 responses)
- 46% of full-time residents believe short-term rentals increase the City's tax base (111 responses)

Part-Time/Second Home Residents

- 87% of part-time residents believe short-term rentals support the City's tourism industry (208 responses)
- 83% of part-time residents believe short-term rentals support businesses in Saugatuck (198 responses)
- 67% of full-time residents believe short-term rentals increase the City's tax base (160 responses)

Non-Residents

- 67% of non-residents believe short-term rentals support the City's tourism industry (88 responses)
- 53% of non-residents believe short-term rentals support businesses in Saugatuck (70 responses)
- 42% of non-residents believe short-term rentals allow homeowners to increase their income (56 responses)

CONCERNS AROUND SHORT-TERM RENTALS

All Respondents

- 63% of respondents are concerned with noise from renters (280 responses)
- 58% of respondents are concerned with parking (e.g. blocking driveways or streets) (257 responses)
- 55% of respondents are concerned with a lack of enforcement of municipal ordinances about short-term rentals (244 responses)

Full-Time/Primary Home Residents

- 72% of full-time residents are concerned with noise from renters (144 responses)
- 70% of full-time residents are concerned with parking (e.g. blocking driveways or streets) (140 responses)
- 68% of respondents are concerned with a lack of enforcement of municipal ordinances about short-term rentals (136 responses)

Part-Time/Second Home Residents

- 53% of part-time residents are concerned with noise from renters (82 responses)
- 48% of part-time residents are concerned with parking (e.g. blocking driveways or streets) (74 responses)
- 45% of part-time residents are concerned with a lack of enforcement of municipal ordinances about short-term rentals (69 responses)

Non-Residents

- 52% of non-residents are concerned with noise from renters (51 responses)
- 51% of non-residents are concerned with parking (e.g. blocking driveways or streets) (50 responses)
- 47% of non-residents are concerned with short-term rentals increasing home prices, making it difficult to purchase a home in the City (47 responses)

POLICIES

The following section outlines public support of different policies surrounding regulating and enforcing regulations on short-term rentals. Respondents were given multiple policies and asked to select how much they agreed with each policy. For each resident group (full-time, part-time, or non-resident), the three most and least supported policies are given, unless there was a tie between multiple policies. In these cases, more than three policies may be highlighted. It should be noted that full-time residents were more in favor of establishing a cap on short-term rentals than part-time residents and community members, however the method in which to establish a cap and the actual cap limit itself was inconclusive.

The policies given were:

- Implement a City-wide “Good Neighbor” policy or tenant and owner code of conduct for short-term rentals.
- Implement a cap on short-term rentals city-wide.
- Implement a cap on short-term rentals in residential zoning districts.
- Implement a cap on short-term rentals in commercial zoning districts.
- Implement a short-term rental cap of 20% of Saugatuck residences.
- Implement a short-term rental cap of 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- Implement a short-term rental cap of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- Revise fee schedule from every 3 years to annually to cover City costs.
- Enforce a minimum rental period for short-term rentals.
- Implement occupancy limits stricter than the current Fire Department limits.
- Increase the fee/fine for confirmed violations of City ordinances and regulations.
- Suspend or revoke short-term rental certificates for properties with multiple violations.
- If permitted by State law, should the City collect a tax on short-term rentals, similar to a hotel tax?
- Work with neighboring communities to preserve and expand affordable housing.

All Respondents

Most supported policies:

- 46% of respondents Strongly Agree and 29% of respondents agree with suspending or revoking short-term rental certificates for properties with multiple violations.
- 38% of respondents Strongly Agree and 31% of respondents agree with implementing a City-wide “Good Neighbor” policy or tenant and owner code of conduct for short-term rentals.
- 37% of respondents Strongly Agree and 29% of respondents agree with increasing the fee/fine for confirmed violations of City ordinances and regulations.

Least supported policies:

- 53% of respondents Strongly Disagree and 16% of respondents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residences.

- 48% of respondents Strongly Disagree and 19% of respondents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- 44% of respondents Strongly Disagree and 16% of respondents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 20% of Saugatuck residences.

Full-time/Primary Home Residents

Most supported policies:

- 58% of full-time residents Strongly Agree and 27% of full-time residents Agree with suspending or revoking short-term rental certificates for properties with multiple violations.
- 54% of full-time residents Strongly Agree and 26% of full-time residents Agree with increasing the fee/fine for confirmed violations of City ordinances and regulations.
- 49% of full-time residents Strongly Agree and 28% of full-time residents Agree with implementing a City-wide "Good Neighbor" policy or tenant and owner code of conduct for short-term rentals.

Least supported policies:

- 51% of full-time residents Strongly Disagree and 16% of full-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- 45% of full-time residents Strongly Disagree and 16% of full-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- 35% of full-time residents Strongly Disagree and 15% of full-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 20% of Saugatuck residences.

Full-time residents were in favor of establishing a cap on short-term rentals, however the method in which to establish a cap and the actual cap limit itself was inconclusive.

Part-time/Second Home Residents

Most supported policies:

- 36% of part-time residents Strongly Agree and 31% of part-time residents Agree with suspending or revoking short-term rental certificates for properties with multiple violations.
- 25% of part-time residents Strongly Agree and 29% of part-time residents Agree with increasing the fee/fine for confirmed violations of City ordinances and regulations.
- 24% of part-time residents Strongly Agree and 33% of part-time residents Agree with working with neighboring communities to preserve and expand affordable housing.

Least supported policies:

- 58% of part-time residents Strongly Disagree and 20% of part-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- 58% of part-time residents Strongly Disagree and 17% of part-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residences.

- 57% of part-time residents Strongly Disagree and 18% of part-time residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 20% of Saugatuck residences.

Non-Residents

Most supported policies:

- 40% of non-residents Strongly Agree and 32% of non-residents Agree with suspending or revoking short-term rental certificates for properties with multiple violations.
- 41% of non-residents Strongly Agree and 17% of non-residents Agree with working with neighboring communities to preserve and expand affordable housing.
- 35% of non-residents Strongly Agree and 33% of non-residents Agree with working with implementing a City-wide “Good Neighbor” policy or tenant and owner code of conduct for short-term rentals.

Least supported policies:

- 43% of non-residents Strongly Disagree and 16% of non-residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residents.
- 32% of non-residents Strongly Disagree and 21% of non-residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap of 30% of Saugatuck residences.
- 32% of non-residents Strongly Disagree and 17% of non-residents Disagree with implementing a short-term rental cap in commercial districts.

DUPLICATE RESPONSES

There were a total of 77 IP addresses that submitted multiple responses. IP addresses that submitted three or fewer responses were presumed legitimate, as each response was likely from a different member of the same household. IP addresses that submitted more than three responses were evaluated to determine response similarities. If all the responses were the same or very similar, only one of the responses was considered in the survey analysis. Of the 77 duplicate IP addresses, 71 addresses submitted three or fewer responses. 6 IP addresses submitted at least four responses to the survey, for a total of 28 responses. After evaluating the answers to the individual responses, 5 of these responses were considered duplicates and eliminated from the dataset. Below outlines the process for finding and evaluating duplicate responses:

1. Staff highlighted all duplicate IP addresses using Excel.
2. Duplicates of three or fewer were assumed to be legitimate responses and filtered out.
3. For IP addresses that submitted more than 3 responses, the responses were analyzed to determine if the answers were the same for each submission. If the responses were the same or very similar, only one of the responses was considered for analysis. If the responses to the questions were different for each submission, they were all included in the analysis.



CONCLUSION

The following key takeaways were gathered from the results of the survey:

1. Full- and part-time residents both agree that short-term rentals have the benefits of supporting tourism and businesses in the city and increase the city's tax base, but part-time residents agree with this at higher rates than full-time residents. Unlike full-time and part-time residents, non-residents selected that short-term rentals allow homeowners to increase their incomes as a top benefit.
2. Full- and part-time residents both had the greatest concerns with noise, parking, and a lack of enforcement of short-term rental regulations, while non-residents were also concerned that short-term rentals are increasing home prices, making it difficult to buy a home in the City.
3. Full-time, part-time, and non-residents support strengthening enforcement measures behind short-term rental regulations, including suspending or revoking short-term rental licenses after multiple violations and increasing fees and fines for confirmed violations.
4. The least popular amongst all resident groups were those surrounding caps on short-term rentals, with the strongest disagreement towards caps of greater than 30% of Saugatuck residents.

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Appendix



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT

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3342 Blue Star Highway
Saugatuck, MI 49453
269 857-3000 / Fax: 269 857-1228
E-mail: info@saugatuckfire.org

August 30th, 2023

City of Saugatuck – STR Task Force
c/o Ryan Cummins
102 Butler Street
Saugatuck, MI 49453

Dear Mr. Cummins and the Short-Term Rental Task Force,

We wanted to take a moment to thank you for reaching out and asking for input from the Fire District's Department of Fire Prevention regarding short-term rental properties. It's great to see that you are taking the safety of your visitors seriously and are willing to work with local authorities to ensure that short-term rentals are as safe as possible.

As the ones who see the devastating effects of fires firsthand, we can't stress enough how important it is to have proper safety measures in place. By working together, we can ensure that guests have a great experience while also minimizing the risks associated with short-term rentals.

When the first rental ordinance was drafted in 2010, it was intended at the time to be low-impact and assist the owners who were struggling to sell their homes to obtain some income while they sat on the market. In 2010 the program began and there were about 72 rentals within the City of Saugatuck. Fast forward to 2023, the Fire District has records for 890 rentals within the Fire District coverage area. After documenting concerns and complaints for the past several years, we believe we are in a good position to offer the following observations and suggestions:

1. We support transitioning to annual inspections. When doing the three-year inspection at many properties, we found nothing had been updated since we were last in the dwelling. If we are to commence annual inspections, it is anticipated we will add full-time fire inspector(s).
2. Limit max occupant load to 2 persons per bedroom which is how the single-family dwelling was originally built and designed for.
 - a. A 3-bedroom house could have 6 persons sleeping.
 - b. An 8-bedroom home could have 16 persons.
 - c. Eliminate the extra people on the living room pullouts, hide-a-beds, and basement couches.
 - d. The decision to grandfather existing properties' occupant loads, or not, would need to be made.
 - e. A qualifying bedroom that meets the requirements of the Michigan Residential Code could still be used for sleeping. (i.e.: a room that is currently used as an office or study).
 - f. This may be modified based on additional fire safety features such as an NFPA 72-compliant fire alarm system, NFPA 13D fire suppression system, additional means of egress, etc.



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3. It is essential that the City of Saugatuck work with the City of the Village of Douglas and Saugatuck Township to ensure all three ordinances, fee structures, and programs mirror one another. This is imperative for enforcement by the Fire District as well as owners, renters and agents who work across the municipal boundaries in the tri-communities.
4. Require a local agent or management company within 15 road miles of the property. The company shall have someone knowledgeable about the property and accountable for responding to the property 24/7/365. The lack of response to a telephone call within 15 minutes may incur fines and fees. Please note: We have struggled with absentee owners and local contacts lack of availability during emergency responses.
5. Regulate all Short-Term and Long-Term rentals identically.
6. Provide a certificate and require it to be posted where it is visible from the front of the house with Agent contact information and max occupant load. Possibly change colors by approval year, so it is easy to see if one is expired from the street.
7. There needs to be enforcement that includes monetary penalties for infractions after approval. For example, if someone moves a grill back onto a deck after passing the inspection or adds an additional bunk bed to a room after passing an inspection, etc. In addition, a record of infractions should be maintained, and implement a *three-strikes-you're-out* policy that voids the rental permit.
8. The Fire District has reviewed the current fee structure we charge for inspections and determined it to be out of date. The Fire District staff will be reviewing the fee structure in the future and make a recommendation to the Fire Administrative Board.
9. Require a letter from the property insurance company identifying and acknowledging the property is insured as a rental dwelling. Many owners do not realize they need to change their policy from a standard homeowner's policy and are generally not covered in the event of a loss when renting. (*This would be handled by the Zoning Administrator or municipality; we just want people to ensure they are covered in the event of loss*).
10. We feel it important to note, that these short-term rentals were originally built, and the certificate of occupancy was issued as a single-family dwelling under the Michigan Residential Code. Renting a single-family dwelling to the public on a transient basis mirror a commercial or business-like *change-of-use* that can trigger other requirements. To give a little perspective on the topic, we are including the following text in *italics* that is directly copied from the definition section of the 2015 International Fire Code Commentary:

Residential Group R

- ❖ *Residential occupancies represent some of the **highest fire safety risks** of any of the occupancies listed in Chapter 3 of the IBC. There are several reasons for this condition:*
 - *Structures in the residential occupancy house the widest range of occupant types, i.e., from infants to the aged, for the longest periods of time. As such, residential occupancies are more susceptible to the frequency of careless acts of the occupants; therefore, the consequences of exposure to the effects of fire are the most serious.*
 - *Most residential occupants are asleep approximately one-third of every 24-hour period. When sleeping, they are not likely to become immediately aware of a developing fire. Also, if awakened from sleep by*



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the presence of fire, the residents often may not immediately react in a rational manner which could delay their evacuation.

- The **fuel load** in residential occupancies is often quite high, both in quantity and variety. Also, in **the construction of residential buildings, it is common to use extensive amounts of combustible materials.**
- Another portion of the fire problem in residential occupancies relates to the occupants' lack of vigilance in the prevention of fire hazards. In their own domicile or residence, people tend to relax and are often prone to allow fire hazards to go unabated; thus, in residential occupancies, fire hazards tend to accrue over an extended period of time and go unnoticed or are ignored.

Most of the **nation's fire problems** occur in Group R buildings and, **in particular, one- and two-family dwellings**, which account for **more than 80 percent of all deaths from fire in residential occupancies** and about **two-thirds of all fire fatalities** in all occupancies. **One- and two-family dwellings also account for more than 80 percent of residential property losses from fire and more than one-half of all property losses from fire.**

The Fire District's Department of Fire Prevention is appreciative of your time and energy to review the Short-Term Rental challenges we have been facing for several years. Thank you again for your commitment to safety, and please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything we can do to help.

Respectfully yours,

Greg Janik
Fire Chief / Fire Marshal

Chris Mantels
Deputy Chief / Fire Inspector

Chris Bernhardt
Captain / Fire Inspector

**Short-Term Rental
Task Force Action Report**

City of Saugatuck, Michigan