



# Saugatuck Township

One-Year Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Presented: August 14, 2023  
Adopted: August 14, 2023

Saugatuck  
Township

# Strategic Plan



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Dear Residents of Saugatuck Township,

I am honored to introduce the Township's new One-Year Strategic Plan, a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to the betterment of our community. This plan comes as a result of a comprehensive and collaborative effort undertaken by the Township Board of Trustees and Township Staff.

As you may recall, the Township adopted a multi-year strategic plan in February of 2021, which has undeniably played a pivotal role in shaping our direction and accomplishments over the past year and a half. This visionary document established the Township Mission Statement, Board of Trustee Mission, Priority Areas, Goals, Actions, and Metrics that have provided the blueprint for the notable projects we have successfully pursued during this time.

Since the plan's adoption, we have not only celebrated achievements but also identified emerging needs and opportunities. As a dynamic and forward-thinking Township, we recognize the necessity of keeping our strategic goals aligned with the evolving landscape of our community. Thus, in response to these changes and growth, the Township Board initiated a thoughtful and inclusive process to develop an updated strategic plan.

The journey towards the creation of this new plan commenced with a strategic planning session in April of 2023, where the Board of Trustees and Township Manager contributed their insights and perspectives. This collaborative session was followed by an intensive all-day workshop, which engaged Township Staff in further enriching the plan's foundation. The combined outcomes of these planning sessions have culminated in the creation of the updated One-Year Strategic Plan presented here.

This new plan builds upon the strong foundation laid by its predecessor and introduces several enhancements:

1. **Honed Mission Statement and Trustee Commitment:** The Township Mission Statement and Trustee Commitment have been refined to reflect our unwavering dedication to community well-being and progress.
2. **10-Year Vision and Community Vision Statement:** A forward-looking 10-Year Vision and Community Vision statement, underscoring our aspirations for the Township's future.
3. **Core Values:** A statement of the values that define the unique character of our organization and will serve as guiding principles for all our endeavors.
4. **Updated Strategic Pillars:** Building on the existing strategic pillars, the updated plan aligns our focus areas with current and emerging challenges and opportunities.
5. **Projects for Fiscal Year 2023-2024:** The plan outlines the projects to be undertaken for the upcoming fiscal year, reflecting our commitment to our mission of enhancing the quality of life for all.



We are excited by the possibilities that our new One-Year Strategic Plan holds and the positive impact it will have on our community. It is a testament to our shared dedication to progress, innovation, and collaboration.

I am profoundly grateful to the Board of Trustees for their leadership and commitment, our Township Staff who work tirelessly to serve the community with integrity, our Commissioners and Committee members who generously volunteer their time and many talents, and to the residents of Saugatuck Township who continue to inspire us with their outstanding community contributions.

As we move forward, we look to the continued support and engagement of the community. Together, we will work towards realizing the goals outlined in this new plan and advancing Saugatuck Township's standing as a vibrant and thriving community.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel DeFranco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Daniel DeFranco  
Saugatuck Township Manager



## Saugatuck Township Officials

### The Township Board

Abby Bigford  
**Supervisor**

Jon Helmrich  
**Treasurer**

Brenda Marcy  
**Trustee**

Rebecca Israels  
**Clerk**

Stacey Aldrich  
**Trustee**

### The Township Staff

Daniel DeFranco  
**Township Manager**

Dana Burd  
**Engineer**

Chad Warner  
**Building Inspector**

Morgan Arens  
**Administrative Support**

Nick Curcio  
**Township Attorney**

Cindy Osman  
**Building Official/Zoning Admin**

Lynne Wells  
**Township Planner**

Lori Babinski  
**Deputy Clerk/Sexton**

Kelly Jellison  
**Assistant Assessor**

Ronald Bultje  
**Township Attorney**



# Saugatuck Township

## Roles and Responsibilities

Updated May 19, 2023

### **Current Positions**

#### **Township Board Member**

1. Fiscal Responsibility
2. Election Oversight
3. Make Policy
4. Hire Staff
5. Represent Township Regionally

#### **Township Manager**

1. Chief Administrator
2. Implement Policy
3. Manage Staff
4. Manage Facilities & Assets
5. Face of Township
6. Project Management

#### **Building Official**

1. Building Permits
2. Inspections
3. Plan Review
4. Appeals
5. Enforcement
6. Monitor Department Budget

#### **Deputy Clerk/Cemetery Sexton**

1. Payroll
2. Accounts Payable
3. Elections – In house
4. Cemetery
5. Recordkeeping

#### **Administrative Support**

1. Front Face
2. Department Assistant
3. Rental Department
4. Social Media
5. Communications
6. Recording Secretary

#### **Treasury/Financial Director**

1. Administrative Support
2. Summer-Winter Taxes
3. Bank Reconciliations
4. Financial Analysis
5. Investment Oversight
6. Special Assessment Districts
7. Budget Assistance

#### **Intern (Future Position)**

1. Special Projects

#### **Park Consultant (Future Position)**

2. Outside Contract



# Saugatuck Township

## Recognition

**Saugatuck Township receives state award for environmental impact** [FOX17 May 2023](#)

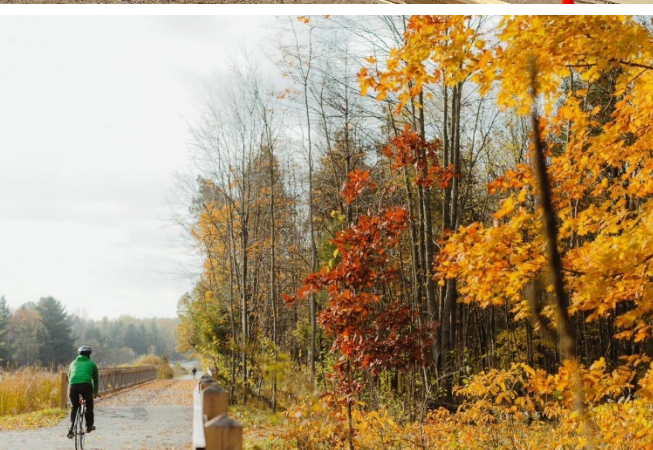
**Summer 'saved' in Saugatuck thanks to federal dredging funds** [FOX17 March 2023](#)

**Saugatuck Township Hall to undergo \$765K renovation** [ABC 13 January 2023](#)

**Township Eyes Seeking \$300K Trail Grant** [Commercial Record March 2022](#)

**Popular Harbor Made Safer for Summer** [Boat U.S. June 2022](#)

**Blue Star Trail Between South Haven, Holland Gets \$1.344 Million Grant** [Moody On the Market December 2022](#)



# Board of Trustees' Commitment

We are inspirational leaders who love our community, embody our core values, and pioneer innovative solutions to community challenges.







# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Mission

Enhance the Quality of Life for All

### Community Vision

A welcoming, nature rich community where people thrive and are inspired to create a bright future for all.

### 10 Year Vision

Be nationally recognized as a forward thinking local government that creatively meets community needs in infrastructure, sustainability, land conservation, public safety and equity.

### Core Values

#### Love of Community

Engaging for positive impact and the greater good.

#### Resourceful

Maximizing resources with dedicated follow-through.

#### Forward Thinking

Looking outside of ourselves for inspiration.

#### Welcoming

Welcoming and embracing the unique contributions of all.

#### Respectful

Nurturing a culture of mutual regard and courtesy.

#### Trustworthy

Fulfilling our promises and commitments.

### Strategic Pillars



#### Growth & Development

Balance development with consideration for community well-being and our environment.



#### Community Investment

Invest in strategic projects that support sustainable development and high quality of life.



#### Collaborate & Communicate

Strengthen existing community relationships and engage with regional/state/national partners.



#### Recreation & Transportation

Expand outdoor recreation opportunities and support transportation equity.



#### Conservation & Restoration

Preserve and enhance our parks, green spaces, woodlands, waterways, waterfront, and natural areas.



#### Operational Excellence

Hire, retain, develop, and inspire a professional staff committed to making a positive community impact.



#### Financial Sustainability

Effectively manage assets, use public funds responsibly, and develop a sustainable financial position.





# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 1: **Growth & Development**

Balance development with consideration for community well-being and our environment

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Growth & Development	Identify Properties within River Overlay District	1	Record in Township's computer system all parcels located in the River Overlay District.	Spring 2024
Growth and Development	Comprehensive Update to Zoning Ordinance	1	Complete a comprehensive update to the Township's Zoning Ordinance with a focus on environment and habit protection, sustainability, attainable housing, economic development, and safety.	Dec-23
Growth and Development	Sewer Acquisition	1	Identify and pursue opportunities to acquire additional sewer capacity in the Wastewater Treatment Plant to accommodate future development projects such as attainable housing development.	Winter 2023
Growth and Development	BSH Traffic Study/Master Plan	2	Complete traffic study for Blue Star Highway that will focus on intersections from Maple Street north to Exit 41. Findings from traffic study will be provided to a consultant in the development of a master plan for the Blue Star HWY Corridor.	Summer/Fall 2024



# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 2: **Community Investment**

Invest in strategic projects that support sustainable development  
and high quality of life.

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Community Investment	Township Hall Design & Renovation	1	Engineer and execute a comprehensive renovation of the Township owned office building on Blue Star Highway, addressing existing structural, mechanical and electrical issues and creating a modern office space to more effectively serve the public.	Sep-23
Community Investment	Audio/Security/Data Installation	1	Design and install new audio system for Board Room , data lines, and security system.	Sep-23
Community Investment	Develop Water Service Line Standards	1	Develop material standards for installation of new water service lines.	May-24
Community Investment	Trust Fund Grant Application	1	Apply for \$300,000 in funding for the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant to provide funding for the completion of the Blue Star Trail north of the Kalamazoo River.	December 2023
Community Investment	Multi-Year Road Plan	1	Update the Multi-Year Road Plan to identify necessary road projects for the next 3-4 years.	Spring 2024
Community Investment	Riverside Drive/Dugout Road Water Main Replacement	1	Remove the substandard 2" water line that services 10-15 homes on the northern section of Riverside Drive and replace it with an 8" water main on Riverside and Dugout Rd and loops with the new water main on 66th St. Replacement of lead service lines is within the project scope.	Fall 2024
Community Investment	Wiley Road Water Main Extension	1	Extend the existing 12" water main on Wiley Rd an additional 650 ft to service four additional parcels that lack water access.	Spring 2024
Community Investment	Acquisition of Future Well Site	1	Secure ownership of a parcel that will serve as a new municipal well site for the Township.	Oct-23
Community Investment	Outbuilding Restoration	1	Restore historic Caretaker's Cottage at the heart of Riverside Cemetery.	Sep-23
Community Investment	Cemetery Master Plan	1	Work with Consultant to develop master plans for the Township owned Riverside and Douglas Cemeteries to aid in planning for future improvements.	Fall 2023
Community Investment	Regrading Cemetery Roads	1	Regrade gravel roads in Riverside and Douglas cemeteries for improved access.	Spring/Summer 2023

Community Investment	BSH/Old Allegan Roundabout	1	Work with Allegan County Road Commission on design and installation of roundabout at the Blue Star Highway/Old Allegan Rd intersection.	Spring 2024
Community Investment	Water Service Line Inventory	1	Complete a 20% verification of service line material and that mapping of service line material and locations in a GIS program per Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule.	End of 2024
Community Investment	Milfoil SAD	1	Work with residents on the Kalamazoo River to determine interest in establishing a Special Assessment district to treat Milfoil.	Jul-05
Community Investment	Safety Improvements at North/BSH Intersection	1	Work with Allegan County Road Commission and City of Saugatuck to identify and implement safety improvements at Blue Star Highway and North St intersection.	Summer/Fall 2023
Community Investment	Ambulance Coverage Assessment	1	Work with Ambulance Committee and Fire District to assess challenges with present ambulance coverage and identify opportunities to improve coverage and response times.	Spring 2024
Community Investment	Blue Star Trail	2	Complete currently unconnected portions of the Blue Star Bike Trail north of the Blue Star Bridge such that there is a continuous trail from Douglas through the Township and into Laketown.	Fall 2025
Community Investment	Upgrades of Exterior of TWP Hall	2	Contract with architectural firm to develop plans for an update to the exterior of the Township Hall and master plan for site.	Summer/Fall 2024

Community Investment	Cemetery Sign Repainting	1	Repaint existing Riverside and Douglas Cemetery signage.	Summer 2023
Community Investment	Fall/Spring Clean-Up	1	Organize Fall and Spring clean-up event for Township residents to dispose of non-hazardous waste not accepted curbside.	June 2023 & September 2023



# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 3: **Collaborate & Communicate**

Strengthen existing community relationships and engage with regional/ state/ national partners.



Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Collaborate & Communicate	Website Redesign	1	Develop a user friendly website that accomodates increased communication with the public and integrates Township's new branding.	Summer/Fall 2023
Collaborate & Communicate	Wellhead Protection Team	1	Regional Committee (Saugatuck, Douglas, Saugatuck Township, the KLSWA, the Fire District, and the Allegan County Health Department) tasked with safeguarding tri-community's drinking water.	On-going
Collaborate & Communicate	Gas Line Easement	1	Work with Semco and KLSWA to provide an easement for the installation of a gas line to service a KLSWA water pump station.	Summer 2023
Collaborate & Communicate	Van Dis Monument	1	Coordinate with Van Dis family in the installation of new monument in Riverside Cemetery	May/June 2023
Collaborate & Communicate	HHW Drop Off Event	1	Work with Saugatuck and Douglas Cities to hold annual Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Event.	Septmeber 26, 2023
Collaborate & Communicate	KLSWA Sewer Agreement	1	Work with KLSWA and Saugatuck and Douglas Cities to improve current agreement for sewer system operations, repairs and assets.	TBD
Collaborate & Communicate	BS Bridge Navigation Light Project	1	Work with Harbor Authority on the engineering and installation of marine lights on Blue Star Bridge for improved boat safety.	May-24
Collaboration & Communication	Open House for Renovated Township Hall	1	Organize Open House to welcome public into the newly renovated Township Hall.	May-24

Collaboration & Communication	5-Year Joint Parks and Rec Plan	1	Update the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan along with the Cities of Saugatuck and Douglas and Saugatuck Public Schools.	Feb-24
Collaboration & Communication	Exit 36 & 41 Bridge Work	1	Stay in communication with MDOT concerning construction at exits 41 and 36 on I-196 and communicate updates to public.	Fall 2023
Collaboration & Communication	KLSWA Water Agreement	1	Work with KLSWA and Saugatuck and Douglas Cities to make necessary improvements to the organizational management of the public water system to ensure	Dec-23
Collaboration & Communication	Channel Dredging	1	Assist USACE and City Managers in the dredging of Kalamazoo River Channel by assisting in planning efforts, communicating community concerns, and sharing information on dredging project with the public	Fall 2023
Collaborate & Communicate	Lakeshore Drive Access / Contingency Planning	3	Work with Allegan County Road Commission in identifying a long-term solution for safe access to Lakeshore Drive.	On-Going
Collaborate & Communicate	Channel Dredging Funding Plan	3	Work with Harbor Authority and Municipal Governments to find a solution for long-term funding for dredging of the Kalamazoo River Channel.	On-Going



# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 4: **Recreation & Transportation**

Expand outdoor recreation opportunities and support transportation equity.

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Recreation & Transportation	Bike Trail/Sidewalk Master Plan	1	Develop a master plan for shared-use pathways and sidewalks, improving connectivity in the community.	Spring 2024
Recreation & Transportation	Park Asset Master Plan	1	Develop Master Plans for all Township owned Park properties.	Spring 2024
Recreation & Transportation	Park Sign Design & Installation	1	Develop sign design and install welcome kiosk, park and trail map, wayfinding, interpretive, and trail blazing signs at the River Bluff Park.	Spring 2024
Recreation & Transportation	Dog Park Trail Improvements	1	Prioritize and implement specific elements of the Tails 'n Trails Master Plan.	Winter 2024
Recreation & Transportation	Amelanchier Park Trail Head	2	Create an accessible trailhead at Amelanchier Park with signage and sustainability features.	Fall 2024
Recreation & Transportation	Old Allegan Shared-Use Pathway Design	2	Design a shared-use pathway that will connect with a future pedestrian crossing at Blue Star and Old Allegan, and take pedestrians down Old Allegan to River Bluff Park.	2024
Recreation & Transportation	Wiley Rd Shared-Use Path Design and Construction	2	Construct a shared-use path from Lakeshore Dr east on Wiley Rd to terminate at the existing path on BSH. The project would span both the Township and Douglas, requiring cooperation by both municipalities.	TBD
Recreation & Transportation	BST South Extension	2	Work with Friends of Blue Star Trail and Douglas on phase 1 engineering study for extending the Blue Star Trail from Exit 36 to the municipal border at BSH and M-89.	Spring/Summer 2023



# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 5: Conservation & Restoration

Preserve and enhance our parks, woodlands, waterways, and natural areas.

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Conservation & Restoration	Ecological Valuation & Interpretive Sign Design for Amelanchier Park	1	Work with the ODC on an ecological valuation report for Amelanchier Park and use findings to develop interpretive signage for the site.	Septmeber 1, 2023
Conservation & Restoration	River Bluff Shoreline Restoration Feasibility Study	1	Complete a Shoreline Restoration Feasibility Study of River Bluff Park. 100% of the project funded through NOAA and the Kalamazoo River Trustees.	Oct-24
Conservation & Restoration	Prairie Restoration Project	1	Remove invasive species and restore native prairie habit on an approximately 10-acre area of unused land at the Douglas Cemetery and install walking trails.	Commence March/April 2024
Conservation & Restoration	Creation of Land Acquisition and Conservation Program	1	Work with Consultant to develop a land acquisition and conservation program. 50% funded through a Coastal Management Program Grant.	Fall 2023



# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 6: **Operational Excellence**

Hire, retain, develop, and inspire a professional staff committed to making a positive community impact.

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Operational Excellence	Strategic Planning	1	Organize strategic planning session for Board and Manager to review Township's long-term vision and develop 3-year plan.	Dec-23
Operational Excellence	Staff Action Plan Development	1	Organize workshop with staff to to align vision and develop action plan.	Mar-24
Operational Excellence	Develop 1 Year Plan	1	Develop Mission, Vision, Core Values, Strategic Pillars and Project Goals and Create a One-Year Plan	Summer 2023
Operational Excellence	Implement Proposal 2 changes for Election	1	Develop plan for implementing changes to Elections as required by Proposal 2.	Fall 2023





# Saugatuck Township

## Strategic Pillar 7: **Financial Sustainability**

Effectively manage assets, use public funds responsibly, and develop a sustainable financial position.

Strategic Pillar	Project Title	Year	Project Summary	Anticipated Completion Date
Financial Sustainability	Reduce Pension Liability	1	Make an additional payment to MERS to reduce Township pension liability.	Summer 2023
Financial Sustainability	Reduce Pension Liability	1	Submit application to the Protecting MI Pension Grant Program to secure available state funding for reducing pension liability. Available funds for the TWP are \$52,653	Jun-23
Financial Sustainability	Review Connection Fee & REU Schedule / Utility Asset Planning	1	Complete Asset Management Plan for Township owned water assets and review connection and service fees to ensure adequacy for long-term funding of water system.	Fall 2023