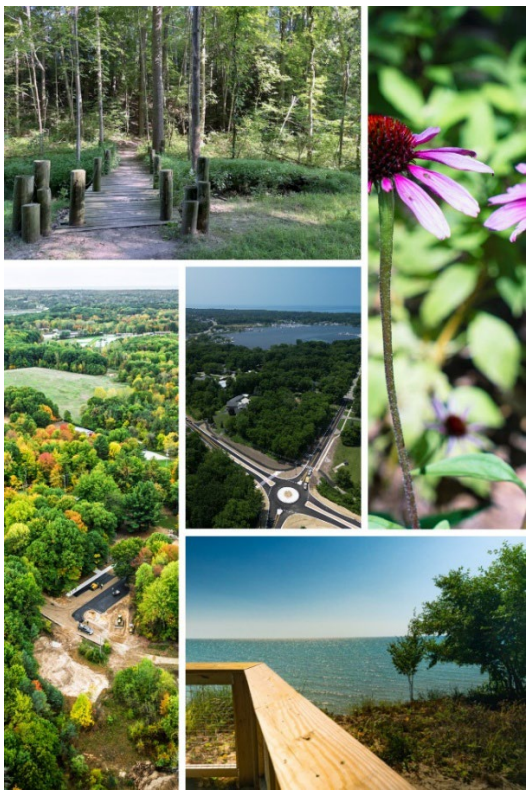
# Saugatuck Township
# Request for Proposals (RFP)
# Coastal Resiliency Chapter Development for Comprehensive Plan

Issue Date: October 28, 2026
Due Date: November 30, 2026



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## 1. Introduction & Intent

Saugatuck Township ("Township") is seeking proposals from a qualified individual, firm, or team with demonstrated expertise in coastal resiliency, coastal processes, shoreline management, coastal engineering, and/or coastal planning to assist the Township in developing a Coastal Resiliency Chapter for the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

The selected consultant will serve as the Township's technical expert on coastal resiliency and will work closely with the Township, Township staff, and the third-party planning consultant retained to prepare the broader Comprehensive Plan.

The Coastal Resiliency Chapter will establish a clear understanding of the Township's coastal systems, identify key coastal risks and opportunities, and develop goals, policies, strategies, and implementation recommendations that can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and used to guide future land use, development, infrastructure, conservation, public access, and other community decisions.

The Township is undertaking this work with support from the Michigan Coastal Management Program.

## 2. Background & Planning Context

The Township's current planning framework includes the adopted 2016 Tri-Community Comprehensive Plan, which is a joint Comprehensive Plan between three communities – City of Saugatuck, City of Douglas and Saugatuck Township.

The Township has completed or initiated several related planning and policy efforts, including:

- Land Conservation and Public Access Strategic Plan;
- 2024-2029 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan;
- Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan;
- Lakeshore Drive Managed Retreat planning effort;
- Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance re-write (adopted in March 2024); and
- Lakeside Overlay District;

The new Comprehensive Plan is intended to bring these efforts together within a coordinated, long-range planning framework. The Coastal Resiliency Chapter will be a central component of that effort.

The Township's grant narrative identifies two interconnected coastal systems requiring particular attention:

1. Lake Michigan shoreline, including high-risk erosion areas, coastal bluffs, critical dune systems, shoreline development, public access, and shoreline protection practices; and
2. Kalamazoo River mouth and corridor, including wetlands, floodplain systems, ravines, habitat, conservation opportunities, public access, and development pressure.

The Coastal Resiliency Chapter is intended to provide the technical foundation for addressing these systems while also establishing principles that can inform other Comprehensive Plan elements, including land use, infrastructure, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, tourism, and economic development.

The Township intends for this RFP to result in a plan that is user-friendly for residents, implementable by staff, appealing to decision-makers, and practical for private-sector partners. The final product of the Comprehensive Plan should include a well-defined implementation matrix with phasing, responsible parties, and performance measures.

## 3. Project Objectives

- Develop a technically sound and locally relevant Coastal Resiliency Chapter for Saugatuck Township's Comprehensive Plan.
- Establish a shared understanding of the Township's Lake Michigan and Kalamazoo River coastal systems, including their characteristics, functions, vulnerabilities, and opportunities.
- Evaluate available information regarding shoreline conditions, erosion, bluff stability, coastal hazards, flooding, habitat, infrastructure vulnerability, public access, and development pressures.
- Develop a set of coastal resiliency principles that can be incorporated throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
- Translate available technical information and coastal resiliency best practices into practical, understandable planning policies, recommendations and implementation strategies appropriate for Saugatuck Township.
- Develop a set of coastal resiliency principles that can be incorporated throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
- Provide technical expertise and public education regarding coastal processes and shoreline management practices, including alternatives to conventional hard shoreline armoring where appropriate.

- Coordinate closely with the Township's Comprehensive Plan consultant so that coastal resiliency considerations are integrated throughout the overall planning process.

## 4. Scope of Work

The Township anticipates the scope below; proposers may suggest refinements or alternatives based on professional expertise.

### A. Project Kickoff & Coordination

- Participate in kickoff meeting with Township staff, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Comprehensive Plan consultant, and key partners to confirm objectives, communication protocols, and schedule.
- Prepare a detailed project management plan including establishment of roles, responsibilities and coordination process between the coastal resiliency consultant and Plan consultant, a task-level schedule (a timeline with milestones and deliverables), engagement plan, and deliverables list.
- Identify opportunities for integrating coastal resiliency in other Comprehensive Plan chapters.
- Consultant should anticipate regular coordination with the Comprehensive Plan consultant throughout the project to ensure open, clear communication on milestones, timelines, and deliverables.

### B. Review Existing Conditions & Data

- Analyze existing plans and relevant data to coastal resiliency. Available includes but is not limited to natural features inventories prepared by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan; shoreline condition documentation, bluff topography, and drone imagery developed through the Allegan County Road Commission's Lakeshore Drive study; and recent research documenting the increase in Lake Michigan shoreline hard armoring associated with high water events, including work by Dr. Ethan Theuerkauf.
- Provide educational materials to use in public meetings and public engagement to inform public on coastal conditions, processes, management practices, etc.
- Field review and spatial analysis to prepare a concise assessment of existing and anticipated coastal conditions and vulnerabilities relevant to long-range planning. The assessment should address the Lake Michigan Shoreline and Kalamazoo River/coastal riverine systems separately.
    - Lake Michigan Shoreline Assessment areas should address topics like bluff stability and development considerations, critical dune systems, shoreline

hard armoring, natural shoreline processes public access, and existing infrastructure and potential vulnerabilities.
    - The Kalamazoo River/Coastal Riverine System Assessment areas should address topics like river corridor conditions, habitat and natural features, development pressure, and Conservation and Public Access opportunities
- The consultant should clearly distinguish between technical findings supported by available data and areas where additional study would be warranted.

## C. Public Engagement (Consultant-Led)

- Facilitate a minimum of one (1) public engagement and education session focused on coastal processes, shoreline management practices, and long-term resiliency strategies in coordination with Comprehensive Plan consultants.
- Directly engage lakeshore and riverside property owners to review existing conditions, solicit feedback, and provide education on shoreline management practices beyond hard armoring in a minimum of (2) stakeholder meetings.
- Plan, staff, and facilitate all engagement activities; provide materials (print/digital), meeting notices, and recordkeeping (sign-in sheets, summaries, translation where appropriate).
- Document how input influenced recommendations; summarize participation metrics and demographics where practical.
- There is flexibility on the format of public engagement based on consultant expertise and Staff are open to consultant recommendations.

## D. Coastal Resiliency Chapter Development

- Based on the existing conditions assessment, available data, professional expertise, and community input, the consultant shall develop, in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan Consultant, a concise set of Coastal Resiliency Principles for adoption as part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Collaborate and work with Comprehensive Plan consultant to incorporate “Coastal Resiliency” chapter into the Plan.
- Chapter framework may include the following sections:
    - Introduction and Purpose, including definition, purpose and relationship of coastal resiliency with comprehensive planning.
    - Existing Conditions, including Lake Michigan shoreline, Kalamazoo River and coastal riverine systems, other natural resources, development patterns, infrastructure, public access, existing policies and regulations, and relevant planning initiatives.

- Coastal Hazards and Vulnerabilities, including erosion, bluff stability, high-water events, flooding, habitat loss, infrastructure vulnerability, development-related impacts, and other vulnerabilities identified by consultant.
- Coastal Resources and Opportunities, including conservation, habitat protection and restoration, public access, parks and recreation, non-motorized connections, natural shoreline functions, land acquisition, and other opportunities identified though the planning process.
- Coastal Resiliency Principles, including how these principles will guide Township decision-making.
- Implementation, including recommendations for implementing coastal resiliency through comprehensive planning, zoning and land use regulations, development review, public investments, conservation, infrastructure planning, public access, intergovernmental coordination, education/outreach, and future studies or technical work.

### E. Implementation & Adoption

- Develop an implementation matrix with actions, responsible parties, potential partners, potential funding sources, and suggested phasing (immediate, 1–2 years; short-term, 3–5 years; long-term, 6–10+ years).
- Prepare draft and final plan documents; incorporate staff and public comments.
- Present to the Planning Commission and Township Board of Trustees during review and adoption.
- Deliver all final products in print-ready PDF and native editable formats, including GIS data (e.g., file geodatabase or shapefile) for maps/layers. This may include working with the Geographic Information Systems Resources office for Allegan County.

## 6. Deliverables

- Project Management Plan (schedule, engagement plan, deliverables list).
- Public Engagement Session and Stakeholder Meetings with education materials, and engagement summary memos for each major activity.
- Existing Data and Information Review.
- Coastal Conditions and Vulnerability Assessment.
- Creation of Coastal Resiliency Principles.
- Draft Coastal Resiliency Chapter for staff/Commission/Board review.
- Final Coastal Resiliency Chapter, incorporating feedback.
- Implementation Recommendations (spreadsheet and embedded in plan).

- Digital GIS, mapping, graphics and supporting data files, as applicable and available.

## 7. Meetings & Milestones

- Consultant Interviews (short, virtual meetings) – December 7-10, 2026
- Consultant Selection & Contract Execution – By/Before January 20, 2027
- Project Kickoff – Late January/February 2027
- Existing Conditions Summary Delivered – April 2027
- Stakeholder Meetings – May – June 2027
- Public Engagement – July/August 2027
- Public Review Draft Released – November 2027
- Planning Commission Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan – January 2027
- Township Board of Trustees Adoption of Comprehensive Plan – Spring 2028

The final schedule will be coordinated with the schedule established for preparation and Township's Comprehensive Plan. Proposers should identify any recommended modifications to the schedule.

## 8. Proposal Requirements

- Cover Letter and Statement of Interest.
- Firm Profile and Qualifications, including relevant experience with small/mid-sized Michigan communities on the lakeshore, coastal processes and management expertise, and Comprehensive plan development.
- Project Understanding and Proposed Approach, including engagement strategy, coordination approach with third-party consultant.
- Work Plan and Schedule with major milestones.
- Team Organization and Resumes of key personnel on the project and subconsultants (if any).
- Relevant Project Examples (links or PDFs) with client references and contact information.
- Cost Proposal: task-based fee with hours and billing rates for each person on the project; identify reimbursables and optional services. Provide total cost for the work along with an estimated breakdown of each of the anticipated responsibilities and deliverables.
- Proposed Schedule for completing the project following Notice to Proceed.

## 9. Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated experience with coastal resiliency and Great Lakes coastal planning, including low-impact/ecologically-sensitive coastal engineering, shoreline erosion

management and restoration, coastal hazard assessment, GIS and coastal mapping, community engagement and technical education, and implementation-focused plans.
- Qualifications and availability of key personnel.
- Ability to work with third-party Comprehensive Plan consultant to incorporate "Coastal Resiliency" chapter cohesively into Comprehensive Plan document.
- Proposed schedule and ability to meet deadlines.
- Quality of past work and references.
- Cost effectiveness and value.

The Township staff will evaluate submissions and conduct short-virtual interviews with consultants prior to final selection. Interviews would occur between December 7-10, 2026.

## 10. Submission Instructions

Submit one (1) digital .pdf and five paper copies (only if submissions are more than 10 double-sided pages) to the address below by **4:00 pm on November 30, 2026**. Proposals must be clearly marked "Saugatuck Township Coastal Resiliency Chapter RFP". Late proposals will not be considered.

Mailing Address:
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## 11. General Terms & Conditions

- The Township reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, and select the proposal deemed in the Township's best interest with or without interviews.
- All costs incurred in responding to this RFP are the sole responsibility of the proposer.
- The selected consultant will be required to enter into a professional services agreement with the Township and maintain appropriate insurance.
- Work products become the property of the Township; consultant may retain rights to standard instruments of service as negotiated.

- The Township may use its own staff in coordination with the consultant for certain tasks (e.g., data provision, logistics).