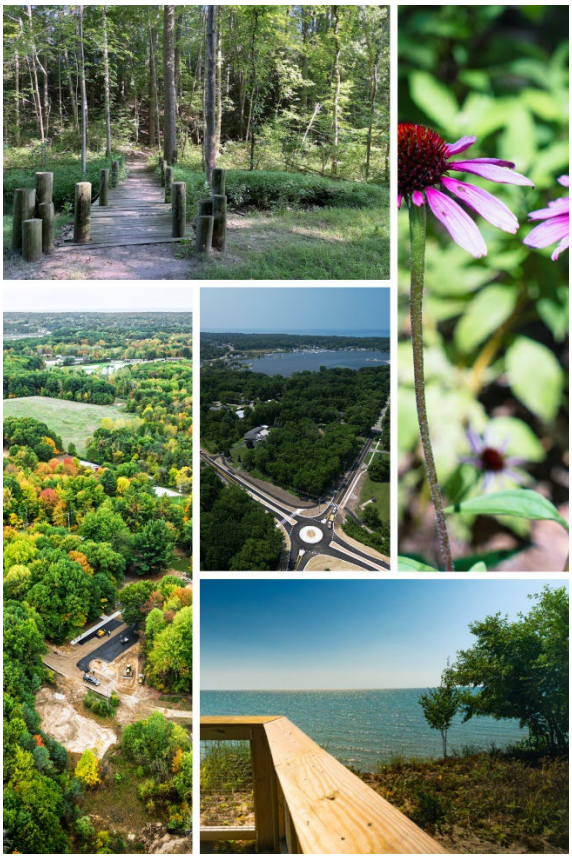
Saugatuck Township
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Comprehensive Plan Development

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



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www.saugatucktownshipmi.gov

1. Introduction & Intent

Saugatuck Township ("Township") is seeking proposals from qualified planning consultants or consultant teams to lead the development of a Township-specific Comprehensive Plan. The plan will guide future growth, land use, housing, transportation, non-motorized pathway development, economic development, recreation and tourism, long-term management of coastal resources along Lake Michigan and Kalamazoo River, sustainability and resiliency, and capital investments. The selected consultant will be responsible for designing and leading an inclusive, multi-channel public engagement process.

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 also completed a number of other plans, including the Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan, Land Conservation and Public Access Strategic Plan, 2024-2029 5-Year Parks Plan, Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan, and Blue Star Highway Hamlet Development Framework, all of which are relatively recent and not in need of revision. The Comprehensive Plan should consider and integrate these plans' findings rather than duplicate them. The plan should align with contemporary best practices and provide a clear, graphics-rich strategic plan that is actionable for the next 10–20 years. The plan should coordinate with the Township's recently adopted and re-written Zoning Ordinance (as of March 2024).

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 should include a well-defined implementation matrix with phasing, responsible parties, and performance measures.

3. Project Objectives

- Provide a full Comprehensive Plan that establishes an updated vision, goals, and land use framework for the Township.
- Integrate robust community engagement outcomes, including outreach to all stakeholders, community groups, and residents through multiple channels, including underrepresented populations of the Township.

- Address land use compatibility, rural character, street safety improvements, neighborhood preservation and reinvestment, housing choice and attainability, short-term rentals, economic development, and environmental sustainability/resiliency.
- Address strategies to enhance and increase connectivity of non-motorized pathways and greenways.
- Collaborate with a third-party technical expert to incorporate a separate "Coastal Resiliency" chapter into the Comprehensive Plan, as prepared by the third-party consultant contracted separately by the Township. A set of coastal resiliency principles will be developed which will also be intentionally integrated throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
- Coordinate plan recommendations with zoning (including form and character where appropriate), infrastructure, parks and non-motorized pathway networks, and economic development strategies.
- Develop an actionable implementation program with immediate, short-, and long-term steps; responsible parties; potential funding sources; and measurable performance indicators.
- Deliver GIS-based future land use and zoning recommendation layers and high-quality plan graphics and maps in both print-ready and digital/web formats and in coordination with Allegan County GIS
- Provide a Comprehensive Plan that is user-friendly, well-organized, has illustrative information, diagrams, etc.

4. Plan Topic Areas

The Plan will need to address the following important topic areas:

- Rural Character; identify key aspects of what defines the "rural character" of the Township and what the Township can do to maintain its "rural character".
- Residential Development; identify a proper ratio of housing types and price points to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Coastal Resiliency; collaborate with third-party technical expert on "Coastal Resiliency" chapter. The entire Comprehensive Plan shall be developed through a coastal resiliency lens to plan and manage growth and development on lands adjacent to Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River while protecting coastal resources.
- Tourism; evaluate tourism industry of the Township to determine best practices for sustainable tourism that protects the natural and coastal resources of the Township, connects and builds upon investments in Township parks, land

conservation plans, and non-motorized trails, and promotes responsible stewardship of these amenities.

- Road and Non-Motorized Pathway Safety; reference existing created plans and harmoniously incorporate into Plan and make any modifications should public engagement result in updated recommendations.
- Infrastructure; recommendations to best utilize and sustain existing infrastructure for development while minimizing expanding network in an unsustainable way.
- Short-Term Rentals; analyze short-term rental growth in the Township, rental certificate program, and provide recommendations on better regulating and/or restricting short-term rentals.
- Retail/Commercial/Mixed Use Development; how to support existing areas with right-sized future development and redevelopment/reuse while still maintaining/enhancing the character of the Township.
- Recommendations for continued refinement of the Zoning Ordinance and other Township Code regulations and requirements.

5. Scope of Work

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

A. Project Management & Kickoff

- Facilitate a kickoff meeting with Township staff, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and key partners to confirm objectives, communication protocols, and schedule.
- Prepare a detailed project management plan including a task-level schedule (a timeline with milestones and deliverables), engagement plan, and deliverables list.
- Draft and prepare Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting minutes.

B. Existing Conditions & Trend Analysis

- Analyze prior plans and relevant data (demographics, housing, market trends, mobility/traffic, infrastructure, environmental conditions). Provide educational materials to use in public meetings and public engagement to inform public on what has already been done.
- Field review and spatial analysis to identify opportunities and constraints and create a visual map of constraints and opportunities.

- High-level market context to support realistic land use and development strategies.

C. Public Engagement (Consultant-Led)

- Design and implement an inclusive public engagement plan, including (at minimum): project website/online hub, mailers for surveys and important dates, multilingual survey tools (if needed), stakeholder interviews, focus groups, pop-up events, and at least two community workshops/open houses.
- 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.
- Township Staff will be the primary point of contact for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

D. Statutory Notices & Mailings (Consultant Coordination)

- Township Staff will prepare and manage all required notices, mailings, and postings for Planning Commission and Township Board of Trustees reviews and public hearings, consistent with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) and Township procedures. However, Staff will require consultant coordination to ensure proper publication timing and meeting logistics.

E. Plan Development

- Draft plan chapters such as: (vision/goals, land use, neighborhoods/housing, commercial/industrial, mixed-use, transportation and non-motorized networks, public facilities and sustainability, implementation).
- Collaborate and work with third-party consultant to incorporate “Coastal Resiliency” chapter into Comprehensive Plan.
- Prepare a future land use map and supporting character/place-type guidance; include design/compatibility guidelines where appropriate and zoning plan.
- Provide references to zoning updates needed for implementation (e.g., districts, use standards, form, design, and procedures).
- Identify priority corridors and districts for reinvestment, infill, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use opportunities and priority areas for rural preservation.

F. 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 Plan and engagement summary memos after each major activity.
- Existing Conditions/Opportunities Summary, including proposing redevelopment concepts and achievable strategies (concise, visual).
- Draft Comprehensive Plan (full) for staff/Commission/Board review.
- Final Comprehensive Plan (print-ready PDF; accessible web PDF; three paper copies).
- GIS data for future land use and associated maps; high-resolution graphics and map image exports.
- Implementation Matrix (spreadsheet and embedded in plan).
- Presentation decks and materials for public meetings and hearings.

7. Meetings & Milestones

- Consultant Interviews (short, virtual meetings) – December 7-10, 2026
- Consultant Selection & Contract Execution – By/Before January 20, 2027
- Project Kickoff – January/February 2027
- Engagement Round 1 – February – April 2027
- Existing Conditions Summary Delivered – May 2027
- Engagement Round 2 – June – August 2027
- Public Review Draft Released – November 2027
- Planning Commission Public Hearing – January 2027
- Township Board of Trustees Adoption – Spring 2028

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 and Comprehensive plan development.
- Project Understanding and Proposed Approach, including engagement strategy.
- 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 Plan 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 Michigan Comprehensive plans, community engagement, and implementation-focused plans.
- Qualifications and availability of key personnel.
- Ability to work with third-party 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 Comprehensive Plan Rewrite RFP". Late proposals will not be considered.

Mailing Address:
Saugatuck Township
Attn: Kate White

3461 Blue Star Hwy
P.O. Box 100
Saugatuck, MI 49453

Email: kwhite@saugatucktownshipmi.gov
Phone: (269) 857-7721 ext. 101

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).