



State of the City 2026

The City of Montague had another productive year in 2025. We are fortunate to live in this unique community, where we can put our differences aside and work together to get things done. The dedicated city staff and elected officials maintain our small-town charm while providing services usually found in bigger cities. Here are some of the highlights and projects city staff and Council worked on in the past year:

Every year the state of Michigan requires the city to have an audit. Once again, the audit results show we are in good shape. Funding of employee pension, retirement, and health plans has a much healthier balance. Funding for these plans has increased at a steady pace as well as the city maintaining regular operations and completing extensive park and sidewalk projects. All while lowering the tax millage rate again in 2025, by .25 mils.

In 2025 the Planning Commission, City Council, and staff worked diligently with the developer and residents concerned about the Bowen Street Planned Unit Development. The construction of the development, to be called Bowen Woods, is slated to begin in 2026. Bowen Woods will consist of a maximum of 24 duplexes with a total of 48 units, which will be built as they sell. Great care was taken in developing plans for infrastructure, the natural setting of the landscape, surface water runoff, traffic flow, and the aesthetics of the duplexes. It is the hope that this housing, and the new residents it will bring, will be an asset to our community for many years to come.

The same care was taken with City Council and staff working on developer guidelines for the Ferry Street parcels, the adjacent farmers market location, and potential one-way traffic on the south end of Ferry Street. Last May, a Town Hall meeting was held to gather resident input on the issues. Many ideas were floated on the farmers market location, public parking, one-way street options, and the Ferry Street parcels. Ultimately, City Council and staff crafted an Application of Inquiry and Development Standards to be presented to any future developers interested in the Ferry Street parcels.

The Parks and Recreation Plan was approved by Council in early 2025. Updating essential plans like Parks and Recreation ensures that the city reaches goals and keeps moving forward with improvements. Several city parks saw impressive improvements in 2025, and two new park areas have been added. Maple Grove Park has a new playground structure and shoreline work will commence this coming spring. The shoreline work is funded by a significant donation to the city

from Will and Sharon Kari as Will has fond memories of the old bathing beach. The city received notice of grant funding for pickleball courts, parking lot improvements and other trail enhancements near Cullen Field. And the city now boasts a dog park in the same area! The dog park is fenced in with separate areas for big and small dogs and has been well-received by residents and canines. Sidewalks, landscaping, and sculptures were installed at the Marilyn Voss Sculpture Park, located between Shelby State Bank and the bike trail. The sculpture park work was completed in partnership with the Arts Council of White Lake. Longtime Montague resident, Charles 'Chick' Caluwaert, gifted the city over 14 acres of vacant land to be a future city park off Old Channel Trail. The park will be named Caluwaert Park in honor of the generous land donation to the community.

The city and Downtown Development Authority continue to work together to help local businesses expand and attract new businesses to the downtown area. During 2025 there have been a couple of new businesses and changes to established businesses. Welcome to new businesses Dune Grass Gallery and Classic Cleaners! Established business Renew You Fitness Studio & Boutique changed locations and Stoney Ridge Winery is working on expanding the dining room of their current location. Knit & Spin is now under new ownership and has different classes available. And Whitehall Products is slated to begin construction in 2026 to restore and update their facility after the fire damage in late 2022.

Part of the role of the city is to enhance the safety of our citizens. In 2025, two new ordinances were put in place to address pedestrian-crossing safety issues. These include ordinances dedicated to Pedestrian Crossings on Business Route US-31 and Pedestrian Crossings and Protection of Blind Pedestrians on City Streets. These ordinances will allow for signage and flashing lights at busy crossings and enable the police department to issue civil infraction tickets for motorists that disregard the pedestrian crossings. MDOT will be repaving BR US-31 in 2027 and held a public road diet meeting this past August. The repaving will begin at the White River bridge and head north along the Business Route. The road diet portion of the project will take place north of the stoplight from Dowling Street to Stanton Boulevard. In other pedestrian news, the city completed many sidewalk upgrades and installations in 2025. Over a half mile of sidewalk was updated or newly installed! And more will be coming in 2028 as the city prepares for the larger Safe Routes to School sidewalk project.

We welcome your input on city projects and plans! Again, the city keeps moving forward partly because of citizens like you. There are several committee and board appointments that occur each year according to term schedule. Applications of interest can be submitted yearly at Montague City Hall. And 2026 will be our first year of local elections on an even-year schedule, with several Council seats on the November ballot. Feel free to contact city staff or council members to find out the many ways you can serve your community.

Sincerely,



Mayor Tom Lohman
City of Montague