

Western Avenue

Past, Present and Future

By Zhumin Xu and Brandon Bartoszek

Early 20th Century

Looking East down Western Avenue in the early 20th Century.

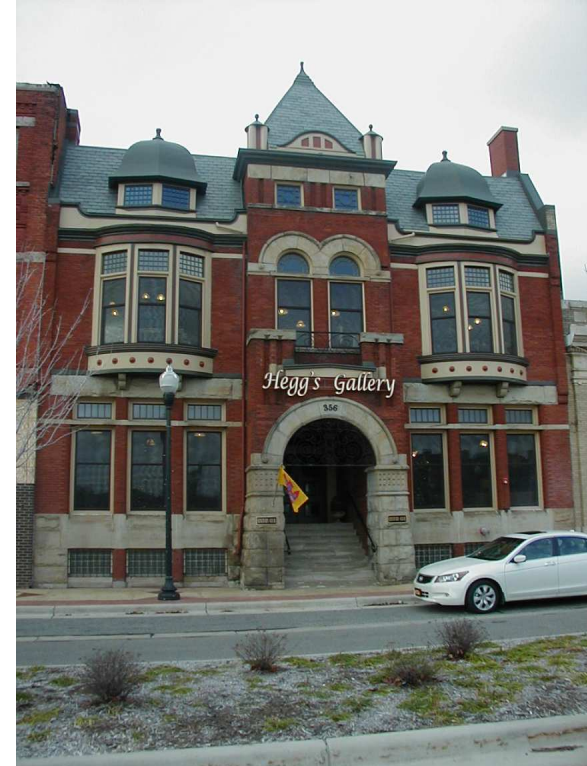


Downtown Muskegon grew in the shadow of the lumber industry at the beginning of the 20th century. During this period of growth classic buildings were built, a few of which still remain today.

The Century Club



Previous: Century Club in 1950s



Today: Hegg's Gallery

Muskegon Savings Bank

The Muskegon Savings Bank opened at the corner of Second & Western in 1908. A century later it is being refurbished for a new use.

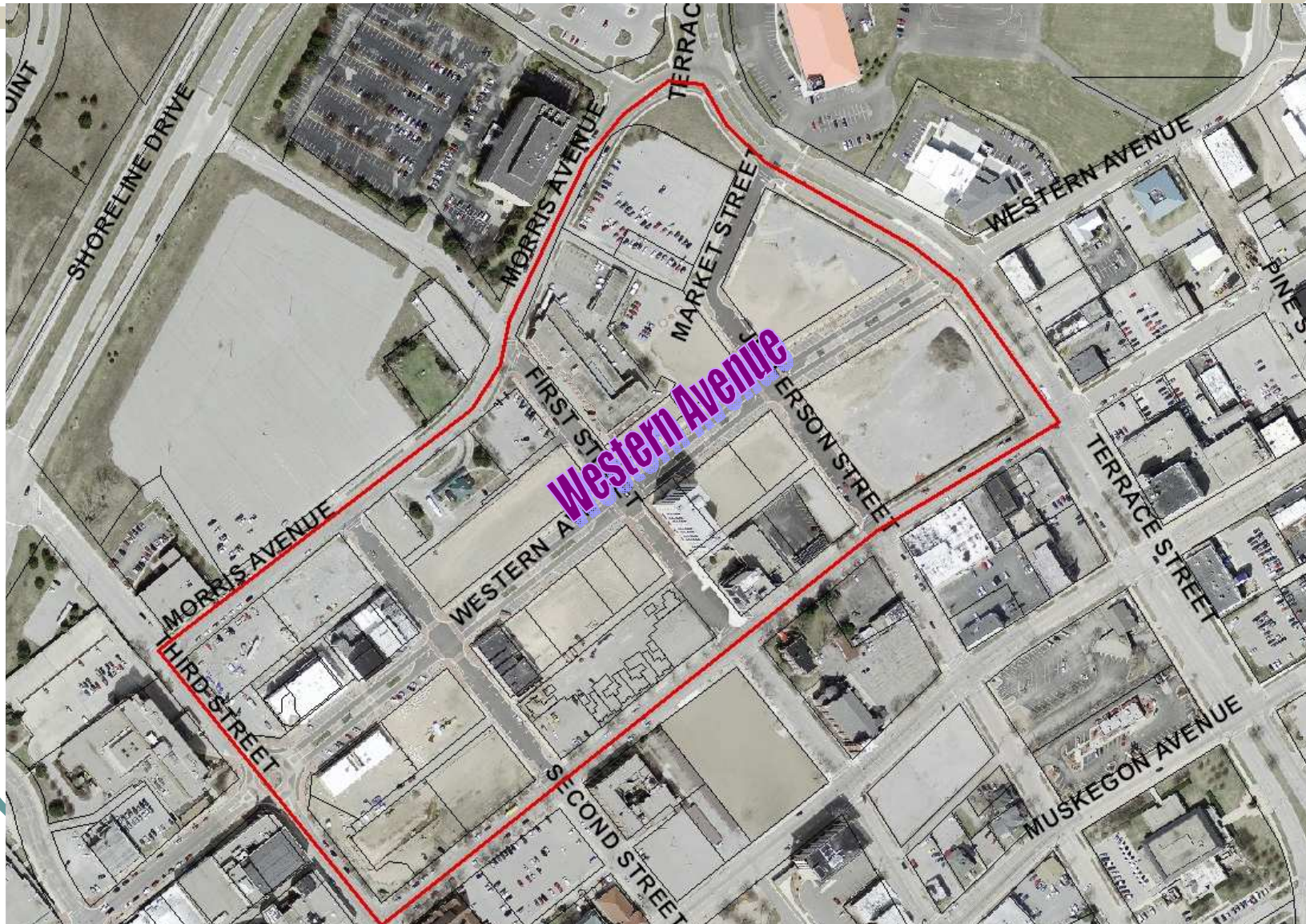


Early 20th Century

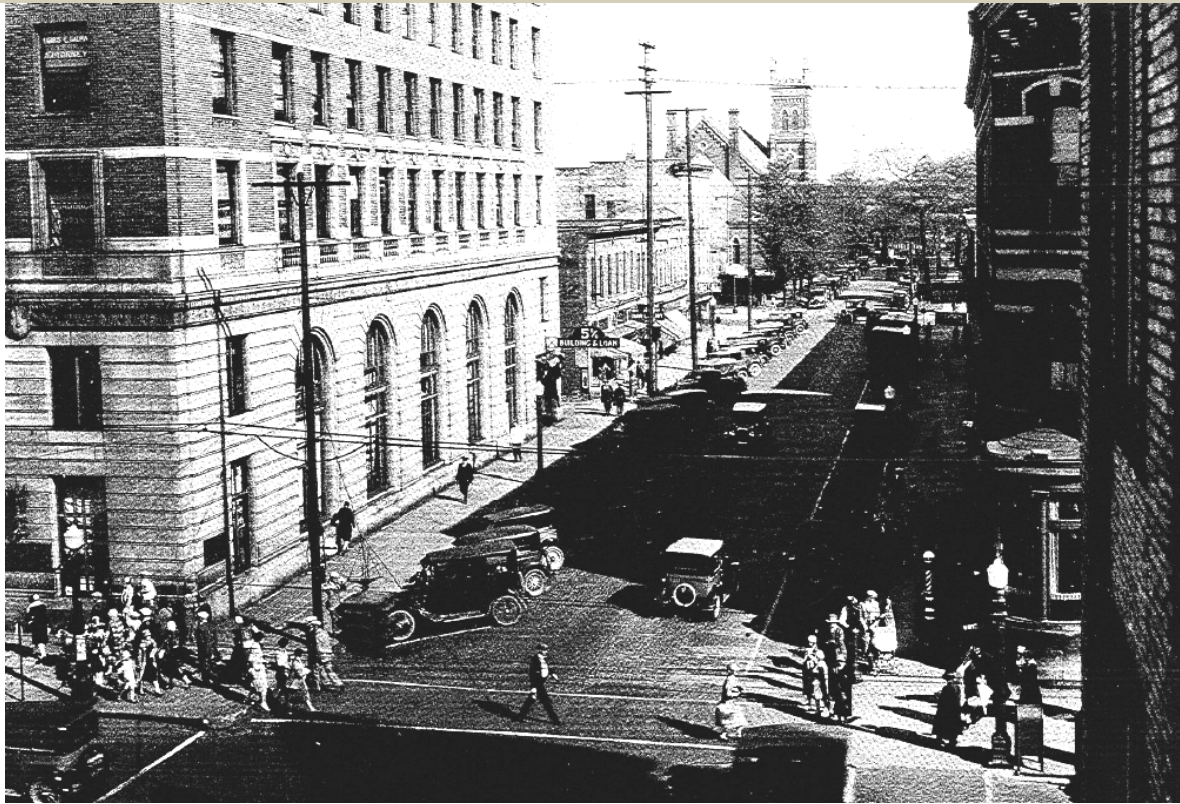


Early 21st Century

Mall Site Boundaries



The Heart of Downtown



In 1927, one of the Muskegon's busiest corners was the intersection of First and Western. This intersection was later covered by the mall.



The Flatiron Building, which occupied a triangular plot of land opposite Federal Square, was a landmark in Muskegon from 1912 until it was razed to make way for the Muskegon Mall in 1976. This photo was taken circa 1930.

Western Avenue

The Western Avenue of the 1940s and 50s formed the very heart of Muskegon.



It was the place for parades and community celebrations, as well as shopping.

Western Avenue



The picture is Western Avenue in 1960s between First Street and Second Street looking to the west. Most of these buildings were destroyed the following decade to make way for the Muskegon Mall.

Urban Renewal

- The downtown renewal first started in September 1958.
- 1963, downtown businessmen issue call for the redevelopment of central business area.
- Acquiring 8-blocks of downtown property took awhile, but in 1974 ground was broken on the downtown mall.
- Muskegon Mall opened on March 27th, 1976.

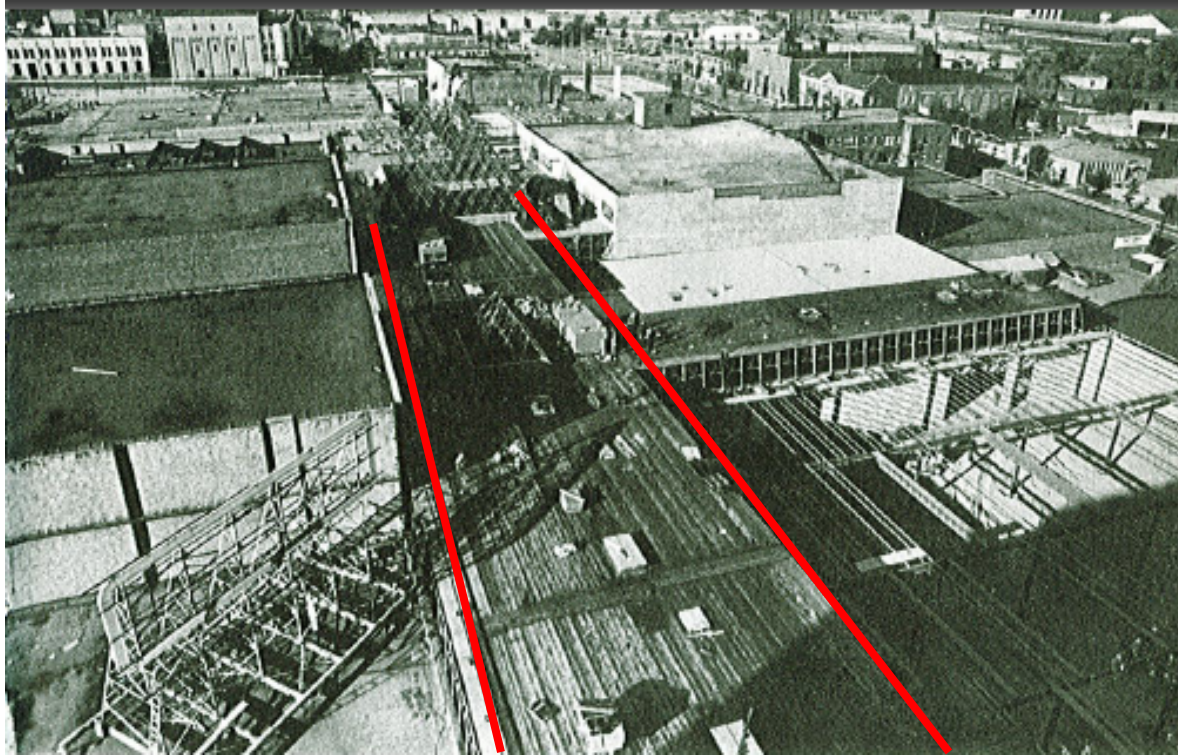


Occidental Hotel Demolition

The old Occidental Hotel was razed in 1975 to provide parking space for the mall. The historic hotel stood at the corner of Third and Clay.



Mall Construction



In 1974, the old downtown of Muskegon was drastically torn up. Western Avenue between Terrace and Third ceased to exist. The Muskegon Mall covered what was Western in that area.

Muskegon Mall



Groundbreaking ceremonies took place in November, 1974, and the official opening was held on March 27, 1976.

The Muskegon Mall: 1976-2001



End of the Mall

- The Lakes Mall Opens
 - Sears leaves downtown mall for new location. Many smaller stores follow
 - Steketee's closes, others do the same
- Muskegon Mall Closes



The Harvey Street Corridor with the Lakes Mall on the right.

The Aftermath



The Aftermath

- Almost all retail leaves downtown.
- 8-block (23 acre) area completely closed off.
- Downtown reaches its low point.

The DMDC

- Formed by CFFMC, MACC, Paul C. Johnson Foundation, in cooperation with the City of Muskegon in 2002.
- Purchased Mall in August 2002 for nearly \$2-million.
- Reopened the parking lots to the public.



Members of the DMDC reopen the mall parking lots.

Rebirth



Rebirth

- Imagine Muskegon – May 03
- Demolition of Mall – Nov 03
- Charter Development 2002-2004
- Western Rebuilt 2006
- All surviving mall buildings purchased.
- New Buildings Built.
- Over \$25-million in development since 2006.

Imagine Muskegon – Mall Site



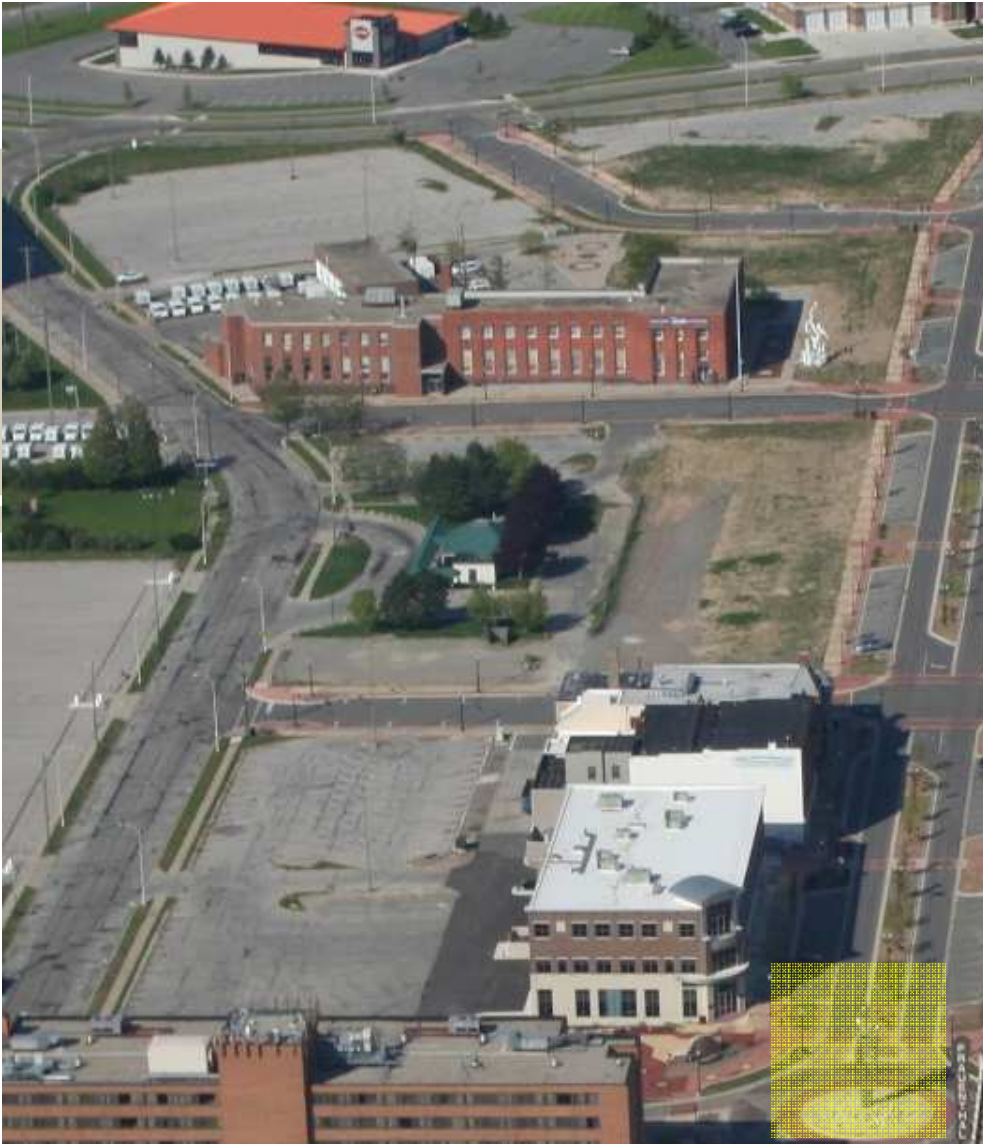
Mall Demolition

Mall Site Projects



Baker College Culinary Institute of Michigan

Mall Site Projects



Muskegon, Together Rising

Mall Site Projects



The Hines Building

Mall Site Projects



THIRD STREET PROMENADE



Third Street Promenade

Mall Site Projects



Redeveloped Montgomery Block

Mall Site Projects



The Sidock Building

Mall Site Projects



Redeveloped Russell Block

Mall Site Projects



Heritage Square Townhomes

Mall Site Projects



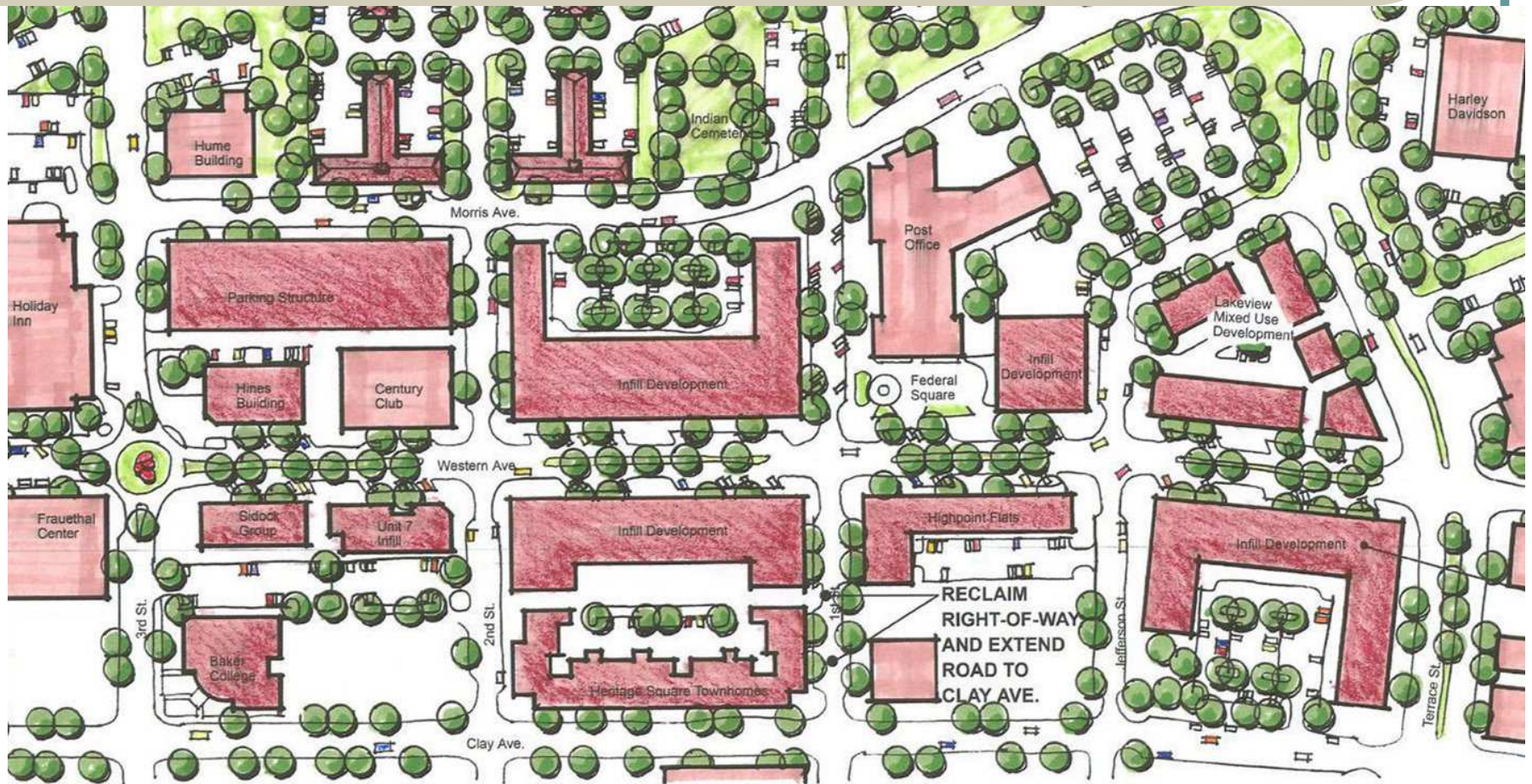
Highpoint Flats

Mall Site Projects



Future Building at Western & Second

The Future



The Muskegon Master Plan shows the mall site built-out with new buildings among the old