

Employment Opportunity

City Manager

City of Muskegon



# City Manager

## City of Muskegon

The City of Muskegon borders the shores of Lake Michigan and offers abundant attractions for its residents and visitors alike. The city is branded by the award-winning Watch Muskegon campaign – Watch Us Go. Over the last seven years, it has been a creative marketing campaign backed up by a great story of city progress.

With the largest beach in West Michigan, Muskegon is known for fishing, sailing, pleasure boating, and has a commercial and cruise ship port. It is a popular vacation destination because of the expansive freshwater beaches, historic architecture, and public art collection.

The city is governed by the Mayor and six City Commissioners elected every four years with staggered terms. The Mayor and City Commission appoint a city manager to oversee the day to day operations of the city. The City of Muskegon has a budget of \$108 million for all funds and a general fund budget of \$39.5 million. The city has 240 full-time employees and 30 part-time employees.

Muskegon is seeking an energetic City Manager motivated by challenges and a dynamic work environment. The Mayor and City Commission are flexible in embracing creative benefits for their preferred candidate, which may include tuition reimbursement, generous professional development, and residency incentive.



### ► POPULATION

38,318

### ► SIZE

18.20 sq. miles

### ► GENERAL FUND BUDGET

\$39.5 million

### ► STARTING SALARY

Up to \$200,000 DOQE

## ▶ THE COMMUNITY

Muskegon is the county seat of Muskegon County, Michigan and is part of West Michigan's larger Grand Rapids-Kentwood-Muskegon combined statistical area. Muskegon has gone through booms and busts in its economy tied to its natural resources of timber, sand, fresh water and deep-water port access to the Great Lakes. Its history is tied to the natural harbor that is Muskegon Lake.

Most recently, the City of Muskegon has been in the midst of an historic transformation of its downtown, former industrial properties on Muskegon Lake, diverse neighborhoods and industrial parks. The city's community innovations and accomplishments won it the 2018 nationwide Strongest Town Award from the new urbanist Strong Towns organization.

The local economy is driven by advanced manufacturing, health care and the hospitality industry. Key industrial companies in the city include General Electric Aviation, ADAC

Automotive, Pace Industries and KL Outdoors. Trinity Health Muskegon is a regional health care system while nearby Michigan's Adventure Amusement Park is the largest amusement park in Michigan. A hub of activity for Greater Muskegon, the city's downtown and social district drew 1.94 million patrons in 2021.

Muskegon is a popular vacation destination annually drawing 1.6 million out of town visitors to the county for its expansive sugar-sand beaches, historic architecture, public art collection and calendar of dynamic festivals and events. Downtown boasts of more than 40 significant pieces of public art, and plays host to the Lakeshore Art Festival, Rebel Road/Bike Time, Taste of Muskegon, the Michigan Irish Music Festival and the Unity Christian Music Festival to name a few. Out at Pere Marquette Beach, craft breweries from Greater Muskegon and across the Great Lakes region celebrate the growth of the industry with the Burning Foot Beer Festival.





Muskegon is the most populous city along the western shores of Michigan and home to a diverse population in an urban setting just minutes from world-class outdoor amenities. While the city's population has trended lower since peaking at nearly 50,000 residents in the 1950s, the city has been experiencing a renaissance in recent years that has contributed to its population stabilizing and beginning to rebound. As of the 2020 U.S. Census, the city was home to 38,318 individuals. To accommodate current residents and new residents, the City has proactively supported new housing developments, including an ambitious initiative

to infill housing on vacant lots in its urban neighborhoods. Over the past five years, the city has seen a 500-unit increase in housing, from downtown apartments to waterfront condos and single-family houses in several neighborhoods. The City expects up to another 60 single-family homes to be built in the coming year.

Proudly, Muskegon is big enough to have a symphony orchestra, a nationally-recognized art museum, a new convention center and an historic performing arts center but small enough for everyone to make a difference.

## ► THE ORGANIZATION

The city operates as a commission/manager form of government. The City Commission is comprised of seven members. The mayor and two at-large commissioners were elected in November 2021 to four-year terms. The other four commissioners are elected by specific wards of the city for four-year terms, with the next election for these positions occurring in 2023. The City Commission appoints the city manager, sets policy and direction, approves capital and operating budgets and major expenditures, while serving as the legislative authority through approval of ordinances and major planning initiatives. The hired City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the City, which has a budget of \$108 million for all funds, inclusive of a nearly \$40 million general fund budget, and a workforce consisting of 240 full-time employees and 30 part-time employees

The mayor and city commission members trust the expertise of the city manager and rely on the position's professionalism. Elected officials advocate for creativity and are supportive of improvements made to processes and recommendations advanced by city staff.

In April 2022, the City Commission convened with division and department heads to discuss a five-year vision for the City. The City Commission Vision 2022-2027, with a summary of goals selected for focus, may be viewed online [here](#) and in the addendum to this document.



# ▶ OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



## THE OPPORTUNITIES

- On a solid financial footing that will only improve as the city begins to reap the benefits of the solid development of the last decade
- On track to fulfil pension obligations which will free up a great deal of financial capital for the long term
- A community engaged to empower youth in the city
- Capitalize on the forthcoming delisting of Muskegon Lake as a Great Lakes Areas of Concern as designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Advancing sustainability initiatives that benefit the environment, community resiliency to climate change, and the City's fiscal conditions
- Reviving and building out the City's Parks & Recreation Department

## THE CHALLENGES

- Addressing and repairing housing, roads, water and sewer systems
- Achieving city employment that reflects the wide-ranging diversity of its citizens
- Redevelopment of properties effected by past industrial era's environmental contamination
- Public education stressed by state policies of schools of choice and a school financial aid formula unfair to urban districts
- Balancing a growing city with newcomers without alienating current and longtime residents
- Preserving, enhancing, and expanding public access to waterfront and waterways as shoreline development continues

## ▶ THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Mayor and City Commission are seeking a City Manager that is energetic, who embraces a dynamic work environment and is motivated by challenges. The city is seeking a candidate that furthers good governance, transparency, communication and community engagement. The ideal candidate will also have a passion for and knowledge of environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the City is looking for a manager with an innate drive to involve residents, elected officials, city staff, business owners, major employers and other government officials in continuing Muskegon's renaissance, with emphasis on residential and economic growth, expanded and enhanced recreational opportunities, vibrant cultural activities, and local entrepreneurship.

To be considered as a qualified applicant, respondents shall have:

- A bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, human resources, finance or other relevant field of study; a **master's degree is preferred**
- A minimum of five years' experience in local government as a city manager, assistant city manager or senior department head for a city, township or county; additional private sector experience is valued

Note: a willingness to reside within the City of Muskegon is desired.

The candidate preferably will have experience in a community that is comparable to Muskegon in terms of size and complexity. The ideal candidate shall also have experience in personnel/labor relations, budgeting and finance, public works, community/economic development and intergovernmental relations.

The new city manager will be inspirational and goal-oriented, holding their self and others accountable to the City's mission, goals, and aspirations. The ideal candidate shall also demonstrate executive leadership, be a team player and be respectful and responsive to the community, city staff and elected officials.

Among other important skills and attributes desired in the next manager are:

- Commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Eagerness to foster community engagement, quality citizen/customer service, and collaboration
- Has a record of problem-solving, decisiveness, and approachability
- Personal and professional integrity, as well as trustworthiness, and the ability to inspire the confidence of elected and appointed officials, department directors, city staff, and residents
- Genuine commitment to public service
- Empowers department directors to manage their respective departments
- Excellence in inter-governmental relations
- Support of professional training for city staff and elected officials
- High-level communication, interpersonal, and human-relations skills
- Forward-thinking and creative
- Vigilant in monitoring municipal and financial trends
- Seeks out grants and private-sector financial support
- Embraces public-private partnerships
- Dedicated to continuous improvement in organizational efficiency, processes, and policy



WATCH  
MUSK  
EGON™

# APPLICATION PROCESS

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APPLY BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS August 8, 2022

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Please submit resume, cover letter, consent form, and five professional references to:

Email:

[execsearch@mml.org](mailto:execsearch@mml.org)

Subject Line: Muskegon Search

Questions can be directed to MML Executive Recruiter Joyce Parker at [joyce\\_parker@msn.com](mailto:joyce_parker@msn.com)

Candidates desiring confidentiality of their interest, as allowed for and provided by Michigan law, must indicate such in a separate subject line above the body of the cover letter.

This search is conducted by an Equal Opportunity Employer.





## **CITY COMMISSION VISION 2022-2027**

SUBMITTED TO THE  
MUSKEGON CITY COMMISSION

**JUNE 2022**

## OVERVIEW

In April 2022, the City Commission convened with division and department heads to discuss a five-year vision for the City. This document summarizes the process used and goals selected for focus in the coming 5 years.

Prior to the April meeting, commissioners completed an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges, and staff provided input on their top challenges and goals for their individual departments as well as top goals for the city at large.

On Friday, April 15, 2022, the leadership team of the City of Muskegon, consisting of the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, and Department Heads, met to create a shared vision of the future with major goals, key objectives, and one-year tasks. The following summary reflects the discussion's main points that take the City forward.

## VISION TOUR

Commissioners and staff worked together to develop a vision for the future of Muskegon. Three small groups captured ideas and then met as a whole to refine a shared vision. In 2027, a visitor touring the City of Muskegon will see the following:

- Diversity – neighborhoods, businesses, and city staff are reflective of the larger community
- Economic opportunities – a wide variety of jobs are available for current and future residents; developers see the community as a good and safe place to invest
  - Youth-focused – the community is dedicated to helping youth reach their potential
  - Seasonal balance – community activity and commerce is balanced across all seasons
  - Creating micro commercial areas to fit into each neighborhood
- Communication – neighbors, workers, businesses owners, and visitors have easy access to information
- Blight is cleaned up – all neighborhoods are improving and attractive
- Events and activities throughout the city, providing diverse options and through all seasons
- A train from Chicago to Muskegon – progress toward passenger transit service between Muskegon and Chicago
- Improved public access to Muskegon Lake – public access exists throughout the shoreline with a variety of ways to interact with the lake
- Additional retail incubators – small retail spaces (much like those at the Western Market) are available near the NOAA station at Pere Marquette Park

- Community connection – additional sources of communication between the residents and the City including better use of technology and development of a city newsletter
- Increased election engagement – more residents are voting, running for office, working on campaigns, working at the polls, or otherwise engaged in election processes; additional use of election trailer
- Improved connectivity between downtown and the waterfront and between downtown, other commercial corridors, and the beaches – idea for water taxis, implementation of the Imagine Muskegon Lake Plan
- Progress on the current economic development projects
  - Windward Pointe
  - Harbor 31 Business Park
  - The Docks
  - Hartshorn Marina Village
  - Adelaide Pointe
  - The Leonard Phases II & III
  - Lakeview Lofts Phase II
  - 1144 Third Street
  - Ameribank Building (880 First St)
  - Watermark Building
  - Huntington Bank Building
  - former McDonald's (122 W. Muskegon)
  - Catholic Charities Building (1095 Third Street)
  - 790 Terrace
  - 902 Pine Street
  - Morris St lot redevelopment
  - Port City Industrial Park Expansion
  - Infill Housing with continued focus on attainability for all residents
- More integrated community – reduce segregation based on economic status and ethnicity
- Education and engagement in neighborhoods – all neighborhood associations are active and work together with city staff
- Improved perception of and partnership with Muskegon Public Schools as an institution
- Develop and support other commercial corridors outside of the downtown

- Western Avenue is full and diverse – there are no remaining vacant lots, and the residents and businesses better reflect the diverse community
- Infill housing – greatly reduce the number of buildable vacant lots in neighborhoods
- Improved housing at all levels – more housing options, better living conditions
- Decrease the burden on residents to support infrastructure – secure more federal resources

## MAJOR GOAL AREAS

It is the City Commission’s desire to ensure that all goals, projects, programs, and practices are implemented in ways that improve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

### **2027 GOAL 1: DESTINATION COMMUNITY & QUALITY OF LIFE**

*Create an environment that puts an emphasis on improving amenities and investing in the traits that positively affect residents’ quality of life and attract visitors.*

#### Key Focus Areas

- Improved access to the waterfront
- Improved connections between downtown and the beaches
- Passenger transit service to Chicago
- Blight cleanup
- Enhanced Parks and Recreation Department and Services
- Events and activities
- Public transportation options (tram, scooters, trolley, biking network)
- Public restrooms that remain open

#### Goal 1 Action Items

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|------------------------|---|
| Action Item 2022 – 1.1 | Set meetings for conversation with Amtrak and Greyhound                       |
| Action Item 2022 – 1.2 | Investigate water taxi and other downtown to Lake Michigan circulator vendors |
| Action Item 2022 – 1.3 | Establish a robust Park and Recreation improvement plan                       |
| Action Item 2022 – 1.4 | Proceed with events and activities  |
| Action Item 2022 – 1.5 | Increase grant assistance to neighborhoods to reduce blight                   |
| Action Item 2022 – 1.6 | Allocation of funds for tram and restrooms                                    |

## **2027 GOAL 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, AND BUSINESS**

*Create an environment that effectively attracts new residents and retains existing residents by filling existing employment gaps, attracting new and diverse businesses to the city, and expanding access to a variety of high-quality housing options in Muskegon.*

### Key Focus Areas

Diverse housing types  
Diversity reflected in businesses and business owners  
Improved reputation for inspections department  
Micro-commercial areas in neighborhoods  
Retain youth within the city  
Neighborhood commercial center development  
Progress toward completion of ongoing economic development projects

### Goal 2 Action Items

Action Item 2022 – 2.1	Include neighborhood commercial center development in master plan update
Action Item 2022 – 2.2	Pursue funding for food hall at farmer’s market
Action Item 2022 – 2.3	Increase variety of housing types
Action Item 2022 – 2.4	Develop subsidies to improve housing affordability
Action Item 2022 – 2.5	Begin engagement and discussion about chalets at Pere Marquette Park near NOAA and per the Imagine Muskegon Lake plan
Action Item 2022 – 2.6	Complete Adelaide Pointe public improvements
Action Item 2022 – 2.7	Investigate options for assisting minority owned businesses

### **2027 GOAL 3: COMMUNITY CONNECTION**

*Create an environment of mutual respect and trust between local government and the community we serve. Increase communication with residents, workers, business owners, and visitors to inform, educate, and create opportunities for input.*

#### Key Focus Areas

- Enhanced internal and community communication
  - Focus on neighborhood associations
- Foster strong ties among government and community agencies
  - Help increase public participation
  - More integrated community
- Increased range of options for communications
  - Staff reflective of the diverse community
  - Increased election turnout

#### Goal 3 Action Items

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|------------------------|--|
| Action Item 2022 – 3.1 | Monthly communication with neighborhood associations     |
| Action Item 2022 – 3.2 | Increase education and outreach to voters                |
| Action Item 2022 – 3.3 | Update and implement internal communication policies     |
| Action Item 2022 – 3.4 | Develop a community newsletter                           |
| Action Item 2022 – 3.5 | Create media content to assist with community engagement |
| Action Item 2022 – 3.6 | Modernize the recruitment strategy                       |

### **2027 GOAL 4: FINANCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Create an environment that naturally affects the city's revenues in a positive manner, with a focus on reclaiming city investments in housing, nurturing startup projects proposed throughout the city, and exploring staff recommendations related to new revenues.*

#### Key Focus Areas

- Decrease infrastructure burden on residents
- Sustainability in financial practices and infrastructure
  - Increase revenue

### Goal 4 Action Items

Action Item 2022 – 4.1	Identify specific major capital projects across all departments
Action Item 2022 – 4.2	Take advantage of external revenue sources
Action Item 2022 – 4.3	Complete study of sewer and water rates
Action Item 2022 – 4.4	Improve the budget process to maintain focus throughout the year
Action Item 2022 – 4.5	Investigate options to improve environmental sustainability for projects within the city

## IMPLEMENTATION

Once adopted, the leadership team will discuss the vision and goals at regular intervals to confirm that the action plan is guiding decision making. A more formal review of the plan will take place with commissioners near the end of each calendar year, and appropriate revisions will be made. In annual increments, commissioners and leadership staff will review progress made on the action items in the previous year and develop new action items for the coming year. Decisions by commissioners and staff should be guided by this strategic action plan.