

# CITY OF MUSKEGON MASTER LAND USE PLAN



# City of Muskegon Master Land Use Plan April 1997



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# Introduction

## Master Land Use Plan



Located along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, the City of Muskegon is a dynamic urban community. The City is home to the nationally acclaimed Cherry County Playhouse, the Muskegon Museum of Art, the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, colleges, regional health care institutions, and a host of national firms, including representation in the Fortune 500.

Recreational opportunities abound. Lake Michigan's sandy beaches attract visitors from throughout the Midwest. The Muskegon Lake shoreline provides scenic views and natural areas. Both lakes are important sport fisheries.

Muskegon is a community of ethnic and cultural diversity. The City is home to approximately 42,000 residents. It is the region's largest city and the seat of Muskegon County government. Founded on a lumbering base, and supplanted by automotive and other industries, the City is



now experiencing significant growth in high-tech industrial development and tourism.

The City is accessible by Interstate 96 and US-31. Muskegon Lake provides deep harbor access for commercial, industrial, and recreational watercraft. The Muskegon Airport, located minutes from the City, provides full-service passenger facilities with linkage to major national airports. Within West Michigan, the City is considered a prime location for significant growth due to lakefront development opportunities, an existing industrial base, a skilled labor force, and an extensive range of educational, cultural, and recreational amenities.

The City of Muskegon Master Land Use Plan is designed to be a guide and strategy for future land use. It is intended for use by decision makers during the process of making choices between varied and often competing interests.





# Introduction

## Master Land Use Plan



The Master Land Use Plan is made up of three elements: the overall Master Land Use Plan document; a focused Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment plan; and an extensive geographic information system. The Master Land Use Plan summarizes numerous data gathering efforts, subsequent analytical steps, and comprehensive land use recommendations. The Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan represents similar steps and recommendations, but focuses on the Core Downtown and Muskegon Lakefront. The geographic information system digitized vast quantities of data for use in unlimited analysis and presentation of land use issues.

All elements of the Master Land Use Plan were generated during approximately 28 months of work in 1995 to 1997 by a large team of citizens, City and business officials, and consultants. The level of dialogue and effort put into thinking, discussing, proposing and finalizing a plan for the City of Muskegon was unprecedented in the City's history. All participants should be proud.

The Master Land Use Plan should be used as follows:

- ◆ As a tool when developing, coordinating, and preparing specialized plans and plan implementation programs; and when addressing issues such as neighborhoods, natural resources, and land development proposals.
- ◆ As a guideline during the process of administering zoning and other land development ordinances. Decisions on requests for special use permits,

rezonings, site plan reviews, variances, and the like should be evaluated on the basis of consistency with specific plan recommendations and standards.

- ◆ As a guide for augmenting current land development regulations.

The Plan presents a framework for future land use that is supported by findings and recommendations which are based on:

- ◆ Perceptions of the City's past, present, and potential future, as shared by members of City and regional business, governmental, institutional, banking, investment, development, educational, entrepreneurial, and residential communities.
- ◆ An analysis of demographic trends and projections.
- ◆ An analysis of traffic and accident data and transportation needs.
- ◆ An analysis of land use, development patterns, and natural resources.
- ◆ An analysis of potentially contaminated property and redevelopment of former industrial land.
- ◆ Neighborhood, business owner, City official, and City staff workshops conducted during the process of preparing the Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan component of the Master Land Use Plan.
- ◆ Information gathered during downtown patron and regional household surveys.





# Introduction

## Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ An examination of previous City planning documents.

The plan is presented in thirteen sections:

1. Introduction
2. Population & Socio-Economic Characteristics
3. Existing Land Use
4. Transportation
5. Natural Features Inventory
6. Historic District
7. Parks and Recreational Facilities
8. Brownfield Analysis
9. Residential Quality
10. Neighborhood Issues
11. Sub-Area Plans
12. Future Land Use Recommendations
13. General Plan Recommendations

# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



### HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

Population numbers for 1970-1994 for the City of Muskegon, its surrounding communities, and Muskegon County are provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 indicates that the City of Muskegon, after experiencing about a 4,000 drop in population between 1970 and 1980, has remained stable since that time with an estimated population in 1994 of 40,639. The other cities surrounding Muskegon have generally remained stable or declined slightly in population between 1970 and 1994.

The reason the City of Muskegon has not increased in population, despite slow infill of new residential construction may be due to a number of factors including outmigration to the County's outlying areas, other communities and counties, a declining area economy, and a trend toward smaller per household population.

Outmigration trends may be influenced by the increase in the City's African American population and the generally greater economic mobility of the City's white

population over the past decade.

The average population per household has dropped from 2.80 in 1970 to 2.46 in 1990. In effect, the added population from new housing is being offset by lower population numbers within existing housing units. This trend is consistent with State and national trends. Average population per household for the United States has declined from 3.14 in 1970 to 2.63 in 1990. Likewise the State of Michigan has declined from 3.27 in 1970 to 2.66 in 1990.

The trend in household size during the next 20 to 30 years will be as big of an influence on future City population counts as continued infill of residential construction.

It is difficult to predict whether this long downward trend in household size will continue or whether it has bottomed out. This difficulty lies in the fact that people are responding to so many societal factors in making their decisions relative to family size. The general trend throughout the County toward an aging population will be a factor in keeping the average population per household low. Migration is likely to

Unit	1970	1980	1990	1994
City of Muskegon	44,631	40,823	40,283	40,639
City of North Muskegon	4,243	4,024	3,919	3,809
City of Muskegon Heights	17,304	14,611	13,176	14,017
City of Roosevelt Park	4,176	4,015	3,885	3,252
City of Norton Shores	22,271	22,025	21,755	22,061
Township of Muskegon	13,754	14,557	15,302	15,373
Muskegon County	157,426	157,589	158,983	163,436

Source: 1990 U.S. Census  
1994 Estimates provided by West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

**Table 2.1** **Population Trends**  
**City of Muskegon and Surrounding Communities**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



also have a continued impact on population size. Only 50 percent of the population over five years of age lived in the same residence in 1990 as it did in 1985. Ten percent of the population came from a different County in Michigan, and 6 percent were from another State. According to IRS records from 1979 and 1980, Ottawa County and the Southern United States are the top two places from which both population inflow and outflow from Muskegon County result.

### 2. Population Projections

Data provided by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) projects a 4,365 person increase in the City's population over the next 30 year period. WMSRDC population projections indicate that the City will have a population of 45,004 by the year 2025, a figure slightly higher than the 1970 population of 44,631 persons. Population projections for the City, surrounding communities, and Muskegon County through the year 2025 are provided in Table 2.2. These projections anticipate an increase of 6,283 persons for the City and its surrounding communities, and an

increase of 16,653 persons for Muskegon County as a whole.

Current WMSRDC projections for the City of Muskegon are realistic given an analysis of past construction and demolition trends in the City, and anticipated changes in the average population per household in future years. The population in the City of Muskegon is predicted to range between 43,000 and 47,000 by the year 2025. The higher range will most likely be reached if the average population per household does not continue to decline.

A more accurate population projection is unavailable because it is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately predict 1) the number of homes or dwelling units that may be demolished as a result of age, fire, natural disaster, etc.; 2) the number of dwelling units that may be displaced by other types of development; 3) the number of new dwelling units that might result from future infill development, and; 4) changes in average household population.

### 3. Age Groups

A breakdown of age groups within City,

Unit	1994	2005	2015	2025
City of Muskegon	40,639	42,137	43,547	45,004
City of North Muskegon	3,949	4,082	4,218	3,809
City of Muskegon Heights	14,017	14,534	15,020	15,522
City of Roosevelt Park	3,252	3,372	3,485	3,601
City of Norton Shores	22,061	22,874	23,639	24,430
Township of Muskegon	15,373	15,940	16,473	17,024
Muskegon County	163,436	169,461	175,130	180,089

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Note: The City's 1984 Master Land Use Plan projected the 1990 and 2000 populations at 38,532 and 36,726 persons, respectively.

Table 2.2

Population Projections  
City of Muskegon and Surrounding Communities



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



County and the State populations is provided in Table 2.3. Table 2.3 shows no significant differences between City, County and State populations except in the 65 to 74 and 85 and older age groups. The number of persons in these City age groups is slightly higher than that of the State's, though almost double that of the County's.

Persons within these age groups typically have needs for lower housing costs; efficient public transportation; easily accessible community medical and shopping facilities, assistance with home maintenance, and increased neighborhood security. Elderly renters often need rent subsidies, or subsidized housing. Homeowners frequently need access to home maintenance programs. The greater number of persons within these age groups may be a result of the City's ability to meet such needs, or due to the general aging of the City's long-term resident population.

Table 2.4 illustrates life phases 1970, 1980 and 1990. While there have been changes in all life phase groups between 1970 and 1990, significant reductions have occurred

in the elementary school, family forming and mature family phases. Table 2.5 shows the distribution of age on a census tract by census tract basis and supplements the data in Table 2.4.

### 4. Gender, Racial & Ethnic Composition

The City's population is composed of 19,942 males and 20,341 females. Approximately 70 percent the City's population is white, 27 percent is African-American, one percent American Indian, 0.03 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.67 listed as other. The City's African American population has increased over the past decade, and the white population has declined. Between 1990 and 2000, the City's white population is projected to decrease by 620 persons, or from approximately 70 percent to approximately 66 percent of the City's total population. The African-American population is expected to increase by 2,263 persons, or from approximately 27 to 31 percent of the total population.

Age Group	Number	Percent of City Population	Percent County Population	Percent State Population
Under 5	3,495	8.6	8.0	8.0
5 to 14	5,780	14.3	20.0	19.0
15 to 24	6,239	15.4	4.0	5.0
25 to 34	7,832	19.3	5.0	6.0
35 to 44	5,353	13.2	31.0	32.0
45 to 54	3,018	7.5	10.0	10.0
55 to 64	2,850	7.0	4.0	4.0
65+	5,923	14.7	18.0	16.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,490</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census Percentage figure have been rounded to next highest percentage point.

**Table 2.3** Population by Age Group, 1990  
City of Muskegon, Muskegon County, and State of Michigan



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

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Age Group	Life Phase	Number	Percent in	Percent in	Percent in
			1990	1980	1970
Under 5	Pre School	3,495	8.6	8.6	8.8
5 to 14	Elementary School	5,780	14.3	14.4	19.5
15 to 19	Secondary School	3,120	7.7	9.1	9.9
20 to 44	Family Forming	16,304	40.2	35.3	27.3
45 to 64	Mature Family	5,868	14.5	18.1	21.8
65 and over	Retirement	5,923	14.7	14.5	12.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>40,490</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.4** **Population by Life Phase Groups  
City of Muskegon 1990**

The racial composition of Muskegon varies significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood. Minority households are concentrated in near-Downtown neighborhoods where high concentrations of low-income households are prevalent.

Muskegon Heights. While the racial composition for Muskegon County is quite similar to that of the State, the City's racial composition was about 13% lower in the white category and about 13% higher in the African American category.

As of the date of this plan, the majority of the City's African-American population lives in the East Muskegon, Angell, and McLaughlin census tracts. Between 1970 and 1980, more than 90 percent of Muskegon County's minority population lived in the Cities of Muskegon and

Although Hispanic persons constitute only 3.5% of the City of Muskegon's population, this group increased between 1980 and 1990 by 16%. This segment of the population is distributed throughout the community on a relatively even basis.

Age Group	Census Tract											
	1	2	3	4	5	6.01	6	7	8	9	10	21
Under 5	307	99	437	560	672	196	305	2	315	274	73	286
5 - 9	243	72	386	529	586	152	210	—	310	248	66	197
10 - 14	215	83	335	447	506	151	185	1	254	229	67	165
15 - 19	298	79	298	447	607	158	242	—	205	203	71	168
20 - 24	482	81	381	885	534	164	303	8	252	255	58	296
25 - 34	768	120	531	2,279	1,047	326	511	17	687	655	156	581
35 - 44	559	97	408	1,411	708	311	303	7	477	547	209	395
45 - 54	310	78	238	610	368	117	167	9	255	391	135	231
55 - 64	224	102	254	520	345	104	168	8	230	368	168	326
65 - 74	299	81	304	500	344	116	204	2	264	384	182	396
75 - 84	219	31	157	388	194	94	166	8	183	245	70	306
85+	69	16	66	197	65	35	47	—	75	53	20	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,993</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>3,695</b>	<b>8,773</b>	<b>5,976</b>	<b>1,924</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3,507</b>	<b>3,852</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>3,468</b>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census & City of Muskegon 1995 Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan

**Table 2.5** **Age by Census Tract, City of Muskegon, 1989**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

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Category	City of Muskegon		Muskegon County	State of Michigan
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
White	28,148	69.9	84.2	83.4
African American	10,916	27.1	13.6	13.9
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut.	390	1.0	0.8	0.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	139	0.3	0.3	1.1
Other Race	690	1.7	1	0.9
Hispanic (any race)	1,416	3.5	2.3	2.2

**Table 2.6**

**Racial Composition**

**Muskegon County, City of Muskegon, & State of Michigan**

Table 2.6 indicates that the City's Hispanic population is similar to State and regional populations.

older age groups. The 16 to 64 age group has been assessed as to work disability, including disabilities which would prevent individuals from working. Disability information for the City of Muskegon, Muskegon County, and the State of Michigan is provided in Table 2.8.

Table 2.7 shows the breakdown of the City's populations by race and ethnicity on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.

### 5. Disabled Population

Table 2.8 indicates that the City's labor force exhibits nearly twice the rate of work disabilities and disabilities that prevent working than is exhibited by the State's labor force. The City's labor force also

The disabled population is assessed by the Census Bureau as non-institutionalized persons either in the 16 to 64 or 65 and

	White		African American		Other		Hispanic <sup>1</sup>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All Tracts	28,148	69.9	10,916	27.1	1,219	3.0	1,416	3.5
Marquette	2,782	69.7	1,096	27.4	115	2.9	158	4.0
Jackson Hill	147	15.7	787	83.8	13	1.4	16	1.7
Angell	1,289	34.9	2,290	70.0	116	3.1	137	3.7
East Muskegon	5,649	64.4	2,821	32.2	303	3.5	331	3.8
McLaughlin	3,818	63.9	1,916	32.0	242	4.0	302	5.1
South Nelson	1,399	72.7	463	24.1	62	3.2	44	2.3
North Nelson	1,453	51.7	1,268	45.1	90	3.2	108	3.8
Downtown	59	95.2	2	3.2	1	1.6	0	0
Nims	3,280	93.5	106	3.0	121	3.4	140	4.0
Lakeside	3,716	97.6	38	1.0	53	1.4	73	1.9
Bluffton/Beachwood	1,255	98.4	8	0.6	12	1.0	3	0.2
Henry/Glenside/Rudiman	3,256	93.9	121	3.5	91	2.6	104	3.08

Source: City of Muskegon 1995 Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan

<sup>1</sup>The term Hispanic is used as an ethnic rather than a racial indicator. Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any racial group and are included in other racial groups within the general population.

**Table 2.7**

**Population by Race & Census Tract**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



Category	City of Muskegon	Muskegon County	State of Michigan
<b>Persons 16 - 64 years of age</b>	<b>21,474</b>	<b>94,727</b>	—
Having work disability (%)	16.0	12.0	9.0
Prevents from Working (%)	9.0	6.0	4.7
Mobility or self-care limitation (%):	17.0		10.9
a) mobility limitation (%)	15.0	11.0	8.9
b) self-care limitation (%)	4.0	3.0	3.3
<b>Persons 65 years and older</b>	<b>5,368</b>	<b>19,719</b>	<b>1,108,461</b>
Mobility or self-care limitation (%)	41.0	37.0	37.0
a) mobility limitation (%)	35.0	33.0	33.2
b) self-care limitation (%)	14.0	12.0	11.7

**Table 2.8**

**Disability Status, City of Muskegon, 1990**

exhibits higher numbers of people in mobility and self care limitation categories when compared to County and State figures.

### 6. Income

An illustration of Muskegon households by income range (as reported in 1989) is given in Table 2.9. This table also includes percentages of households in each income range for both the City, County, and the State for comparison purposes. This table identifies a concentration of households in

the medium to lower income levels.

Muskegon had about 16% more households in the three under \$15,000 income range categories than did the State. Likewise, the State had about 25% of households in the income ranges of \$50,000 or more compared to 7% for the City of Muskegon.

Median household income is a commonly used value to compare general income capacity among governmental units. Table 2.10 indicates that with the exception of

Income Range	Number of City Households	Percent of City Households	Percent of County Households	Percent of State Households
Less than \$5,000	1,334	9.1	6.0	6.0
\$5,000 to \$9,999	2,948	20.1	13.0	9.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,741	11.8	10.0	8.6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3,195	21.8	20.0	16.4
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,355	16.0	17.0	15.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,983	13.5	18.0	18.7
\$50,000 to \$74,999	929	6.3	11.0	16.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	131	1.0	2.0	5.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	36	0.2	1.0	2.5
\$150,000 or more	33	0.2	1.0	1.2

**Table 2.9**

**Household Income, City of Muskegon, 1990**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



Community	Median Income
City of Muskegon	\$18,748
City of North Muskegon	\$37,281
City of Muskegon Heights	\$13,778
City of Roosevelt Park	\$28,955
City of Norton Shores	\$33,646
Muskegon Township	\$25,058
Muskegon County	\$25,617
State of Michigan	\$31,020

**Table 2.10** **Median Household Income  
City of Muskegon 1989**

Muskegon Heights, the City of Muskegon has a lower median household income than its surrounding communities or that of Muskegon County or State.

The differences between incomes in the City and other County municipalities is largely due to a concentration of low-income households. Female-headed households with children are even more likely to be living in poverty. In the City of Muskegon, 74% of these households were living in poverty in 1989. With the exception of households headed by persons 75 years of age and older, the income of white households significantly exceeds that of African-American households. Table 2.11 illustrates differences in the City's white and African-American median household income within various head of

household age ranges.

Table 2.12 presents an illustration of City resident's use of certain types of financial resources and services compared to or indexed against national averages. An index of 100 means the use of the resource or service is identical to that of national averages. An index of less than 100 means the use is less than the national average. With limited exception, use of or access to certain types of financial resources and services such as bank accounts, certificates of deposit, investments and investment services, by residents 18 years of age and older is less than national averages.

### 7. Poverty Status

As would be expected with a low median

Age Range	White Households	African-American Households	Difference
Under 25	\$16,323	\$5,493	\$10,830
25 - 34	\$24,300	\$10,698	\$13,602
35 - 44	\$27,319	\$20,765	\$6,584
45 - 54	\$31,694	\$21,188	\$10,506
55 - 64	\$26,815	\$17,623	\$9,192
65 - 74	\$14,175	\$11,989	\$2,186
75+	\$10,767	\$11,125	\$3,852

Source: Urban Decisions Systems

**Table 2.11** **Household Income - White & African American Households**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



income, the City has a significant percentage of its population living below the poverty level. The 1990 Census Reports indicate in 1989 that of the 36,264 persons for whom poverty level status was determined, 9,615 people were determined as living below the poverty level. These

9,615 persons represent almost 24 percent of the City's population. Only 13 percent of the State's population is identified as being below the poverty level. Table 2.13 provides a breakdown of poverty status by age group.

Table 2.12	Use of Financial Resources by Household	
	Percentages	Index
<b>Bank Accounts/CD's</b>		
Non-Interest Checking	32.9	89
Interest Checking	29.2	89
Savings	45.0	91
Short Term CD	7.5	86
Long Term CD	8.5	76
Non-Interest Check Last Year	4.7	103
Interest Check Last Year	3.1	93
Savings Account Last Year	5.2	103
ATM Card	33.9	85
Check Guarantee Card	3.9	91
Safe Deposit Box	7.3	95
<b>Investments and Investment Services</b>		
Own Investment Property	3.6	86
Keogh Account	1.4	94
Tax Sheltered Annuities	2.9	78
IRA	16.0	77
IRA - via Brokerage	6.5	84
IRA - Bank/Credit Union	10.1	92
Brokerage Firm Account	6.1	72
Use Full Service Brokerage	3.8	73
Use Discount Brokerage	0.9	50
Use Accountant	6.6	84
Use Lawyer	16.7	90
US Savings Bonds	10.0	75
Other Bonds	3.2	76
Mutual Funds	7.5	74
Stocks in Employer Company	3.2	78
Stocks in Other Company	5.7	75
Stock < 10K	4.5	75
Stock > 10K	3.4	74
3+ Transactions Last Year	2.2	73
Investment in Precious Metals	1.5	100



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

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Table 2.12 - Continued	Use of Financial Resources by Household	
	Percentages	Index
Christmas/Chanukah Club	3.7	90
<b>Loans and Mortgages</b>		
Automobile	18.9	94
Personal Loan - Education	8.1	96
Other Personal Loan	10.6	90
Home Improvement	6.2	107
First Mortgage	22.4	86
First Mortgage - Last Year	2.7	74
Home Equity	6.0	84
Line of Credit	10.4	90
<b>Credit Cards</b>		
Mastercard	22.3	82
Visa	30.1	82
American Express	7.2	73
Other Bank Card	2.8	85
Gold/Premium Cards	14.2	75
Gasoline	13.9	81
JC Penney	18.9	92
Montgomery Ward	8.1	88
Sears	19.4	86
Other Department Store	17.5	85
Air Travel Card	1.4	53
Auto Rental Card	0.9	55
AT&T Card	4.6	76
Any Credit Card	50.7	88
<b>Other Services</b>		
Money Order Last Year	30.9	114
Non-Postal Money Order	20.6	124
Postal Money Order	8.4	95

Source: Urban Decision Systems

Median family incomes for Muskegon County are considerably lower than both the median family incomes for the State and nation. The adjusted median family income for Muskegon County was \$30,151 in 1989, compared to a State median family income of \$36,652, and a national median of \$35,225. Muskegon County's poverty figures also exceed State and national figures by 2 percentage points.

Table 2.14 presents an overview of neighborhood population trends between 1970 and 1990, and 1990 poverty level and median age statistics.

Table 2.15 presents an illustration of household income ranges for households on a census tract by census tract basis. Muskegon households by income range (as reported in 1989) is given in Table 2.9.



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

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Age Group	Number	Percent
5 and under	1,890	19.7
6 to 17	2,441	25.4
18 to 64	4,529	47.1
65 and over	755	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,615</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1989

**Table 2.13 Poverty Status by Age Group, City of Muskegon, 1989**

### 8. Housing

The 1990 Census indicated that the City had 16,019 housing units. This figure represents a loss of 331 units, or 2 percent of the City's housing stock, since 1980. The majority of the City's housing stock is composed of detached single-family homes. However, the City does experience a lower percentage of single family detached housing as a percent of total housing than either Muskegon County or the State of Michigan. Conversely, Muskegon has higher percentages in every category of multiple family housing units.

Although a 2 percent decline in available housing stock may not appear to be

significant, the overall decline of housing units exceeds the City's decline in population of 1.3 percent over the same period. This is significant when compared to trends between 1970 and 1980 when the City's available housing stock increased by 3% from 15,925 units to 16,350 units, while population declined by over 10%.

The City has a high percentage of multiple family units in buildings having between 2 and 4 units. Many of these multiple-family units were originally constructed as single-family homes and have subsequently been divided into multifamily rental units. The City's 1995 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan indicates that much of the City's rental housing stock

Census Tract	Neighborhood	1970	1980	1990	% Below Poverty Level	Median Age
1	Marquette	1,892	4,408	3,993	21.3	30.4
2	Frobel	—	1,181	939	55.4	30.2
3	Angell	4,947	4,095	3,695	48.1	26.8
4	East Musk. N&S	7,273	6,244	8,773	18.5	31.4
5	N&S McLaughlin	6,926	6,305	5,976	38.2	25.7
6.01	South Nelson	2,160	1,940	1,924	38.4	28.7
6.02	North Nelson	3,595	3,035	2,811	48.9	28.1
7	Downtown	328	26	62	34.5	41
8	E&W Nims	4,229	3,667	3,507	16.6	31
9	Lakeside	4,879	4,079	3,852	8.4	35.9
10	Beachwood & Bluffton	1,627	1,488	1,275	9.5	41.1
21	Henry/Ruddiman/Glenside	4,168	3,602	3,468	8.5	35.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2.14 Population, Poverty Level & Median Age Comparisons by Census Tract**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



Income Range	1	2	3	4	5	6.01	6.02	7	8	9	10	21
<\$5,000	92	68	248	144	266	86	192	13	89	46	18	72
5,000-9,999	377	98	430	280	550	110	359	—	235	212	48	249
10,000-14,999	270	31	186	275	231	108	177	—	120	138	55	150
15,000-24,999	511	61	294	473	305	135	238	—	321	351	135	371
25,000-34,999	199	40	106	420	375	126	117	15	324	256	57	320
35,999-49,999	165	17	63	353	323	34	50	11	203	386	140	238
50,000-74,999	96	7	30	140	77	52	52	—	109	178	62	126
75,000-99,999	—	—	8	32	10	6	—	—	18	27	13	17
100,000+	—	—	—	—	8	6	—	—	20	16	14	5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2.15**

**Household Income by Census Tract  
City of Muskegon 1989**

is comprised of these converted units, few of which were originally constructed for multifamily or rental use.

The City has a substantially lower percentage of mobile homes than either the County or the State. A breakdown of housing units by type is illustrated in Table 3.16. Figures for Muskegon County and the State are given for comparison purposes.

In 1990 there were a total of 1,249 vacant housing units. Of those, 56 were classified as vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The homeowner vacancy rate for the City in 1990 was 1.7 percent, and the rental vacancy rate 7.8 percent.

These are not considered significant percentages.

### Age of Housing Stock

Table 2.17 presents an illustration of the age of the City's housing stock. New construction of housing units between 1980 and 1990 represents almost 25% of new construction figures during the 1970s. Most of the new units built during the 1980s were multifamily rental units. Much of the City's owner-occupied housing stock is older than the rental housing stock. Almost 47 percent of the City's owner-occupied housing is over 50 year old, compared to approximately 27 percent of

Housing Unit Type	Units	Percentages City of Muskegon	Percentages Muskegon County	Percentages State of Michigan
1 unit detached	10,164	63.4	75.6	69.5
1 unit attached	238	1.5	1.2	3.4
2-4 units	2,784	17.4	7.2	7.0
5-9 units	716	4.5	2.3	3.9
10+ units	1,917	12.0	6.0	8.7
Mobile Homes	200	1.2	7.7	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,019</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2.16**

**Housing Unit Types City of Muskegon 1990**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



Year	Number of Housing Units
1989 - March 1990	53
1985 - 1988	153
1980 - 1984	327
1970 - 1979	1,954
1960 - 1969	1,821
1950 - 1959	2,689
1940 - 1949	3,119
1939 or earlier	5,903
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>16,019</b>

**Table 2.17** **Year Housing Units Were Built  
City of Muskegon 1990**

the rental units. Many of the City's older rental units are in structures originally built as single family homes that have been converted to rental use.

Unlike many other urban communities, Muskegon has not experienced periodic redevelopment of its urban core. Much of the City's inner-city housing stock is intact excepting that which has been lost to fire, demolition, and commercial or industrial development. In certain locations, new housing has been established in inner City

neighborhoods to replace old or demolished housing stock.

The age of Muskegon's housing stock will continue to present the issues of housing rehabilitation and demolition. Seventy three percent of Muskegon's housing units are over 35 years of age, and 37% are over 55 years of age.

### 9. Employment Statistics

In 1990 the City of Muskegon had 15,786

Occupation Category	Number of Persons
Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations	1,182
Professional specialty occupations	1,387
Technicians and related support occupations	422
Sales occupations	1,504
Administrative support occupations, including clerical	2,011
Private household occupations	68
Protective service occupations	274
Service occupations, except protective and household	2,368
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	78
Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	1,543
Machine operations, assemblers, and inspections	2,047
Transportation, and material moving occupations	435
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	651
<b>Total employed, persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>13,970</b>

**Table 2.18** **Employment by Occupation  
City of Muskegon 1990**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



people in the labor force. The unemployment rate at that time was 11.3 percent, so approximately 1800 of the 15,786 were not employed. Table 2.18 indicates the occupation of employed persons age 16 and over. The three occupation categories having the highest employment numbers are: Service; Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors; and Administrative Support.

Employment by industry for employed persons age 16 and over is listed in Table 2.19. This information indicates high employment levels in the industry categories of: Retail Trade, Manufacturing of Durable Goods, and Health Services.

### 10. General Conclusions

Movement of the population to outlying

areas in Muskegon County and other communities has been the primary contributing factor to the decline in the City's population. Much of this movement can be attributed to a decline in area economic opportunities. Population trends of the City's white and African American population groups suggest that the overall decline in population may be attributable to a loss of the white population to other areas. Although an increase in the City's population is expected to occur over the next 20 years, outmigration trends among the white population are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. (Source: Urban Decisions Systems).

As is the case in many older central cities, Muskegon has first-hand experience with the broad ranging impacts of a cyclical economy. Although 1990 Census data

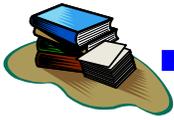
Industry Category	Number of Persons
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	107
Mining	5
Construction	513
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	993
Manufacturing, durable goods	2,886
Transportation	351
Communications and other public utilities	374
Wholesale Trade	605
Retail trade	3,145
Finance, insurance, and real estate	422
Business and repair services	406
Personal services	469
Entertainment and recreation services	306
Health Services	1,191
Educational Services	978
Other professional and related services	616
Public Administration	603
<b>Total Employed Persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>13,970</b>

**Table 2.19** **Employment by Industry  
City of Muskegon 1990**



# Population and Socio-Economic Characteristics

## Master Land Use Plan



reflects a decrease in lower income households over the past decade is a result of a decrease in the City's population, not an increase in household income. This decline in income, while impacting all City households to some degree, has had a more dramatic impact on low-income individuals and families.

Population, income, and housing data suggest that the City will see increasing numbers of persons in lower income brackets. The City will also likely experience increasing needs for (and witness increases in) additional rental housing to serve a lower income population.





# Existing Land Use

## Master Land Use Plan



This portion of the plan presents an overview of existing land use that is based on a land use field inventory. Comparisons of land use are also made to the previous Master Plan completed in 1983. Data from this analysis were used in a number of different steps and evaluations in the development of the Master Plan. The existing land use data was also developed into a layer of the City's geographic information system so that the data could be presented and analyzed in a variety of ways, including the attached existing land use map. The mapping effort relied on the tax maps maintained by the City's Equalization Department to delineate the land parcels.

In addition to this section, additional land use detail may be found under the section discussing the City's thirteen sub-area districts. Also, the Downtown and Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan, a separate component of the Master Plan, contains extensive land use information on the City's Core Downtown.

Descriptions of each category illustrated on the existing land use map are provided below.

### **Single and Two-Family Residential**

Single-family detached dwellings, and two-family dwellings (flats, duplexes, and similar units).

### **Multi-Family Dwellings**

Structures containing three or more dwelling units. All multi-family residential zoning districts were field checked to make a best estimate of actual multi-family use.

### **Commercial**

This category includes land occupied by any type of business, retail and service facilities, and accessory off-street parking areas.

### **Office**

This category includes land occupied by all types of individual office facilities and related off-street parking. Office facilities which are ancillary to commercial or industrial uses are not included in this category.

### **Industrial**

This category includes the land area devoted to all types of light and heavy industrial uses, including warehousing, bump and paint shops, tool and die shops, technological industries, assembly operations, and facilities that manufacture finished or semifinished products from raw materials.

### **Marinas**

Land devoted to publicly and privately owned marinas, including on-site parking areas, loading ramps, and boat storage areas.

### **Government, Schools, and Museums**

This category includes facilities of the City, County, and State, public and private schools, and public museums.

### **Hospitals and Medical Centers**

This category includes medical facilities





## Existing Land Use Master Land Use Plan



primarily associated with the campuses of Mercy, General, and Hackley Hospitals.

### Churches, Cemeteries, and Funeral Homes

This category includes local churches and synagogues, cemeteries, and funeral homes.

### Public Parks and Recreation

The category includes public parks, playgrounds, waterfront facilities, state land, and associated uses.

### Recreational Facilities and Clubs

This category includes major recreational facilities and clubs of a quasi-public character. Unlike public park facilities, land uses in this classification require membership fees or other forms of compensation as a prerequisite to use.

### Road Right-of-Way

This category is not depicted in the legend box of the Existing Land Use Map.

However, it indicates all road right-of-way (ROW) in the City and is detailed within the land use tables.

### Vacant

All land that was undeveloped at the time of the land use field survey.

Table 3.1 lists the number of acres within each of the above land use categories. (Note: the following tables utilize land use categories consistent with the 1983 land use inventory in order to offer comparisons of change).

Table 3.2 presents a comparison of the land area in each category in 1983 and 1996.

The land use inventory indicates:

- ◆ the predominate land use is 1-family residential;
- ◆ significant percentage increase in multi-family versus single-family residential units;

Use	Acres	% Total
1-Family Residential	2,091	17.5
Multi-Family Residential	323	2.7
Commercial	382	3.2
Office	143	1.2
Industrial	789	6.6
Public	1,784	14.9
Marina	94	0.8
Road ROW	2,050	17.2
Vacant	1,824	15.3
Surface Water	2,453	20.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,933 Acres</b>	

Sources: City of Muskegon 1983 Land Use Inventory City of Muskegon Tax Maps and 1996/1997 field surveys. Percentage figures have been rounded.

**Table 3.1 Existing Land Use**





## Existing Land Use Master Land Use Plan



Use	1983	1997	Change (%)
1-Family Residential	1,768	2,091	+ 18.3
Multi-Family Residential	199	323	+ 62.3
Commercial	300	382	+ 27.3
Office	43.5	143	+ 229
Industrial	721	789	+ 9.4
Public	1,504	1,786	+ 18.8
Marina	37	94	+ 154
Vacant	3,243	1,824	-44
Water	2,453	2,453	NA
Road Right-of-Way	1,931	2,050	NA

Sources: City of Muskegon 1983 Land Use Inventory City of Muskegon Tax Maps and 1996/1997 field surveys. Percentage figures have been rounded.

**Table 3.2**

**Comparisons 1983 - 1997**

- ◆ significant percentage increase in office space versus general commercial areas;
- ◆ small increase in development of industrial and public land use in the past 14 years;
- ◆ significant percentage increase in marina development(though overall acreage is still small);
- ◆ significant decrease in areas designated as vacant;
- ◆ Muskegon is a mature urban community with a limited amount of developable land;
- ◆ much of the vacant land is subject to constraints posed by location in wetland or floodplain areas;
- ◆ commercial development outside of the core Downtown, Sherman/U.S. 31, and Sherman/Henry areas is decentralized;
- ◆ pedestrian scale neighborhood commercial areas are virtually non-existent;
- ◆ long-established residential and corridor commercial land use patterns have remained generally unchanged since adoption of the City's 1984 Master Land Use Plan;
- ◆ commercial development has encroached upon residential neighborhoods since the 1984 Master Land Use Plan was adopted;
- ◆ the City exhibits a general lack of transition areas and buffers between corridor commercial areas and adjoining residential development. The same is true between industrial areas and adjoining residential development;
- ◆ strip commercial development along the Apple, Getty, Lakeshore, Laketon, and Henry Street corridors generally contain older and underutilized retail and service uses;





## Existing Land Use Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ industrial development and redevelopment has concentrated in the Port City Industrial Park, and in that area of the City generally east of US 31 and north of Sherman Boulevard; and
- ◆ the Muskegon Lake shoreline presents opportunities for high-quality development and redevelopment that can benefit the City and region. The Muskegon Lake shoreline possesses valuable aesthetic and natural resources not found in many urban centers.

### Land Absorption

Based on land use counts between the 1983 and 1997 period, the annual rate of land use change was determined (Table 3.3). Although some caution must be used when applying the data due to potential variations between historic and current information, the counts offer insight into the type and degree of ongoing change. The table reveals that all categories, except for vacant land, experienced growth. Of particular note are the combined rates of

change for single and multiple family residential development. Collectively, these uses absorb approximately 35 acres annually. The other land use showing a significant change is the annual increase in public lands. This reflects the City's aggressive policy of acquiring lands suitable for recreational and other public needs.

Industrial land experiences an absorption rate of approximately 5 acres per year. While this rate appears somewhat low given the growth of such facilities as the Port City Industrial Park, it is also indicative of a need to create new space for industrial use. Based on the Existing Land Use Map, industrial space is relatively limited..

The commercial and office categories expand by approximately 14 acres per year. Historically, this growth has occurred in a decentralized fashion.

Marina development has grown at the rate of approximately 4 acres per year. Additional growth is anticipated as lakeshore areas become available for

Use	Annual Rate (Acres)
1-Family Residential	25
Multi-Family Residential	10
Commercial	6
Office	8
Industrial	5
Public	22
Marina	4
Vacant	89
Water	NA
Road Right-of-Way	9

Note: Reflects 1983 to 1997 Period

**Table 3.3**

**Annual Land Absorption Rate  
1983 - 1997**





## Existing Land Use Master Land Use Plan



redevelopment opportunities.

### **Build-out**

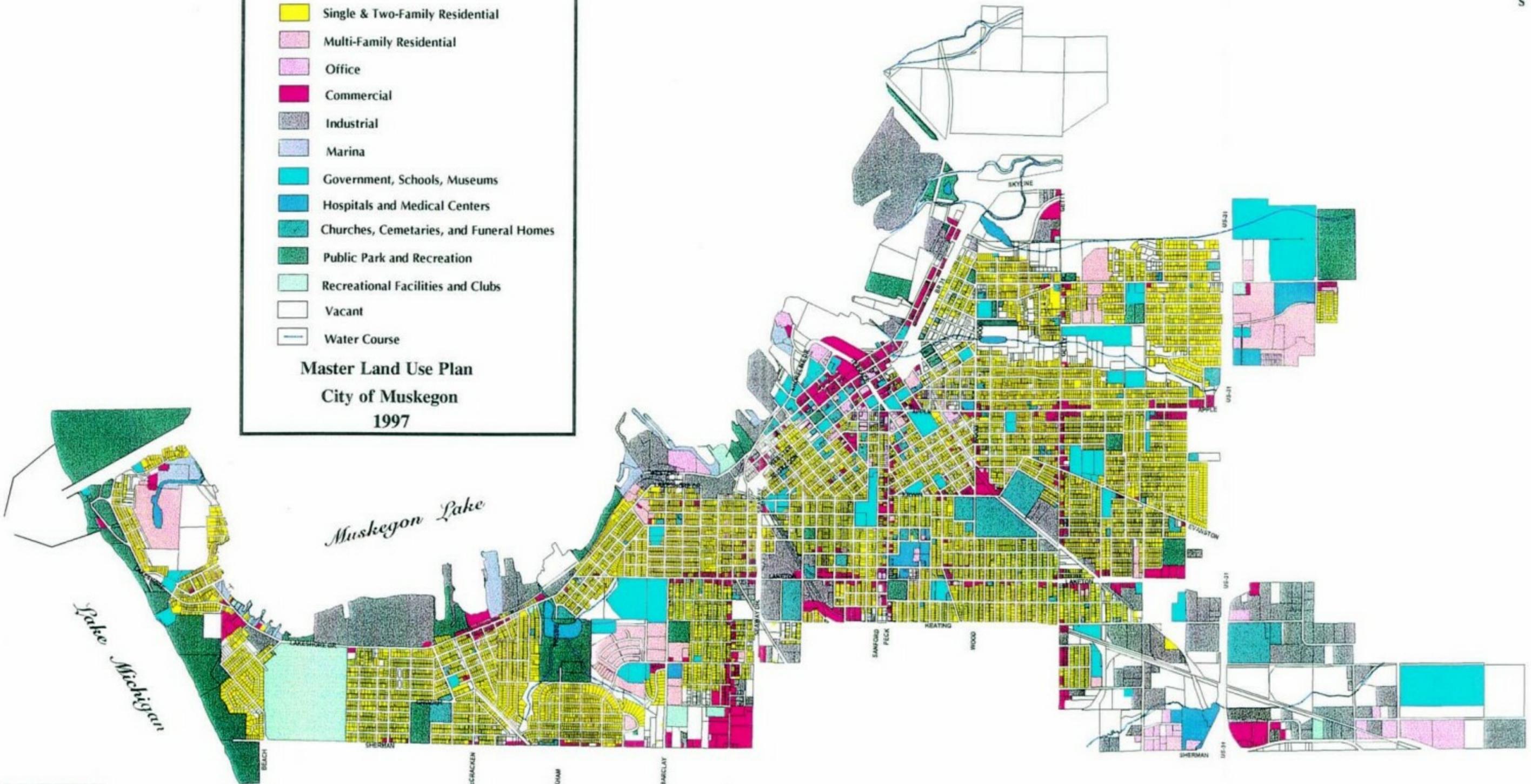
Based on the absorption trends of the 1983 to 1997 period, the City will utilize all developable vacant lands over an approximate 19 to 20 year period. Since a high percentage of vacant properties are unbuildable due to natural/environmental limitations or are poorly located for desired uses, the City will face increasing demands to redevelop properties in order to accommodate continuing growth.



### Existing Land Use Map

- Single & Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Marina
- Government, Schools, Museums
- Hospitals and Medical Centers
- Churches, Cemeteries, and Funeral Homes
- Public Park and Recreation
- Recreational Facilities and Clubs
- Vacant
- Water Course

Master Land Use Plan  
City of Muskegon  
1997





# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose

The Transportation Section of the Muskegon Master Plan provides an inventory of existing street and transportation factors, a determination of existing and future traffic generators, a determination of road capacities, a discussion of other recent traffic studies, an inventory and discussion of major accident intersections, and a recommendation discussion. The purpose of these subunits is to determine existing traffic conditions within the City of Muskegon, to accurately project future conditions and to provide proper and studied recommendations both for physical improvements and planning and land use control guidance.

#### Road Transportation System Overview

The City of Muskegon is well served by a series of freeways, state highways, major roads and local roads. Muskegon's primary link to other metropolitan areas in southern Michigan is by Interstate 96 which terminates just south of the City. Access to Downtown Muskegon from I-96 is provided by Seaway Drive (BR-31). I-96 empties onto Seaway which provides the most direct route to the Downtown. Other regional access is provided by four lane limited access (U.S. 31) which is the primary north-south road for communities along the coast of Lake Michigan and by Apple Avenue (M-46), a state highway providing access to townships and communities to the east.

Internally, the City is served by a series of streets that move traffic in general north-

south and east-west directions. Streets considered (for the purpose of this study) have been designated as either arterial/major streets or collectors.

The major east-west streets in the City of Muskegon are:

- ◆ Sherman;
- ◆ Lakeshore;
- ◆ Laketon;
- ◆ Apple; and
- ◆ Marquette.

The major north-south streets in the City of Muskegon are:

- ◆ Quarterline;
- ◆ Getty;
- ◆ Wood;
- ◆ Peck;
- ◆ Sanford;
- ◆ Seaway Drive;
- ◆ Henry; and
- ◆ McCracken.

Collectors include:

- ◆ Lakeshore (west of McCracken);
- ◆ Lincoln;
- ◆ McGraft Park;
- ◆ Glenside; and
- ◆ Creston.

Refer to the Traffic Volume map for a depiction of these streets.

#### Arterial/Major Streets



# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



Arterial/major streets are those which serve longer trips within an urban area, sometimes extending beyond municipal boundaries to connect adjacent population centers, or more heavily traveled major streets. Arterial/major streets are designed for moderate to large traffic volumes traveling at speeds of 35 to 45 mph. Speed limits on major streets outside of the City's boundaries may be higher. Conversely, lower speed limits may be found near schools and as one enters core Downtown locations.

Some access to adjacent development may be permitted from streets of this type, but on-street parking and curb cuts are usually regulated to preserve capacity for vehicle traffic.



### Collector Streets

Collector streets are those which provide access and mobility within and between smaller residential, commercial, or industrial areas. Collector streets accommodate lower traffic volumes and utilize speeds of 25 to 35 mph. Access spacings and side streets may be closer together than on major streets, and on-street parking is often permitted.

### Local Streets

Local streets include the bulk of the City's roadway network. Local streets generally link to collector streets and provide direct

access to neighborhoods, individual home sites, and other such properties. Local streets generally accommodate the lowest traffic volumes and typically utilize a 25 mph speed limit. Access spacings are on a parcel basis, via driveways, and side streets tend to be located on a block-by-block basis. Except for winter months, on-street parking is the norm. During winter, on-street parking may be limited to a designated area or during select hours in order to accommodate municipal snow removal.

### Commercial Corridors

Many of the City's principal arterial/major streets function as commercial corridors. Of note are Apple

Avenue, Laketon Avenue, Sherman Avenue, Getty Street, Peck Street, and Henry Street. In all cases these systems, and commercial development, extend into Muskegon's neighboring municipalities. Table 5.1 provides a categorical breakdown of the business mix per corridor. The table also includes the absolute number of businesses per corridor within the City, as well as the number for the associated Metro Area.

Of the six corridors, Apple, Sherman, and Peck experience relatively high concentrations of individual, or focused, uses.

*Apple Avenue*





# Transportation Master Land Use Plan



Business	Apple	Laketon	Sherman	Getty	Peck	Henry
Industrial	3.4	6.0	10.0	17.6	---	6.4
Institutional/Churches	3.4	6.0	---	3.7	---	---
Office/Service	63.8 <sup>a</sup>	37.0	64.5 <sup>b</sup>	18.4	88.5 <sup>b</sup>	4.3
Restaurant/Lounge/Bar	5.2	15.0	6.4	5.1	---	10.6
Retail	17.2	21.0	10.9	16.9	9.8	53.2
Vehicular Repair	6.9	11.0	2.7	18.4	---	10.6
Vehicular Sales	---	3.0	---	14.7	---	10.6
Other	---	1.0	5.5	5.2	1.7	4.3
Number of Businesses per Corridor - City Portion	58	100	110	59	61	47
Number of Businesses per Corridor outside City Portion	231	11	108	77	58	91

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Concentration of legal offices/attorneys, at eastern end.  
<sup>b</sup>Concentration of medical services. In certain instances, more than one business may be located at the same address. For instance, a group of (independent) physicians may share a single building complex. For purposes of the above chart, each physician has been counted as a business.

**Table 5.1 Business Type as a Percent of Total Businesses per Corridor**

The westerly portion of Apple Avenue, near the Muskegon City Hall and Muskegon county Building, has a concentration of professional offices devoted to legal services. This is to be expected given the proximity of the governmental centers and courts. The second highest category is retail development. Much of that development is located within close proximity to the eastern end of Apple, near the U.S. 31 highway. Business development within these two extremes is relatively modest. The corridor continues to maintain a large percentage of single family residential development.

### *Sherman Boulevard*

Sherman Boulevard possesses a high concentration of medical service uses, generally in close proximity to Mercy Hospital. These include physician offices centered about the hospital campus. Uses

along the remainder of the system are generally mixed throughout, except for the most westerly stretch where residential development is found. With the exception of Apple Avenue, Sherman possesses the highest number of businesses within the Metro area. The recent construction of a large retail shopping complex on Sherman, east of U.S. 31, resulted in increased traffic volumes for Sherman. As development around that complex continues, Sherman is likely to experience additional traffic.

### *Peck Street*

Due to the presence of Hackley Hospital, Peck Street experiences heavy concentrations of medical service uses. These include physician offices and various health agencies. Other corridor uses include legal services, mortuary services, and small pockets of retail. Although 61 businesses exist along the corridor, many





# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



are housed in larger, well-maintained, older homes. As such, the corridor exhibits a residential character.

### *Getty Street*

Once a street comprised of many homes, Getty Street has become a collection of industrial, automotive, and retail uses. Throughout its length (including those areas beyond Muskegon's borders), Getty has approximately 25 vehicular repair/body shops, 20 used car dealerships, and 29 industrial establishments. Interspersed among these are retail and service uses and a declining number of homes. Much of the corridor has developed in full strip commercial fashion. Modifying that is not practical at this time, nor in the foreseeable future.

### *Laketon Avenue*

With the exception of those areas lacking sufficient lot depth to construct modern commercial facilities (e.g., former Grand Trunk Railroad/CSX right-of-way) and the large enclaves of active industrial property, Laketon Avenue has also developed in strip commercial fashion. As with Getty, reversing that trend would be difficult.

Several Laketon Avenue business and property owners have recently voiced a desire to form a task force to investigate ways to beautify Laketon and strengthen its image as a prime, and highly attractive corridor. Efforts are underway to initiate that effort. In addition to possible task force improvements, the City is currently implementing a bikeway/trail beautification project along the north side of Laketon, between Getty and Hoyt. This is the first of

several bikeway construction phases. The project is being funded, in part, by the State of Michigan.

### *Henry Street*

Henry Street has a rather large retail component, however, over the past decade this system has experienced some modification in use and demand. Once considered the prime commercial corridor, Henry Street has not been able to maintain pace with some of the newer retail areas occurring along Harvey Street (Norton Shores/Fruitport Township) and U.S. 31/Sherman (City of Muskegon and Fruitport Township). Notwithstanding the above, Henry Street does possess a strong retail base. We recommend that the existing base be strengthened by orienting future development to retail, restaurant, and consumer service (e.g., banks, credit unions, hair salons, etc.) uses. Wholesale operations, manufacturing, vehicular repair, assembly halls, storage, and other such uses should be discouraged.

As future development occurs along the above road systems, we recommend that greater attention be given to streetscape and overall site design efforts. To ensure that this happens, the City Zoning Ordinance should include detailed standards for site landscaping, signage, lighting, access, and buffering protection for residential home sites lying contiguous to commercial and industrial development. One of the major problems with development occurring along each of the corridors is a failure to require adequate buffering between commercial uses and adjoining residential homes.





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### Existing Traffic Counts

Shown on the Traffic Volume map are the most recent traffic counts taken within the City for major streets. Traffic counts were taken between the years 1988 and 1995 by either the Michigan Department of Transportation or the City of Muskegon. The data identifies primary travel patterns within the City, using comparable benchmarks.

Traffic counts are reported using the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count. The AADT is a derived number in that it is a computation obtained from a sample count.

For a true annual daily average, a count of vehicles would have to be taken for 365 days and the total divided by 365. Since this is relatively difficult, costly, and time consuming, the AADT is usually based on counts of 24, 48, or 72 hours and up to a week with the result factored, or multiplied, by the known variations between the days in the week and the months in the year. The result then is a close approximation to the real number.

Traffic count patterns obtained over several years when utilized with land use and other data, can be effective tools in determining a roadway corridor's suitability for development. In addition, traffic counts are useful for determining priority of needs in funding highway improvements, measuring the adequacy of existing roadways, evaluating accident data, judging the necessity for traffic control devices, and planning operational improvements.

### Traffic Count Projections

An inventory of the major and selected collector streets has been prepared using AADT data and identifying the year from which the data originates. Projections to AADT were then performed based on varied non-compounded growth factors per year and compiled in five-year increments to the year 2020.

In reviewing the AADT data, the year 1988 provided a good deal of measurements, that were often repeated in the year 1993 or 1995. The year 1995 is used to project growth rates, versus earlier periods. Recent census data supports that Muskegon County is just starting to grow, and it is anticipated that traffic data adjusted from 1995 counts will give supportable volumes.

### Growth Areas

Growth factors were applied based on the likelihood that the following major developments will occur during the time period of the present to the year 2020.

- ◆ Continued commercial developments along Sherman east of U.S. 31, the Westshore Plaza.
- ◆ Commercial developments along Sherman west of U.S. 31 and Getty.
- ◆ Proposed industrial park south of Laketon between Getty and U.S. 31.
- ◆ Growth of Muskegon Charter Township, Egelston Township, and other communities east of U.S. 31 affecting Apple, Marquette, and Laketon.
- ◆ Proposed commercial development at



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Sherman and Getty.

- ◆ Potential development south of Sherman at Lake Michigan.
- ◆ Continued development of Harbour Towne and undeveloped property to the west on Sand Products land.
- ◆ Large potential to significantly develop the Downtown area, lakeshore, and properties to the north of Downtown.
- ◆ Potential to develop large for industrial properties along Lakeshore and Seaway Drives, north and south of Downtown.

Projections of AADT are contained in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2**

**Existing AADT Along Major and Collector Streets  
Projections of Growth to the Year 2020**

Street	From - To	Growth Factor	Existing		Projected AADT				
			AADT	Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
<b>Sherman</b>	East of U.S. 31	1	12,025	93	12,815-13,425	13,456-14,768	14,129-16,244	14,835-17,869	15,577-19,656
	31 to Getty	1	17,826	93	18,717-19,609	19,653-21,569	20,636-23,726	21,668-26,099	22,751-28,709
	Seaway to Henry	1	22,211	92	23,322-24,432	24,487-26,875	25,712-29,562	26,998-32,519	28,347-35,771
	Henry to Glenside	2	11,033	93	11,033-11,585	11,033-12,164	11,033-12,772	11,033-13,411	11,033-14,081
	Glenside to McCracken	2	19,618	93	19,618-20,599	19,618-21,629	19,618-22,710	19,618-23,846	19,618-25,038
	McCracken to Lincoln	2	9,602	91	9,602-10,082	9,602-10,586	9,602-11,116	9,602-11,671	9,602-12,254
	Lincoln to Westerly	2	8,890	93	8,890-9,335	8,890-9,801	8,890-10,291	8,890-10,806	8,890-11,346
<b>Laketon</b>	Sheridan to U.S. 31	1	15,207 - 14,028	92-95	15,967-16,728	16,766-18,400	17,604-20,241	18,484-22,265	19,408-24,491
	U.S. 31 to Getty	2	23,468	93	23,468-24,641	23,468-25,873	23,468-27,167	23,468-28,525	23,468-29,952
	Getty to Wood	2	24,111	93	24,111-25,317	24,111-26,582	24,111-27,911	24,111-29,307	24,111-30,772
	Wood to Peck	2	25,428	94	25,428-26,699	25,428-28,034	25,428-29,436	25,428-30,908	25,428-32,453
	Peck to Seaway	2	20,835	93	20,835-21,879	20,835-22,970	20,835-24,119	20,835-25,325	20,835-26,591
	Seaway to Henry	2	18,798	93	18,798-19,738	18,798-20,725	18,798-21,761	18,798-22,849	18,798-23,911
	Henry to Lakeshore	2	14,835	89	14,835-15,577	14,835-16,356	14,835-17,173	14,835-18,032	14,835-18,934
<b>Apple</b>	Quarterline to U.S. 31	2	32,780	88	32,780-34,419	32,780-36,140	32,780-37,947	32,780-39,844	32,780-41,837
	U.S. 31 to Creston	2	24,700	88	24,700-25,935	24,700-27,232	24,700-28,593	24,700-30,023	24,700-31,524
	Creston to Getty	2	16,600 - 16,000	88-95	16,600-17,430	16,600-18,302	16,600-19,217	16,600-20,177	16,600-21,186
	Getty to Wood	2	14,000	88	14,000-14,700	14,000-15,435	14,000-16,207	14,000-17,017	14,000-17,868
	Wood to Muskegon	2	12,600	88	12,600-13,230	12,600-13,892	12,600-14,586	12,600-15,315	12,600-16,081
<b>Marquette</b>	Quarterline to U.S. 31	1	6,555	93	6,883-7,571	7,227-8,328	7,588-9,161	7,968-10,077	8,366-11,085



**Table 5.2**

**Existing AADT Along Major and Collector Streets  
Projections of Growth to the Year 2020**

Street	From - To	Growth Factor	Existing		Projected AADT				
			AADT	Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
	Getty to Wood	1	3,850	93	4,043-4,447	4,245-4,892	4,457-5,381	4,680-5,919	4,914-6,511
	Wood to Seaway	1	5,601	92	5,881-6,61	6,175-6,777	6,484-7,455	6,808-8,200	7,148-9,020
<b>Lakeshore</b>	Northeasterly of Laketon	1	2,978	92	3,127-3,276	3,283-3,604	3,447-3,964	3,620-4,360	3,801-4,796
	Laketon to McCracken	1	10,456	92	10,979-11,502	11,528-12,652	12,104-13,917	12,709-15,309	13,345-16,839
	McCracken to Cottage Grove	1	9,800	88	10,290-10,780	10,805-11,858	11,345-13,044	11,912-14,348	12,508-15,783
	Cottage Grove to Edgewater	1	7,723	93	8,109-8,495	8,515-9,345	8,940-10,279	9,387-11,307	9,857-12,438
<b>Quarterline</b>	North of Marquette	1	5,194	93	5,454-5,713	5,726-6,285	6,013-6,913	6,313-7,605	6,629-8,365
	South of Marquette	1	7,437	92	7,809-8,181	8,199-8,999	8,609-9,899	9,070-10,889	9,492-11,977
<b>Creston</b>	Apple to Laketon	2	7,765	93	7,765-8,153	7,765-8,561	7,765-8,989	7,765-9,438	7,765-9,910
<b>Getty</b>	Access Highway to Marquette	2	4,202	93	4,202-4,412	4,202-4,633	4,202-4,864	4,202-5,108	4,202-5,363
	Marquette to Apple	2	8,108	95	8,108-8,513	8,108-8,939	8,108-9,386	8,108-9,855	8,108-10,348
	Apple to Laketon	1	11,709 - 11,629	91-93	12,294-12,880	12,909-14,168	13,555-15,585	14,232-17,143	14,944-18,857
	Laketon to Sherman	2	20,893	93	20,893-21,938	20,893-23,034	20,893-24,106	20,893-25,396	20,893-26,665
<b>Wood</b>	Apple to Laketon	1	3,981	93	4,180-4,379	4,389-4,817	4,609-5,299	4,839-5,229	5,081-6,411
	Laketon to South	2	6,083	93	6,083-6,387	6,083-6,707	6,083-7,042	6,083-7,394	6,083-7,764



**Table 5.2**

**Existing AADT Along Major and Collector Streets  
Projections of Growth to the Year 2020**

Street	From - To	Growth Factor	Projected AADT							
			Existing AADT	Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	
<b>Peck</b>	North of Laketon	2	6,865	94	6,865-7,208	6,865-7,569	6,865-7,947	6,865-8,344	6,865-8,762	
	South of Laketon	2	6,243	92	6,243-6,555	6,243-6,883	6,243-7,227	6,243-7,588	6,243-7,968	
<b>Sanford</b>	North of Laketon	2	5,048	94	5,048-5,300	5,048-5,565	5,048-5,844	5,048-6,136	5,048-6,443	
	South of Laketon	2	6,028	93	6,028-6,329	6,028-6,646	6,028-6,978	6,028-7,327	6,028-7,693	
<b>Seaway</b>	Marquette to Eastern	1 Both Ways	22,700	88	23,835-24,970	25,027-27,467	26,279-30,214	27,592-33,235	28,970-36,559	
	Webster - Terrace to Washington	3 One Way	13,903	95	8,650	9,083	9,537	10,013	10,514	
	Muskegon - Terrace to Washington	3 One Way	13,606	95	8,250	8,663	9,096	9,550	10,028	
	Washington to Laketon	1 Both Ways	28,800	88	30,240-31,680	31,752-34,848	33,370-38,333	35,007-42,166	36,757-46,383	
	Laketon to Sherman	1 Both Ways	32,800	88	34,440-36,080	36,162-39,688	37,970-43,657	39,867-48,022	41,862-52,824	
<b>Henry</b>	Laketon to Sherman	2	11,557	92-93	11,557-12,135	11,557-12,742	11,557-13,379	11,557-14,048	11,557-14,750	
<b>Barclay</b>	Laketon to Sherman	2	5,706	93	5,706-5,991	5,706-6,291	5,706-6,605	5,706-6,936	5,706-7,282	
<b>Glenside</b>	McGraft Park to Sherman	2	3,401	93	3,401-3,571	3,401-3,750	3,401-3,937	3,401-4,134	3,401-4,341	
<b>McGraft Park</b>	Lakeside to Glenside	2	6,012	93	6,012-6,313	6,012-6,628	6,012-6,960	6,012-7,308	6,012-7,673	
<b>McCracken</b>	Lakeshore to Sherman	2	3,105	93	3,105-3,260	3,105-3,423	3,105-3,594	3,105-3,774	3,105-3,963	



**Table 5.2**

**Existing AADT Along Major and Collector Streets  
Projections of Growth to the Year 2020**

Street	From - To	Growth Factor	Existing	Projected AADT					
			AADT	Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Lincoln	Lakeshore to Sherman	2	4,165	93	4,165-4,373	4,165-4,592	4,165-4,822	4,165-5,063	4,165-5,316

Growth Factors:

- 1: 1% - 2% non-compounded growth per year
- 2: 0% - 1% non-compounded growth per year
- 3: Readjusted based on Shoreline Drive Traffic Impact Analysis then grown at a rate of 1% per year after 2000





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In general, traffic moving east and west travels Apple, Laketon, and Sherman roads, using Henry, Getty and Seaway Drive to travel north and south. The east-west roads are heavily traveled, at or near their design capacity (see below), and future potential developments are expected to have major effects on these roads, as they are adjacent to or directly downstream of future development.

### Capacity

To understand the effects of increased traffic, using the growth assumptions previously defined, roadway volumes were compared to existing capacity.

The capacity of a roadway includes several considerations. A field survey was accomplished to identify number of traffic lanes available, posted speed limits, and general street classifications. Capacities

were then completed assuming a Level of Service (LOS) of no worse than C with appropriate generalized signal attributes corresponding with LOS C. Level of Service may be ranked from A to F with A representing the highest level of efficiency pursuant to movement, safety, and the like. Level F represents a high degree of inefficiency resulting from congestion, high accident rates, and the like. Level of Service C represents an acceptable level of roadway efficiency and is generally used for planning purposes. In some instances, Level of Service D is used when determining acceptable levels of efficiency. For purposes of this analysis, the higher efficiencies supported by LOS C were used. Computations were carried out in conformance with reference materials as per H.C.M. (Highway Capacity Manual) 1994, and results indicated as “Existing Capacity” in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3		Projected Traffic Volume and Capacity		
Street	From - To	Year 2020 Volumes	Existing Capacity	Deficiency
<b>Sherman</b>	East of U.S. 31	15,577-19,656	23,740	
	31 to Getty	22,271-28,709	23,740	4,969
	Seaway to Henry	28,347-35,771	20,950	7,397-14,821
	Henry to Glenside	11,033-14,081	22,350	
	Glenside to McCracken	19,618-25,038	22,350	
	McCracken to Lincoln	9,602-12,254	22,350	
	Lincoln to Westerly	8,890-11,346	10,415	
<b>Laketon</b>	Sheridan to U.S. 31	19,408-24,491	22,344	2,936-7,147
	U.S. 31 to Getty	23,468-29,952	23,344	128-7,608
	Getty to Wood	24,111-30,772	20,950	3,161-9,822
	Wood to Peck	25,428-32,453	20,950	4,478-11,503







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Table 5.3		Projected Traffic Volume and Capacity		
Street	From - To	Year 2020 Volumes	Existing Capacity	Deficiency
	Peck to Seaway	20,835-26,591	20,950	5,641
	Seaway to Henry	18,798-23,911	20,950	2,961
	Henry to Lakeshore	14,835-18,934	20,950	
<b>Apple</b>	Quarterline to U.S. 31	32,780-41,837	23,740	9,040-18,097
	U.S. 31 to Creston	24,700-31,524	20,950	3,750-10,574
	Creston to Getty	16,600-21,186	20,950	
	Getty to Wood	14,000-17,868	20,950	
	Wood to Muskegon	12,600-16,081	20,950	
<b>Marquette</b>	Quarterline to U.S. 31	8,366-11,085	18,820	
	Getty to Wood	4,914-6,511	18,820	
	Wood to Seaway	7,148-9,020	18,820	
<b>Lakeshore</b>	Northeasterly of Laketon	3,801-4,796	10,470	
	Laketon to McCracken	13,345-16,839	10,470	2,875-6,369
	McCracken to Cottage Grove	12,508-15,783	10,470	2,038-5,313
	Cottage Grove to Edgewater	9,857-12,438	10,470	1,968
<b>Quarterline</b>	North of Marquette	6,629-8,365	11,170	
	South of Marquette	9,492-11,977	22,350	
<b>U.S. 31</b>	Between Marquette and Apple		55,000	
	North of Sherman		55,000	
<b>Creston</b>	Apple to Laketon	7,765-9,910	10,475	
<b>Getty</b>	Access Highway to Marquette	4,202-5,363	11,170	
	Marquette to Apple	8,108-10,348	10,475	
	Apple to Laketon	11,709-18,857	20,954	
	Laketon to Sherman	20,893-26,665	20,954	5,711





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Table 5.3		Projected Traffic Volume and Capacity		
Street	From - To	Year 2020 Volumes	Existing Capacity	Deficiency
<b>Wood</b>	Apple to Laketon	5,081-6,411	10,475	
	Laketon to South	6,083-7,764	11,025	
<b>Peck</b>	North of Laketon	6,865-8,762	11,025	
	South of Laketon	6,243-7,968	11,025	
<b>Sanford</b>	North of Laketon	5,048-6,443	11,025	
	South of Laketon	6,028-7,693	11,025	
<b>Seaway</b>	Marquette to Eastern	28,972-36,559	49,980	
	Webster - Terrace to Washington	10,514	23,520	
	Muskegon - Terrace to Washington	10,028	23,520	
	Washington to Laketon	36,757-46-383	47,040	
	Laketon to Sherman	41,862-52,824	47,040	5,784
<b>Henry</b>	Laketon to Sherman	11,557-14,750	20,950	
<b>Barclay</b>	Laketon to Sherman	5,706-7,282	10,475	
<b>Glenside</b>	McGraft Park to Sherman	3,401-4,341	8,820	
<b>McGraft Park</b>	Lakeside to Glenside	6,012-7,673	8,820	
<b>McCracken</b>	Lakeshore to Sherman	3,105-3,963	8,820	
<b>Lincoln</b>	Lakeshore to Sherman	4,165-5,316	8,820	





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### Frequency of Accidents

Accidents at intersections have been compiled for the five-year period between June of 1990 through December of 1995. The results are through the Michigan Accident Locations Index (MALI) system and were provided by the Muskegon County Road Commission. Intersections that experienced 40 or more accidents during the five-year period were plotted on

the attached map. Also reported was Property Damage Only (PDO) accidents and Injury Accidents. The top intersection/accident locations by number were ranked. Table 5.4 indicates the number of accidents during the five-year study period, the combined AADT of the two intersection streets, the intensity rate of accidents per 1,000,000 vehicles and the rank based on the intensity of accidents.

1990-1995 Number of Accidents	Location	Combined AADT	Rate Accidents/ 1,000,000	Rank Accidents/ 1,000,000
120	Henry-Sherman	33,768	1.960	4
92	Getty-Laketon	45,004	1.120	13
76	Northbound Seaway-Laketon	36,935	1.127	12
72	Getty-Apple	28,309	1.389	9
69	Peck-Laketon	31,671	1.193	10
66	Henry-Laketon	30,355	1.191	11
64	Third-Muskegon	15,903	2.222	2
62	First-Muskegon	22,242	1.538	6
61	Third-Webster	16,200	2.08	3
60	Fourth-Muskegon	*	*	*
58	Creston-Apple	32,465	0.980	15
57	Southbound Seaway-Sherman	38,311	0.810	17
54	Marquette-Muskegon	16,951	1.500	7
52	Quarterline-Marquette	11,749	2.330	1
50	Wood-Laketon	31,511	0.869	16
48	Southbound Seaway-Laketon	33,198	0.792	18
46	McCracken-Sherman	22,723	1.110	14
46	Wood-Apple	17,981	1.402	8
45	Sanford-Laketon	31,456	0.783	19
40	Sherman-Lincoln	13,767	1.592	5

**Table 5.4** **Ranked Intersection Accidents**

\* AADT data not available for Fourth Street.





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The results of ranking the intensity of accidents indicates a high rate of accidents at the Quarterline-Marquette intersection and at the First, Third, and Fourth street intersections with Muskegon and Webster streets. As might be expected, the busy east-west streets (Sherman, Laketon, and Apple) and their intersections with the north-south streets (Seaway, Getty, and Henry) provided 38 percent of the accidents reported in Table 5.4. A large number of accidents is indicative of, among other factors, congested roadways.

### Shoreline Drive

The City of Muskegon has initiated the Shoreline Drive street project in Downtown Muskegon. This project involves taking a part of Terrace Street along the lakeshore and creating a new extension which would efficiently connect with Seaway Drive north and south of the Downtown. This project is designed to open up the Downtown waterfront area for more development opportunity through improved access. This project also improves access routes through the Downtown in general. The Shoreline Drive project due to its efficient connection with Seaway provides a continuous access route along the Muskegon Lake shoreline from the west end of the City all the way to U.S. 31. This project also offers access options to Seaway Drive traffic entering Downtown from the south. With the completion of Shoreline Drive such traffic wishing to pass through Downtown will have the option to use Muskegon Street which is a one-way street passing through the heart of Downtown, or pick up Shoreline Drive which will provide an alternative route through Downtown along the lakeshore.

The Shoreline Drive project while presenting opportunities for enhanced development of the Downtown waterfront, also may present challenges if it becomes the preferred "through" route for Downtown. Part of the strategy for revitalizing and redeveloping Muskegon's Downtown involves creating a synergy between existing Downtown anchors such as the mall and new development or redevelopment along the waterfront. This synergy or "cross traffic" is expected in large part to be of a pedestrian nature. If Shoreline Drive is to have high traffic volumes it may frustrate easy and safe access between uses on both sides of the street. If high volumes do occur on new Shoreline Drive, design alternatives for creating safe pedestrian crossings may become more complex and result in higher costs.

The City through physical design, one or two-way designation, and traffic control devices has the opportunity to influence which street becomes the preferred route through Downtown. Until the Shoreline Drive project was initiated the one-way pair of Muskegon and Webster Streets has served as the primary through route. Due to years of operation as the primary route and as a one-way system many design and business locations decisions have been made. Design issues may involve driveway design and on-site circulation. Business location decisions may have been made based on past and current traffic volumes. Any decision relating to changes in the one-way system or changes to traffic control devices to create a preferred route should take into account the impact to current businesses as well as planned future uses.



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As a part of design of the second and final phase of Shoreline Drive, a traffic impact analysis was prepared by the traffic consulting firm of Ed Swanson & Associates to determine Shoreline's impact on Muskegon and Webster streets. Currently, these two one-way streets carry between 13,900 to 13,600 vehicles per day. The Swanson impact study attached as Figure 4.1 indicates that Webster would carry 8,650 AADT and Muskegon would carry 8,250 AADT. This volume of traffic was then projected to the year 2020 and it is seen that these volumes are handled by a two or three lane roadway configuration.

We recommend that the status of Muskegon and Webster Streets not be changed until one to two years after the opening of Shoreline Drive. This time frame would allow for a reasonable period to assess the change in travel patterns produced by Shoreline Drive, and we recommend that Shoreline Drive be designated the business route at the earliest opportunity. If a two lane cross section is used later on Muskegon and Wester Streets, the unused width (20-22 feet) can be used for either parking, greenspace, or enhanced pedestrian travel, depending on neighborhood priorities. From a safety standpoint it would be better to not have on-street parking, although such parking might result in reduced speeds. Whatever safety benefit is derived from the lower speeds would be outweighed by the lack of clear vision for drivers to see other vehicles and especially pedestrians. It is anticipated that short turning lanes could be provided at intersections as appropriate.

Although the Shoreline Drive Project presents some new challenges and

decisions regarding the routing of traffic, it will along with other activities as recommended in the "Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan" increase opportunity for opening up the Downtown waterfront for new development and redevelopment efforts. As proposed in the Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan there are proposed five new project focus areas including: Public Recreation District; Maritime Market Place; Marina/Restaurant/Office District; Lakeshore PUD; and Enterprise Center. Each of these districts are proposed for intensive uses in the areas of recreation (public and private), commercial business, residential development, and industry. Details on the uses being proposed are included in the Downtown Plan, however, it is important to note in this plan the significance of the Shoreline Drive project in increasing the likelihood that these proposed projects will become a reality. The Shoreline Drive project adds the asset of "easy accessibility" to the already existing assets of Muskegon Lake frontage and adjacent activity centers such as the Muskegon Mall, Holiday Inn, Frauenthal Theater, and Walker Arena.

The Shoreline Drive project can be considered successful to the degree that it will improve traffic accessibility to the point at which Downtown waterfront property is perceived to be marketable for the uses proposed. If the City chooses to make improvements to promote Shoreline Drive as the primary "through" route (i.e. minimizing traffic signals, and maximizing the progression of traffic), that would not be objectionable as long as safe and easy pedestrian crossings can be designed into the project.



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We recommend that for a period of one year the City open Shoreline Drive with the signals and timing set to establish a somewhat equal traffic distribution between the one-way pair and Shoreline. This will provide a period of time in which the City can assess both the positive and negative impacts to business and traffic along both routes. Then following such an assessment, the decision can be made to undertake further improvements to promote the routes based on an existing database.

### Shoreline Drive and Pedestrian Access.

The planned realignment of Terrace at Shoreline, as discussed in the Downtown Plan, may be the best opportunity for developing a good visual and functional connection for pedestrians between the Downtown and the waterfront. The design of this realignment should include strong pedestrian connections consistent with a pedestrian activity pathway. A strong connection would include a wide walk, preferably 10-12 feet, and located so heavy pedestrian usage does not significantly interfere with the operation of the Downtown vehicular loop or unnecessarily with Shoreline Drive.

If the Shoreline pedestrian/bicycle crossing at Third and Terrace are not constructed/reconstructed to be more user friendly, isolation may be a problem. This may especially be a concern if MDOT takes over Shoreline as the business route after fixing Muskegon/Webster and turning them back over to the City. MDOT will likely be much more concerned with a smooth vehicular operation than accommodating pedestrian needs. Overhead crossings may be a solution but would still result in

somewhat of an isolated environment, and reduce synergy between uses as discussed above. MDOT has worked with other communities to accomplish access to Downtown destinations and we believe that the loop system will unify the Downtown, not only to vehicular traffic but to pedestrians as well.

### Public Transit

Public transit within the Muskegon Metropolitan Area is provided primarily by Muskegon Area Transits System (MATS), which has been operated by Muskegon County since 1974. MATS provides regular fixed route service on six routes, six days a week and on three trolley routes operating only in the summer. MATS also operates a demand-responsive "Go Bus" service for seniors and handicapped persons. The fixed route service operates Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Four of the six routes operate on a 30 minute headway and the remaining two have one hour headways. All routes have a one hour headway on Saturday. There are two buses on each of the routes having a 30 minute headway and one bus on each of the routes having a one hour headway. All routes but one meet Downtown for transfers. It is believed that MATS is currently meeting public transit needs and has the ability to respond to increased or changes in demand.

The City of Muskegon provides demand-responsive "Senior Taxi" service to City residents who are 65 years old or older. The service operates Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.





# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Specifics

- ◆ Designate Laketon as the principal east and west route. Construct to five lanes wide with right turn lanes, install state-of-the-art signals, timed to route traffic on Laketon, and implement access controls. Preserve the ability to utilize the abandoned railroad right-of-way to expand Laketon to a six lane road with boulevard. Establish setbacks for new construction to anticipate a six lane road - see proposed recommended cross-section (see Figure 7.2)
- ◆ Extend Henry north of Laketon as a commercial corridor and as a direct connection to Downtown, through Western.
- ◆ Designate Muskegon and Webster as three lanes wide Downtown and two lanes wide with left turn lanes in the historic district, south of Downtown. Streetscape the historic district in a turn of the century mode.
- ◆ Implement access control on Apple, Henry, Getty, and Sherman.
- ◆ Encourage access to the Downtown through the north and south connections with Seaway at U.S. 31 and I-96.
- ◆ Encourage Shoreline as the principal route to Downtown with strong access controls, collector routes, timed signals, and year round landscape.

- ◆ Study with MDOT the feasibility of an additional ramp at Marquette to serve the growing area around Muskegon Community College.
- ◆ Implement the Downtown loop to provide for a unifying effect for the Downtown area - widen Houston to three lanes.

#### Access Management

##### *Definition and Importance of Access Management*

Access management is defined as “a process that provides or manages access to land development (driveways and street intersections) while simultaneously preserving the flow of the traffic on the surrounding road system in terms of safety, capacity and speed.” Achieving this goal requires a careful balancing act in the application of access design standards and regulations.

Access management is most important along collector streets, major streets, and highway/freeway systems. In particular it is important for commercial areas found along these types of streets. Too many driveways can confuse drivers, who become uncertain as to when turns into or out of driveways will be made. Too many driveways result in a large number of turning movements and conflict points, increasing the potential for traffic accidents. In addition when there are no turn lanes, each turning vehicle slows traffic and reduces the carrying capacity of the road.

The principal design techniques used in access management focus on the control





# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



and regulation of the spacing and design of: driveways and streets; medians and median openings; traffic signals; and freeway interchanges.

### *Benefits of Access Management.*

The benefits of a good access management program include:

- ◆ Reduce Crashes and Crash Potential
- ◆ Preserve Roadway Capacity and the Useful Life of Roads
- ◆ Decrease Travel Time and Congestion
- ◆ Improve Access to Properties
- ◆ Coordinate Land Use and Transportation Decisions
- ◆ Improve Air Quality
- ◆ Maintain Travel Efficiency
- ◆ Increased Economic Development Potential

### *Basic Principles of Access Management.*

Six basic principles are used to achieve the benefits of access management. They include:

- ◆ Limit the number of conflict points
- ◆ Separate conflict points
- ◆ Separate turning volumes from through movements

- ◆ Locate traffic signals to facilitate traffic movement
- ◆ Maintain a hierarchy of roadways by function
- ◆ Limit direct access on higher speed roads

A discussion of each of these principles is given below:

- ◆ Limit the number of conflict points: When the number of potential conflict points between turning vehicles increases, so do the opportunities for traffic crashes. Intersections typically have the most points of potential conflict. This is certainly confirmed by the accident data contained earlier in this section.
- ◆ Good access management can reduce conflict points. Medians eliminate many conflict points by limiting opportunities for left turns. Directional median openings can also safely provide for controlled access with few conflict points. When medians are used, nearly every driveway becomes right-in and right-out only with just two conflict points.
- ◆ Separate Conflict Points: Traffic conflicts can also be reduced by separating conflict points. Effective ways include establishing minimum distances between intersections, intersections and driveways, and between driveways. These minimum distances give motorists longer reaction time and improve safety.



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- ◆ Street intersections should be spaced a minimum of 300 feet apart, closest right-of-way line to closest right-of-way line.
- ◆ Restricted access driveways (right-in, right-out) should be maintained a minimum of 100 feet from any street intersection (closest right-of-way line to centerline of driveway).

Posted Speed	Distance Between Driveways
25 mph	145 feet
30 mph	185 feet
35 mph	245 feet
40 mph	300 feet
45 mph	350 feet

**Table 5.5                      Speed and Recommended Driveway Distances**

- ◆ Full movement driveways should be maintained a minimum of 125 feet from a local or collector street intersection, and 250 feet if adjacent to a major street intersection (closest right-of-way line to centerline of driveway).
- ◆ Distance between driveways (measured centerline to centerline) should be based on the posted speed for the street involved. The following distances are recommended:
- ◆ Driveways which are on opposite sides of the street should be directly aligned when feasible, and offset a minimum of 150 feet when not possible.
- ◆ The above standards should be considered general guidelines. Slight increases or decreases to these standards may be found to be

acceptable or even desirable when weighing safety considerations against site constraints. We do not recommend incorporating these standards into a regulatory document without a final review and recommendation by a traffic engineer.

- ◆ Other separation strategies include use of a frontage road whereby one access point can serve several businesses, and use of joint access driveways whereby two businesses use the same driveway.

### *Separate Turning Volumes From Through Movements*

Vehicles typically slow before turning. When turning vehicles are removed from the main flow of traffic, traffic speed is better maintained. In addition to maintaining speed, roadway capacity is preserved and accident potential is reduced. The differences in speed between through vehicles and turning vehicles is also reduced, which also creates safer driving conditions. Separate right and left turn lanes, carefully spaced median openings, and frontage roads are access management design tools that serve this purpose.

### *Locate Traffic Signals To Facilitate Traffic Movement*

When a major street has poorly spaced and uncoordinated signals, traffic safety, road capacity and traffic speed can be severely hampered. Distances of one-half mile or more between signals are desirable. Good access management includes evaluating signal spacing and developing a program to maintain or change spacing or signal





# Transportation

## Master Land Use Plan



progression to achieve safety, travel speed and capacity objectives.

appropriate access controls should be put into effect for all City streets.

### *Establish a Street Classifications System*

### *Limit Direct Access on Higher Speed Streets*

It is important for a City to establish a street classification system which establishes a function for each street. For the City of Muskegon we have assigned each of the City's streets into the categories of local, collector, and major streets. Each of these classifications has a function as described above. Access management standards consistent with street function protects investments in existing streets, businesses, and residential areas. More access control measures are needed as one moves up through the classification system from local street to major street.

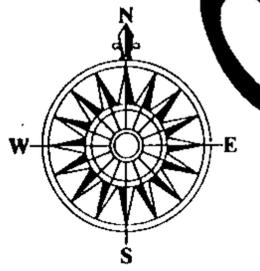
The greatest benefit of access management is preserving the functional integrity of high speed, high capacity streets. This benefit is achieved by limiting direct access to these streets. By permitting access only at signalized intersections or other public streets along the street (rather than at each abutting property) the public investment in the street is best preserved. Fewer street widenings will be needed in the future, traffic speeds will be maintained, and crashes will be reduced.

For Muskegon, access controls are most important for major streets, and particularly for commercial areas along major streets. Focus areas for access management in Muskegon include:

- ◆ Sherman Boulevard (Black Creek to Getty)
- ◆ Sherman Boulevard (Seaway Drive to McCracken)
- ◆ Laketon Avenue (U.S. 31 to Getty)
- ◆ Laketon Avenue (Seaway Drive to Barclay)
- ◆ Apple Avenue (East City limit to Getty)
- ◆ Getty Street (South City limit to Apple Avenue)
- ◆ Peck (South City limit to Downtown)
- ◆ Seaway Drive (in its entirety)
- ◆ Henry (South City limit to Laketon)

While the access control along the above street segments will be the most effective,

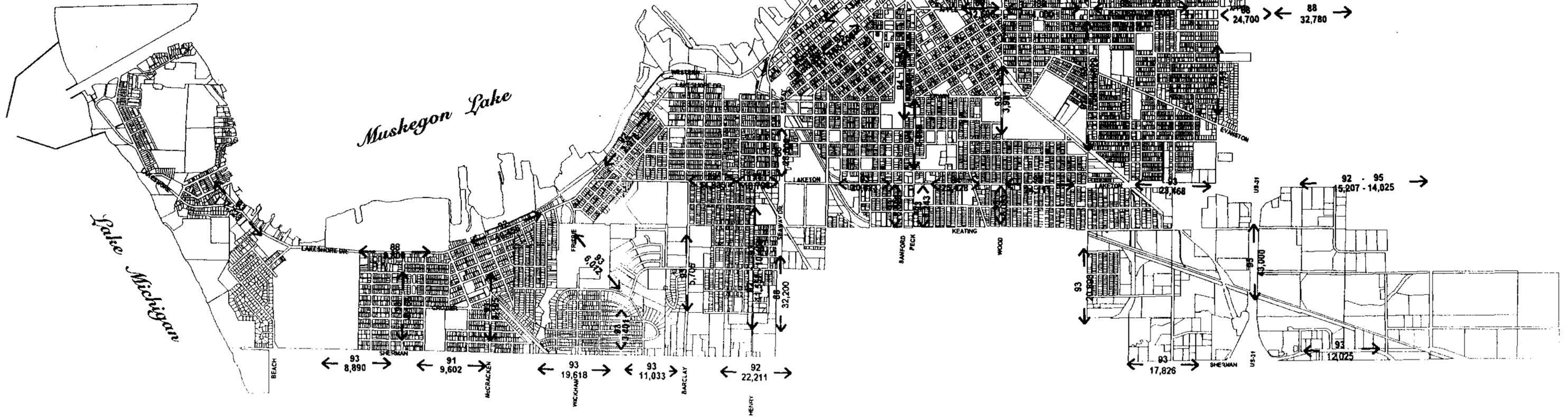


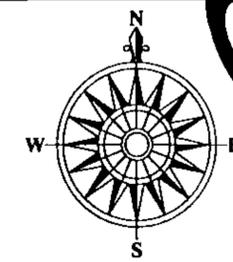


**Traffic Volume Map**

← YEAR →  
CURRENT VOLUME (ADT)

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City of Muskegon  
1997

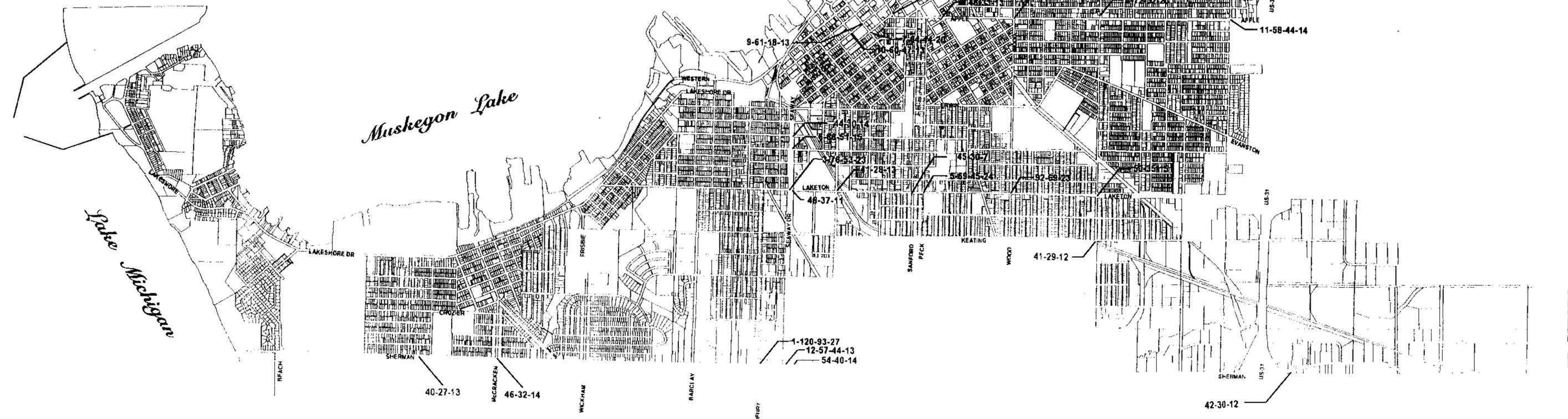




**Number of Crashes at Intersections  
Jan 1, 1990 - Dec 31, 1995**

[RANK (1-12)]  
TOTAL CRASHES  
PROP. DAMAGE ONLY  
INJURY

**Master Land Use Plan  
City of Muskegon  
1997**





# Natural Features Inventory

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### INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL FEATURES

The purpose of performing the City of Muskegon Natural Features Inventory is to assess the City's current natural features and address their value to the City to assist in appropriate regeneration and development efforts.

The City's location on one of Michigan's largest natural harbors is a splendid and unique amenity. This setting of freshwater, coastal dunes, natural harbor, inland lake, rivers, streams, and wetlands is an exhibition of a diversity of natural features, areas, and resources that are not usually found in mature urban centers, and are unique to the entire world.

Muskegon Lake is actually a drowned river mouth and is over 4,100 acres in size. The Muskegon Lake, Muskegon River, and their associated wetlands are classified as significant systems by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The City of Muskegon is the largest City on Michigan's West coast. It is also situated on the largest inland lake that has a deep water port, with access to Lake Michigan. This port is the State's only foreign trade zone.

Coastal freshwater marsh areas along Muskegon Lake and the Muskegon River are significant migratory and spawning areas which were severely diminished during logging and industrial eras. The marsh areas and their significance are now returning somewhat as the region turns more to service and tourism industries. Muskegon Lake and environs is an internationally and federally designated

Area of Concern (AOC). A major goal of the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) calls for shoreline reclamation and reestablishment of native fresh water coastal marsh.

Muskegon's historical urban development, particularly the development associated with industry has affected the natural resources of the City of Muskegon. Some resources, such as Muskegon Lake, and portions of it's shoreline have been physically impacted with fill material, channelization, and pollution . Some features, like Fourmile Creek, have received much less human impact, and remain much as they were in the 1600s.

At time of settlement, Muskegon Lake was a pristine, drowned river valley located at the mouth of the Muskegon River. The lake was characterized by large marsh areas which surrounded the lake. The original character of the marsh can be visualized by examining the wetland features of the State of Michigan Game Area located upstream of Muskegon Lake.

The City of Muskegon includes the entire southern shoreline of Muskegon Lake and a portion of the northern shoreline along the channel in the vicinity of Muskegon State Park. The southern shoreline was highly modified during the mid to late 1800s, during Muskegon's lumbering era. Much of the native marsh along the southern shore was replaced by shipping docks created from lumbering by-products and native fill. By reclaiming land from the marsh and lake, the shipping docks extended out to the deeper water necessary for larger Great Lakes shipping vessels. During the early 1900s, the saw mill and lumber industry was replaced by industrial development,





# Natural Features Inventory

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which brought large factories to the shoreline.

The City of Muskegon's natural features can be broken into five (5) primary groups: lakes/lakeshore, dunes, wetlands, rivers/streams, and woodlands. Natural "subareas" that exhibit high quality native or reestablished habitats have also been identified. Each of the features and areas are illustrated on the Natural Features Inventory Map and are described in the following subsections. Recommendations are presented in the final section of this Plan.

### NATURAL FEATURES

The City's natural features have been divided into five (5) primary categories for this Plan.

They include:

- ◆ Lakes/Lakeshore
- ◆ Dunes
- ◆ Wetlands
- ◆ Rivers/Streams
- ◆ Woodlands

#### Lakes/Lakeshore

##### *Muskegon Lake*

Muskegon Lake has been central to the history and development of the City. Currently, it provides access to docks by Great Lakes shipping vessels, thriving fisheries, and recreational watercraft.

Muskegon Lake will continue to be an important consideration for future development along the City's approximate 8.6 miles of shoreline.

Muskegon Lake supports a valuable sport fishery consisting primarily of perch, walleye, large and small-mouth bass, sunfish, northern pike, crappie, bullhead, sucker, steel head, brown trout, chinook, and coho salmon. The lake serves as a breeding, migratory, and wintering habitat for a wide variety of waterfowl.

Most of the southern shoreline of Muskegon Lake has been significantly altered from its original condition by filling of the lake and surrounding marshlands. Today, the southern shore is a series of docks, bays, seawalls, and fragments of undeveloped shoreline. The fragments of undeveloped shoreline have been altered to varying extents by humans, but many areas currently serve as valuable wildlife habitat and corridors (Day & Associates, 1995). To revitalize the shoreline, several former industrial and dock sites have been converted to recreational areas, and several vacant parcels have been primed for future redevelopment.

Because land was reclaimed along the southern shoreline of Muskegon Lake, the water depth increases more rapidly than along the northern shoreline. Several private and public marinas provide mooring and slips for the many watercraft which utilize the lake. Muskegon Lake is a favorite harbor for both power boaters and sailboats, as it provides access to Lake Michigan as well as adequate space for boating within the lake. The outlet of Muskegon Lake has been channelized with





# Natural Features Inventory

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sea walls, and the channel is protected by the breakwater built in the 1920s. The City includes the north side of the channel and a portion of Muskegon State Park.

The large dune known as Pigeon Hill was removed and leveled during earlier sand mining activities south of the channel. Currently, part of the former Pigeon Hill area is being developed as a marina with condominiums. Large portions of the former dune area remain undeveloped, and should be managed as valuable natural areas. Wildlife usage in the undeveloped areas (and the condominium development area) is high. The wildlife includes raccoons, Whitetail deer, muskrats, Green and Blue Heron, and various waterfowl. Deer are known to swim across the channel to access the former Pigeon Hill area from the Muskegon State Park which is located on the north side of the channel.

A recent study of Muskegon Lake, Muskegon Lake Wildlife Habitat Assessment (Day & Associates, 1995), identified fourteen (14) distinct natural areas along the shoreline of Muskegon Lake. Eight (8) of the natural areas are within the City of Muskegon corporate

limits. They are illustrated on the Natural Features Inventory Map and are described below:

1. **Muskegon State Park, immediately north of the channel.** This area is characterized as Marsh/Foredune/Backdune Complex. The area serves as valuable wildlife habitat, which has been preserved in a predominantly original state. The area is a high quality natural dune area which should remain protected.
2. **Former Pigeon Hill area, south and east of Harbour Towne Condominiums and Marina.** This area is characterized as Fore dune Complex. This area has reestablished itself as a natural area which supports native dune vegetation and contains isolated wetland areas. The area serves as valuable habitat for wildlife, including deer, mallards, teal, muskrats, racoons, Herons, fish, and other waterfowl.
3. **The Cottage Grove Public Access area, west of the S.D. Warren property on Lake Shore Drive.** This area is characterized as Shrub Willow/Isolated Marsh Complex. The area provides some wildlife habitat, but is isolated and very narrow. This length of shoreline is also a natural shoreline/littoral zone, one of the very few remaining on the south side of the lake. The shallow, natural shoreline provides habitat for aquatic plants and fish.





# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



**4. Ruddiman Lagoon Outlet, southwest side of stream.** This area is characterized as Scrub-shrub Community consisting mostly of short shrubs, trees, and brush. The area provides habitat for wildlife, especially birds and small animals. The Ruddiman Lagoon outlet area is limited as a wildlife corridor due to its isolation.

**5. Shoreline, Northeast of Former Amoco Oil tank farm property.** This area is characterized as Shrub Willow/Isolated Marsh Complex. This area is one of the longest sections of undeveloped shoreline. The shoreline is separated from the bluff by the Chesapeake Ohio Railroad. This area also provides wildlife habitat, but would be considered a marginal wildlife corridor, due to its isolation from other habitat areas and its narrowness.

**6. Western Avenue area.** The area at the western end of Western Avenue has historically been used for industrial manufacturing and shipping. An area near the western edge of the peninsula is a natural area. This area is characterized as Old Field Community. Some of this area has been developed as a marina facility.

**7. Large field and marsh, Northeast of Fisherman's Landing.** This area is characterized as Old Field/Woodlot Community. This area provides abundant habitat for wildlife and also serves as a wildlife corridor area with the former wastewater treatment plant

property.

**8. Southwest side of causeway, South of North channel of the Muskegon River.** The area lies across the causeway from Veterans Memorial Park. This area is characterized as Shrub/Old Field/Marsh Community. The area serves as habitat for wildlife, but is limited as a wildlife corridor due to the isolation of the area by the causeway and the power plant property. Migration between natural areas in this vicinity by small animals is difficult and dangerous.

Each of the eight natural areas have unique qualities with respect to vegetation and wildlife utilization. These areas by themselves are valuable natural features, but the potential for expansion of greenbelts and buffers along Muskegon Lake is considerable. Linking of these natural areas by habitat enhancement on connecting vacant parcels and along the future Muskegon Lakeshore Trail can increase both their functional value as a natural area and their recreational value to public users. The Muskegon Lakeshore Trail, and expansion of the greenbelt across vacant parcels may be the best practice for enhancement and protection of





# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



the Muskegon Lake shoreline.

Additional opportunities for enhancement of the greenbelt is recommended by implementing a simple tree planting program. Several City parcels, such as each public watercraft launch site, contain adequate space for additional trees. These trees may also serve as vision barriers between these recreational areas and existing industrial and railroad properties. These visual buffers would greatly increase the aesthetics at these locations.

Muskegon Lake is an internationally and federally designated Area of Concern (AOC), due to concerns of potential environmental impacts on the Great Lakes from historical, municipal, and industrial discharges, and non-point pollution. As an AOC, Muskegon Lake remains the subject of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP - originally prepared in 1987 and subject to continual updating) that includes guidelines for mitigating identified environmental concerns. One of the most important features of the on-going RAP process is participation by the Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council (PAC), a coalition representing the general public, environmental groups, government, business, and industrial interests. The PAC is involved in the on-going process of identifying problems, and defining and implementing beneficial remedial actions.



In summary, Muskegon Lake is a substantial natural feature, which is the largest of its kind in Michigan. The coastal setting of the City on Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan offers incredible views, recreation, and educational and conservation potential due to its rebounding water quality and redeveloping coastal marshlands. As the City continues its revitalization effort, Muskegon Lake should remain a primary consideration. Water quality and natural areas around the lake are primary factors to the quality of the lake as a natural feature, and should be protected and enhanced as such.

### *Lake Michigan*

The City of Muskegon has approximately 2.5 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. The lakeshore, within the City, includes natural beach and engineered areas. Lake Michigan is an important natural feature for the City as it provides recreation for residents and tourists, a great sport fishery, and a means of shipping materials to and from the City of Muskegon via the Great Lakes. Pere Marquette Park, Kruse Park, and the Muskegon State Park provide public beach access for the enjoyment of the lakeshore. The breakwater structures and channel provide protected access to between Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake. Parking at the seawall near the waterworks building provides an unobstructed view of Lake Michigan from





# Natural Features Inventory

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automobiles.

Lake Michigan is a natural feature, that will continue to be an important amenity for the City. Water quality and enjoyment of Lake Michigan is partially controlled by the water quality of Muskegon Lake, but is also influenced by every river and City located along its shore. By enhancement and protection of Muskegon Lake and its tributaries, the City will continue to be a good steward of Lake Michigan.

### Dunes

A vast area of sand dunes can be found along the Lake Michigan shoreline within the City limits. One former large sand dune, Pigeon Hill, was entirely removed by sand mining operations. A portion of the former dune has been redeveloped as a condominiums and marina while a portion has remained undeveloped and provides valuable wildlife habitat.

In areas which have not undergone sand mining operations, roads, parks, and residences have been built. Most of the dunes have been developed as residential areas with single family homes. Some of the dune areas have been classified as "Critical Dune Areas" under Act 451, Part 353. Most development activities within "Critical Dune Areas" currently require a Department of Environmental Quality permit. The City of Muskegon is given an opportunity to respond to the permit applications to enforce any local ordinances or rules regarding building within the dunes. The City of Muskegon may use this opportunity to regulate and protect its dunes, as it feels is appropriate. Specific ordinances or guidance regarding density,

access, slope, setbacks, and vegetation removal will standardize the City's view of and ability to regulate dune development.

The dunes are a part of a unique freshwater sand dune complex along the western shoreline of Michigan. The dunes are fragile features that are ever changing with time. They are important buffers from Lake Michigan and are ecologically significant. Their protection, through nondevelopment or limited development according to strict zoning, is recommended.

### Wetlands

The largest wetland areas found in the City are located along the Muskegon River system, adjacent to the Muskegon State Game Area, along the Muskegon Lake shoreline, in the Ruddiman Creek floodplain, in the Four Mile Creek floodplain, in the Ryerson Creek floodplain, and in the former Pigeon Hill sand mining area. Each of these areas are colored light blue on the Natural Features Inventory Map. The wetlands of specific stream corridors are further described in the Rivers/Streams section.

Muskegon Lake, at the time of settlement, was surrounded by marshlands. It is expected that the lake was extremely productive, and otters could be seen feeding in the marshes with eagles hovering above to capture a unweary fish. Today, after much of the coastal marshes have been replaced by fill material or dredged away, the lake is beginning to return to it's natural state in the remaining shallow areas. This transition can be attributed to many things, but the primary reasons are a decrease in heavy industry around the





# Natural Features Inventory

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lakeshore and an increase in service and tourism industries. Residents are also becoming good stewards and are enjoying the rewards of a cleaner, more natural lake.

Wetlands are very important in their function to retain and filter sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants from storm water runoff. Wetlands are high productivity habitats for a variety of plants and animals. The wetland resources of the City are also an important aesthetic and educational resource. The wetlands are integral portions of greenbelts within the City. Enhancement of riparian buffer



zones, stormwater management, and upland management practices will lengthen the usefulness of the wetlands, by slowing the eutrophication process. If wetlands become choked with sediments and experience increased plant growth, they age prematurely and lessen their capability to filter and retain sediment, nutrients, and pollutants.

### RIVERS/STREAMS

One River and four creeks transect portions of the City of Muskegon. The Muskegon River, Fourmile Creek, Ryerson Creek, Little Black Creek, and Ruddiman Creek provide excellent existing greenbelts within the City. These river and stream corridors host a wide diversity of plants and animals, including fox, rabbit, deer, songbirds, racoon, waterfowl, Green and Blue Heron, eagles, and muskrat. There is great potential for expansion, and even connection of these greenbelts to enhance and connect key wildlife habitat.

Floodplains are important physical features that are generally narrow to broad, nearly flat areas along rivers or streams. These low relief areas in the valleys of streams frequently provide important natural retention during heavy rains and snow melts, and generally have remained undeveloped. They support good habitat generally and a unique diversity of plants and animals. Land within 100-year floodplains has been delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A 100-year floodplain is defined as an area within





# Natural Features Inventory

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which there is a 1 percent chance in any year of a 100-year flood occurring, or that in every 100 years there is a 1 percent chance that the water will rise to that elevation. The Floodplain Inventory Map shows the location of the 100-year floodplain around Muskegon Lake, Lake Michigan and the river and stream corridors. Floodplains are generally considered unsuited to most types of development, though passive recreational uses can be appropriate.

### *The Muskegon River*

The Muskegon River is a valuable natural resource and scenic amenity to the City of Muskegon, and has a total watershed area of 2,660 square miles. The river provides an important source of recreation, partially due to it's fisheries and opportunities for wildlife viewing. The river system provides habitat for a large diversity of plants and wildlife and is nationally known for it's highly prized crop of walleye, steelhead, and salmon.

The Muskegon River has three branches which enter the northeastern end of Muskegon Lake. The north branch of the Muskegon River delineates the City of Muskegon Corporate Limit from the City of North Muskegon in the vicinity of Veterans Memorial Park. The south and middle branches flow together in the vicinity of the old wastewater treatment plant, and enter Muskegon Lake approximately 4,000 feet south of the north branch.

The area between the branches, adjacent to the Muskegon State Game Area, is an extensive marsh that exists in a partially modified condition. The marsh is habitat

for a great diversity of wildlife, including eagles, Green and Blue Herons, egrets, swans, Canadian geese, and muskrats. The primary human impact to the marsh has been from fill placed along the margin of the marsh. The fill supports roads and railways which connect Muskegon and North Muskegon, the power plant, and the former wastewater treatment plant. The marsh has also been modified by utilities and an area formerly used as the City's dump.

The water quality of the Muskegon River directly affects the quality of water found in Muskegon Lake. Sediment and other non-point source pollutants in the Muskegon River can increase the eutrophication rate, or aging process of Muskegon Lake. The Muskegon River is slowly filling and aging the lake with sediment and accelerated aquatic plant growth from non-point source pollutants such as nitrates and phosphates (fertilizers).

The primary water quality issues for the Muskegon River are hydrocarbons from petroleum facilities , sediment from erosion, and other nonpoint source pollutants. However, only a small portion of the river transects the City of Muskegon, and most sediment and other non-point source pollution occurs outside the City's limits. The City of Muskegon is limited in its ability to control and decrease upstream impacts, but can continue to be a good steward of its portion of the river and associated marsh.

### *Fourmile Creek and Sandford's Bayou*

Fourmile Creek is approximately 3.8 miles long from its headwaters in Muskegon





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Township, where it begins as an intermittent stream near Hall Road between Mill Iron Road and Dangle Road, to its end at the South Branch of the Muskegon River. Two sections of the creek fall within the City of Muskegon Corporate Limits. The two sections combined, one approximately 3,500 feet and the other approximately 4,000 feet long, account for approximately 1.45 miles of the length. Fourmile Creek flows through the campus of Muskegon Community College and golf course, and the ponded area known as Sanford's Bayou, all within the City limits. The predominant land use along Fourmile Creek is residential. Outside of the City, Orchard View High School and the General Dynamics facility are located adjacent to Four Mile Creek. The creek corridor is deep (in most areas), isolated, well buffered, and great for recreation.



for wildlife eastward to the Muskegon Community College campus. The floodplain of Fourmile Creek widens westwardly from the U.S. 31 crossing. As the floodplain widens, it is covered by a large cattail marsh. The marsh is separated into west and east portions by the Getty Street crossing. Westward from the Getty Street crossing, the floodplain transitions from the marsh to Sanford's Bayou.

East of U.S. 31, Fourmile Creek lies in a deep ravine, with striking topography. The stream valley is heavily wooded, and provides very productive woodland habitat

Sanford's Bayou is a large ponded area within the floodplain of Fourmile Creek. Portions of the bayou are shallow and subject to increased eutrophication by sediment and other non-point source pollutants. The Sanford's Bayou area is an important part of the Fourmile Creek greenbelt because the bayou offers different ecological characteristics, thereby increasing the value to plant and wildlife diversity. The danger of sediment and other non-point source pollutants is that the bayou will shallow prematurely and this ecological diversity will be lost. Riparian buffer zones, upland management practices, and





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stormwater management can dramatically increase the quality of Sanford's Bayou and Fourmile Creek as Natural Features.

Although Fourmile Creek is crossed several times with roadways, it remains very natural. Riparian buffer zones along the stream corridor are highly productive wildlife habitats and should be preserved as such. The floodplain marsh and Sanford's Bayou act as a sediment basin, trapping sediment, nutrient, and other pollutants. West of U.S. 31, Fourmile Creek and Sanford's Bayou are shallow surface water bodies with associated wetlands, and are sensitive to increased eutrophication. The primary concern for Fourmile Creek is sediment and other non-point source pollutants. It is recommended that the Fourmile Creek corridor become better understood with respect to water quality, wildlife, and habitat so that zoning may be developed for the protective use and conservation of the resources.



enters the City limits at the U.S. 31 crossing, and contains one intermittent tributary to the north which is entirely within the City limits.

This tributary enters the north side of Ryerson Creek across from Steel School.

Between the U.S. 31 and Getty Street crossings, the floodplain widens to the west. As the area broadens, the floodplain consists of a marsh. The marsh is covered primarily with cattails and some willows. Between the Getty Street and Wood Street crossings, the floodplain consists of a similar cattail marsh with some ponding along the main stream channel.

Between Wood Street and its outlet to Muskegon Lake, Ryerson Creek has been highly modified and channelized. The channelized area consists of land which was filled for Green Park, the Farmer's Market, and stream crossings for the Chesapeake Ohio Railroad, Business Route 31, Yuba Street, and Ottawa Street. The stream segments of Ryerson Creek east of Wood Street are in a mostly natural state, and provide quality wildlife habitat. The segments of Ryerson Creek offer an excellent opportunity for a protected greenbelt. Currently, these segments offer wildlife habitat, but do not serve as a

### *Ryerson Creek and the Smith-Ryerson Playfield Pond*

Ryerson Creek is approximately 4.1 miles long from its headwaters in Muskegon Township where it begins as an intermittent stream near Dangle Road. Of the approximate 4.1 miles of Ryerson Creek, the western 2.1 miles are within the City of Muskegon Corporate Limits. Ryerson Creek





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quality wildlife corridor due to the many culverted stream crossings. Eliminating or reconstructing some crossings to allow migration under the crossings is recommended and should be evaluated further.

The predominant land use along Ryerson Creek is residential. Commercial developments in the Apple Avenue and U.S. 31 area are also adjacent to Ryerson Creek. The primary concern for Ryerson Creek is sediment and other non-point source pollutants. Oil and grease from commercial parking lot storm drains, fertilizers, and sediment pollution are the main current water quality concerns for Ryerson Creek. The stream bed is characterized as mostly sandy where it enters the City to west of Getty Street.

The Smith-Ryerson Playfield Area Pond is a small ponded area within the floodplain of Ryerson Creek, near Wood Street. The Smith Playfield ponded area is an important part of the Ryerson Creek greenbelt because it offers different ecological characteristics that increase the diversity of plant and wildlife. The ponded area contains a diversity of fish and wildlife, including carp and waterfowl. Currently the pond is very shallow and subject to rapid eutrophication by sediment and other non-point source pollutants. The danger of sediment and other non-point source pollutants is that the bayou will shallow prematurely and this ecological diversity will be lost. Riparian buffer zones, upland management practices, and stormwater management can increase the quality of the pond area as a Natural Feature.

Between Smith-Ryerson Playfield/Wood Street, and the outlet to Muskegon Lake, the stream is choked with sediment, trash, and becomes foul smelling. The application of natural riparian buffer zones and storm water management are important factors in the preservation and enhancement of this segment of Ryerson Creek as a Natural Feature.

Ryerson Creek and its floodplain marsh are shallow surface water bodies. They are sensitive to increased eutrophication, and directly affect the water quality of Muskegon Lake.

### *Little Black Creek*

Little Black Creek transects a section of the City before flowing through the City of Muskegon Heights and into Mona Lake. The section which flows through the City is almost entirely within industrial and commercial areas, but mostly protected by extensive wooded buffer zones. Street crossings are found at Roberts Street, U.S. 31, Black Creek Road, and Sheridan Road. As Little Black Creek flows through the City, it is contained within a ravine, without a well developed floodplain, except in the vicinity of Mercy Hospital. In the vicinity of Mercy Hospital, a small marsh has developed where the stream widens.

The portion of Little Black Creek west of U.S. 31 has excellent value as wildlife habitat and as a wildlife corridor. Whitetail deer can be found west of Roberts Street and are anticipated to utilize the woodlands which continue west to Getty Street. The area east of U.S. 31 contains considerably more wildlife habitat. In the area east of





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U.S. 31, Little Black Creek has adequate natural buffers between industrial buildings and the creek, making it an excellent greenbelt and wildlife corridor.

The primary concern for Little Black Creek is sediment and other non-point source pollutants. Oil and grease from commercial/industrial parking lot storm drains, pollutants from other discharges, fertilizers, and sediment pollution are the main potential and current water quality concerns for Little Black Creek. A petroleum facility outside the City adjacent to the creek may adversely impact the stream. The application of natural riparian buffer zones and storm water management plans are important recommendations in the preservation and enhancement of Little Black Creek. Impact along Little Black Creek, although limited within the City of Muskegon, affects the water quality of Mona Lake which outlets to Lake Michigan.

Little Black Creek and associated woodlands represent a large area of natural woodland habitat, which has great value for wildlife viewing and nature walks. This area should be preserved and enhanced as a valuable greenbelt within the City.

### *Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon*

Currently, Ruddiman Creek is approximately 1.2 miles long from its headwaters to its outlet into Muskegon Lake, including Ruddiman Lagoon. Two additional tributaries empty into Ruddiman Lagoon, and are tributaries to the overall Ruddiman Creek system. The creek formerly reached further east, but has been filled and contained in a subsurface drainage system. The actual water shed of

Ruddiman Creek includes portions of the City of Muskegon, City of Muskegon Heights, City of Roosevelt Park, and the City of Norton Shores. Stormwater drainage and discharges from each of these cities influence the water quality and overall value of Ruddiman Creek as a Natural Feature.



Ruddiman Creek formerly received industrial and residential septic discharges from portions of each City prior to implementation of the Muskegon County Wastewater Treatment system. Complete conversion of the system is ongoing, and illegal hookups continue to be isolated and corrected. A continued systematic system of investigation and correction of the problem is recommended. In addition to the discharges, residual petroleum impact from area facilities and pipelines, erosion and sediment, and other non-point source pollutants continue to present water quality problems for Ruddiman Creek.

The floodplains of Ruddiman Creek and it's tributaries are wooded, and adjacent land use is primarily residential, with some commercial and industrial usage. The floodplain of Ruddiman Creek begins to widen to the west from the Barclay Street crossing to the Glenside crossing. The floodplain is not very wide, but does





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support some floodplain wetlands, consisting primarily of cattail marsh. West of the Glenside crossing, the Ruddiman Creek floodplain opens into the Ruddiman Lagoon.

Ruddiman Lagoon is a ponded portion of the floodplain of Ruddiman Creek. Ruddiman Creek, along with two additional unnamed drainages/tributary streams, empty into the southeastern half of Ruddiman Lagoon. The lagoon is regulated by its outlet at the northwest end where it is constricted and flows under Lake Shore Drive. The Ruddiman Lagoon narrows and outlets to Muskegon Lake at its Northwestern end at Lake Shore Drive. The stream flows northwesterly, from the Lake Shore Drive crossing, approximately 600 feet, into Muskegon Lake.

The water quality of the lagoon is primarily influenced by Ruddiman Creek. The lagoon has received pollutants from the stream historically, and continues to receive



high levels of bacteria. The lagoon is a natural feature that provides valuable wildlife habitat, and acts as a greenbelt. The lagoon area is limited as a corridor to

Muskegon Lake by its outlet beneath Lake Shore Drive.

Ruddiman Lagoon's water quality will continue to be influenced by the water it receives. Stormwater management, continued storm and septic sewer separation, and sound upland management practices offer greatest (current) control on the water quality. Some impacts from residual petroleum and heavy metals may remain for decades, while the system purges itself. Riparian buffer zones can expand and enhance the Ruddiman Lagoon and Ruddiman Creek area as an important greenbelt. This buffer will help protect the lagoon's water quality from upland activities such as fertilizing. Fertilizer compounds which runoff into the lagoon will only increase the rate of eutrophication. Currently, the lagoon acts as a chemical sink ,or a buffer, between Ruddiman Creek and Muskegon Lake. Therefore the water quality of both Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon directly affect the water quality and recreational enjoyment of Muskegon Lake.

Despite water quality impacts, Ruddiman Creek and the Ruddiman Lagoon area provides numerous quality scenic views and recreation opportunities, and serve as valuable wildlife corridor and habitat area. Remedial action and natural purging of pollutants in the Ruddiman Creek system will be ongoing. The application of natural riparian buffer zones, storm water management, and sanitary sewer separation are important factors in the preservation and enhancement of Ruddiman Creek and





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Ruddiman Lagoon. Improvement of water quality within the Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon will increase the functional value of the Natural Feature. The water quality is important to the creek and lagoon as well as Muskegon Lake.

### Woodlands

As is the case in most urban centers, areas exhibiting significant tree cover include parks and other City owned land, cemeteries, ravine systems abutting creeks and streams, and residential areas, commercial corridors, and the core Downtown. However, the City of Muskegon contains three large areas of substantial woodlands and woodland habitat. The areas are associated with Little Black Creek, Four Mile Creek, and the critical dune area near Bronson Park. Each of the three woodland areas appear on the Natural Features Inventory Map.

#### *Little Black Creek Woodlands*

An especially aesthetic and large tract of woodlands follow Little Black Creek through its entire route across the City. The width and continuity of this woodland provides a natural greenbelt, with substantial wildlife habitat. Whitetail deer utilize the woodlands as far west as the portion between Roberts Street and Getty Street, an area surrounded by significant commercial and industrial development. Protection of this woodland greenbelt will ensure the longevity of this valuable amenity.

#### *Fourmile Creek Woodlands*

The Fourmile Creek valley between U.S. 31 and the Muskegon Community College Campus contains a beautiful woodland area, approximately a square quarter mile in size. The deeply cut ravine offers exceptional wildlife habitat, while generally poorly suited for development. The area offers excellent recreational and educational opportunity, as well as acting as a valuable component to the Fourmile Creek greenbelt.

#### *Lake Michigan Dune Woodlands Near Bronson Park*

The woodlands located on the lakeward side of the foredunes near Bronson Park, is the largest remaining section of natural dune woodland habitat remaining within the City limits. The uniqueness and scarcity of this ecosystem, as well as along the entire Lake Michigan shoreline, causes this



area to be an important Natural Feature. These woodlands, as well as the dunes themselves, should be developed carefully to not destroy their ecological importance and the natural protection they provide from Lake Michigan.





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In addition to the three woodland areas, trees are an important aspect of the Downtown historical district. Many of the facades are completed by mature trees. A recommendation to include tree preservation in the historical district will ensure that this important aspect of the City will remain intact.

other Environmental Groups where common interests exist.

Additional neighborhoods with mature and historic trees provide quality aesthetic habitats for birds, squirrels, and raccoons. A tree inventory identifying and characterizing the woodland resources of the City could be used to identify these areas. Once identified, recommended tree preservation zoning ordinances could be applied to the areas.

### CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Several specific recommendations are presented to preserve, enhance, develop, create, and use the natural resources of the City. The recommendations have been summarized into seven primary actions: Habitat Plan Development and Implementation; Integration of Natural Features with Recreation and Leisure Planning; Water Quality and Subwatershed Plans; Generic Zoning and Design Criteria for Natural Features and Natural Areas; Development of City Stormwater Management Requirements and Possible Modifications for Sensitive Natural Areas; Preservation and Conservation of Natural Features and Natural Areas; and Working with the Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council, Natural Resource Conservation Service & Soil Conservation District, and





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### SEVEN PRIMARY ACTION/POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS COMMON TO ALL NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS

#### **1. Habitat Plan Development and Implementation.**

Several areas, which are now, or could become, Natural Areas, have great potential for improved wildlife habitat and native vegetation. Habitat improvement with native plants, will increase the areas value for wildlife and provide an amenity to the City and metropolitan users. A plan should be developed specifically to define the areas where habitat could be improved and exactly how they could be improved. The plan would describe what kinds of habitats would be created and evaluate what funding sources and cooperating groups are available to assist.

#### **2. Integration of Natural Features and Areas with Recreation and Leisure Planning.**

The natural amenities within the City are unique and are not duplicated elsewhere. The system of Natural Features and Areas should be focal points of recreation and leisure, especially along the lakeshore and along stream corridors. The Muskegon Lakeshore Trail will specifically link Natural Features and Areas and provide an opportunity for access to scenic views and recreational activities.

#### **3. Development of Water Quality and Subwatershed Plan.**

Development of a water quality and subwatershed plan is critical for determining specific actions or policies the City can initiate to increase water quality within each subwatershed and Muskegon Lake. The Plan would include but not be limited to identifying specific concerns for water quality improvement, buffer zone improvements, critical stormwater management areas, recreational opportunities, and habitat enhancement areas. The water quality and subwatershed plan will support regulations set forth in the General Zoning and Design Criteria for the lakes and stream corridors. Such zoning and design criteria may be very different from one subwatershed to another, depending on past and current adjacent land use, pollution history, and human impacts such as filling or clearing within floodplain and riparian zones.



# Natural Features Inventory

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### SEVEN PRIMARY ACTION/POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS COMMON TO ALL NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS

#### **4. Generic Zoning and Design Criteria for Natural Features and Areas.**

All of the Natural Features and identified Natural Areas within the City are deserving of protection because the cumulatively make up a natural setting which is very unique. Different zoning and design criteria would apply to dunes, wetlands, streams, woodlands, and lakes. In general, within these different areas, zoning mechanisms such as Natural Feature Overlay Zoning Districts and development standards, Planned Unit Development Standards, site plan review, cluster development regulations, building height limits, Special Use Standards will be beneficial. Existing minimal standards applicable to Natural Features and resources do not enable the City to take full advantage of it's oversight authority. Establishment of these regulations for the Natural Features and Areas will protect and improve the natural resources and the scenic amenities within the City.

#### **5. Development and Enforcement of City Stormwater Management Requirements and other Possible Modifications for Sensitive Natural Areas.**

Development and/or revision, and enforcement of stormwater management practices may reduce the amount of pollutants entering waterways through illegal sanitary connections, parking lot and street runoff, and industrial discharges. Along with future enforcement of stormwater management practices, and possible retrofit of existing systems, elimination of curb and gutter in Planned Unit Developments or retention/detention ponds at commercial and industrial facilities are some possibilities.

#### **6. Preservation and Conservation of Natural Features and Areas.**

Many natural or potential Natural Areas around the City, have extreme ecological value. These areas should be acquired by the City solely or with potential conservancy groups, and placed in a conservancy program. These areas would potentially receive development limited to passive use recreational activities and educational facilities/activities. A specific plan should be developed, identifying such parcels and preliminary plans for their potential use, preservation, and enhancement.



# Natural Features Inventory

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### SEVEN PRIMARY ACTION/POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS COMMON TO ALL NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS

#### **7. Working with the Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council, Natural Resource Conservation Service & Soil Conservation District, and other Environmental Groups where common interests exist.**

Some groups are completing water quality analysis, cleanup and awareness programs, or other assessment, protection, and enhancement projects. Many of these projects are aligned with common goals and objectives of the City, related to protection, preservation and use of its Natural Features. These groups may also assist in community awareness programs. Many City and metropolitan residents are not fully aware of the Natural Features within the City. Community awareness will make people aware of the amenities they have in their “back yards” and what they can do to assure their preservation and quality.

Six of the seven primary recommendations have been expanded in the following specific recommendations. The final recommendation for working with the PAC, NRCS & SCD, and other environmental groups does not warrant additional specific recommendations. Many specific

opportunities for working together will be realized as portions of the plan are completed. Some recommendations can't be fully defined until recommended plans have been created, further addressing specific aspects of individual natural features or areas.





# Natural Features Inventory

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### 1. HABITAT PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/POLICY

#### **Muskegon River**

The former City dump now a compost recycling area, has been altered greatly, but due to it's adjacent wetlands, offers an opportunity for valuable habitat improvement. Many birds and mammals that utilize the marsh need upland breeding and loafing habitat. A plan for secondary land use of the altered area that includes native plant species, grasses, trees, and shrubs, will provide such habitat and restore the aesthetics of the area.

The area of the former waste water treatment plant, between the middle and south branch of the River offers opportunity for habitat restoration. Currently, low areas have revegetated with wetland species. The areas that are currently manicured around the pond and upland could be revegetated with native tree and shrub species, providing valuable habitat and a nature area for the study of native plants. The habitat enhancement could dramatically improve the aesthetics of the area.

#### **Ryerson Creek**

Opportunities for habitat enhancement exist in the riparian buffer zone along Ryerson Creek in the vicinity of Smith-Ryerson Playfield and Green Acres Park. Use of native plants (trees, shrubs and ground cover varieties) would increase the aesthetics of these areas as well as provide additional habitat. The additional habitat would be useful breeding and loafing habitat. Less desirable, invasive species currently found could be replaced by native, desirable, plants.

#### **Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon**

Opportunities for habitat enhancement exist in the riparian buffer zone along Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon. Specifically, the manicured lawn space along the lagoon could be reduced and replaced by native plants. A portion of the lawn could be replaced by a wood chip nature trail with lagoon viewing points. This would increase wildlife habitat, create a wider riparian buffer zone, and decrease the effects of stormwater runoff from manicured areas without dramatically decreasing the park's recreational value. Use of native plants (trees, shrubs and ground cover varieties) would increase the aesthetics and provide additional breeding and loafing habitat.



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### 1. HABITAT PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/POLICY

#### Muskegon Lake and Lakeshore

Opportunities for habitat enhancement occur along nearly the entire shoreline. In each of the eight (8) Natural Areas, some habitat enhancement may be valuable. However the primary habitat enhancement efforts should be within all of the altered areas which connect the Natural Areas. This would provide a less dissected greenbelt around the lake.

The Muskegon Lakeshore Trail will work well with this recommendation because it will offer excellent opportunities for native plant habitat along nearly it's entire route. Implementation of a general recommendation to plant native tree, shrub, and herb species along the trail, extensively when possible, will increase the aesthetics along the trail and provide habitat and a greenbelt around the lake.

Other specific areas where habitat improvement with native species are recommended include public launch sites, especially the Grand Trunk, Fisherman's Landing, and Hartshorn Marina sites. These areas are mostly open, with very little or no habitat for wildlife. In areas such as Fisherman's Landing, planting areas with trees and other cover will serve as aesthetic breaks from railroad or industrial properties.

Heritage Landing, Terrace Point, and other vacant former industrial properties have excellent potential for habitat enhancement. A focus on landscaping with native plants will add to the aesthetic, recreational, and educational quality of the lakeshore, and wildlife habitat along the lake. An increase of birds, butterflies, and other small animals would be anticipated with increased native habitat.



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### 1. HABITAT PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/POLICY

#### Wetlands

Develop and implement a plan to increase wetland habitat and native vegetation for disturbed areas which have been filled or impacted adjacent to wetlands. Created and enhanced wetland habitat on disturbed areas, especially around current surface water, may provide this additional wetland habitat. There may be opportunities within the City for expansion of wetlands or reclamation of filled wetland areas.

Such areas may be on the former Continental Motors property, the small waterway between the YMCA and Heritage Landing, Muskegon Lake west of the Port City Princess docking facility (by Waterfront Center), the area west of the Cole's Marina facility, the former Amoco property, and the former waste water treatment area. Some of these areas have known contamination, so potential mitigated or created wetland should have an assessment completed prior to agitating soils or groundwater which may release pollutants. The assessment will also identify the potential positive affects the wetlands may have on impacted areas. The wetlands will capture impacted sediment as well as filter sediment and other nonpoint source pollutants before entering Muskegon Lake.

#### Woodlands and Trees

Develop and implement a plan to increase habitat and native vegetation for disturbed areas which have been filled or impacted. The plan should include tree planting recommendations for areas along Muskegon Lake, such as Fisherman's Landing and the public launch site near the Grand Trunk Railroad dock. Both areas have considerable potential for additional trees. Additional trees and native ground cover will serve as habitat and natural buffer. The trees will also serve as important aesthetic buffers, separating recreational areas from industrial and railroad properties. Several City owned parcels, and numerous private parcels, have large areas of manicured lawn and decorative landscaping, however, native shrubs, grasses, and trees should be promoted where possible.

#### Dunes

Develop and implement a plan to increase habitat and native vegetation for beach and dune areas which are maintained but do not have direct use. These areas may include unused portions of Pere Marquette Park that are groomed by removing excess sand. Establishment of dune grass on such areas may offer an increased aesthetic value to the lakeshore.



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### 2. INTEGRATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS WITH RECREATION AND LEISURE PLANNING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Muskegon River**

The former City dump, due to its large upland area and adjacent wetlands, offers excellent opportunity for recreational secondary land uses specifically centered around existing adjacent habitat and wildlife. A wildlife observation tower, parking, and some picnic facilities would lend access for all people, including handicap access, to enjoy the wetland habitat and the wildlife. Currently such access is very limited.

The area of the former waste water treatment plant has excellent recreational potential. Currently, many people fish and launch small boats on the parcel. The parcel contains a pond, manicured lawn, and Natural Area, in addition to the former waste water treatment plant. Habitat enhancement, with recreational facilities such as picnic area, nature trail, observation platform, etc., can add to enjoyment of the area. An old greenhouse and the settling and aeration tanks, could possibly be used as native plant and fish rearing facilities for local conservation groups.

#### **Ryerson Creek**

The Smith-Ryerson Playfield area currently boasts extensive recreational opportunities for the area, and The Ryerson Creek floodplain and riparian zone offer good habitat and support a diverse assemblage of wildlife species. The potential for combining natural features with recreation and leisure is good. Primitive trails used by local residents, primarily children, offer excellent potential for expansion. The trails should be widened, leveled, and covered with wood chips. Such a nature trail could be more widely used by all ages and provide greater access to wildlife viewing. Viewshed/wildlife observation points and/or small picnic areas may also enhance the enjoyment of the feature. As with Fourmile Creek, the potential for a long loop trail along the length of Ryerson Creek would increase access to, and enjoyment of the entire Ryerson Creek greenbelt.

The plan should assess potential use and enjoyment of a fishing/viewshed platform on north side of the pond. The Smith-Ryerson Playfield will continue to develop as a recreational center, with potential additions of trails and enhanced habitat, increasing its value as a natural feature and amenity.





# Natural Features Inventory

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### 2. INTEGRATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS WITH RECREATION AND LEISURE PLANNING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Fourmile Creek**

The north side of Sandford's Bayou and Fourmile Creek , and potentially the south side, offer an excellent location for a nature trail with wildlife and viewshed observation points. In addition, people currently fish near the outlet of Sandford's Bayou. Such trails would provide access for multiple use and enjoyment of the natural area. Much of the creek and greenbelt currently has somewhat limited access. A loop trail, west of US 31, would provide approximately a 3 mile hike with incredible views and wildlife viewing. The plan should incorporate wildlife viewing and scenic views locations, with a nature trail system along the bayou. Increase access for picnics and fishing on Sandford's Bayou.

#### **Little Black Creek**

The Little Black Creek greenbelt provides an excellent opportunity for recreation and leisure, especially by industrial and commercial workers during lunch times. Many people utilize the former railroad grade as a path to walk, jog, or bike during lunch. If trails were developed and some potential parking and picnic areas were created, they may be widely used by both area workers as well as all people on weekends and evenings. The greenbelt has the largest area of connected woodlands and tree canopies in the City, with unique wildlife viewing possibilities.

#### **Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon**

Explore the possibility of creating new trails, and enhancing existing primitive trails to nearly level, five-foot wide paths along Ruddiman Creek, tributaries, and the lagoon. Many people enjoy walking the existing trails created by children. If the trails were better developed and made in loop fashion, utilization and enjoyment of these Natural Features may be increased. Excellent recreation opportunities already exist at McGraft Park, the trails would add to the park and lagoon area with minimal funding and resources. Enhanced habitat along these trails, will promote breeding and loafing and increased usage by wildlife. The plan should incorporate wildlife viewing and viewshed locations with a nature trail system along the lagoon, Ruddiman Creek, and the tributary which borders McGraft Park.



# Natural Features Inventory

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### 2. INTEGRATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS WITH RECREATION AND LEISURE PLANNING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan is already a main focus of recreation in the City. Pere Marquette Park and Bronson Park are heavily used in the summer for beach recreation activities. The Muskegon Lakeshore Trail provides increased enjoyment and safe pedestrian travel along nearly the entire lakeshore. Boats and fisherman will continue to utilize Lake Michigan as a valuable amenity.

#### Muskegon Lake and lakeshore

Consistent with the Master Plan for the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail, Muskegon Lake will be accessible by more people. The Trail will provide multiple viewsheds, lake access points, and recreation areas. Completion of the trail will be the greatest link, recreationally between natural areas. A major undissected greenbelt will be created along the lakeshore will be created with enhanced vegetation.

#### Wetlands

Current and potential created wetlands provide a visual, recreational, and educational amenity. The wetlands around Muskegon Lake, adjacent to the Muskegon State Game Area, and within the stream floodplains, provide wonderful habitat for wildlife. Trails and parks which provide access to these features are important. McGraft Park, Smith-Ryerson Playfield, and the former wastewater treatment area already provide access to wetlands. A future park and/or wildlife observation area on the former landfill area north of the causeway would provide much needed access to viewing of the marshlands adjacent to the Muskegon State Game Area.

#### Woodlands and Trees

Develop and implement a plan to incorporate wildlife viewing and viewshed locations, nature trails, and habitat enhancement with future recreation and leisure planning efforts. The Little Black Creek woodlands offer an excellent opportunity for a woodland nature trail within the City. A nature trail through portions of the three major woodland areas would increase the value of these amenities through passive recreational and educational uses.



# Natural Features Inventory

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### 3. DEVELOPMENT OF WATER QUALITY AND SUBWATERSHED PLAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Muskegon River**

The plan would identify any potential actions and/or policy that the City might use to improve water quality within the river floodplain. With only a limited portion of the river which is within the City, the primary value of the plan would be in cooperation with other habitat enhancement or preservation assessments and projects.

#### **Ryerson Creek, Fourmile Creek, and Little Black Creek**

The water quality and subwatershed plan would identify specific concerns for water quality improvement, recreational opportunities, and habitat enhancement areas. The subwatershed plan could support action and policy set forth in the zoning and design criteria to be created for the stream corridors. Clear understanding of the water quality issues and recommended policy and action is vital to increasing water quality in Muskegon Lake and the streams themselves.

#### **Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon**

Development of a subwatershed plan would be helpful in identifying specific concerns for water quality improvement, recreational opportunities, and habitat enhancement areas. The subwatershed plan could support regulations set forth in generic zoning and design criteria for development within the Ruddiman Creek corridor. Ruddiman Creek water quality issues are among the most important, due to current use restrictions by the Muskegon County Health Department.

#### **Muskegon Lake**

A water quality and subwatershed plan would incorporate a vast amount of existing data and specifically identify those areas around the City's shoreline where water quality is currently being compromised. The areas may include sites of environmental contamination, storm sewer outfalls with remaining sewer connections, and tributary streams.



# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



### 4. GENERIC ZONING AND DESIGN CRITERIA FOR NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan**

The two lakes and their shorelines are very unique and are a central focus to the City's redevelopment and recreational efforts. Actions to be taken can include : Lakeshore/Natural Feature Overlay Zoning Districts and development standards, Planned Unit Development Standards, site plan review, cluster development regulations, building height limits, Special Use Standards. More stringent standards would provide required buffers, setbacks, density, stormwater management, and similar guidelines for the continued preservation and enhancement of the lakeshores as Natural Features.

#### **Dunes**

The City may further control the dune resource and their development by establishing guidance for, and exercising right to provide comments and regulate development of Critical Dune areas. The State law requires the Department of Environmental Quality to give local government the opportunity for such comment and regulation. Such guidance may include recommendations for avoidance, shared development, slope limitations, and density limits. Development of such Policy and regulations will, at a minimum provide uniformity to the review process and allow the City a basis for acting on concerns such as density and access.

#### **Wetlands**

The City should have it's own policy and development regulations for wetlands. The City's remaining wetlands are generally in areas not well suited for other development due to physical characteristics. The State of Michigan and Federal Government will allow the City to comment on projects. Wetland protection policy and development regulations would provide a uniform treatment of wetlands and allow the City to regulate construction in them. Not all permits from the State and Federal government allowing destruction of wetlands, require creation of mitigation wetlands and this could result in a net loss of remaining wetlands within the City.





# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



### 4. GENERIC ZONING AND DESIGN CRITERIA FOR NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Rivers and Stream Corridors**

Each of the stream corridors and the Muskegon River are valuable to the overall Natural Features system within the City. Zoning and design criteria such as Natural Feature Overlay Zoning Districts and development standards, Planned Unit Development Standards, site plan review, cluster development regulations, building height limits, Special Use Standards should be instituted to provide for the continued protection of the resources. More stringent standards would provide required buffers, setbacks, density, stormwater management, and similar guidelines for the continued preservation and enhancement of the corridors.

#### **Woodlands**

Tree preservation plans may require developers and home owners to contact the City, prior to removing trees. The trees on the property could be inventoried and then steps such as avoidance, replacement, or trimming may be recommended by the City. A tree study of the City may reveal areas where this approach may be more valuable than others, such as historic districts, stream corridors, or other mature areas



# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



### 5. DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF CITY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS FOR SENSITIVE NATURAL AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Ryerson Creek**

Investigate source of septic water near mouth of Ryerson Creek near Ottawa Street. There has been septic odor during various studies, including the preparation of this report, where the railroad tracks cross the creek.

Future enforcement of stormwater management practices, and possible retrofit of existing systems, may reduce the amount of hydrocarbon contaminants being introduced to the stream and Muskegon Lake. The feasibility for mechanisms such as elimination of curb and gutter or retention/detention systems in new developments should be addressed, as they may reduce the amount of runoff and nonpoint source pollution from residential areas.

#### **Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon**

Continued investigation, isolation, and correction of historic septic discharges to the storm sewer system are recommended. This is a key priority because the current health advisory for contact with Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon, due to high levels of fecal bacteria, is a limiting factor in the recreational use and enjoyment of the resource.

Ruddiman Creek and Lagoon have been impacted by oil and grease, likely due to area hydrocarbon facilities and pipelines, but also potential urban runoff from commercial parking areas. Future enforcement of stormwater management practices, and possible retrofit of existing systems, may reduce the amount of hydrocarbon contaminants being introduced to the stream and Muskegon Lake. Other possibilities such as elimination of curb and gutter or retention/detention systems in areas may reduce the amount of runoff and nonpoint source pollution from residential and commercial areas.

#### **Muskegon Lake and Lakeshore**

Design and implement a plan for systematic investigation, isolation, and correction of historic septic discharges to the storm sewer system. Determine the viability of incorporating an assessment of industrial discharge locations and concentrations, and determine if there are nonpermitted industrial discharges to the stormwater system.





# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



**5. DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF CITY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS  
AND OTHER POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS  
FOR SENSITIVE NATURAL AREAS  
SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY**

**Wetlands**

Develop and/or revise, and enforce stormwater management practices. Stormwater management within the watersheds associated with wetland areas, may help to reduce sediment and other pollutants associated with residential uses and commercial parking lot runoff. A reduction of the pollutants will help increase water quality, and the wetlands longevity.



# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



### 6. PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Muskegon Lake and Lakeshore**

Several parcels of land along the lake, especially these eight Natural Areas identified by Day & Associates, Inc., should be preserved. Preservation can be accomplished through zoning, and/or actual acquisition of the land. Preservation and enhancement can be in concert with development when done correctly, so one does not preclude the other. However, some areas such as the former Pigeon Hill area, Cottage Grove shoreline area, and Old Field Community northeast of Fisherman's Landing are areas where conservation and passive recreational usage is recommended. These parcels represent large, unique natural areas that serve as important wildlife habitat and open space.

#### **Lake Michigan**

Acquire/set aside areas for continued preservation and enhancement of the Lake Michigan Shoreline, including allowing the development of some small dunes with dune grass, between manicured beeches. This also applies to the north shore, which is less developed and has native dune aesthetics.

#### **Dunes**

Conservation of publicly owned property which contains dunes or Critical Dune areas is recommended. These areas represent the only areas where the City can maintain full control over the development and protection of the Dunes. This also applies to the north shore, which is less developed and has native dune aesthetics.

Explore the possibility of working with conservation groups to acquire parcels of dune area such as the large undeveloped portion of the former Pigeon Hill. Place the dune area in permanent conservancy for protection and passive recreational and educational uses.

#### **Wetlands**

The wetlands adjacent to the Muskegon State Game Area, is indistinguishable from the ones within the Game Area and therefore are functionally just as valuable. These areas should not be developed other than for passive recreational enjoyment as a wildlife habitat and as a ecosystem education opportunity.

Areas southwest of the causeway and along the south and middle branch of the river should also be set aside due to their general unsuitability for development and high value as natural areas/habitat.



# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan



### 6. PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### **Fourmile Creek and Sandford's Bayou**

The area along the north side of Sandford's Bayou and Fourmile Creek offers excellent potential for recreational use and enjoyment. As such, the possibility of acquisition and/or preservation of this area should be explored. Maintaining this area as a Natural Area has several possibilities for land use, while preserving it's value as a viewshed and natural wildlife area.

Where available, the Fourmile Creek floodplain and riparian zone should be preserved as an important greenbelt. This may include land acquisition, preservation, and or zoning controls.

Acquire/set aside areas for continued preservation and enhancement of the Sandfords Bayou and surrounding areas as an important part of the Fourmile Creek greenbelt. Sandford's Bayou is a beautiful surface water body, that currently has little or no access for it's use. Limited access is afforded by the north and south shorelines.

#### **Ryerson Creek**

The Ryerson Creek greenbelt has been protected by the City acquiring lands which contain the stream, floodplain, and immediate riparian area. Where possible, the City should acquire and set aside properties which encompass the Ryerson Creek floodplain and immediate upland area. This may also facilitate future conversion of primitive trails into nature trails along the floodplain.

#### **Little Black Creek**

The Little Black Creek greenbelt has value as an excellent wildlife habitat and corridor area. Land acquisition and/or preservation of it's entire length will continue to ensure it remains a viable habitat and corridor area, and may be a potential recreational area within the City some day. Currently, the associated land use along the creek is mostly industrial and commercial. These land uses actually enhance the Little Black Creek greenbelt, because not many people use the woods resulting in an area that is very quiet, and not disturbing to the animals during evening and night hours.



# Natural Features Inventory

## Master Land Use Plan

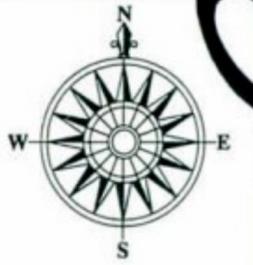


### 6. PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES AND AREAS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED ACTION/POLICY

#### Woodlands

A tree inventory for the City of Muskegon to identify areas in addition to the three areas previously described should be completed. This survey may result in additional areas where tree preservation practices are desirable.

Evaluate the potential for a canopy corridor between Ryerson Creek and Fourmile Creek in the vicinity of Jackson Hill. There are existing woodland resources within the area, and protection and enhancement will connect the two greenbelts. If viable, tree preservation and enhancement could be used to ensure this area will remain a tree canopy corridor between the two greenbelts.

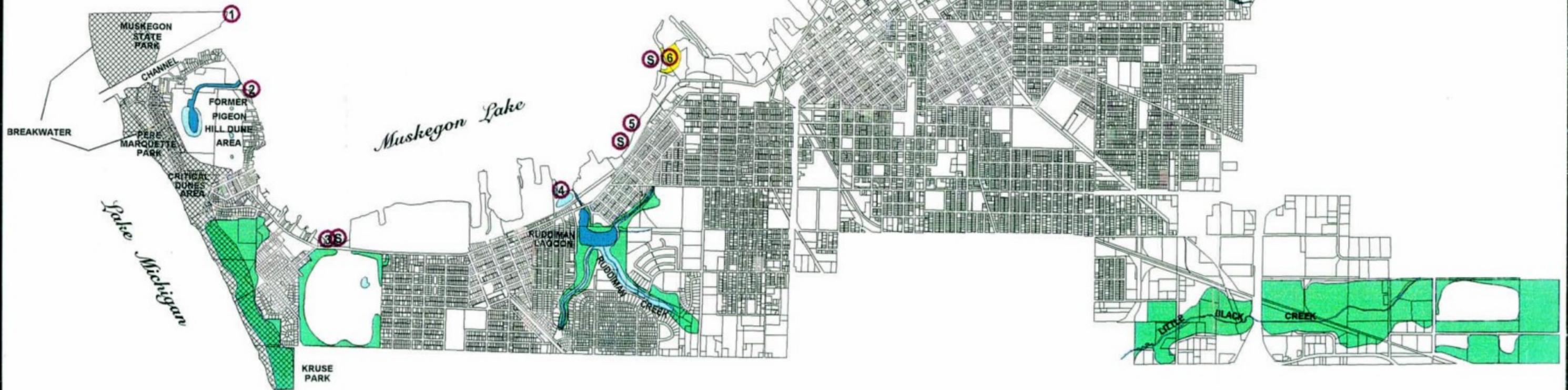


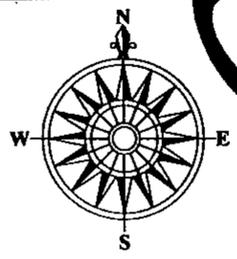
# Natural Features Map

- Critical Dune Area
- Lake or Pond
- Wetland
- Woods
- Marshland
- Old Field Habitat
- Water Course

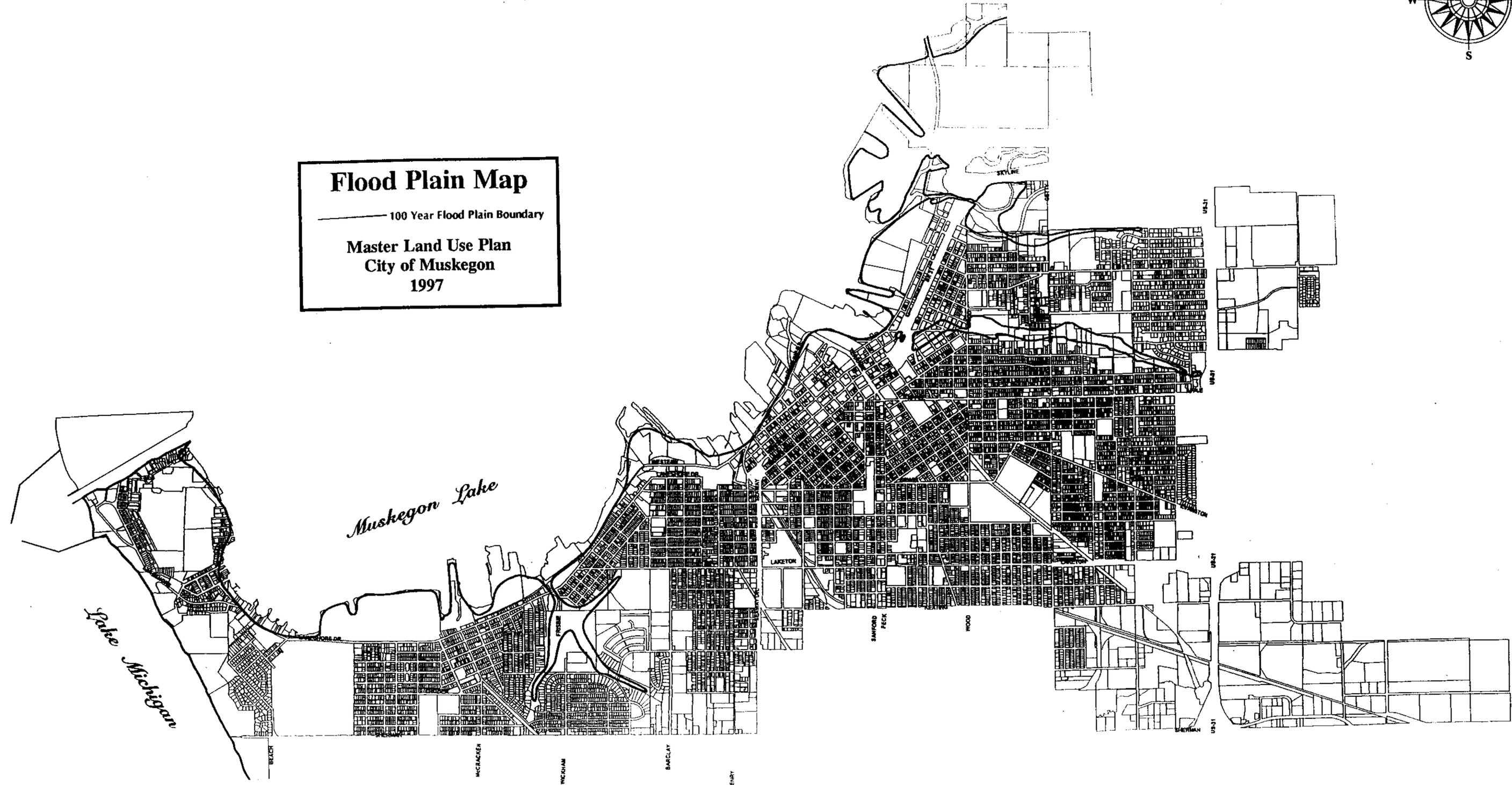
- Muskegon Lake Shoreline Natural Areas
- ① Muskegon State Park Foredune Community
  - ② Former Pigeon Hill Area Shrub Willow/ Isolated Marsh Complex
  - ③ Cottage Grove Area Scrub Shrub Community and Natural Shoreline/Littoral Zone
  - ④ Ruddiman Creek Outlet Area Scrub Shrub Community
  - ⑤ Shoreline Shrub Willow/Isolated Marsh Complex and Natural Shoreline/Littoral Zone
  - ⑥ Western Avenue Area Old Field Community
  - ⑦ Fishermans Landing Area Old Field Community
  - ⑧ Causeway (SW Side) Area Shrub-Oldfield/ Marsh Community
  - Ⓢ Natural Shoreline/Littoral Zone (Important Aquatic Plant Habitat)

Master Land Use Plan  
City of Muskegon  
1997





**Flood Plain Map**  
— 100 Year Flood Plain Boundary  
**Master Land Use Plan**  
**City of Muskegon**  
**1997**





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



## INTRODUCTION

Muskegon had a long pre-European history as the home of Native Americans. The original indigenous population was attracted to the area by the abundant ecosystems which provided a wealth of food sources associated with the extensive freshwater marshes; the two large Lakes, Muskegon and Michigan; and the tremendous forests.



European-derived peoples started moving strongly into the region in the late 1800's, although sparse settlements existed for about 200 years prior to that time. Beginning about the turn of the century, Muskegon's economic growth was based on the lumber industry which derived its wealth from the surrounding forests, and used the waterways as transportation routes. This industry boomed into the 1920's.

Starting soon after the decline of the local lumber industry, Muskegon, like many urban areas in the northern mid-west became a heavy industrial town. The primary basis of this industrial growth was the automotive industry and associated

defense needs of our nation during World War II and the subsequent cold war. This legacy lives on in the highly skilled metal and foundry workers that still reside here, though the economy has and continues to diversify.

The result of this history is excellent examples of late 1800 and early to mid-1900 architecture, much of which is unique to Midwestern towns in the United States. The City of Muskegon has a strong commitment to safeguarding, stabilizing and maintaining many of these historic structures. To this end, the City Commission adopted a Historic District Ordinance in 1973, and designated eight Historic Districts within which important distinguished structures will be preserved, maintained and protected. The ordinance created a specific approach to ensure the appropriate preservation of Muskegon's Historic Districts. The Historic District Commission publicly discusses and oversees these preservation efforts, and is supported in this effort by the City Inspections Department and the City Planning Department.

These historic districts fall into two classifications. Class A covers districts exhibiting structures that are worthy of preservation, but are neither rare nor of pristine character. Class AA covers districts exhibiting the most pristine and meaningful buildings, sites and environments.

## PRESERVATION ISSUES

**Preservation and Costs.** A major concern in historic preservation is the cost and burden of building maintenance. In order to preserve the unique and notable aspects





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



District	Classification
1. Clay-Western	Class AA
2. National Register	Class AA
3. Houston	Class AA and A
4. Campus	Class A
5. McLaughlin	Class A
6. Jefferson	Class AA
7. Clinton-Peck	Class A
8. Selected Downtown Structures	Class A

Class AA - Pristine and Meaningful Buildings and Environments  
Class A - Worthy of Preservation

**Table 6.1** **Muskegon Historic Districts**  
**As Adopted in the Historic District Ordinance of 1973**

of historically important architecture, specific types of reconstruction and maintenance need to be limited or controlled. Maintenance and preservation places a financial burden on the owners or responsible parties. Not only is the upkeep of old structures a continuous venture, but controls on reconstruction and modifications limit the options available to the property owners. Modern code requirements and building laws can also have significant impacts on the use and cost of historic structures. Balancing this concern is the asset that historically important and interesting buildings provide their owners and the community. Living, working, visiting, shopping, eating in, or just looking at these structures and environments can be fun and provide workplaces and business opportunities in and of themselves. Cost and preservation issues are not unique to Muskegon.

**Adaptive Reuse.** Many historical structures are no longer viable for use in the original intended manner. Old, Downtown homes may now be in commercial areas, or commercial buildings may not be able to turn a profit in the original business for which they were designed. Finding

productive uses for these structures can ensure preservation and help mitigate the burden of maintenance costs.

**Occupancy.** Other than Historic District 1 (Clay-Western), there appears to be a high rate of occupancy throughout the Muskegon Historic districts. Very few buildings are empty, although some are underutilized. The number of buildings listed for sale are consistent with any thriving neighborhood. As further renovation and restoration work are undertaken in the districts, the neighborhoods between them will continue to benefit and prosper as well.

**Trees.** The architectural and historical significance of many of the buildings, including residential structures, is strongly emphasized in the numerous mature trees that survive to frame them. The maintenance of trees should be continued and specifically protected through district legislation. The historic facades are reflected and emphasized in the natural dignity of the mature trees. New trees of similar species should be planted to infill where trees have been removed and incentives should be provided to encourage





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



this type of tree replacement.

## HISTORIC DISTRICTS

An overview of the City's eight Historic Districts and land use recommendations follow; general recommendations are provided at the end of this section.

### Clay-Western Historic District #1 - Class AA Historic Structures

The historic structures along Western Avenue are generally in good to excellent shape with a few exceptions. The style of the architecture is unique to smaller Midwestern Downtowns represented by one and two story commercial and multi-story industrial buildings exhibiting quality brick and terra-cotta work, and storefront windows. Typically as a City increases in size, these older, non-monumental buildings have been destroyed and replaced by featureless contemporary structures. Muskegon is unique and fortunate in that buildings along Western Avenue remain with only minor changes to their original facades. Clay is similar to Western in many respects, though more transitional to residential. Clay has some beautiful examples of old residential houses.

Many buildings along Western Avenue are kept in excellent condition, and are clean and in continuous use. A few of the buildings detract from the quality of the district only because they are not being

used to their full potential. Others detract from the quality of the district because abundant and grand windows have been boarded over. As discussed in the City's Downtown Plan, with minor, sensitive architectural renovations, historic structures within this district can make significant contributions to the Avenue's former glory. Mixed uses, including various commercial, retail, professional offices and services, and residential (especially upper floors) remain viable options for these buildings.



Gaps in the current streetscape should be sensitively infilled with buildings similar in size, scale, materials and character to existing historic structures, and existing street parking should be maintained. Facades should be

opened up by the removal of improvements made in the 1970s that cover large windows and storefronts. Sensitive and human scale lighting, benches, and plantings should be added, and awnings can be provided to add texture, color, and charm to the district. When possible, upper story views to the Lake should remain open.

### National Register Historic District #2 - Class AA Historic Structures

This district includes many landmark commercial or monument public buildings as well as some of the best preserved and most architecturally significant residential buildings in the City. Important historic buildings and environments in this District





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



that remain community landmarks include the Hackley Public Library, the Hackley Museum, the Hackley and Hume Homes/Museum, Hackley Park, and the stately Board of Education building.

The commercial/public buildings are kept in excellent shape and are typically true to their architectural heritage. The view of many facades is partially obscured by very mature maple and oak trees during the six months of the year in which the trees have leaves. Many of the trees appear to be close to the same age as the buildings and some line the sidewalks in regimented patterns. Because of their maturity, location, and character these trees become part of the architectural experience. Some of the smaller, less mature trees could be removed to allow more space for the larger trees; although, this should be limited to trees with diameters less than 16 inches.



These buildings were meant to be experienced and enjoyed on foot. It is not recommended that trees be removed to afford a better view from passing vehicles. The grandiose and majestic facades are reflected and emphasized in the natural dignity of the mature trees.

There are few empty lots between the commercial buildings and the residential homes in this area. Any infill in this area

should be strongly geared to the residential neighborhood and help to soften the transition between commercial and residential uses. For example, some of the homes along Webster and Clay have been converted to Bed and Breakfast establishments. Because of the proximity to the Downtown GEMS Guest and Maritime functional centers discussed in the City's Downtown Plan, encouragement of this use should be continued. Small restaurants, specialty shops, or service businesses could also be encouraged.

The professional restoration of the Hackley and Hume Homes/Museum in this district has helped bolster homeowners to undertake restoration projects on numerous homes in this neighborhood. Many of the homes are architecturally significant enough to potentially foster historic walking tours for visitors. With its proximity to Historic Districts 1, 3, and 8, this could be an important area of focus as a tourist attraction.

### **Houston Historic District #3 - Class AA Prime historic structures and Class A Historic Structures**

This is a much more diverse District, providing retail uses along Third (though most are currently outside the District) and parts of Houston, some commercial development along Muskegon Avenue, and an architectural variety of residences





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



surrounding the long established, heavily attended St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Because of this diversity, this district has the most potential for remodeling and re-energizing of all the historic districts.

Most of the residences are in good to excellent condition, with much renovation/restoration progress taking place. This should be continued and encouraged, possibly through incentive programs for one and two family owner-occupied homes. Strict upkeep controls should be placed and upheld on multi-tenant residential facilities. Although the homes along Muskegon Avenue are also in good to excellent condition, some of these require the most amount of work in this district. This work may be due to a higher vacancy rate because of their use as rental homes and/or heavy traffic on Webster and Muskegon.

The redevelopment of the Devonshire Hotel into the Nelson Place senior housing complex will present opportunities for additional revitalization of this neighborhood. This site will serve as a transition between the commercial and residential developments. Empty or underdeveloped sites along Muskegon Avenue should also be used in this transitional manner with attention paid to the architectural suitability of the infill design. Bed and breakfast hotels, small restaurants, specialty shops, service businesses, or professional offices could be encouraged in existing structures or new construction.

The ongoing relocations of historic homes between Muskegon Avenue and Webster should continue as long as the quality of

the design remains consistent with others along these streets. These could be residential or be allowed to make the transition between the commercial areas of Downtown and the residential neighborhood. Infill in the denser residential neighborhoods should remain residential with an emphasis on sensitive architectural design and character. The infill could also include small neighborhood or community parks.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church should be encouraged to remain in the neighborhood, despite the fact that much of their congregation commutes from other parts of the City and county. They will continue to be a potential partner for the City and neighborhood when developing projects and programs for re-energizing this district.

The City should consider expanding the Historic District to include the buildings currently used for retail along Third Street. These businesses would benefit from incentive programs for the revitalization of their storefronts. Most are in good condition but could use cleaning, tidying, or the removal of architecturally inappropriate renovations. Many of these businesses have become landmarks in this area and they should be encouraged to remain by efforts to entice complimentary businesses.

## Campus Historic District #4 - Class A Historic structures

This is primarily a residential neighborhood adjacent to the Muskegon Senior High School, the large First Congregational Church, and similar residences. It is densely developed with single family homes, leaving no room for infill. If reconstruction





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



becomes necessary, we highly recommend that it be residential in nature.

The architectural quality of this district is solid late-19th to mid-20th century middle income working class homes. They are well kept and typify a top quality urban neighborhood. Restoration and sensitive renovations should be encouraged when work is undertaken on any of these homes. This historic district has a strong potential to expand into the surrounding neighborhood which is filled with similar housing stock.

Further encroachment on the neighborhood by the school should be severely limited. Any temptation to provide commercial or retail development complimentary to the school should be strongly avoided for the continuity of the neighborhood.

### **McLaughlin Historic District #5 - Class A Historic Structures**

This district is diverse in its make-up in a manner similar to District 3. The District consists primarily of residences, some of which are used as professional offices along Peck Street, and is adjacent to commercial businesses along Hartford and McLaughlin School on Catherine Avenue. Numerous historic and well-kept churches are located throughout the district.

The architectural quality of the buildings in this district is good to excellent. A great sense of pride is exhibited by the care given to many homes and yards. Residences are typically one and two-family requiring only minor repairs. Because it is near the elementary school, this area could be attractive to many young families and provide them with a quality stock of larger

homes. The district could be actively marketed in this manner in an effort to boast its revitalization efforts.

Most of the buildings requiring more restorative work are along the major thoroughfare of Peck Street. These could be encouraged for use as professional offices, small specialty shops, or similar occupancies as well as higher-end owner-occupied residences.

The adjacent businesses along Hartford should be encouraged to remain part of the area by efforts to entice complimentary businesses and professional services. Infill could also be developed to provide services specific to the neighborhood, such as a grocery store. The many churches in the district appear to be readily adaptable, many drawing on their surrounding population for their congregations rather than relying on commuters. As such, they should be encouraged to remain active in the neighborhood and will be potential partners for the City and neighborhood when developing projects and programs.

### **Jefferson Historic District #6 - Class AA Prime Historic Structures**

This district is filled with well maintained, top quality homes on very large lots. Architecturally, there are a few gems, many typical period styles, and a few undistinguished contemporary homes. Some space exists for infill in the district's southern portion near Laketon Avenue, though the homes are smaller and less distinguished.

Quality restoration and renovation should be continued with strict emphasis on





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



architecturally beneficial design. Any future infill should be contextual with the historic homes, and not pay homage to the existing contemporary structures. Because of commercial development along Laketon Avenue, infill development in the district's southern portion should be transitional in nature, respecting the character and significance of existing development.

Many of these homes are architecturally significant enough to potentially foster historic walking tours, and could be an important area of focus as a tourist attraction.

### **Clinton-Peck Historic District #7 - Class A Historic Structures**

This district is unique in its adjacency to the Hackley Hospital campus and its bisection by Peck Street, one of the City's significant thoroughfares. Many of the buildings in this district are single and multi-family residential in nature, however most have been converted to other uses. The architectural quality of the District is similar to District 6, but with smaller lots and homes. A few undistinguished contemporary structures exist, but there are also numerous architecturally significant early-20th century structures.

Because of the heavy traffic flow and the adjacency to the hospital, continued emphasis should be placed on the use of homes along Peck Street as professional offices or multi-family dwellings; one and two single family homes would also not harm the historic nature. Some of these buildings could also be used as bed and breakfast or guest facilities associated with these offices or the hospital. They could

service out-of-town patients by providing temporary facilities in which the patients or their families could stay within walking distance of the offices and hospital prior to or following treatment. Several buildings on various corners of Peck were also built to be small stores and businesses, and these residential support-type businesses fit within the structure of this neighborhood.

Residences throughout the district not fronting on Peck Street are of good quality and mostly well maintained. Their continued use as one and two-family residences should be encouraged. The currently empty church facility adjacent to the hospital should be used as a church, day care, educational, or senior center for the neighborhood or at worst, be redeveloped for non-patient oriented offices associated with the hospital. This site should not be considered for an extension of treatment or patient facilities because of its infringement on the neighboring residences.

Further encroachment on the district by the hospital should be severely limited. Any temptation to provide commercial or retail development complimentary to the hospital other than offices and guest houses should be strongly avoided for the continuity of the neighborhood.

### **Selected Downtown Structures - Historic District #8 Class A Historic Structures**

This district is limited to the Central United Methodist Church, the Women's Club and the beautiful Frauenthal Theater. All are architecturally significant, but the Methodist Church and Women's Club have sustained additions and less than sensitive renovation





# Historic Districts Master Land Use Plan



work over their long lives. Their proximity to other important landmark and monumental buildings should be maintained and emphasized. Any further work on the buildings should be scrutinized for architectural and design sensitivity, and parking areas should be appropriately screened.

benches, walkways, signage, and plantings can enhance the historic feel of the neighborhoods, and facilitate the development of the Downtown as a destination. Such planning and design standards/guides may be integrated with similar efforts recommended for the other portions of the Downtown.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ The City should perform a more comprehensive evaluation of its historic areas and buildings and develop a more detailed plan. Modifications, including possible expansions (e.g., Third Street) of the existing Historic Districts should be considered and discussed with the community. Financial incentives for preservation and maintenance should be evaluated, including methods for bringing buildings up to current code requirements.
- ◆ As the City continues its efforts to make better use of its Downtown, consideration of Historic Buildings and environments should be incorporated in the planning and implementation. Western Avenue presents an excellent opportunity to address Downtown development needs and preserve and make better use of architecturally important structures. Other areas provide opportunities for Bed and Breakfast, specialty retail, and restaurant uses, all of which can protect and make good use of historic structures.
- ◆ Further planning and thought needs to be done on streetscaping and the environments around the historic areas. Appropriate pedestrian scale lighting,
- ◆ Further promotion of the City's Historic Districts should be undertaken. An informal review appears to indicate that beyond the most visible monumental structures, few people are aware of the City's historic beauty. Promotional efforts can help preserve the historically important items, and increase tourism.





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

## Master Land Use Plan



The City of Muskegon Parks and Recreation System serves a potential user population of nearly 41,000 City Residents. This figure grows considerably when the residents from the surrounding metropolitan areas are included in the number of people who use the City's facilities on a routine basis. For all practical purposes, the system serves a potential user population in excess of 100,000 people.

The City's Department of Leisure Services prepared a Leisure Services Master Plan which was approved by the City Commission in 1993. The plan serves three broad purposes:

- ◆ Provides a rational basis for programming maintenance and improvement programs for the parks, recreational, and community facilities.
- ◆ Establishes long-range goals for the Department's program, service acquisition, facility acquisition, and improvements projects.

- ◆ Maintains eligibility for recreational grant funding programs administered by the Recreation Services Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The long range goals adopted to guide the City in the development of the City wide Parks and Recreation System described in the 1993 Leisure Services Master Plan, are summarized in Table 7.1.

The 1993 Leisure Services Master Plan and on-going Leisure Services Department planning efforts are essential to the City's ability to accommodate the diverse recreational needs and desires of City and metropolitan residents.

The 1993 Leisure Services Master Plan presents an inventory of park and recreational facilities, provides a detailed description of the condition of each facility, and sets forth specific action plans for a variety of improvement and development projects. The Plan indicates retention of all





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

## Master Land Use Plan



existing facilities, as well as a continued emphasis regarding the recreational aspects of the Muskegon Lakeshore. (The Muskegon Downtown/ Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan also emphasizes the recreational aspects of the Muskegon

Lakeshore). Table 7.2 lists the twenty capital improvement projects presented in the 1993 Muskegon Leisure Services Master Plan. These capital improvements have been completed or are currently in progress.

1. Maintain and improve the quality of programs, facilities, and parks for benefit and enjoyment of City residents.
  - ◆ Provide recreational facilities and activities which contribute to neighborhood stability.
  - ◆ Provide City parks to enhance and contribute to the urban living environment.
  - ◆ Provide accessible, enriching recreational opportunities and experiences for all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, color, religion, handicap, national origin or ancestry.
  - ◆ Advocate the preservation of natural environmental resources.
  - ◆ Promote good stewardship of park lands.
  - ◆ Provide a broad range of waterfront recreational facilities.
  - ◆ Maximize the use of private and public recreational facilities.
  - ◆ Provide for a safe environment for park users.
2. Offer recreation programs and facilities which promote tourism.
  - ◆ Increase and promote the development of public/private waterfront recreational facilities.
  - ◆ Preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the City.
  - ◆ Preserve the natural resources of the City of present and future generations.
  - ◆ Promote development of public/private regional recreational facilities/activities.
  - ◆ Market the City Leisure Services facilities to attract tourists.

**Table 7.1**

**Muskegon Leisure Services Master Plan 1993  
Summary of Goals**





## Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ Muskegon Lake Frontage (Muskegon Lakeshore Trail)
- ◆ Smith-Ryerson (enlarge gymnasium, nature trails, enlarge parking area)
- ◆ Seyferth Park (new restroom/shelter building, playground equipment, pave parking area, irrigation system, trim trees)
- ◆ Hackley Park (paving, trees)
- ◆ Walker Arena
- ◆ Beachwood (pave parking lot, playground equipment, irrigation system, restroom/shelter building)
- ◆ Pere Marquette Park (bike/walkways - part of Muskegon Lakeshore Trail)
- ◆ Bronson (Kruse) Park (parking, dune walkways, campgrounds)
- ◆ Fisherman's Landing (paving, landscaping)
- ◆ Hartshorn Marina (small boat basin docks, shoreline protection, paving)
- ◆ Case Hammond Golf Course (tree removal, finish new nine)
- ◆ Beukema (playground equipment, pave parking)
- ◆ Marsh Field (concession/maintenance building, pave parking, roof grandstands)
- ◆ McCrea (pave parking, playground equipment)
- ◆ Campbell Playfield (playground equipment, irrigation system)
- ◆ Sheldon (sidewalks, irrigation, playground equipment, pave parking)
- ◆ Reese (pave parking, playground equipment, resurface courts, new restroom/maintenance building, new restroom/shelter building)
- ◆ McGraft (pave parking, playground equipment, irrigation, new picnic shelter)
- ◆ Causeway - Veteran's Park (light fountain)
- ◆ Fisheries Interpretive Center (facilities construction)

**Table 7.2** List of Capital Improvements from 1993 Muskegon Leisure Service Master Plan





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

## Master Land Use Plan



### CITY PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The City owns more than 800 acres of parkland and open space. All but 214 acres (the municipal golf course) are located in the City limits. Improved and natural park facilities serve a variety of functions, and meet a variety of recreational needs within City and regional population groups. An overview of park and recreational facilities is as follows:

#### Tot Lots

Tot lots are stand-alone facilities that serve the neighborhoods in which they are located. Aamodt Park and the Ninth Street Tot Lot serve the Froebel and Nelson neighborhoods, respectively.

#### Playgrounds

Playgrounds are found at elementary schools and at the City's larger park facilities.

#### Neighborhood Parks

Sheldon, Seyferth, and Beachwood Parks provide passive and active recreation opportunities to adjoining neighborhoods.

#### Playfields

Playfields are the backbone of the City's parks system. Beukema, Smith-Ryerson, Reese, McCrea, Marsh, and Campbell playfields provide facilities for intensive, active recreational uses including tennis

and basketball; playgrounds; softball, baseball, and football league play; and a variety of other organized sporting activities.

#### Major Parks

Major parks serve the City, region, and outlying areas. Major parks include Fisherman's Landing (sportfishing/ tourism industry), McGraft Park (large improved and natural areas), Pere Marquette Park (northernmost point along a 2.5 mile long City owned segment of Lake Michigan shoreline), Bronson Park (dune system, sandy beach, picnic facilities).

#### Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities typically provide unique or unusual recreational opportunities. These facilities include the Chase Hammond Golf Course (18 holes, driving range, club house and cross country ski trails), Hackley Park (formal central City park dedicated in 1890, on National and State historic registers, strong, attractive, historic element), the Indian Cemetery (the oldest known Indian cemetery in the area, circa 1800s), L.C. Walker Arena/Convention Center (sporting and cultural events, public/private skating, banquets, flea markets and meetings), Hartshorn Marina (only municipal marina on Muskegon Lake), Heritage Landing (a multi facility-use and home of the Port City Princess), the Kruse Park observation deck, and Jaycee's Launch Ramp (heavily used public launch ramp on west end of Muskegon Lake).

#### Open Space Parkland





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Open Space Parkland is represented by Veteran's Memorial Park (lagoon, memorials and fountain), Richards Park, Ryerson Creek Open Space (wooded ravine along length of creek), Muskegon Lakeshore Open Space (wooded open space in residential area), Lake Michigan Park shoreline dune between Pere Marquette and Bronson Parks, and Seaway Drive (greenspace along entryway to City).

### Public School Recreational Facilities

All schools in the Muskegon Public School District provide outdoor recreational facilities. Because schools are distributed throughout the City, their recreational facilities function as local neighborhood playgrounds used by school age children in surrounding neighborhoods.

The City and School District have a reciprocal use agreement encompassing park and recreational facilities owned or operated by each entity, excluding the L.C. Walker Arena and Annex, and the Senior High School gymnasium and swimming pool. An overview of school district facilities is as follows:

#### *Elementary Schools*

These school facilities include playgrounds typically providing a variety of active play areas, playground equipment, basketball courts, and softball diamonds. Tennis courts are located only at Craig School.

#### *Junior High Schools*

Steel (eastern portion of City) and Bunker (western portion of City) Junior High

Schools have gymnasiums and indoor swimming pools.

#### *Senior High School*

Muskegon Senior High School has excellent gymnasium and swimming pool facilities. Hackley Stadium is an excellent 6,500 seat venue for football, track, and field events. These facilities primarily serve the needs of the City's high school population, and secondly are used in conjunction with Community Development Block Grant funded recreational programs. The football field is also used for Peewee Football League play.

### Non-District/Private School Recreational Facilities

The Greater Muskegon Catholic Schools, West Michigan Christian Schools, Muskegon Intermediate School System, and Muskegon Community College provide additional facilities. An overview of these facilities is as follows:

#### *Catholic Central High School and St. Michael Elementary School*

Catholic Central High School has a football field; track and field facilities; baseball and softball diamonds; and an open area for other field games. St. Michael Elementary School has a playground and open space area for field games. These facilities primarily serve school population groups, and are not heavily used by the City's general population, or by residents of surrounding neighborhoods.

#### *West Michigan Christian High School*





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West Michigan Christian High School provides a comprehensive recreational complex which includes tennis courts; basketball courts; soccer and open space playfields; baseball and softball diamonds; track and field facilities; and playgrounds. These facilities receive a fair amount of use by residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

*Intermediate School District Wesley Street School*



The Intermediate School District Wesley Street School provides a playground and an open space area that are not heavily used by residents in the surrounding neighborhood.

*Muskegon Community College*

Muskegon Community College provides numerous recreational opportunities to surrounding neighborhoods, and the City as a whole. Facilities include lighted tennis and basketball courts; ball fields; a soccer field; an open space area for field games; and a nature trail. These high-quality facilities are underutilized by neighborhood residents and the general population.

### Other Facilities

The City's Leisure Services plan lists numerous public, semi-public, and private facilities that provide City, neighboring community, and region-wide residents with a variety of recreational and cultural facilities. Golf courses (two), miniature golf courses (three), bowling alleys (two), marinas, and state and county campgrounds serve active recreational needs.

Cultural facilities include the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts and Beardsley Theater (owned by the Community Foundation for Muskegon County) providing 1,800 and 200 seat venues for concert and stage productions. The Muskegon County Museum, Muskegon Museum of Art, and Hackley Public Library provide cultural activities beyond those typically found in a city the size of Muskegon.

The Victorian Era Hackley-Hume Home National Register properties and other nearby properties are open to the public and play a central role in the City's overall historic preservation efforts.

### Special Facilities

The City provides a limited number of facilities geared toward the handicapped or elderly. Senior citizens use the community buildings at McGraft and Smith-Ryerson parks, and the shuffleboard complex at McGraft Park.

Barrier free facilities are provided at Fisherman's Landing (wheelchair lift at boat





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities Master Land Use Plan



launch), Bronson Park (Lake Michigan access), and Heritage Landing (pathways, play structure, Muskegon Lake overlook, fishing area, and paved parking). Additional and augmented barrier free facilities will be included in future recreational and park development and redevelopment efforts.

## **In-Process & Proposed Recreational and Park Facilities**

Land along the Muskegon Lake shoreline formerly devoted to industrial land uses presents a range of opportunities for waterfront residential, commercial, and recreational development. The Muskegon Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan also emphasizes the recreational aspects of the Muskegon Lakeshore. That document calls for a future recreational emphasis along portions of the shoreline to compliment Heritage Landing, existing marina development, and proposed projects such as the Lakeshore Aquarium and relocation of the Silversides to a downtown site. An overview of recreational and park facilities under or proposed for development include the following:

### *Terrace Point*

Located on the Muskegon Lake waterfront immediately north of downtown, Terrace Point is being developed and maintained by the SPX Corporation. Terrace Point is home to the SPX Corporate Headquarters, a dockminium facility, a clubhouse, and a high quality restaurant. A 150 foot wide passive use easement provides public access to the waterfront. Building sites are available for additional development.

### *Heritage Landing*

Heritage Landing is a 19 acre mixed-use recreational facility located on the Muskegon Lake waterfront immediately west of the YFCA. The facility includes a playground (large, small scale, and barrier free play structures); barrier free waterfront access and fishing areas; a multi-use pavilion/amphitheater; and restroom facilities. Heritage landing is the site of a variety of pubic festivals and outdoor concerts.

### *Muskegon Lakeshore Trail*

The 1990 Muskegon Lakeshore Trail Master Plan presents a detailed examination of the feasibility and costs associated with development of a proposed 14.1 mile non-motorized multi-use trailway. The proposed trailway will showcase the Muskegon shoreline by providing access to waterfront and shoreline areas currently inaccessible to large segments of the population, including many elderly and handicapped persons.

The trail will highlight unique shoreline and waterfront attributes, provide new recreational opportunities, and foster renewed interest in, and awareness of, the diversity of environmental features along the City's Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan shorelines. The trail will also provide a safe means of access from residential neighborhoods to recreational facilities, businesses and employment centers. The Lakeshore Trail will provide linkages to adjoining community and state trail systems.





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

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### *Consumers Power Property*

Consumers Power Company owns 323 acres of land (297 acres within Muskegon City limits) at the northeasterly end of Muskegon Lake. The company's electrical generation facility (coal storage, conveyor systems, transmission towers, and parking areas) occupies 40 acres of land. The remaining 283 acres (portions of which were at one time used for fly ash disposal) are undeveloped.

The undeveloped acreage is traversed by tributaries of the Muskegon River, and includes high-quality wetlands. This undeveloped acreage exhibits environmental features that present a variety of recreational and other developmental opportunities.

### *West Michigan Steel Foundry Property*

This property, located adjacent to Hartshorn Marina, offers additional waterfront recreational opportunities. The City has leased a small portion of the property, called Foundry Park, for development of an on-shore fishing pier. The northern portion of the property may be developed for other waterfront recreational uses.

### *Grand Trunk Property*

This property, located at the foot of McCracken on Lakeshore Drive, offers great potential for waterfront recreational development. The property includes a City-owned boat launch ramp and parking area. The State of Michigan has acquired a portion of this property for possible additional development.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### City Hall

The City of Muskegon City Hall is located at 933 Terrace Street at the intersection of Terrace and Muskegon Avenue. The building lies adjacent to the Muskegon County Building (across Terrace). Collectively, the two structures are a major landmark in the City's downtown.

The present facility was opened in 1970, and contains the majority of administrative offices and meeting facilities used by elected and appointed officials. It houses the offices of the City Manager, City Clerk, Treasurer, Water Department, Finance Department, Assessor, Building Inspection Department, Planning and Community Development Offices, Leisure Services, Engineering, and Police Department. Meetings and public hearings of the City Commission, City Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission, and like bodies are normally conducted at City Hall.

The building is being renovated to enhance internal efficiency to better meet staff and public needs. Small off-street parking areas are located immediately adjacent to the building, adjacent to the Police Department and between City Hall and the Fire Department.

Employee parking is provided at a more distant lot, across Apple Avenue. Public spaces within close proximity to the building are limited. As such, it is recommended the overall site plan be analyzed for potential redevelopment and/or reconfiguration to determine new





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

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parking opportunities. Also, opportunity for the public to use the current employee parking area for overflow parking should be explored.

### Police Department

The Police Department is located within the City Hall structure, physically separated from other office functions by the internal design of the building.

### Fire Department

The Fire Department is headquartered at Central Station immediately adjacent to City Hall along Terrace Street. Station No. 5, called Marquette Station, is located in the north-easterly portion of the City in the Marquette neighborhood. Mutual aid agreements are in effect with all surrounding City and Township areas to provide mutual assistance in the event of a substantial fire.

### Other Municipal Facilities

Other municipal facilities include the Public Service Building located at 1350 E. Keating which provides sewer, water, and general public works functions for the community. The site contains a modern office structure and associated storage and service facilities. Other City facilities include several public cemeteries, the Farmer's Market, and various parks and recreational facilities.

### Water Filtration Plant

The City's water filtration plant is located along the Lake Michigan Shoreline adjacent to Pere Marquette Park. Lines extend into

Lake Michigan where water intake is accomplished and the facility filters and treats the water prior to distribution throughout the community. The plant building was recently upgraded.

### Libraries

The City is served by two libraries. The Hackley Public Library, operated by the Muskegon Public Schools, is located at 316 W. Webster Avenue. The second library facility is operated by Muskegon County, and is located at 635 Ottawa Street.

### Schools

Other community facilities include the schools provided by the Muskegon Public School District and the Muskegon Community College located in the northeast portion of the City.

*Public schools include:*

- Angell School
- Bluffton School
- Bunker Middle School
- Career/Technical Education Center
- Craig Alternative High School
- Even Start/Pre-Kindergarten
- Early Childhood Education Center
- Froebel Special Education Center
- Glenside School
- Marquette School
- McLaughlin School
- Moon School
- Muskegon High School
- Nelson School
- Nims School
- Oakview School
- Phillips School
- Steele Middle School





# Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities

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There are also a variety of parochial schools throughout the City area providing elementary and secondary education.

### Public Facilities and Services

Other public and quasi-public community facilities of note include Mercy, General, and Hackley Hospitals, Baker College (currently located in the downtown but soon to relocate to a site near Muskegon Community College), the Muskegon County Building, various private schools, and a range of public service facilities including Every Woman’s Place, Muskegon Rescue Mission, Muskegon Family Center, Council on Aging, Senior Services, Community Action Against Poverty, local neighborhood associations, and others.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated at the beginning of this Chapter, on-going parks and recreation planning efforts are essential to the City's ability to effectively provide for and accommodate diverse and changing recreational needs. The City's ability to meet these needs has (and will continue to) reap ever increasing benefits for City and metropolitan residents over the short and long-term. Continuing to coordinate such efforts with other City and area-wide neighborhood, business, and land use planning efforts is consistent with the overall intent and purpose of this plan.

Extensive interviews with local Neighborhood Associations, the populace at large, and governmental and agency

leaders indicated broad satisfaction with the overall range of community facilities and services. Of particular note were the City's parks and recreational facilities. Residents expressed high satisfaction over the present park's system and level of maintenance.

Major areas of concern generally centered on the need for enhanced enforcement of property maintenance codes, desire for additional police presence in the core downtown, and improved street maintenance. These factors have also been addressed in the Downtown/Shoreline Redevelopment Plan.

A review of survey results recently compiled by the Muskegon Oceana Community Reinvestment Corporation for several of the City's neighborhoods indicated concurrence with the above findings.

While the City exhibits a rather strong system of playgrounds and parks, a need exists for a neighborhood oriented community center offering a wide range of year-round indoor recreational and educational opportunities. A community center might incorporate game rooms, computer labs, a gymnasium, fitness rooms, arts and craft workshops, playrooms, dining room, and a child care facility. While this type of center would cater to all age groups, its major focus should be area youth.

A community center should provide a sense of place to city residents - especially youth - and be neighborhood oriented, easily accessible by bike or walking, and capable of operating year round. While a specific location is not been identified by this plan, it is recommended the center be located in





## Park, Recreation, and Community Facilities Master Land Use Plan



an area of low to moderate income residents, with a relatively high youth population. If possible, a location somewhat central to the city (city neighborhoods) would be most appropriate.

Community facilities are extremely important to the well-being of the city and its residents. Parks, playgrounds, libraries, museums, schools, and places of worship contribute to city residents quality. For many residents, city facilities provide the primary (or only) means of recreational or other life enrichment opportunities.





# Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



## INTRODUCTION

The City of Muskegon, like many towns in the U.S. Great Lakes basin, has a history of heavy industrial commerce. In Muskegon's case, much of this industry originated with metal foundry operations that supported the national defense and the automotive industries, both of which grew tremendously in the 1940's and 1950's. Machining and pattern making which are both affiliated with these industries, are heavily represented in Muskegon's past. Industrial and heavy commercial continue to represent important economic engines in the community. Nearly 30 percent of today's workforce in Muskegon is in manufacturing.

Muskegon's industrial history led to the general perception of the City as a factory or "foundry town." To some, Muskegon is an archetypal example of a rust belt, old industrial town, which has seen better days and is somehow tainted with the remnants of its industrial history. While Muskegon does have over 100 acres of brownfield sites in the Downtown area, the City's aggressive plan for brownfield redevelopment is designed to negate these perceptions by bringing new businesses back to the urban core. For example, the City was awarded a \$1,000,000 Site Assessment Fund grant to perform an in-depth analysis of and to develop recommendations on 13 lakefront brownfield sites. This work is currently being performed under the Muskegon area-wide site assessment program. To continue the progress made under the Site Assessment Fund grant, a limited brownfield analysis was undertaken as part of the City's planning efforts to evaluate the

current regulatory climate, identify funding and tax incentives for brownfield redevelopment, identify known sites of environmental contamination, evaluate the impact of contamination on the economic viability of these sites in light current and foreseeable land use, and outline recommendations for supplementing the City's existing brownfield strategy. The analysis is essentially a "snap shot" in time and was not intended to be an in-depth analysis of all brownfield sites in the City.

Old industrial and heavy commercial properties may have been impacted by historical manufacturing and hazardous substance management activities. Although, current environmental regulations ensure that today's industries do not adversely affect human health or the environment, buyer's concerns about liability for cleanup of old releases has driven industrial and commercial development to undeveloped greenfield sites. This threat of historical contamination, whether real or perceived, has been a barrier to the productive use of abandoned and under utilized "brownfield" sites. The public's belief that brownfield and Superfund sites are synonymous unfairly stigmatizes many industrial and commercial properties. Although brownfield sites may be contaminated, the contamination usually does not severely impact site use, and any necessary cleanup can normally be performed within a reasonably short time frame.

The following section on the new regulatory climate for brownfield sites describes how the legislature has removed many of the disincentives to the redevelopment of contaminated property.





## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



The intent of the Part 201 amendments to the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA, formerly Act 307) is to level the playing field. That is, to remove environmental concerns as an obstacle to redevelopment. All of the other factors that come into play when comparing an existing site to a greenfield site such as infrastructure improvements and demolition costs must still be considered. There are, however, benefits to the community and the private sector that are unique to brownfields.

The potential benefits to the community from brownfield redevelopment include:

- ◆ **Recovery of tax base.** When an industrial or commercial site is closed or abandoned tax revenues are significantly reduced, if not eliminated. Bringing business back to these sites puts them back on the tax rolls.
- Job Creation.** Redeveloping brownfield sites creates jobs in the urban core City and helps to revitalize the surrounding neighborhoods.
- ◆ **Reuse of existing infrastructure.** Unlike an undeveloped, “greenfield” site, brownfield sites have existing infrastructure. The availability of sewer, water, roads, and utilities may result in substantial cost savings, as compared to a greenfield site. Any improvements made as part of the brownfield development benefit the surrounding community.
- ◆ **Preservation of open space.** Redeveloping abandoned or idle industrial and commercial properties

preserves open space by reducing urban sprawl.

- ◆ **Environmental improvements.** Abandoned industrial and commercial properties present unknown risks to public health and the environment. Any potential risks are evaluated and addressed during the redevelopment of a brownfield site through the use of exposure controls and/or cleanup, resulting in a cleaner and safer community.

Brownfield redevelopment also benefits the private parties that are involved in the transaction. The following describes the potential benefits for the major players in a brownfield redevelopment project:

- ◆ **Lending Institutions.** Lending institutions benefit because redevelopment means new opportunities for business. Under today’s legal and regulatory climate in Michigan liability concerns regarding brownfield sites are minimized, and there by reducing the risk to the loan collateral and the borrower’s business plan.
- ◆ **Buyers and Developers.** Buyers and developers benefit directly from the broader selection of properties from which to choose. Many brownfield sites are less costly than greenfield and the funding and tax incentives that are available for brownfields often makes the brownfield site very competitive.
- ◆ **The Property Owner or Seller.** The property owner or seller may be either private or public. For the public seller,





## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



brownfield redevelopment provides the obvious benefit of returning an unused or underutilized property to productive and revenue-generating use. For the private seller, it offers the opportunity to realize a financial return on a property that might otherwise remain dormant.

- ◆ **Environmental Regulators.** Environmental regulators are direct beneficiaries whenever a successful development plan becomes the environmental remedy of a contaminated site. This helps meet the regulatory goal of cleaning up the environment.
- ◆ **Contractors and Construction Firms.** Contractors and construction firms benefit from construction of new facilities on the redeveloped site or rehabilitation of existing buildings. This activity represents jobs and direct economic impact on the community.
- ◆ **Real Estate Brokers** - The amendments to Part 201 have eliminated many of the barriers to brownfield redevelopment, allowing real estate brokers to actively market their portfolio of industrial or commercial brownfield properties.

### REGULATORY CLIMATE

Prior to June 1995, the high cost of attempting to “clean close” historically impacted property combined with the specter of strict, joint and several liability had brought industrial property transactions in Michigan to a halt. Buyers chose greenfield sites to avoid cleanup costs and environmental liability. Many property owners who knew or suspected that they

had an environmental contamination problem “warehoused” unused properties due to fear of what a buyer’s due diligence process might find. The June 5, 1995 amendments to Part 201 significantly changed the dynamics of brownfield property transactions and site remediation by creating new liability exemptions for buyers, lenders and innocent owner/operators; establishing risk-based cleanup criteria; and requiring responsible parties to take affirmative steps to remediate contamination.

The Part 201 amendments are critical to a community’s ability to successfully redevelop brownfield sites. The legislative intent behind the amendments was to foster the redevelopment and reuse of vacant manufacturing facilities and abandoned industrial sites that have economic potential if the redevelopment or reuse assures the protection of the public health, safety, welfare, and the environment.

Part 201 addresses the liability concerns of buyers and lenders with regards to state enforcement. Many potential brownfield developers are still concerned about the U.S. EPA and Superfund. Although the federal Superfund law still has a strict, joint and several liability scheme, the U.S. EPA recognizes that an adversarial, enforcement approach will drive developers away from brownfield sites. They have entered into a memoranda of agreement with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) that recognizes Michigan’s Part 201 program and basically limits federal involvement to sites on the National Priorities List, sites subject to a Superfund orders, or sites where there is a substantial or imminent threat to human health or the



## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



environment. This means that federal enforcement is not a threat for the majority of brownfield sites.

### FEDERAL BROWNFIELD INITIATIVES

The U.S. EPA has developed a Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative to assist communities in revitalizing historically industrial properties. This program includes:

- ◆ removing sites from the Superfund tracking system list that do not warrant federal involvement;
- ◆ amending the National Priorities List to allow partial de-listing as a site is remediated;
- ◆ creating guidance for prospective purchaser agreements and expanding the circumstances under which the U.S. EPA will enter into agreements not to sue a buyer for existing contamination;
- ◆ issuing a directive that encourages the consideration of land use when developing cleanup criteria;
- ◆ developing an orphan share funding program for funding the portions of clean-up costs attributable to insolvent liable parties (note: this program is under funded);
- ◆ issuing guidance that clarifies Superfund liability for lenders, local units of government, and owners of property with contaminated aquifers.

### SUMMARY OF PART 201

**Liability.** In the past, any owner of a property could be held responsible for contamination, regardless of fault. Part 201 now assigns responsibility to the party that caused the contamination. A new purchaser can avoid liability by diligently investigating and documenting the environmental condition of the property. Where a property is found to be contaminated, a "Baseline Environmental Assessment" (BEA) can be performed and disclosed to the State of Michigan (and subsequent purchasers), thereby avoiding liability for any existing contamination. Although such liability protection requires time and money, it now allows a party to purchase and use contaminated property without acquiring the responsibility for fully investigating and cleaning up existing contamination.

"Innocent" buyers still have to comply with a "due care" requirement, regardless of fault. Unlike the BEA, which is a "snapshot in time," this due care obligation is on going. The focus of due care is to make sure that the site is safe for the public and employees, and that the new use does not make the existing contamination worse. The level of investigation to satisfy due care may extend beyond what is necessary for a BEA. It may also lead to remediation and/or the use of engineering or institutional controls to prevent adverse exposures. The risk-based cleanup criteria described below ensure that any remediation is focused only on what is appropriate for the type of site use.

**Cleanup Standards.** The Part 201 amendments establish a reasonable, risk



## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



based approach to the remediation of industrial sites. We no longer assume that all properties must be cleaned up to pristine levels. Part 201 now requires that future land use be incorporated into setting the cleanup standards for a particular site. Institutional controls, such as a restrictive covenant on the property deed that prohibits the installation of potable wells and engineering controls such as using pavement to cover stained soils, may be used to prevent adverse exposures eliminating the need for expensive cleanups. Often site improvements such as a building expansion or paved parking may be used to address due care concerns.

**Liability Protection for Local Units of Government.** Part 201 (Section 26) recognizes the key role that municipal government plays in brownfield redevelopment. The following exemptions from liability were designed to assist local units of government in their role:

- ◆ a local unit of government that acquires property involuntary (e.g. tax reversion) is not liable;
- ◆ a local unit of government that acquires an easement, or acquires an interest in property through dedication, or as a public right-of-way, is not liable; and
- ◆ a local unit of government that leases property to another party is not liable.

**Liability Protection for Lenders.** Part 201 clarifies legal liability for lenders to encourage them to make loans on brownfield sites. Lenders may foreclose on contaminated property without assuming liability for cleanup if they prepare an

adequate BEA, and may turn the property over to the state if environmental conditions have made it unmarketable. Since the amendments prohibit the imposition of superliens on non-liable parties, the potential for the lender's security interest to be impaired is reduced. The statute also provides guidance on what is and is not considered participating in the management of a facility," thereby assisting lenders in defining their role and limiting their liability.

## FUNDING AND TAX INCENTIVES

### Environmental Protection Bond Fund

In November 1988, Michigan voters approved the *Environmental Protection Bond*. Of the \$800 million approved, \$425 million was targeted toward the cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The *Environmental Protection Bond Implementation Act* (1988 PA 328) set aside \$45 million from the bond in a site reclamation program (SRP) to encourage reuse of contaminated sites for economic development. At the time of this writing, the existing funding level in the SRP is approximately \$20 million.

### Environmental Cleanup and Redevelopment Funding Legislation

The legislature enacted additional incentives in the summer of 1996 to facilitate the successful implementation of Part 201. The five-bill package was designed to meet the following goals:

- ◆ to provide a new source of funding for cleanups;



# Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ to facilitate brownfield redevelopment;
- ◆ to provide new local funding mechanisms; and
- ◆ to focus spending priorities on the protection and human health and the environment.

The cleanup incentives include the state revitalization revolving loan fund, the ability for municipalities to capture state and local property taxes for cleanup costs through brownfield redevelopment authorities and a single business tax credit program for response activities at brownfield sites.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act will allow cities like Muskegon to create Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities to capture state and local property taxes to pay for response activities at contaminated sites within brownfield redevelopment zones. This act also allows municipalities to establish a local site remediation revolving loan fund.

A credit against the single business tax is available for qualified taxpayers that perform response activities at a contaminated site in a brownfield redevelopment zone. This incentive is only available for parties who are not liable under Section 26 of Part 201.

### Michigan Jobs Commission Grants and Loans

The Michigan Renaissance Fund also has two programs that are designed to assist local units of government in revitalizing brownfield sites. The Center of Michigan's Renaissance Program provides loans for site

assembly and clearance and/or rehabilitation and loans or grants for infrastructure. The second program under the Michigan Renaissance Fund is the Michigan Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Grants are available for communities under 50,000 under this program for economic development, public infrastructure, land acquisition, clearance and/or rehabilitation.

The long-term viability of the Renaissance Fund is unknown at the time of this writing. The fund receives revenues from tribal casinos (i.e., 8 percent of electronic gambling revenue). The new law that allows for casinos in Detroit nullifies this 1993 revenues sharing agreement. A state court recently ruled against the tribes requiring the revenue sharing agreement to stay in place until a Detroit casino opens. This should provide funding for the next two years.

Other possible funding sources include:

- ◆ the CDBG Economic Development Infrastructure Programs
- ◆ the CDBG Economic Development Planning Program
- ◆ the CDBG Rebuild Michigan Program

### U.S. EPA Brownfield Grants

The U.S. EPA has a Brownfields Pilot grant program which provides up to \$200,000 to states, local units of government and Indian-tribes to support creative site assessment, clean-up and redevelopment solutions for brownfield sites.

## INTRODUCTION TO CITY'S





## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



### BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Muskegon's Downtown has over 100 acres of brownfield property. Three projects along the waterfront are excellent examples of Muskegon's successful brownfield redevelopment. The Waterfront Center is a mixed-use commercial retail office and marina complex that was built on an eleven acre industrial site. Heritage Landing transformed a former scrap metal yard into a 20 acre park complete with a playground, waterfront walkway and festival band shell. The corporate headquarters for the SPX Corporation was built on a 15 acre foundry site. This site also includes a marina and restaurant.

Muskegon has aggressively pursued state funds to facilitate brownfield redevelopment. The City was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant under the Michigan Site Assessment Fund. The funds are being used to do an in-depth investigation at 13 brownfield sites along the Muskegon lakefront.

The City recognizes that environmental concerns are only one factor in the redevelopment of contaminated sites. Muskegon's brownfield redevelopment program is a piece of a well established economic development incentives program. The City has both a federal and state enterprise zone designation which provides businesses within these zones the opportunity to receive many special incentives. The City operates two Local Development Finance Authorities, one in each industrial park, and a Downtown Development Authority within the central

business district to capture incremental taxes for reinvestment within the district.

### BROWNFIELD SCREENING

#### Approach

The City of Muskegon has begun several efforts to address brownfields, including the identification of properties that were potentially impacted by historical manufacturing or commercial activities, the implementation of an area wide site assessment program under a state grant; the redevelopment of brownfield sites through public/private partnerships and the creation of a brownfield redevelopment authority. As part of this Master Plan, a formally documented list of environmentally contaminated sites was reviewed and each site was groundtruthed for its actual location in the City. This information was loaded into one layer of the City's geographic information system (GIS), in order to provide for further analysis or study as necessary. Sites that are being investigated under the Site Assessment Fund program will be added to this base when the project is completed. The site list was also compared to the overall plan recommendations, and considered for the development of specific recommendations with respect to brownfield redevelopment.

The source of the data was the MDEQ, which is charged with tracking all known sites of contamination within the State. Specifically, the last printed a list of contaminated sites was reviewed ("Michigan Sites of Environmental Contamination" Volume I, April 1995 for Fiscal Year 1996, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Response





## Brownfield Analysis Master Land Use Plan



Division). This list contains sites which are known by the State to be impacted with substances which are regulated under Part 201; the impact may take the form of soil or groundwater contamination, and to a lesser extent, surface water and sediment contamination.

Associated with the contaminated sites list, and also included in this analysis, were leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites. The LUST sites included in this analysis were those published by MDEQ at the same time as the Part 201 list.

The Part 201 and LUST sites listed by the MDEQ represent the sites that are known to the Department. The MDEQ is constantly revising this list to make both additions and deletions. There are also sites that would meet the definition of a brownfield that are not on either list. For example, the City is working on a number of sites through the Site Assessment Fund program and other redevelopment efforts that are not on the state list:

- ◆ Terrace Street Lots
- ◆ Muskegon Rag and Metal
- ◆ Carpenter Brothers Building
- ◆ Amazon Building
- ◆ Westran Facility
- ◆ West Michigan Street Foundry
- ◆ CMS - Consumer Site
- ◆ Muskegon Farmers Market
- ◆ Fisher Steel
- ◆ Muskegon Cast Products
- ◆ Teledyne Lakefront Site
- ◆ Muskegon Boiler Works
- ◆ Westshore Pavilion
- ◆ Interspace

### Results

Fourteen Act 307 and 19 LUST sites in the City of Muskegon are shown on Map entitled "Part 201 of NREPA and LUST Site Inventory". The recorded name, location, regulatory status, and in the case of Part 201 sites, pollutants of concern are listed in Tables 8.1 and 8.2. All locations were groundtruthed using the MDEQ published data (note there may have been errors in the database and exact ownership may be in dispute or no longer current). Site names may refer to previous owners, managers, or simply a nearby landmark; regulatory status may change over time; and pollutants of concern can change as new field and laboratory data is obtained for a particular site.

## PART 201 AND LUST MAPPING GENERAL FINDINGS

- ◆ There are fewer than expected known sites of contamination within the City limits. This analysis contradicts the public perception of the City of Muskegon as a land area containing a large number of contaminated properties.
- ◆ While some general trends in the distribution of the sites across the City are apparent, no particular area exhibits a high concentration. The distribution can generally be tied to historic industrial areas and commercial corridors, the latter more likely to contain LUST sites (as expected given the common location of automotive service facilities). The Muskegon Lake shoreline is also an identifiable area of known sites; this reflects the general



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industrial history of the shoreline.

- ◆ The sites identified and mapped in this analysis provide a good indicator of where similar, but unidentified sites may occur. Commercial corridors, the Muskegon Lake shoreline and other historic industrial locations would be expected to exhibit environmental contamination.
- ◆ Many of the sites are in current use, with little apparent adverse impact arising from the identified contamination. Approximately 65 percent of the identified sites appear to be in current use, most of these in a manner similar to their original use.

### Comparison to Existing and Future Land Uses

To evaluate the potential effect of these sites on current land use patterns and to make the recommendations for future land use addressed elsewhere in the Master Plan, several sub-areas were delineated.

- ◆ **Muskegon Lake Shoreline.** The shoreline is in transition from nearly ubiquitous industrial land use. Thus it is not surprising that this exercise identified that nearly 30 percent of all Part 201 and LUST sites within the City were in close proximity to the Lake. The shoreline is also known to be the location of significant quantities of sand fill previously used in foundry operations. Future land use plans for the shoreline are based on a fully mixed use, with greenspace and parkland, commercial, and possibly even residential use planned, although some

industrial use will likely remain for many years.

- ◆ **Menendorp Industrial Park.** About 20 percent of the sites are in the "middle-aged" industrial area in the southeastern part of the City; the area that is now planned as the Menendorp Industrial Park. Though six sites are associated with this area, only two were identified as Part 201 sites.
- ◆ **The South-Central Area Around Laketon and Seaway.** This historic industrial area is home to several identified sites, including the Brunswick facility which is an important part of Muskegon's current and historical economic vitality. Many of these sites are in close proximity to an historic railroad line, a common indicator of industrial property use in urban areas. Much of this area is also planned to continue in industrial use.
- ◆ **Commercial Corridors.** Several important streets or commercial corridors in the City are the locations of LUST sites. This is a common phenomena, and Getty and Laketon both exhibited this character. Other major commercial corridors with historic automotive service facilities (e.g., Henry) likely have tank-related concerns.

Since the City's industrial areas and commercial corridors are generally expected to remain in industrial or commercial use, the negative impact of environmental contamination on the City's land use plans appears to be limited. The new state liability standards are specifically



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designed to avoid placing the burden of environmental remediation on new owners or managers of a property. While taking the necessary steps to avoid acquiring liability for past contamination requires some cost and time (i.e., through the creation and filing of a BEA), these costs should be manageable in most cases.

Likewise, the new land use or exposure-based cleanup standards allow considerable flexibility in the use of contaminated property, as long as these issues are adequately incorporated in the planning and site development steps. In some cases, commercial use of an industrial property may allow less restrictive standards than industrial uses. The use of former industrial site for residential or recreational use may require additional remediation or more extensive exposure controls.

While historical contamination is not an insurmountable barrier, there are steps the City can take to level the playing field for brownfield sites and get underutilized property back into full and productive use. For instance, some property owners are reluctant to take any action with their property because they believe there is a significant possibility they will be required to undertake massive environmental investigation and remediation efforts. By actively seeking incentives for these owners to act, the City will be able to prevent the "warehousing" of its historically commercial and industrial land.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Steven Brooks recently wrote for the National League of Cities that "a City that encourages brownfields redevelopment can attract new business to its community, broaden its tax base, increase construction activity, and create jobs." The City of Muskegon recognizes these benefits and has integrated brownfield programs into their existing economic development incentives framework. The recommendations outlined below are designed to build on the success of the Site Assessment Fund grant and take advantage of the favorable regulatory climate and state and federal brownfield incentives.

#### Specific Recommendations

- ◆ Continue the brownfield screening program and determine current ownership of sites on the list. For example, a review of City directories would provide information on sites with industrial histories that are likely to be impacted.
- ◆ Continue to update the brownfield GIS layer so that it may be used as a planning tool for brownfield redevelopment. Consider expanding the number of fields to increase its flexibility and make it more useful to the private sector.
- ◆ Continue to monitor developments in environmental regulations, tax incentives, and funding sources.
- ◆ Continue to seek state and federal funding opportunities to address brownfield issues. A good track record in obtaining State-level resources exists, but further opportunities are most likely





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available (e.g. site reclamation funds, state revolving loan funds and renaissance funds). Pursue a brownfield pilot program grant from U.S. EPA.

- ◆ Enact a groundwater use ordinance that prohibits the installation and use of potable wells in areas with known groundwater contamination.
- ◆ Finalize the development of a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Use the brownfield site map prepared under the master plan as the basis for defining a City-wide brownfield zone.
- ◆ Expand on the work done under the Site Assessment Fund grant to determine the marketability of identified brownfield sites.
- ◆ Continue to implement sound goal-oriented land use planning and implementation. Coordinate with brownfield efforts to identify rezoning and infrastructure needs. Consider environmental issues when evaluating infrastructure needs. Integrate utility upgrades with any required remediation.
- ◆ Host a workshop that provides information on brownfield redevelopment and financial and tax incentives.



Site Name	Location	Pollutants	Status
1. Old City of Muskegon Dump	61-10N-16W-17BD	Domestic, Commercial, Light Industrial	No Actions Taken
2. Nordco Drum Getty Street	61-10N-16W-29DA	Phthalates, BTEX, TCE	Evaluation/Interim Response -Fund
3. Theresa Street Area	61-10N-16W-33AB	Nickel, TCE	Evaluation/Interim Response -Fund
4. Whittaker Electric	61-10N-16W-31BA	PCB, DCE	Evaluation/Interim Response -Fund
5. American Coil Spring Co.	61-10N-16W-33BD	Chromium, TCE, 1,2 DCE	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
6. Amoco Oil Terminal	61-10N-17W-25	BTEX, MTBE	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
7. Anaconda Industries	61-10N-17W-25BD	Cresols, Organics	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
8. Goetze Corporation	61-10N-16W-31AB	Chromium, TCE, 1,2 DCE	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
9. Grand Trunk Railroad Dock	61-10N-17W-35BA	BTEX, Naphthalene	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
10. MichCon Lakey Foundry	61-10N-16W-19CD	Xylene, Toluene, Zinc, Lead, Benzene	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
11. Old Muskegon Wastewater Treatment Plant	61-10N-16W-17CA	Benzidine, Arsenic, Nitrobenzene	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
12. Our Lady of Grace Church Gas Contamination	61-10N-16W-20AD	Benzene, Toluene, Xylene	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
13. Sealed Power Corporation - Sanford Street	61-10N-16W-31AB	Trichloroethylene, Dichloroethene	Evaluation/Interim Response -PRP/Other
14. Brunswick Corporation	61-10N-16W-30CC	Toluene	Final Cleanup - PRP/Other

Source: "Michigan Sites of Environmental Contamination," Volume I April 1995 for Fiscal Year 1996, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Response Division

**Table 8.1**

**Part 201 of NREPA Site Inventory**



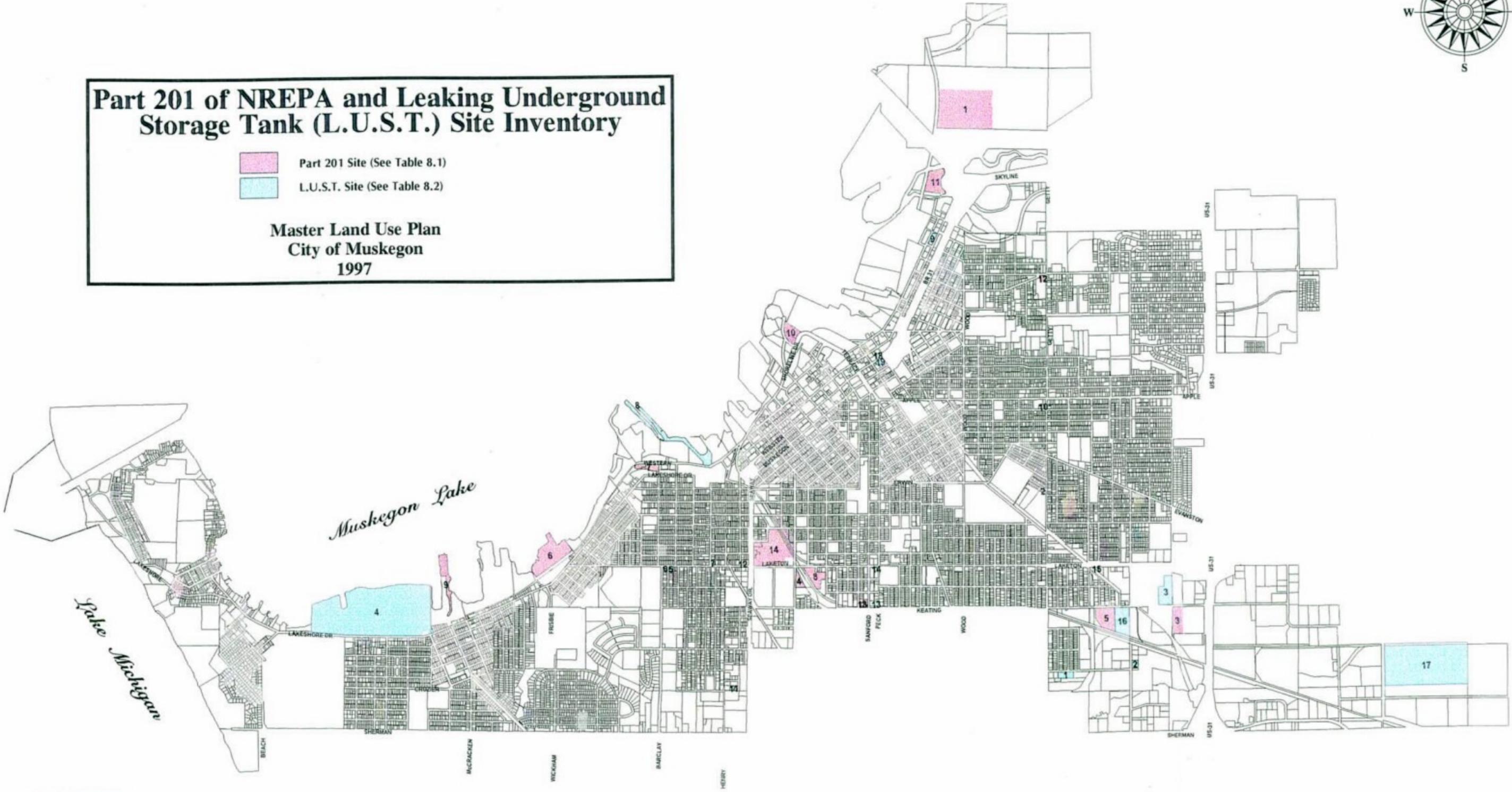




# Part 201 of NREPA and Leaking Underground Storage Tank (L.U.S.T.) Site Inventory

-  Part 201 Site (See Table 8.1)
-  L.U.S.T. Site (See Table 8.2)

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# Neighborhood Condition Analysis

## Master Land Use Plan



### IDENTIFYING NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY - THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Census information and other familiar data sources focus on identifying residential and neighborhood quality through such factors as housing age, presence or lack of basic systems (e.g. in-door plumbing), housing value in relationship to area or regional values, number of bedrooms in relationship to household size, etc. Historically, these characteristics have been used to measure housing condition, to serve as a gauge of comparative quality between neighborhoods and cities, and to describe overall community quality.

While such information may be very useful, it does not necessarily offer an accurate picture of neighborhood quality. In fact, such information may unfairly label a residential area, or City as a whole, as less than desirable pursuant to housing quality. A prime example is that of housing value. Is an area comprised of homes with a per unit average housing value of \$50,000 less desirable or of less quality than an area consisting of homes having an average per unit value of \$100,000? Many planning and housing studies would respond in the affirmative. Essentially, there is an underlying assumption that more is better.

### MASTER PLAN SURVEY FINDINGS

Data collected and analyzed during the planning process revealed that the perception of neighborhood and overall City quality was very closely linked to

external image factors rather than housing value, age, or the unknown internal characteristics of housing units. Site conditions such as the presence of junk, abandoned vehicles, yard debris, and the like were identified by participants in the planning process as most significant to defining poor neighborhood quality.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITION SURVEY

To fully determine potential “areas of concern” pursuant to neighborhood quality based on external site conditions, a comprehensive field survey of all residential areas was undertaken. In completing the field exercise, two assumptions were made:

- ◆ The perception of poor neighborhood quality is strongly related to the presence of site conditions perceived as undesirable; and
- ◆ The value of homes within an area does not define neighborhood quality. A neighborhood comprised of homes with an average value of \$35,000 has the same quality potential as neighborhoods with more expensive housing.

A number of important planning benefits may be achieved from a comprehensive neighborhood site survey. These include:

- ◆ Offers an objective (versus subjective) means of identifying potential problem areas.
- ◆ Useful in identifying areas with highest (potential) need for rehabilitation, code





# Neighborhood Condition Analysis Master Land Use Plan



enforcement, etc.

- ◆ Helps verify the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of blighted locations.
- ◆ Useful when identifying and/or supporting the conversion of neighborhoods to a different form of land use.
- ◆ Useful when measuring the relationship of occupancy status (owner or renter occupied) to site/neighborhood conditions.
- ◆ Establishes a “baseline” for subsequent investigations.
- ◆ Allows one to better analyze the impacts of compatible relationships between residential and non-residential areas.

Survey results were assembled and reported on a block-by-block basis. Residential blocks were classified based on the “level of occurrence” of various site factors. These included:

- ◆ Abandoned and/or junk vehicle visible in side or front yard.
- ◆ Debris (e.g. discarded lumber, auto parts, trash, etc.) visible in front, side, or rear yard. Debris did not include trash at curbside waiting to be collected, trash/garbage containers, children’s toys, or materials/trash stored adjacent to a trash/garbage receptacle for potential pick up.
- ◆ Boarded-up home.

- ◆ Burned-out home.
- ◆ Dilapidated fence (required at least two cases per block to be counted as one occurrence.)
- ◆ Grass/weed growth in front yard greater than 12 inches (required at least two such cases per block to be counted as one occurrence).
- ◆ Porch and/or roof falling/caving in.
- ◆ Excessive peeling of paint on front face of home (excessive being more than one-half of wall area). Homes being scraped/sanded were not included.
- ◆ Junk/debris strewn about a vacant lot.
- ◆ Dilapidated garages/sheds visible from sidewalk/street.
- ◆ Church or other non-residential property located in the neighborhood exhibiting the above conditions.

Blocks were classified based on the level of occurrence (number of times) site conditions were observed. This information was mapped using the following rigid standards:

- ◆ *None*  
Block experienced no homes or vacant lots with evidence of one or more site factors.
- ◆ *Moderate*  
Block experienced not more than two homes or vacant lots exhibiting site





# Neighborhood Condition Analysis Master Land Use Plan



factors.

## ◆ High

Block experienced three or more homes or vacant lots exhibiting site factors.

## AREAS EXHIBITING HIGH LEVELS OF SITE FACTORS

Three areas exhibit homes characterized by high levels of site factors (see Residential Site Condition map). These are:

### Area A

The group of blocks broadly defined by Getty, Oak, Scott, and Apple.

### Area B

The group of blocks broadly defined by Keating, Continental, Laketon, and Nims.

### Area C

The group of blocks broadly defined by Southern, Seventh, Mason, Fourth, Strong, and Sixth.

Areas A, B and C represent enclaves in which six or more blocks exhibit high levels of site related problems. Unlike many residential areas within the City, it was noted that each of the above areas tends to be highly visible to residents and visitors.

Area A abuts the highly traveled streets of Apple Avenue and Getty Street. As such, the blocks defined by this area receive high

rates of visible exposure to those traveling the local roadways.

Area B fronts on Laketon Avenue, lying just west of the Laketon/US-31 Interchange. As with Area A, this location receives significant exposure to those traveling by vehicle.

Area C is sandwiched between Nelson Junior High School to the west and the Muskegon Senior High School on the east. The proximity to these schools leads to significant exposure of the Area C blocks.

The areas broadly defined by Larch, Hoyt, Grand, and Sixth, and by Clay, Sixth, Monroe, and Eighth have the potential to enter a similar stage.

## AREAS EXHIBITING MODERATE LEVELS OF SITE FACTORS

Blocks of moderate occurrence tend to be concentrated in the central portion of the City, but do exist throughout. Areas identified as “moderate” in level of occurrence typically require minimal improvement to advance to the non-occurrence stage.

There are many blocks/areas within the City not experiencing any site factor. The rate of “no” or “moderate” levels of site occurrence far exceeds the rate of “high” levels. Based on the prevalence of site factors as an indicator of blight, a vast majority of the City does not experience this problem.

There does not appear to be definite correlations between level of occurrence





# Neighborhood Condition Analysis

## Master Land Use Plan



and zoning or land use. While many areas exhibiting the highest levels of occurrence are found either adjacent, or in close proximity to, non-residential development and non-residential zoning districts, many are not.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis, and other related evaluations, the following recommendations were developed:

- ◆ Systematic and targeted programs of code enforcement need to be developed and implemented.

Most cities must deal with the issue of property maintenance code enforcement and Muskegon is no exception. Currently, the City has a program wherein rental properties are uniformly inspected to determine the need for site improvement. This program includes on-going inspection of housing units to determine maintenance needs of the structure (e.g. peeling paint, rotten wood, etc.) and surrounding property. Observed violations are officially noticed, with the home owner provided opportunity to make necessary improvements. Failure to do so may result in fines and penalties. The program appears to have met with general success and we recommend it be supplemented. Various specific approaches for doing so are described in the following recommendations.

- ◆ The City should participate with Neighborhood Associations to develop programs of site enhancement (cleanup)

similar to those implemented by the City during the Summer of 1996 along Hoyt (north of Laketon) and Muskegon Avenue (flower plantings). The allocation of funds to various Neighborhood Associations should consider the success of these cleanup programs.

- ◆ Community Development Block Grant Targeting. This includes the targeting of funds to isolated blocks experiencing site condition problems. Left unchecked, such blocks may result in the spread of area problems.

The Residential Site Condition Survey identified a number of locations in which the presence of a high occurrence of housing and site related problems were limited to a single block within a larger residential area (refer to the Residential Site Condition Map). We recommend these blocks be analyzed for the targeting of a portion of the City's Community Development Block Grant (Entitlement) funds for housing rehabilitation and site related improvements. Targeting of funds to specific locations is justified based on the potential positive impacts to a broader neighborhood area brought on by resolving isolated pockets of need.

- ◆ Determine the merits of maintaining a residential area. It may be desirable to do so. It may not. The area bounded by Laketon and Nims represents a former residential area more suitable for development to other uses, including linkage to nearby industrial development.





# Neighborhood Condition Analysis

## Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ Utilize “anchor” facilities (e.g. hospitals, churches, schools, certain businesses, etc.) to help coordinate/spearhead neighborhood improvement efforts.
- ◆ Upgrade the City Zoning Ordinance to include very strict buffer standards between residential and non-residential districts. Greater emphasis should be placed on compatibility relationships between differing land uses, and residential/ neighborhood integrity will be enhanced by such an approach.
- ◆ Complete the neighborhood site survey on an annual basis. We suggest the effort be completed by Planning Commission team members. That is, divide the Planning Commission membership into teams of two, allocate reasonable program areas, have each team complete a field review of site conditions, and submit to staff for recording and mapping.
- ◆ Initiate as a pilot project an “Ombudsman” position to serve as a liaison between residents/ Neighborhood Associations and City Hall.
- ◆ Site Infill. The City has aggressively tackled residential site infill in the Downtown Historic District. Over the past several years, six or seven homes have been relocated to the Downtown.

Site infill can be a very important and logical component of increasing the City’s housing supply and in the stabilization of neighborhoods. Unfortunately, infill programs can be

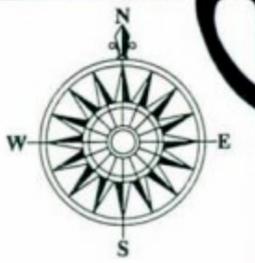
costly and time consuming, with long-term success difficult to predict.

We recommend the City convene a panel of local real estate and building professionals to analyze the City’s infill potential. This might be accomplished under the auspices of the Muskegon Board of Realtors, or through a group of professionals selected by City staff. Charge the panel with identifying an infill methodology and implementation process.

- ◆ With the participation of area lending institutions and housing agencies, conduct annual (Neighborhood Association) workshops educating residents on the availability of housing improvement dollars and methods for securing same.

Although no single effort will ever completely rid the City of housing blight, a concerted effort on a number of fronts could yield significant improvements. Combined with efforts to address other livability issues in the City, the overall quality of life and its perception by residents and visitors would be significantly improved.

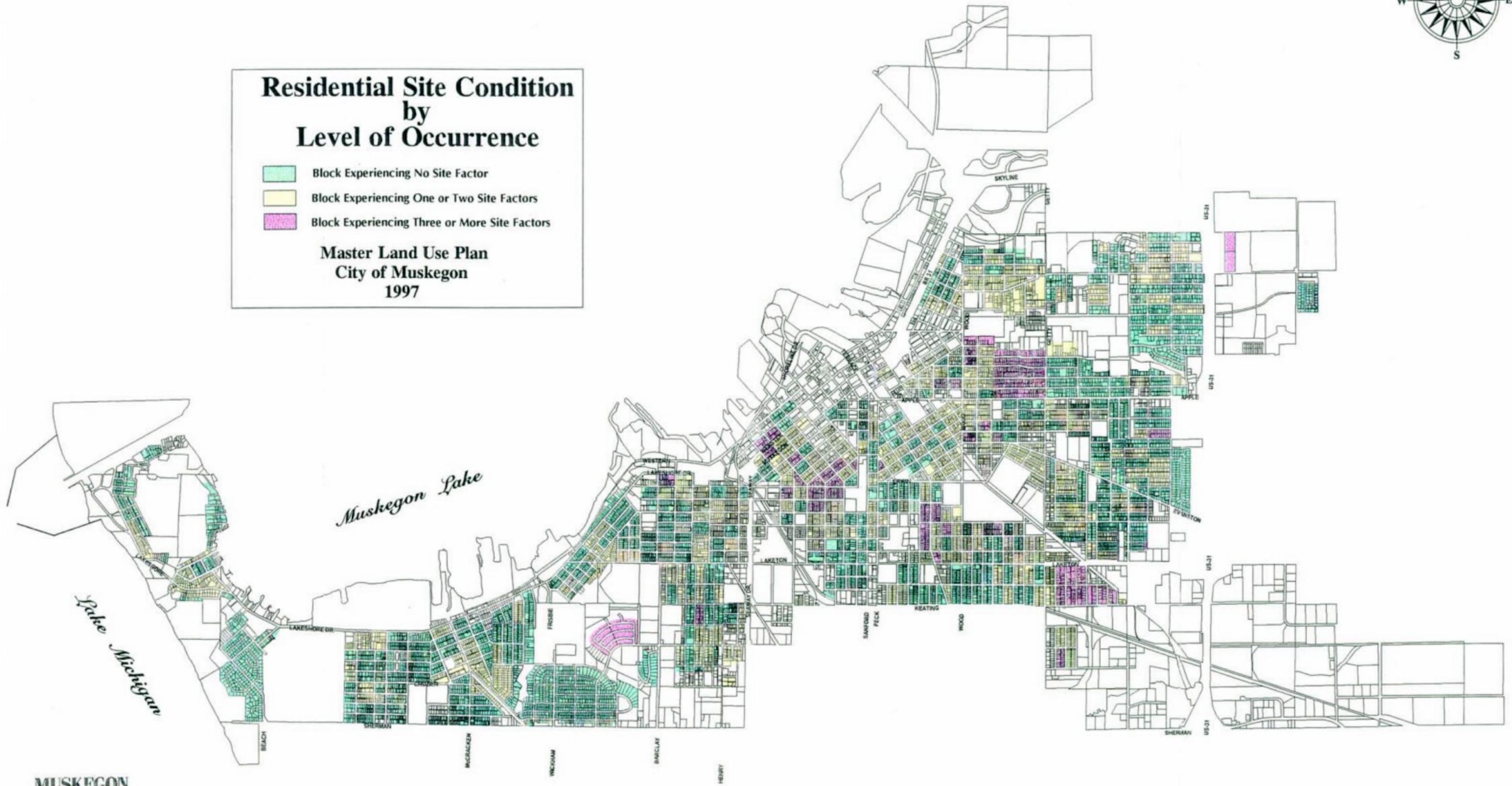




## Residential Site Condition by Level of Occurrence

-  Block Experiencing No Site Factor
-  Block Experiencing One or Two Site Factors
-  Block Experiencing Three or More Site Factors

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# Neighborhood Issues Master Land Use Plan



## INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood workshops were conducted to solicit input on planning-related matters. Workshops included such groups as:

- ◆ City neighborhoods (usually two or three neighborhoods were present per session)
- ◆ Students of the Muskegon High School (juniors and seniors)
- ◆ Planning Commission and City Council of the City of Muskegon
- ◆ City staff
- ◆ Individual citizens, business and governmental leaders, other groups and organizations, etc.

Workshop participants were asked to respond to a series of common questions. The workshops intended to solicit input regarding perceived issues, assets, and opportunities, and to help define a future direction for the City

Additional information was obtained from the Muskegon Oceana Community Reinvestment Corporation (MOCRC). Working with City neighborhood associations, MOCRC conducted a series of door-to-door surveys soliciting resident input on a variety of matters ranging from household characteristics to neighborhood/City opportunities and concerns. The following is a summary of findings.

## NEIGHBORHOOD/CITY OPPORTUNITIES

All survey respondents were asked to identify local opportunities. Opportunities reflect items, characteristics, etc., that people like about their neighborhood and/or the City. Opportunities are those factors people wish to see maintained and/or enhanced. Opportunities most often identified, or uniformly identified by all survey sectors, were:

- ◆ Presence of Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake
- ◆ Convenience of being close to facilities and services
- ◆ Good housing quality
- ◆ Good neighbors and friendly people
- ◆ Feeling of safety/security (within their neighborhood)
- ◆ Historic housing
- ◆ Availability of parks and recreational opportunities

## NEIGHBORHOOD/CITY ISSUES

Similar to the identification of opportunities, survey respondents were asked to detail issues. Issues reflect items of concern. They are those factors people dislike about their neighborhood and/or City, and wish to see changed. Issues most often identified or identified by all sectors were:





# Neighborhood Issues

## Master Land Use Plan



- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increasing number of apartment complexes or conversion of single-family homes to multiple-family use</li> <li>◆ Presence of too many slum landlords</li> <li>◆ Lack of housing maintenance</li> <li>◆ Lack of street maintenance</li> <li>◆ Concerns over environmental issues (e.g. noise, odors, leaves, trash</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collection, etc.)</li> <li>◆ Need for better code enforcement (site/housing)</li> <li>◆ Lack of communication with City Hall</li> <li>◆ Crime/lack of respect for people and property</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the broad concerns impacting all neighborhoods, specific neighborhood</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

<p><b>Neighborhood Group 1 - Bluffton/Beachwood, Glenside, and Lakeside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Extend sidewalks throughout all neighborhood locations.</li> <li>◆ Reduce the number of multiple-family apartments, including a reduction in the conversion of existing single-family homes to multiple-family use.</li> <li>◆ Streetscape Laketon Avenue.</li> <li>◆ Improve opportunities for connection to area bike paths (existing and planned).</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood Group 2 - Campbell, Nims, and Marsh Field</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reduce the number of multiple-family apartments, including a reduction in the conversion of existing single-family homes to multiple-family use.</li> <li>◆ Reduce industrial odors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood Group 3 - Angell, Jackson Hill, McLaughlin, and Nelson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reduce the number of multiple-family apartments, including a reduction in the conversion of existing single-family homes to multiple-family use.</li> <li>◆ Construct a full service grocery store.</li> <li>◆ Small (neighborhood) businesses are not always conducive to promotion of neighborhood quality. Zoning should ensure that permitted commercial development is compatible with area neighborhoods. Liquor stores were most often mentioned as facilities of concern.</li> <li>◆ Major streets need a streetscape program [e.g. trees, lighting, better signs, upkeep, etc.]</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood Group 4 - East Muskegon, Marquette, Oakview, Sheldon Park, and Steel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Businesses along Getty Street are not conducive to neighborhood quality. They are oriented to regional/transient shoppers versus local residents.</li> <li>◆ Major streets need a streetscape program [e.g. trees, lighting, better signs, upkeep, etc.].</li> </ul> <p><b>Neighborhood Group 5 - In-Town (Downtown) Neighborhood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Need single-family housing in-fill on vacant parcels</li> <li>◆ ◆ Create wider terraces along Muskegon and Webster Avenues</li> </ul>
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**Table 10.1** **Summary of Neighborhood Land Use Issues**





# Neighborhood Issues

## Master Land Use Plan



issues were also raised. These have been listed according to neighborhood groupings [based on the series of neighborhood workshops which were conducted in neighborhood group settings] and include only those issues having a land use or land development significance [e.g. construct a new grocery store as opposed to pick-up leaves]. The plan recognizes that all issues may be important and in need of some manner of attention. To that end, the complete findings of the various workshops have been made available to City staff for review and necessary action.

In analyzing workshop and survey results it is important to note that a vast majority of residents were primarily concerned over preservation of their home and immediate neighborhood. Planning issues such as the future development of the shoreline, disposition of the downtown mall, impact of Shoreline Drive on downtown development, etc., were perceived as important, but not paramount to the long-term stability and future success of the City.

The above phenomena is not unique. Over time, planning studies and related research have continually demonstrated that well-maintained neighborhoods are one of the most significant factors influencing local and regional perception of a community as desirable.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

From the review of neighborhood concerns, combined with other plan data pertinent to this matter, the following recommendations are made:

- ◆ Zoning regulations associated with the conversion of single-family homes to multiple-family use should contain standards ensuring that converted dwellings have sufficient on-site parking, suitable locations for trash receptacles which are customarily stored out of doors, sufficient yard/play areas, and exterior facade controls.
- ◆ Design and implement streetscape programs for each of the City's major roadways. Such programs may range from simple tree plantings in selective locations to more intensive greenbelting. As part of this effort, examine the potential for enlarged terraces along Webster and Muskegon Avenues.
- ◆ Work with S.D. Warren to reduce the occupancy and/or modify the timing of emissions of unpleasant odors.
- ◆ Work with area grocery retailers regarding opportunities in core urban neighborhoods. It is not recommended that the City enter the grocery business. Rather, that the City work with the private sector to secure suitable sites, and where feasible and appropriate, provide development assistance with the opportunity for reasonable paybacks.
- ◆ Zoning regulations should restrict the opportunity for inappropriate business development to occur in residential locations. Non-conforming businesses should be highly restricted.
- ◆ Promote ongoing housing in-fill programs. As part of the in-fill effort,





# Neighborhood Issues

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work with area builders to determine possible joint public/private partnerships for the construction of affordable housing.

- ◆ Analyze sidewalk and pathway needs as part of the City’s ongoing public infrastructure improvement programming activities.
- ◆ With limited exception, restrict business development in the “In-Town” residential neighborhood. Bed and breakfast operations, tea rooms/coffee shops, etc. should be considered based on rigid zoning standards to ensure compatibility with area homes.

### Residential Stability and Anchor Facilities

A concept espoused by this plan is the greater employment of “anchor” facilities to foster neighborhood stability and improve overall neighborhood quality. An anchor facility is a public or private school, church, institution, or business located within or near a residential area and having sufficient staff, wealth, and/or other characteristic or opportunity to influence the neighborhood in a positive fashion.

Historically, schools and churches served as anchor facilities. In some instances they still do. They provide opportunity for neighborhood residents to come together to share common needs and concerns and to undertake the handling of common issues. In recent years, many schools and churches have either been supplemented or replaced by Neighborhood Associations as a neighborhood’s anchor facility.

Beyond these, there are several additional facilities expressing a potential and a desire to “anchor” local neighborhood areas, or to at least provide facilities for neighborhood meetings and workshops. They include:

- ◆ Baker College/County Offices/City Hall - Peck Street north
- ◆ Hackley Hospital - Peck Street south
- ◆ Muskegon Community College/Muskegon General Hospital/Baker College - extreme northeast portion of the City
- ◆ Mercy Hospital - southeasterly portions of the City
- ◆ Muskegon Museum - downtown residential areas

We strongly recommend that local, public, and private schools, and neighborhood churches, assume a more active leadership role in neighborhood stability. We suggest the City conduct a series of workshops or informal meetings with area school officials and church leaders to examine methods for achieving that role. Moreover, we suggest these institutions be used as conduits for the dissemination of information on matters of neighborhood improvement, neighborhood funding, housing rehabilitation, and the like.





# Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 1 PORT CITY INDUSTRIAL CENTER

Sub-Area 1 provides a location in which the industrial vitality of Muskegon may be readily observed. Home to the Port City Industrial Park, the area offers opportunity for service and manufacturing industries to locate in a secure, fully-serviced, park setting with close proximity to US-31 and I-96. Industrial growth within the sub-area has been particularly formidable over the past decade and is anticipated to remain strong. Complimenting the industrial flavor of the area is an enclave of regional commercial activity comprised of several national retail chains located at the US-31/I-96 Intersection, and the Muskegon Correctional Facility located along the eastern portion of the sub-area. While both uses are considered secondary to the primary focus of the sub-area, they provide high quality retail and employment opportunities.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the industrial orientation of Sub-Area 1. Accordingly, the rezoning of land for additional non-industrial use shall be discouraged, provided however, parcels located along Sherman Boulevard and Laketon Avenue may be used for non-industrial purposes which are ancillary to the area's industrial focus. Such uses include, but are not limited to, financial institutions, health/fitness clubs, office supply stores, computer sales and servicing, employment centers, and other uses with the potential to serve local industrial needs.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

North: Laketon Avenue  
East: City Limit [Muskegon Charter Township]  
South: Sherman Boulevard  
West: US-31

### Neighborhood:

East Muskegon

### Land Use:

Primary: Industrial  
Secondary: Regional commercial  
State correctional facility

### Area Description:

The sub-area is traversed by several of the City's local and regional arterials. These include Laketon Avenue, Sherman Boulevard, and US-31. Interstate I-96 lies approximately three miles south, intersecting with US-31. Access to these systems has heavily influenced sub-area development.

A majority of the sub-area is devoted to industrial use. The area is home to the Port City Industrial Park - a Class "A" planned industrial park. Uses within the park include environmental, engineering, and printing services; wholesale food services; and manufacturing and processing industries.





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



The Muskegon Correctional Facility, a State prison complex, is located along the eastern side of the sub-area in a heavily wooded setting. The facility has been designed, constructed, and landscaped to blend with its natural surroundings. Although abutting the Port City Industrial Park, it has not been a deterrent to the park's rapid growth.

At the extreme southwest corner of the sub-area, near the Sherman Boulevard and US-31 Intersection, one finds a new regional retail strip center anchored by a Target department/variety store. Other uses include retail outlets specializing in electronics, computers, and pet supplies and a family style restaurant. Additional space is available for retail occupancy.



Along Sherman, east of the retail center, lie a combination of industrial and service facilities. Service uses include a financial institution and tennis/fitness club.

The retail center is situated directly across a new, complimentary, retail complex located in neighboring Fruitport Township. That development is anchored by WalMart, SAM's Club, and Lowe's retail stores. Other uses include a series of variety stores,

several major restaurants, and a Comfort Inn.

Laketon Avenue serves as the sub-area's northern border. Land use along the roadway is primarily industrial.

Sunrise Memorial Gardens, a cemetery, is located near the US-31 (Industrial Boulevard) and Keating Avenue Intersection.

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Industrial and limited commercial
- East: City limit/Muskegon Charter Township. Land uses include vacant parcels, single-family residential, and industrial.
- South: Sherman Boulevard comprised of regional commercial, service, and industrial.
- West: US-31.

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

As evidenced by the high rate of new industrial and retail growth over the past ten years, level of recent private investment, and proposed new investment, the sub-area is considered a stable land use area.

### Sub-Area Issues:

Although considered highly stable, the sub-area possesses several factors warranting attention within the Master Plan. These are:

1. There is likely to be continued demand to convert industrial properties along Sherman Boulevard to non-industrial (retail or service sector) use.





## Sub-Area Plans

### Master Land Use Plan



2. As the level of retail traffic grows, conflicts with industrial park traffic are likely to increase.
3. Much of the easterly vehicular traffic bound for the Target site does not proceed to the signalized intersection before turning left. Instead, left turns are made off Sherman, at the initial parking lot access opening. This results in vehicular conflicts, including the stacking of traffic in the northerly, eastbound, lane which has been designed to accommodate through movement.
4. Internal traffic movement on public streets within the Port City Industrial Park should be analyzed to ensure that sufficient signalization and/or signage exists to avoid long periods of queuing at intersections.
5. Site development (zoning) standards should be implemented to ensure that parcels abutting the future Marne to Muskegon Rail Trail [Musketawa Trail] are well designed, compatible with, and complimentary to the trail system.
6. The sub-area includes several wetland locations. These are generally found within the central portions of the Port City Industrial Park. These natural features should be recognized and protected.
7. The Sunrise Memorial Gardens, while a viable use, represents a use which is not consistent with the future growth and development of Sub-Area 1.

#### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Maintain the sub-area's industrial focus.
2. Along Sherman Boulevard and Laketon Avenue maintain the current industrial zoning status to restrict conversion of industrial property to uses considered inconsistent with the area's land use focus.
3. Continue monitoring traffic movement throughout the sub-area. As needed, address circulation and access problems. Particular attention should be given to minimizing access points. This includes, where possible, the closure of unnecessary curb cuts; ensuring alignment of driveways; erection of internal directional signage to accommodate visitors and truck traffic; and like factors.
4. Implement zoning (site plan) standards to ensure compatibility with the Marne to Muskegon Rail Trail system. Such standards should include provisions for segregating parking areas from the trail system; visual buffering of outside storage, parking, and loading/unloading areas; appropriate building setbacks (at least 50'); landscaping; and the like.
5. Incorporate the sub-area's wetlands as a component of the City's natural features inventory. Implement zoning (site plan) standards to ensure protection of the wetlands including minimum setbacks (at least 50 feet); avoidance of snow storage within the building/wetland setback area; maintenance of natural buffer strip (at least 25 feet) from the actual wetland limit; and like criteria.



## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



6. Preclude further expansion of the Sunrise Memorial Garden Cemetery. Moreover, investigate the present status of the cemetery site to determine the extent of development and potential to convert unused property [lying adjacent to existing industrial parcels] for industrial use.

Pursuant to the above, and to Sunrise Memorial Gardens in general, it is important that buffering standards be established between the Gardens and adjacent industrial development. Said buffers should provide for heavy landscaping to ensure adequate visual and noise buffering.

7. Work with Fruitport Township to coordinate development and access management along Sherman Boulevard.
8. Work with Muskegon Charter Township to coordinate development and access management along Laketon Avenue.



# Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 2 SHERMAN/LAKETON MIXED USE AREA

Sub-Area 2, located directly west of US-31 between Laketon Avenue and Sherman Boulevard, is an area undergoing change. Land uses include single-family residential, multiple-family, general retail, business services, medical facilities, and light and heavy industrial. Although classified as mixed use, specific development types tend to be spatially distributed to four distinct sectors. These are the Mercy Hospital Medical Campus near the Sherman Boulevard/US-31 Intersection (southeast quadrant of the sub-area), strip commercial bordering the eastern edge of Getty Street and southern edge of Laketon Avenue, a mixed residential tract within the sub-area's northwest quadrant, and industrial located in the sub-area's interior (Medendorp Industrial Park). As a whole, the sub-area's predominate, emerging use is industrial.

It is the goal of the Muskegon Master Plan to encourage expanded industrial development in Sub-Area 2. In doing so, the plan recognizes that Sub-Area 2 contains various non-industrial uses important to the well-being of the City and populace as a whole. Accordingly, the plan outlines measures to ensure adequate protection and compatibility between the sub-area's variety of land development types.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: Laketon Avenue
- East: US-31
- South: Sherman Boulevard
- West: Getty Street

Street. Laketon and Sherman intersect with nearby US-31 resulting in easy access for automobile and truck traffic.

### Neighborhood:

East Muskegon

Mercy Hospital, along with associated medical offices, nursing facilities, and medical supply businesses, are located near the Sherman Boulevard/US-31 Intersection.

### Land Use:

- Primary: Industrial
- Secondary: Health services  
Single-family  
Commercial

Single and multiple family housing are found in the sub-area's northwest quadrant. The multiple-family dwellings are of recent construction and provide rent assisted accommodations for area residents.

### Area Description:

Sub-Area 2 may be accessed via Laketon Avenue, Sherman Boulevard, and Getty

Commercial development has occurred in strip fashion along Getty Street and Laketon Avenue. Uses include general and speciality retail, convenience retail, services, and offices. Strip commercial is also found along the western edge of Getty Street in Muskegon Heights and along the





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



northern edge of Laketon in Sub-Area 3. Some industrial development is also found sporadically located along the two corridors.

The central portion of the sub-area, which is also the largest land area component, is developing as industrial and is known as the Medendorp Industrial Park. Similar to its counterpart lying east of US-31 (Sub-Area 1, the Port City Industrial Park), Sub-Area 2 provides an opportunity to create a high quality industrial area with close proximity to excellent transportation facilities.

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial.
- East: US-31.
- South: Sherman Boulevard with a mixture of residential and commercial.
- West: Mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial.

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

Over the past ten to fifteen years, the sub-area has experienced significant change. Additional change is anticipated as evidenced by the following:

1. Mercy Hospital has encouraged the successful, campus-type, development of free-standing medical offices and clinics directly south and west of the main hospital building. A large number of the region’s health professionals are located there. Additional, similar, development is anticipated.

2. Industrial development is emerging as the sub-area’s predominate land use. The area’s proximity to US-31, combined with the availability of large parcels, has made the area inviting to industrial users. The City is also encouraging industrial development through its land assembly efforts in this area.
3. Reinvestment in existing, single-family, housing units is minimal. Housing located in the interior portions of the sub-area is undergoing replacement by new and/or expanding industries. In some instances, homes (home sites) are being assembled to create parcels sufficient to accommodate industrial development.
4. New, rent assisted, multiple-family apartments have been constructed along Valley Street, near Barney. While this development has helped stabilize the “immediate” neighborhood area, its impact on the sub-area’s other residential sectors is negligible.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. Designation and use of the sub-area for industrial development will require the removal of single-family housing.





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



2. The combination of land uses (e.g., housing, medical, commercial, and industrial) may result in land use compatibility conflicts unless development is carefully regulated.
3. Generally, the strip commercial development along Getty Street and Laketon Avenue has not provided sufficient buffer protection with adjoining residential development.
4. Strip commercial development along Getty Street and Laketon Avenue varies in depth pursuant to residential encroachment. The “deeper” parcels may establish benchmarks for subsequent requests to extend commercial into residential locations.
5. The visual image afforded by Getty Street and Laketon Avenue is poor due to a lack of high quality streetscape and coordinated business signage. Sherman, between Roberts Street and Getty Street experiences a similar phenomena.
6. In several instances, non-residential “spot” development has been allowed to encroach upon residential locations.
7. The sub-area is traversed by Little Black Creek, a tributary of Mona Lake. This natural feature requires protection from sub-area development.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Except as noted, extend the limits of industrial development to Getty Street.

### Exceptions:

- a. The general area occupied by Mercy Hospital (east of Roberts Street and south of Black Creek) should be recognized as a health services/office location.
  - b. The area north of East Barney Avenue, west of Madison Street, and south of East Delano Street should be retained as mixed use residential.
  - c. Permit strip commercial development along Laketon Avenue up to a depth of approximately 300 feet.
  - d. Permit strip commercial development along Getty Street at the following locations:
    - ◆ South of East Barney Street.
    - ◆ Between East Barney and East Delano Avenue. Within this area, commercial should be limited to the alley between East Barney Avenue and East Hackley Avenue. The block between East Hackley Avenue and East Delano Avenue may extend from Getty to Continental Street.
  - e. Pursuant to items c and d, above, ensure that sufficient zoning standards are in place to address the issues of limited access control, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, signage, landscaping, and related design criteria.
1. As the proposed industrial area is planned (designed), investigate the potential closure of Continental Street,



## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



Austin Street, and Valley Street at their intersecting points with Laketon Avenue. Entry to the industrial area may be gained via other access points.

2. Any commercial or industrial development bordering residential should provide high quality buffering in the form of architectural screening and landscaping.
3. Implement streetscape and coordinated signage programs for Sherman Boulevard, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue.



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### MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 3 GETTY STREET TO US-31 RESIDENTIAL/MIXED-USE AREA

Sub-Area 3 is bordered by several of the City's major arterials. These systems experience high levels of through traffic which render abutting lands desirable for commercial and industrial use. Notwithstanding the above, Sub-Area 3 retains a significant amount of concentrated residential development situated internal to the roadways.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the internal residential orientation of Sub-Area 3, while recognizing the opportunity to provide for non-residential uses in select perimeter locations. In providing for non-residential perimeter development, careful attention must be given to adequate buffering between residential and non-residential uses. Additionally, perimeter roadways should be landscaped to reflect a setting (entry) which is more residential than commercial in character.

#### Location (Area Boundaries):

North: Apple Avenue  
East: US-31  
South: Laketon Avenue  
West: Getty Street

#### Neighborhoods:

Sheldon Park  
Oakview

#### Land Use:

Primary: Single-family residential  
Secondary: Educational facilities  
Churches /religious institutions  
Mixed retail, Industrial

#### Area Description:

The sub-area is bordered by Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue. All are principal arterials, providing for high rates of transient through movement.

The interior portion of the area consists of low to moderately priced single-family homes, West Michigan Christian High School, and approximately nine religious institutions (churches).

Due to the character of the perimeter roadways, the sub-area experiences a mixture of retail, service, and industrial development along segments of Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue. The northeasterly portion of the area is near the intersection of Apple Avenue and US-31. As such, parcels in this location along Apple have developed in strip commercial fashion, linking with similar development in nearby Muskegon Charter Township. The Apple Avenue/US-31 Intersection represents an initial entry point into the City and serves as a regional commercial center.

Getty Street is almost fully developed as strip commercial. Laketon Avenue consists of a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial (warehousing/distribution).





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### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Residential and strip commercial.
- East: Residential, commercial, and industrial.
- South: Commercial and industrial.
- West: Residential, commercial, and industrial.

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

The area is slowly undergoing change, due in large part to the continual strip commercialization of Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon. Many of the residential blocks experience homes in need of rehabilitation and/or basic “paint-up/fix-up.”



### Sub-Area Issues:

1. The demand for additional strip commercial development along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue is anticipated to continue.
2. There is a lack of a consistent and cohesive streetscape along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue.

3. Through traffic, non-related to sub-area residents, results from those attempting to avoid travel along the major perimeter roadways during peak times.
4. Several of the residential blocks experience homes in need of rehabilitation.
5. There is a lack of adequate buffer protection between many of the strip commercial areas and adjacent homesites.
6. There is a lack of coordinated planning between the City and adjoining Muskegon Charter Township.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Maintain the sub-area’s residential focus.
2. Restrict the continued strip commercialization of Apple Avenue.
3. Permit remaining residential properties along Getty Street to be converted to commercial use.
4. Implement through zoning, buffer requirements associated with non-residential uses which are to be located contiguous to residential development.
5. Restrict further expansion of industrial development.
6. Implement a comprehensive streetscape program along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon.





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7. Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.
8. Working in conjunction with Muskegon Charter Township, prepare and implement a coordinated streetscape beautification program for the commercial sector along Apple Avenue near US-31.
9. Implement signage along Apple Avenue, west of US-31, alerting drivers to the City's core downtown (and major attractions).



# Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan

## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 4 PECK STREET TO GETTY STREET RESIDENTIAL/MIXED-USE AREA

Sub-Area 4 is predominately residential in use. The Clinton-Peck and McLaughlin Historic Districts are located in the sub-area. The historic districts possess a variety of period housing, institutional, and commercial structures. To the northwest, Sub-Area 4 links with Muskegon’s Core Downtown. The sub-area also includes a variety of medical facilities and commercial, industrial, and institutional development.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the residential orientation of Sub-Area 4, while also recognizing the importance of existing medical, office, commercial, and industrial development that is appropriately sited and designed. With the exception of Laketon Avenue, these latter uses are found along the perimeter of the sub-area. Laketon Avenue, a major east/west arterial located within the sub-area, possesses several pockets of non-residential development.

Except for recognized enclaves of desired non-residential development, the sub-area’s internal development should be limited to those uses of a residential character or having residential compatibility.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: Apple Avenue
- East: Getty Street
- South: City Limit [Muskegon Heights]
- West: Peck Street

### Neighborhoods:

- Angell
- Marsh
- McLaughlin

### Land Use:

- Primary: Residential
- Secondary: Hospital/Medical facilities  
Medical offices  
Commercial, Cemetery

### Area Description:

The sub-area is bordered by Peck Street, Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Muskegon Heights (on the south). Laketon Avenue is located near the southern portion of the area. These roadways, classified as principal arterials, carry significant traffic through this portion of the City.

A majority of the area is devoted to single-family use. Housing character and local neighborhood quality vary markedly. On some blocks, one finds superior examples of well-maintained period housing. Conversely, one also discovers residential blocks with homes and home sites in need of major rehabilitation and/or clean-up. A visible example of the above situation may be found along the residential blocks surrounding Hackley Hospital. To the immediate west of the hospital, along





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



Clinton Street, one finds high quality period housing on manicured sites. To the immediate east, along Hoyt Street, homes are generally smaller in size, significantly lower in assessed value, and often in need of rehabilitation. Comparable variations in housing character and condition are prevalent throughout the sub-area.

Hackley Hospital, the City's largest medical facility and a major employer, is located near the Laketon Avenue and Peck Street Intersection. Attached to the hospital are two multi-storied medical office buildings providing physician and associated medical space. Over the years, Hackley Hospital has acquired surrounding properties, including residential sites, in order to meet growth demands. The inclusion of such property has allowed the hospital to expand at its present location, versus relocating elsewhere. Over the past ten years, the hospital has instituted major site improvement activities including the beautification of several blocks along Laketon Avenue and perimeter landscaping consistent with the character of the area's historic background. Additional improvements are planned.

Located near Hackley Hospital, one finds a variety of religious facilities (local churches), medical offices, public and private schools, and Marsh Field. Marsh Field, currently undergoing rehabilitation, represents one of the City's finest baseball complexes and is suitable for tournament play.

Restlawn and Oakwood Cemeteries are located near the east-central portion of the sub-area. Collectively, they represent the sub-area's second largest land use,



occupying the equivalent of approximately 18 blocks. They are surrounded to the north, west, and south by residential development. On the east, they abut, and buffer, an area comprised of industrial uses.

Peck Street consists of a mixture of residential, office, and speciality retail development. In many instances, homes have been converted for non-residential use, but retain their residential character.

As in Sub-Area 3, Getty Street has developed in strip commercial fashion. Generally, such commercial parcels are limited to the first tier of properties along the roadway. There has been only limited intrusion into the adjoining residential blocks.

Getty Street also possesses a small industrial area, a portion of which provides incubator space for budding industrial businesses. Normally, industrial development would be discouraged in a residential sub-area, however, several factors prevent the above use from negatively impacting surrounding properties. As previously indicated, the industrial site is buffered by two large



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cemeteries. These features reduce the visual impacts of the industrial uses and prevent the east-west movement of industrial traffic through nearby residential blocks.

Within Sub-Area 4, Laketon Avenue has avoided the strip commercialization common to the City’s major streets. This is due to a variety of factors, including the former presence of the Grand Trunk Railroad right-of-way, paralleling Laketon Avenue on the north. The historic presence of this 66 foot right-of-way, actively used for rail transport during the early to mid-1970's, precluded use of frontage properties. The line is now abandoned, most of the trackage removed, and the right-of-way in City ownership (with some exception). A portion of the right-of-way (between Getty Street and Hoyt Avenue) is presently being redeveloped as a component of the City’s pathway system.

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Core downtown and residential.
- East: Strip commercial.
- South: Muskegon Heights (mixed uses)
- West: Residential, strip office, institutional.

### Sub-Area Stability:

The stability of the sub-area varies depending on the specific geographic location. As a whole, the sub-area is classified as slightly less than stable. This is due to the increasing rate of homes in need of rehabilitation.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. Many residential blocks experience deteriorating housing conditions and/or poor site maintenance.
2. It is anticipated that Hackley Hospital will require the additional removal of homes for hospital expansion and associated improvement purposes.
3. Peck Street is likely to experience continued demand for the conversion of single-family homes to non-residential use.
4. The area lacks a convenient, full-service, grocery store.
5. The presence and location of the hospital and related medical facilities results in some movement of transient traffic through adjacent residential blocks.
6. The perimeter roads, and Laketon Avenue, lack high quality, cohesive, streetscapes.
7. The demand for strip commercialization of Getty Street is likely to continue.
8. There is a lack of adequate buffer protection between many of the strip commercial areas/uses and adjacent homesites.
9. There is a lack of coordinated planning between the City and adjoining Muskegon Heights.
10. Although the sub-area is host to, or near, several major employers, it does





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not possess a higher quality, market rate, apartment complex.

11. The industrial development along Getty must be carefully buffered to ensure compatibility with nearby residences.
12. The general area (Sub-Area's 3, 4, and 5) includes high numbers of children and older residents. Other than local schools, the availability of recreational facilities for these residents is limited.

#### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Maintain the sub-area's residential focus.
2. Coordinate the City's sub-area planning effort with that of Hackley Hospital on the development of a campus master plan to ensure high quality integration of the medical facility with surrounding neighborhoods and the roadway system. Ensure that such efforts include residents and the underlying Neighborhood Association.
3. Complete the proposed bicycle pathway along Laketon Avenue.
4. Permit remaining properties along Getty Street to be converted to commercial use.
5. Implement, through zoning, buffer requirements associated with the placement of non-residential uses contiguous to residential development.
6. Limit additional industrial development to the established industrial sector.
7. Implement comprehensive streetscape programs along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, Laketon Avenue, and Peck Street.
8. Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.
9. Consider placement of a local community center central to Sub-Area's 3, 4, and 5 that will provide leisure and educational facilities to area residents.
10. Work with an area retailer to assemble sufficient property for construction of a full-service grocery store and accessory uses.
11. Investigate the potential for construction of a market rate apartment complex. A possible location is one central to the confluence of Sub-Areas 4 and 5 with the Core Downtown.
12. Consider placement of duplex, tri-plex, and four-plex units as infill housing based on designs [building and site] which are complimentary to existing area housing.
13. Coordinate planning efforts with that of Muskegon Heights along common boundaries and corridors.



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## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 5 PECK STREET TO SEAWAY DRIVE RESIDENTIAL/MIXED-USE AREA

Sub-Area 5 ranges from residential development in the north to heavier industrial uses along the south (southwest). The sub-area includes the headquarters of the Brunswick Corporation, SPX industrial facilities, St. Mary’s Cemetery, and Muskegon High School and school administration offices. The Jefferson, Campus, Clinton-Peck, Houston, and Clay-Western Historic Districts are located in the sub-area. The Jefferson District is classified as a “AA” historic district and provides excellent examples of period housing. The sub-area also possess a unique, downtown residential neighborhood lying south of the City’s Core Downtown, close to historic Western Avenue on the west. The neighborhood is part of a “AA” National Register Historic District and home to the Hackley House and Hume Home.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: Core Downtown
- East: Peck Street
- South: City Limit [Muskegon Heights]
- West: Seaway Drive

### Neighborhoods:

- Marsh
- Nelson

### Land Use:

- Primary: Residential - northerly portion  
Industrial - southerly portion
- Secondary: Educational facilities  
Offices  
Mixed commercial  
Cemetery

### Area Description:

The sub-area is bordered by Peck Street, Core Downtown, Seaway Drive, and Muskegon Heights (on the south).

The southerly portion of the area is devoted to industrial development, including the headquarters of the Brunswick Corporation and SPX industrial facilities. These uses, as well as others, have been in existence for many years and are well established at this location. Most have made ongoing investments in new buildings and equipment and are the recipient of tax incentives from the City. The industrial area possesses several former industrial sites.



The northerly two-thirds of the sub-area consists of residential development varying in quality, size, and value. The residential blocks encompassed by the Jefferson Historic District possesses some of the City’s finest housing, with sites generally





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well-maintained. The blocks abutting the Core Downtown [generally described as that area between Hackley Park, Western Avenue, Ninth Street, and Houston] reflect a neighborhood enclave with direct linkage and identity to the City's downtown entertainment and business area. The Master Plan calls for this area to be classified as an "In-Town" residential neighborhood, distinct from the basic core downtown area. The "In-Town" neighborhood is part of the Class AA National Register Historic District. The Charles Hackley House and Hume Home, historic landmarks, are located in the "In-Town" neighborhood.

Notwithstanding the presence of many quality homes, the sub-area also possesses a number of blocks with units in need of rehabilitation and site maintenance.

Muskegon High School serves as a major anchor to the sub-area's residential segment. Over the years, the school has undergone several major expansions and site improvements. Additional enhancements are underway.



The sub-area includes the Peck Street and Sanford Street one-way pair located along the easterly border. These north/south systems serve as major collectors to local residential traffic and as arterials to through movement. Over the years, Peck Street has experienced the conversion of homes to office and speciality retail and services uses. The rise of such development may be traced to nearby Hackley Hospital and the northerly portion of the roadways proximity to the City's core downtown.

Seaway Drive (BR-31) serves as the area's westerly boundary. The roadway effectively isolates the area from development to the west.

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Core Downtown
- East: Mixed residential, office, and speciality retail
- South: City limit (Muskegon Heights)
- West: Seaway Drive

### Sub-Area Stability:

The area's stability varies throughout. Residential locations range from mature, well maintained, neighborhoods to those undergoing significant decline and in need of rehabilitation.

Most of the industrial development is also mature in age. And, like the area's residential development, ranges from well maintained facilities to those in need of major rehabilitation and/or removal.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. There are pockets of housing in need of





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rehabilitation.

2. Laketon Avenue suffers as a result of several business and property owners who fail to maintain the appearance of their buildings and/or frontage sites.
3. The area has several Part 201 sites. These are generally located in the area's industrial sector.
4. Buffers between residential and industrial development are virtually non-existent.
5. The small enclave of housing within the vicinity of East Hackley Avenue and Park Street is isolated by industrial and commercial development. The suitability, and long term survival, of residential development in this location is questionable.
6. The area's major streets lack a cohesive streetscape program.
7. The site occupied by Muskegon High School is undersized and may impact long term development efforts.
8. As with adjoining Sub-Area 4, Sub-Area 5 contains a number of major employers. However, the area does not possess higher quality, market rate, apartment in which employees may live.
9. The "In-Town" neighborhood district represents an exceptional residential asset due to its historic character and geographic position. However, the district's close proximity to the downtown, combined with its historic

quality, result in planning challenges unique to the area [e.g. tourist traffic, demands for conversion of large homes to commercial use, etc.].

10. There is a lack of coordinated planning between the City and adjoining Muskegon Heights.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Redevelop that portion of the sub-area located south and east of the industrial sector from residential to industrial.
2. Complete the proposed bicycle pathway along Laketon Avenue.
3. Implement, through zoning, buffer requirements to mitigate compatibility impacts between residential and non-residential uses.
4. Work with the Muskegon Public Schools Board of Education to development a long range campus master plan for the High School area.
5. Investigate the potential for development of a market rate apartment complex.
6. Implement comprehensive streetscape programs along the sub-area's major roadways.
7. Focus "brownfield" redevelopment efforts on the former industrial land.
8. Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.
9. Work with Laketon Avenue businesses



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to encourage site enhancements and, where necessary, building facade improvements.

10. Develop a comprehensive preservation strategy [plan] for the “In-Town” residential district which permits the City to capitalize on the tourist appeal of the district while retaining its residential integrity. The preservation strategy should include an analysis of building and site conditions on a parcel-by-parcel basis, preparation of a streetscape program unique to the district and consistent with its historic flavor, an analysis of visual and pedestrian linkages to Western Avenue and the Core Downtown, an assessment of traffic circulation impacts and recommended improvements, an analysis of infill needs and potential including a comprehensive evaluation of infill programs completed over the past several years, and related district factors.
11. Coordinate planning efforts with that of Muskegon Heights. Of particular note is the joint development of a small industrial park from Park to Seaway and Hackley to Laketon.



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## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 6 BARCLAY STREET SUB-AREA

Barclay Street, one of the City’s north/south collectors, traverses the center of Sub-Area 6. This sub-area contains a variety of land uses including parks and open space, single and multiple family residential, and various forms of commercial. No specific land use predominates, however, residential becomes the primary focus when single and multiple family land areas are combined. Ruddiman Creek borders the western edge of the area, leading into Ruddiman Lagoon and Muskegon Lake.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the mixed-use character of Sub-Area 6 and to demonstrate how varying land uses may co-exist, as well as compliment each other.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: Laketon Avenue
- East: Seaway Drive (BR-31)
- South: Sherman
- West: Barclay and Ruddiman Creek

this location, one finds retail strip centers lying east and west of Henry. Historically, these centers have served a regional population base offering grocery, pharmacy, clothing, automotive, restaurant, and general retail goods.

### Neighborhoods:

Campbell

The area lying between Henry Street and Seaway Drive is slowly becoming a solid core area of commercial development. While some residential and industrial uses do exist, it is anticipated they will ultimately be replaced by commercial facilities.

### Land Use:

- Mixed Use: Open space/park
- Single-family
- Multiple-family
- Office, service, and retail

Commercial activity may also be found along Laketon Avenue, between Barclay Street and Seaway Drive. Commercial uses are situated in strip fashion along the roadway and include a variety of local retail and service facilities.

### Area Description:

Henry Street, a north/south arterial, traverses the easterly portion of the sub-area. Henry Street is one of the metro areas most popular commercial corridors. Henry Street links the sub-area to the nearby cities of Roosevelt Park and Norton Shores. Commercial development is generally found throughout the length of Henry Street, with the largest concentration at the southern end near Sherman Boulevard. At

Between Henry and Barclay one finds the sub-area’s largest section of single-family homes. Generally, homes are moderately priced and in good condition. There are limited instances of units in need of rehabilitation.





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Muskegon Catholic Central School lies west of Barclay, south of Laketon. Muskegon Catholic is one of the region's largest parochial schools.

A large, vintage, multiple-family housing complex is found in the Willow Drive area, south of Muskegon Catholic Central. Although renovated several years ago, the complex retains a row-house, barracks type, character. Additional multiple-family facilities may be found in the southern portion of the sub-area, between Barclay and Henry Streets.

Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon traverse the western rim of the sub-area. These natural features markedly enhance the sub-area's attractiveness and are important elements to the local quality of life. Ruddiman Lagoon empties into nearby Muskegon Lake. The creek and lagoon are closely associated with McGraft Park, found in adjacent Sub-Area 7.

#### Adjacent Land Use:

North: Residential and strip retail  
East: Seaway Drive  
South: City limit (Roosevelt Park)  
West: Ruddiman Creek, McGraft Park, and residential

#### Sub-Area Stability:

Although commercial development along Henry Street is undergoing some change, the sub-area as a whole is relatively stable.

Due to competition from new commercial development occurring in outlying locations, Henry Street's position as the region's premier commercial sector has declined. Notwithstanding that fact, however, Henry Street's central position to a large population base should ultimately counter any declining trend.

#### Sub-Area Issues:

1. There is a lack of buffering between commercial and residential development.
2. Due to its location, the City may experience a demand for the expansion of commercial development between Henry Street and Seaway Drive. This would necessitate the removal of homes (located in the area between Hackley and Young Streets). The City has invested considerable funds in this area for purposes of maintaining its residential character.
3. The area's major streets (Laketon Avenue, Henry Street, and Sherman Boulevard) lack cohesive streetscape programs.
4. The area between Young Street, Seaway Drive, Laketon Avenue, and Henry Street is industrial in orientation. This is not consistent with surrounding land uses.



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5. The former Mall (now under Muskegon County ownership and used for storage) detracts from the visual quality and general character of Henry Street. The large vacant parking lot and appearance of unused buildings is not conducive to a high quality commercial (retail) environment.
6. Remaining single-family homes along Henry Street are likely to experience a future demand for conversion to commercial use.
7. Commercial development along Laketon Avenue has been restricted to the area between Seaway Drive and Barclay Street. Pressure may result to extend commercial uses farther west due to the large population concentration in this area.
8. Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon are subject to deterioration due to the influence of surrounding development.
9. There is a lack of coordinated planning between the City and adjoining Roosevelt Park.
- streetscapes along Laketon Street, Henry Street, and Sherman Boulevard.
4. Market the Outlet Mall site for redevelopment to commercial or office use. Due to its size, the site might also function as the location of a community recreation center.
5. Allow homes along Henry to be converted to office or commercial use.
6. Prohibit future industrial development along Henry.
7. Restrict commercial development along Laketon Avenue to Barclay Street.
8. Prepare and implement a comprehensive management plan for Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon. Utilize an environmental corridor overlay zone (as part of the zoning ordinance) to provide additional resource protection.
9. Coordinate boundary planning activities with the City of Roosevelt Park.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Implement, through zoning, controls to ensure adequate buffers between commercial and residential development.
2. Complete the full commercial development of that area lying between Henry Street, Laketon Avenue, Seaway Drive, and Sherman Boulevard.
3. Prepare and implement high quality





# Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 7 McGRAFT PARK RESIDENTIAL AREA

Sub-Area 7 is one of Muskegon’s mature, stable, inviting residential areas. The sub-area is anchored by McGraft Park, located along the sub-area’s eastern edge, and the Muskegon Country Club on the west. Central to the sub-area is Bunker Junior High School.

Lakeshore Drive extends in a east/west direction along the northern edge of the sub-area, while Sherman Boulevard delineates the southerly perimeter. These systems enable vehicular traffic to move to the nearby, and highly popular, Lake Michigan shoreline and Pere Marquette Park.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the McGraft Park Residential Sub-Area as single-family in orientation. As such, the Master Plan supports ongoing efforts towards the rehabilitation of mature housing stock for continuing single-family use and, where feasible, the construction of new single-family detached homes. Moreover, those features of the sub-area considered highly beneficial to the area’s residential character, aesthetic quality, and life style should be fully protected and, where necessary, enhanced. These include McGraft Park, Seyferth Playfield, and tributaries of Ruddiman Lagoon.

While fostering the above goal, it is acknowledged that a limited range of commercial and office activities are appropriate to select segments of Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard. Typically, non-residential uses should be oriented to the needs of the local populace. Such development should be highly controlled pursuant to type, location, and design in order to prevent negative impacts on the sub-area’s residential focus.

Industrial development should be prohibited.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

North: Lakeshore Drive  
East: McGraft Park Road/Barclay  
South: Sherman Boulevard (City limit)  
West: Muskegon Country Club

### Land Use:

Primary: Single-family residential  
Secondary: Regional and neighborhood commercial

Multi-family

### Neighborhoods:

Lakeside  
Glenside

### Area Description:

The area is primarily comprised of mature residential housing stock in good to very





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good condition.

Complimenting the sub-area’s residential flavor are several parks including Seyferth Playfield and well-known McGraft Park.

McGraft is recognized throughout the Muskegon Metropolitan area as one of the region’s finest outdoor parks. As such, it is in demand by residents and non-residents alike. The park’s outdoor amphitheater is commonly used by religious, civic, and other groups for summer concerts, while the indoor shelter and outdoor playgrounds are host to numerous picnics, family reunions, and civic festivities.

Commercial development is sporadically located along Sherman Boulevard. Typically, commercial uses are found as small nodes near intersections or as small strip segments within various blocks. Along Lakeshore, commercial development generally occurs in linear (strip) fashion.

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Industrial, marina, and commercial.
- East: Residential and McGraft Park.
- South: Strip commercial.
- West: Muskegon Country Club.

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

As a whole, the sub-area is relatively stable. However, some unwanted disruption to the area’s residential environment is experienced along the Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard corridors. These are described below.

**Lakeshore Drive** - The advanced age of housing along portions of Lakeshore Drive, combined with a lack of maintenance and influence of certain nearby industrial and commercial uses, has resulted in intermittent pockets of homes in need of rehabilitation. Left unchecked, such conditions could impact nearby home sites, including those internal to the sub-area.

**Sherman Boulevard** - Some of the commercial uses along Sherman have not provided or maintained sufficient buffer protection to fully mitigate unwanted compatibility impacts (e.g., noise, lights, aesthetics, etc.) between said uses and nearby homes. This is not conducive to residential stability.

### Sub-Area Issues:

In addition to the stability concerns referenced above, several additional issues warrant attention. These are:

1. The presence of commercial development and commercial zoning along Sherman Boulevard (both sides), combined with high rates of traffic (local and transient) will result in additional requests for strip commercial rezonings. The same phenomena holds true for Lakeshore Drive (although the amount of property left for rezoning is limited).
2. Commercial signage along Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard is not consistent pursuant to size, type, and design.
3. Zone district classifications along Lakeshore Drive lack continuity and, in





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certain instances, are not consistent with the Preamble Statements of the present zoning ordinance.

4. Many of the commercial establishments along Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard lack streetscapes consistent with the residential character of the sub-area.
5. Certain outlot areas associated with tributaries of Ruddiman Lagoon have been used inappropriately (e.g., depositing of leaves and brush, depositing of debris, heavy trespass, cutting of vegetation potentially suitable for wildlife and the protection of the water resource, etc.).

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Maintain the character of the sub-area as single-family residential. Limited multiple-family may be permitted provided:
  - ◆ residential density (units per acre) does not exceed underlying single-family standards by more than 50 percent;
  - ◆ sufficient on-site parking exists to accommodate all units;
  - ◆ the character of the multiple-family complex (building and site) must be consistent with that of surrounding residential development;
  - ◆ all units should have on-site access to at least (1) stall of an enclosed garage; and,
  - ◆ all projects should be subject to rigid site design (zoning) standards, including site plan review by the Planning Commission.
2. Maintain the existing system of sub-area parks and natural features as integral elements of the area's residential flavor.
3. Incorporate the sub-area's (Ruddiman Lagoon) tributaries as components of the City's natural features inventory. Implement zoning standards and maintenance criteria to ensure protection of the tributaries [refer to Number 4, following].
4. Develop and implement an educational program which advances preservation of the area's natural features. For instance; a) consider erecting an informational display map of the Ruddiman Lagoon/McGraft Park natural area and park system on the grounds of McGraft Park; b) develop a designated "walking" trail, with interpretive signage, traversing the park and lagoon area [the trail should be included as a component of the Lakeshore Trail Master Plan]; c) as part of the City's Leisure Services Program, coordinate a program with the local system of public and private schools and neighborhood associations for purposes of educating students and residents on the importance of the area's (City's) natural features; d) on public properties, near water courses, identify and implement a program of designated "natural" areas wherein lawn maintenance is either eliminated or markedly reduced. This might include a designated 25 feet, non-disturb, natural area adjacent to



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local water and wetland bodies.

5. Along Sherman Boulevard, work with adjoining Norton Shores to coordinate the preparation and implementation of consistent (compatible) sign, access, and related streetscape standards. Such standards should recognize the sub-area's residential character.
6. Implement zoning (site plan) standards requiring adequate buffer protection between the commercial uses along Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard and adjacent residential development.
7. Limit expansion of commercial development (rezonings) along Sherman Boulevard.
8. Existing commercial districts along



Sherman Boulevard, west of Pine Grove Street, should be restricted to the B-1 Zone District Classification. B-1 uses are designed primarily to serve persons residing in adjacent residential areas or neighborhoods.

9. Commercial development along Lakeshore Drive should be restricted to the B-2 Zone District Classification.

While it is recognized that Lakeshore Drive serves a rather high amount of transient traffic, many of the uses permitted within the present B-4 areas (e.g., major automobile repair, engine and body repair, storage of wrecked automobiles, storage of goods, parts assembly, vehicular sales, flea markets, etc.) are not conducive to the planned character of the area.



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## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 8 LAKE MICHIGAN SHORELINE SUB-AREA

Sub-Area 8 might be classified as a peninsula since it is surrounded by water on three sides. These include Muskegon Lake, the Muskegon Lake Channel leading to Lake Michigan, and Lake Michigan. The area is home to the highly popular Pere Marquette Beach fronting on Lake Michigan, as well as Kruse Park. Each summer the beach draws literally thousands of residents and visitors who come to enjoy the water, sand, and sunshine. Other notable land uses include the Muskegon Country Club, the Harbour Towne planned residential development, the Silversides Submarine tourist attraction, and several marinas located along the Muskegon Lake side. In addition to Harbour Towne, residential development is found throughout the length of the area.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to maintain the quality and character of Sub-Area 8, while permitting select (and highly restricted) residential and commercial enhancements consistent with the range of sub-area uses. Industrial development should be prohibited.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: Muskegon Lake
- East: Eastern edge of the Muskegon Country Club
- South: Sherman Boulevard (City of Norton Shores)
- West: Lake Michigan

### Neighborhoods:

Beachwood/Bluffton

### Land Use:

- Primary: Single-family Residential  
Lake Michigan shoreline/beach
- Secondary: Muskegon Country Club  
Marina, marina service

### Area Description:

Approximately one-fifth (1/5) of the sub-area is comprised of the Muskegon Country Club. Located at the eastern edge of the area, the Muskegon Country Club is a private, 18 hole golf course with associated club house, dining, recreation, and meeting room facilities. Site topography is rolling with mature trees abounding throughout. The golf course serves as an attractive aesthetic feature for entry to the sub-area. It also provides a significant land use buffer between this sub-area and adjoining Sub-Area 7.

Lake Michigan serves as the western boundary of the sub-area, extending the full length in a north/south direction. Associated with Lake Michigan is one of the region's finest sand beaches. The beach is home to Pere Marquette Park, a City recreational facility. Except for a small concession area, commercial development





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is non-existent along the beach. Over the years, public discussion has ensued regarding placement of speciality commercial facilities along a portion of the beach area. These might include restaurants and specialty retail with an emphasis on the tourist trade. Public opinion on such development is split. Some wish to preserve the “natural” qualities of the beach area, while others view small, well-planned, commercial facilities as consistent with the character of the area and benefiting the community.



Along the southerly end of the Lake Michigan stretch one finds Kruse Park with a boardwalk along the Muskegon Channel, boat ramps, and observation decks, and the Kruse Park area woodlands. As with the beach, the park and woodland features add to the high quality environmental character of this sub-area.

Well-maintained single-family homes are located throughout the length of the sub-area. A new residential site condominium planned unit development is under construction in the northern portion of the area, with linkage to Muskegon Lake. Known as Harbour Towne, the site condominium development includes high

quality, attached condominium units in a series of clustered pods. The project has proven highly successful and the housing reflects some of the most expensive units in the City (\$200,000+). The success of Harbour Towne demonstrates the ability of Muskegon to successfully compete with other communities in the high end housing market.



Marina facilities and services, the Muskegon Yacht Club, public boat launch facility, and a variety of mixed-uses are found along the Muskegon Lake shoreline between Thompson Avenue (extended) and the S.D. Warren plant. Marina facilities and a small beach area along Muskegon Lake are also located north of Harbour Towne.

The Silversides, a World War II vintage submarine, and designated national monument, has been placed along the Muskegon Lake Channel and serves as a regional tourist attraction. Over thirty thousand (30,000) guests per year visit the site.



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### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Muskegon Lake and a small segment of the S.D. Warren plant abutting the Muskegon Country Club.
- East: Residential
- South: Residential (Norton Shores)
- West: Lake Michigan

### Sub-Area Stability:

Land use within the sub-area is considered very stable. The area's water related position makes it a highly desirable location. Housing quality is generally very good to excellent.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. The presence of Pere Marquette Beach, the Silversides Submarine, and marina development result in significant transient traffic through the sub-area.
2. There is divided opinion over the development of a portion of Pere Marquette Beach for commercial use.

Some residents believe the beach should be retained in a natural state. Others feel a small cluster of speciality retail would be economically beneficial and conducive to a park of this type.

3. In addition to commercial development along the beach, some residents believe additional commercial activity should be positioned near the Silversides in order to take advantage of the tourist trade.
4. The segment along Lakeshore Drive, between Thompson Avenue (extended) and S.D. Warren represents the sub-area's greatest concentration of mixed uses, including an industrial facility, boat storage buildings, bar and restaurant, convenience store, marina, boat sales and service, and housing.
6. Although somewhat congested, the above area offers a desirable marine character to the sub-area. However, some of the uses and/or placement of uses may not be desirable to the area's long term stability.
5. When compared to the Lake Michigan side and the area along the Muskegon Lake Channel, the opportunity for public access to the Muskegon Lake shoreline is limited.
6. There is a lack of coordinated planning with the City of Norton Shores along the Sherman Boulevard corridor.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Consistent with the City's Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment





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Plan, relocate the Silversides to a Core Downtown site. Reuse the vacated site for public open space/park purposes.

2. Restrict permanent commercial development along Pere Marquette Beach. Instead, consider the restrictive leasing of limited, seasonal, space to vendors who utilize portable trailers which may be positioned and removed on a daily basis.
3. Other than the commercial development detailed under item 2, above, restrict commercial uses (restaurant, convenience, bait and tackle, marine supplies, etc.) to the marina service area located along Lakeshore Drive, between Thompson Avenue (extended) and S.D. Warren. With limited exception as detailed below, commercial uses near the former Silversides site should be prohibited. The marina site located north of Harbour Towne contains a proposed restaurant facility (to occupy the former marina club building). The presence of the marina and existing building appear to be conducive to a restaurant at this location. Other forms of commercial activity should be restricted. Land development trends indicate the viability of additional housing in this area. Commercial demands may be satisfied in the marine service area delineated above, along Lakeshore Drive between Thompson Avenue (extended) and S.D. Warren.
4. Prepare a detailed sub-area plan for the marina service area identified earlier. The plan should call for the elimination of industrial uses but should permit the variety of mixed-uses currently existing.
5. Public access (pathway or boardwalk easements) along the length of Muskegon Lake should be implemented. This would permit connection of similar pedestrian movement opportunities presently found along Lake Michigan and the Muskegon Lake Channel. Such pathways should be incorporated as part of the Lakeshore Trail System.
6. Coordinate planning activities along Sherman Boulevard with the City of Norton Shores.



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## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 9 MUSKEGON LAKE/LAKESHORE DRIVE MIXED-USED AREA

Regionally, Sub-Area 9 is most well-known for the presence of the S.D. Warren manufacturing facility. Situated between Lakeshore Drive and Muskegon Lake, the S. D. Warren site comprises one of the largest Lakeshore land holdings. It also represents a complex issue pursuant to land use planning. On the one hand, the facility provides employment opportunities, significant tax base, and represents the lumbering heritage so important to the region’s historic growth and development. Conversely, the facility results in the movement of heavy truck traffic through non-industrial locations, periodically emits off-site odors common to paper mills, fosters the City’s image as a heavy industrial town, and is considered by many to be visually blighting.

Near the S.D. Warren plant is the Lakeside Business District, a unique mixed-use waterfront area conducive to pedestrian scale activity. The district includes a variety of retail, marine, and service uses. Located along the eastern edge of the sub-area, adjacent to Muskegon Lake, is the site of the (former) Amoco tank farm. The sub-area rests at the base of an adjoining residential neighborhood.

It is the long range goal of the Master Plan to bring about the full redevelopment of Sub-Area 9 consistent with the maritime character of the Lakeside Business District.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

North: Muskegon Lake  
East: Laketon Avenue/Lakeshore Drive  
South: Lakeshore Drive  
West: Western edge of the S.D. Warren site

### Area Description:

The sub-area lies primarily between Lakeshore Drive and Muskegon Lake and consists of a mix of industrial, commercial, marine, and recreational uses. The westerly one-half consists of the S.D. Warren Paper Mill. This complex includes manufacturing facilities and storage yards for wood pulp and coal. Wood pulp arrives over the City’s road system via large trucks, while coal arrives by lake freighter. Over the years the plant has undergone several renovations including the application of environmental controls to curb periodic off-site odors common to paper production operations. The plant’s rather massive site is highly visible to those traveling Lakeshore and may be seen across the Lake from North Muskegon. As indicated in the

### Neighborhoods:

Lakeside  
Nims

### Land Use:

Primary: Industrial  
Mixed-Use Commercial  
Secondary: Marine  
Residential





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introduction, the facility represents a complex planning issue. The plant provides a high number of employment opportunities, is a significant contributor to the City's tax revenue base, and links to the Region's former lumbering era. Conversely, the plant results in the cross town movement of heavy industrial traffic, periodically emits objectionable off-site odors, contributes to the City's image as a heavy industrial town, is perceived by certain investors as a hindrance to the revitalization of the lakeshore, and is considered by some to be visually blighting.



Near the S.D. Warren plant lies the Lakeside Business District. This unique blend of mixed retail, marine, entertainment, and service uses is markedly different than the City's other business locations due to its pedestrian scale and waterfront character.



The Lakeside District contains the City's only indoor movie theater, a grocery, local tavern, restaurants, several marina/marina service facilities such as Great Lakes Marina and Storage and Pier 33 Marina, and other complimentary commercial uses. The district is situated at the base of a mature residential area, thus providing nearby shopping and entertainment convenience for neighborhood residents.

The sub-area includes the site of the (former) Amoco tank farm. The site's low elevation, water related position with vistas to Muskegon Lake, and proximity to the Ruddiman Lagoon make it potentially conducive to public open space use.



### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: Muskegon Lake
- East: Residential
- South: Residential, recreation, Ruddiman Lagoon
- West: Marina/marine services

### Sub-Area Stability:

The sub-area is classified as stable. S.D. Warren, the larger land holder, has made substantial plant improvements over the years. The Lakeside Business District has





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also experienced a variety of building and site improvements.

#### Sub-Area Issues:

1. As a predominate, highly visual, land use, the S.D. Warren plant significantly influences other shoreline development.
2. Industrial development in this sub-area generates undesirable levels of heavy truck traffic and production related odors.
3. The sub-area possesses several, large, Part 201 and LUST sites. One of these includes the (former) Amoco tank farm which has public open space potential.
4. Select shoreline areas offer ongoing potential for the harboring of deep water craft pursuant to the shipping and/or receiving of bulk product and/or large shipment containers. The receipt of products such as aggregate, bulk quantities of chemicals or like materials, etc. may be viewed by some as industrial in orientation and inappropriate for this shoreline local.
5. It is common for industrial (employee) traffic to disperse throughout the adjacent residential neighborhood as a means of avoiding congestion on Lakeshore Drive and McCracken Street.

environmental concerns [e.g. odor, traffic impacts, etc.].

2. In the event of a relocation by S.D. Warren, redevelop the plant site for non-industrial use.
3. Acquire the Amoco tank farm site and redevelop for public open space use.
4. As industrial development along the shoreline is eliminated, restrict the movement of deep water (bulk shipment carrier) vessels to this sub-area thereby reducing (and eventually eliminating) use of the shoreline for the temporary storage and/or processing of waterborne industrial products.
5. Maintain the Lakeside Business District as a manageable, compact area suitable for pedestrian movement. Avoid the linear (strip) extension of commercial development outside the district's present boundaries. Encourage retention of the district's marine character. Place greater emphasis on the district's tourist potential via marketing and media efforts.

#### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Support the continued growth and development of S.D. Warren within the limits of its current site. In doing so, work with the industry to address their





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**MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 10  
SEAWAY DRIVE/LAKETON AVENUE/LAKESHORE DRIVE RESIDENTIAL/MIXED-USE  
AREA**

Although primarily single-family residential, Sub-Area 10 contains a wide array of land uses including some of the City's most well known commercial and industrial businesses. The sub-area is served by Laketon Avenue, Seaway Drive, and Lakeshore Drive and is the recipient of significant through traffic moving to local industries along the shoreline, Pere Marquette Park, and homesites in adjoining Sub-Area's 7 and 8. The northern edge of the sub-area abuts Muskegon Lake. However, like many of the other sub-areas with water relationships, the residential segments are effectively blocked from most of the shoreline by industrial or other private development.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to retain the residential orientation of Sub-Area 10 while restricting the expansion of commercial and industrial development to infill locations.

**Location (Area Boundaries):**

- North: Muskegon Lake
- East: Seaway Drive/Core Downtown
- South: Laketon Avenue and a small residential segment along Nolan Avenue and Frisbie Street
- West: Muskegon Lake

**Neighborhood:**

Nims

**Land Use:**

- Primary: Residential
- Secondary: Industrial  
Mixed Commercial  
Office

**Area Description:**

Seaway Drive and Laketon Avenue serve as the sub area's eastern and southern limit, respectively. Lakeshore Drive runs near the

northern and west edge, separated from Muskegon Lake by a strip of land varying in width and occupied by industrial, residential, marina, and office uses.

Cole's (industrial) Bakery is located in this sub-area along with an adjoining cluster of high-end condominiums and associated marina. Designed in planned unit development fashion, the project offers an excellent example of the potential for residential and industrial development to coexist.





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Also found along the Muskegon Lake shoreline is the Muskegon YFCA and office/retail space (Waterfront Centre). The YFCA is in close proximity to Heritage Landing County Park located on Muskegon Lake at the edge of the core downtown.



The Waterfront Center [identified as an historic structure on the State Register of Historic Places] has undergone several transitions in use. Originally constructed for industrial purposes, this multi-storied brick building was converted to retail use during the 1980's. Housing a variety of specialty, antique, and craft shops, and a restaurant, the rehabilitated industrial facility waned after several years of use. The building has since been converted to office space.



The interior portion, and a majority of the sub-area is comprised of low to moderately valued single-family homes. Housing and site condition are generally good with minor instances of blocks in need of significant enhancement. The southwestern portion of the area links with the Ruddiman Lagoon.

Strip commercial use is found along Laketon Avenue, between Seaway Drive and Barclay Street. A small commercial area on Laketon Avenue also exists near Palmer Avenue. Isolated commercial parcels occur on Beidler Street, north of Laketon Avenue.

### Adjacent Land Uses:

- North: Muskegon Lake
- East: Seaway Drive (residential, industrial, and commercial)
- South: Commercial, semi-public (Muskegon Catholic High School, commercial, McGraft Park.)
- West: Muskegon Lake

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

The sub-area is relatively stable. Prior investments have been made along the waterfront and will likely continue into the future. Housing condition is generally good.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. Laketon Avenue is likely to experience future demand for continued strip commercial development. With commercial uses located at each end of the Laketon Avenue segment, pressure to develop the full corridor has the





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- potential to occur.
- Existing industrial development on the south side of Lakeshore Drive abuts residential development with virtually no buffering between the uses. Housing at this location exhibits the greatest need for improvement.
  - The interior of the sub-area, which is residential in use, experiences several pockets/parcels of commercial development. Given the sub-area's close proximity to the Core Downtown and the commercial development along Laketon Avenue, interior commercial development is not desired.
  - Lakeshore Drive and Laketon Avenue (central and eastern segments) are in need of improved streetscapes.
  - Incorporate, through zoning, buffering requirements between residential and non-residential uses.
  - Design and implement streetscape programs along Laketon Avenue and Lakeshore Drive, including completion of the Lakeshore Trail.
  - Restrict industrial expansion to infill locations, internal to existing industrial development.
  - Focus housing/site rehabilitation efforts on those blocks identified as exhibiting a need.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

- Along Laketon, limit commercial development to Barclay Street (south side) and Franklin Street (north side). Between Seaway Drive and the above streets, permit commercial infill along Laketon Avenue.
- Other than neighborhood businesses directly linked to the area, prohibit further encroachment of commercial development within the interior portions of the sub-area. Work towards the long-term elimination of commercial development on Beidler Street with reuse oriented to residential development.



# Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



## MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 11 SEAWAY DRIVE/WATERFRONT SUB-AREA

Sub-Area 11 lies between Seaway Drive and Muskegon Lake, north of the Core Downtown. The most predominate land use features include the large expanse of wetlands associated with the convergence of the three branches of the Muskegon River with Muskegon Lake, and the B.C. Cobb Power Plant with its towering stack. Other uses include commercial, marina facilities, and industrial facilities. Sub-Area 11 provides the first glimpse of visual entry into the Core Downtown for visitors from the north. It is the doorway to the Downtown.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to bring about major redevelopment throughout most of Sub-Area 11 in a manner which integrates, yet protects, the area's unique natural features.

### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: City Limit [Muskegon Charter Township with North Muskegon lying north of Muskegon Lake]
- East: City Limit [Muskegon River floodplain and Seaway Drive-Moses Jones Parkway]
- South: Seaway Drive
- West: Muskegon Lake

plant and the Muskegon River (North, Middle, and South branches with associated wetlands). These features are easily observed by those traveling via Seaway Drive from the north. Both create positive impressions of the City.

The plant's tall, and impressive, smoke stack is considered a well known City landmark.

### Neighborhood:

Jackson Hill

### Land Use:

- Primary: B.C. Cobb Power Plant  
Muskegon River/wetlands  
Vacant parcels
- Secondary: Industrial Mixed Commercial



The expanse of open water and wetlands formed as the Muskegon River converges with Muskegon Lake offers an ecosystem supporting an array of fish, plants, migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. This area provides an excellent, and nationally recognized, sport's fishery.

### Area Description:

The northern one-half of the sub-area consists of the B.C. Cobb (Consumer's Energy) coal fired electric power generating





# Sub-Area Plans

## Master Land Use Plan



The southern one-half of the sub-area is comprised of strip commercial, industrial, undeveloped sites (due in large part to their wetland character), and Fisherman’s Landing (a public boat launching site).

### Adjacent Land Use:

- North: City Limit [Muskegon Charter Township with North Muskegon lying north of Muskegon Lake]
- East: Muskegon River floodplain and Seaway Drive
- South: Core Downtown
- West: Muskegon Lake

### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

The northern one-half of the area is classified as very stable due to the presence of the B.C. Cobb Power Plant and Muskegon River. The southern one-half is anticipated to undergo marked change over the next ten to twenty years as older uses make way for the revitalization of the waterfront.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. The environmental integrity of the Muskegon River, and associated tributaries and wetlands, are critical to the future well-being of the City.
2. The large scrap metal/recycling industry, as with other industries of a heavy industrial character, are not conducive to the positive long term development of the sub-area.
3. Ottawa Street and Western Avenue exhibit the appearance of an aging, non-maintained, industrial corridor. Views of these systems from Seaway Drive lend a negative image to the City entryway.
4. The area possesses several sites of known environmental concern including the old City dump and wastewater treatment plant.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Prepare and implement sound environmental policies governing shoreline development in order to protect the integrity of the Muskegon River ecosystem.
2. In cooperation with (non-water related) industry along the shoreline, develop and implement relocation programs moving the operations to appropriate industrial sites, such as within the City’s complex of industrial parks.

Pursuant to this recommendation, select areas along the shoreline may be suitable for industrial uses directly





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



associated with the deep water port capabilities of Muskegon Lake. Such industries may include aggregate and non-hazardous bulk products, large container shipments, and other goods utilizing the Great Lakes for product movement. Unlike other subareas with Muskegon Lake frontage, Sub-Area 11 is closely linked to the region's interstate road system.

3. Prepare a comprehensive, sub-area, redevelopment (design) plan for Sub-Area 11 based on the use of innovative development techniques (i.e., Waterfront Overlay Zone/Planned Unit Development). Future development should be coordinated in a planned, versus piecemeal, fashion.
4. As part of the above plan, investigate the potential to create a single roadway serving future sub-area development versus the present system (Western Avenue and Ottawa Street).
5. Develop the former Waste Water Treatment site as a natural area incorporating a system of nature trails for aesthetic enjoyment and educational enhancement.
6. Traverse the sub-area with the Lakeshore Trail system providing opportunity for a view of Muskegon Lake and associated natural areas.



## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



### MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 12 NORTH APPLE RESIDENTIAL SUB-AREA

Sub-Area 12 comprises the largest land mass of the 13 areas, extending from US-31 to Seaway Drive (BR-31), between Apple Avenue (M-46) and the (northern) City limit. A majority of the area is single-family residential, supplemented by small pockets of industrial, several segments of strip commercial, and multiple-family. Ryerson Creek and Fourmile Creek traverse the sub-area. These systems provide wildlife habitat, greenspace, and help to identify the area's character.

It is the goal of the Master Plan to maintain the residential integrity of the sub-area, while setting aside small segments suitable for commercial and industrial uses in a highly compatible, non-threatening, fashion.

#### Location (Area Boundaries):

North: City limit/BR-31  
East: US-31  
South: Apple Avenue (M-46)  
West: Seaway Drive/BR-31

#### Neighborhoods:

Jackson Hill  
Angell  
Marquette  
Steele

#### Land Use:

Primary: Residential  
Secondary: Industrial, commercial

#### Area Description:

Single-family homes are found throughout the sub-area including many new homes located in the Marquette neighborhood. They range from well to poorly maintained dwellings. Sub-Area 12 has the highest concentration of homes experiencing significant site deterioration. A variety of

schools and churches are interspersed throughout and compliment the residential flavor of the area.

Strip commercial development of a mixed variety is found along Apple Avenue near the US-31 and Getty Street intersections. This development is consistent with those of the adjoining sub-areas. Isolated commercial parcels are found along Apple throughout its length.

An industrial area is located near the intersection of Getty Street with Seaway Drive (Skyline Drive). This area is situated directly across from the Teledyne





## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



Continental Plant. The industrial area is isolated/buffered by woodlands and wetlands associated with the Muskegon River.

### Adjacent Land Use:

North: BR-31  
East: US-31  
South: Residential, commercial, institutional  
West: Seaway Drive (M-120)

### Sub-Area Stability:

Due to the high number of homes and home sites in need of improvement, the general stability of the sub-area as a whole is less than desirable. For many blocks, advancements need to be made in neighborhood rehabilitation efforts.

### Sub-Area Issues:

1. A large number of residential blocks exhibit poor housing and/or poor site condition.
2. Apple Avenue is likely to experience additional demand for increased commercial use.
3. Apple Avenue lacks a comprehensive streetscape program.

### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. Housing rehabilitation efforts should be focused in Sub-Area 12.
2. A comprehensive streetscape program should be prepared and implemented for Apple Avenue.

3. Clustered commercial development should be confined to the US-31 and Getty Street intersections, consistent with similar development identified in Sub-Areas 3 and 4.
4. The industrial node near Seaway Drive (Skyline Drive) and Getty should be developed as a small industrial park.



# Sub-Area Plans

## Master Land Use Plan



### MASTER PLAN SUB-AREA 13 MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUB-AREA

In addition to Muskegon Community College, Sub-Area 13 hosts General Hospital, a mixture of high density apartment complexes, a small area of single-family homes, a public golf course, and a variety of institutional and commercial uses. Similar to Sub-Area 1, Sub-Area 13 is separated from the main body of the City by US-31. Except for linkage to the City on its westerly side, the sub-area is surrounded by Muskegon Charter Township.

The southwest corner of the sub-area abuts the Apple Avenue (M-46)/US-31 Intersection. In this general location, Apple Avenue experiences a high degree of retail and fast food development, including the presence of local and national facilities. This general area represents the primary (core) retail center for Muskegon Charter Township and additional retail expansion is anticipated. Interestingly, the above intersection coincides with Muskegon County’s center of population.

Notwithstanding Apple Avenue’s existing commercial development and the roadway’s importance to the Township for additional business use, it is the goal of the Muskegon Master Plan to retain the institutional and multiple-family character of Sub-Area 14 within the confines of the City.

#### Location (Area Boundaries):

- North: City Limit and Muskegon Charter Township
- East: City Limit and Muskegon Charter Township
- South: Apple Avenue (M-46)
- West: US-31

#### Land Use:

- Primary: Institutional  
Multiple-family
- Secondary: Single-family  
Regional commercial

#### Area Description:

Access to the sub-area is quickly gained via US-31 or Apple Avenue (M-46). These

systems form the western and southern perimeters of the area, respectively. The intersection of the two systems also serves as the City’s primary entry for those traveling from the north or east. Both are important to the efficient movement of college bound and apartment traffic.

Muskegon Community College (MCC) and the University Park Golf Course lie north of Marquette Avenue, comprising roughly one-third (1/3) of the sub-area’s land mass. The Muskegon Center for Higher Education, a consortium of colleges and universities including MCC, Ferris State University, Grand Valley State University, and Western Michigan University, is located on the MCC Campus.





## Sub-Area Plans

### Master Land Use Plan



An additional one-third of the area is comprised of medium to high density, multiple-family, apartments. These range from market rate to rent assisted units.

The remaining one-third is comprised of General Hospital, physician offices, the Muskegon County Health Department office building, the former State Regional Center (for the developmentally disabled), small nodes of single-family residential home sites, and a variety of commercial development. Thirteen restaurants are located on M-46 within close proximity to the US-31/M-46 Intersection, although not all are in Sub-Area 13. All of the major fast food chains are represented, as well as a number of family-style restaurants.



#### Sub-Area (Land Use) Stability:

The presence of Muskegon Community College, recent expansion of the college to support the Center for Higher Education, General Hospital, and predominately well maintained apartment development result in a high degree of stability for Sub-Area 13. Additionally, Baker College anticipates relocating its Downtown campus to the site of the vacant Regional Center during 1997. That move, while impacting the City's

Downtown, will further strengthen this area.

#### Sub-Area Issues:

1. It is anticipated the Muskegon County Health Department, located at the corner of Harvey and Oak, will relocate its operations to the downtown campus of Baker College (now owned by Muskegon County) resulting in the vacancy and availability of this large office complex.
2. While recent improvements have been made to the US-31/M-46 Intersection, traffic congestion remains pronounced along M-46 throughout the sub-area and in adjacent Sub-Area 12. Of particular concern are the many left turns at non-signalized intersections and by traffic exiting businesses along the roadway.
3. Due to their interior locations, combined with a limited number of access points along M-46 and limited signage, facilities such as MCC, the Center for Higher Education, General Hospital, and the like may be difficult to locate by those unfamiliar with the area. This problem will become more pronounced as Baker relocates to the area.
4. Apple Avenue lacks a consistent access, streetscape, and signage program. A similar situation exists in adjoining Muskegon Charter Township.

#### Master Plan Recommendations:

1. To enhance the marketability and



## Sub-Area Plans Master Land Use Plan



- ongoing occupancy of the County Health Department Office Building, provide, through appropriate zoning, opportunity for both public and private use of the facility for office purposes.
2. Working in concert with Muskegon Charter Township, prepare an Apple Avenue Corridor development program addressing access control, streetscape, and signage standards. Within the City, the program should include the full commercial segment of Apple traversing Sub-Area 12, extending to approximately Roberts Street in Sub-Area 13. Within Muskegon Charter Township, we recommend the study extend to at least the Sheridan Road/Apple Intersection area.
  3. With the growth of nearby Apple Avenue as a prime commercial corridor, there appears to be no reason to foster the interior (northerly) development of Sub-Area 13 properties for retail, restaurant, or general service use. Therefore, such development should be restricted to existing locations along Apple Avenue.

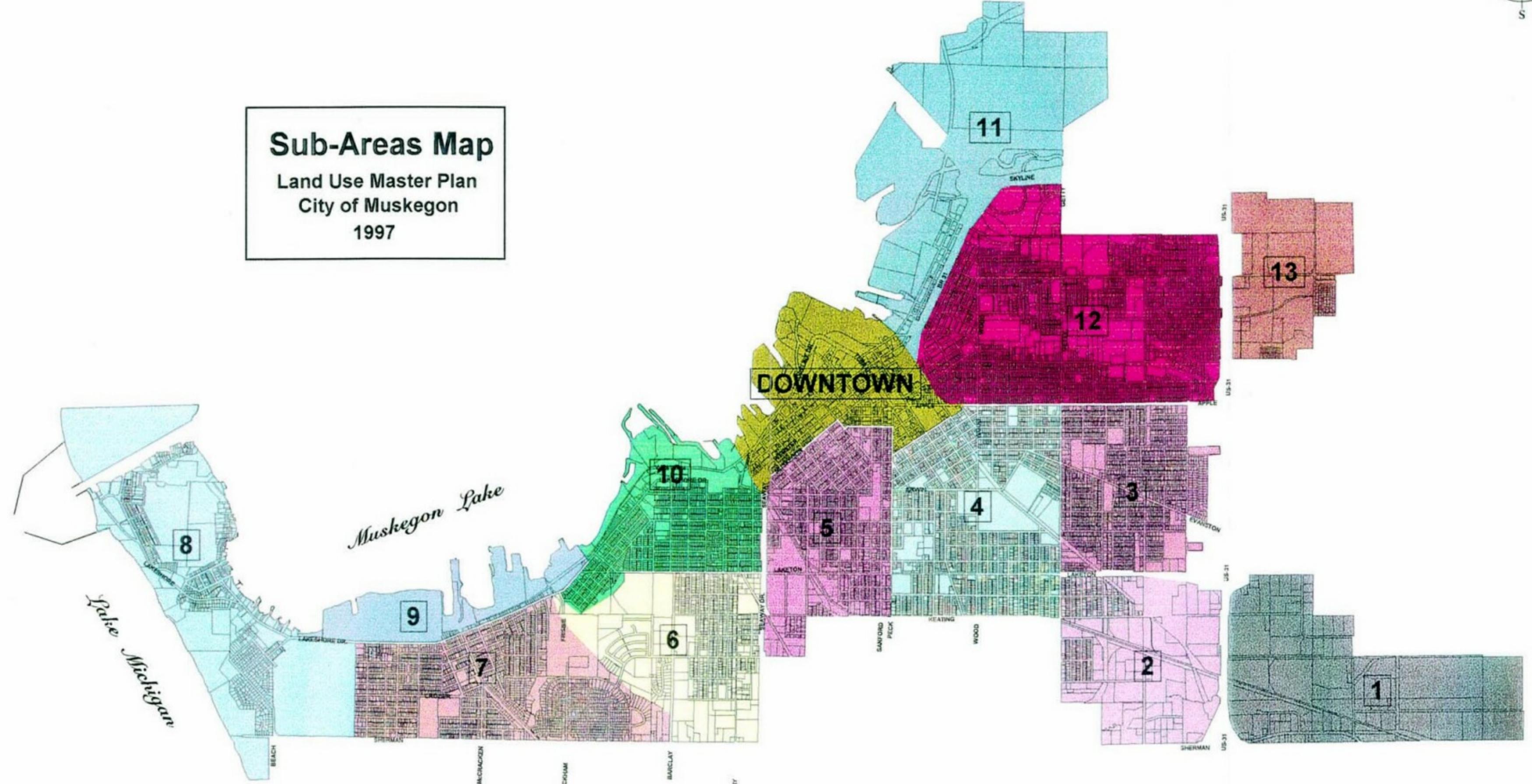
The few internal commercial establishments presently located along Marquette Avenue should be restricted to existing sites and limited, through the City's zoning ordinance, to uses fully complimentary with the surrounding residential and institutional setting. These would include small convenience stores selling groceries and sundry items, ice cream shop, restaurant or deli with indoor seating [no drive-through], family video rental,

and like establishments. The current uses are consistent with the above.

4. General Hospital should be supported through the development of professional offices on, or adjacent to, the hospital campus. The master plan recognizes the potential need for such development.
5. College-related directional signs should be placed on Apple, near Shonat and Quarterline.

# Sub-Areas Map

Land Use Master Plan  
City of Muskegon  
1997



**DOWNTOWN**

8

9

7

10

6

5

4

3

2

1

11

12

13

*Muskegon Lake*

*Lake Michigan*

LAKESHORE DR

FRISBIE

BARCLAY

SANFORD PECK

KEATING

WOOD

SHERMAN

SKYLINE

US-31

US-31

US-31

US-31

BEACH

MACRACKEN

CHURCH

ST



# Future Land Use Plan Master Land Use Plan



This portion of the plan presents an overview of general and specialized future land use areas. The location of these areas is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map. Descriptions of the types of uses proposed for each area are provided, and as appropriate, policies applicable to land use areas are presented. A concluding subsection also reiterates the major recommendations from the entire Master Plan document.

It should be noted that significant areas of developable land are located along the shoreline of Muskegon Lake in the Maritime and Enterprise GEMS Centers described in the City's Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan. Specific recommendations for development and redevelopment activity are provided in the Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan document.

## FINDINGS

The future land use plan is based on the following findings:

- ◆ Muskegon is a mature urban center with a very limited amount of developable vacant land.
- ◆ Much of the vacant land within the City is subject to constraints posed by location in wetland or floodplain areas.
- ◆ The City is predominated by residential neighborhoods that have reached buildout and are sensitive to encroachment by non-residential land uses. Residential neighborhoods contain a limited number of vacant lots

that can accommodate lot-by-lot single or two-family residential development.

- ◆ Residents have expressed desires that the quality and integrity of neighborhoods be preserved and protected. Residential neighborhoods can benefit from containment of encroaching commercial development.
- ◆ Long-established residential and commercial corridor land use patterns will remain unchanged well into the foreseeable future.
- ◆ While developable land along commercial corridors is quite limited, opportunities for the enhancement of current and future commercial uses are abundant.

## MAPPED LAND USES

The Future Land Use Map illustrates the following general future land use areas:

- ◆ Single & Two-Family Residential
- ◆ Multi-Family Residential
- ◆ Commercial
- ◆ Industrial
- ◆ Marina
- ◆ Public/Quasi-Public - Enhanced/potential park facilities are indicated.
- ◆ Open Space and Woodlands

The map also illustrates seven specialized land use areas:





# Future Land Use Plan

## Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ Marina Service & Residential Area
- ◆ S. D. Warren Company
- ◆ Lakeside Pedestrian Scale Mixed-Use Area
- ◆ Peck Residential & Service Area
- ◆ Fisherman's Landing Marine/Recreational Area
- ◆ Interspersed Natural Features
- ◆ Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Area

One other specialized area is described in detail, though not illustrated on the future land use map:

- ◆ Muskegon Lake Shoreline Overlay Area

## OVERVIEW OF GENERAL LAND USE AREAS

General use areas are as follows:

### Single & Two-Family Residential Areas

This land use area includes existing single-family residential neighborhoods and privately owned undeveloped areas adjoining such neighborhoods, and residential neighborhoods located in two-family residential zoning districts.

The Single and Two-Family Residential Land Use Areas are intended to protect the integrity of existing single and two-family residential neighborhoods, and to provide for non-residential uses typically found in

such residential areas, including public parks and playgrounds, schools, places of worship, and other public and quasi-public facilities that serve neighborhood residents. Other uses can include public service oriented non-profit facilities, such as private recreation centers.

In the development of this plan, we have found that a mix of residential densities within existing single family neighborhoods can be considered desirable over concentrations of low density two-family and high density multi-family development in isolated areas of the City. Such uses can occur in single and two-family neighborhoods in structures designed and constructed for multi-family occupancy, rather than by the conversion of single family homes for multi-family use.

We have also found that neighborhood oriented stores should be allowed in these neighborhoods at appropriate locations.

### Multiple-Family Residential Areas

This land use area includes existing multiple-family residential developments in current multiple-family residential zoning districts, and similar developments established as Planned Unit Developments.

Multi-Family Residential Areas provide for the establishment of moderate to high-density multiple-family residential development and for the establishment of certain non-residential uses, such as public parks, playgrounds, schools, places of worship, and limited types of service and commercial uses serving multiple family uses.





# Future Land Use Plan

## Master Land Use Plan



Areas along the Muskegon Lake shoreline (see discussion of Specialized Land Use Areas below) provide opportunities for mixed two and multi-family developments.

### Commercial Areas

This land use area includes existing commercial corridors that exhibit a broad range of business, professional, service, and other commercial uses serving neighborhood, City, and regional markets. Undeveloped lots and existing structures in these areas present opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

The boundaries of these areas may exclude small areas currently zoned for commercial use, or include small areas currently zoned for residential use.

### Industrial Areas

This land use area includes areas previously designated by the City as planned industrial areas, including the Port City Industrial Park, the Menendorp Industrial Park, the area north of Brusse Avenue west of Getty Street extending east to the U.S. 31, and along the east side of Seaway Drive north and south of Laketon Avenue. Each of these areas provide opportunities for infill and redevelopment. Note that an interspersed natural area is shown in the Port City Industrial Park and the Menendorp Industrial Park.

Existing industrial areas on or near the Muskegon Lake shoreline, except those located in Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan (GEMS Enterprise Functional Area) have been significantly reduced in order to redevelop lakeshore

properties for uses more conducive to the environment and the City's needs. To compensate for that loss, new industrial locations are programmed.

The boundaries of these areas may exclude areas currently zoned for industrial use, or include small areas currently zoned for business, institutional, or public use.

### Marina Areas

These areas include existing public and private marinas and associated support facilities that will continue to cater to and serve a growing regional recreational market.

### Public Areas

This area includes all non-residential uses in residential areas, including public parks, playgrounds, schools, and places of worship. These areas also include all property designated for future public use by the City's Leisure Services Master Plan, and Master Plan for the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail.

### Open Space and Woodlands

The Open Space and Woodland areas includes land in current Open Space Conservation zoning district boundaries. This zoning district encompasses critical sand dunes, wetlands, floodplains, and undeveloped open space adjoining creeks and shorelines. These areas make significant contributions to the City's character and identity. They provide relief from the developed urban landscape, an unusually varied assortment of high-quality, year-round recreational opportunities for





# Future Land Use Plan Master Land Use Plan



residents and visitors, and habitat for a variety of plant and animal life.

Policies applicable to the preservation of open space include:

- ◆ Protect and preserve scenic viewsheds, sand dunes, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Avoid further encroachment on surface waters.
- ◆ Maintain or establish vegetative buffers or greenbelts on City owned property located on streambanks and shorelines.
- ◆ Maintain current Open Space Conservation zoning district boundaries surrounding stream and river corridors, undeveloped shoreline areas, and critical sand dunes.

## OVERVIEW OF SPECIALIZED LAND USE AREAS

Specialized use areas are as follows:

### Marina Service & Residential Area

This area is located west of the S.D. Warren Paper, and includes a shoreline wildlife habitat, a public boat launch facility, marinas offering boat slip, sales, service, and off-season storage facilities, the Muskegon Yacht Club, a fraternal lodge, a convenience store, an industrial facility, a bar/restaurant, and a mix of single family homes.

Because of its proximity to the Lake Michigan channel, this area presents

opportunities for additional marine and convenience oriented commercial and service development. The industrial property presents opportunities for higher density, one, two, and multi-family residential development if it is abandoned for its present use.

### S. D. Warren Company

Certain industrial uses have been extremely important to the growth and well-being of the City. One of these is the S. D. Warren Paper Company. Occupying a large tract of land on Muskegon Lake, the firm is a major taxpayer and employer and has long been considered an asset to the region. The Master Land Use Plan recognizes the importance of S. D. Warren and placement at its historic location.

Notwithstanding the above, the plan also provides a future use of the S. D. Warren site should the facility, at some point in time, cease to exist. The plan recommends that future use of the site not be oriented to industrial development. Future development should occur in a manner consistent with the character of the surrounding area, recognize and protect the integrity of the Muskegon Lake, and be consistent with anticipated and desired lakeshore development.

The site could be developed for multi-story multi-family use with little visual impact on upland residential areas.

### Lakeside Pedestrian Scale Mixed-Use Area

The Lakeside business district is a unique waterfront asset that presents opportunities for pedestrian-friendly, mixed use





## Future Land Use Plan Master Land Use Plan



development and redevelopment. The area exhibits potential for a "Main Street" mix of commercial and service uses drawing neighborhood residents and marina patrons.

Vacant waterfront properties present an opportunity for higher density, one and two-family residential development, or for additional public shoreline access and recreational use.

The site occupied by the waterfront aggregate operation could, if located elsewhere along the waterfront (see Fisherman's Landing Marine/Recreational Area), be developed for mixed use residential, recreational or marina uses.

### Peck Residential & Service Area

The areas on both sides of Peck Street, north of Hackley Hospital is characterized by large, older homes, several of which have been converted to office use, or are occupied by mixed residential and service uses.

This area lends itself well to continued residential and service use provided conversion of existing homes is accomplished in a manner sensitive to the area's residential and historic character.

### Fisherman's Landing Marine/Recreation Area

This area presents opportunities for additional public and private boat launching facilities; private marina and boat storage facilities consistent with nearby public uses; and public recreational

facilities such as boardwalks and a nature interpretive center.

Commercial properties along Western Avenue can provide for marine oriented convenience retail and service uses. Such uses might include bait and tackle shops, boat sales and service facilities, general sporting goods sales, and a party store.

Because of the area's proximity to the Consumers Power power plant, its northern most portion might accommodate a maritime use dependent upon location on the waterfront, such as a tug/barge facility, aggregate facility, or other similar use.

### Interspersed Natural Features

These represent land areas containing important natural features which can integrate successfully with other uses. The natural features are not intended to override other land uses, but they do represent valuable assets to the City. Three primary areas are identifiable.

- ◆ Little Black Creek Woodland. This area in the southeast corner of the City runs through the Port City Industrial Park and the Menendorp Industrial Park, both of which should continue full industrial development.
- ◆ Lake Michigan Dune/Woodland area. Much of this area is already intended to remain public land, but some residential development/use should also continue.
- ◆ Creekside Areas. These represent smaller, mostly linear areas around Ruddiman Creek/Lagoon and Ryerson





# Future Land Use Plan

## Master Land Use Plan



Creek. Residential use overlaps with some of these areas.

Recommendations for maintaining these natural features are provided in the Natural Features Inventory Section.

### **Downtown/Lakeshore Area      Redevelopment Area**

This area includes those areas in the City's Downtown located in the Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan GEMS functional centers.

### **Muskegon Lake Shoreline Overlay Area**

The Muskegon Lake Shoreline is a unique asset that represents the largest concentration of underutilized developable land among Lake Michigan urbanized port cities. The shoreline presents opportunities for high-quality development and redevelopment efforts that cannot be duplicated by many other mature urban centers. These opportunities will produce benefits in the City and region.

The shoreline possesses valuable aesthetic and natural resources. Preservation of these resources can benefit the City and region. Undeveloped properties present opportunities for high-quality residential, recreational, and other development. Opportunities also exist for the preservation and possible enhancement of shoreline habitats. Uses dependent upon location on the shoreline, such as marinas, marine salvage operations, and maritime interests need not be viewed as inherently incompatible with other existing or future waterfront uses.

Actions and recommendations appropriate to this area include:

- ◆ Special attention should be given to the design and layout of buildings, parking areas, landscaping, waterfront buffers, storm water management systems, and other improvements.
  - ◆ The City needs to augment current site plan review, special use and PUD regulations to provide more detailed design, review, and approval standards for shoreline development and redevelopment projects.
  - ◆ Waterfront buffer strips or greenbelts planted with native vegetation can protect shoreline habitats and surface water quality, and provide aesthetic benefits. The City and members of the development community should adopt policies encouraging the maintenance of buffers and greenbelts along the shoreline.
- Scenic views can be preserved by the application of building height, cluster development, or viewscape preservation standards.
- ◆ The City should establish a shoreline overlay zoning district to assure the protection of aesthetic and natural resources.



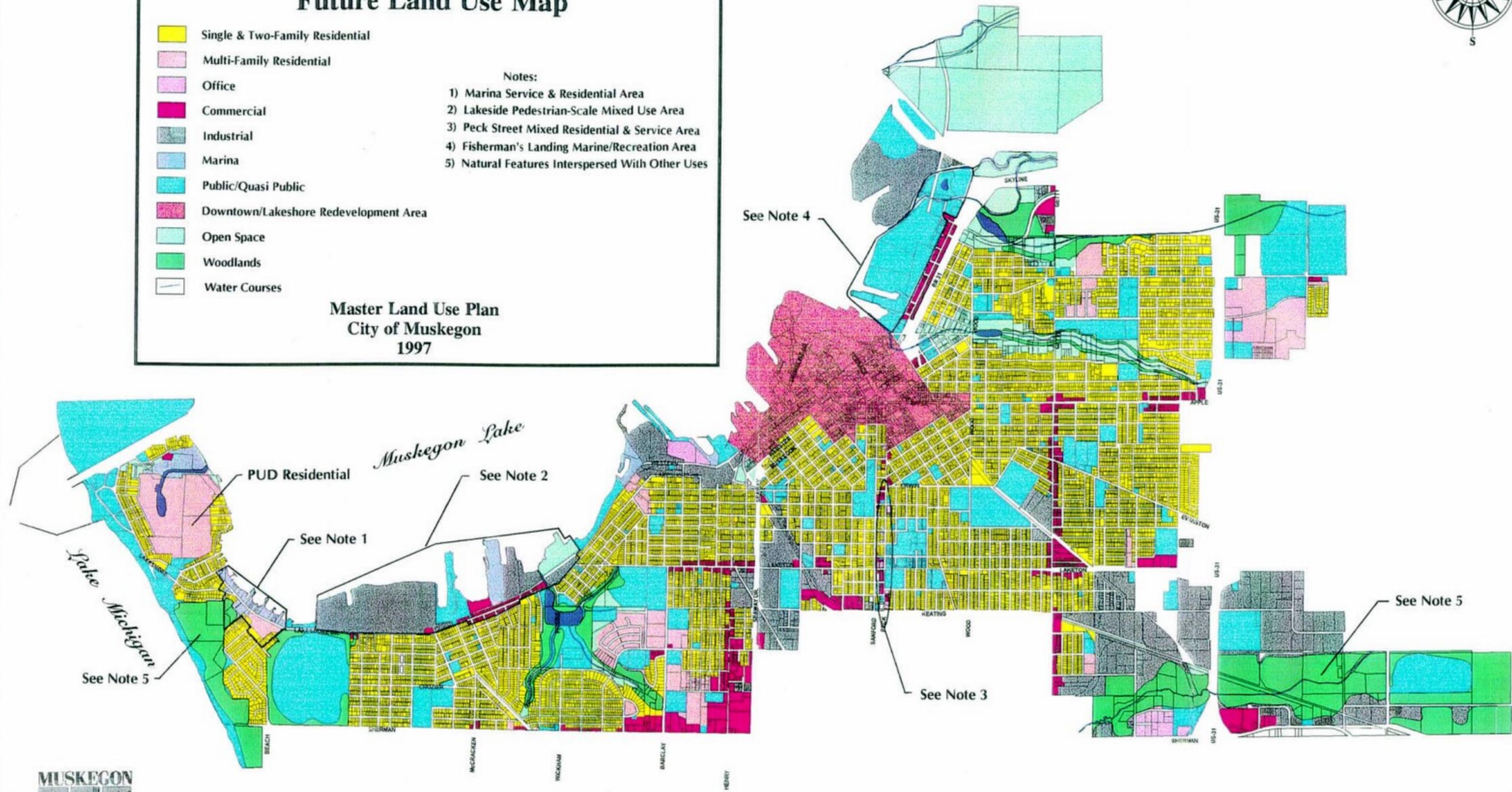


# Future Land Use Map

- Single & Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Marina
- Public/Quasi Public
- Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Area
- Open Space
- Woodlands
- Water Courses

- Notes:
- 1) Marina Service & Residential Area
  - 2) Lakeside Pedestrian-Scale Mixed Use Area
  - 3) Peck Street Mixed Residential & Service Area
  - 4) Fisherman's Landing Marine/Recreation Area
  - 5) Natural Features Interspersed With Other Uses

## Master Land Use Plan City of Muskegon 1997





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan



The following text reiterates the most important recommendations presented in the body of this Master Plan. They are organized here to allow a quick review of the major points. Additional detail may be found in the body of this document.

### Traffic

- ◆ Designate Laketon as the principal east and west route. Construct to five lanes wide with right turn lanes, install state-of-the-art signals, timed to route traffic on Laketon, and implement access controls. Preserve the ability to utilize the abandoned railroad right-of-way to expand Laketon to a six lane road with boulevard.
- ◆ Extend Henry north of Laketon as a commercial corridor and as a direct connection to Downtown, through Western.
- ◆ Designate Muskegon and Webster as three lanes wide Downtown and two lanes wide with left turn lanes in the historic district, south of Downtown. Streetscape the historic district in a “turn of the century” mode.
- ◆ Implement access control on Apple, Henry, Getty, and Sherman.
- ◆ Encourage access to the Downtown through the north and south connections with Seaway at U.S. 31 and I-96.
- ◆ Encourage Shoreline as the principal route to Downtown with strong access controls, collector routes, timed signals, and year round landscape.

- ◆ Study, with MDOT, the feasibility of an additional ramp at Marquette to serve the growing area around Muskegon Community College.
- ◆ Implement the Downtown loop to provide for a unifying effect for the Downtown area including widening Houston to three lanes.

### Natural Features

- ◆ *Habitat Plan Development and Implementation.* Several areas which are now or could become natural areas, have great potential for improved wildlife habitat and native vegetation. The plan would describe the kind and size of habitat that would be created; where it would be created; how it could be integrated with other uses; and what funding sources and cooperating groups are available to assist.
- ◆ *Integration of Natural Features and Areas with Recreation and Leisure Planning.* The natural amenities within the City are unique and are not duplicated elsewhere. The system of Natural Features and Areas should be a focus for recreation and leisure, especially along the lakeshore and also along stream corridors. The Muskegon Lakeshore Trail will link special Natural Features and Areas and provide an opportunity for access to scenic views and recreational activities.
- ◆ *Development of Water Quality and Subwatershed Plan.* Development of a Water Quality and Subwatershed Plan is critical for determining specific actions or policies the City can initiate





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan



to improve water quality within each subwatershed and Muskegon Lake. The recommended Water Quality and Subwatershed Plan will support regulations set forth in the General Zoning and Design Criteria for the lakes and stream corridors.

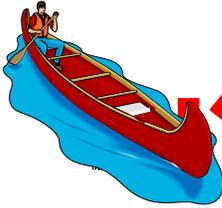
- ◆ *Generic Zoning and Design Criteria for Natural Features and Areas.* All of the Natural Features and identified Natural Areas within the City could be more effectively managed through zoning mechanisms such as Natural Feature Overlay Zoning Districts and development standards, Planned Unit Development Standards, site plan review, cluster development regulations, building height limits and Special Use Standards.
- ◆ *Development and Enforcement of City Stormwater Management Requirements and other Possible Modifications for Sensitive Natural Areas.* Development and/or revision of stormwater management practices, future enforcement of stormwater management practices, and possible retrofit of existing systems may reduce the amount of pollutants entering waterways through illegal sanitary connections, parking lot and street runoff, and industrial discharges.
- ◆ *Preservation and Conservation of Natural Features and Areas.* Several Natural or potential Natural Areas around the City, have extreme ecological value. These areas should be acquired by the City solely or with potential conservancy groups, and placed in a conservancy program.

- ◆ *Working with the Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council, Natural Resource Conservation Service & Soil Conservation District, and other Environmental Groups where common interests exist.* Some groups are completing water quality analysis, cleanup and awareness programs, or other assessment, protection, and enhancement projects. Many of these projects are aligned with common goals and objectives of the City, related to protection, preservation and use of its natural features.

### Historic Districts

- ◆ The City should perform a more comprehensive evaluation of its historic areas and buildings and develop a more detailed plan. Modifications, including possible expansions (e.g., Third Street) of the existing Historic Districts should be considered and discussed with the community. Financial incentives for preservation and maintenance should be evaluated, including methods for bringing buildings up to current code requirements.
- ◆ As the City continues its efforts to make better use of its Downtown, consideration of Historic Buildings and environments should be incorporated in the planning and implementation. Western Avenue presents an excellent opportunity to address Downtown development needs and preserve and make better use of architecturally important structures. Other areas provide opportunities for Bed and Breakfast, specialty retail, and restaurant uses, all of which can protect and make





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan



good use of historic structures.

- ◆ Further planning and thought needs to be done on streetscaping and the environments around the historic areas. Appropriate pedestrian scale lighting, benches, walkways, signage, and plantings can enhance the historic feel of the neighborhoods and facilitate the development of the Downtown as a destination. Such planning and design standards/guides may be integrated with similar efforts recommended for the other portions of the Downtown.
- ◆ Further promotion of the City's Historic Districts should be undertaken. An informal review appears to indicate that beyond the most visible monumental structures, few people are aware of the City's historic beauty. Promotional efforts can help preserve the historically important items and increase tourism.

### Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

- ◆ Continue the program pursuant to the 1993 Muskegon Leisure Services Master Plan. The Plan emphasizes retention and enhancement of existing features, increased program offerings, and Lakeshore recreational improvements. The Plan outlines 20 capital improvements to be completed over several years.
- ◆ Construct a Community Center in the Downtown area or nearby Downtown neighborhoods.
- ◆ Continue completion of the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail, with connections to

other community and State trail systems.

### Brownfield Analysis

- ◆ Continue the brownfield screening program and determine current ownership of sites on the list. For example, a review of City directories would provide information on sites with industrial histories that are likely to be impacted.
- ◆ Continue to update the brownfield GIS layer so that it may be used as a planning tool for brownfield redevelopment. Consider expanding the number of data fields to increase its flexibility and make it more useful to the private sector.
- ◆ Continue to monitor developments in environmental regulations, tax incentives, and funding sources.
- ◆ Continue to seek state and federal funding opportunities to address brownfield issues. A good track record in obtaining State-level resources exists, but further opportunities are most likely available (e.g. site reclamation funds, state revolving loan funds and renaissance funds). Pursue a brownfield pilot program grant from U.S. EPA.
- ◆ Enact a groundwater use ordinance that prohibits the installation and use of potable wells in areas with known groundwater contamination.
- ◆ Finalize the development of a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan



Use the brownfield site map prepared under the master plan as the basis for defining a city-wide brownfield zone.

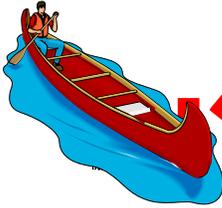
- ◆ Expand on the work done under the Site Assessment Fund grant to determine the marketability of identified brownfield sites.
- ◆ Continue to implement sound goal-oriented land use planning and implementation. Coordinate with brownfield efforts to identify rezoning and infrastructure needs. Consider environmental issues when evaluating infrastructure needs. Integrate utility upgrades with any required remediation.
- ◆ Host a workshop that provides information on brownfield redevelopment and financial and tax incentives.

### Neighborhood Quality and Development

- ◆ Systematic and targeted programs of code enforcement and site cleanup should be implemented. Neighborhood Associations, churches, hospitals, businesses and other groups and facilities should be involved. Planning Commissioners should annually survey the entire City for neighborhood conditions.
- ◆ Entitlement and other funds should be targeted to maintain and enhance neighborhood conditions. Both isolated blocks and whole neighborhoods should be targeted to prevent the spread of blight and improve residential quality.

- ◆ The Zoning Ordinance should be upgraded to include strict buffer standards between residential and non-residential districts. Residential areas near or surrounded by industrial areas should be evaluated for long term viability.
- ◆ An "Ombudsman" liaison position between the Neighborhood Associations/Residents and City Hall should be tested.
- ◆ Zoning regulations associated with the conversion of single-family homes to multiple-family use should contain standards ensuring that converted dwellings have sufficient on-site parking, suitable locations for trash receptacles which are customarily stored out of doors, sufficient yard/play areas, and exterior facade controls.
- ◆ Design and implement streetscape programs for each of the City's major roadways. Such programs may range from simple tree plantings in selective locations to more intensive greenbelting. As part of this effort, examine the potential for enlarged terraces along Webster and Muskegon Avenues.
- ◆ Work with S.D. Warren to reduce the occurrence and/or modify the timing of emissions of unpleasant odors.
- ◆ Work with area grocery retailers regarding opportunities in core urban neighborhoods. It is not recommended that the City enter the grocery business. Rather, that the City work with the private sector to secure suitable sites





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan



and, where feasible and appropriate, provide development assistance with the opportunity for reasonable paybacks.

- ◆ Zoning regulations should restrict the opportunity for inappropriate business development to occur in residential locations. Non-conforming businesses should be highly restricted.
- ◆ Promote ongoing housing in-fill programs. As part of the in-fill effort, work with area builders to determine possible joint public/private partnerships for the construction of affordable housing.
- ◆ Analyze sidewalk and pathway needs as part of the City's ongoing public infrastructure improvement programming activities.
- ◆ With limited exception, restrict business development in the "In-Town" residential neighborhood. Bed and breakfast operations, tea rooms/coffee shops, etc. should be considered based on rigid zoning standards to ensure compatibility with area homes.
- ◆ Develop and use schools, churches, businesses, etc., as residential anchor facilities to help promote neighborhood cohesiveness, quality, and general improvements.

### Sub-Areas

#### *Sub-Area 1 - Port City Industrial Center*

- ◆ Maintain the sub-area's industrial focus.

- ◆ Along Sherman Boulevard and Laketon Avenue maintain the current industrial zoning status to restrict conversion of industrial property to uses considered inconsistent with the area's land use focus.
- ◆ Continue monitoring traffic movement throughout the sub-area. As needed, address circulation and access problems. Particular attention should be given to minimizing access points including, where possible, the closure of unnecessary curb cuts; ensuring alignment of driveways; erection of internal directional signage to accommodate visitors and truck traffic; and like factors.
- ◆ Implement zoning (site plan) standards to ensure compatibility with the Marne to Muskegon Rail Trail system. Such standards should include provisions for segregating parking areas from the trail system; visual buffering of outside storage, parking, and loading/unloading areas; appropriate building setbacks (at least 50'); landscaping; and the like.
- ◆ Incorporate the sub-area's wetlands as a component of the City's Natural Features inventory. Implement zoning (site plan) standards to ensure protection of the wetlands including minimum setbacks (at least 50'); avoidance of snow storage within the building/wetland setback area; maintenance of natural buffer strip (at least 25') from the actual wetland limit; and like criteria.
- ◆ Preclude further expansion of the Sunrise Memorial Garden Cemetery.





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## Master Land Use Plan



Moreover, investigate the present status of the cemetery site to determine the extent of development and potential to convert unused property [lying adjacent to existing industrial parcels] for industrial use.

Pursuant to the above, and to Sunrise Memorial Gardens in general, it is important that buffering standards be established between the Gardens and adjacent industrial development. Said buffers should provide for heavy landscaping to ensure adequate visual and noise buffering.

- ◆ Work with Fruitport Township to coordinate development and access management along Sherman Boulevard.
- ◆ Work with Muskegon Charter Township to coordinate development and access management along Laketon Avenue.

### *Sub-Area 2 - Sherman/Laketon Mixed-Use Area*

- ◆ Except as noted in the sub-area analysis, extend the limits of industrial development to Getty Street.
- ◆ As the proposed industrial area is planned (designed), investigate the potential closure of Continental Street, Austin Street, and Valley Street at their intersecting points with Laketon Avenue. Entry to the industrial area may be gained via other access points.
- ◆ Any commercial or industrial development bordering a residential area should provide high quality

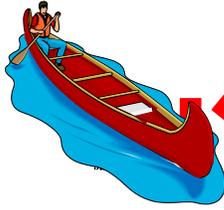
buffering in the form of architectural screening and landscaping.

- ◆ Implement streetscape and coordinated signage programs for Sherman Boulevard, Getty Street, and Laketon Avenue.

### *Sub-Area 3 - Getty Street to US-31 Residential/Mixed-Use Area*

- ◆ Maintain the sub-area's residential focus.
- ◆ Restrict the continued strip commercialization of Apple Avenue.
- ◆ Permit remaining residential properties along Getty Street to be converted to commercial use.
- ◆ Implement, through zoning, buffer requirements associated with non-residential uses which are to be located contiguous to residential development.
- ◆ Restrict further expansion of industrial development.
- ◆ Implement a comprehensive streetscape program along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, and Laketon.
- ◆ Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.
- ◆ Working in conjunction with Muskegon Charter Township, prepare and implement a coordinated streetscape beautification program for the commercial sector along Apple Avenue near US-31.





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- ◆ Implement signage along Apple Avenue, west of US-31, alerting drivers to the City's core Downtown (and major attractions).

### *Sub-Area 4 - Peck Street to Getty Street Residential/Mixed-Use Area*

- ◆ Maintain the sub-area's residential focus.
- ◆ Coordinate the City's sub-area planning effort with that of Hackley Hospital's on the development of a campus master plan to ensure high quality integration of the medical facility with surrounding neighborhoods and the roadway system. Ensure that such efforts include residents and the Neighborhood Association.
- ◆ Complete the proposed bicycle pathway along Laketon Avenue.
- ◆ Permit remaining properties along Getty Street to be converted to commercial use.
- ◆ Implement, through zoning, buffer requirements associated with the placement of non-residential uses contiguous to residential development.
- ◆ Limit additional industrial development to the established industrial sector.
- ◆ Implement comprehensive streetscape programs along Apple Avenue, Getty Street, Laketon Avenue, and Peck Street.
- ◆ Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.

- ◆ Consider placement of a local community center central to Sub-Area's 3, 4, and 5 to provide leisure and educational facilities to area residents.

Work with an area retailer to assemble sufficient property for construction of a full-service grocery store and accessory uses.

- ◆ Investigate the potential for construction of a market rate apartment complex. A possible location is one central to the confluence of Sub-Areas 4 and 5 and the Core Downtown.
- ◆ Consider placement of duplex, tri-plex, and four-plex units as infill housing based on designs [building and site] which are complimentary to existing area housing.
- ◆ Coordinate planning efforts with that of Muskegon Heights along common boundaries and corridors.

### *Sub-Area 5 - Peck Street to Seaway Drive Residential/Mixed-Use Area*

- ◆ Redevelop that portion of the sub-area located south and east of the industrial sector from residential to industrial.
- ◆ Complete the proposed bicycle pathway along Laketon Avenue.
- ◆ Implement, through zoning, buffer requirements to mitigate compatibility impacts between residential and non-residential uses.
- ◆ Work with the Muskegon Public Schools Board of Education to develop a long range campus master plan for the





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High School area.

- ◆ Investigate the potential for development of a market rate apartment complex.
- ◆ Implement comprehensive streetscape programs along the sub-area's major roadways.
- ◆ Redevelop the existing "brownfields" into productive and compatible uses.
- ◆ Focus residential rehabilitation and site maintenance efforts in this sub-area.
- ◆ Work with Laketon Avenue businesses to encourage site enhancements and, where necessary, building facade improvements.
- ◆ Develop a comprehensive preservation strategy [plan] for the "In-Town" residential district which permits the City to capitalize on the tourist appeal of the district while retaining its residential integrity.
- ◆ Coordinate planning efforts with that of Muskegon Heights. Of particular note is the joint development of a small industrial park from Park to Seaway and Hackley to Laketon.

### Sub-Area 6 - Barclay Street

- ◆ Implement, through zoning, controls to ensure adequate buffers between commercial and residential development.
- ◆ Complete the full commercial development of that area lying between

Henry Street, Laketon Avenue, Seaway Drive, and Sherman Boulevard.

- ◆ Prepare and implement high quality streetscapes along Laketon Street, Henry Street, and Sherman Boulevard.
- ◆ Market the Outlet Mall site for redevelopment to commercial or office use. Due to its size, the site might also function as the location of a community recreation center.
- ◆ Allow homes along Henry to be converted to office or commercial use.
- ◆ Prohibit future industrial development along Henry.
- ◆ Restrict commercial development along Laketon Avenue to Barclay Street.
- ◆ Prepare and implement a comprehensive management plan for Ruddiman Creek and Ruddiman Lagoon. Utilize an environmental corridor overlay zone (as part of the zoning ordinance) to provide additional resource protection.
- ◆ Coordinate boundary planning activities with the City of Roosevelt Park.

### Sub-Area 7 - McCraft Park Residential Area

- ◆ Maintain the character of the sub-area as single-family residential. Limited multiple-family may be permitted under certain circumstances.
- ◆ Maintain the existing system of sub-area parks and Natural Features as integral elements of the area's residential flavor.





# General Plan Recommendations

## Master Land Use Plan

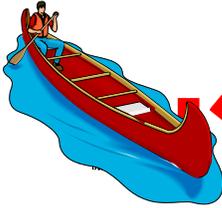


- ◆ Incorporate the sub-area's (Ruddiman Lagoon) tributaries as components of the City's Natural Features inventory. Implement zoning standards and maintenance criteria to ensure protection of the tributaries [refer to Number 4, following].
- ◆ Develop and implement an educational program which advances preservation of the area's natural features.
- ◆ Along Sherman Boulevard, work with adjoining Norton Shores to coordinate the preparation and implementation of consistent (compatible) signage, access, and related streetscape standards. Such standards should recognize the sub-area's residential character.
- ◆ Implement zoning (site plan) standards requiring adequate buffer protection between the commercial uses along Lakeshore Drive and Sherman Boulevard and adjacent residential development.
- ◆ Limit expansion of commercial development (rezonings) along Sherman Boulevard.
- ◆ Existing commercial districts along Sherman Boulevard, west of Pine Grove Street, should be restricted to the B-1 Zone District Classification. B-1 uses are designed primarily to serve persons residing in adjacent residential areas or neighborhoods.
- ◆ Commercial development along Lakeshore Drive should be restricted to the B-2 Zone District Classification.

### *Sub-Area 8 - Lake Michigan Shoreline*

- ◆ Consistent with the City's Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan, relocate the Silversides to a Core Downtown site. Reuse the vacated site for public open space/park purposes.
- ◆ Restrict permanent commercial development along Pere Marquette Beach. Instead, consider the restrictive leasing of limited, seasonal, space to vendors who utilize portable trailers or kiosks which may be positioned and removed on a daily basis.
- ◆ Other than the commercial development detailed under item 2, above, restrict commercial uses (restaurant, convenience, bait and tackle, marine supplies, etc.) to the marina service area located along Lakeshore Drive, between Thompson Avenue (extended) and S.D. Warren.
- ◆ Prepare a detailed sub-area plan for the marina service area. The plan should call for the elimination of industrial uses but should permit the variety of mixed-uses currently existing.
- ◆ Public access (pathway or boardwalk easements) along the length of Muskegon Lake should be implemented. Such pathways should be incorporated as part of the Lakeshore Trail System.
- ◆ Coordinate planning activities along Sherman Boulevard with the City of Norton Shores.





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### *Sub-Area 9 - Muskegon Lake/Lakeshore Drive Mixed-Used Area*

- ◆ Support the continued growth and development of S.D. Warren within the limits of its current site. In doing so, work with the industry to address their environmental concerns [e.g. odor, traffic impacts].
- ◆ In the event of a relocation by S.D. Warren, redevelop the plant site for non-industrial use.
- ◆ Acquire the Amoco tank farm site and redevelop for public open space use.
- ◆ As industrial development along the shoreline is eliminated, restrict the movement of deep water (bulk shipment carrier) vessels to this sub-area thereby reducing (and eventually eliminating) use of the shoreline for the temporary storage and/or processing of waterborne industrial products.
- ◆ Maintain the Lakeside Business District as a manageable compact area suitable for pedestrian movement.

### *Sub-Area 10 - Seaway Drive/Laketon Avenue/Lakeshore Drive Residential/Mixed-Use Area*

- ◆ Along Laketon, limit commercial development to Barclay Street (south side) and Franklin Street (north side). Between Seaway Drive and the above streets, permit commercial infill along Laketon Avenue.
- ◆ Other than neighborhood businesses directly linked to the area, prohibit further encroachment of commercial

development within the interior portions of the sub-area. Work towards the long-term elimination of commercial development on Beidler Street with reuse oriented to residential development.

- ◆ Incorporate, through zoning, buffering requirements between residential and non-residential uses.
- ◆ Design and implement streetscape programs along Laketon Avenue and Lakeshore Drive, including completion of the Lakeshore Trail.
- ◆ Restrict industrial expansion to infill locations, internal to existing industrial development.
- ◆ Focus housing/site rehabilitation efforts on those blocks identified as exhibiting a need.

### *Sub-Area 11 - Seaway Drive/Waterfront*

- ◆ Prepare and implement sound environmental policies governing shoreline development in order to protect the integrity of the Muskegon River ecosystem.
- ◆ In cooperation with (non-water related) industries along the shoreline, develop and implement relocation programs moving the operations to appropriate industrial sites, such as within the City's complex of industrial parks.
- ◆ Prepare a comprehensive, sub-area, redevelopment (design) plan for Sub-Area 11 based on the use of innovative development techniques (i.e.,





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Waterfront Overlay Zone/Planned Unit Development). Future development should be coordinated in a planned, versus piecemeal, fashion.

- ◆ As part of the above plan, investigate the potential to create a single roadway serving future sub-area development versus the present system (Western Avenue and Ottawa Street).
- ◆ Develop the former Waste Water Treatment site as a natural area incorporating a system of nature trails for aesthetic enjoyment and educational enhancement.
- ◆ Traverse the sub-area with the Lakeshore Trail system providing opportunity for views of Muskegon Lake and associated natural areas.

### *Sub-Area 12 - North Apple Residential*

- ◆ Housing rehabilitation efforts should be focused in Sub-Area 12.
- ◆ A comprehensive streetscape program should be prepared and implemented for Apple Avenue.
- ◆ Clustered commercial development should be confined to the US-31 and Getty Street intersections, consistent with similar developments identified in Sub-Areas 3 and 4.
- ◆ The industrial node near Seaway Drive (Skyline Drive) and Getty should be developed as a small industrial park.

### *Sub-Area 13 - Muskegon Community College*

- ◆ To enhance the marketability and ongoing occupancy of the County Health Department Office Building, provide, through appropriate zoning, opportunity for both public and private use of the facility for office purposes.
- ◆ Working in concert with Muskegon Charter Township, prepare an Apple Avenue Corridor development program addressing access control, streetscape, and signage standards.
- ◆ With the growth of nearby Apple Avenue as a prime commercial corridor, there appears to be no reason to foster the interior (northerly) development of Sub-Area 13 properties for retail, restaurant, or general service use. Therefore, such development should be restricted to existing locations along Apple Avenue.
- ◆ General Hospital should be supported through the development of professional offices on, or adjacent to, the hospital campus. The master plan recognizes the potential need for such development.
- ◆ College-related directional signs should be placed on Apple, near Shonat and Quarterline.





# Bibliography

## Master Land Use Plan



A very wide range of sources were consulted and used in the development of this plan. While not usually listed in bibliographies, the citizens of the City of Muskegon were by far the most important source of information. All team members owe a unending debt to the citizens for the knowledge gained from them in numerous conversations and more structured opinion gathering efforts. In many respects, this plan only acted as a conduit to express the opinions of the City's residents.

### Other Sources

City of Muskegon government, including employees, managers, and information sources in the following departments:

- ◆ City Manager's Office
- ◆ Planning, Zoning and Economic Development
- ◆ Engineering Department
- ◆ Housing Department
- ◆ Leisure Services Department
- ◆ Public Works
- ◆ Equalization Department
- ◆ Police Department

The City Neighborhood Associations City Oversight Bodies, including:

- ◆ City Commission
- ◆ Planning Commission
- ◆ Historic District Commission
- ◆ Housing Commission

Specific City Documents

- ◆ Historic District Brochure
- ◆ 1995 Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan
- ◆ 1983 Master Plan
- ◆ Farmers Market Relocation Study
- ◆ 1993 Leisure Services Master Plan
- ◆ Lakeshore Trail Plan
- ◆ Tax Maps and associated data

Other Local Governments, including

- ◆ Muskegon Township
- ◆ City of North Muskegon
- ◆ Fruitport Township
- ◆ City of Norton Shores
- ◆ City of Muskegon Heights



# Bibliography

## Master Land Use Plan



- ◆ City of Roosevelt Park

Muskegon County Government

- ◆ Road Commission, especially traffic count data
- ◆ Planning Department
- ◆ Various employees and managers
- ◆ County Museum, especially information on historic districts
- ◆ Hackley Library

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, especially population data and projections

Muskegon Oceana Community Reinvestment Corporation, especially information on housing and community needs

Muskegon Public Schools, West Michigan Christian School and Catholic Central, especially information on future needs and plans

Muskegon County Community College

Grand Valley State University, especially demographic and land use data

University of Michigan, especially demographic data

State of Michigan

- ◆ Michigan Department of Transportation, especially traffic count data
- ◆ Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, especially the lists of known sites of contamination
- ◆ Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- ◆ Michigan Jobs Commission

United States Government

- ◆ Muskegon County Resource Conservation District
- ◆ The U.S. Census Bureau, including various reports, but especially the 1990 census data
- ◆ Corps of Engineers, especially information on the deep water port and dredging

Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council

Hackley Hospital, Mercy Hospital and General Hospital, especially information on future plans

Muskegon Economic Growth Alliance



# Bibliography

## Master Land Use Plan



Urban Decision Systems Inc., especially financial services use data, 1996

Basic professional texts and current practices in:

- ◆ Land Use Planning and Urban Studies
- ◆ Natural Resources
- ◆ Traffic Engineering
- ◆ Environmental Science
- ◆ Engineering (multiple disciplines)
- ◆ Demographics & socioeconomics
- ◆ Historical architecture
- ◆ Mapping and data presentation

# Updating the City of Muskegon's Lakefront and Downtown Plans

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# Preface

## History

In 1997 the city adopted an updated Master Land Use Plan. The previous plan was 1970's vintage and was in dire need of an update. A Master Plan is a land use policy document. By law, city land use and development decisions must be consistent with the Master Plan. The 1997 planning process took nearly two years to complete and involved a good deal of public input. Soon after the overall Master Plan was developed, it was determined that there should be more of a focus on the waterfront and the downtown. The Downtown/Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan (1997) and the Waterfront Redevelopment Sub-Plan (1999) were written as sibling documents to the Master Plan to provide more focus for those areas.

## Plan Updates

Any viable, defensible plan needs periodic updates. Most professionals recommend that plans be reviewed at least every five years. Because Muskegon has many prospects and challenges in its redevelopment, the need for timely and thorough updates is probably even more critical. In addition to updating the plans, there has also been concern expressed that our plan(s) still do not provide enough detail to guide major development, especially on the waterfront and the Lakeshore Drive corridor, west of the Sappi Plant.

The basic information in our existing plans is still a good working foundation. Proposed changes to the plans will be processed as amendments to the original plans. The language of the old document will be edited to both clarify community intent and provide more direction to decision-makers and developers. The attached summary of public input will be drawn upon to amend the plans.

## Process

In the fall of 2001 the "Turn-Back" Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Muskegon Heritage Association, and several Neighborhood Associations sponsored a series of community meetings in conjunction with the Planning Commission and City Planning Department. The purpose of the meetings was to gather information from the public to update the Downtown Lakeshore and Waterfront Redevelopment Plans. The "downtown" was loosely identified as those areas with more intense and diverse development--from the Causeway to Cole's Bakery with a southern boundary of Monroe and Walton Avenues. The "lakeshore area" was loosely defined west of Cole's Bakery with Harrison, Palmer and Grand Avenues being the southern boundary. The area west of Cole's was viewed as primarily residential and recreational.

All large property owners, business interests, and about one-third of all households in the study areas were invited to participate in these "brainstorming" sessions (472 contacts). Public notices were also published. Ninety-five individuals participated in the sessions, the focus of which was to first to identify concerns about development, then to document strategies to address those concerns.

## Public Comment Summary

### I. Overview

A Master Land Use Plan typically focuses on land use and community design. While listening to meeting participants, it became clear that perhaps community efforts should span beyond pure land use planning and address neighborhood and community development issues. Social issues like blight, crime, and racism are real problems that need to be addressed. Considering land use and design apart from these realities will not properly foster healthy neighborhoods.

### II. Community Vision

#### A. Leadership Vision (taken from the City of Muskegon's Mission statement)

In general, the vision for the city as outlined by the City Commission is to maintain the city as a "Premier Shoreline City." When the City staff and Commission were asked what makes a premier city, the vision was further defined by outlining the following:

- Community diversity. Diversity meaning, "different" or "variety". In the context of building a desirable city, diversity relates to not only a healthy mix of racial, ethnic groups and socio-economic levels, but also to a variety of choices in housing, employment, shopping, transportation, educational, recreational and cultural opportunities.
- Leadership. Leadership comes in many forms and strong communities draw on leadership from the public sector, businesses, churches, human service groups, and neighborhoods. Building a sense of community pride and leadership in youth is also an important part of the vision.
- Sustain existing resources: Existing community resources include everything from natural, cultural, historical and recreational amenities to economic, educational and human resources.
- Collaboration: Successful communities maintain a high quality of life through teamwork and collaboration. Representatives of business groups, human service interests, cultural entities, educational institutions and various levels of governments must work together to build and keep healthy communities.
- Enhancement of residential neighborhoods, infrastructure and community facilities. This includes everything from aggressive capital improvement plans, to consistent code enforcement, to diverse leisure service programming. The city needs to be viewed as a collection of neighborhoods and business centers with various needs and characters, all under the umbrella of one unit of government.

#### B. Downtown Neighborhood Vision

Residents of the downtown were asked what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods and the downtown. The following is a summary of recurring themes among the participants.

In 2015, the downtown and connecting neighborhoods are diverse, vibrant and exciting places to be. Muskegon has become a focal point for the region offering events, services, shops and dining not found elsewhere in the county. Homeowners eagerly seek downtown neighborhoods to be close to downtown services and activities. Homes and business properties are preserved and well kept. Residents represent

various age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural and racial heritages. This variety is also reflected in thriving establishments of the downtown. Locally owned and operated shops and dining establishments offer a wide range of ethnic and specialty products that draw customers from throughout the county. Local establishments hire and train local residents, which help strengthen community bonds. People are attracted to the downtown for its unique blend of entertainment, dining and specialty stores. Large converted historical structures house businesses and residents and add to the character of the area. These mixed-use establishments contribute to a high level of downtown activity.

City streets are clean, safe and attractive places to be. People like to linger and mingle downtown. Pedestrians stroll along the waterfront and through the downtown to admire the beauty and ambiance of lakefront views and the Heritage District. New developments fit in well with historic buildings. Business and residential areas are laced with beautiful plantings and outdoor amenities like seating, bike racks, fountains, kiosks, interpretive plaques, and sculpture. Bikers, joggers and walkers have attractive paths to enjoy and carriages and trolleys safely share the road with cars. While cars are accommodated downtown, they do not dominate the environment. Institutions like schools and churches continue to be strong and dynamic parts of the community.

Landmark homes, as well as quaint bungalows, are admired for their charm. There is a good mix of housing opportunities, including high quality, affordable apartments, condominiums, cottage-like homes for smaller households, and stately homes for larger families.

### C. Lakeshore Neighborhood Vision

Residents outside of the downtown and adjacent to the lakeshore were asked what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods, on the waterfront, and in neighborhood business areas. The following is a summary of recurring themes among the participants.

In 2015, the lakefront and connecting neighborhoods maintain the charm and small-town coziness that has been a part of neighborhood living for decades. Beach, marina and boating centers remain a strong part of coastal character. New developments are tucked among older developments and do not impose upon neighborhoods or the shoreline. Older homes are well-kept and primarily owner-occupied. Residents represent various age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural and racial heritages.

Locally owned and operated shops and dining establishments thrive and serve both the year-round and seasonal populations. The quaint village character of the Lakeside business district is maintained and enhanced. Local establishments hire and train local residents, which help strengthen community bonds.

Everyone enjoys the ambiance of free, beautiful public beaches, water, and sunsets. The area is a regional focal point for recreational activity. Tomorrow's children will enjoy the same activities and pleasant waterside scenes, as did their great-grandparents.

City streets are clean, safe and attractive places to be. People like to linger and mingle in the area. Pedestrians stroll through beautiful neighborhoods and along the waterfront on a well-established trail system to admire the splendor of lakefront views. Business and residential areas are laced with beautiful plantings and outdoor amenities like seating, bike racks, and interpretive plaques.

The single-family nature of existing neighborhoods remains strong and desirable. Some new housing choices are provided in the area to offer a variety of housing opportunities for various household and life-stage needs, including small pockets of quality, affordable apartments, limited low-density condominiums, and townhouses. Mixed-use housing and small-scale commercial developments are

integrated in diverse and well-designed clusters. New single-family developments follow traditional city patterns and function as interactive neighborhoods.

Alternative modes of transportation are encouraged and expanded. Sidewalks, non-motorized trail connections and other amenities are well developed which reduce dependency on the automobile.

#### D. The Shared Vision

City leadership, and all residents of Muskegon share a common desire to have healthy neighborhoods. A common theme heard by staff clearly ties to the function of a "traditional" neighborhood: *"watchwords for neighbors are mutual support and respect. People look out for one another and neighbors often become surrogate parents and mentors for the youth of the neighborhood. Through cultural interaction, established neighborhood standards, and formal recreational and school functions, children learn self-respect, community pride and the sense of responsibility they need to become happy and productive adults. They want to return to the neighborhoods in which they grew up. In general, residents are very proud of their community."*

### **III. Issues, Opportunities and Strategies**

The following section, in table format, is a compilation of a significant amount of community input. The comments of initial brainstorming sessions were recorded and reported back to the participants for refinement (e.g., corrections, additions). Participants then identified general categories that their comments could be grouped into to better organize the collective thoughts of the group. Once a subcommittee of participants edited the comments, this distillation was presented to all original participants for ratification. The primary purpose of this summary of issues, opportunities and strategies is to provide a clear frame of reference of community desires. Neighborhood groups, City Commissioners, appointed boards and commissions, and city staff can use this as a focal point for our collective efforts to build and maintain healthy neighborhoods in this premiere waterfront city.

### **Land Use, Downtown Issues**

1. Participants were concerned that long-established single-family districts are being encroached upon or transitioned into commercial or multi-family uses.
2. Housing stock continues to be reduced in the central city.
3. There was concern that public access to the waterfront not be lost in development and redevelopment projects.
4. Because the City of Muskegon is a working city with strong residential areas, there are concerns that tourist-oriented businesses might get out of balance with non-tourist residents and businesses.
5. When asked what kinds of uses they thought were inappropriate downtown participants indicated:
  - Heavy Industry
  - Trucking
  - Pawn shops
  - Rent to own
  - Tattoo Parlor
  - Junk yards
  - Aggregate on Lakeshore
  - Chain restaurants
  - Single family conversions to multi-family
  - Casino
  - Over-sized parking lots
  - Check cash shops
  - Adult entertainment
  - Tire store
  - Commercial Storage
  - Strips of storage bldgs.

### **Land Use, Lakeshore Issues**

1. There was concern that the single-family/cottage nature of residential waterfront areas would be significantly altered or overwhelmed by a concentration of poorly placed, high-density, high-rise development outside the downtown. Downtown areas are more appropriate for higher density development. Appropriate densities for residential uses need to be determined for the entire Lakeshore area.
2. Various forms of residential development need to be encouraged in appropriate areas of the Lakeshore. The scale and nature of new development, especially residential, need to blend with the scale of the majority of existing contiguous development. Each new waterfront development should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
3. Long-established, stable single-family neighborhoods should not be encroached upon or transitioned into commercial or multi-family uses.
4. There was a fear that Pere Marquette and other contiguous areas (Channel Park, Lighthouse Park, and Beechwood Park) may be infiltrated by year-round, permanent commercial ventures. The land is dedicated Charter Park and should remain so. Existing seasonal businesses have not realized the profit margin they hoped for and additional permanent structures should be prohibited, especially if an established business area (Lakeside) struggles to maintain support.
5. The use (or misuse) of Planned Unit developments and other "flexible" zoning techniques within the Lakeshore area that fundamentally change the character of a single family neighborhood require careful scrutiny by staff and the public.
6. If Lakeshore industrial uses phase out, there should be a thoughtful reuse plan for the property that considers the context of the area.
7. The Muskegon Lake and adjacent aquatic habitat promotes an important fishery. Land use decisions that strip vegetation from the shores negatively impacts the fishery and should be prevented.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Land Use, Downtown <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To redevelop vacant sites.</li> <li>2. To rehabilitate old industrial structures for housing and mixed uses.</li> <li>3. To develop the downtown into a specialty shop, restaurant and entertainment center.</li> <li>4. To integrate good public access to the waterfront in cohesive design.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Land Use, Lakeshore <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access and proximity to the waterfront and resources of Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan.</li> <li>2. To develop new single-family and low density residential development.</li> <li>3. To consolidate aggregate operations on the east end of Muskegon Lake.</li> <li>4. To improve alternative and non-motorized transportation.</li> <li>5. To negotiate waterfront access as part of new development.</li> <li>6. Development potential of the McCracken peninsula.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Land Use, Downtown <u>Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Except for the designated Port Zone, relocate waterfront industry out of the study area.</li> <li>2. Institute flexible zoning districts that promote mixed use of residential, commercial and office uses. Promote mixed-use developments that have first-floor service or retail uses with office and/or residential uses on upper floors.</li> <li>3. Place townhouses, condominiums and other high-density, middle to high income housing near the downtown waterfront where the scale of such development fits with the downtown skyline rather than scattering it along the coastline outside of the downtown. Promote some higher density housing along Western to promote a 24-hour presence of human activity.</li> <li>4. Prevent the transition of single-family homes to multiple units by downzoning areas of the city, especially in the downtown.</li> <li>5. Consolidate commercial uses along Western Avenue, Pine Avenue, and Third Street.</li> <li>6. Limit the density of office uses on Western Avenue to promote a 24-hour downtown.</li> <li>7. Move activities into the downtown that will benefit downtown neighborhoods (e.g., the farmer’s market).</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Land Use, Lakeshore <u>Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amend the Planned Unit Development standards of the ordinance to provide more guidelines for appropriate application.</li> <li>2. Downzone the paper mill to at least an I-1 designation only if there is an indication that the mill being phased out. This would prevent heavy industry from occupying the waterfront. Since the property is large enough to be its own enclave, staff should work with the property owners to discuss a mixed use development for the site that could include light and clean industrial, commercial and/or residential development. Natural shoreline in that area should be preserved and/or restored.</li> <li>3. Any recreational development on the Amoco Property should promote a natural buffer strip.</li> <li>4. Assess zoning of the Lakeshore corridor and consider downzoning business areas and rezoning some business to multi-family designations where appropriate.</li> <li>5. Assess existing waterfront districts for an appropriate mix of land uses.</li> <li>6. Existing marina establishments should be maintained. Dockage and slips on Muskegon Lake are a premium and should not be transitioned into other uses, especially those that are not water-compatible. Preserve existing publicly accessible slips on Muskegon Lake.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Clarify zoning district regulations to differentiate uses and protect waterfront, Lakeshore and neighborhood character.</li><li>8. Businesses located on or adjacent to the waterfront should be water-dependent. Legitimate water-dependent uses include marinas, commercial fisheries, docks, restaurants or other facilities that require waterfront ambience.</li><li>9. Relocate aggregate operations in Lakeside to the east end of Muskegon Lake where water dependent industrial uses are consolidating.</li><li>10. Increase access to the water through better use of existing access and acquiring additional access where feasible.</li><li>11. Explore seasonal uses for Pere Marquette under a multi-use pavilion that could also be used for recreational functions (e.g., dances)</li></ol>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Downtown Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High-speed commercial traffic is not compatible with the nature of downtown neighborhoods (i.e., small yards setbacks, higher density design).</li> <li>2. Many neighborhoods are cramped for parking because the city was laid out well before society become dependent on automobiles. Many homes lack driveways and alley access is limited. Congestion is aggravated by home conversions to apartments.</li> <li>3. The concentration, quality and proliferation of rental housing. There is also a concern over not having a healthy mix of housing.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Lakeshore Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A large portion of the housing stock is well over 50 years old and may need updates and/or significant maintenance. Older citizens or first time home-owners may not have the resources to make such home improvements.</li> <li>2. The quaint single-family nature of the neighborhoods could be jeopardized by intensive, high-scale residential development.</li> <li>3. There are limited senior housing opportunities in the neighborhood. When a senior wishes to move from their single-family home they have to leave the area.</li> <li>4. Evidence of blight is showing more in the single-family neighborhoods.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Downtown Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The downtown has affordable housing choices.</li> <li>2. Downtown housing is within walking distance of cultural and business activities.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Lakeshore Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The waterfront and lake is a significant amenity which keeps the desirability, and therefore property values of the area strong.</li> <li>2. The area has an inherent high standard of property maintenance.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Downtown Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make sure in-fill homes are of high quality and are consistent with the character of the downtown.</li> <li>2. Build infill homes or move homes on vacant city lots.</li> <li>3. Investigate “point-of-sale” inspections with special attention to land contract sales. This program may be as simple as requiring proof of a home inspection by a certified professional for major items like foundations, furnaces, opening windows and roofs.</li> <li>4. Strengthen housing code enforcement to prevent deterioration of homes. Hold owner-occupied homes to rental standards.</li> <li>5. Increase the frequency of rental inspections from once every four years to at least once every two years.</li> <li>6. Investigate the use of shared garage space or parking areas in those areas with limited on-site parking (e.g., the notion of “mews” of British design).</li> <li>7. Investigate the adaptive reuse of large homes not viable for single family development on a limited basis for offices, cottage industry and studios.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Housing, Lakeshore Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amend the Planned Unit Development standards of the ordinance to provide more guidelines for appropriate application of high-density housing.</li> <li>2. Assess zoning of the Lakeshore Drive corridor and consider downzoning business areas and rezoning some business to multi-family designations where appropriate.</li> <li>3. Assess existing waterfront districts for an appropriate mix of land uses</li> <li>4. Additional multi-family development near Lakeshore areas outside the downtown should be low-level, low to moderate-density, and appropriately placed near the water, but not adjacent to it.</li> </ol>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community &amp; Economic Development, Downtown <u>Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As with many other urban centers, the City of Muskegon has experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A significant out-migration of residents to the suburbs.</li> <li>- Retail abandonment as fringe and highway interchange malls replaced or displaced downtown business areas;</li> <li>- Economic displacement as industry automation, migration and consolidation required fewer workers;</li> <li>- Maintenance challenges of aging water, sewer, street and public utilities systems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Despite a certain level of disinvestment in the City since the 1950s, service demands have increased. The growing need for reinvestment can outstrip resources.</li> <li>3. There is a lack of business density and geographic definition to the central business district. There are too many vacant buildings and lots. There is a need for more unique shops and services to serve residents and tourists, particularly near the waterfront.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community &amp; Economic Development, Lakeshore <u>Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business areas should be confined to the existing concentrations between Estes Ave. and McCracken. High-impact businesses should locate outside of the neighborhood business district in B-4, General Business zones.</li> <li>2. Measures need to be taken to fill economic gaps when waterfront industry relocates or gets phased out.</li> <li>3. Lakeside business and tourist activities are relatively isolated from the Downtown.</li> <li>4. Blight and empty storefronts in the Lakeside Business District.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community &amp; Economic Development, Downtown <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The City can capitalize on the fact that it is situated on the largest inland lake in West Michigan, with a deep-water port, that has access to Lake Michigan.</li> <li>2. There are large areas of waterfront land available for redevelopment.</li> <li>3. The history of Muskegon shows the community and its waterfront has evolved significantly since its incorporation some 133 years ago (1869). Nearly seven generations later, it is still a unique community with regionally significant assets. This includes an historical character and downtown that cannot be duplicated by suburban counterparts.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community &amp; Economic Development, Lakeshore <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The City of Muskegon can capitalize on the fact that it is the largest city on Michigan's west coast. Its character includes a unique blend of waterfront resort and urban entertainment.</li> <li>2. There are several talented artists in the focus area and throughout the City whose talents could draw activity to the City.</li> <li>3. The City has a great deal of existing infrastructure including public water, sewer, stormwater and a parks system. Full-time public safety and public works personnel are equipped to assist with regional level events (festivals, etc.).</li> </ol>

**Community & Economic Development, Downtown Opportunities**

4. The City’s natural and cultural assets have regional significance. The city is home to:
- Cultural assets like the Frauenthal Center, County Museum and associated facilities (Hackley/Hume homes, fire barn).
  - Muskegon Museum of Art
  - National Historic sites like the Hackley Library and Hackley Administration building;
  - Walker Arena and Muskegon Fury hockey team;
  - Hackley Hospital and Mercy General Health Partners;
  - Community Foundation for Muskegon County;
  - Heritage Landing and the historic [Union](#) Depot
  
  - Grand Valley State University's Water Research Institute, Baker College and Muskegon Community College;
  - Regional offices for national human service groups like United Way, Red Cross, YMCA, and Goodwill;
  - Hackley Park, the farmer's market, boat launches and public marinas;
  - A host of special events like Summer Celebration, Cherry County Playhouse, Shoreline Spectacular, and AVP Volleyball.
  - Commercial tourism like the Silversides, the Port City Princess, and the Milwaukee Clipper.

### **Community & Economic Development, Downtown Strategies**

1. The downtown should be developed and marketed to set it apart from the suburban offerings of strip malls and department stores. Focus on the development of specialty or niche businesses.
2. Build on the existing downtown cultural center. Arts, entertainment and regular events like "Parties in the Park" provide a focus for the downtown. Special events like Summer Celebration bring an excitement to the downtown.
3. Promote convention business development in the downtown.
4. Work with neighborhood and business groups to develop consistent design themes for the downtown. The effort should include recommendations for:
  - The location of street furniture, kiosks, formal bus stops, shelters and picnic tables.
  - Fixtures that are consistent and fit the historic nature of the downtown including street signs, streetlights, fencing, etc.
5. Concentrate regional-draw businesses around the arts and entertainment centers on Western Avenue.
6. Promote neighborhood service businesses in the Third Street and Pine Street Corridors.
7. Consider increased police presence as the downtown blossoms. Foot, bike, golf-cart shuttles and horse patrol should be considered.
8. Define the types of uses that will receive any additional Renaissance Zone designations and tie their designation to property-owner performance guarantees.
9. Provide better/more public access to Muskegon Lake, including tie-ups for small power and non-motorized boats, especially near downtown.
10. Provide more of a draw for boaters docking near the downtown (small shops, convenience stores, etc.).
11. Investigate the merits of water-taxi or water shuttle services to destinations along the City's shoreline.

### **Community & Economic Development, Lakeshore Strategies**

1. Target the Lakeside business district for business development assistance. Link technical assistance resources with the business owners association to assist them with development and design issues.
2. Promote connections between the Lakeside area and the Downtown area on entertainment and waterfront activities that might be centered in either district (e.g., shuttles, boat transportation, programming).
3. Investigate the potential of drawing boaters more into business areas. Perhaps more transient docks are warranted.
5. Develop a better design for seasonal cart and kiosk businesses at Pere Marquette.
6. Promote development that can accommodate local artists and promote unique products and crafts of the area.
7. Promote an antique mall for Lakeside Business District.
8. Consider developing a water shuttle to the North side of the channel.
9. Promote winter recreation and tourist attractions by co-marketing with the county and other municipalities.
10. Engage in holistic marketing to promote all features, attractions and amenities to make the City a destination.
11. Consider the use of business incentives and tax capturing techniques to upgrade the Lakeside business district.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Downtown <u>Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of neighborhood continuity. The presence of the wide, one-way, and relatively high-speed corridors of Muskegon and Webster aggravate the situation. Downtown neighborhoods need to be reintegrated with the central business district with the redesign of the Muskegon and Webster corridors.</li> <li>2. Concerns with the waterfront being built-up to the point where Muskegon Lake cannot be seen. Residents were concerned with public access to Muskegon Lake and thought structures should be placed as a backdrop and not impose upon or block the waterfront.</li> <li>3. Poorly lit areas and streetlights which are maintained or out of scale/context with the nature of the neighborhood.</li> <li>4. Providing more low-cost recreation and entertainment for downtown residents (seniors and youth in particular). Regional parks and other general recreational offerings are outside of the downtown and not easily accessible by downtown residents.</li> <li>5. Poorly maintained city property (most notably, vacant lots).</li> <li>6. Failure to replace or maintain elements of downtown design (e.g., banners, Christmas decorations, and street landscaping).</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Lakeshore <u>Issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduction of the public’s visual and physical access to the water from development design that is not well thought-out.</li> <li>2. Dock and marine service facilities in poor repair detract visually from the shoreline. Scrapped or obsolete equipment litters the coast.</li> <li>3. Unmaintained seawalls, broken concrete and unmaintained docks which detract from the visual beauty of the coastline create a poor image for the City.</li> <li>4. There was concern that development of new boat slips not encroach upon the navigable waters of Muskegon Lake.</li> <li>5. In some areas along the business district and bike trail lighting is poorly maintained, glaring or non-existent.</li> <li>6. Lack of organized beautification/design efforts for the Lakeside Business District.</li> <li>7. Permanent dock with appropriate parking and access for the Milwaukee Clipper.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Downtown <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are many redevelopment opportunities downtown that can incorporate outstanding design features as part of the redevelopment.</li> <li>2. There are several unique and impressive facilities and structures that provide an existing urban fabric on which to build.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Lakeshore <u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The backdrops of Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake can be accentuated with good design.</li> <li>2. The waterfront offers a theme that can unite elements of the community.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Downtown <u>Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporate design standards in zoning regulations that address building facades, pedestrian access, street furniture and non-motorized vehicle access.</li> <li>2. Make design ties north/south from downtown neighborhoods to the Muskegon Lake shoreline.</li> <li>3. Eliminate the artificial hills on the waterfront.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design and Amenities, Lakeshore <u>Strategies</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start a streetscape beautification plan with the Lakeside businesses to include façade improvement and street amenities (e.g., kiosks, street furniture, etc.).</li> <li>2. Consider the adoption of a Harbor Ordinance, which could regulate the condition of docks, seawalls and other shoreline infrastructure.</li> </ol>

### **Preservation, Downtown Issues**

1. The need to revitalize the historic, quiet nature and high quality of downtown neighborhoods by paying particular attention to:
  - Neighborhood design (e.g., streetlights, architecture, and general beautification).
  - Code enforcement on poorly maintained properties before they deteriorate and get demolished.
  - Protecting and rehabilitating historic structures rather than demolishing them.
  - Infrastructure upgrades.
  - Pedestrian-friendly and public transit-responsive services.
  - Chronic public safety and image concerns like street corner drug deals, solicitation and gang activity.
  - Empty storefronts.
  - Undesirable or poorly suited land uses downtown (e.g., warehousing and businesses with high outdoor storage requirements).
  - Needed recruiting for service businesses (e.g., grocery).
2. The deterioration and lack of use or misuse of unique structures, e.g., the Century Club, and "grand old houses" having been cut-up for multi-family units which further crowd neighborhoods. The condition of structures on the Pine and Third Street corridors is of particular concern.

### **Preservation, Lakeshore Issues**

1. Muskegon Lake is a prime fishery that has been diminished by development. Currently, the percentage mix of relatively undisturbed aquatic and shoreline habitat is on the lower end of what is considered healthy for a good fishery.
2. Dredge and fill around Muskegon Lake can re-suspend contaminants and destroy aquatic life.
3. The amount and quality of public access to Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan is of concern. Public facilities need to be maintained and protected. Additional access opportunities need to be developed whenever feasible through enhancing existing access or acquiring new access as available.
4. Waterfront habitat in the City should be preserved where practical.
5. Although the environmental quality of the area is greatly improved from the 1950's. There are lingering issues with sediment contamination, stormwater runoff and damage to remaining habitat.
6. Muskegon Lake becomes a sink of contaminants as streams, groundwater and stormwater carry pollutants to the receiving body (i.e., contaminants in Ruddiman Creek).
7. The "ovals" vegetation at Pere Marquette Park should be protected to prevent blowing sand to residential areas.

### **Preservation, Downtown Opportunities**

1. Historic tax credits for structures in historic districts are an excellent means to promote rehabilitation.
2. There are many unique local businesses we could promote. Some of the suggested businesses include:

Antique shop	Aquarium	Artists lofts/shops
Bakery	Professional sports	Bike Rental Places
Bingo Hall	Brew Pub	Casino
Coffee house	Convention/Vocational center	
Cross Lake Ferry	Dance Club	Deli
Dive shop	Drug Store	Dry Cleaner
Ethnic and local restaurants		Financial institutions
Food Courts	Florist	Fresh fish shop
Gas Station (fringe)	Gift Shops	Gift Shops/Boutiques
Grocery Store	Gym	Ice Cream parlor
I-Max Theatre	Indoor Carnival	
Indoor farmer's market & flea		
Motel	Movie Theater	Office Bldgs
Photographers	Pool hall (classy)	Reception facility
Sidewalk Café	Spa	Specialty Clothing
Specialty shops	Sports Bar	Subway
Tailor	Water taxi	Marine recreational industries

3. Participants were asked about key sites for development and redevelopment

Anaconda (Westran) site	Apple & Pine (Dobben)
Area at Terrace/Western	Boiler Works
Carpenter Bros. Property	Century Club
City Parking Ramp	Clay & 9 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>
Clay & Eastern	Clay & Spring
Ginman Tire Area	Mart Dock
Leighton Park	Lower Western to Ninth
Medical Arts Center	Michcon site
Muskegon Mall	North end, Witt Buick
Old Bishop/Heethuis Bldg & vacant lot	Old small train station
Ottawa Ave.	Parking lot east of the Hume
Richards Park	Seaway and Eastern (off towers)
Shaw Walker Building	SPX Building
St. Joe's property, Monroe St.	Stable property on Clay
Street development of West end of Henry to Downtown	
Teledyne Medical Arts Center	Pine St. – Apple to Western
Empty Lots on Muskegon & Webster	Excess lands from Shoreline Drive
Farmers Market to Ninth & Western	Fisherman's Landing

### **Preservation, Lakeshore Opportunities**

1. West Michigan is one of the *few places in the entire world* with freshwater dune systems. Muskegon is a city tucked into the dunes and against Lake Michigan. Quality of life in the City is very high, in part because of its geographic location.
2. The city's entire Lake Michigan shoreline, over two miles worth, is held in public ownership. Everyone can enjoy the ambiance of beautiful beaches, water and sunsets for free.
3. Muskegon Lake is a 4,100-acre water body with many commercial and recreational opportunities. Further, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classifies the Muskegon Lake, Muskegon River, and associated wetlands as a significant national wetland system. This resource niche gives Muskegon economic and community development options many other cities simply do not have.

Foundry property at end of Western Further devel.of Heritage Landing.  
Seaway and Eastern (off towers)  
Shaw Walker Building St. Joe's property, Monroe St.  
Third St. Corridor  
Street development of West end of Henry to Downtown  
Pine St. – Apple to Western

4. Take advantage of existing ambiance, historic structures, horse and carriage service, etc.
5. Young people are coming back downtown, buying homes and fixing them up.
6. Beauty and presence of historic buildings like the redevelopment of the Amazon.
7. Private initiatives that enhance the downtown (e.g., Monet Garden).

### **Preservation, Downtown Strategies**

1. Continue to relocate saved historic homes in the infill areas downtown.
2. Reevaluate historic district boundaries and educate owners about their rights and responsibilities.
3. Use historic tax credits to promote rehabilitation.
4. Be more assertive about reutilizing key Western Street structures like the Heethuis/Bishop building.
5. Promote the designation of single-property historic districts.
6. Establish programs and regulations that better protect historic resources.
7. Clarify and strengthen codes to better address blight issues. Work more diligently to clean problem properties, including trash in yards, dilapidated homes and junk cars.
8. Focus rehabilitation efforts on older homes in the downtown. Provide incentives to stimulate additional reinvestment in homes.
9. Develop an aggressive tree replacement and enhancement program for the downtown, especially along the Muskegon and Webster Avenue corridors.
10. Tie the neighborhood, cultural amenities and waterfront together with marked walkways, kiosks, landscaping, signs, and interpretive plaques.
11. Identify significant view lines and enhance or preserve them.
12. Continue promoting the influx of new residents downtown.

### **Preservation, Lakeshore Strategies**

1. Enhance and preserve water quality through the use of natural vegetative buffers along the shoreline. Also limit direct discharge of stormwater.
2. Continue with cross-community and intergovernmental cooperation to address concerns with Ryerson and Ruddiman Creeks.
3. Work with state fisheries officials and the County Conservation Office to augment and protect fish habitat in Muskegon Lake.
4. Encourage the use of Michigan Department of Natural Resources hearing process to discuss concerns with dredging, filling, coastal armoring and encroachments on navigable waters.
5. Large-scale or mixed use developments should be guided with incentives and design standards that protect and enhance natural amenities including aquatic and shoreline habitat so the Muskegon Lake fishery is not diminished.
6. Work with the Water Research Institute to monitor and improve water quality.
7. Stay educated on environmental studies and clean-up needs. Work with other organizations and the state to facilitate clean-up of such sites.
8. Limit armoring of the coastline to existing established facilities. Encourage use of alternative or “soft shoreline” stabilization methods. Additional transition of any natural shoreline should be carefully evaluated.
9. Become familiar with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisheries standards and manage waterfront resources.
10. Promote the use of native landscaping species to prevent invasive species from intruding on the ecosystem.
11. Increase the level of access to the Muskegon Lake waterfront by better utilizing the land already held in public ownership.
12. Consider an additional historic district for segments of Lakeshore Drive.

**Transportation, Downtown Issues**

1. Safety, noise, speed, vibrations and isolation problems associated with a major trunkline cutting through the downtown neighborhood (Muskegon and Webster). Truck traffic, privacy, small front yards, and lack of trees along the corridors are also of concern.
2. The changes to Muskegon and Webster Avenues after the completion of Shoreline Drive. The general consensus was to step down the function of the street and turn them back into two-way, local service streets.
3. The ability of Shoreline Drive and the downtown to accommodate an increasing number of special events and increasing attendance at special events. Residents are particularly concerned about:
  - Adequate public safety resources (fire, ambulance and police) and their ability to respond in a crowded environment.
  - Congestion and poor vehicular and pedestrian circulation;
  - The invasive nature of some of the events on the neighborhood (e.g., trespass, noise, illegal parking).
  - Adequate, well-placed and well designed parking areas.
  - Adequacy of the route/design for truck traffic.
4. Shoreline Drive’s design creates a barrier between the central business district, its neighborhoods, and the waterfront.
5. There are conflict points between pedestrians and cars along north/south streets as people try to access the waterfront, especially on 9<sup>th</sup> street.

**Transportation, Downtown Opportunities**

1. Downtown neighborhoods can be strengthened by new developments when Shoreline Drive is complete. There is an opportunity to integrate the downtown with the shoreline and the neighborhoods with commercial activity during this process.

**Transportation, Lakeshore Issues**

1. Lakeshore Drive is the primary access to a growing peninsula. With truck traffic and additional residential development there needs to be care not to overly congest the area. East of Lincoln Avenue the issue is compounded by the fact that the road narrows and there is limited or no shoulder.
2. The amount, location and design of parking areas in the Lakeside Business area has been an issue in the past. Thoughtful design needs to be employed in new development and redevelopment to improve this situation.
3. Beach Street is very congested at Lakeshore Drive. A bottleneck is created at peak use times.
4. Truck traffic often totally blocks Lakeshore Drive. As development increases this hazard will become more of a problem.
5. Heavy truck traffic down Lakeshore disrupts the neighborhoods, and the ambiance of the area.
6. From Laketon Avenue to Country Club Drive, the sidewalk is inadequate for a bike and pedestrian use.

**Transportation, Lakeshore Opportunities**

1. Development of the bike trail west of Laketon Avenue.
2. The presence of water offers the opportunity for various modes of water transportation.

### **Transportation, Downtown Strategies**

1. Assemble a design team (e.g. engineer, urban designer, transportation planner) to work with neighborhood representatives, city staff, commercial interests and Michigan Department of Transportation to retool the Muskegon and Webster corridors and revitalize urban neighborhoods. Consider:
  - Start the process with a design group that actively involves the residents and business representatives. This process should serve as the foundation for design efforts.
  - Two lanes of traffic, two-way with two lanes of parking in select areas.
  - Restrict access to Muskegon Avenue where it meets Shoreline Drive.
  - "Bump-out" terraces in various areas to improve neighborhood design and calm traffic.
  - Narrow the streets.
  - De-sync traffic lights, remove some signals and provide 4-way stops in residential stretches of the corridor.
  - Create a small scale internal loop to cross-link neighborhoods with commercial districts and the shoreline.
  - Expand terraces in select spots and plant street trees in bump-out areas.
  - Provide boulevard islands along parts of the stretch.
  - Limit truck traffic on the corridors. Create truck routes and weight limits throughout the city.
  - Provide a traffic calming transition between the residential and business areas of both the Muskegon and Webster corridors, such as, curbing bump-outs or pavement narrowing in the residential area that may not be applied in the commercial area.
2. Perform a comprehensive downtown traffic study that evaluates traffic patterns, (especially all one-ways downtown) in light of Shoreline Drive being completed.
3. Evaluate problem intersections like the Pine and Clay intersection and the

### **Transportation, Lakeshore Strategies**

1. The design of parking areas along Lakeshore should promote shared parking and design connections for foot traffic among facilities.
2. Do not locate parking lots adjacent to the water. Design parking so it does not isolate people from the water or block waterfront views.
3. Investigate the use of other modes of transportation to limit congestion during summer events at Pere Marquette Park.
4. Consider a turn-lane where Edgewater Street connects with Lakeshore Drive.
5. Help facilitate common or shared parking agreements among Lakeside merchants.
6. Review on-street parking policies and spaces. Consider working with the paper mill to redesign staging areas to keep trucks from using the main thoroughfare as a maneuvering lane and docking area.
7. Encourage the reduction of truck traffic on Lakeshore Drive from gravel transport by facilitating the relocation of Lakeside gravel operations to the east of the lake.
8. Provide signs on common truck routes to prevent truckers confusion or misdirection.
9. Limit high-density residential and commercial development along Lakeshore Drive to limit concentrations of high-volume traffic since opportunities to expand the roadway are limited.
10. Provide well-designed pedestrian crossings in the Lakeside business district, particularly along marina/business district interfaces where boaters may want to cross Lakeshore to business establishments. Consider pedestrian right-of-way walks like those found in coastal communities along the east coast.
11. Use traffic calming techniques and design to slow traffic along the Lakeshore corridor, especially near business and marina areas.

<p>Spring and Webster intersection.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Investigate the needs of alternative transportation, including expanded bus service, shuttles, trolleys, boaters and bikers. Pay particular attention to crossings and overpasses over Shoreline Drive to connect the central business district and its neighborhoods to the waterfront. Look to Chicago and Duluth as models for doing this.</li> <li>5. Provide alternative transportation amenities throughout the downtown like bus-stops, cab stands, marked walking or jogging routes. Pay special attention to a connection between the downtown and the High School.</li> <li>6. The design of parking areas in the downtown should promote consolidated, shared parking and parking decks or ramps where appropriate.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Investigate realigning Lakeshore Drive by the paper mill to make room for maneuvering and loading areas off the public right-of-way.</li> <li>13. Consider an extra lane at Beach Street to separate right and left turning movements.</li> <li>14. Consider seasonal traffic control at the Beach, Lakeshore Drive intersection.</li> </ol>
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