

MUSKEGON TOWNSHIP

# Master Plan



# Master Plan

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MUSKEGON, MUSKEGON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Recommended by Planning Commission, August 8, 2022

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# 01. INTRODUCTION





# Welcome

Welcome to the Muskegon Charter Township Master Plan. This Plan reflects a vision for the future of transportation, land use, the economy, the environment, downtown, parks, and cultural stewardship of the Charter Township of Muskegon. This Plan is the result of countless hours and efforts of community leaders, staff, and volunteers over the past several months. It represents the hopes and desires of all those involved and a comprehensive analysis of relevant existing and future conditions in the Township and region.

The Township Board appointed a Steering Committee who worked together throughout this planning process to create a comprehensive vision for the Township, satisfying the requirements for a Land Use Master Plan as mandated by the State of Michigan. This document includes overall goals and strategies for the community as a whole, along with specific goals addressing each of the particular elements included within the document.

The Master Plan was developed through an open, public process led by the Steering Committee who are committed to making a difference in Muskegon Township. The Committee members, along with the Planning Commission and Township Board, are also committed to creating a community where residents and visitors can live, work, and recreate for many years to come.

The Muskegon Charter Township Master Plan is based on the dreams, aspirations, concerns, ideas and values shared by the community. Those aspirations were the fundamental basis of this Plan and its goals and vision for the future.

## Purpose and Intent

This document is intended to fulfill the requirements and provide the important functions of a Master Plan. A Master Plan is a crucial planning document for a community as it not only provides important information about the current conditions and trends in the community, but also presents a vision for the future of the Township along with a plan for accomplishing that vision.

A Master Plan is used for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level, a Master Plan is the basis for a community's zoning ordinance. One of the legal tests of validity for a zoning ordinance is that the ordinance must be based on a comprehensive plan for the development of the jurisdiction. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended) requires that zoning ordinances are based on a plan.

A Master Plan is a guide for desired projects and programs to improve the community. A fundamental part of the master planning process is the public involvement that identifies the community's desires for its future and its long-term vision for growth and development. The goals and objectives are the heart of the Master Plan and present the vision and the manner in which it will be achieved. This document presents the vision for the Muskegon Township over the next 20 years, but also includes a number of specific, short term implementation activities intended to realize the overall vision of the Master Plan.

# 02. COMMUNITY PROFILE



# Regional Location

Muskegon Charter Township is located in central Muskegon County located in the West Michigan region. According to the Michigan Townships Association, a charter township is defined as “a special township classification created by the Michigan Legislature in 1947 to provide additional powers and streamlined administration for governing a growing community. A primary motivation for townships to adopt the charter form is to provide greater protection against annexation by a city. Currently, 139 Michigan townships have opted to become charter townships.”

The Township is located just east of the City of Muskegon, and north of Fruitport and Norton Shores. One of the Township’s most desirable and unique features is the Lower Muskegon River basin, where the wetlands, flood plains, and natural habitats are preserved for recreation and ecosystem preservation. The Township is also in close proximity to the shore of Lake Michigan and other associated popular regional destinations.

Just as many other suburban communities in the State of Michigan, many of the commercial and residential development in the Township is aging. Some of the common characteristics associated with aging commercial development includes vast underutilized street-facing parking lots, high vacancy strip malls and indoor shopping malls, and an apparent automobile-focused development style. As such, a significant component of this Master Plan is to create a common and tangible vision for the Township’s aging commercial corridors, and envision new (re)development and investment in appropriate areas.

Relatedly, another significant component to this Master Plan examines the Township’s current conditions as they relate to broader national planning trends and hot topics such as housing diversity and affordability, aging in place, public utilities and infrastructure, public transportation, parks and recreation, changing consumer trends, and other important aspects of the community.

Demographic analysis, or study of the characteristics of the population, is a fundamental element of master planning. Planning for future growth and development requires consideration of “how much” – how many people will need Township services, how much housing is affordable, how many new houses will be built, and other vital signs. Understanding these existing conditions and past trends will help to appropriately anticipate and plan for the future needs of the community.

The intent of a demographic analysis is to paint a general picture of the community: the population’s age, gender, family size, educational status, and similar features. The analysis compares Muskegon Township to nearby communities, Muskegon County, and the State of Michigan as a whole. The other communities used for comparison purposes are Fruitport Township, City of Muskegon, and Norton Shores. Differences in demographic characteristics may indicate issues or areas in which land use planning and public policies are warranted; may identify strengths or assets that can be further developed or emphasized; or may identify weaknesses or issues that need to be addressed.

Most of the data presented comes from the US Census. The most recent data comes from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The American Community Survey is conducted every year and samples a percentage of the community on topics such as population, economics, housing, etc. The 5-year estimates for a given population are considered a reliable source as they represent 60 months of collected data for all geographic areas.

# Population

Changes in the number of people residing in a community are an important indicator for community planning. Growing communities have different needs than communities with stable or declining populations. The table below shows the relative populations of Muskegon Township and the comparison communities.

**Table 1: Population**

Year	Muskegon Township	Fruitport Township	City of Muskegon	Norton Shores	Muskegon County	State of Michigan
2010	17,964	13,518	39,023	23,916	173,223	9,952,687
2020	17,596	14,575	38,318	25,030	175,824	10,077,331

Source: US Census Bureau

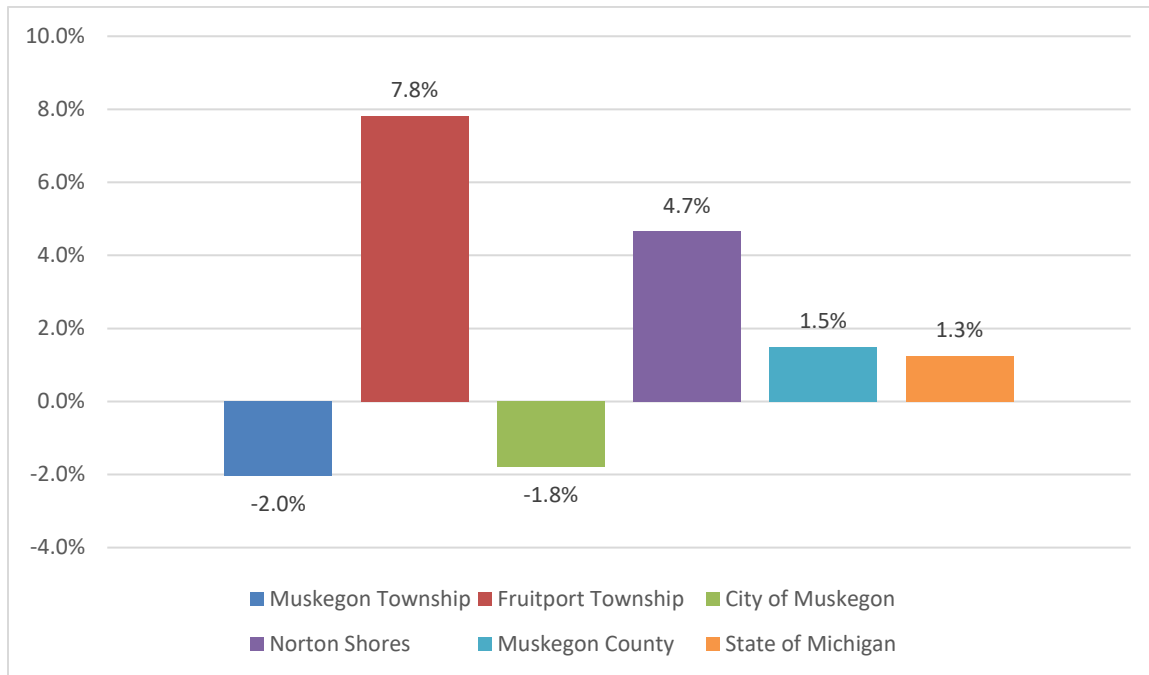
In comparing the several communities located in Muskegon County as noted above, Fruitport Township experienced the largest population growth over the sample period by over 600 people, or 4.3%. Over the sample period, Muskegon Township experienced a small overall loss in population. However, the population picture is more complex than that. As shown in the table below, according to Census estimates, the Township lost population from 2010 to 2015, but then rebounded in 2016, gaining population through 2019. However, the 2020 decennial headcount showed those gains reversing. The reason for the difference between the headcount and the estimates is not clear.

**Table 2: Year by Year Population Changes, Muskegon Township**

Year	Population
2010	17,964
2011	17,910
2012	17,840
2013	17,797
2014	17,777
2015	17,757
2016	17,785
2017	17,802
2018	17,846
2019	17,878
2020	17,596

Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Headcount (2010 and 2020), American Community Survey (2011-19)

Figure 1: Population Change, 2010-2020



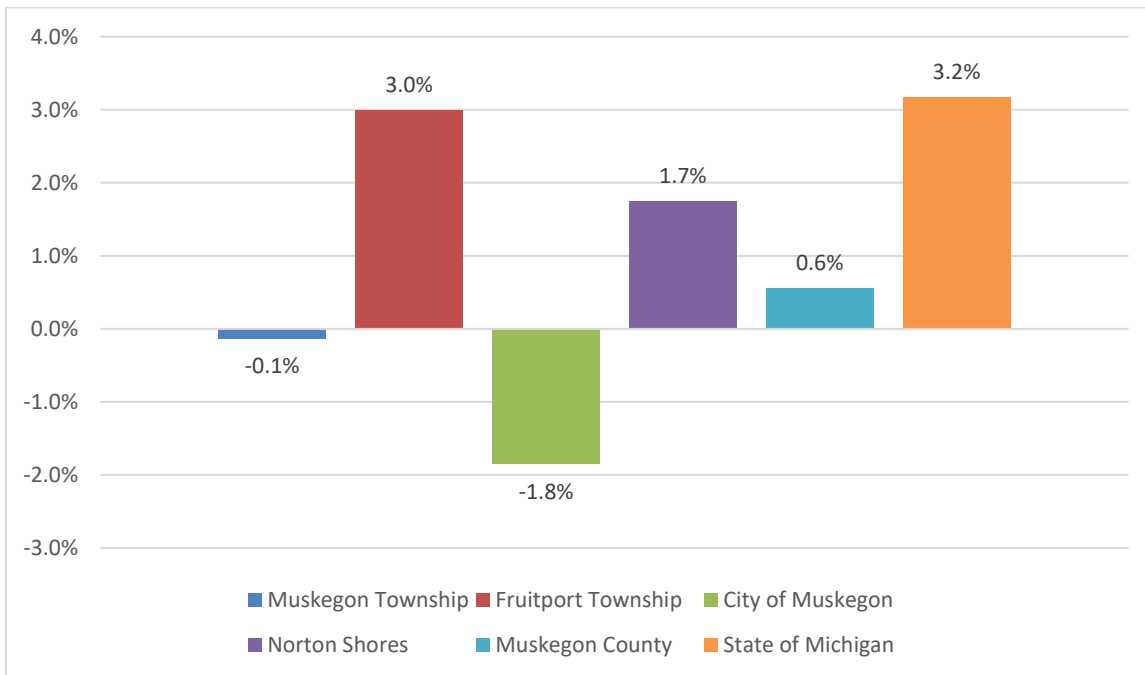
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Households

This section analyzes the composition and characteristics of households in Muskegon Township. Changes in the number of households in a community are an indication of changing demand for housing units, retail and office space, and community services. Tracking household changes ensures sufficient land is set aside in appropriate locations to accommodate future growth and demand for housing.

The figure below shows the change in the number of households in Muskegon Township has decreased by 0.1% with a loss of 9 households. Consistent with the area’s population trends, Norton Shores experienced the highest growth in number of households within the sample period. However, it should be noted that the State of Michigan overall experienced the highest growth in households at 3.2%. Given that Muskegon Township experienced minimal population and household fluctuations over the sample period, it can be concluded that the overall population is relatively stable.

**Figure 2: Change in Number of Households, 2010-2020**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000, 2010 Census and 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Average household size is another indicator of community composition. Larger average household sizes generally mean more children and fewer single-parent families. Nationally, household sizes are shrinking as young singles wait longer to get married and life expectancy increases for the senior population. The table below compares the change in average household size since 2010 for Muskegon Township, the comparison communities, the County, and the State.

Again, Muskegon Township experienced a slight decrease in the average household size from year 2010 to 2019. The City of Muskegon experienced a more significant decrease in average household size in comparing with the sample communities. Interestingly, the average household size in Muskegon County remained the same

throughout the sample period. The decreasing average household size is a common trend nationwide, in that many couples are choosing to have less children than previous decades, but the Muskegon region appears to be an outlier.

**Table 3: Average Household Size, 2010-2019**

Year	Muskegon Township	Fruitport Township	City Of Muskegon	Norton Shores	Muskegon County	State of Michigan
2010	2.64	2.62	2.39	2.42	2.53	2.46
2020	2.60	2.69	2.30	2.46	2.53	2.53

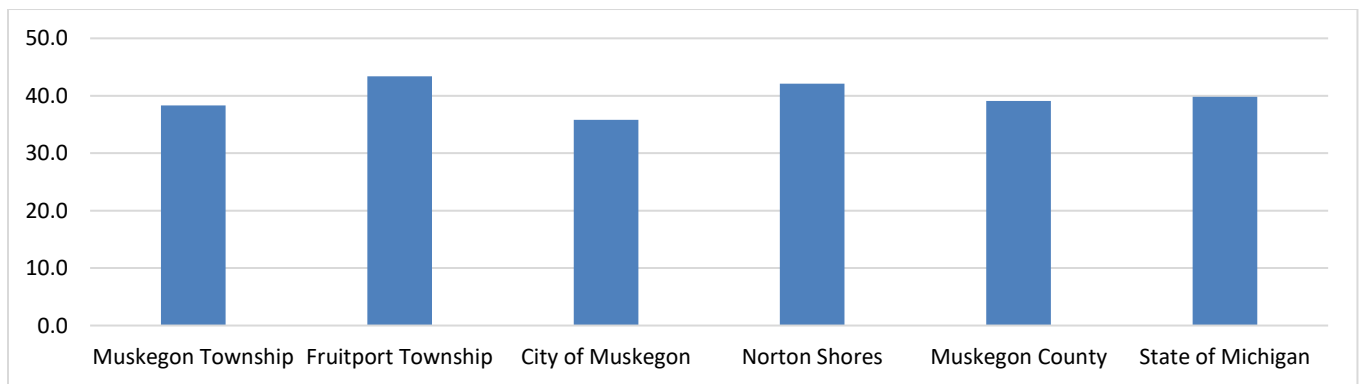
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Age

The age of a community’s population has very real implications for planning and development, whether it is an increased or decreased need for schools to serve the population under 18, or a need for housing alternatives and services for empty nesters and older residents.

The figure below compares the median ages (the mid-point where half the population is younger and half is older) of Muskegon Township and the comparison communities. What should be noted here is that Norton Shores and Fruitport Township have the highest reported median age compared to the other sample communities. Muskegon Township’s median age is approximately 38.3 years old, a relatively young population compared to the other sample communities.

**Figure 3: Median Age, 2020**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Age structure (analyzing which proportions of a municipality’s population are in which stages of life) gives a nuanced view of the makeup of a community. To compare age structure, the population is divided into the following groupings:

- Under 5 (Pre School)
- 5 to 19 (School Aged)
- 20 to 44 (Family Forming)
- 45 to 64 (Mature families)
- Over 65 (Retirement)

**Table 4: Age Distribution, 2019**

Age Group	Population	Percent of Total Population
Under 5 (Pre School)	1,286	7.2%
5 to 19 (School Aged)	3,317	18.6%
20 to 44 (Family Forming)	5,567	31.1%
45 to 64 (Mature Families)	4,601	25.7%
Over 65 (Retirement)	3,107	17.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

As the table above suggests, the highest percentage of Muskegon Township residents fall into the 20 to 44 years old age range, or “Family Forming” age. This is consistent with the Township’s relatively young median age as well as the average household size of 2.60 people. This data suggests that in general, residents in the Township are typically from younger families with children living in the home. It should also be noted that the second highest population group is aged between 45 to 64 years old. Overall, the Township is well-positioned to support the needs of existing families in the Township, but should also be mindful of the needs of future aging residents as well as supporting and encouraging new younger residents simultaneously.



# Education

This section analyzes the level of educational attainment in Muskegon Township and the comparison communities for persons age 25 or older. As with many communities throughout the State, the highest percentage of residents have achieved a high school diploma, or some college.

*Table 5: Educational Attainment in Residents Aged 25 Years and Older, 2019*

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Muskegon Township</b>
Less than High School	2.6%
Some High School	5.6%
High School Graduate	40.5%
Attended College	26.2%
Associate Degree	12.3%
Bachelor's Degree	10.1%
Advanced Degree	2.8%

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

# Housing

## HOUSING UNITS

According to US Census data, there are 7,298 housing units in Muskegon Township in 2019. Each housing unit represents one single family dwelling unit – a house, apartment, condominium, etc. In 2010, the Township had approximately 7,170 housing units. Between 2010 and 2019, the Township experienced a growth of 128 housing units. Interestingly, although the Township’s population decreased slightly between the sample years, the number of housing units actually increased. Therefore, it can be concluded that those who are moving into the Township are likely building new homes, rather than purchasing existing homes. Further, US Census data also notes that the number of vacant housing units increased from 2010 to 2019 by approximately 137 units.

## AGE OF STRUCTURE

The table to the right indicates the age of existing housing units in the Township. Between years 1950 and 1959 as well as 1990 and 1999, the Township experienced the largest boom in construction of housing units.

*Table 6: Age of Housing, 2019*

Year Structure Built	# of Units	Percent
2014 or Later	153	2.1%
2010-13	36	0.5%
2000-09	632	8.7%
1990-99	1,163	15.9%
1980-89	665	9.1%
1970-79	885	12.1%
1960-69	962	13.2%
1950-59	1,412	19.3%
1940-49	808	11.1%
1939 or earlier	582	8.0%

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

As housing ages, it requires greater investment of time and money to keep it in good condition. Typically, residences that are 30 years and older will require substantial maintenance to prevent blight and decline for the broader community. Also, older homes tend to lack features that support handicapped access and may not be suitable without significant retrofitting for an aging population. This is a concern for the community given the older age of half of the housing stock.

## HOUSING TYPE

This section analyzes the types of housing present in Muskegon Township and their proportions, as compared to the proportions in Muskegon County. As the table below indicates, the Township has similar proportions to the County in providing two-family housing units. However, the County has a higher percentage of multiple family housing units than the Township. Conversely, the Township has a higher percentage of mobile home units (or other housing types) within its jurisdiction. This can indicate that a large number of the County’s total mobile home units are located within Muskegon Township.

**Table 7: Housing Type, 2019**

Housing Type	Muskegon Township		Muskegon County	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Single Family Detached	5,540	75.9%	54,236	72.8%
Single Family Attached	253	3.5%	2,224	3.0%
Two Units	7	0.01%	2,114	2.8%
Multiple Family (More than 2 units)	560	7.7%	10,269	13.8%
Mobile Home or other Type of Housing	938	12.9%	5,653	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,298</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74,496</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## HOUSING TENURE

**Table 8: Housing Ownership Status and Tenure, 2019**

Muskegon Township	Number of Dwelling Units	Percentage of Total
Owner-Occupied	5,636	77.2%
Renter-Occupied	1,149	15.7%
Vacant	513	7.1%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>7,298</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing tenure describes how housing is occupied – by the owner, by a renter, or whether it is vacant. The table above shows that the majority of dwellings in Muskegon Township are owner-occupied. The Township has a relatively low vacancy rate of approximately 7 percent. This does not indicate a disinvested housing. However, it should be noted that the number of owner-occupied housing vastly outweighs the number of renter-occupied housing.

## MEDIAN HOME VALUE

The value of the homes in Muskegon is one measure of the quality of life in the community and the health of the economy. The median home value in the Muskegon Township in 2019 is \$131,100, but the larger question is whether the value of homes in Muskegon is rising more quickly after adjusted for inflation, thus giving homeowners real equity in their property. The median home value in 2010 was \$112,800. This is a total increase in median home value within a 9-year time period of approximately \$18,300. This could partially be due to the fact that the Township has experienced an increase in the number of new housing units during that time.

# Economics

## INCOME

Muskegon Township's median household income is \$52,615. Of all the sample areas, Norton Shores has the highest median income, which is aligned with the fact that Norton Shores seems to be growing in both population and investment over the last number of years. However, it should be noted that Muskegon Township and Norton Shores experienced a similar increase of median income from year 2010 to 2019, with an increase of approximately \$14,500.

*Table 9: Median Income, 2000-2017*

	Muskegon Township	Fruitport Township	Norton Shores	City of Muskegon	Muskegon County	State of Michigan
<b>2010 (Not Adjusted)</b>	\$38,208	\$50,045	\$49,299	\$26,686	\$40,670	\$48,432
<b>2019</b>	\$52,615	\$63,352	\$63,805	\$32,433	\$50,854	\$59,584

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

## OCCUPATION

This section addresses the employment of Muskegon Township residents. This is not an analysis of what kind of jobs are available or what businesses are located within the community, but rather in what occupations members of the community are employed, regardless of where they work. Thus, commuters from Muskegon Township to other areas are included in this analysis, but commuters from other locations coming into the Township are not. Major occupational sectors for Muskegon Township residents are employed in the manufacturing, education, healthcare, and retail trade industries. The top three (3) occupational sectors in Muskegon Township are the same as those for in Muskegon County.

**Table 10: Occupational Sectors, 2019**

Sector	Muskegon Township		Muskegon County	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Agriculture and Mining	72	0.9%	687	1.3%
Construction	329	4.1%	2,460	4.7%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>2,532</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>20,087</b>	<b>38.0%</b>
Transportation and Utilities	301	3.8%	2,447	4.6%
Information	39	0.5%	147	0.3%
Wholesale Trade	155	1.9%	1,584	3.0%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>4,537</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	218	2.7%	1,864	3.5%
Tourism and Entertainment	627	7.9%	2,755	5.2%
<b>Education and Health Care</b>	<b>1,599</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>9,153</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
Professional Services	416	5.2%	3,007	5.8%
Other Services	367	4.6%	1,843	3.5%
Government	325	4.2%	2,281	4.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Commuting

The table below shows the commute time of Township residents, with an average commute time of 20.8 minutes. Approximately 55.7% of residents travel 19 minutes or less to work, meaning a remaining 44.3% of residents travel 20 minutes or more to work. This near even split of shorter and longer commute times notes the desirability to live in Muskegon Township, that more residents are willing to travel a bit further to work.

**Table 11: Commute Time of Muskegon Township Residents**

Time of Commute	Destination	Percentage of Residents
Less than 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muskegon Township</li> <li>City of Muskegon</li> </ul>	15.4%
10 to 14 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muskegon Heights</li> <li>Fruitport</li> </ul>	18.5%
15 to 19 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norton Shores</li> <li>Roosevelt Park</li> </ul>	21.8%
20 to 24 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Haven</li> <li>Whitehall</li> <li>Coopersville</li> </ul>	19.9%
25 to 29 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moorland</li> <li>Sullivan</li> </ul>	4.0%
30 to 34 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fremont</li> <li>Newaygo</li> </ul>	5.1%
35 to 44 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Rapids</li> <li>Allendale</li> </ul>	3.2%
45 to 59 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cedar Springs</li> <li>Rockford</li> </ul>	8.6%
60 or more minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kalamazoo</li> <li>Lansing</li> </ul>	3.5%
<b>Mean travel time to work</b>		<b>20.8</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Housing Market

## INTRODUCTION / SUMMARY

The purpose of this market study is to determine the types of housing that are in demand for Muskegon Township and the surrounding County in order to inform the ongoing Master Plan process. The demand and supply for housing within Muskegon County is analyzed, and the differences between demand and supply are analyzed to establish conclusions about the type, tenure, and price of housing that will be needed in Muskegon in the coming decades. These conclusions will then be used to determine the best course of action in each of the targeted areas.

### Demand

Demand is calculated by determining the number of households in the study area that are pre-disposed to own or rent, then calculating the affordable price of housing for households based on income. The first step is to take the population in the study area broken down into age cohorts<sup>1</sup> (available from the US Census Bureau), and then determine the number of households headed by a member of each age cohort using national headship rates<sup>2</sup>. Once the number of households in each age group is determined, they are further broken down into “owners” and “renters”, based once again on national patterns of housing tenure by age. This breakdown provides the total number of rental and homestead properties demanded in the study area.

### Supply

Supply is calculated by determining the number of housing units rented/for rent and owned/for sale in each of the price categories determined by the demand analysis. The analysis uses the overall number of units in the study area and their tenure<sup>3</sup>, as found in the US Census.

### Supply-Demand “Gap”

Having determined the supply and demand in the study area, the two are compared in order to show whether there is a market “gap”<sup>4</sup>. First, the overall numbers of units supplied and demanded are analyzed, and then the number in each price point is compared (for both ownership and rental). The gap analysis points to the areas of the market that are saturated and the areas with latent demand.

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<sup>1</sup> Age Cohorts: The number of people living in a geographic area that fall within a given age range. Data Source: US Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Headship Rates: The percentage of people in a given age cohort that are considered the heads of their households. Data Source: US Census Bureau

<sup>3</sup> Housing Tenure: Tenure is a description of whether housing is owned or rented. Data Source: US Census Bureau

<sup>4</sup> Market “Gap”: The difference between demand and supply for a given product in a given market area. A gap could indicate excess demand or excess supply.

## TRADE AREA

Markets do not stop at municipal borders. When households seek housing in the Muskegon area, they do not look solely within Muskegon Township, or any other specific community. Thus, the geographic extent of the housing market is more realistically the area where someone can live and comfortably commute into Muskegon Township. For ease of data collection and in the interest of drawing a clear boundary around the trade area, the whole of Muskegon County is designated as the “Trade Area” for this study.

## WHAT INFLUENCES HOUSING DEMAND?

A number of demographic and preference factors influence housing demand. Population growth is a key factor in driving demand, but the number of households being formed is a more direct determinant of housing demand.

Four key factors that influence the overall level of demand for housing are:

- **Longevity:** As life expectancy increases, people remain in their homes longer. This reduces the supply of housing units that are available to new households. In 1960, the average life expectancy was 69.8 years; today it is 78.5 years.
- **Single-Person Households:** The number of single-person households increased from 10% of all households in 1950 to 28% of all households today. This trend is linked to longevity, as the majority of single person households are older women who have outlived their partner. However, later marriage age and increased rates of divorce also accounts for some of this increase. Single person households are less likely to own their housing units than multi-person households.
- **Hidden Demand:** High unemployment rates and a shortage of available housing or unaffordable housing (either as a result of a high housing value to income ratio or a high cost of borrowing) can result in people continuing to live with parents or relatives, moving back in with parents or relatives, or sharing houses with others. The impact of Covid-19 and the resulting housing crisis is unknown, and may not be reflected in Census estimates that use data from 2019 or earlier.
- **Migration:** Higher net rates of inward migration result in greater demand for housing. On the other hand, outward migration reduces demand for housing.

## WHAT INFLUENCES TENURE CHOICE?

Projecting the overall volume of demand is only part of the story. To properly consider how future demand might be met requires analysis of how overall demand might translate into demand for owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. A different range of factors influence tenure choice:

- **Affordability:** This refers to how affordable owner-occupation is, and it is a factor that has particularly significant implications for first-time buyers. There is strong evidence to suggest that a high price-to-income ratio creates barriers to home ownership, and that an economic slowdown reduces demand for new housing.
- **Mortgage Market:** Closely linked to housing affordability is the cost of borrowing and access to financing for owner occupation through the mortgage market. Without access to obtainable mortgages, owner-occupancy is not possible. When housing prices are growing strongly, lenders are more willing to lend – including offering higher loan-to-value ratios and reduced down payment requirements. During the housing bubble of the 2000’s, these practices tilted to excess, and ultimately resulted in the economic crash of 2008 as households



with untenable mortgages began defaulting in high numbers. Since then interest rates have remained low by historical standards, but the uncertainty in the employment market caused by Covid-19 may result in difficulties for many households in maintaining mortgage payments.

- **Confidence:** When confidence is high and there is an expectation of rising incomes and housing equity growth, demand can remain high even when housing is unaffordable and the cost of borrowing is high. Under these conditions, unaffordable housing prices can result in reduced savings rates rather than reduced demand for owner occupation as households choose to funnel money into homeownership rather than saving. The relationship also works in reverse, and during times of economic uncertainty households are less likely to commit to homeownership.

## WHAT INFLUENCES HOUSING TYPE CHOICE?

Beyond tenure preference, there are also preference considerations in how people choose to live – for instance, large lot, small lot, attached, or multi-family housing. Several factors influence housing choice.

- **Age:** People have different preferences for housing throughout their lives. Young, single people tend to prefer smaller units in high densities, families prefer larger lots, and retirees congregate in areas where their needs can be met.
- **Household Size:** Household size makes a big difference in housing type choice. Larger households, especially families, choose large units, often on large lots. Single people tend to prefer smaller units. Household size has been steadily dropping nationally over the past few decades, but housing type supply has not followed this trend, leading to a demand for more, smaller units.
- **Neighborhood Preferences:** People have preferences for certain amenities and characteristics in their neighborhoods. Some prefer to be near to retail, while others prefer more natural space. These preferences play out in housing type preference, as people pick housing types that fit their preferred neighborhood identity.

## HEADSHIP AND HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES

The headship rate is the number of households in each age group divided by the population in that age group. By definition, a household resides in a dwelling unit under its control. Using the data in Table 17 we can calculate the propensity of the population in each age cohort to 1) form a household based on the headship rate, and 2) own or rent a dwelling unit. Notably, roommates or a romantic couple living together are considered “co-heads” of a household, and only one person is counted as the “head” for the purposes of the headship rate.

Headship rate data is provided by the National Association of Home Builders, based on their analysis of US Census estimates from the American Community Survey. National data is used for headship and homeownership, because it is more readily available, and more reliable, than Census estimates for Muskegon County. The assumption, for the purposes of this analysis, is that Muskegon County’s headship and homeownership rates are roughly similar to the nation at large.

**Table 12: Headship and Homeownership Rates, 2019**

Age Group	Proportion of Population (Muskegon County)	Headship Rate (United States)	Homeownership Rate (United States)
20-29	12.7%	39.2%	37.3%
30-39	13.1%	54.3%	61.5%
40-49	11.0%	56.7%	70.3%
50-59	13.1%	58.5%	76.3%
60-69	13.4%	63.6%	78.7%
70-79	6.9%	64.4%	70.4%
80+	4.6%	54.1%	60.3%

Source: U.S. Census, National Association of Home Builders

## ESTIMATED STUDY AREA HOUSING DEMAND

The table below shows the number of households headed by each age group, and then breaks down those households into owners and renters. The table shows that the **total housing demand** for the trade area is **52,487 ownership units and 25,768 rental units**.

Note: The total number of households does not exactly match the Census estimate for total households in the County due to rounding of the headship rates.

**Table 13: Estimated Homeowner/Renter Demand by Age Group, 2019 (Muskegon County)**

Age Group	Population	Households	Homeowners	Renters
20-29	21,976	8,615	3,213	5,401
30-39	22,695	12,323	7,579	4,744
40-49	19,061	10,808	7,598	3,210
50-59	22,706	13,283	10,135	3,148
60-69	23,325	14,835	11,675	3,160
70-79	11,949	7,695	5,417	2,278
80+	7,985	4,320	2,605	1,715
<b>Total</b>	<b>129,696</b>	<b>71,877</b>	<b>48,222</b>	<b>23,656</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, McKenna Calculations

## SUPPLY-DEMAND GAP AND PROJECTED GROWTH

Overall, there are 74,591 housing units in Muskegon County, according to Census estimates. With only around 72,000 households, there is an oversupply of housing in the County. But that could change over time. Muskegon County grew by 1% between 2010 and 2020, which is not particularly fast growth, but is fast enough to eat up the gap between households and housing units in under ten years. **Therefore, Muskegon Township should plan for additional housing within its boundaries.**

Further, the County's growth rate from 2010 to 2020 is slightly misleading. Muskegon County lost population in 2010 and 2011, and its growth rate since then has been 2.1%. Meanwhile, Muskegon Township has lost population – but is well positioned to gain population in the coming years. Following are three projection scenarios:

- **Conservative Scenario – 1% Growth.** Muskegon Township has 6,785 households (according to 2019 Census estimates), so 1% growth would be approximately 68 new households – and therefore **68 new housing units – needed over a ten year period.**
- **Moderate Scenario – 5% Growth.** Muskegon Township stands to benefit from new housing demand stemming from households seeking the quality of life that the Township offers, including well regarded schools and easy access to natural amenities. That would result in a further increase in housing demand. 5% growth in households would result in a need for **339 new housing units over the next ten years.**
- **Aggressive Scenario – 10% Growth.** While growth in Muskegon County was slow, nearby Kent and Ottawa Counties grew rapidly between 2010 and 2020 – each experiencing more than 10% increases in population. Muskegon County offers many of the same attractive aspects of life as its neighbors, including access to natural amenities, short commute times, low cost of living, abundant job opportunities, and high quality of life. If Muskegon County can become part of the growth trend that has arisen in other parts of West Michigan, 10% growth is a reasonable projection for the Township. **10% growth would result in 678 new housing units over ten years.**

Therefore, the Future Land Use Plan should anticipate housing growth, but not at the expense of natural beauty or environmental protection.

It is worth noting that the Township's recent experience at the time of the drafting of this plan was, anecdotally, closer to the 10% scenario than the other two – and with the potential for even more growth. At the time of this Master Plan, the Township had multiple housing developments proposed or underway totaling several hundred new housing units. It remains to be seen whether this is a short-term trend or a long-term trend.

# Retail Market Analysis

This section will analyze the market for additional commercial space in Muskegon Township by conducting a “Gap Analysis.” Gap Analysis compares the supply of a certain good or service within a community to the demand for that good or service, based on the spending power of residents. If the number is positive, that indicates pent-up demand for a new retail location. If the number is negative, that indicates an oversupply of a certain type of commercial business.

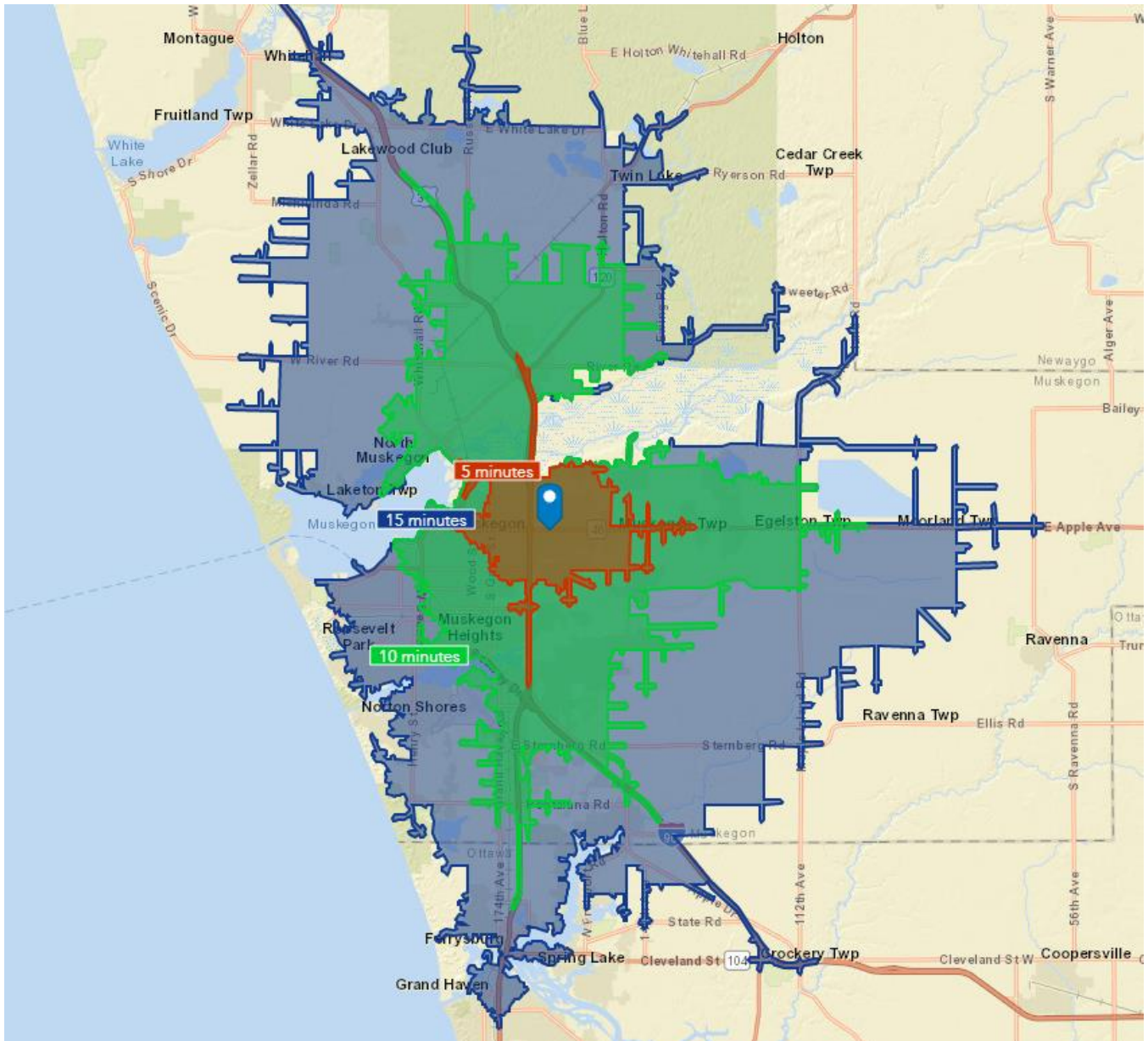
Then, the “gap” is converted from a spending power amount (in dollars) to a number of additional square feet of retail space demanded (based on per-square-foot sales for each category of retail). Finally, the number of additional square feet will be compared to the average size of a store in each category to determine the number of new stores demanded.

In considering the results of these retail gap calculations for purposes of the Master Plan, it is important that the numbers not be viewed as an absolute determinant of the community’s future. Retail gap is only one aspect. Local variations in buying preference, buying power, community desires, and other local characteristics and assets will greatly impact the future and outcome. The purpose of this analysis is, therefore, to give some insights which can contribute to a balanced approach in future economic development efforts and to create realistic expectations for the types of new retail development the Township can hope to attract.

## TRADE AREA

Customers and potential customers for Muskegon Township businesses come approximately from the three “rings” surrounding the Township. For purposes of analysis, they are measured from the intersection of Apple Avenue and Quarterline Road, along the Township’s busiest retail corridor. The first ring, within a five minute drive, covers the south side of Muskegon Township and extends into the City of Muskegon. The second ring, within a ten minute drive, adds the rest of the Township (including the north side), and extends into North Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, and Egelston Township.

The 15 minute drive area covers most of the greater Muskegon region, including Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, and Fruitport. It also reaches nearly as far north as Whitehall, and as far south as Grand Haven.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

## GAP ANALYSIS

Once the trade areas for the community are established (in this case, approximately estimated as the 15 minute drive around Apple/Quarterline, with sub-areas at 5 and 10 minutes for more detailed analysis), a gap analysis can be performed. This analysis consists of comparing the demand for a particular good to the supply of that good in the trade area and then computing the difference, or “gap” between demand and supply.

A positive gap indicates that there is more demand than supply and that a new store may be necessary to fill a particular need. A negative gap indicates that there is more supply than demand, meaning either that existing

stores may be in danger of going out of business or that additional demand is coming from outside the identified trade area.

For the purposes of this analysis, the gap will be expressed as a percentage of demand – i.e. the percentage of demand that is not being met by the existing supply. A negative percentage indicates a negative gap, i.e., a surplus of retail space in that category and no demand for additional stores of that type. Displaying the gap as a percentage allows a quick-glance analysis and easy comparison between categories.

Once the gap is calculated, it can be used to project the demand for new stores in various retail categories. The gap will be divided by the average sales per square foot for each type of retail, and the resulting figure will be compared to the approximate size in square feet of an establishment that could open in Muskegon Township.

Because Muskegon Township’s retail corridors compete with other regional shopping destinations, it will not be able to attract all of the new stores that are demanded within the trade area. This analysis will not seek to put an exact number on the proportion of regional retail demand that will be absorbed in the Township, because that will be based on other factors described by this plan, such as transportation improvements, land use policies, and economic development strategies. Instead, this chapter shows the total demand base that Muskegon Township can tap into as it grows in the future.

**The Table below** shows the percentage gaps based upon the supply and demand within the trade areas. A positive gap (in green) means that there is unmet demand that could be filled by new businesses. A negative gap (in red) means the market is already oversupplied.

**Table 14: Percentage Retail Gap, 2021**

Category	5 Minute Drive	10 Minute Drive	15 Minute Drive
Automobile Dealers	48.6%	46.9%	30.8%
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	-206.4%	-472.3%	-283.3%
Auto Parts Stores	82.1%	-6.7%	12.5%
Furniture Stores	16.0%	-52.7%	-31.7%
Home Furnishings Stores	-54.9%	-33.8%	1.5%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	56.1%	-39.3%	-4.4%
Building Materials and Supply Stores	59.1%	-23.3%	-39.0%
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores	100.0%	71.2%	32.5%
Grocery Stores	-55.9%	-125.3%	-61.7%
Specialty Food Stores	78.2%	51.6%	17.9%
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	8.1%	34.0%	22.5%
Health and Personal Care Stores	-216.8%	-78.7%	-26.0%
Gas Stations	-118.0%	78.4%	-50.7%
Clothing Stores	58.7%	33.5%	-14.8%
Shoe Stores	100.0%	-8.3%	-49.5%
Jewelry and Luggage Stores	100.0%	82.0%	35.8%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Music Stores	56.9%	-27.6%	-46.1%
Book Stores	100.0%	65.4%	-13.3%

Category	5 Minute Drive	10 Minute Drive	15 Minute Drive
Department Stores	25.6%	-98.3%	-68.9%
General Merchandise Stores	4.7%	-397.3%	-93.8%
Florists	-253.5%	-246.5%	-97.6%
Office Supply Stores	85.8%	-106.8%	-85.5%
Used Merchandise Stores	-100.1%	-223.2%	-63.0%
Restaurants/Bars	-74.9%	-66.4%	-58.7%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

The dynamics of the three drive times are interesting. The 5 minute drive has much more unrealized demand, indicating that shoppers on the Township's south side drive to other communities to patronize their retail stores. The 10 and 15 minute drive times, however, show oversupply in most categories, with some notable exceptions (automobile dealers, lawn and garden, jewelry, etc).

The table shows the gap converted to a demand for square footage, based on the size of the potential market and the usual sales per square foot of stores in the category.

**Table 15: Square Footage Demand, 2021**

Category	5 Minute Drive	10 Minute Drive	15 Minute Drive
Automobile Dealers	12,975	54,022	78,230
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	0	0	0
Auto Parts Stores	11,529	0	16,622
Furniture Stores	1,431	0	0
Home Furnishings Stores	0	0	852
Electronics and Appliance Stores	7,023	0	0
Building Materials and Supply Stores	11,477	0	0
Lawn and Garden Equipment Stores	2,051	6,443	6,689
Grocery Stores	0	0	0
Specialty Food Stores	2,791	7,715	5,885
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	356	6,305	9,264
Health and Personal Care Stores	0	0	0
Gas Stations	0	204,060	0
Clothing Stores	9,493	33,700	0
Shoe Stores	2,987	0	0
Jewelry and Luggage Stores	1,549	5,383	5,392
Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Music Stores	7,726	0	0
Book Stores	3,087	8,264	0
Department Stores	30,179	0	0

Category	5 Minute Drive	10 Minute Drive	15 Minute Drive
General Merchandise Stores	1,828	0	0
Florists	0	0	0
Office Supply Stores	3,118	0	0
Used Merchandise Stores	0	0	0
Restaurants/Bars	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,599</b>	<b>352,892</b>	<b>122,933</b>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2016, McKenna Calculation

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data regarding retail demand in Muskegon Township and the Muskegon Township area.

- There is local demand that could be filled by new stores on Apple Avenue. However, the retailers would need to specifically focus on the local market. National retailers are unlikely to notice or try to fill this particular niche.
- There is demand within the 10 Minute Drive area that is filled by retailers within 15 Minute Drive area. It is possible that Muskegon Township's corridors (Apple Avenue, Holton Road, etc) could attract this demand. But right now, that spending power is being used in places like Norton Shores and Grand Haven.
- Some of the highest unmet demand comes from retailers with unique land use needs, such as auto dealers and gas stations. These businesses need specific sites, and cannot simply fill empty storefronts. Therefore, the market for individual storefronts in shopping centers is likely weaker than the top-line numbers would indicate.

There are empty storefronts and other land along the Apple Avenue corridor and, to a lesser extent, the Holton Road corridor. Given that, planning for additional commercial land is probably not necessary. Commercial land may be incorporated into mixed use areas that allow flexibility, such as a commercial/industrial mixed use area, or a commercial/residential/office mixed use area.



# Industrial Needs Analysis

The quantity of developed industrial land a community will need in the future is dependent upon its current employment base, infrastructure capacity, local political philosophy, as well as a myriad of other factors industries consider when choosing a new facility location.

This chapter assesses the current supply and location of industrial land within the Township and estimates the amount of industrial land that will likely be needed to support the local tax base. Further, recommendations are made on the type and location industrial development should occur based upon local objectives and need.

## EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BASE

Emerging global markets, heightened competition for market share, and customer demand for faster product delivery are all contributing to transportation as a key factor in site selection. Transportation is second only to labor availability and cost when selecting the right site for a new or expanded facility. The emphasis on transportation, highway accessibility in particular, reinforces a continuing trend of executives seeking effective transportation links with both suppliers and customers. “Just-in-time” delivery requirements, reduced inventories, and reduced costs of materials on hand are driving this requirement.

Muskegon Township’s transportation facilities play a major role in industrial development patterns. The Township’s industrial base has capitalized on its highway interchanges, the nearby airport, and rail lines. Specifically, industrial uses are found near US-31 and Getty Street, along Whitehall Road on the north side of the Township, and along the Laketon Road corridor.

## INDUSTRIAL LAND USE PLANNING STANDARDS

For land use planning purposes, it is necessary to estimate the amount of land that can reasonably be expected to develop for industrial uses. This enables capital improvements to be planned and programmed in advance, and that an ample supply of land is available to support local employment opportunities.

Three methodologies commonly used for calculating future industrial land needs are employment/density ratio method, land use ratio method, and population ratio method.

The employment/density ratio method is considered the most accurate predictor of industrial land use demand. If employment by industry can be projected, a worker density factor can be applied. This will result in a total acreage requirement for three distinct intensities of industrial land use. Intensive industries include electrical equipment and supply; printing and publishing; apparel and textile products; transportation equipment; and similar uses. Intermediate extensive industries include lumber and wood products; furniture and fixtures; food and kindred products; chemicals; and similar uses. Finally, extensive industries include tobacco products; petroleum and coal products wholesale trade; and similar uses.

## EMPLOYMENT DENSITY RATIO

Currently, manufacturing employs approximately 32% of Muskegon Township's labor force. According to 2019 Census estimates, manufacturing employment in Muskegon Township is around 2,532 people and likely to increase as local businesses continue to expand. There are 2,102 acres of industrial land in the Township currently, or approximately 0.8 acres per employee.

## PROJECTING INDUSTRIAL JOB GROWTH

In 2010, manufacturing employment in the Township numbered 2,032 people, meaning manufacturing jobs grew by 24% between 2010 and 2019. Following are three projection scenarios to 2030:

- **Conservative Scenario - 20% Growth:** If manufacturing job growth slows to a 20% increase between 2020 and 2030, the Township will need approximately 2,466 acres of industrial land.
- **Moderate Scenario – 25% Growth:** If manufacturing job growth continues at approximately its current pace between 2020 and 2030, the Township will need approximately 2,532 acres of industrial land.
- **Aggressive Scenario – 30% Growth:** If manufacturing job growth increases to 30% between 2020 and 2030 (a possible scenario given the growth of the cannabis industry and the strong position of other major industrial employers in the Township), the Township will need approximately 2,633 acres of industrial land.

**Therefore, the Future Land Use Map should call for between 2,400 and 2,600 acres of industrial land, which could include commercial/industrial mixed use areas.**



# 03. EXISTING CONDITIONS



# Natural Features

Located east and northeast of the City of Muskegon, Muskegon Charter Township occupies a unique space in the West Michigan region. It has the distinction of being the oldest Township in Michigan, created in 1837 when its boundaries also included parts of lands now in Ottawa and Oceana Counties. Eventually, its geographic extent was reduced by further divisions of the State government and annexations by the City of Muskegon. All of these factors have given the Township its current boundary, which encompasses about 23 square miles. The Township shares a common border with seven other communities: the Cities of Muskegon and North Muskegon, Laketon Township, Dalton Township, Cedar Creek Township, Egelston Township and Fruitport Township.

Protecting the water quality in the Township's rivers and streams is of critical importance

Muskegon Charter Township's unique location is reflected in the diversity of its land uses and natural features. The southwest portion of the Township has been urbanized and is only about three miles east of downtown Muskegon. The southeast corner of the community has experienced less intense development over the years, and contains vital stands of hardwood forests and open spaces while supporting low- and moderate-density residential development. The Township is bisected by the Muskegon River, which empties into Muskegon Lake just west of the Township's boundary. The river is surrounded by a large, wooded wetland area, cutting a path about one and a half miles wide from east to west. This natural feature provides a barrier dividing approximately six square miles of the Township from the remainder.

## SURFACE WATER & WATERSHEDS

A watershed is an area of land where all of its water drains to a common location. Watersheds also include many smaller tributaries (or sub-watersheds) such as creeks and streams that feed into a larger river and are influenced by the topography of the land. Surface water in Muskegon Charter Township consists entirely of rivers and streams flowing, generally, in an east-to-west direction towards Muskegon Lake; no lakes of significant size are located within the Township. Most of Muskegon Township is within the Muskegon River watershed, which encompasses an area of about 2,700 square miles and contains more than a dozen sub-watersheds.

The predominate hydrologic feature in the Township is the Muskegon River, which originates more than 200 miles upstream in the Houghton Lake region in Roscommon County. The river flows southwest, passing through several cities including Evart (Osceola County), Big Rapids (Mecosta County) and Newaygo (Newaygo County) before emptying into Muskegon Lake. The river descends more than 250 feet in elevation between its headwaters in Roscommon County and its mouth in Muskegon Lake. Also flowing through the Township towards Muskegon Lake are several smaller creeks and streams including Bear Creek, Little Bear Creek, Ryerson Creek, Cedar Creek, Four Mile Creek and Little Black Creek.

Protecting the water quality in the Township's rivers and streams is of critical importance to protecting the overall environmental health of the Township. Rivers and streams provide critical habitats for plants and animals, increase the quality of life for Township residents and help to define the character of the community. Furthermore, while land use practices in Muskegon Township may have a less significant effect on the watershed when compared with a community further inland, the Township should nevertheless take steps to protect the watershed.

This would help to protect the water quality, not only in the Township's waterways, but also Muskegon Lake and Lake Michigan, as well.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, one of the leading threats to a community's surface water is nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. Unlike pollution resulting from a single point, such as an industrial development or sewage treatment plant, NPS pollution cannot be traced to a single source or a specific location. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it carries pollutants and deposits them into lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater. These pollutants include excess fertilizers, oil and grease from urban areas, sediment from construction sites, bacteria from livestock and many other contaminants.

The nature of NPS pollution also means that the land use practices of one community may have a wide-ranging effect on another community. Since the Township lies at the mouth of the Muskegon River, it may be affected by NPS pollution that results from the land use practices that occur in most of the 2,700 square mile watershed located upstream of the Township.

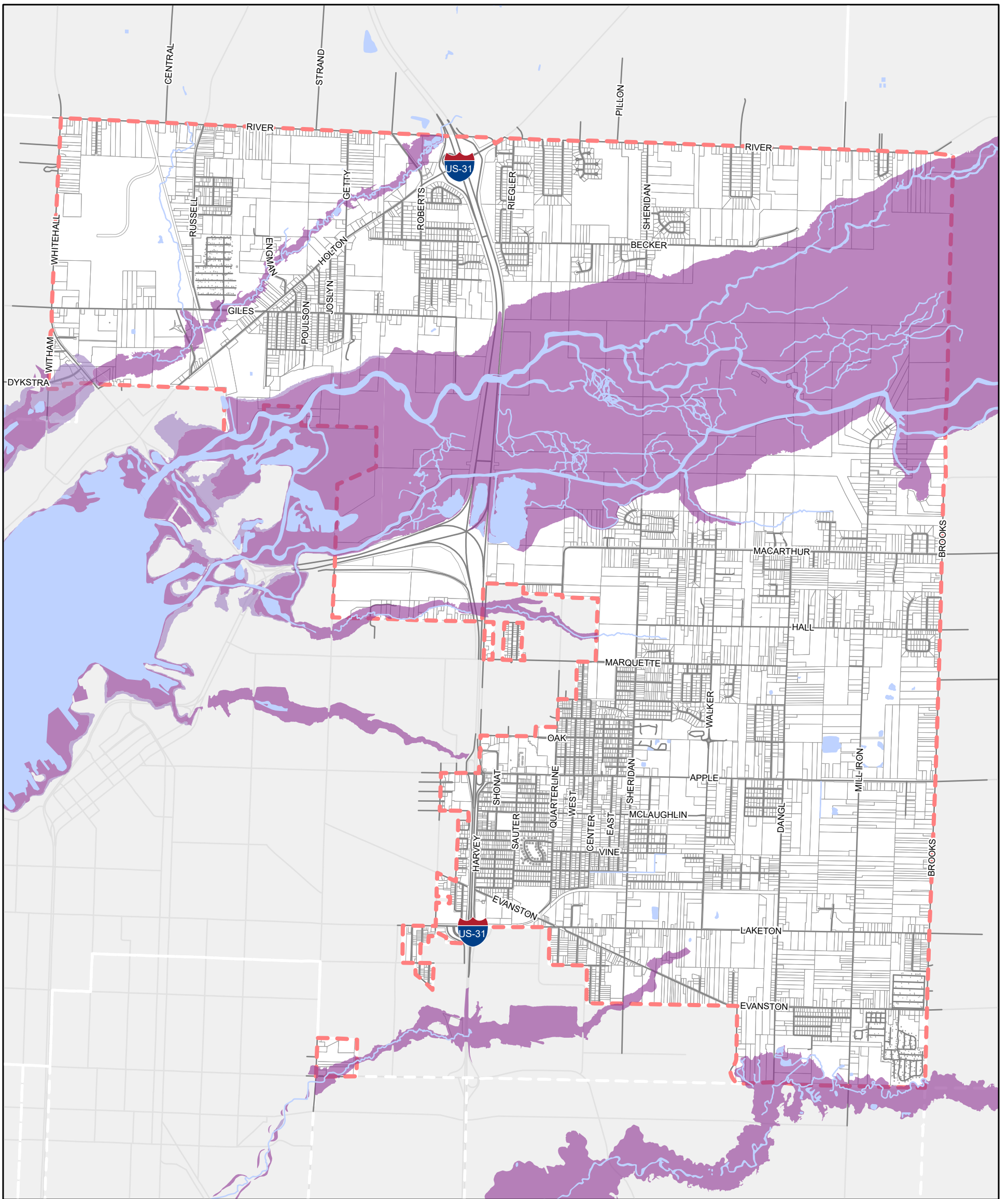
The Muskegon River watershed encompasses an area of about 2,700 square miles.

NPS pollutants include runoff from parking lots, stormwater discharge, and other sources.

## FLOODPLAINS

Muskegon Township contains four areas that are within the flood zone as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These areas are generally found along Little Bear Creek, the Muskegon River, Four Mile Creek and Black Creek. The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is defined as the land area covered by the floodwaters of a base flood. In this area, the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies. Areas in the SFHA in Muskegon Township are shown on Map 5.3. Most lands located within the SFHA in Muskegon Township are undeveloped, except for a limited number of residential properties located in close proximity to Little Bear Creek. As future land use decisions are contemplated in the updated Master Plan, the Township should discourage development in these sensitive, and potentially hazardous, locations.





# Floodplain

Muskegon Charter Twp., Muskegon County, MI

December 13, 2021

## LEGEND

- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Bodies of Water
- Parcels



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Muskegon County 2021. McKenna 2021.





## WETLANDS

Wetlands play a unique role in the natural environment. Muskegon Township is blessed with an abundance of natural wetland areas, most of which are found along the stream and river corridors. Wetlands as identified by the National Wetland Inventory are illustrated in Map 5.3. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality defines wetlands as "...land characterized by the presence of water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, wetland vegetation or aquatic life..."

Muskegon Township is blessed with an abundance of natural wetland features.

The Michigan DEQ further describes wetlands as "a significant factor in the health and existence of other natural resources of the state, such as inland lakes, ground water, fisheries, wildlife and the Great Lakes" and defines several of the environmental benefits of wetlands, citing that they provide:

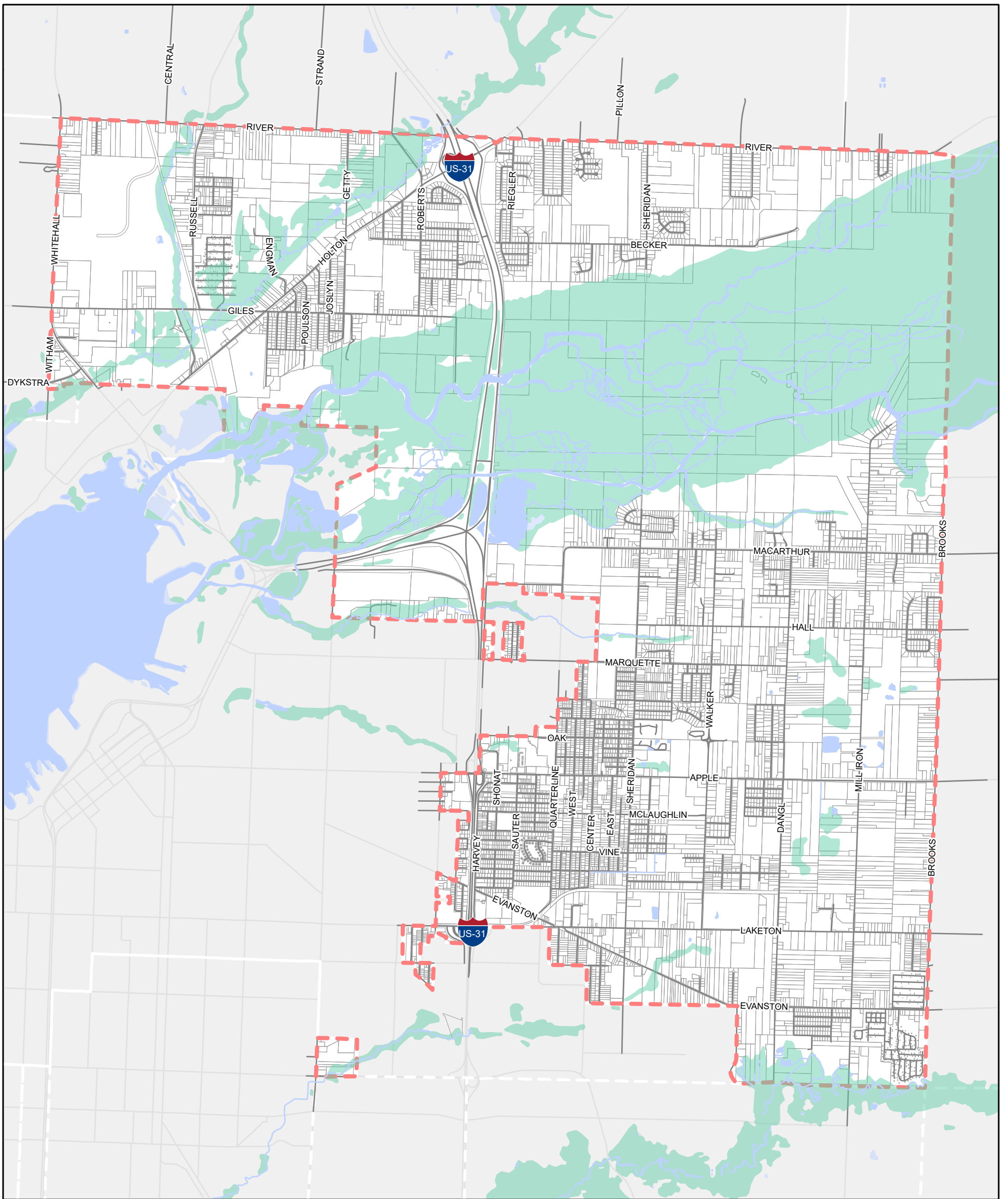
- Flood and storm control by the hydrologic absorption and storage capacity of wetlands.
- Wildlife habitat by providing breeding, nesting, and feeding grounds and cover for many forms of wildlife, waterfowl, (including migratory waterfowl) and rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species.
- Protection of subsurface water resources and provision of valuable watersheds and recharging ground water supplies.
- Pollution treatment by serving as a biological and chemical oxidation basin.
- Erosion control by serving as a sedimentation area and filtering basin, absorbing silt and organic matter.
- Sources of nutrients in water food cycles and nursery grounds and sanctuaries for fish.

Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, PA 451 of 1994, provides for the protection of most wetlands greater than five acres in area, and also enables local communities to adopt a natural feature ordinance to protect wetlands and natural features within their boundaries. However, despite these regulations, the Michigan DEQ estimates that, nationally, approximately 100,000 acres of wetlands are destroyed annually, and it is generally accepted that the total amount of wetlands is continually declining. Responsible development techniques are vitally important if the decline in wetland areas is to be reversed. At the local level, the Township must ensure that reasonable and responsible development is permitted while protecting natural features, such as wetlands, to the greatest extent possible. An updated Master Plan should recommend several suggestions for protecting wetlands within the Township.

In response to the apparent decline in wetland areas, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service established voluntary wetland restoration programs to assist landowners who want to restore wetlands on their property.

Similar programs have been started by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and several nonprofit organizations. Most wetland restoration projects are designed to restore water to drained wetland areas by simple techniques, such as plugging agricultural ditches or breaking field tiles. Map 5.4 illustrates the location of potential wetland restoration sites within Muskegon Township as identified by the Michigan Center for Geographic Information.





# Wetlands

Muskegon Charter Twp., Muskegon County, MI

December 13, 2021

## LEGEND

- Lakes & Ponds
- Wetlands
- Parcels



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Muskegon County 2021. McKenna 2021.



## GROUNDWATER

Maintaining a clean groundwater supply is of critical importance for any community. In Muskegon Township, many residents are connected to a public water distribution system, but data from the State of Michigan indicates that about 900 drinking water wells are located within the Township's boundaries. The majority of these wells draw water from a relatively shallow depth: the static water level is less than 30 feet down in most cases. These wells may be susceptible to pollution if polluted water is not filtered thoroughly enough before reaching the water table.

Maintaining a clean groundwater supply is of critical importance for any community.

Causes of pollution in groundwater are often similar to the causes of pollution in surface water discussed above: excessive fertilizing and intense industrial land uses can result in hazardous substances soaking into the ground, which can end up in the groundwater supply. If the soil is unable to filter these chemicals before they reach the relatively shallow water table in Muskegon Township, the water drawn from those wells may be harmful to the health of residents.

Since the quality of the groundwater is, in many cases, affected by land use decisions and practices within a community or region, one of the goals of the updated Master Plan should be protecting this resource that is critical to the Township's residents.

## SOILS

The composition of soils in a community is one of the primary factors affecting the natural and built environment. By studying the characteristics of different types of soil, it can be determined whether the soil can hold enough water to keep plants growing through a drought, withstand a flood, and provide the necessary chemicals to vegetation so that they will grow properly. Table 5.1 on the following page contains the texture characteristics of soils found in Muskegon Township, which are also illustrated on Map 5.6.

**Sandy** – Consists of loose, single grained particles. Sands contain 85-100% sand-sized particles.

**Blown-Out Land** – Areas where the original surface layer and the subsoil have been removed by soil blowing or water erosion.

**Mucky** – Extremely dark in color, contains well-decomposed organic soil mixed with mineral soil material.

**Marsh** – Consists of old bayous and wet areas along streams.

**Loamy** – Is medium-textured, and contains a relatively even mix of sand, silt and clay.

Soil characteristics are also an important factor in planning for growth and development. Certain soils are ideally suited for supporting buildings, while others may be too wet or too unstable to support development without incurring significant additional development costs. Similarly, certain soils are ideal for agricultural use, while others are ideal for septic systems.

However, it is important to remember that soil characteristics are not mutually exclusive; some soils may serve competing interests. For example, one soil type may be equally suited for both agricultural uses and urban

development. Therefore, soil properties alone cannot dictate land uses, but should be one of the many factors that contribute to the future land use decisions.

## WOODLANDS

The preservation of natural woodland forests is often a high priority for many residents, as there are many benefits to the preservation of woodlands. Large stands of mature trees can improve air and water quality and provide habitats for a variety of plant and animal species. Additional human benefits include energy savings, reduced noise levels, and natural aesthetics and increased property values.

An important component of woodland preservation is connectivity. Interconnected forests allow animal species to move freely throughout a community, minimizing the hazards posed by urban development. In some areas of the Township, these woodland areas also follow stream corridors, which provide additional benefits, such as minimizing stream bank erosion. Muskegon Township is fortunate to have about 8,000 acres of woodland areas within its boundaries. Throughout the planning process, maintaining connected woodlands should be a consideration as land use policies are considered.

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use analysis describes what land uses exist on the ground in the Township at this moment in time. The first step in conducting an existing land use survey is to define land use categories that fit the Township's unique conditions. Traditional distinctions such as "residential" and "commercial" are broken down into smaller categories to more fully describe the situation on the ground. The next step is to determine which category each parcel in the Township fits into.

For purposes of this analysis, vacant buildings are classified by their most recent use or the uses of their immediate neighbors. Vacant land is counted as one category, whether it is used for agriculture or not.

## SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The residential category consists of generally single family detached homes located throughout the Township. On the north side of the Township, the single family residential homes are typically older single-story homes located on large lots in a rural setting. On the south side of the Township (south of the Muskegon River), single-family homes are generally in higher density residential neighborhoods with smaller sized lots.

## MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multi-Family Residential category encompasses the Township's more dense housing stock. In general, multi-family development includes apartment complexes, townhomes, and other attached multi-unit dwellings.

## PARKS / OPEN SPACE

The Parks category includes existing parks and recreation areas in the Township, as well as the preserved areas surrounding the Muskegon River.

## COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses consist of all properties where goods and services are sold, ranging from restaurants, convenience stores, gas stations, and markets, to professional offices. Much of the Township's existing commercial development is located along Apple Avenue on the south side of the Muskegon River. On the north side of the River, several pockets of commercial development are located along Holton Road, or M-120, as well as on the Township boundary along North Whitehall Road.

## INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional uses include Township services, schools, libraries, and other buildings with a public function. Civic institutions can be found throughout Muskegon Township, with Reeths Puffer Elementary School and High School located on the north side of the Township and Orchard View schools on the south side of the Township. There is also a charter school, Timberland Charter Academy, on the south side of the Township.

## INDUSTRIAL

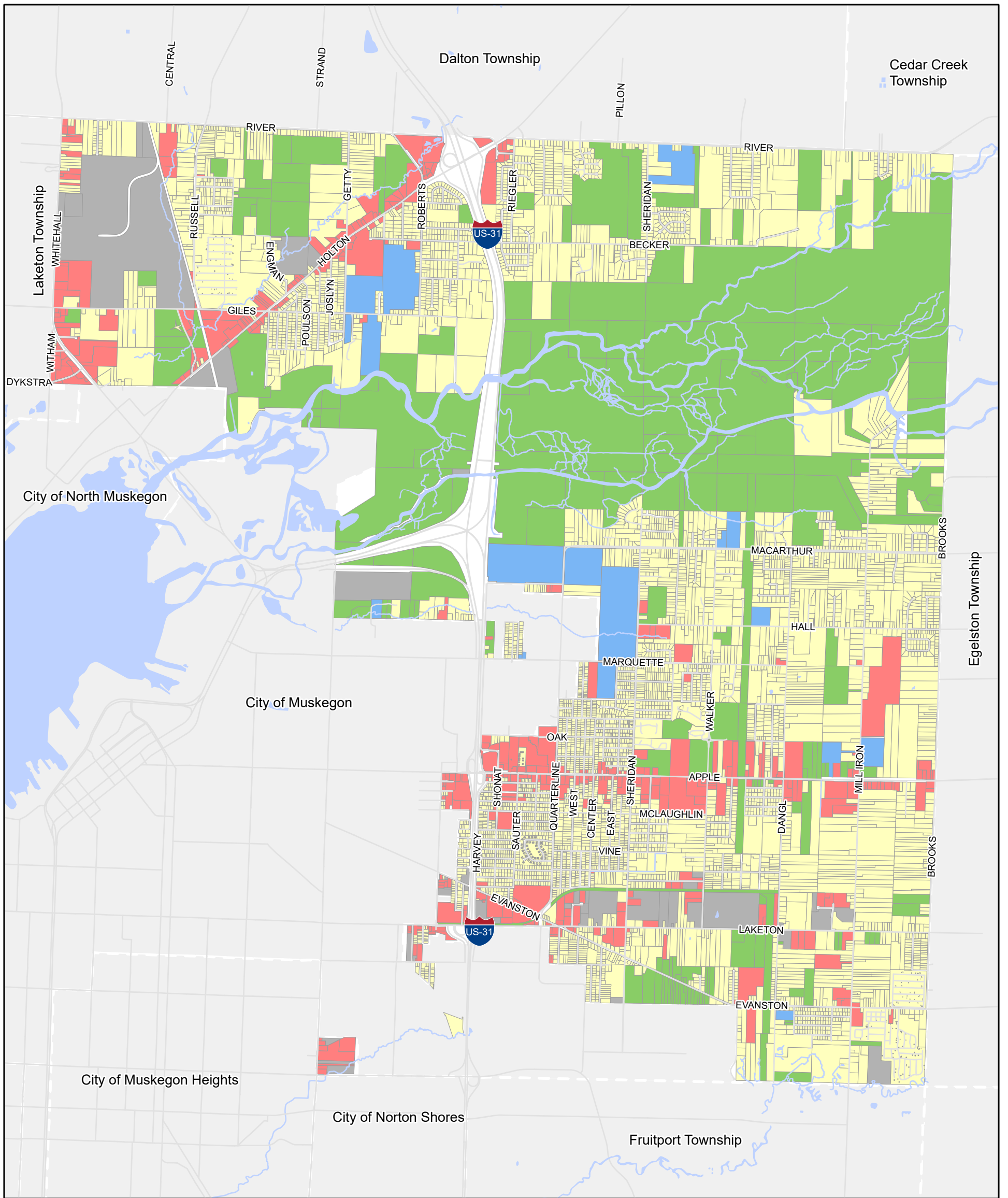
The Industrial classification covers Muskegon Township's manufacturing and distribution uses. Mainly the Industrial land uses are located just outside the Township limits, but some Industrial land uses are located along Holton Road on the north side of the Township and near Laketon Avenue and Evanston Avenue on the south side of the Township.

## VACANT

The undeveloped land located within the Township is classified as vacant land. The largest undeveloped swaths of land are on the north side of the Township, surrounding the Muskegon River on both sides as well as the area wetlands located immediately adjacent to the River.







# Existing Land Use

Muskegon Charter Twp., Muskegon County, MI

December 13, 2021

## LEGEND

- Open Space / Vacant Land
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Semi-Public



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Data Source: Muskegon County 2021. McKenna 2021.



## POLICE AND FIRE SERVICE

Muskegon Township has its own police department. The police department is a very skilled and dedicated full-service agency that takes great pride in maintaining the high quality of life in Muskegon Township. The safety of Township citizens and security of Muskegon Township is their top priority.

Additionally, Muskegon Township also has its own fire department. The Fire Department includes two stations in the Township, located on South Walker Road and North Getty Street. The Fire Department is comprised of a Fire Chief and Fire Marshal as well as 3 administrators, 15 full time firefighters, and a reserve roster of paid-on-call firefighters.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Muskegon Township also includes a Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW is in charge of the maintenance and upkeep of various Township programs and public infrastructure facilities. In Muskegon Township, the DPW is responsible for sanitation facilities, leaf and debris pick ups, road maintenance, parks maintenance, and more.

## EDUCATION

Muskegon Township includes two school districts within its boundaries. The Reeths-Puffer Schools are located on the north side of Muskegon Township, and includes eight schools: one high school, one middle school, four elementary schools, one intermediate school, and one early childhood center.

On the south side of the Township, the school system includes Orchard View Schools, which is comprised of one high school, one middle school, and two elementary schools.

## POST OFFICE

Muskegon Township has one post office within its boundaries. The US Post Office has a branch location within the Township located on Apple Avenue near Walker Road.

## LIBRARY

Muskegon Township has one library located at the corner of Apple Avenue and Quarterline Road. The Library is part of the Muskegon Area District Library system. The Muskegon Township Branch Library includes several amenities such as wireless internet, public computers and office products, and printing/copying.

# Transportation and Circulation

## ROADS

In general, the Township’s Department of Public Works is responsible for routine road maintenance responsibilities. Additionally, the Muskegon County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) also assist with road upkeep and maintenance, depending on the road classification. For example, State roads such as M-45 (Apple Avenue), US-31, and M-120 (Holton Road) are maintained by MDOT. The Township’s Department of Public Works and the Muskegon County Road Commission coordinate on road maintenance activities, schedules, and responsibilities. Funding for these projects is achieved through property tax revenue.

Muskegon Township’s road network consists of the following classifications, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA):

Muskegon Township Street Types	
<b>Local Streets</b>	The primary function of local streets is to provide direct access to property with very limited traffic service and should be designed to discourage through trips. Trip lengths are intended to be quite short, typically a quarter mile or less. Local streets have the lowest speeds and lowest traffic volumes (generally less than 1,500 ADT*).
<b>Major Collector</b>	Collectors serve a critical role in the roadway network by gathering traffic from Local Roads and funneling them to the Arterial network. Generally, Major Collector routes are longer in length; have lower connecting driveway densities; have higher speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than their Minor Collector counterparts.
<b>Minor Arterial</b>	Like major arterials, minor arterials also serve to connect activity centers, but they also serve less intense development areas like small retail centers, office centers and industrial/business parks. Minor arterials provide traffic service for moderate trip lengths. Average trip lengths on minor arterials will be one or two miles long. Moderate speeds and moderate to high traffic volumes (approximately 10,000 to 25,000 ADT*) are typical characteristics of these facilities. While the primary function of minor arterials continues to be moving traffic, access becomes a slightly more important function.
<b>Other Principle Arterials</b>	These roadways serve major centers of metropolitan areas, providing a high degree of mobility and can also provide mobility through rural areas. Unlike their access-controlled counterparts (i.e. Interstates, Freeways, and Expressways), abutting land uses can be served directly. Forms of access for Other Principal Arterial roadways include driveways to specific parcels and at-grade intersections with other roadways.

The Township’s road network includes only one crossing across the Muskegon River. Motorists who are trying to travel between the north and south side of the Township can only do so by utilizing the US-31 route. While US-31 can be characterized by high speeds and a low number of stops, the general lack of road connection between the north side and south side of the Township is apparent, given the costly and difficult nature of crossing the Muskegon River. Further, US-31 is one of the few routes in the entire County that provides access across the River, resulting in high traffic volumes, especially during peak hours.

## OTHER ROAD AGENCIES

In addition to the several road entities that coordinate road improvement and maintenance projects in the Township, the Township is also served by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC). WMSRDC is a federal and state designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO). An MPO is a federally mandated and funded transportation policy-making and planning organization that accomplishes regional transportation planning, environmental planning, economic development, and other services. By law, census-designated urban areas of at least 50,000 residents are required to be served by an MPO. One of the primary functions of an MPO is to assist with the delegation and prioritization of federal transportation improvement monies.

In Muskegon Township, some of WMSRDC's focus includes:

- Air quality projects
- Economic development projects
- Environmental planning
- GIS mapping services
- Hazard mitigation projects
- Transportation projects
- Census data and information
- And more

## ROAD CONDITIONS

In 2019, WMSRDC conducted an area-wide road pavement surface evaluation and rating (PASER) project. The PASER scale is a 1-10 road rating system that helps to provide a foundation for developing a schedule for road improvement projects. The PASER system includes the following ranges:

- 1-2: Failed (reconstruction is needed)
- 3-4: Poor (structural renewal is needed)
- 5-6: Fair (surface repairs and preservation treatments are needed)
- 7-8: Good (routine maintenance such as minor patches are needed)
- 9-10: Excellent (no maintenance is needed)

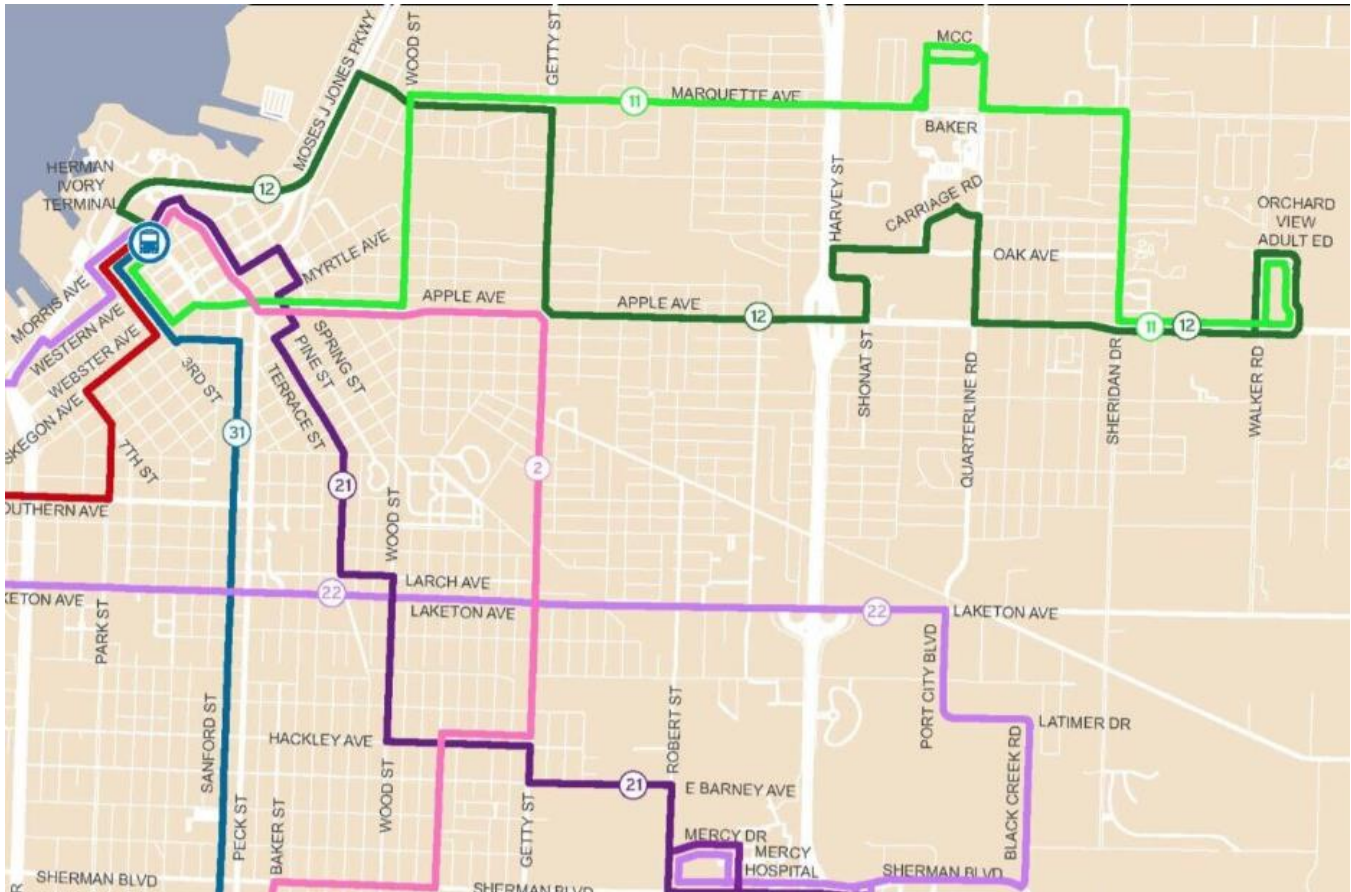
On the north side of Muskegon Township, north of the River, a majority of the roads achieved a PASER rating of 5-10. However, it should be noted that several local roads received a rating between 1-4, indicating a need for more major repairs. The poor ratings are located primarily along residential streets just west of US-31.

On the south side of Muskegon Township, south of the River, many of the roads received a poor PASER rating, including a majority of Apple Avenue, residential streets just east of the City of Muskegon, and residential streets within the vicinity of Wesley Avenue Park. Many of Township's major corridors, such as Laketon Avenue, Evanston Avenue, Hall Road, and MacArthur Road received fair ratings.

Additionally, according to the PASER rating analysis conducted by WMSRDC, the stretch of US-31 north of Marquette Avenue received a poor rating. Future maintenance and improvements may be needed along this corridor to ensure safe and efficient access from one side of the Township to the other.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Residents in Muskegon Township are primarily served by the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) which provides fixed-route and on-demand public transportation throughout Muskegon County. The image below illustrates which routes travel through Muskegon Township including Apple Avenue, Marquette Avenue, Sheridan Drive, Walker Road, and a portion of Laketon Avenue.



## COMPLETE STREETS

“Complete Streets” is the concept that roads should be safe and available for all types of users, not merely automobiles. Many of the Township’s major commercial corridors such as Apple Avenue, Laketon Avenue, and Holton Road are not fitted with sidewalks or any other non-motorized infrastructure. A component of this Plan will take a closer look at the corridors best suited for non-motorized transportation facilities such as sidewalks, bike paths, bike lanes, and others.

# 04. MASTER PLAN





# Goals and Objectives

Goals are general in nature, and, as related to community planning are statements of ideals toward which the Township wishes to strive. This represents the ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is both broad and immeasurable. Goals also express a consensus of community direction to public and private agencies, groups, and individuals. Goals are long-range considerations that should guide the development of specific objectives.

Objectives are a means to achieve the overall goals of the Plan. Objectives take the form of more measurable standards, or identify the methods in which the goals of the Plan may be realized. In some instances, they are specific statements which can be readily translated into detailed design proposals or action recommendations.

Together, the following Goals and Objectives provide the foundation of the Master Plan and a framework for future implementation strategies.

## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### Goal:

Protect the Township's Vital Environmental Resources.

### Objectives:

- » Work with State, County, and Regional partners to preserve the rivers, tributaries, State Game Area, wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, woodlands, and habitats of the Township.
- » Direct development to areas of minimum environmental sensitivity; prohibit development in areas of heightened environmental sensitivity such as wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas and steep slopes.
- » Manage water resources through improved storm water management.
- » Preserve natural woodlands within the Township, especially north of the Muskegon River, through zoning and conservation techniques.
- » Encourage the use of LEED certification, green roofs, and on-site solar/wind energy generation. Remove zoning roadblocks to these site improvements.
- » Encourage green energy (particularly solar energy) accessory to new residential neighborhoods, to provide local, sustainable energy for the residents.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND NEIGHBORHOODS

### Goal:

Strengthen the Township's Residential Neighborhoods and Improve Cleanliness, Safety, and Walkability for All Residents.

### Objectives:

- » Create and support neighborhood associations throughout the Township, which will become educated and aware of local nuisance and property maintenance laws.

- » Retrofit key residential blocks with sidewalks; connect sidewalks to main roads, pedestrian paths and roads having bus service. Focus initially on areas near school campuses.
- » Continue to focus new housing to areas served by utilities, transit and services, especially on land that does not have sensitive natural features.
- » Update laws and ordinances to require aesthetically pleasing, high-quality development, which is desired in the Township.
- » Ensure that sufficient new housing is built to provide a sufficient workforce for growing local businesses.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS

### Goal:

Provide quality recreational opportunities to residents and visitors of the Township that meet varying needs at all times of the year.

### Objectives:

- » Improve access to the Muskegon State Game Area and the Muskegon River.
- » Broaden recreational opportunities in the Township to include winter sports, such as snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, sledding and others.
- » Encourage community involvement in the park system by developing a system of volunteer maintenance.
- » Develop additional sports facilities in the Township, including soccer, lacrosse, pickleball, frisbee golf, and other growing sports.
- » Investigate opportunities to become a regional hub for one or more additional sports (in addition to baseball/softball, which already has strong regional facilities in the Township).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Goal:

Maintain and Broaden the Township's Mix of Employers to Ensure Job Growth and Continued Opportunity for Those Entering the Workforce.

### Objectives:

- » Continue to support small and large-scale businesses in the Township.
- » Improve the functionality and appearance of the Township's commercial corridors.
- » Fund infrastructure and aesthetic improvements, as well as business recruitment and retention, along Apple Avenue and Holton Road.
- » Maintain a focus on retail, services, and commerce along Apple Avenue, Holton Road, and Whitehall Road while maintaining a focus on manufacturing and logistics along Laketon Avenue.
- » Monitor the industrial areas that allows for marijuana businesses to ensure it is appropriately sized for the industry.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Goal:

Ensure that all residents have access to safe, convenient, and affordable motorized and non-motorized transportation, and that all roadways are appropriately scaled designed for their level of automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit usage.

### Objectives:

- » Participate in regional opportunities to provide public transportation, including service to the north side.
- » Provide sidewalks along major arterials and in areas of sufficient population and housing density to enable walking and biking to area amenities, such as schools, places of worship, retail establishments and major employers. Schools should be the highest priorities.
- » Study and regulate access along major commercial corridors of the Township, as well as improve traffic congestion related to education institutions.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

### Goal:

Residents, Visitors, Business Owners, and Area Jurisdictions will feel welcome in Muskegon Charter Township and will be provided opportunities to participate in community.

### Objectives:

- » Pursue collaboration and service-sharing with area Townships and municipalities when feasible and practical.
- » Ensure that the Township, in its operations and practices, is a model for efficiency and transparency.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Goal:

Provide quality water and sewer service to Township residents and continuously explore opportunities to create more efficiency in provision of services.

### Objectives:

- » Become a leader in regional infrastructure planning.
- » Adhere to a strict policy of having new development shoulder the burden of utility needs they create.
- » Explore opportunities for utilizing renewable energy sources to power Township utilities, and ensure that the Zoning Ordinance contains appropriate regulations to allow green energy while also protecting residents from potential negative impacts.

## LAND USE AND HOUSING

### **Goal:**

Preserve character by managing growth to foster development that complements the natural features and existing neighborhoods of the Township.

### **Objectives:**

- » Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance requires appropriately scaled residential, commercial, industrial, and office development that is market-responsive and respects the environment and existing community character.
- » Follow the Future Land Use Map to guide growth and development and avoid land use conflicts.
- » Maintain an efficient pattern of residential land use within the Township.
- » Support housing that incorporates facilities and services to meet the health care, transit or social needs of seniors.
- » Ensure neighborhood stability and home occupancy throughout the Township.

# Placemaking and Branding

As it implements this plan, Muskegon Charter Township aims to develop a more robust brand for itself, in order to better position the community for economic development and growth.

The Township has a long and rich history, and was, in fact, the first Township to be created in the State of Michigan. Therefore, the slogan and brand “Michigan’s First Township”, as well as the Township’s logo, will be used to inform the signage, documents, and other aspects of the brand.

Conceptual signage is shown below:



Muskegon Charter Township has two main commercial corridors: Apple Avenue and Holton Road. They serve different purposes for the commercial needs of the area. Apple Avenue is more heavily developed and older, featuring smaller lots and some shopping centers that need re-investment. Holton Road has larger commercial lots and newer businesses, but does not have as robust or high capacity road design, compared to Apple.

## APPLE AVENUE BEAUTIFICATION

Below are several opportunities to beautify the Apple Avenue Corridor to increase customer traffic to the area and consequently attract more businesses to the area, as well bring it into alignment with the charm and uniqueness established in other areas of the region.

1. Incorporate unified wayfinding signage at strategic locations along the corridor.
2. Work with MDOT and the County Road Commission to replace street signs with decorative street signs that feature the theme used in the wayfinding signage.

3. Install decorative streetlamps, as well as decorative features such as floral hanging baskets, flags, or banners along strategic sections or intersections, especially Quarterline Road because of its proximity to the Township Hall.
4. Work with MDOT on consideration of a median for portions of the corridor where one would be functional, in order to increase beauty, functionality, and safety.
5. Require businesses with frontage or a driveway entrance on Apple Avenue to create a decorative screening or landscape feature.
6. Require sidewalks or pathways along the corridor when sites are redeveloped, at least west of Walker Avenue. Pursue grants and other funding sources to fill in sidewalk gaps.
7. Create architectural standards or require specific façade materials to be used for businesses with frontage or a driveway entrance on Apple Avenue. Ultimately, establish signage and façade design standards built into the zoning ordinance.
8. Partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to identify appropriate locations and types of trees to plant along Apple Avenue right-of-way, and incorporate the list of recommended trees into the zoning ordinance.

## HOLTON ROAD BEAUTIFICATION

Below are several opportunities to beautify the Holton Road Corridor to increase function and beauty. Holton faces a different set of opportunities and challenges compared to Apple, because the development along it is newer, but its angled configuration and less intensely developed character create a different set of circumstances.

9. Incorporate unified wayfinding signage at strategic locations along the corridor. The design could be different from the Apple Avenue design, or it could be the same.
10. Replace street signs with decorative street signs that feature the theme used in the wayfinding signage.
11. Install decorative streetlamps, as well as decorative features such as floral hanging baskets, flags, or banners along strategic sections or intersections.
12. Require businesses with frontage on Holton Road to create a decorative screening or landscape feature.
13. Require sidewalks or pathways along the corridor when sites are redeveloped, at least south of US-31. Pursue grants and other funding sources to fill in sidewalk gaps.
14. Create architectural standards or require specific façade materials to be used for businesses with frontage or a driveway entrance on Holton Road. Ultimately, establish signage and façade design standards built into the zoning ordinance.
15. Create “Green Infrastructure Zones” in strategic locations utilizing low maintenance and native Michigan plantings and absorbent and water filtering soils to reduce the impact of roadway runoff. These roadside rain gardens would also create visual interest in areas currently lacking any character.

## GATEWAYS

Below, listed in approximate order of priority, are the key gateways to the Township, which should be targeted for signage, landscaping, lighting, and other placemaking improvements:

1. Apple/US-31 (East)
2. Holton/US-31 (South)
3. Holton/River
4. Apple/US-31 (West)
5. Apple/Brooks
6. Laketon/US-31
7. River/Whitehall
8. Laketon/Brooks
9. Holton/North Muskegon City Limits
10. Whitehall/North Muskegon City Limits
11. Moses Jones Parkway/Getty
12. River/Russell
13. River/Cedar Creek Township Limits

# Mobility Plan

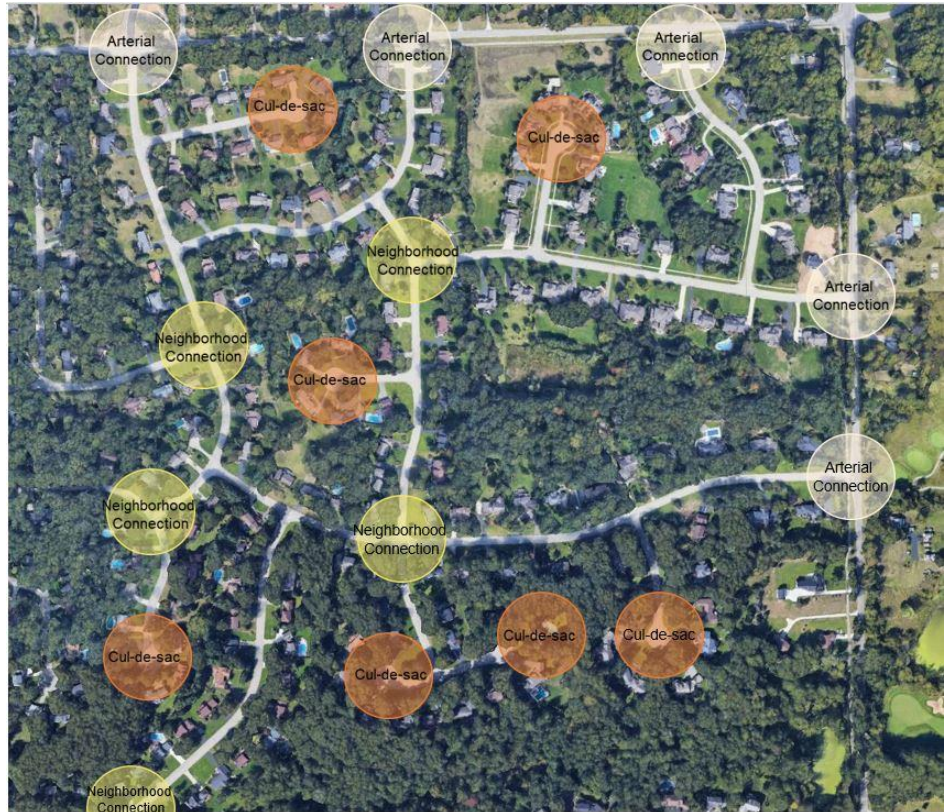
## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

As Muskegon Township grows, it is important to consider the character, design, and function of neighborhoods. As such, some of the key factors that are generally considered as best practices for neighborhood design include:

- **Street Connectivity**  
A theme throughout this Plan, connecting neighborhood streets to one another, and to Township thoroughfares, is imperative to ensuring an overall connected Townshipwide transportation system. Some primary purposes of a connected street system are to facilitate flow, alleviate congestion, and reduce the number of trips. Some other benefits to neighborhood street connectivity also include long-term cost savings for road maintenance and municipal infrastructure.

Additionally, neighborhood streets should be designed in a way to minimize cut-through traffic, but allow for access to community gathering places, such as playgrounds, parks, and more. Neighborhood street designs should offer more than one entry and exit route and connections to adjacent neighborhoods, but can also include cul-de-sacs and dead-ends as needed and applicable. The image example below includes multiple connections to arterial roads simultaneously placed with cul-de-sacs, and connections to other neighborhood streets.

Also noted in this example, is that although there are multiple street connections to arterial roads and to adjacent neighborhoods, a motorist would not use these neighborhood streets for cut-through access. This type of design promotes enhanced safety and privacy for residents.





## Connected Street Patterns

In general, connected street patterns are preferable over disconnected patterns with dead ends, for the following reasons (Source: Smart Growth America):

- People are more likely to walk to their destination when there is a direct route made up of short blocks.
- An interconnected system spreads traffic to many streets, reducing overall congestion.
- An interconnected system reduces overall traffic because vehicles travel shorter destinations to reach their destinations.
- Interconnected systems provide multiple access points for emergency vehicles.
- Interconnected systems have less severe accidents and fewer fatalities from accidents.
- Public transportation routing is simpler and easier for riders to understand in a connected system.

*“Neighborhoods should rarely contain cul-de-sacs. Because dead-end systems reduce the number of through streets, those streets which do connect become overburdened. In a truly porous network, each street receives enough traffic to keep it active and supervised, but not so much as to make it unpleasant for pedestrians.”*

— Andres Duany/Jeff Speck, *The Smart Growth Manual*

- **Slow Traffic Speed**

Another best practice for neighborhood design includes slow traffic speeds. Slow traffic speed increases the safety of motorists as well as pedestrians and cyclists and increases the longevity of road surfaces. Additionally, as the reference image demonstrates, slight curves and turns in neighborhood streets naturally promote slower traffic speeds.

- **Bike Path and Sidewalk Connectivity**

Connectivity does not only refer to streets and cars, but also to pathways, bikes, and people. As a means to connect neighborhoods and homes to one another, bike paths or sidewalks should be considered in open space areas and/or utility corridors located between (and within) developments to provide access from one development to another by means other than a roadway. These neighborhood connections reduce the dependency on cars, increase environmentally-friendly transportation alternatives, and improve quality of life for residents. Neighborhood bike paths and sidewalks should also be connected to nearby community nodes, such as low-intensity shopping centers, schools, or corner stores (as applicable).

- **Permeability**

As noted above, the connection of neighborhoods to one another (both motorized and nonmotorized), as well as to nearby community nodes is a best practice in neighborhood design. Along with that idea, neighborhoods should be considered permeable. Permeability simply means the ability for people to pass across and through neighborhoods without the use of arterial roads.

- **Nearby Amenities**

When feasible, neighborhoods should be located within close proximity to public amenities such as parks and/or open space or natural space, which should be accessible from bike paths and/or sidewalks connected to the adjacent residential development(s). As a best practice in neighborhood design, parks and/or open spaces should be encouraged within developments, such as playgrounds, sports fields/courts, or pathways through wooded or natural spaces.

- **Durable materials**

Also mentioned throughout this Plan, durable materials should always be encouraged in all developments. For neighborhoods, utilizing and requiring durable construction materials for homes increases the lifespan of the neighborhood, keeps routine maintenance low, and prevents developments from becoming unsafe or inhabitable for a longer period of time. In this context, durable materials can include brick, stone, siding, and others.

- **Design**

As a general best practice, some of the recommended design and overall character elements of a neighborhood include:

- **Scale** – encourage human scale development to blend-in with the surrounding character of the Township, especially in rural areas.
- **Inclusivity** – neighborhoods should be welcoming and accessible to all. Some of the ways to achieve this include the construction of front porches and entries, consistency of structures, front yards and landscaping elements, and more.
- **Compatibility** – homes should be consistent with one another and the surrounding character of the neighborhood and general area.

## CORRIDOR DESIGN PLAN

The Corridor Design Plan is intended to give guidance and state goals for the corridors throughout Muskegon Charter Township. Because specific contexts may vary from street to street and neighborhood to neighborhood, the images and text on the following pages should be taken as guidelines and best practices, rather than specific designs.

**Obviously, the Township does not have control over its road designs. However,** it is the Township's goal to achieve the concept of **Complete Streets** throughout Muskegon Township, designing corridors to be safe and attractive for all users, and ensuring that streets contribute positively to the vibrancy and economic vitality of the community. Therefore, the guidelines expressed in this plan contain recommendations to MDOT and the Muskegon County Road Commission to re-orient streets away from the needs of through traffic, and towards the needs of local traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

In order to do so, each roadway in the Township has been given a designation that articulates the primary purpose of each roadway, and thus the preferred design priorities. Descriptions of the categories follow, followed by a map of the Township's corridors, with their category designated.

The map also includes important new connections that should be made as the Township grows, along with their corridor design designation. The new connections need not be made along the exact route shown on the map, but the points they connect between should be connected as new development occurs in the areas with new roads shown.

## BUSINESS CONNECTOR

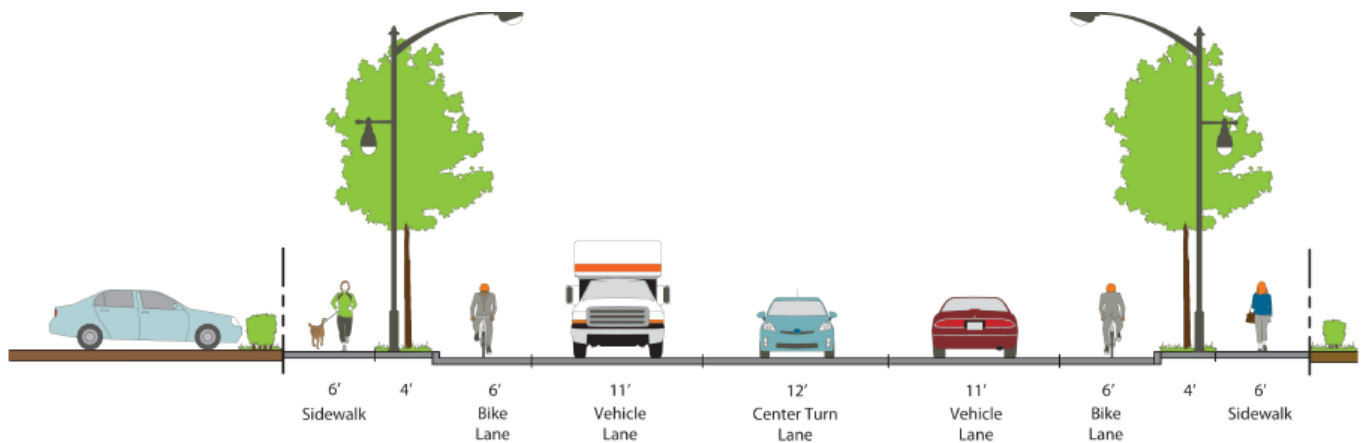
- 100-120 feet of ROW
- 25,000 – 50,000 cars per day
- 45-55 MPH

Business Connectors are roadways that travel through non-residential areas – particularly high intensive commercial and industrial areas. They are designed for high levels of truck traffic. While pedestrians and bicyclists should be able to traverse them safely and transit access (where offered) should be efficient, they are predominantly corridors for commercial traffic and commuters.

### Guidelines for Business Connectors:

Creative solutions should be investigated for allowing through traffic to continue to its destination at an efficient rate, while also allowing for turning movements and local access. **Slip streets**, as illustrated below, separate through traffic from local traffic.

- Business Connectors should have **wide lanes**, particularly turning lanes, to accommodate trucks safely.
- Although other designs may be appropriate, business connectors should generally have a **3 or 5-lane cross-section** with a **continuous center turn lane**. This prevents rear-end accidents and allows for efficient through traffic and turning movements.
- **Sidewalks** should be constructed along Apple Avenue, Holton Road, Whitehall Road, and other corridors where deemed appropriate and necessary as the Township grows. **Bike lanes or bike trails** should be constructed where designated in this plan. **Bus bulbs** are desirable in these areas at transit stops to keep through traffic moving.



### Business Connectors within Muskegon Township include:

- **Apple Avenue/M-46**, one the Township and region’s busiest corridors. Access management, safety, and aesthetics are key concerns for Apple Avenue. Additional recommendations for Apple Avenue can be found in the Placemaking and Branding section.

- **Laketon Avenue:** This is the most intensive industrial area in the Township, and truck traffic and commuting can and should be the priority.
- **Quarterline Road (north of Apple Avenue).** This road accesses the Township Hall and nearby educational campuses, connecting them to Apple Avenue.
- **Holton Road is** a major commercial corridor that serves as a gateway into the Muskegon region from the north and northeast. Additional recommendations for Holton Road can be found in the Placemaking and Branding section.
- **Whitehall Road,** a regional thoroughfare that serves large industrial and commercial businesses.
- **Giles Road (west of Holton Road),** a connecting road between Holton and Whitehall that serves businesses.
- **Getty Street (south of the Muskegon River),** a major corridor through the City of Muskegon that connects to employers in Muskegon Township, as well as providing an entry point to the Moses Jones Parkway and US-31.

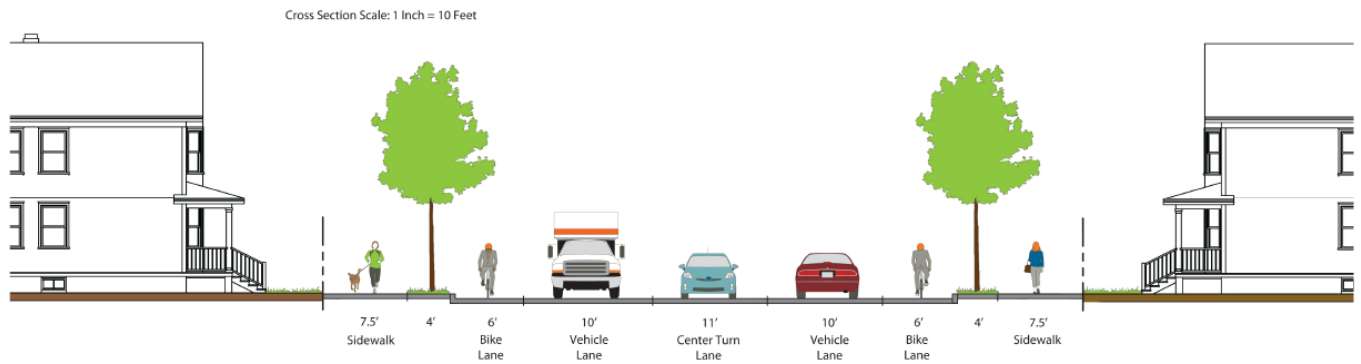
## NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTOR

- 66-100 feet of ROW
- 5,000 to 25,000 cars per day
- 25-35 MPH

Neighborhood Connectors are roadways that travel through and between residential areas, connecting those neighborhoods together. Their land use context is generally residential, but could also include low-intensity retail/service businesses, religious or educational institutions, recreational areas, or preserved open space.

### Guidelines for Neighborhood Connectors:

- Neighborhood Connectors with frequent intersections and driveways should have a **three lane cross section** to allow for left turns and efficient movement of through traffic.
- Where there are businesses nearby that need the support of **on-street parking**, it should be provided. On street parking is also appropriate in residential areas.
- Neighborhood Connectors should have **sidewalks**, especially within one mile of school campuses, with wide, **tree-lined buffer areas** separating them from the automobile lanes.
- **Bike lanes, trails, or paved shoulders** should be constructed where appropriate based on the surroundings, and where they can connect to regional bicycle infrastructure.



- **Bus bulbs** are desirable at transit stops to keep through traffic moving.
- In some areas, **medians** may be desirable, for aesthetic and tree canopy reasons, and to calm traffic. Medians are recommended for roadways with through traffic within residential areas.

**East-West Neighborhood Connectors:**

- River Road
- Becker Road
- Giles Road (east of Holton Road), which provides access to Reeths-Puffer High School.
- MacArthur Street
- Hall Road
- Marquette Avenue
- Evanston Avenue (west of Sheridan Drive and east of Dangl Road)

**North-South Neighborhood Connectors:**

- Russell Road
- Getty Street
- Roberts Road
- Riegler Road
- Quarterline Road (south of Apple Avenue)
- Sheridan Drive
- Walker Road
- Dangl Road
- Mill Iron Road
- Brooks Road

## NATURAL BEAUTY CORRIDOR

- 66-100 feet of ROW
- 5,000 to 35,000 cars per day
- 35-55 MPH

Natural Beauty Corridors are roadways that run through undeveloped and natural areas that are planned to remain in that character. The roadway should be designed to complement the natural surroundings.

### Guidelines for Natural Beauty Corridors:

- Natural Beauty Corridors should be designed with a **two or three lane cross section**. Four lane cross sections are inefficient, and five lanes should be unnecessary through areas that are not planned for heavy development.
- **Cycle tracks/bike paths** should be prioritized alongside natural beauty corridors, to allow for non-motorized transportation between developed areas, as well as recreational cycling. Sidewalks may also be provided where they are determined to be necessary.
- Where there is additional right-of-way in a Natural Beauty Corridor once the street elements listed above have been designed, the additional right-of-way should be **planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers** to add to the natural beauty of the private realm.

**Evanston Avenue between Sheridan Avenue and Dangi Avenue is the only Natural Beauty Corridor in Muskegon Township.**

## NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

- 60-66 feet of ROW
- Local Traffic
- 25 MPH

Neighborhood Streets are low traffic corridors designed for local access, mainly to residential uses.

### Guidelines for Neighborhood Streets:

- Neighborhood Streets should be designed with **narrow traffic lanes for slow speeds**.
- All Neighborhood Streets should have **sidewalks**, buffered from the roadway by **wide, tree-lined landscape areas**.
- Cycling on Neighborhood Streets should be encouraged, but bike lanes need not be specifically designated.
- Transit lines and truck traffic should not be permitted on Neighborhood Streets.
- Newly constructed Neighborhood Streets should be public roadways, dedicated to the County, and designed based on the guidelines of this plan and the County's road design standards.

Neighborhood Streets within Muskegon Township include all roadways not listed in one of the other categories.

## TRANSIT

Public transportation is a crucial part of the transportation system. In some areas, the only way to reduce congestion is to take cars off the street by providing other options. Within Muskegon Township, the Muskegon Area Transit System bus service provides fixed routes on **Marquette Avenue** and **Apple Avenue**, both of which terminate at the Orchard View Public Schools Adult Education Campus.

Service is also provided on Laketon Avenue, but only up to Quarterline Road.

This plan supports the continued provision public transportation, and improvements to the rider experience, such as additional covered waiting areas and real-time bus arrival systems. Reduced headways should also be explored as operating budgets allow.

Service is also provided on **Laketon Avenue**, but only up to Quarterline Road. This plan envisions that service being extended further east to service the growing employment opportunities at industrial businesses along the corridor.

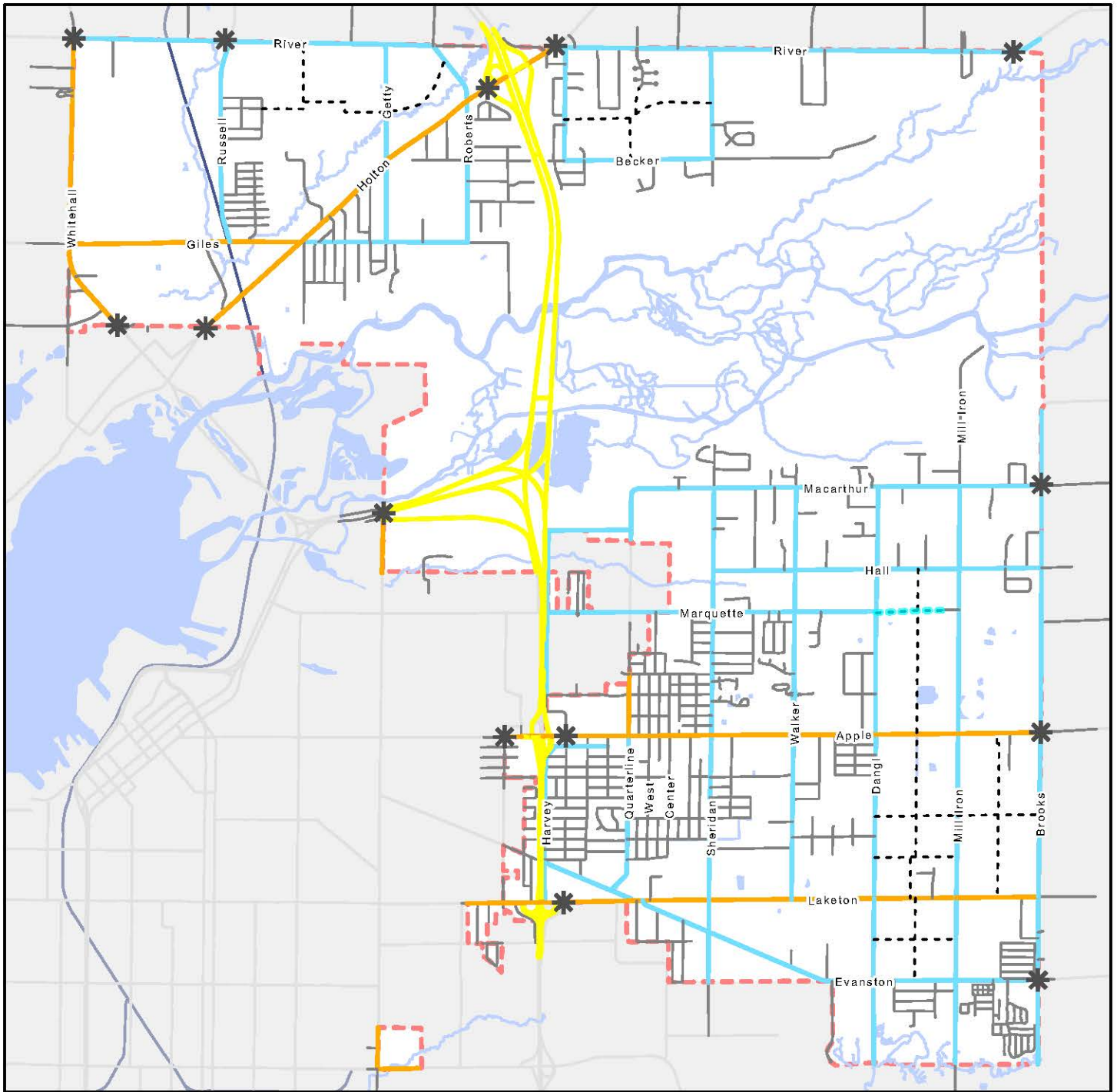
Transit service should also be considered on **Holton Road**, to serve the north side of the Township.

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

As automakers convert higher and higher percentages of their lineups to electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles in order to lower carbon emissions, Muskegon Township will need to be prepared for a new accessory land use – electric vehicle charging stations.

It is the policy of this plan to reduce the amount of “red tape” required to build out charging stations. They should not be considered equivalent to gas stations under the zoning ordinance and should instead be allowed to be constructed in any parking lot, provided that the parking lot retains safe dimensions for automobile and pedestrian circulation.



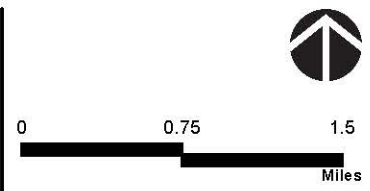


# Future Transportation Plan

Muskegon Charter Township, Muskegon County, MI

## LEGEND

- Neighborhood Street
- Neighborhood Connector
- Business Connector
- Expressway
- Proposed New Corridors
- Proposed Gateways
- Railroads
- Water Features
- Township Boundary



Data Source: Michigan Geographic Library  
2022. Muskegon County GIS 2022. McKenna  
2022.

July 5, 2022  
**DRAFT**





## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

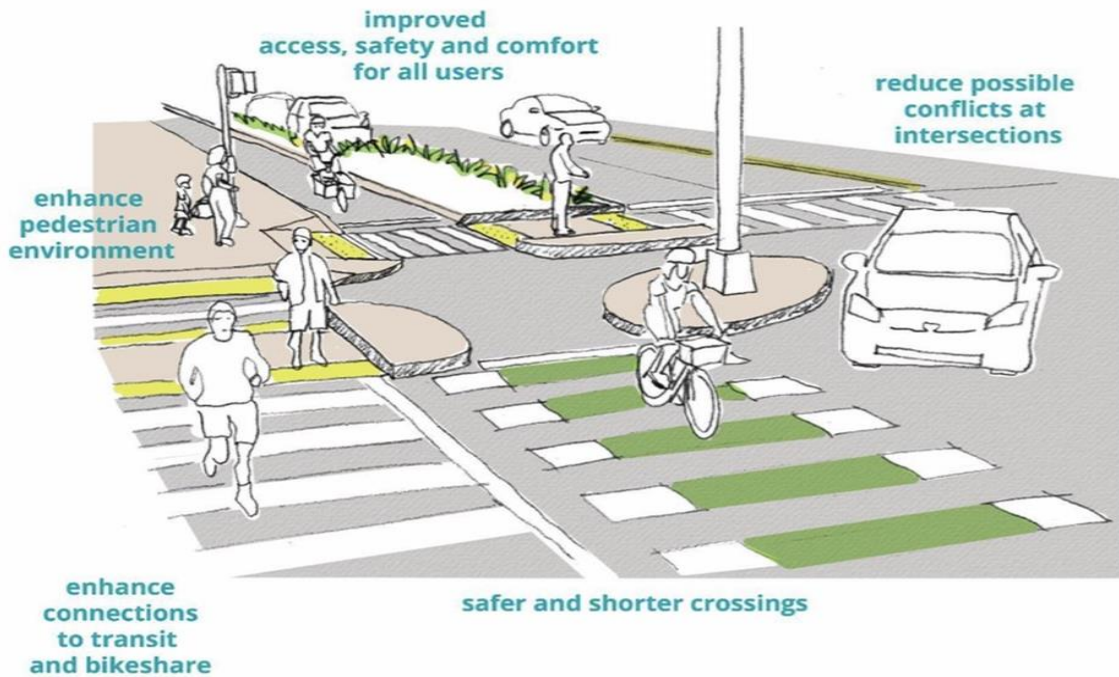
Non-Motorized Connectivity is crucial for sustainability, vibrancy, and transportation efficiency. This plan envisions the following non-motorized transportation improvements.

**Bike Paths:** Off-street bike paths provide the highest level of safety and efficiency for cyclists, but they require right-of-way that is not always available. Therefore, they are best prioritized on high-traffic corridors and roads that run through lightly developed areas.

**Bike Lanes:** On-street bike lanes are an effective design when space is limited, and through areas where denser development is existing or planned.

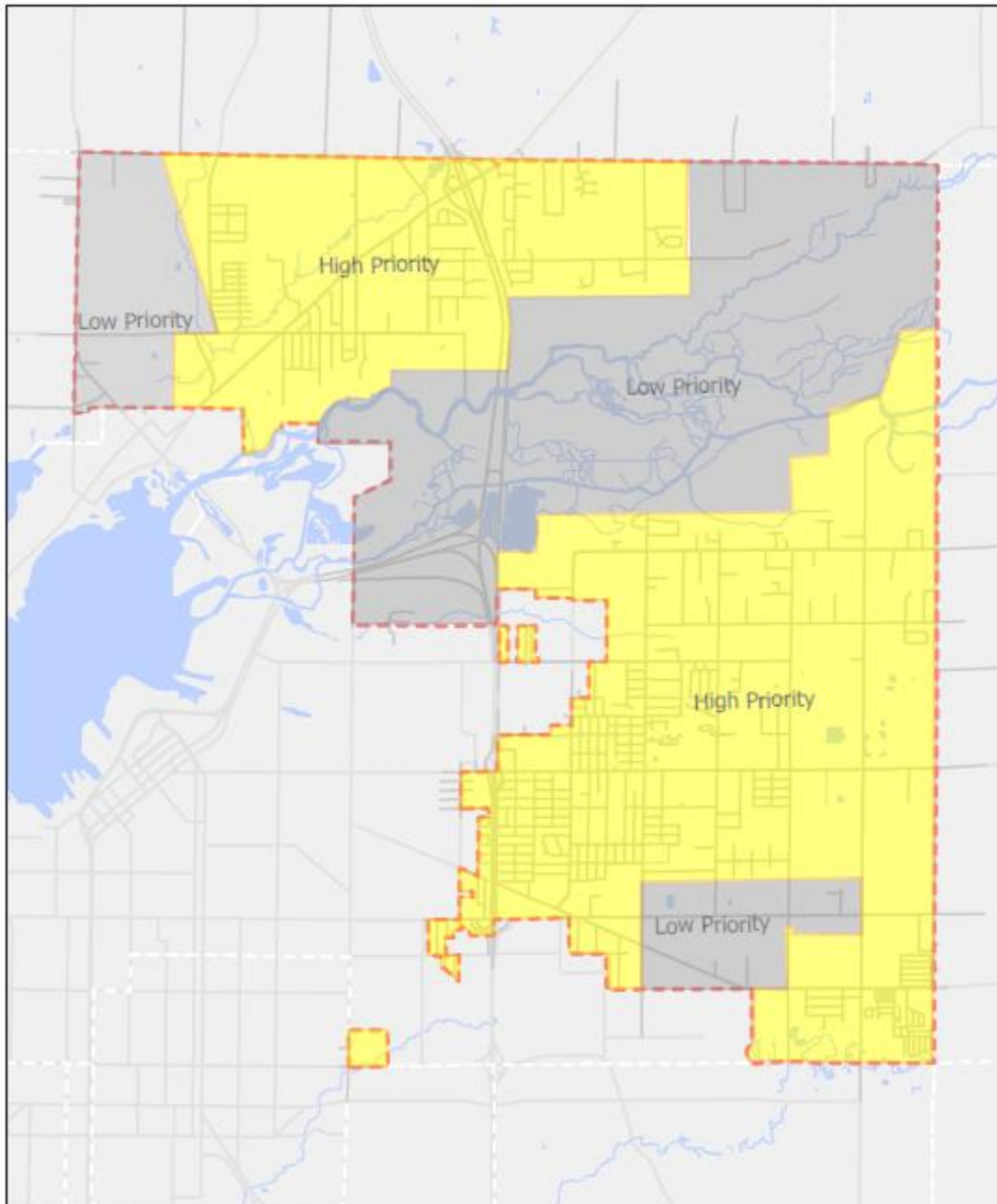
**Pedestrian Improvements:** Throughout the Township – especially near school campuses, there is a need to ensure that pedestrians are safe, comfortable, and welcome, through upgrades to sidewalks and crosswalks. The specific improvements will be context-dependent.

**Crosswalks:** Crosswalks, including upgrades like HAWK signals and pedestrian islands, help people navigate the community on bicycles and on-foot.



The Non-Motorized Transportation map below shows “High Priority” and “Secondary Priority” areas for pedestrian improvements. Within “High Priority” areas, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including the installation of sidewalk, should be required with all new developments, and the Township should prioritize public investment in sidewalks and other non-motorized infrastructure. Within the “Secondary Priority” areas, non-motorized transportation is still important, but the specific investments should be context-dependent and based on the likely needs of the users of the street in that areas.

**Map 5: Non-Motorized Transportation Priority Areas**



## TRAFFIC CALMING

“Traffic Calming” refers to re-designing streets to slow down cars and create a safer, more pleasant environment for both pedestrians and drivers while increasing property values and maintaining the competitiveness of mature neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures are not intended to reduce capacity, but are intended to slow the maximum speed of autos through a stretch of road, reducing the severity of accidents and encouraging pedestrianism. Traffic Calming can slow down cars on a residential street without adding excessive stop signs or closing off the street all together.

Below are some examples of Traffic Calming improvements:



# Future Land Use

Based on a comprehensive planning process, the Future Land Use plan serves as a guide for the community's vision for the next 10 to 15 years. It is based on an analysis of land use issues facing Muskegon Township, existing uses and conditions, demographic and housing data, physical constraints and resources, community infrastructure, circulation patterns, community engagement, and the goals and objectives of this plan.

Through land use planning and zoning controls, the Township intends to ensure that the character of neighborhoods are preserved, that economic development is encouraged, and that the designated mixed use areas become vibrant and exciting places to be.

This Future Land Use plan constitutes the development policy of Muskegon Township, and, as the Township moves into the future, the plan should be regularly updated to address how development and physical change has impacted the infrastructure and existing conditions.

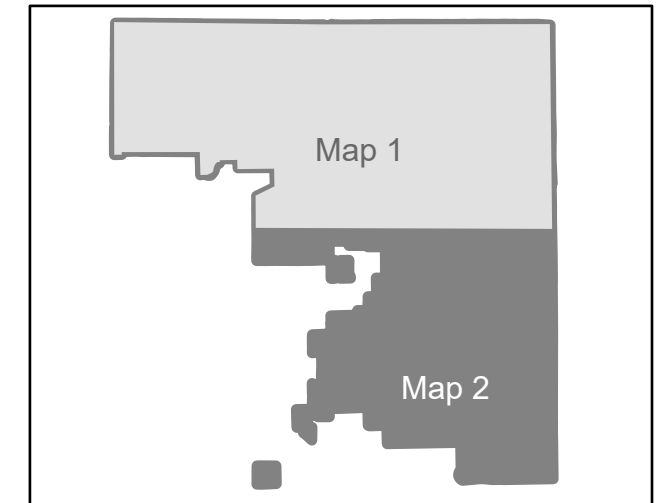
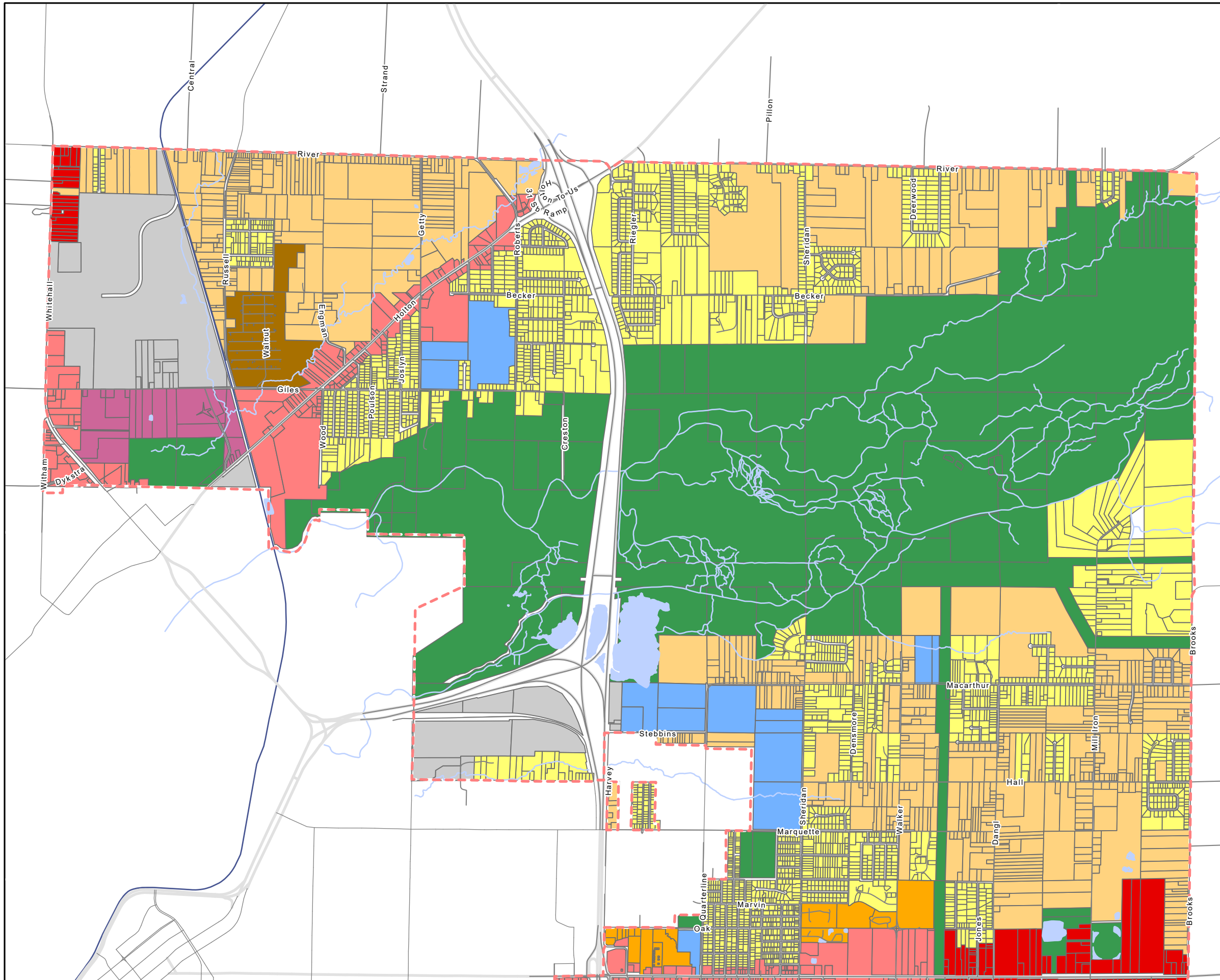















MAP 1

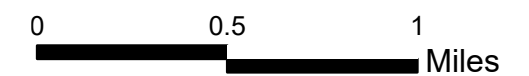
# Future Land Use

Muskegon Charter Township, Muskegon County, MI



**LEGEND**

-  R-EX Residential Existing Density
-  MDR Medium Density Residential
-  HDR High Density Residential
-  MH Manufactured Housing
-  NC Neighborhood Commercial
-  C-I Commercial-Industrial
-  GC General Commercial
-  I Industrial
-  NP Natural Preservation/Parks
-  PE Public/Educational
-  Township Boundary



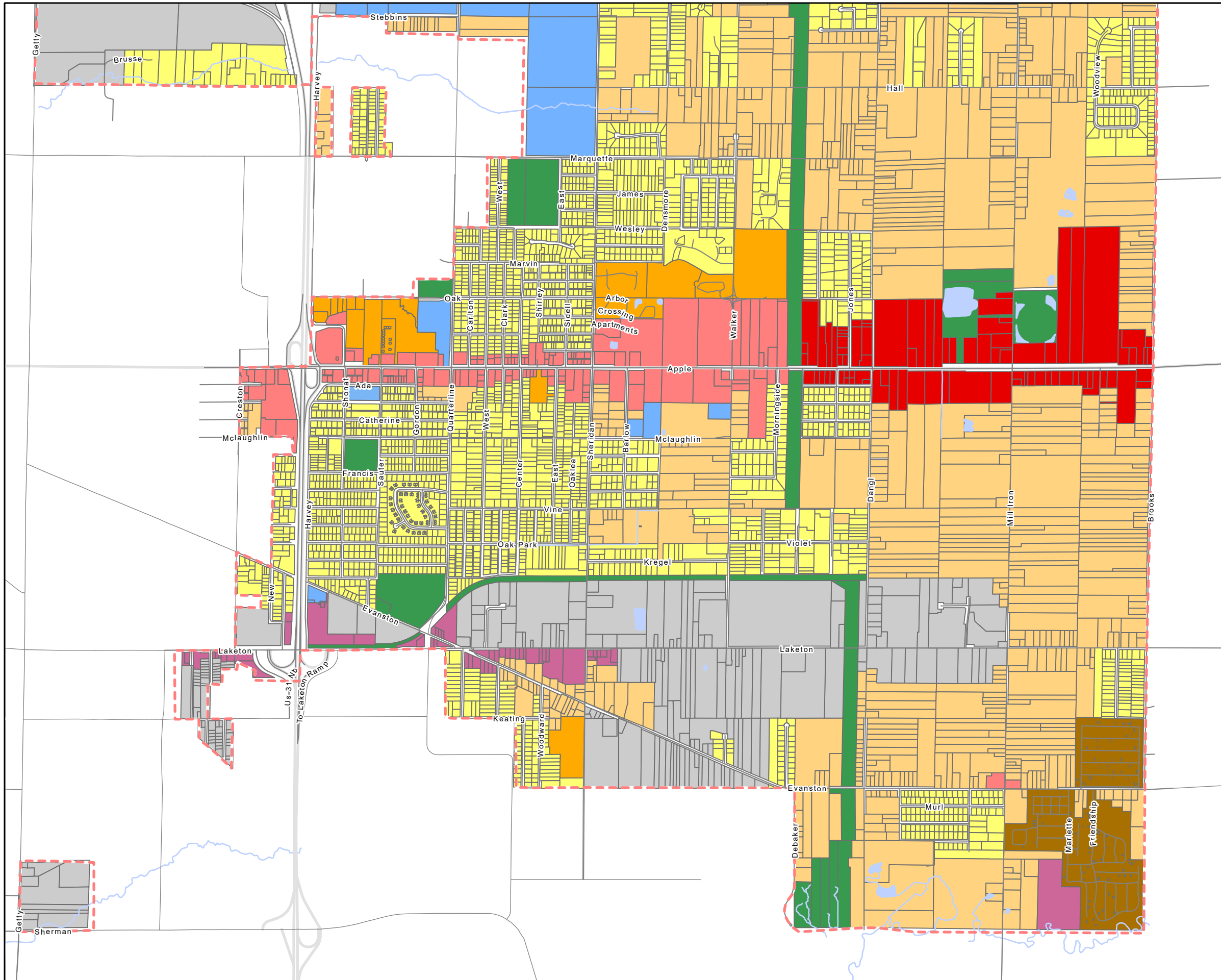
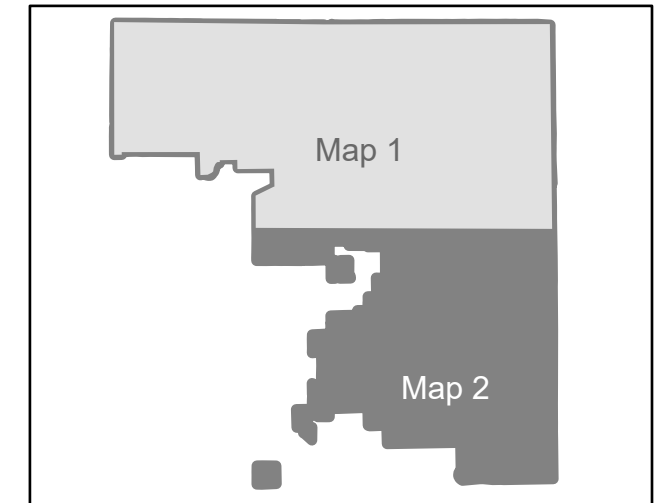
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information v. 17a. Data Source: Muskegon County 2021. McKenna 2021.



MAP 2

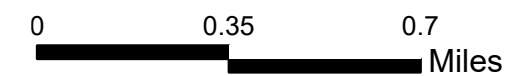
# Future Land Use

Muskegon Charter Township, Muskegon County, MI



**LEGEND**

- R-EX Residential Existing Density
- MDR Medium Density Residential
- HDR High Density Residential
- MH Manufactured Housing
- NC Neighborhood Commercial
- C-I Commercial-Industrial
- GC General Commercial
- I Industrial
- NP Natural Preservation/Parks
- PE Public/Educational
- Township Boundary



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information v. 17a. Data Source: Muskegon County 2021. McKenna 2021.





# R-EX

## Residential Existing Density

### General Characteristics

This future land use category is comprised of existing residential areas. **The key recommendation of this district is to protect and preserve the existing neighborhood character.**

While significant changes are not proposed, these areas can still be upgraded with sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, landscaping, and other improvements.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Typical uses include single-family homes or other housing unit types, with parks, schools, and religious institutions occasionally mixed in.

### Streets and Transportation

Streets in these areas are typically low-speed and low-volume. These street patterns should include high connectivity with accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street and bicycle infrastructure where appropriate.

### Building and Site Design:

Consistent with existing lot and site layout. Neither additional lot splits, nor combinations of lots are envisioned. Redevelopment at higher densities is also not encouraged in this category. Any new construction or major renovations should be consistent with the existing character in terms of setback, height, architecture, and function.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

Existing Zoning Districts (which are generally R-1, R-1S, R-2, R-2S, R-3, R-4, or RMH) should remain unchanged, unless the Zoning District does not currently match the land use, in which case a rezoning to a more appropriate district would be consistent with this plan.



# MDR

## Medium Density Residential

### General Characteristics

This Future Land Use category encompasses areas where new housing should be considered, at a target density of 3-7 units per acre to ensure compatibility with the existing built environment. Some areas in this category are greenfield or undeveloped sites, while others are low density neighborhoods where infill is desirable – provided neighborhood character and natural features are maintained.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Appropriate land use in these areas are single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses, small apartment buildings, parks, schools, religious institutions, and open spaces. Infill development should be similar in form, design, and intensity to the existing surroundings.

### Streets and Transportation

Streets in these areas are typically low-speed and low-volume. These street patterns should include high connectivity with accessible sidewalks on both sides of the street and bicycle infrastructure where appropriate. On-street parking should be provided where it can be designed safely.

### Building and Site Design:

Sites should be designed to maintain a human, walkable scale that promotes social interaction and does not negatively impact any existing nearby residential. Buildings should be designed with quality materials and consistent with architectural styles common in the greater Muskegon area. Alternative architectural styles may be appropriate in some areas, provided that the unique design enhances the general character of the area. New construction or major renovations should be consistent with the existing character in terms of setback, height, architecture, and function.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-1S Single Family Residential
- R-2 Duplex Residential
- R-2S Duplex Residential
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category



# HDR

## High Density residential

### General Characteristics

This future land use category is comprised of greenfield/undeveloped sites and medium-density residential areas that have conditions favorable to additional development. Most of these areas are located along arterial roadways or near shopping centers. Large-scale multi-family, as well as fourplexes, and other small-scale multi-family buildings are compatible with the character of these areas.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Typical land use in these areas are townhouses, multi-unit residential buildings, garden apartment complexes, parks, schools, churches, and open spaces. These areas should be located near parks, schools, shopping centers and transit facilities, which may or may not be developed in conjunction with the residential development.

### Streets and Transportation

Streets should follow a connected pattern that respects topography and natural features, and therefore may not constitute a true “grid.” Streets should feature elements such as sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and a tree canopy. High-density residential land uses should be concentrated near frequently traveled road corridors in the City.

### Building and Site Design

Sites should be designed to maintain a human, walkable scale that promotes social interaction and reduces unnecessary and unused lawn space for multi-unit dwellings (though preserved natural space is highly recommended).

Buildings should be designed with quality materials and consistent with architectural styles common in the greater Muskegon area. Alternative architectural styles may be appropriate in some areas, provided that the unique design enhances the general character of the area. Buildings should include front (street) entrances to encourage connection to the street. Sites should include preserved natural spaces and/or appropriate landscaping consistent with the surrounding area. Developments should be scaled accordingly as to appropriately transition with the surrounding land uses. In general, developments should not obstruct the view or character of adjacent neighborhoods. Taller developments should be placed adjacent to commercial or industrial areas.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- R-3 Fourplex and Townhouse Residential
- R-4 High Rise Residential
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category



# MH

## Manufactured Housing

The need for additional mobile home park acreage as of the adoption of this plan is not apparent. Based upon the goals and objectives in this plan, manufactured housing park developments would be most appropriate on parcels of land where they will have minimal impact on adjacent or nearby uses, and where there is access to commercial and public services, including sanitary sewer service and high-capacity roads. If a need is demonstrated in the future, the following criteria shall be used to identify appropriate manufactured housing park locations:

- Manufactured housing parks shall have a direct access to a paved or arterial collector road, or a state highway.
- Manufactured housing parks shall have access to public sanitary sewer and water systems with adequate capacity to serve the residents and to provide fire protection capability.
- Manufactured housing parks shall be located within approximately one mile of retail services in Muskegon Township or adjacent communities.
- Manufactured housing developments shall be screened from adjacent uses and separated from conventional single family development. The screening may consist of abundant landscaping or a natural woodland buffer.
- Manufactured housing park development shall not be located where it would result in cut-through traffic in existing residential neighborhoods.
- Manufactured housing parks shall generally be adjacent to other high density residential uses, such as existing manufactured housing parks, parcels zoned RMH, or multiple family residential developments, and are intended to serve as a transitional use between high density residential and nonresidential districts.
- Manufactured housing parks shall not be placed on sites in a designated floodway.
- Manufactured housing parks shall not be placed on a parcel size less than 15 acres.

Any development of a manufactured/mobile home park shall be required to meet the highest standards approved by the Township and the Manufactured Housing Commission. Extensive open space, recreation areas, storm water retention areas and landscaping shall be required so that the park becomes an asset to the community.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- RMH Mobile Home Park

# NC

## Neighborhood Commercial

### General Characteristics

This future land use category is designed to promote enhanced live/work/play elements along major corridors. These areas seek to enhance walkability by incorporating commercial and office uses in close proximity to residential areas. The unifying philosophy is to promote vibrancy through an appropriate mix of uses, with site design that reflects the circulation needs dictated by the nearby corridor design.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Typical land use in these areas are retail stores, personal services, offices, medical clinics, and restaurants. Schools, civic buildings, parks, and churches should also be encouraged. The intensity of development, and the degree to which it is automobile or pedestrian focused, should flex based on the proximity to major corridors, residential areas, and other major destinations such as schools.

Land uses that do not promote an active, vibrant business district, such as self-storage, are discouraged.

### Streets and Transportation

These areas often exist near residential and commercial areas and must account for high levels of daily traffic variation due to the mixture of land uses within the area. Where appropriate, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle upgrades should occur to support the development.

### Building and Site Design

Buildings should be built with durable materials and should be architecturally compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings with a connection to the street, including designs with attractive front facades, entrances, and patios, are all highly encouraged.

Site design, in terms of parking and building orientation, should depend on the context. In areas closer to the downtown and along more walkable corridors, parking should be in the rear and pedestrian access should be prioritized. In areas with higher speed traffic, larger parking lots may be acceptable, though pedestrian safety should still be considered. Building height is also variable depending on the specific location.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 Shopping Center
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category



# GC

## General Commercial

### General Characteristics

This future land use category is comprised of large lot commercial operations in close proximity to higher-volume arterial roadways, but not in close proximity to built-out residential areas. Buildings in this category typically include large setbacks from the road and feature large signs visible for motorists. These areas feature big box stores, restaurants, shopping centers, and other higher-intensity commercial uses.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Commercial businesses such as retail stores, personal services, small offices (including medical offices), restaurants, automobile-oriented businesses, and more. Contractor's yards, and other commercial businesses that have an outdoor storage component accessory to them, are encouraged in this area, but discouraged in the Neighborhood Commercial category. Schools, civic buildings, parks, and religious institutions are also permitted, although they should not take up too much of the limited GC land.



### Streets and Transportation

Highway commercial land uses are typically surrounded by roads characterized by higher volumes of traffic, heavier vehicles, and faster speeds. These streets should allow for regional automobile connectivity, but should also feature safe and efficient travel for transit and pedestrians, including sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on both sides of the road. Roadside landscaping and other beautification elements, such as street trees, should be considered in these areas due to the high volumes of both motorists and pedestrians traveling to these areas.

### Building and Site Design

Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site. Commercial buildings should be supported by sufficient but not overly excessive parking areas. Parking areas may be located in the front, side, or rear yards for buildings. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees. To promote new commercial development opportunities, consider the development of outlots in large commercial parking lot areas.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 Shopping Center
- *New C-3 Zoning District, allowing commercial uses that have an outdoor storage component, such as Contractor's Yards.*
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category

# C-I

## Commercial-Industrial

### General Characteristics

The Enterprise Future Land Use designation is a combination of commercial and industrial, and is intended to allow for a flexible variety of business uses, with the specific zoning district determined by the conditions of the site in question.

Enterprise is intended for office, retail, manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, research and development businesses, and creative industries/artisan facilities. Developments should be designed and operated to be respectful of their surroundings, with minimal truck traffic, noise, odor, dust, or outdoor storage/operations.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Appropriate uses include office, retail, light manufacturing, artisan production, food and beverage production, creative industries, warehousing, logistics, and research and development facilities. Parking areas and loading zones must be properly buffered and landscaped when adjacent to residential and agricultural land uses.

### Streets and Transportation

Streets should be designed in a pattern that allows access from abutting areas, but does not encourage cut-through traffic by employees and trucks. Within the Enterprise district, the streets should be designed to be sufficient for business-traffic.

### Building and Site Design

Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site, especially adjacent to residential areas.

Businesses should be supported by sufficient, but not overly excessive parking areas. Parking areas may be located in the front, side, or rear yards of buildings. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees.

### Appropriate Zoning Districts

- C-2 Shopping Center
- M Commercial-Industrial
- I Light Industrial
- IP Industrial Park
- New C-3 Zoning District, allowing a mix of commercial and industrial uses
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category



# I Industrial

## General Characteristics

Industrial is intended for office, manufacturing, research and development businesses, creative industries/artisan facilities (in certain circumstances) that are primarily adjacent to other industrial areas, as well as commercial and office-service areas. Developments should be designed and operated to be respectful of their surroundings, with minimal truck traffic, noise, odor, dust, or outdoor storage/operations.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Appropriate uses include office, light manufacturing, artisan production, food and beverage production, creative industries, makerspaces, and research and development uses. Parking areas and loading zones must be properly buffered and landscaped.

Industrial Park areas (IP Zoning District) are planned to act as a buffer between Light Industrial Areas (I Zoning District) and residential land uses.



## Streets and Transportation

Streets should be designed in a pattern that allows access from abutting areas but does not encourage cut-through traffic by employees and trucks. Within the Industrial district, the streets should be designed to be sufficient for business-traffic. Non-motorized and transit connections are encouraged but are only necessary along major corridors.

## Building and Site Design

Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site, especially adjacent to residential areas.

Industrial buildings should be supported by sufficient but not overly excessive parking areas. Parking areas may be located in the front, side, or rear yards for buildings. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees.

## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- I Industrial
- IP Industrial Park
- Planned Unit Developments meeting the goals of this category

# NP

## Natural Preservation/Parks

### General Characteristics

This designation identifies park land and open space. Areas within this designation can be used for both passive and active recreation. Natural features and developed parklands should be compatible with the surrounding landscape and neighborhood.

The Lower Muskegon River, and its surrounding tributaries, flood plains, and wetlands – including, but not limited to, the state game area – is included in this category. Preserving that unique and precious natural feature is a top land use goal of the Township.



### Appropriate Land Uses

All areas should maintain uses which protect natural features. Where appropriate, they should also promote the inclusion of the public and provide recreational and gathering opportunities.

### Streets and Transportation

Existing pedestrian and cycling trails should be maintained. Additional pathways and associated amenities (i.e. bicycle racks, water fountains, wayfinding signage, lighting, etc.) should be constructed as needed. The connection of such pathways to connect the parks is strongly encouraged where feasible and appropriate to the natural features.

### Building and Site Design

Buildings should be rare in the NP category. They should only be built to help the public interpret and experience the natural environment, or to provide recreational amenities appropriate to the context of the park or open space.

### Appropriate Zoning District

- P Park and Conservancy

# PE

## Public/Educational

Existing public, educational, institutional, and municipal uses are called out on the Future Land Use map as an overlay. It is the intent of this plan that these uses remain in place. However, in the event that they move or close, they should be redeveloped in a manner consistent with the Future Land Use categories that surround them.

### Appropriate Zoning District

- M/S Municipal/School

# Zoning Plan

A zoning plan is required by the Michigan planning and zoning enabling acts. Section 33(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008, as amended, requires that the master plan prepared under that act shall serve as the basis for the community's zoning plan. The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, as amended, requires a zoning plan to be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. The zoning plan must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the municipality and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted (as described in Section 201 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act). The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes, as well as the basic standards proposed to control the height, area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises in the Township. These matters are regulated by the specific provisions in the zoning ordinance.

The zoning plan is a key implementation tool to achieve the vision of the Master Plan. In order to realize that vision, the Township must ensure that ordinances and regulations permit the type and style of development recommended by the Master Plan.

This section outlines the zoning plan for the Township. The zoning districts in the Township are described and their relationship to the Master Plan discussed along with recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance to integrate new land use designations.

## DISTRICTS AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

There are 16 zoning districts in the Township, each of which is described in the current Zoning Ordinance (and this plan recommends the creation of one additional district). Permitted uses in each district are further described in the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance's schedule of lot, yard, and area requirements defines specific area, height, and bulk requirements for structures in each zoning district. The Zoning Map is also a part of the Zoning Ordinance and illustrates the distribution of the defined zoning districts throughout the Township.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTER PLAN

This Master Plan establishes the vision, goals, objectives, and policies for growth and development in Muskegon Township for approximately the next twenty years. It includes a specific strategy for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure over this period, and, as required by statute, will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once each five years. This section, along with the rest of the Master Plan, is intended to generally guide future changes to the Muskegon Township Zoning Ordinance.

The following is a list of proposed Master Plan land use designations and their corresponding zoning district. Not all of the Master Plan's future land use categories will match up with the current location or regulations of the zoning district that they most closely correspond to. Recommended revisions to the Zoning Ordinance are discussed below. Please note that the park and institutional zones will remain consistent with surroundings and should be allowed in all districts.

Future Land Use Categories	Zoning Districts
<b>R-EX</b> Residential Existing Density	<i>Rezoning strongly discouraged, except to make zoning district match existing land use.</i>
<b>MDR</b> Medium Density Residential	R-1 Single Family Residential R-1S Single Family Residential R-2 Duplex Residential R-2S Duplex Residential
<b>HDR</b> High Density Residential	R-3 Fourplex and Townhouse Residential <i>(to be renamed “Multi-Family Residential”)</i> R-4 High Rise Residential <i>(to be renamed “Multi-Family Residential”)</i>
<b>MH</b> Manufactured Housing	RMH Mobile Home Park
<b>NC</b> Neighborhood Commercial	C-1 Neighborhood Commercial C-2 Shopping Center
<b>GC</b> General Commercial	C-1 Neighborhood Commercial C-2 Shopping Center <b>New</b> C-3 General Commercial
<b>C-I</b> Commercial-Industrial	C-2 Shopping Center M Commercial-Industrial I Light Industrial IP Industrial Park <b>New</b> C-3 General Commercial
<b>I</b> Industrial	I Light Industrial IP Industrial Park
<b>PE</b> Public/Educational	M/S Municipal/School
<b>NP</b> Natural Preservation/Parks	P Park and Conservancy
<b>No Future Land Use Category</b>	RR Rural Residential – <i>Land should be zoned RR until the property owner requests a rezoning to an appropriate district as listed above, based on the Future Land Use Category of the site in question.</i>

## LEGALLY NON-CONFORMING SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

Near the Township's commercial and industrial corridors, there are currently a number of pre-existing single family homes, many of which are located in a commercial or industrial zoning category, and are thus legal non-conformities. In order to allow property owners to mortgage, insure, expand, and invest in these homes, this plan supports the rezoning of legally non-conforming single family homes to an appropriate zoning district, provided that the following criteria are met:

- The lot in question must NOT front on Apple Avenue, Holton Road, or Whitehall Road. Legal non-conforming homes on those corridors are anticipated to redevelop into business uses. The allowable rezonings anticipated by this plan are intended for homes on side streets that are in close proximity to major corridors, which may be planned for commercial or industrial uses to allow for future growth – but that should be permitted to rezone to residential prior to the time when they might be redeveloped for business expansion.
- The proposed zoning district must not allow any increase in the density of housing units on the site, by way of lot split or by constructing a duplex or multi-family building on the lot.
- The house in question must be in livable condition, such that it can be used as a home once rezoned. Houses in unlivable condition should remain zoned commercial or industrial and redeveloped.
- Rezoning the lot must not impede the commercial or industrial development of neighboring lots, by creating additional zoning regulations (such as landscaping or required setbacks) that would severely restrict development on the adjacent lot.

If those criteria are met, then the rezoning should be considered appropriate under this plan, and should not be considered “spot zoning”, even if it creates a small residential district surrounded by commercial or industrial. However, rezoning the lot back to a zoning district deemed appropriate under its Future Land Use category shall also be considered supported by this plan. Using this system, property owners of non-conforming single family homes will have the option to rezone them to residential, and use them as dwelling units, or to rezone them to an appropriate commercial or industrial category, and redevelop them into commercial or industrial use.

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO ZONING ORDINANCE

This plan recommends the following changes to the Zoning Ordinance, in order to implement the goals and vision of this plan.

- **Creation of a new C-3 District:** A new “C-3 General Business” category should be created, allowing a combination of high intensity, auto-oriented commercial uses and small-scale industrial uses. Dimensional requirements should be similar to the I District. The new C-3 District would be appropriate within the GC and C-I Future Land Use Categories, but would not be appropriate for I or NC, where the uses should be more specifically prescribed.

This category would differ from the current M District because it would have uses permitted by right (all uses in the M District require special use approval) and because it would not give an opportunity for *all* uses allowed in the I, C-1, and C-2 Districts to be approved.

Instead, the new C-3 District should allow the following uses:

- **By Right:**

- » Carpenter/Electrical/Plumbing/Heating/Landscaping/etc Shop
- » Laboratory
- » Trade or Industrial School
- » Auto Equipment Repair
- » Municipal or Public Service Building
- » Microbrewery/Winery/Small Distillery/Brewpub
- » Research and Development
- » Grocery Store
- » Retail
- » Personal Service
- » Office
- » Bank
- » Restaurant
- » Veterinary Clinic
- » Marijuana Provisioning Center (subject other locational rules for marijuana uses)

• **By Special Use:**

- » Contractor’s Equipment Storage Yard (must be accessory to a permitted Carpenter/Electrical/Plumbing/Heating/Landscaping/etc Shop)
- » Gas Station
- » Indoor Recreation
- » Preschools and Daycare Centers
- » Self-Storage Units

- **Residential Density:** The allowable density in the residential categories should be tweaked to ensure that a wide variety of housing products can and will be built in the Township, and that the categories create a consistent spectrum of densities (and thus neighborhood designs) that can be deployed throughout the Township. The increases in density for having access to public sewer (i.e. the “S” districts) already reflect the increased capacity of the land from not having to design septic systems, but other density limits in the Ordinance do not follow a consistent pattern.

The current density limits are as follows. Regulations marked with an \* are recommended for revisions by this plan:

Zoning District	Allowable Housing Types	Maximum Allowable Density (Units/Acre)
RR Rural Residential	Single Family	0.11
R-1 Single Family Residential	Single Family	3.63
R-1S Single Family Residential	Single Family	4.84
R-2 Duplex Residential	Single Family Duplex	5.81
R-2S Duplex Residential	Single Family Duplex	7.26
R-3 Fourplex and Towhouse ( <i>to be renamed “Multi-Family Residential”</i> )	Fourplex* Townhouse	Fourplex: 8.71 Townhouse: Unclear*
R-4 High-Rise ( <i>to be renamed “Multi-Family Residential”</i> )	Apartments with four or more stories*.	7.5*

One change that should be made is allowing triplexes, as well as apartment buildings with fewer than four stories, neither of which is currently allowed in any district. Triplexes should be allowed in R-3 and apartment buildings under four stories should be allowed in R-4.

The maximum allowable density for “townhouses” in R-3 is also not clear. The Ordinance states that the minimum lot size is three acres, but does not say how many townhouses are allowed per acre. An amendment should be pursued allowing 8 or 9 townhouses per acre, so that the density is consistent with the allowable density of fourplexes, which is 4 units per 20,000 square feet, or 8.71 units per acre.

Further, the allowable density in R-4 (30 units per 4 acres, or 7.5 units per acre) is actually lower than the allowable density in R-3. R-4 should be revised to have no maximum density, but should also have a maximum height of 9 stories, which equals the tallest building in the Township currently.

- **Solar Energy Accessory to Residential Developments:** Develop zoning parameters to allow solar energy as an accessory use for new residential developments, by right. Ensure that the new provisions protect residents from the negative impacts of solar arrays while still allowing locally produced, sustainable energy in close proximity to residential developments.
- **Sustainability:** Add density bonuses, lot coverage exemptions, or other incentives for the use of LEED certification, porous pavement, green roofs, bioswales/raingardens, and on-site solar or wind energy.
- **Sidewalks:** Require sidewalks for developments and redevelopments along Apple Avenue, Holton Road, and major corridors near schools, such as Sheridan Avenue, Marquette Street, Hall Street, and Giles Street.
- **Access Management:** Develop access management standards for Apple Avenue and potentially Holton Road.
- **Architectural Standards:** Establish architectural standards for Apple Avenue and Holton Road to provide a high-quality image and encourage reinvestment.
- **Landscaping:** Enhance landscaping requirements – especially frontage landscaping – along Apple Avenue and Holton Road. Consider requiring amenities and decorative elements, such as benches, trash cans, public art, knee walls, and branded signage, along one or both corridors.
- **Industrial Business Growth:** Ensure that standards in industrial districts, such as setbacks, maximum building heights, and parking minimums, do not encumber the operation, expansion, and growth of successful businesses. Balance such concerns with the need to protect nearby residents from negative impacts.
- **Marijuana:** Monitor the marijuana industry and the performance and impact of marijuana businesses, and alter marijuana regulations, including the allowable locations, accordingly.
- **Senior Housing:** Ensure that senior housing is allowable in enough districts, and on enough land, that the growing market for assisted living and other models of 55+ housing can be accommodated.



# Action Plan

The Muskegon Master Plan and its goals, objectives, and strategies recommend a future vision for the community. This vision is to build upon the Township’s existing assets and make the most of opportunities that can attract new development and residents to the community while protecting the Township’s natural beauty and resources. To put it simply, the plan for Muskegon Township is to create an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable community where people want to live, work, visit and play.

The goals and objectives of this plan should be reviewed often and be considered in decision-making by the Township. Successful implementation of this plan will be the result of actions taken by elected and appointed officials, Township staff, the Downtown Development Authority, the Planning Commission, public agencies, and private citizens and organizations.

This section identifies and describes actions and tools available to implement the vision created in this Plan. Broadly stated, the Plan will be implemented through:

**Planning and Zoning.** Evaluation of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance, and if necessary, amendments to regulations are necessary to implement the recommendations of this Plan. Continuous evaluation of the recommendations of this Plan must occur at regular intervals to ensure that the overall vision for the future development of the Township remains relevant.

**Civic and Transportation Improvements.** Civic improvements are generally funded through public funds and are tangible “bricks and mortar” projects. Improvements to the Township’s motorized and non-motorized circulation system also fall into this category.

**Economic Development and Placemaking.** This category includes the economic and physical development of the Township. These improvements include a wide range of activities from physical development activity to promotion and marketing, and may be completed by public or private entities, or some combination thereof.



The tables on the following pages present a detailed summary of all of the recommended implementation activities, who is responsible for completing the activity, and available funding resources for each activity.

KEY					
Priority		Timeframe		Responsibility (Color)	
<b>A</b>	Most Important	<b>1</b>	Within one year		Project Lead
<b>B</b>	Very Important	<b>2</b>	1-3 years		Key Participant
<b>C</b>	Important	<b>3</b>	3+ years		Contributor

RESPONSIBILITY (ABBREVIATION)	
MC	Muskegon County
CIA	Corridor Improvement Authority
BO	Business Owners
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
NC	Neighboring Communities
OVPS	Orchard View Public Schools
RPPS	Reeths-Puffer Public Schools
HO	Home Owners
CM	Community Members
PC	Planning Commission
TB	Township Board
TS	Township Staff
MATS	Muskegon Area Transit System
RDC	West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Corporation

FUNDING	
Public	Includes public funds from the Township operating budget, County, and State funding. May also include local government bonds and grants.
Private	Includes funds from private sources such as grant monies, corporate funding, or property owners
TIF	Tax increment financing provided by an authorized body. Please refer to the summary of economic development tools.

## PLANNING AND ZONING

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			TOWNSHIP	OTHER GOVT	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TIF
Create a new C-3 General Business Zoning District.	A	1	PC TB TS			●		
Correct inconsistencies and lack of clarity in residential densities, especially in the R-3 and R-4 Districts.	A	1	PC TB TS			●		
Develop aesthetic and access management amendments for Apple Avenue and Holton Road.	A	1	PC TB TS			●		
Require sidewalks and other non-motorized improvements in conjunction with all developments in “High Priority” non-motorized transportation areas.	A	1	PC TB TS			●		
Determine locations where sidewalks should be required, and adopt a zoning amendment requiring sidewalks on those corridors.	B	2	PC TB TS			●		
Develop bonuses for sustainable practices, as described in this plan.	B	2	PC TB TS			●		
Review the standards of the industrial district to ensure that they meet the needs of growing businesses.	B	2	PC TB TS			●		
Designate appropriately zoned locations for senior housing.	C	2	PC TB TS			●		
Monitor the marijuana industry and adapt the relevant zoning regulations accordingly.	C	2	PC TB TS			●		
Review and update this plan every five years.	C	3	PC TB TS			●		

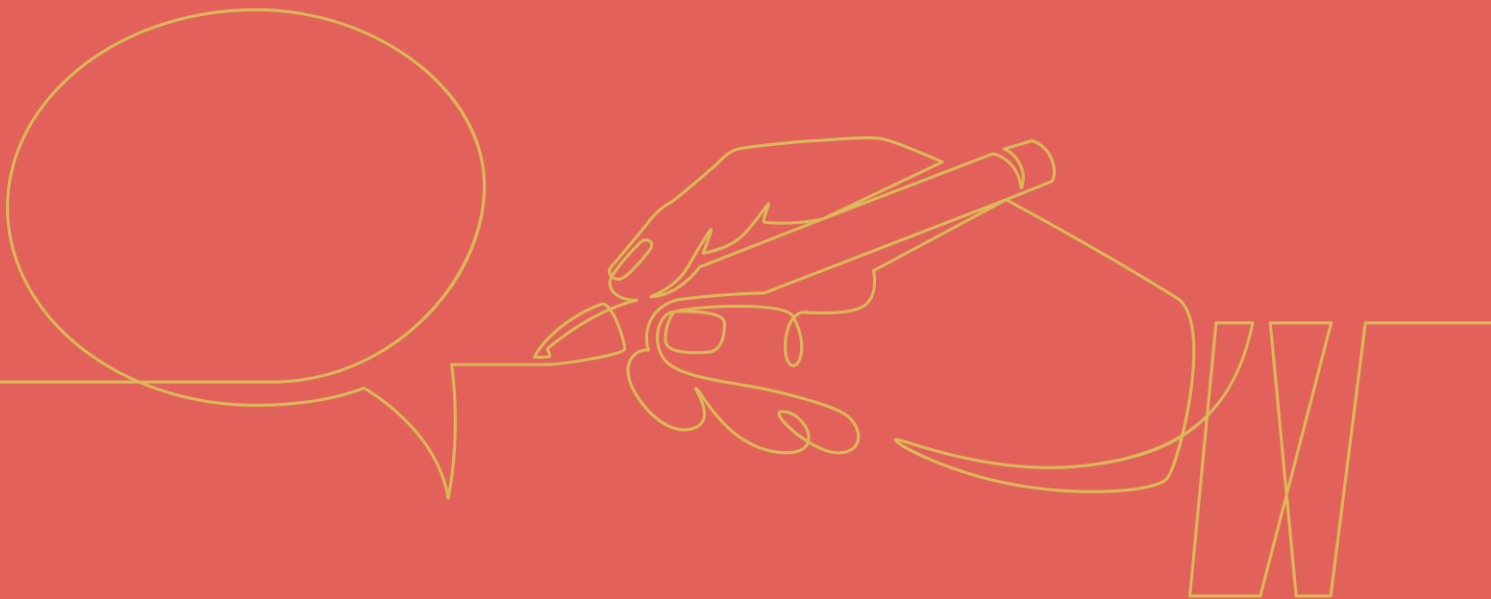
## CIVIC AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			TOWNSHIP	OTHER GOVT	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TIF
Improve walking connections to Orchard View High School, Reeths-Puffer High School, and other educational campuses. Consider Safe Routes to School Grant Funding.	A	2	PC TB TS	OVPS RPPS		•	•	
Implement traffic calming devices such as curb cuts, roundabouts, and speed bumps to increase pedestrian and motorist safety.	A	2	PC TB TS	MDOT MC		•		
Identify key corridors for sidewalks and use zoning and public funding to construct them.	A	2	PC TB TS	MDOT MC		•	•	
Coordinate with MDOT on design improvements to Apple Avenue.	B	2	PC TB TS	MDOT		•	•	•
Explore opportunities to enhance road conditions by filling in potholes.	B	3	PC TB TS	MDOT MC		•		
Upgrade corridors to reflect the design guidelines of this plan.	B	3	PC TB TS	MDOT MC		•		
Expand and improve public transportation service in the Township, including north of the Muskegon River.	C	3	PC TB TS	MATS		•	•	•
Collaborate with utilities and communications companies to improve infrastructure.	C	3	VC VS	BO		•	•	

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMAKING

PROJECT	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY			FUNDING		
			TOWNSHIP	OTHER GOVT	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TIF
Explore the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority for Apple Avenue.	A	1	PC TB TS	CIA MC NC	BO CM	●	●	●
Continue to interface with the business community regarding ongoing needs.	A	1	PC TB TS	CIA	BO CM	●	●	●
Develop a brand for Apple Avenue.	A	1	PC TB TS	CIA	BO CM	●	●	●
Implement the Apple Avenue brand via signage and aesthetic improvements.	A	1	PC TB TS	CIA	BO CM	●	●	●
Explore the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority for Holton Road.	B	2	PC TB TS	CIA MC NC	BO CM	●	●	●
Develop a brand for Holton Road.	B	2	PC TB TS	CIA	BO CM	●	●	●
Implement the Holton Road brand via signage and aesthetic improvements.	B	2	PC TB TS	CIA	BO CM	●	●	●
Utilize CIA funds and other resources to recruit and retain businesses, especially job-creating industrial businesses and high visibility businesses along the Apple and Holton Corridors.	C	3	PC TB TS	CIA RDC	BO CM	●	●	●

# 05. APPENDIX: PUBLIC INPUT



# Survey Results

During the Master Planning process, Muskegon Township sought public input on various important overarching aspects of the Plan such as preservation, aspirations, and enhancements. In general, the purpose of the public engagement component of this Plan is to help determine:

- The value residents receive from the services provided in the Township.
- If current planning and development priorities were on track.
- What should be the Township's future priorities.

A total of 197 people responded to the online survey.

In order to achieve the most public input as possible from all resident demographics, the Township hosted two in-person community engagement events held in Summer 2021. One event was held at Township Hall on the south side of the Township and the other event was held at the Fire Station on the north side of the Township.

Additionally, the Township advertised an online survey for several months from Summer 2021 to Winter 2021.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results from the online public survey concluded the following overarching themes:

- In general, respondents show favor toward single-family style homes, but also understand that more housing is important to add to the Township.
- Many respondents noted appreciation for the Township's parks, wetlands, river, and other natural features and would like to keep those features preserved.
- The community would likely be in support of more non-motorized connectivity around the Township, most notably, along major commercial roads (such as Apple Avenue) and between neighborhoods. Survey results show high favor for more sidewalks and bike paths.
- Overall, survey responses show support for commercial corridors fitted with vegetation, street trees, sidewalks, decorative streetlamps, and other aesthetic elements. It appears a general neutral opinion was given toward setbacks, parking lot size and facing, commercial signage, and building facades.
- In general, it appears survey respondents would be in favor of the Township implementing gateways. Of gateway elements, respondents prefer banners, flowers, decorative streetlamps, and other similar decor.
- Of those elements of the Township that should be fixed, respondents listed roads and road quality as a top priority. Also, respondents noted lack of non-motorized connectivity and availability.
- Top aspirations noted by respondents include modernized commercial developments with a "town square" type feel, a well-connected Township, encouraging more growth and commercial development in appropriate areas, and encouraging to fill commercial vacancies.

## DETAILED RESULTS

### Housing

The first several questions of the survey asked respondents to rate various housing options from a scale of 1 to 5. In this context, 1 is the least desired option and 5 is the most desired option.

- Single family homes on large rural lots received overwhelming support from over 50% of survey responses.
- Single-family homes in higher density residential neighborhoods received a mix of results, with a near equal number of respondents (23.2%) voting this housing type either a 1, 3, or 4. Options 2 and 5 were also near equal at around 15% each. If this type of housing were to be implemented in the Township, it appears the community would be equally divided in support or opposition.
- The third housing option included detached townhomes. This option received a 35% least desirable rating.
- Attached townhomes comprised the image for the following question. Along the same lines at the previous image option, this housing option received a majority of least desirable rating. Approximately 36% of respondents rated this option as a 1 and 21% rated this option as a 2.
- Cottage courts or bungalow courts were included in the image for the next question. Interestingly, the results of this housing type were near equally weighted on the least desirable and most desirable scale. A majority of respondents (27%) rated cottage courts as a 3, which can indicate feelings of neutrality.
- An attached duplex home was featured next. Similar to other multiple and two-family housing type depicted in the survey, this housing option received mainly negative feedback, with almost 40% of respondents rating it a 1.
- The final housing type question featured an image of a high-density and large-scale apartment building. Unsurprisingly, this housing options is not preferred by survey respondents. Over 56% of survey responses rated this housing option as a 1.

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### Corridors

The second set of questions asked respondents to rate their preferences of various images pertaining to the design and functionality of major commercial corridors. In this context, 1 is the least desired option and 5 is the most desired option. The results of this question include:

- An image of Alpine Avenue was used for the first image. This corridor is characterized by a 5-lane thoroughfare with high traffic speeds, large parking lots, many big box stores, and plentiful signage. Over 36% of survey respondents rated this image as a 3 – indicating general neutrality.
- The second corridor image included a snapshot from the 28<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, near M-37. This image includes a sidewalk and greenspace along the roadside, 5-lane traffic, higher speeds, and stores facing closer to the street with rear-facing parking lots. Similar to the previous image of Alpine Avenue, a majority of survey respondents rated this corridor design example a 3, with just under 40% of responses.
- The next image is a capture of a segment of Ford Road on the east side of the State. The image is characterized by greenspace and sidewalk adjacent to the road, 5 lanes of traffic, higher traffic speeds, streetlamps, and vegetation or plantings separating the sidewalk from adjacent businesses. This image received more apparent support with a majority rating of a 5, at over 36% of respondents.



- A portion of Michigan Street in Grand Rapids was featured next. The image depicts a multi-story building with a wide sidewalk located right up to the road with little setback. The highest percentage of respondents (almost 40%) rated this image a 1.
- Lastly, an image of M-10 on the east side of the State was featured. This image includes street trees, green space, boulevard design, sidewalks, and an on-street bike lane. General neutrality was shown for this image as well, with over 30% of responses at a 3. However, it should be noted that the remaining responses generally favored the most desirable side than least desirable side.

## Gateways

The third set of questions pertain to design elements for Township gateways. The following results apply:

- When asked about lampposts with banners, about 72% of respondents selected “I like it!”
- When asked about flowers, plantings, and other similar decorations about 82.5% of respondents selected “I like it!”
- When asked about a large monument sign, approximately 51% of respondents selected “I like it!” while about 24.5% selected “I do not care” and 21% selected “I do not like it”.
- When asked about an archway into the Township, about 40% of respondents selected “I do not like it” and about 34% of respondents selected “I like it!”

Additionally, the survey asked respondents to choose the best location for a Township gateway. Respondents noted the following:

- 70.7% selected Apple Avenue and US-31
- 36% selected Holton Road and Roberts Road
- 32% selected Apple Avenue and Brooks Road
- 27% selected Giles Road and Whitehall Road
- 13.8% selected Laketon Avenue and Evanston Road
- 10% selected Other, which include:
  - » Milliron and southern border and Gerry at 31
  - » Russel and River
  - » Apple Avenue and Quarterline
- 5% selected Evanston Road and Brooks Road

## Fix

These are the areas respondents noted that the Township should fix or improve conditions:

- Neighborhood parks needs to be more inviting..ie Parslow Park used to be nice, now it's run down.
- ROADS. Tarring and stoning roads does not fix the roads.
- Sidewalk on Apple Avenue
- More sidewalks and connectivity throughout the Township
- Add larger breakdown lanes or bike/walking path on from Causway to Giles Rd (to roberts rd would be even better) there use to be a decent breakdown lane that you could ride your bike to the causeway, but it was taken out.

- Senior housing on Holton Rd.
- Intersection of M120 and US31. Traffic flow is heavy and there are too many entrances to enter M120.
- congestion on Apple Ave , speeding also a huge issue. Large flower pots filled to welcome people into the township.
- More bike paths in the Township.
- More street lighting in the Township.

## Preserve

These are the areas respondents noted that the Township should preserve, or keep the way they are today:

- All of the parks & recreational areas.
- Pedestrian sidewalks should be preserved and maintained
- Keep the trees and foliage. Green spaces are better than concrete.
- Waterways and Woodlands
- Wetlands along Cedar Creek & Muskegon River
- Keep these lines of communication open! The housing options given previously are all good depending on the area of the township being considered. The signage is also good, but financial considerations as to their initial cost and upkeep should be included as well.
- Community parks, sidewalks, access to public transportation.
- The progressive growth the of commercial businesses and areas up north including the medical facilities and restaurants.

## Aspire

These are the big ideas for Muskegon Township:

- Develop some kind of draw to make the Township a destination area. Maybe a smaller area for specialty shops/micro brewery/winery/non chain restaurant that is walkable. Could possibly start with removing or remodeling the Brookhaven facility and utilize the office suites next to that for shops.
- Affordable owner occupied housing. Safe neighborhoods.
- Have some consideration for pedestrians and foot traffic.
- Developing small well organized community pockets vs wide open subdivisions would be beneficial to both residents & outlying areas.
- We believe when area residents have access to sidewalks/bike paths it helps all residents stay healthy and connected to their neighbors.
- Try to attract "modern" shopping center developments at both the north and south side of the township that have more of a small town square look than the traditional strip malls we have now.
- Encourage businesses for vacant buildings.

## What does Muskegon Township mean to you?

- Home
- Place to raise a family affordably
- Family and community
- It's a place to call home, that has alot of different people calling it home.
- Enjoy the retail as well as the rural areas. Residents care about the community and schools.

- Really enjoy living in the area. Nice neighborhood with reasonably priced houses. Most of the time traffic is not bad and it is easy to get around.
- Rural Community with several recreation opportunities in parks. Two public school districts. Respected service departments - police, fire, water, sewer, parks, & sanitation. A blend of a small city with some rural neighborhoods.
- Muskegon Township and Muskegon in general is someplace I call home. It's had a bad rep and I'm glad to see things turning around. It's such a great location and a highly underrated one.
- Everything! I was born and raised and I would like to see more black businesses in this township and more housing
- It means a place for my children to enjoy, make friends, and live and play. It means a place to work and enjoy the beauty of the area and have access to recreational opportunity. It means generational enjoyment in the place we live
- Always been HOME to me. Would love to see it "spruced up".

# North Side Open House

A total of 25 people attended the North Side public engagement open house, held on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Fire Station #2.

## SUMMARY

Results from the in-person public engagement open house set up at Fire Station #2 concluded the following general themes:

- The Township’s parks system needs upgrades and enhancements. Residents commented that the river offers a vast opportunity for recreational amenities and would like to see more thought put into the river corridor.
- Many residents who attended the open house commented that additional traffic studies/corridor enhancements are needed along Holton Road and Apple Avenue. Residents made note that those are two of the primary corridors in the Township and as such, should receive additional beautification and traffic mitigation strategies.
- Residents made comments regarding the lack of extended/enhanced public transit offered in the Township.

## OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

### “What Does Muskegon Township Mean To You”

Residents and interested person were asked “What does Muskegon Township Mean To You” on an engagement board. The common themes noted on the board were as follows:

- Muskegon Township feels like a safe and quiet place to call home.
- The Township’s proximity to larger urban areas and centers for attraction is preferred.

### Preserve

The first engagement board asked respondents to indicate areas of the Township that should be preserved or left in an “as is” state. Of those who were present at the open house, the following themes were predominant:

- Preserve wetland area between the two river branches.
- Maintain Getty Street as a semi-rural setting without an increase in development or infrastructure expansions.
- Preserve river flats and discourage development along river front.

### Enhance

The second engagement board asked respondents to indicate areas of the Township that should be enhanced. Enhancement meant areas of the Township that could use some attention but should not be considered for development or redevelopment. The following key themes were most frequently identified:

- Maintaining and supporting trees and natural landscape (including wetlands).
- Provide river access to area residents.
- Promote continued river maintenance, which would include removal of damming logs, debris and other items that make passage of the waterway treacherous.
- Traffic calming along Holton Road and Apple Avenue.

- Roberts Road enhancements.
- Mitigate vehicle noise and congestion near primary residential districts.
- Enhance public transportation options and availability throughout the Township. Increase the number of buses that run throughout the day and increase the service area.
- Revitalize community parks to offer additional amenities to area residents.
- Enhance undeveloped land along the expressway by encouraging the maintenance and growth of the natural landscape.

## Develop

The third engagement board asked respondents to identify areas within the Township that would benefit from development opportunities. The following key themes were identified by participants:

- Encouraging more development in the vicinity of Buel Avenue, Paul Street, Reed Avenue, Vernon Avenue. Area residents indicated that this neighborhood area is undeveloped and does not provide enough area services to the residents.
- Planning and developing more bike trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes along major road corridors.
- Encourage more small-scale businesses: coffee shops, local bakeries, ice cream parlors, etc.
- Develop additional pedestrian accesses (sidewalks, in-fill connections, multi-use trails) along residential corridors.

## Redevelop

The fourth engagement board asked respondents to identify areas within the Township that would benefit from redevelopment opportunities. These are sites within the Township that are either: functionally obsolete; vacant; poorly maintained or sites that could be enhanced to offer additional services to the area residents. The following key themes were identified by participants:

- Turn vacant sites into community parks and recreational facilities.
- Redevelop superfund site(s) within the Township.
- In conjunction with either road redesigns or enhancements, promote the installation of bike lanes to allow multi-modal transportation options for Township residents.

## Design Guidelines

Engagement boards were also displayed that showed a plethora of potential site designs for residential development, street designs and gateway signs. Based on the interaction with the public in attendance, the following observations were made:

- Residents wished to see gateway signs that more mirrored state park designs, such as a wooden sign that blends more with the natural environment. Based on discussions with those residents in attendance, sign designs that were deemed “flashy” should not be considered.
- Residents expressed a higher level of interest in the single family, larger lot design for future neighborhoods. The second housing design that received praise was small scale housing on smaller lots. Discussion with those in attendance indicated little to no interest in multi-tenant apartment complexes nor high density development.

- Residents indicated a high interest in street design that offered pedestrian access (such as sidewalks) and landscape buffers between the roadway and business developments. In discussion with area residents, there was interest in street corridor enhancements that would offer visual buffers between large scale parking lots and those traveling about the Township.
- Residents expressed interest in providing/enhancing the gateways at the following intersections:
  - » Apple Avenue & US-31
  - » Holton Road & Roberts Road
  - » Giles Road & Whitehall Road

## South Side Open House

A total of 22 people attended the public engagement open house, held on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Muskegon Township Hall.

In order to achieve the most public input as possible from all resident demographics, Township staff hosted an in-person public engagement event with the assistance of the planning consultants (project staff). At the open house, project staff were available to obtain public feedback in a casual and exciting setting. The engagement event focused on the southern portion of the Township (south of the Muskegon River).

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results from the in-person public engagement open house set up at Muskegon Township Hall concluded the following general themes:

- Many residents who attended the open house commented that additional traffic studies/corridor enhancements are needed along Holton Road and Apple Avenue. Residents made note that those are two of the primary corridors in the Township and as such, should receive additional beautification and traffic mitigation strategies.
- Residents made comments regarding the lack of extended/enhanced public transit offered in the Township.
- Residents indicated that additional commercial oriented services would be beneficial on the eastern portion of the Township, which has current land uses of agricultural and rural homesteads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN HOUSE RESULTS SUMMARY

### “What Does Muskegon Township Mean To You”

Residents and interested person were asked “What does Muskegon Township Mean To You” on an engagement board. The common themes noted on the board were as follows:

- Muskegon Township has suburbs, which offer a relaxed lifestyle.
- Muskegon Township has room for growth.

### Preserve

The first engagement board asked respondents to indicate areas of the Township that should be preserved or left in an “as is” state. Of those who were present at the open house, the following themes were predominant:

- Preserve neighborhoods that are currently established while preventing expansion.
- Preserve agricultural and rural lifestyle along the eastern portion of the Township, while allowing for small scale service oriented business developments.

### Enhance

The second engagement board asked respondents to indicate areas of the Township that should be enhanced. Enhancement meant areas of the Township that could use some attention but should not be considered for development or redevelopment. The following key themes were most frequently identified:

- Traffic calming along Apple Avenue.
- Corridor enhancements (beautification) along Apple Avenue.
- Increase property maintenance standards.
- Increase active enforcement measures to improve neighborhood quality and reduce blight.
- Improve enforcement of home occupation regulations.
- Enhance public transportation options and availability throughout the Township. Increase the number of buses that run throughout the day and increase the service area.
- Enhance the industrial corridor along Laketon Avenue to provide and accommodate for future increase in commercial/industrial vehicle traffic as industrial operations expand.
- Enhance existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Enhance pedestrian access at and around the public school system: increase the safe connection school attendees have between residential neighborhoods and school campuses.
- Residents expressed opinions that the development process could be more streamlined, which would allow developers and contractors to “break ground” on a shorter timeline, thus allowing for the completion of the project to be achieved sooner.
- Residents indicated a preference to see additional street lighting (not traffic signals) be installed throughout the Township.

- Enhance the industrial corridor along Laketon Avenue to provide additional buffers/screening between industrial uses and residential uses.
- Enhance traffic enforcement measures during school operational hours at or near bus stops.

### Develop

The third engagement board asked respondents to identify areas within the Township that would benefit from development opportunities. The following key themes were identified by participants:

- Develop additional service-oriented businesses along the eastern portion of the Township (Mill Iron Road).
- Encourage multi-family developments or short-term lodging (hotels/motels) to support colleges (Baker College, Muskegon Community College, and other satellite institutes) and businesses.
- Residents indicated a desire to see more affordable housing that would be targeted to seniors and newly retired residents.
- Develop additional bike lanes throughout the Township that allow for both vehicular and non-motorized transport. Additionally, residents indicated that if new bike lanes are created, there should be an increase in the buffer distance between the bike lane and vehicular lane(s) which would allow for safer bike passage on major roadways.

### Redevelop

The fourth engagement board asked respondents to identify areas within the Township that would benefit from redevelopment opportunities. These are sites within the Township that are either: functionally obsolete; vacant; poorly maintained or sites that could be enhanced to offer additional services to the area residents. The following key themes were identified by participants:

- Turn vacant sites into community parks and recreational facilities.
- Encourage commercial oriented businesses on vacant sites near more densely populated neighborhoods.

### Design Guidelines

Engagement boards were also displayed that showed a plethora of potential site designs for residential development, street designs and gateway signs. Based on the interaction with the public in attendance, the following observations were made:

- Residents wished to see banner style signage along the major corridors that help promote a sense of community. Residents indicated that the banner style signs would be more “eye attractive” and most cost conscious as compared to a fixed sign.
- Residents indicated to program staff that the primary focus of gateway sign locations should be the Apple Avenue & US-31 interchange. Residents felt that this is a significantly trafficked area and would be best for the installment of Township signage.
- Residents indicated that the Township should promote single family homes, on moderate to larger lots. Some residents also indicated that a smaller footprint home should be allowed on a large parcel of land. Of those residents whom provided comment, some felt that a smaller home footprint would be more easily maintained than a larger home, especially if the home owner(s) happens to be retired.



- Residents indicated to program staff that there is a desire for landscaping enhancements along major corridors, which would include the installation of street trees. Residents felt that a landscape buffer between the roadway and businesses located along a major corridor (such as Apple Avenue) would help beautify the Township and encourage future development.

## Stakeholders

### INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS LEADERS

**Margaret Eastley, Scherdel (Interviewed September 8, 2021)**

**What are your short, medium, and long term plans for your physical site? Any plans to expand? Are you able to expand on your existing site?**

- Been there since 1999, already added on three times
- Need warehouse space
- Property to the west – trying to buy
  - » But the process is going slow, and the costs of construction are high, probably 1-2 years out
  - » Use Bay Logistics for current warehouse
- Property to the east – looking to buy eventually
  - » Want to get into the medical sector, currently 98% automotive
  - » “Springs are springs”
  - » Created a new medical wing “Scherdel MedTech”, which would be housed in a new building to the east.
  - » Semiconductor shortage is causing issues with automotive customers

**Do you have any issues with neighboring uses or property owners? Do you anticipate any issues if and when you need to expand?**

- Located at a low elevation and had some flooding issues
- Township and County cleaned out drains and fixed the water issues
- Great relationship with other industrial park tenants
- Do not anticipate opposition to planned expansions
- Partnership with animal rescue nearby – free adoptions for employees

**Have you encountered any zoning hurdles in using your property? What were they? If there was no zoning/no restrictions, what would you do on your property?**

- Not that she can remember
- Township is very supportive

**How do you feel about the roads and access to your site? Safe? Efficient?**

- Township plows industrial park roads, even though they are private

- Road is private but in good shape. Township would do minor maintenance if it came out.
- Laketon has been fine for truck traffic – no complaints from logistics team.
- Truck staging occasionally backs up.
- Medical will have fewer truck (product is smaller)

**Thoughts on the Township generally? Things that could be improved?**

- German executives concerned about labor force in Muskegon area
- But have been able to find quality people by looking regionally
- Township has been very supportive, while enforcing rules. Know that is needed to be safe.
- Scherdel is very proactive about reaching out to the Township.
- Need more storage/warehouse space.
- Germans come over on three year visa – 90% love the area. Love the water and seasons. We're a little warmer than Germany. Some of them stay permanently, or make sure they have kids here for citizenship. 24 hour Meijer is very popular. They travel a lot. One thing they don't like is health care.
- Sponsor visa costs for engineers from overseas, especially India and China.
- Very multicultural company.
- No issues with water and sewer.
- Communications technology was bad but has improved.
- Ensure the Township looks nice for visitors, because Scherdel has a lot of people come in from out of town. Fix abandoned storefronts and messy yards. Code enforcement and site design.

**Skyler Vaughn, RenkAmerica (Interviewed September 14, 2021)**

**What are your short, medium, and long term plans for your physical site? Any plans to expand? Are you able to expand on your existing site?**

- Continue their current business
- Eventually become a prime contract for Pentagon vehicle procurement
- Trying to get in with Navy vehicles, especially because the Feds want to produce those in the US
  - » Actual ships would not be built in Muskegon, just parts
- 1.2 million square feet at facility – one third used for storage right now, but would like to make that manufacturing space
  - » Probably would not need to build new storage space elsewhere
  - » But may need a new warehouse for larger gears needed for Navy ships
  - » Would probably not have to take down trees to expand

**Do you have any issues with neighboring uses or property owners? Do you anticipate any issues if and when you need to expand?**

- No major issues with businesses to the west
- Had issues with landowner to the east because they said the test track was encroaching on their property....but this was resolved.
- Professional jobs are about 30% commuters from Grand Rapids. Most of hourly workforce is local. Skilled labor is hard to find, especially for skilled trades and qualified machinists. Not a really good connection between schools and businesses to ensure that students can get skills they need for skilled labor.
- Recruiting professionals and skilled labor from Grand Rapids and also from out of state.

- » Have to be strategic about out-of-town hires – will they appreciate a smaller town? Or will they at least appreciate Grand Rapids?
- » Very hard to hire foreign nationals because of national security.
  - Even though they have a German parent company
- Muskegon plant is Renk’s largest US facility.
- Have engineering firms on-site doing environmental reclamation proactively to prevent future problems and are coordinating with County Water Resources Commissioner on water quality in wetlands/creeks/river.

**Mark Weaver, RootWeaver (Interviewed September 15, 2021)**

- Intends to fill entire marijuana grow district with Root Weaver buildings
- One building per year, up to 10 buildings, and then go from there
  - » 20 licenses, 40,000 plants
    - Currently have one medical and one recreational license.
    - Master build-out plan – need to cross the county drain with a driveway/road
    - Just bought another lot to come in from Dangl. Would not connect to existing land on Laketon – would be separated by county drain.
    - Will be making retention pond bigger so stormwater system can serve entire complex
      - ✓ Landscaping/stock with fish/try to make it a natural
    - Just had to build another roof on top of the original roof because of heat within building during winter caused condensation.
      - ✓ May do greenhouse style for some of their buildings. They are designed to reduce the issues that the metal roofs have.
      - ✓ Marijuana needs 12 hours daylight, 12 hours dark – otherwise the plant thinks it’s early spring and won’t flower.
    - New building will also be closed loop – no outside air
      - ✓ This prevents odor issues, as well as cross contamination.
  - » Will also build an extraction/processing facility within one of the grow facilities. But not ethanol or petroleum – no explosion risk.
  - » Currently have a harvest every three weeks...goal is 1 or more harvests per day
- Have network of dispensaries statewide, but try to take care of local dispensaries first.
- Hard to find property. Was lucky to find this site.
- Contaminants in groundwater are further west, don’t impact property
  - » Have public water and sewer – use a lot of water
  - » No runoff from plants – no floor drains in current building, but will have floor drains in future buildings to make cleaning easier
- Not a lot of neighbors...all the residential neighbors are on the other side of the power line corridor
  - » Mechanic across the street has no issues with them

- Does not want marijuana district to expand, and does not want additional industrial on Dangl
- Township has been extremely helpful. Other side of the state (Hampton Township) was bad experience – opted out after building was already built.
- Some communities think that any old building is fine for growing...that's not true. Need a specialized building, and cannot have any contamination that might impact the plants or property.
- Muskegon Township needs to make sure it attracts high quality growers that know what they're doing.
- Laketon Avenue to US-31 is great. Don't use many big trucks...mostly secure vans. Currently one truck per month, and then only when busy. Trucks will increase but will not be daily.
- A lot of people want to work in this industry, but getting the right matches is more difficult. Need to have a good team that all gets along. That's a struggle with any business, obviously.
  - » Plenty of applicants, though. But it's hard work – and specialized.
  - » People are passionate about marijuana and want to work in the industry. But can't hire unskilled labor off the street. It has to be a labor of love.
  - » Have people moving in from elsewhere, but don't need to recruit for that to happen. Would prefer hiring local.
  - » Not much commuting from GR/Holland/etc.
- Would build a dispensary if the Township opened the door to more, including on site on Laketon. But can't build too many or Twp will saturate market.
- Leaflink has data on statewide market. Marijuana businesses pay monthly for market data. Functions like a commodities market. Dispensary owners come and check prices and then contact growers.
- Market floods with cheap outdoor growers in the fall.
- Caregivers don't really affect their market, and he doesn't have an issue with them. But they need to be more heavily regulated by the state. Not currently testing their product – which is a problem when they are supposed to be providing medicine.

## RETAIL BUSINESS LEADERS AND LANDLORDS

### **Jon Hendricks, Meijer – North Muskegon (Interviewed August 31, 2021)**

- Just finished remodel in July 2020. Footprint stayed the same but changed façade.
- Next project – expanded space for curbside pickup. This would result in a small addition to the food side of the building.
- Have dedicated parking for curbside pickup, but would probably move them closer to the new curbside pickup area.
- Zoning implications of curbside parking spaces – something to discuss. Could Township reduce parking minimums because curbside spaces turn over faster?
- Shipt and other delivery services are separate from curbside.
- Happy with the loading docks on both sides of the building, even though that's unusual for a Meijer store.

- Never had a complaint from Becker Road residents.
- Had people camping in the woods between the store and RP High School, which are Meijer property.
- Have walking trails in the woods. Maintained by Meijer (part of zoning approval when store was built?) Used by neighborhood residents and kids going to school.
- Do not own the Wendy's and Credit Union outlots. Not sure of their medium or long term plans.
- Access from Holton and Getty has no issues that he's aware of.
- Does not foresee any additional Meijer stores in the region. Norton Shores is getting remodeled.
- No interactions or issues with the house on Getty or the one on Holton that are still there amongst the commercial.
- No public transit access to North Muskegon store.
- North Muskegon store sells more summer/camping/outdoors/beach/pool products than most stores, and thus carries more of that stuff. Common stop for people heading north or coming into Muskegon for tourist reasons – sales spike in the summer. Norton Shores store is much more consistent in level of sales.

#### **Samei Patak – Owner of Former Plumb's (Interviewed September 8, 2021)**

**What are your short, medium, and long term plans for your physical site? Any plans to expand? Are you able to expand on your existing site?**

- Beltline Plaza – 80,000 sf of retail
  - » Bob Evans, Biggby, Dollar Tree
  - » Purchased in 2014 as distressed property
  - » Exposure on 31
  - » Renovated outdated 50s building
  - » No issues with access or visibility, except tenants ask for signage on the highway
  - » Marketed the center with Collier
    - But had hard time getting tenants – mattress firm, health care, discount retailers
    - Problem is lack of spending power in the community. Household income isn't high enough. Traffic and population are fine, just income is too low.
    - Lack of population growth is a concern.
    - Shoppers go to Sherman corridor or North Muskegon – he's not sure why.
    - Has interest from self-storage, but Brian says zoning is not right.
      - ✓ Wants self-storage in commercial.
      - ✓ New generation of storage is enclosed space, looks like retail.
      - ✓ Storage companies like the area because of the high number of apartments
    - Marijuana growers and retailers also approach him a lot.
    - Want that shopping center to project quality regardless of tenants.

**How do you make a retail center succeed?**

- Quality of space
- High traffic count
- Household income is a key factor

### **What is Apple Avenue's competitive advantage?**

- Township should take what's available
- Make zoning flexible.
- Accommodate what's available – allow self-storage.
- Every asset I buy, we create value – through management or physical improvements.
- If he had unlimited money and no rules, he would...do the same thing he did.

### **James Cherney – Goodwill (Interviewed September 8, 2021)**

- So far the building is serving us very well. We love the location – targeted in quickly when Kmart left.
- Outlet/bulk concept is somewhat unique among Goodwill's
- Site also includes temporary warehousing/distribution, and dropoff.
- Food truck wanted to locate in front on them, but they are not currently allowed.
- Would be helped by new outlots on the front of the site.
  - » Landlord wants too much money.
- Site is great retail site, and also a hub, because you can get to so many places so fast.
- Provide a lot of jobs there. Including for people transitioning out of incarceration.
- Resource hub – skill building and skill training. Put them all in one place.
- Educational institutions have training centers. Want to partner with them. Provide coordination and opportunities.
- Location in the City is primarily office, but they do training needs.
- Advocated for public access internet. Training programs rely on internet, but the people they serve need to have data service, and they don't have that.
- Pandemic has made technology crucial in workforce development.
- Losing funding for mental health workforce development, but the need is still out there.
- Latest trend is "community integration" – bring them into the community through job training.
- Have not looked at empty space next to CitiTrends
- May also be interested in opening a daycare center. Currently act as the "hub" from employees who need childcare – employees only pay 1/3 of the cost (state 1/3, Goodwill 1/3). But they currently use outside child care facilities.
- Location near the highway makes it a regional center. They distribute goods to other stores throughout the region. 17 stores in the region.
- Retail supports everything else. Need to appeal to both donors and shoppers in order to provide services.
- Potential partnerships – need people in the trades.
- Transportation – may develop transportation service centered on that location.

- Served by public transportation – kind of. Nearest bus stop is at Apple and Creston. Twp could advocate to MATS to create an on-site stop (would also serve Secretary of State).
- Individual Service Plan – each individual has their own goals. Primary goal is job placement. Job retention is also part of the plan. Third goal – promotion. How do you move up? “Cradle to career” – not done just because you have a job.
- Financial literacy. Home ownership. Provide assistance and support for the long term.
- Also have own temp agency – GoodTemps. Helps people go from program to real life job skills. Only place with employers who might hire long term.
- Pool of “client” businesses, majority in manufacturing, but also in retail. Not every employer is friendly. Have not seen new employers come in looking for Goodwill “grads.” But Goodwill-friendly businesses are calling more often.
- Need employees, just like everyone else, and thus hiring more people out of their own program.
- Occasionally take outsourced work and can meet need at location in the City. May need a new facility for this in the future.
- People who prioritize homeownership tend to have families and prioritize school districts. And, of course, what’s affordable. Budget, financial planning, and realistic goals.
- Not that busy yet at this site for donations, because the five other locations surround this one. Still relatively new and needs to develop a donor base.
- Dumping is less of a problem than it used to be. They are monitoring it and enforcing it.
- Township Police are great. They swing by and check frequently.
- People are being more selective in what jobs they take. Wages are increasing.
- Take referrals from other agencies. Market on social media for people to enter their programs or simply apply for their retail jobs.
- Offer more flexibility than most retail jobs.
- Reuse and recycling is a big part of their business. Goodwill is the biggest recycler in the world. Committed to keeping things that are donated to them out of the landfill.

#### **Dan McKinnon – Multiple Businesses and Retail Sites (Interviewed September 15, 2021)**

- Owns seven companies, 200+ employees, five of his seven children work with him
- Businesses in every municipality in Muskegon County except Fruitport
- Owns 12 different commercial/industrial properties County-wide, plus one in Ludington
- Serves on three non-profit boards, including two non-profits in the Township
- Looking to transition a little at his age (72) to children, but would like to stay active in real estate development
- Real estate must be income producing...not buying dirt.

- Commercial or Industrial space that he could lease.
- Owns space in five locations – Holton, Apple, Henry/Norton Shores, Fruitport/Mall, Grand Haven.
- When you're evaluating commercial property, sometimes a less expensive property is better – assuming you can fill the space.
- Different businesses do differently. Holton tends to be a little weaker than others. Apple tends to be stronger in the industries he's worked with (cell phones, tanning, fast food).
  - » Restaurants – Mr. Quick, Wendy's, Dickey's.
    - Eggleston (Apple) is their strongest location for food. No. 2 is North Muskegon (Whitehall). No. 3 is Roosevelt Park (Henry). No. 4 is Norton Shores gas station location.
      - Owns property on Holton Road – struggled because the population isn't as high. But higher income than south side. And has seen growth in past 5-6 years – he's not sure why, though.
      - Just bought old Wendy's on Apple. Has two other properties on Apple in the Township, plus one more in Eggleston.
        - Demographic on Apple is modest income. Good population, high traffic counts. But per capita income is low.
        - Through traffic doesn't provide much business.
      - Apple Avenue needs help to compete with Henry, Mall, and, to some extent Holton.
        - A business association, including investing in aesthetics and branding, would help.
        - Expanding the allowable uses and increasing the allowable height would help, but it's not clear that there is much office demand. Residential upper floors could work.
        - Medical office demand may already be filled on north side.
        - Don't sacrifice marketability by over-regulating signage.
          - Allow electronic message centers.
      - Holton is improving and growing, but from a relatively weaker starting point due to lower population.
      - Would like to own a hotel.
        - Would get a franchise – possibly Microtel.
        - Hasn't put a ton of research into market yet, but thinks PPP probably propped up many properties. But thinks that hotels are likely rebounding, at least from 2020.
        - Thinks there's room in Muskegon Twp, especially at Apple/31. But has talked to people about downtown Muskegon as well. Festivals and events lead to more hotel demand.
- Not likely to buy industrial property in the Township – owns it in Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. General industrial thoughts:
  - » Subsidize job training – including subsidizing wages for a training period at employer.
  - » Labor exists but does not have skills, and wages aren't high enough to compete with benefits.
  - » How can Muskegon Twp be more attractive to industrial than other communities in region (such as Muskegon or Norton Shores).
    - Utility costs, infrastructure, taxes, etc.
  - » Municipalities need to roll out red carpet for existing, small businesses, not just new, large ones.
  - » A smaller public investment may go farther than the bigger investment needed for the big fish.



- » What hinders businesses from growth? Capital, facilities, land, labor? All things municipalities can help with. Look at Eagle Alloy – growing from 20 employees to over 500.
- Graphics/Printing business – has national reach (wholesaler to smaller trade publications). Also does billboards and bus wraps – sub-contracts for printing of large art because not everyone has the equipment to print that big. Potential for growth, but need skilled trades. Easier to find the designers than the printers.

## RESIDENTIAL LANDLORDS

The Township invited business owners to a roundtable on September 8, 2021. However, most of the attendees were actually residential landlords, who had the following feedback:

### Mike Sandberg – Mike’s Affordable Auto Repair on Jones

- Stor N Lox is across the street
- 20 years ago he started his business on C-1 land that was residentially used. There are several non-conforming homes on Jones. Existing homes want to rezone to residential while keeping their business on the other side of the street.
- Small businesses need to be supported in their zoning district, which is C-1. Putting residential puts a burden on the businesses.
- Don’t overlook the small businesses. Don’t restrict commercial development on Apple.

### Chris Kaijala

- Rental Inspection Program is too strict - too onerous on landlords.
  - » Brought in former City inspector after increase in rentals during Great Recession
  - » But Twp doesn’t absorb liability
  - » Too hard to evict people
  - » No clear list of criteria
  - » Inspectors too strict
- Requiring empty lots to be mowed, even if they’re growing hay
- Signage Rules are Too Restrictive
  - » Especially on Apple Avenue
  - » Small businesses can’t compete with the big ones with the big signs
- Develop Apple all the way to Eggleston
- Township not considered business-friendly
- 1492 Holten Road
  - » Surrounded by houses but zoned commercial
  - » Been vacant for more than 180 days and thus can’t be used for residential
  - » Allow homes in commercial by special use? Exempt single family homes from non-conforming status?
  - » What is the definition of “vacant” when it comes to a single family house?

- General Feedback: Try to prevent unnecessary zoning snags
- Wanted to build on the back of their property for offices for tradespeople – the type of people who don't spend much time in their office
- Township staff's goal should be to improve the community
- Can non-conforming homes be improved? Why are inspectors telling people they can't be improved?
- Favoritism is a problem
- Non-Conforming homes that go through probate lose non-conforming status before the probate period ends
- Don't want to see the interiors of the rural sections of the community developed
- Will people be forced to connect to public water or sewer?
- Don't put a minimum size on dwelling units, and allow smaller lots. Make sure new housing can be built and sold attainably.

#### **Township Staff (Interviewed September 16, 2021)**

Steven Sheldon, Building Official

Penny Good, Assessor

Dave Glotzbach, Fire Chief

Mark Nicolai, Fire Marshal

Jerry Sanders, Public Works

Toby Frederickson, Rental Inspections

Tim Thielbar, Police Chief

- We all want our businesses to grow and flourish, but they have to do things safely...ingress, egress, hazards, etc.
- Root Weaver is run very well. Township needs to keep standards for marijuana high. Police very happy with them so far.
  - » Extraction could be concern, but mostly with the petroleum.
- Caregivers are creating grow houses in garages. Need to establish regulations on caregivers. Can reduce PRE percentage if they have grow space that isn't residential.
  - » Currently do not have to apply for a home occupation, because Township doesn't want the locations to be public knowledge. Township enforces nuisance standards if they are violated.
- Advocacy from Fire and Building to have more regulations, including home occupation permit, on caregivers.
- Growth
  - » 300 new homes on East River Road
    - Building Department had no issue handling permits, but Assessing had trouble keeping up.
    - Police, fire, DPW, would all feel pinch would new homes.
    - Need tax base to cover new homes that won't pay for the cost of their services
  - » Only one PILOT still active

- Percentage of Rent
  - Not fee per service
- » Apartment complex that switched from subsidized to market rate reduced police calls.
- No more mobile home parks.
  - » Do not expand existing mobile home parks.
- Plan for lower density or non-residential around mobile home parks?
- Make mobile home park an FLU category to make it clear where they go and where they don't.
- And then say they become low density res if they leave.
- Higher density residential.
  - » Concerns from public safety.
  - » FLU Map must be more specific for housing development and housing type.
    - Specifically call out density levels that match current zoning districts.
- Mixed Residential/Commercial
  - » On FLU Map on Apple and Holton, not included in Zoning Ordinance.
- Mixed Commercial Industrial
  - » On Apple east of Mill Iron or Dangl (Commercial/LIGHT Industrial)
- Non-Conforming Single Family on Holton
  - » Rezone back to Single Family? But FLU commercial? Program for property owners to request residential if they want?
  - » Or create new mixed use zoning district that allows single family residential?
- Rental Inspections Program
  - » 2 Year Certificate
  - » Inspect every unit every two years...except apartment complexes inspect 50% of units plus 1 extra unit for each apartment that fails the inspection.
  - » Problems are the usual slumlords.
  - » Fire Department says rental inspections are effective.
  - » Generally speaking, no pushback
  - » Safety things protect your investment and our residents
  - » Rental inspections are at capacity – would need more inspections if more rentals are built.



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