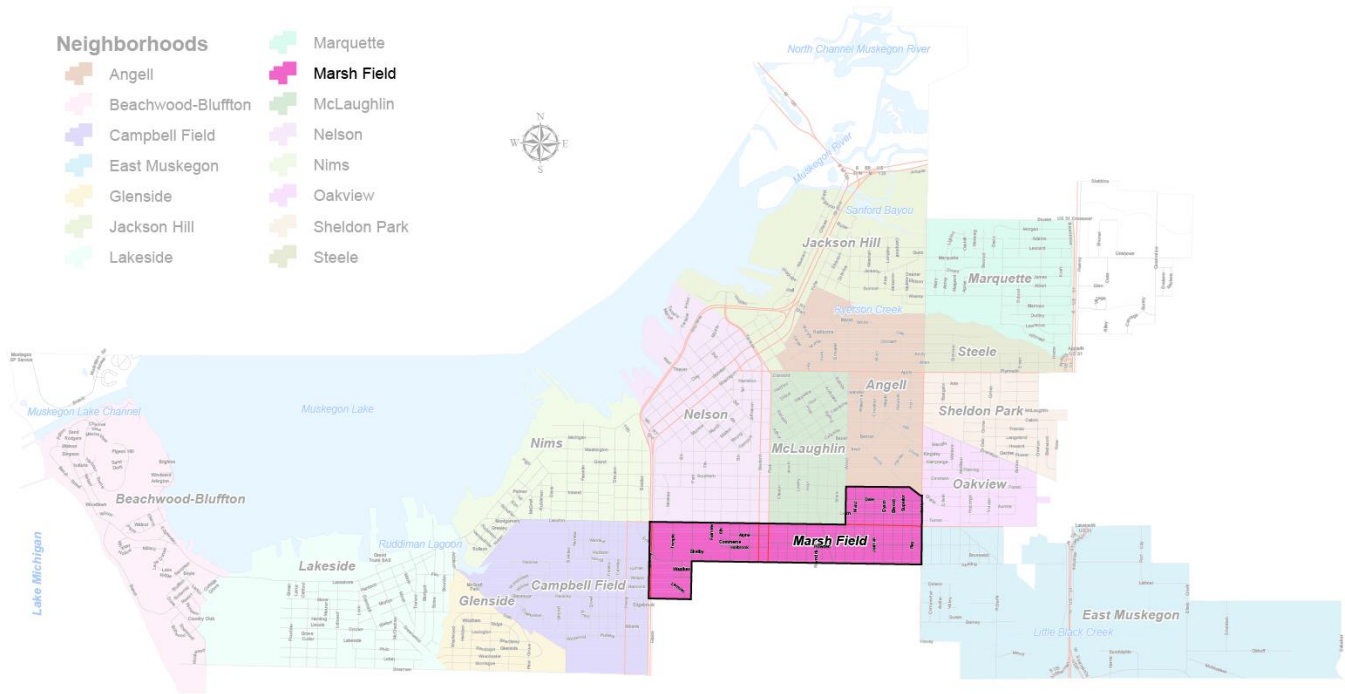


Marsh Field

City of Muskegon
Neighborhood Association Map



Neighborhood Description

The Marsh Field neighborhood hugs a nearly two-mile stretch of Laketon Avenue extending south to form the City of Muskegon’s municipal boundary with the city of Muskegon Heights. Its namesake park, Marsh Field, serves as the center of the neighborhood and an elementary school occupies a site two blocks to the west. Blocks of primarily single-family detached housing make up much of the neighborhood, with the Seaway Industrial Park occupying the west end. The Marsh Field neighborhood is home to the City of Muskegon’s first Marihuana Overlay District which is centered on business zones along the south side of Laketon Avenue near Peck and Sanford Streets.

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Zoned Land Use

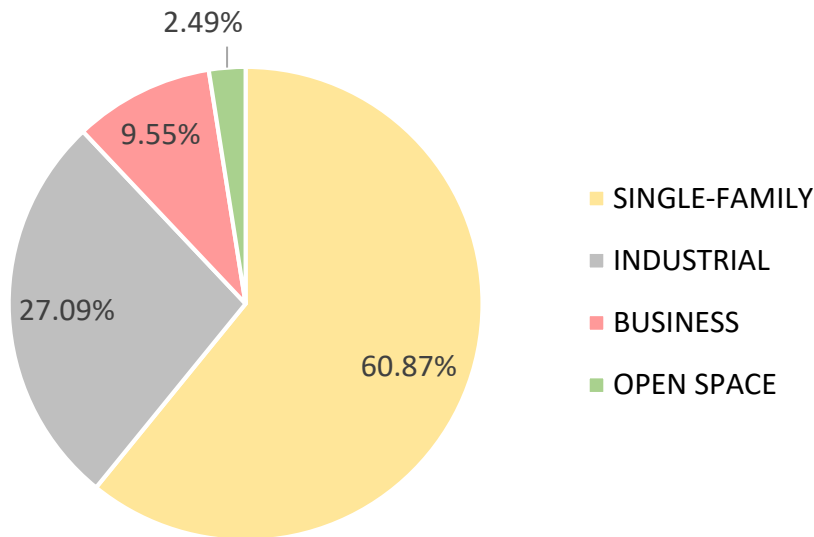


Chart 1: Marsh Field zoned land use as a percentage of the neighborhood's total land area

The majority of Marsh Field is zoned for single-family detached housing. Industrial zones are located at the west end of the neighborhood, but pockets of business zones and industrial zones are scattered throughout the neighborhood, with some even immediately abutting residential areas. Business zones line Laketon Avenue and the area near Peck Street and Sanford Street. Marsh Field (the ballpark and its adjacent park space) accounts for all open space zoning in the neighborhood.

Housing Choice

There are a large number of rental properties in the Marsh Field neighborhood. While many houses tend to fit their single-family zoning designation, missing middle housing units account for nearly one-quarter of all rental housing in the neighborhood. There are a few publicly-owned vacant residential lots, but compared to adjacent neighborhoods, little vacant residential land exists.

Commercial Inventory

Laketon Avenue – Laketon provides many commercial options, but the business districts are not well defined. A few longstanding businesses anchor this commercial stretch, while some vacant buildings are beginning to show signs of deterioration.

Getty Street – Located to the northwest of the neighborhood, the intersection of Getty Street and Laketon Avenue also provides an abundance of commercial options.

Peck and Sanford Streets – South of Laketon Avenue, these streets contain a number of vacant commercial and industrial businesses, though a few of these buildings were rehabilitated during the marijuana industry boom. Currently zoned for commercial, industrial zoning should be considered south of Alpha Avenue.

Industrial Inventory

Seaway Industrial Park – This small industrial park was created in the early 1980s and contained several City-owned parcels to be sold for redevelopment. While a handful of light manufacturing businesses have occupied existing buildings, expansion of industrial businesses has been slow to develop and much of the land has since been developed for the marijuana industry.

Laketon Avenue (between Seaway Drive and Sanford Street) – Scattered buildings include a large industrial parcel west of the cemetery, and a handful of industrial buildings to the east. The former railroad right-of-way could offer opportunities for industrial expansion. Peck and Sanford streets are zoned for commercial, but contain several vacant industrial buildings.

Parks/Recreational Opportunities

Marsh Field neighborhood parks, community gardens, public/private park and open spaces, etc.:

- Marsh Field
- Laketon Trail
- Saint Mary’s Cemetery (privately-owned)

Community Nodes

E. Laketon Avenue (between Peck Street and Wood Street) – Several shared community nodes are found at the Laketon Avenue border between the Marsh Field and McLaughlin neighborhoods. The Laketon Trail on the north side of the street provides access for active transportation, but the area could benefit from better linkages between each node, especially across Laketon.

Marsh Field anchors the west end of this string of community nodes at the intersection of Peck and Laketon serving as a gathering place for the neighborhood and greater region. Most commercial buildings to the west are seeing reinvestment due to their location in the Marijuana Overlay District, but other properties in the immediate vicinity could see future uses that build on the activity at Marsh Field. The new middle school to the north in the McLaughlin neighborhood will become a very active site linking with the community garden and elementary school property to the east. Laketon’s intersection with Terrace Street offers significant redevelopment potential at the elementary school property that could build on popular businesses a short distance away.

The area along Laketon, east of Wood Street, is more residential in nature, with scattered businesses frequented by more neighborhood and regional patrons alike. The north side of the street is almost exclusively residential with no land zoned for nor available for commercial uses aside from the intersection with Getty Street.

Transportation

The Transportation and Mobility section of the Master Plan contains further discussion and recommendations. Major Streets in the Marsh Field Neighborhood include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Laketon Avenue | - Terrace Street |
| - Peck Street | - Wood Street |
| - Sanford Street | - Temple Street |
| - Forest Avenue | - 6 th Street |
| - Nims Street | - Commerce Street (Holbrook to City limits) |
| - Larch Avenue | - Park Street |
| - Holbrook Avenue (6 th to Commerce, Peck to Getty) | - Young Avenue (Park to Temple) |
| - Hoyt Street | - Hackley Avenue |

Possible road diets could occur on Laketon, Getty, Peck, and Sanford.

Active transportation options include a nearly complete sidewalk network in the Marsh Field neighborhood. The Laketon Trail is easily accessible from the neighborhood connecting the neighborhood to the Musketawa Trail through the Oakview and East Muskegon neighborhoods. There is a connection to the Lakeshore Trail at the Laketon Trail’s western terminus, but it could be improved.

Public transportation serving the neighborhood includes MATS Routes 2, 21, 22, 31, and Go2 Service. Marsh Field is well connected to the broader street network in the city via Laketon Avenue, Getty Street, Peck Street, and Wood Street. Access to the regional highway network is very convenient via BR-31 which serves as the neighborhood's western boundary. A series of dead-end streets complicate travel from the neighborhood to the south, but an otherwise complete network allows for easy navigation to and from residences. High traffic counts on the major streets in the can also challenge access and are, in some cases, dangerous to cross via any mode of transportation.

Blight/Beautification

The Marsh Field Neighborhood is very visible considering its multiple entrance routes into the city (Getty, Laketon, Wood, Peck, Seaway). Opportunities exist to beautify these city entrance points.

The underutilized industrial area south of Holbrook Avenue has become dilapidated as have many vacant commercial and industrial buildings on Peck and Sanford Streets.

Historic Preservation

The Marsh Field neighborhood does not presently contain any designated historic districts or sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A State of Michigan Historical Marker for Marsh Field, the ballpark, is located in the neighborhood. Marsh Field does contain some architecturally significant structures and potentially contains historically significant sites as well.

Significant Redevelopment Properties

1965 Commerce Street – Over 11 acres of the former railroad right-of-way is surrounded by industrial property and could be utilized for expansion of such uses. Underutilized land south of Holbrook Avenue could be combined to create additional land suitable for development.

South of Holbrook (between 7th Street and Peck Street) – Over 18 acres of underutilized industrial land containing very few residences or existing businesses.

721 E. Laketon Avenue – Just under one acre of commercially zoned property with frontage on three streets.

1826 Hoyt Street – Former elementary school and surrounding property with Laketon Avenue frontage.

Future Land Use

See future land use map in Appendix

Project 1: Improve pedestrian crossing points along Laketon Avenue.

Heavy and fast-moving traffic on Laketon Avenue divides the neighborhood, serving as a dangerous barrier for residents trying to cross the street. Discussion with neighborhood residents and patrons of Laketon businesses and observation of use will help to determine key crossing locations where safer conditions can be created, increasing access to each side of the street.

Further, the presence of the new middle school will likely generate considerable foot traffic on Laketon Avenue and its cross streets at various times of the day.

Action Steps

- Work with neighborhood residents to determine key crossing locations along Laketon (i.e. near schools, business districts, etc.) and create a plan to improve the pedestrian experience and safety in these locations.
- Desired crossing points are identified through community outreach. An estimate is conducted.
- Create design proposals and seek funding sources for improvements to street crossings.

Project 2: Better define the commercial districts on Laketon Avenue and redevelop the underutilized properties on the south side.

The business district along Laketon Avenue is not well-defined throughout the neighborhood, and long-term vacant or otherwise inactive buildings are prominent in some areas. More flexible zoning regulations could encourage reuse of buildings, allowing the corridor to better adapt to the changing market demands.

Action Steps

- Amend the zoning ordinance so that it allows flexibility between commercial and residential uses for properties fronting Laketon. Missing middle housing has seen success in this neighborhood and additional residences near the commercial corridors will provide population to support businesses and transit.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to allow for dense residential development or commercial uses in areas that are currently limited to commercial.

Project 3: Reutilize the former railroad right-of-way for recreational opportunities.

Development of the utility corridor and former railroad right-of-way paralleling Keating Avenue is restricted, but a few potential low-impact uses may be possible. A non-motorized transportation route or pollinator habitat could make use of an otherwise utilitarian area within the neighborhood.



The former railroad-right-of-way and current utility corridor has the potential to offers recreational opportunities for Muskegon and Muskegon Heights in the form of a non-motorized trail.

Action Steps

- Establish pollinator habitats through appropriate plantings.
- Consider rails-to-trails grant funds.

Project 4: Increase access between city limits with Muskegon Heights.

The former railroad right-of-way limited access points between Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, resulting in many dead-end streets in each municipality. An opportunity exists to reknit the two sides by improving the many informal footpaths and two-track routes now that the railroad is gone.

Action Steps

- Observe popular routes across the former railroad right-of-way.
- Partner with Muskegon Heights to pave identified routes.

Project 5: Conduct an industrial redevelopment study for the underdeveloped industrial land south of Holbrook Avenue.

Over 11 acres of former railroad right-of-way exists in an industrial area in the south-west corner of the neighborhood. This offers possibilities for new industrial development or expansion of existing industries.

Action Steps

- Study the potential demand for industrial redevelopment in the area.