

McLaughlin Neighborhood Master Plan Projects

Redevelop the former commercial buildings at Irwin Avenue and Terrace Street.

This underutilized commercial district contains mostly vacant retail buildings that are beginning to cause blight. Although some longstanding vacant buildings may need to be demolished, existing residential and office/service uses have seen success and should be considered for buildings where retail is struggling. Additional residential units near this intersection could provide the traffic needed for neighborhood-serving businesses.

Redevelop Muskegon County's former South Campus and re-establish its street grid, where possible.

Attracting new office tenants could fill the existing buildings, but reusing all of them may prove difficult. Through the years, Hartford Avenue, Diana Avenue, and Spring Street were vacated to create a campus, which served former uses well, but limited connectivity with the McLaughlin neighborhood. Future uses or redevelopment of the site may find value in reestablishing public rights-of-way and various lost street connections.

Redevelop vacant residential lots throughout the neighborhood.

Many vacant, City-owned lots in the neighborhood historically contained houses, with many of them being missing middle housing types. The lost tax base once provided by these houses strains the City's ability to provide essential services to its residents. The current vacant lots can also be a financial burden to maintain, with neglected properties creating blight throughout the neighborhood.

Establish a bike path connection to downtown on the former railroad right-of-way along Ambrosia.

Acquire the former railroad right-of-way along Ambrosia Street and construct a non-motorized trail connecting the neighborhood to the Lakeshore Trail and downtown waterfront, the Laketon Trail, and the regional, Musketawa Trail.

Correct the zoning designations throughout the residential sections of the neighborhood to reflect the type of housing that exists.

The neighborhood contains 120 examples of missing middle housing types that are primarily located in areas zoned for single-family housing, making them all non-conforming. Non-conforming uses are restricted when it comes to financing options for needed property maintenance. Restrictive zoning designations also limit new missing middle housing types on vacant lots.

What is a Master Plan?

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

- Serves as the basis for the City's various zoning districts
- Addresses land use & infrastructure issues; may project 20+ years into the future
- Working tool for planning-related recommendations and decisions by the Planning Commission
- Reviewed at least every 5 years, often incorporating standalone plans. Recent plans adopted as updates include:
 - 1999 Waterfront Redevelopment Plan
 - 2003 Imagine Muskegon Plan
 - 2008 Downtown & Lakeshore Redevelopment Plan
 - 2015 Downtown Parking Strategy
 - 2017 Imagine Muskegon Lake Plan
- The Master Plan defines the vision for the future, but is not a binding contract
- Changes to land use policy (e.g. zoning) determine the outcome
- The development patterns of the city are reflective of the land use policies in place (these have changed over time)
- Future changes will guide direction of future development.

Master Plan → City Policy → Development

Citywide Goals for Housing & Neighborhoods

Create a policy framework to provide housing choice within all neighborhoods.

Infill vacant residential lots with new housing options.

Create walkable neighborhood centers within a short distance of all residents.

New development that provides public amenities to all residents.

Encourage participation in neighborhood associations to create strong neighborhoods with invested residents empowered to address their common needs.

Reduce blight, dumping, and other negative external effects on neighborhoods.

Create linkages to parks and waterfront.

Strive to protect existing neighborhood residents from displacement as well as the cultural practices of diverse groups within the same space.