

Nims Neighborhood Master Plan Projects

Increase public access points to the Lakeshore Trail.

Public access points to the Lakeshore Trail from the neighborhood are limited and somewhat difficult to find where they do exist. Increasing the frequency of formal access points to and from the Nims' residential areas will bring many residents within reach of open space and the waterfront.

Reutilize the numerous vacant commercial buildings scattered throughout the residential sections of the neighborhood.

Reuse of such buildings has proven to be difficult as current zoning regulations restrict business uses to those that are least likely to be a nuisance to neighbors. Some restaurant and retail operations have seen success, but as non-conforming uses, building expansions are limited. Allowing the conversion to missing middle housing types may also aid in redevelopment of some vacant, blighted properties.

Calm traffic near the Lakeshore/Palmer intersection.

The 2019 Lakeshore Drive reconstruction project made many needed improvements to pedestrian access across Laketon Avenue, but those improvements did not extend east to Palmer Avenue. Calming traffic on Laketon near Palmer would better connect the neighborhood to the north with the businesses to the south.

Create more useful public space by connecting unnecessary traffic islands to their adjacent blocks.

The neighborhood's unique street grid contains a handful of small, triangular traffic islands within the public right-of-way. These islands are bound by streets on three sides, though not all three are always necessary. With park space largely concentrated along the perimeter of the neighborhood, near downtown, and along the waterfront, these traffic islands could instead be linked to blocks to serve as parks or playgrounds closer to residents.

Preserve and enhance the neighborhood's unique physical features including historic buildings, and views created by the street grid.

Unique angled streets create highly-visible sites for significant civic buildings. The neighborhood does not presently contain any designated historic districts or sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but a State of Michigan Historic Marker acknowledges the area known as Pinchtown. Nims contains some architecturally significant houses as well as some potentially historically significant sites that should be recognized.

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.