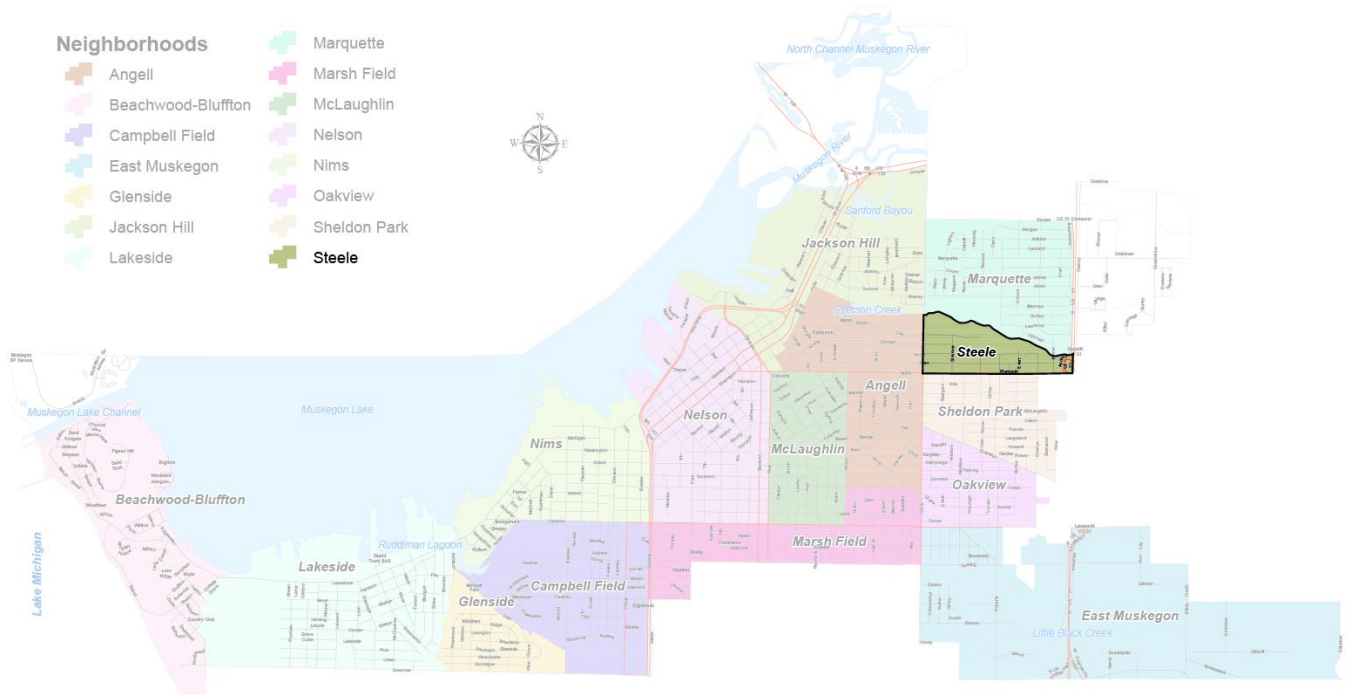


# Steele

City of Muskegon  
Neighborhood Association Map

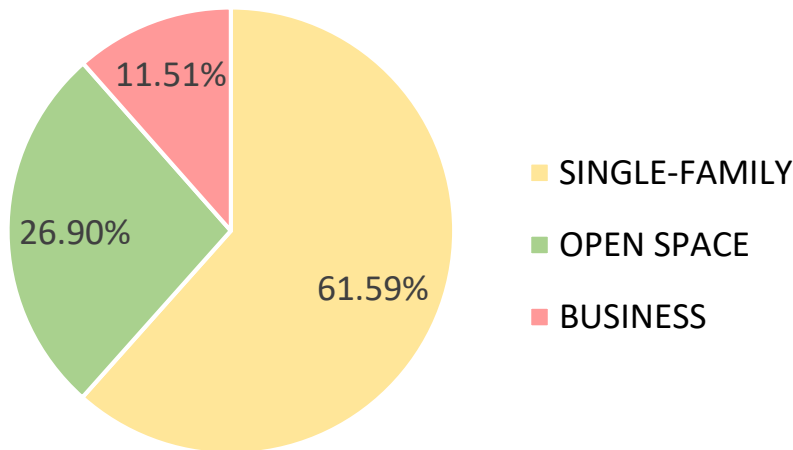


## Neighborhood Description

The Steele Neighborhood offers a well-maintained inventory of low-density housing bound by Ryerson Creek and its wetlands to the north, and Apple Avenue to the south, spanning west of Getty to the City limits. The neighborhood is currently home to the city's middle school, but the building will be vacated and the middle school relocated to a more central location in the McLaughlin neighborhood.

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## Zoned Land Use



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

The majority of the land in Steele is zoned for single-family detached housing on medium to large lots. A sizeable portion of land zoned for open space is concentrated along Ryerson Creek and the surrounding wetlands. Just over 10% of the neighborhood is zoned to allow for business uses, with all of those parcels being located along Apple Avenue and Getty Street.

## Housing Choice

This neighborhood consists almost entirely of single-family detached houses. Only two duplexes and one small multiplex exist as non-conforming uses. There are very few vacant residential lots, though there are a handful of very large residential lots containing unused space, created through a series of lot combinations.

The blocks between Roberts and Creston still contain alleys and should be considered for missing middle housing development. Lots without alleys may still be suitable for duplexes, but not if they are accessed from Apple Avenue, which could cause traffic concerns. Home ownership rates are high in the Steele neighborhood. The neighborhood contains no apartment complexes, and most rental housing options are limited mainly to single-family detached houses.

## Commercial Inventory

Residents of the neighborhood have a couple of options for walkable commercial destinations, although the areas tend to be automobile-oriented with few pedestrian amenities. Most businesses are positioned along major streets at the perimeter of the neighborhood with no commercial buildings in the interior of the neighborhood.

Apple Avenue Corridor – Apple, west of US-31, contains conventional retailers commonly associated with highway exits.

Getty Street Corridor – The northern end of Getty provides Steele residents with varied commercial options, including a convenience store/pharmacy.

## Industrial Inventory

None

## **Parks/Recreational Opportunities**

Steele neighborhood parks, community gardens, public/private parks and open spaces, etc.:

- Ryerson Creek (paved walk and nature paths)
- School track and field
- Sheldon Park (in nearby Sheldon Park neighborhood)
- Smith-Ryerson Park (in nearby Jackson Hill and Angell neighborhoods)

## **Community Nodes**

Creston Street and Allen Avenue Intersection – A faith-based institution provides indoor meeting space and outdoor gathering space, located behind the Apple Avenue commercial corridor.

Former Middle School Site – This facility offers indoor meeting space, outdoor gathering space, and an athletic field. While the facility’s future remains uncertain, redevelopment efforts should include amenities that are welcoming to existing neighbors. A paved path along the side of the school provides access to the Marquette neighborhood and a trail along Ryerson Creek.

## **Transportation**

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

- Apple Avenue
- Getty Street
- Creston Street
- Home Street

Possible road diets could occur on Apple and Getty.

Active transportation options include a nearly complete sidewalk network throughout the Steele neighborhood. A rustic trail is located along the northern edge of Ryerson Creek, though barriers limit its connection to Smith-Ryerson Park.

Public transportation serving the neighborhood includes MATS Routes 2, 12, and Go2 Service. Steele is well connected to the citywide street network via Apple Avenue and Getty Street. A well-connected network of streets exists within the neighborhood, and access to US-31 is very convenient as the highway constitutes the neighborhood’s east border with entry and exit ramps at Apple Avenue.

## **Blight/Beautification**

808 Oak Avenue – former greenhouse property with several vacant, dilapidated buildings.

## **Historic Preservation**

The Steele neighborhood does not presently contain any designated historic districts, sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or sites listed in the State Historic Register. Due to the later dates of construction for the majority of buildings in the neighborhood, it is unlikely that many buildings can be deemed historically significant at this time, though some could be architecturally significant.

## **Significant Redevelopment Properties**

1150 Amity Avenue – The middle school will soon be vacated and relocating to the McLaughlin neighborhood, leaving behind a large vacant building with tentative demolition plans on a 13.2-acre site overlooking the creek.

808 Oak Avenue – A significant portion of the northern part of the 9.1-acre site is considered undevelopable because of its location in a floodplain. Existing buildings are in disrepair and likely need to be removed. The property’s single-family residential zoning designation limits development options.

### **Future Land Use**

See future land use map in Appendix

## Project 1: Redevelop the former middle school in a way that is beneficial to the neighborhood.

Upon the school's closing, redevelopment efforts should begin as soon as possible before the building falls into disrepair or shortly after its demolition if that is the district's plan. Residential and office uses are most common when redeveloping a former school building, but those uses are not allowed by the current zoning designation. Neighbors also utilize the open space/fields during off-hours, but those amenities are threatened with the school's closing.



*The school site offers a considerable amount of land for redevelopment with and without the existing buildings. Whichever route is decided upon should be influenced by input from the community.*

### Action Steps

- Work with the school district to host community input sessions on the redevelopment of the former school property. Discuss desired and acceptable uses and those that should be restricted.
- Redevelopment efforts and potential changes to land use regulations are focused on the input collected.

## Project 2: Improve public access along Ryerson Creek.

Nearly the entirety of the creek and surrounding wetlands are publicly-owned, but access is limited from cross streets like Getty and Home and with few connections to established City parks and. Potential trail improvements along the creek offer an opportunity for hiking and a connection between the neighborhood and Muskegon Lake.



*The trail along Ryerson Creek offers an opportunity for hiking almost all the way to Smith-Ryerson Park, but is limited by rough terrain and one privately-owned parcel (outlined in red), east of Getty Street.*

### Action Steps

- Acquire or establish an easement on the northern portion of the last remaining privately-owned lot to allow for a continuous trail.

### Project 3: Redevelop vacant residential lots that historically contained houses.

Although there are minimal vacant residential lots in the neighborhood, there are several properties that have acquired other buildable lots for additional yard space. These properties typically contained houses that paid for the infrastructure (streets, sewers, etc.) and services that they use. It should be encouraged that such large conglomerations of parcels be returned to their original sizes.



*The eight highlighted parcels each have over 100 feet of street frontage, with one having over 225 feet of frontage on two streets.*

#### Action Steps

- While not much can be done immediately to redevelop privately-owned lots, opportunities may arise from sales or foreclosures where the City may be able to acquire property for redevelopment.



**Project 4: Clean up 808 Oak Avenue and redevelop with residential uses.**

The 9.1-acre property at 808 Oak Avenue formerly contained a greenhouse but is now vacant and underutilized. Its zoning designation and partial location in a floodplain limits redevelopment options. With 220 feet of frontage, this property, along with other lots on the north side of Oak, could offer a unique opportunity for a variety of housing options, such as a cottage court development or multi-family.

**Action Steps**

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