

# WATCH MUSKEGON

## Image Improvement Plan Summary

The goal is to improve the overall image of the Muskegon area and to understand the positive changes that have already taken place. Positive community pride and positive word-of-mouth advertising attracts new residents, tourists, business and capital investment to the community. The image improvement plan suggests community collaboration and strategic goal setting in order to improve people's perception of Muskegon County, both internally and externally.

The multifaceted image campaign focuses on economic development, beautification, education, customer service and marketing efforts. **Watch US GO!**

### RESEARCH

#### PERCEPTION RESEARCH

**Status: Complete** (Separate Document Available)

A perception research study was conducted. The results outline what perception local residents and others have about the Muskegon Lakeshore community and its waterways. It also provides demographics of the participants.

#### FOCUS GROUPS

**Status: Complete**

Research was followed by nine interactive community dialogues held throughout Muskegon County. The goal was to hear from local residents and to educate the community on the importance and value of producing a positive, long-lasting, viable image for the Muskegon Lakeshore.

### BEAUTIFICATION

#### CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION PLAN

**Status: In Process**

Beautification positively correlates with economic development, pride, lower crime rates, and increased quality of life. A plan is being formulated targeting Muskegon's key arteries into the area.

#### TARGETED BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS - IN ACTION

**Status: In Process**

Beautification programs at key community entry points, parks and scenic vistas will improve overall community image. *In Action* is the adopt-a-block campaign currently being implemented that will be easily adaptable for any community in Muskegon County.

#### WAYFINDING SYSTEM

**Status: Needs Champion**

A wayfinding system is a signage program directing people to community art, cultural and entertainment venues. It is a high-impact, visual product built on consistent design and color.

### EDUCATION

#### COMMUNITY TRAINING - MUSKEGON STAR!

**Status: In Process** (500+ STARS! trained since October 19, 2015)

Modeled after a national tourism program, this training certifies individuals in community promotion and customer service. Muskegon STAR! works in partnership with the Chamber, CVB, West Michigan Works! and education institutions.

#### REALTORS PROMOTING MUSKEGON

**Status: Group Established and Working**

This existing program trains local realtors. RPM markets the community and are educated on the assets and amenities that are specific to people looking to relocate to the area.

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING - MUSKEGON IN FOCUS

**Status: Ongoing**

MIF is a ten-week program designed to train community leaders on area assets and issues. Participants walk away with lifelong appreciation of the area, along with the tools to promote and re-invest in the community.

#### FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS FOR DEVELOPERS, MEDIA & ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Status: In Process**

Customized bus and walking tours educate key stakeholders on community assets and opportunities. Tours typically take two to four hours with discussion and follow-up.

### MARKETING

#### DESTINATION EVENTS

**Status: Ongoing**

Quality events attract thousands of people that improve community image and provide economic impact. (e.g. Michigan Irish Music Festival, Unity Christian Music Festival, Bike Time, Lakeshore Art Festival, etc.)

#### BRANDING MESSAGE

**Status: Established and Being Used - watch mUSkeGOn**

Watch Muskegon was designed to attract visitors, residents and businesses as well as develop a sense of pride for residents. Assets are available for use on [www.watchmuskegon.com](http://www.watchmuskegon.com).

#### SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

**Status: In Process**

The Watch Muskegon brand message is being promoted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Social media ambassadors are needed to assist in this powerful promotional platform.

#### ADVERTISING/MARKETING PLAN

**Status: In Process** (Three-Year Campaign Began May 22, 2015)

A comprehensive regional marketing plan is being implemented to include recommended budget, calendar of publication, media outlets defined, and targeted ads/messages. The plan is being underwritten by numerous community organizations and businesses.

#### PARTNER STAKEHOLDER OPPORTUNITIES

**Status: Ongoing**

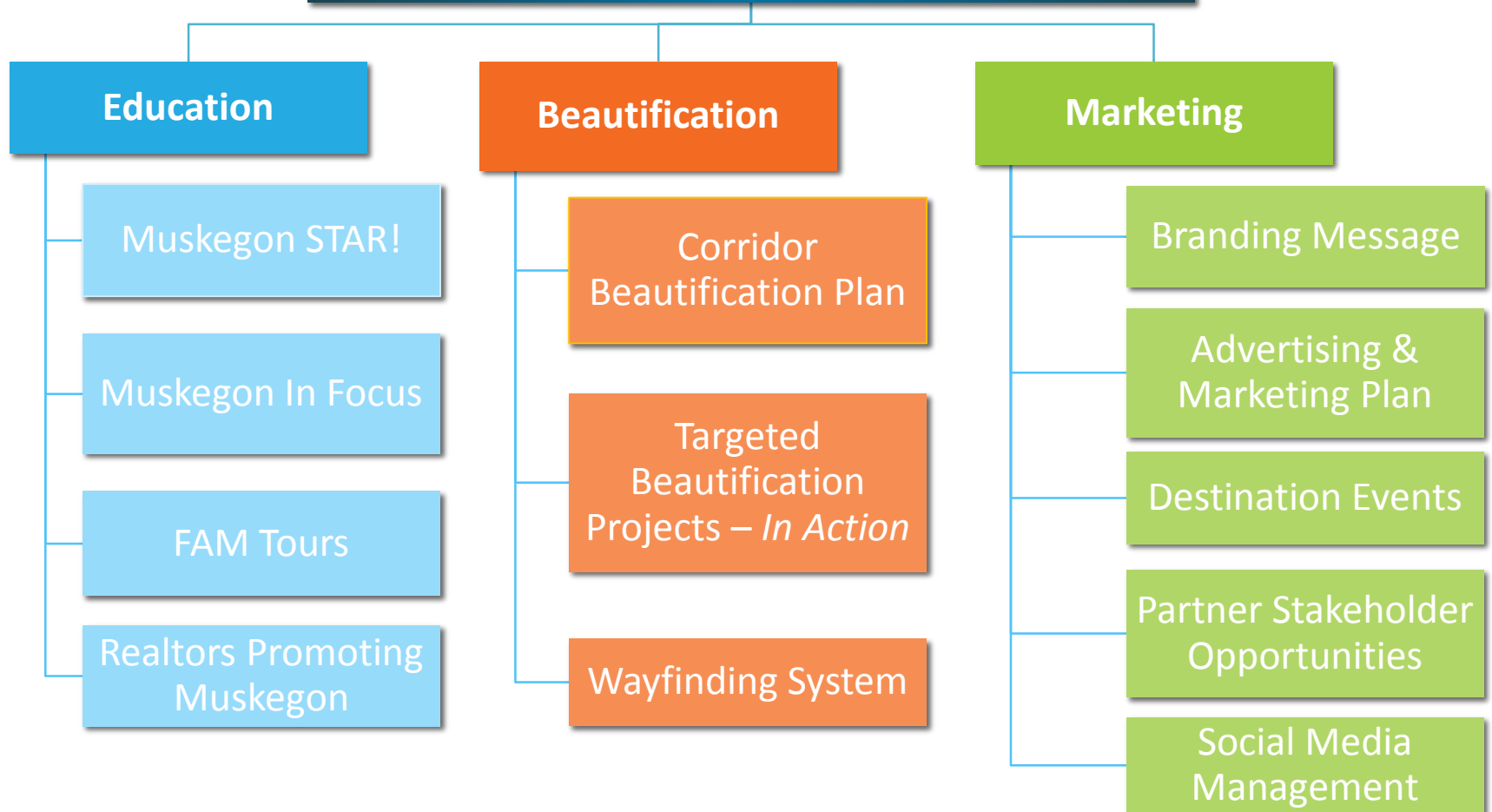
Finding partners and stakeholders to use the tools and help spread the message is an important part of a comprehensive image campaign. A complete list of stakeholders can be found on [www.watchmuskegon.com](http://www.watchmuskegon.com).

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Input is encouraged to the plan and the various programs outlined. Items continue to be updated/amended as projects groups, companies or individuals step forward to get involved. **For more: [www.watchmuskegon.com](http://www.watchmuskegon.com)**

# WATCH MUSKEGON

## Community Image Campaign



# WATCH MUSKEGON

**The timing is now!** Momentum is building in Muskegon County. The community is changing and has more to offer than ever before. Below are just some of the recent developments that have occurred, setting the stage for Muskegon to better tell its story.

This is just the beginning of what's to come... **Watch US GO!**

- **\$1 BILLION in planned or in progress developments** including some of the largest developments in Muskegon's history (i.e. Mercy Health Muskegon, Windward Pointe Waterfront Development and others)
- More than **1,500 jobs** available for skilled workers
- Launch of **Muskegon Promise**, providing two years of **free college** to eligible students in Muskegon County
- **1.5 million annual visitors** to Muskegon County
- **\$230 million in capital investments** occurred within Muskegon County in 2014 alone! Mostly in the manufacturing sector
- **13 museums** including the new Michigan's Heritage Park
- Second **largest outdoor farmers market** in Michigan
- **180,000 high-speed ferry passengers** on the Lake Express annually
- Home to the **largest cluster of aerospace manufacturing** in the U.S.
- **14 miles of lakefront bike trails** and more than 60 miles of trail in total
- **16 new buildings** constructed and **27 building renovations** in Downtown Muskegon over the past 10 years
- 7 growing **destination festivals**
- Award-winning and **world-class Culinary Institute of Michigan**
- **Cleaner waterways with expansive beaches** (27 miles of Lake MI Beach!)
- Home to **1 of 4 luge tracks** in the United States
- More than **30 locally-owned outdoor dining** options, **8 right on the water**, 4 with boater access!

Keep an eye on what's happening in Muskegon. Follow Watch Muskegon on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates on community developments. **For more information on the campaign visit: [www.watchmuskegon.com](http://www.watchmuskegon.com)**