

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 (First training held 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.

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.

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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**