

Equal Standing

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Architecture
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Benjamin Thomas Dance
August 2014

Copyright © 2014 by Benjamin Thomas Dance
All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements go out to Katherine Ambroziak. The help and advice that she has provided me over the past two years has been absolutely invaluable. Thank you to Avigail Sachs and Mark Schimmenti as well, who have been very supportive throughout the entire thesis process.

ABSTRACT

My goal in this thesis is to challenge the social issues that can arise from current downtown redevelopment plans throughout the United States. This proposal seeks to break down physical, spatial, and social barriers that can result from commercial development by creating a design intervention that is economically beneficial for the city while remaining inclusive to the community as a whole. This particular thesis will focus on the current downtown development in Muskegon, Michigan.

The challenge is to create a design and program that is as central to the community as industry once was. This will come in the form of specific design decisions and programmatic insertions that bring everyone back together. These initial moves will serve as catalysts to creating a series of all inclusive spaces that reinvigorate the downtown area of Muskegon, Michigan. The goal is to accomplish this through careful placement of performance, athletic, and trade training facilities, all tied together by a greenway and community market. These pieces of program can be great equalizers, and can create a healthy and vibrant downtown community along the waterfront of Muskegon Lake.

The project focuses on three different scales. The neighborhood scale focuses on addressing the spatial barriers that surround the downtown area and separate it from the adjacent neighborhoods. The downtown scale focuses on the overall campus plan for each of the programmatic elements of the design as well as removing the current barriers that stand between the downtown area and the waterfront. The final scale focuses on the immediate context surrounding the market and theater interventions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

_1.0 Introduction	1
_2.0 The Question	3
_3.0 Gentrification	5
_4.0 Site and Proposal	11
_5.0 Design Concepts	13
_6.0 Site Investigation	16
_7.0 The Proposal	18
_8.0 Precedents	20
_9.0 Program	23
_10.0 Design Execution	25
_11.0 Conclusion	36
List of References	37
Appendix	40
Vita	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1 Downtown Muskegon With Proposal_Author	1
Fig 2 Downtown Muskegon Current Aerial_Author	1
Fig 3 Muskegon Regional Relationships_Author	1
Fig 4 Diagram of Current Conditions in Muskegon Neighborhoods Ignored by Downtown Development_Author	2
Fig 5 Diagram of Proposed Conditions in Muskegon Neighborhoods Included by Downtown Development_Author	2
Fig 6 Diagram of A Transect_Andres Duany	3
Fig 7 Current Downtown Aerial With Main Streets Labeled and Barriers Addressed_Author	4
Fig 8 Connection Between Downtown Muskegon and Muskegon Heights_Author	6
Fig 9 Gentrification Studies_Levy, Diane K.	8
Fig 10 Muskegon Timeline_Author	9
Fig 11 Relationship Between Income and Downtown Development_Author	10
Fig 12 Hypothetical Results of Proposed Downtown Development_Author	10
Fig 13 Downtown Muskegon, Michigan 1874_ http://www.worldmapsonline.com/historicalmaps/MI-Muskegon-1874.htm	11
Fig 14 Muskegon Lumber Mill_ http://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/history.htm	11
Fig 15 General Site Placement_Author	13
Fig 16 Downtown Muskegon Extension of Program and Removal of Shoreline Drive_Author	14
Fig 17 Bringing Waterfront into the Downtown Area_Author	14
Fig 18 Downtown Muskegon Current Relationship to Muskegon Heights_Author	15
Fig 19 Downtown Muskegon Proposed Relationship to Muskegon Heights_Author	15
Fig 20 View down Western Avenue_Author	16
Fig 21 Intersection of Western and 3rd_Author	16
Fig 22 Western Avenue Shops_Author	16
Fig 23 Alcoa Foundation Plaque_Author	16
Fig 24 View down Shoreline Drive_Author	17
Fig 25 Terrace Street leading to Shoreline Drive with Waterfront Beyond_Author	17
Fig 26 Waterfront Site_Author	17
Fig 27 View Down Pine Street_Author	17
Fig 28 Overall Neighborhood and Downtown Plan_Proposed Conditions_Author	18
Fig 29 Waterfront Design with Programmatic Layout_Author	19
Fig 30 Market_Theater_Field House Plan_Author	19
Fig 31 The High Line_Diller Scofidio	20
Fig 32 Pedestrian View_High Line_Diller Scofidio	20
Fig 33 La Albufera Aerial_Bing Maps	21
Fig 34 Canal Cut_La Albufera_ http://travelsineuropeandasia.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/la-albufera-nature-park-valencia-spain/	21
Fig 35 Canal Cut and Esplanade_La Albufera_ http://travelsineuropeandasia.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/la-albufera-nature-park-valencia-spain/	21
Fig 36 Brooklyn Bridge Park Aerial_Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates	22
Fig 37 Brooklyn Bridge Park Rendering_Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates	22
Fig 38 Brooklyn Bridge Park Rendering 2_Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates	22
Fig 39 Brooklyn Bridge Park Photo_Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates	22
Fig 40 Campus Program_Author	23
Fig 41 Athletic Complex and Greenway_Author	23
Fig 42 Theater_Author	24
Fig 43 Community Market_Author	24
Fig 44 Greenway_Author	24
Fig 45 Barriers Diagram_Author	25
Fig 46 Pine Street Plan_Author	26
Fig 47 Pine Street Aerial_Author	26
Fig 48 Pine Street Section_Author	27
Fig 49 Pine Street Section along Park Block_Author	27
Fig 50 Barriers Diagram Repeated_Author	28
Fig 51 Waterfront Intervention_Author	28

<i>Fig 52 Connection of Both Schemes_Author</i>	29
<i>Fig 53 Piers, Program, and Greenway Connection_Author</i>	29
<i>Fig 54 Overall Plan_Author</i>	30
<i>Fig 55 Theater Aerial_Author</i>	31
<i>Fig 56 Theater as a Gateway to Beyond_Author</i>	31
<i>Fig 57 View towards Field House_Author</i>	32
<i>Fig 58 Ground Floor Plans_Author</i>	32
<i>Fig 59 Winter Views_Author</i>	33
<i>Fig 60 View From Pedestrian Bridge_Author</i>	33
<i>Fig 61 View From Markets_Author</i>	34
<i>Fig 62 Theater Main Floor Plan_Author</i>	34
<i>Fig 63 Primary Theater Viewing_Author</i>	35
<i>Fig 64 Secondary Theater Viewing_Author</i>	35
<i>Fig 65 Transverse Section 1_Author</i>	35
<i>Fig 66 Transverse Section 2_Author</i>	35
<i>Fig 67 Longitudinal Section_Author</i>	35
<i>Fig 68 View From Water_Author</i>	36
<i>Fig 69 Equal Standing_Author</i>	36

1.0 | INTRODUCTION

1

Reinvigorating Downtown Muskegon Muskegon, Michigan

This thesis offers an alternative to the current practice of many downtown redevelopment projects that focus on commercial development and high end living to allow growth to occur and vibrancy to return to currently neglected downtown areas. Typically, urban renewal strategies seek to revitalize the business districts of a downtown area, and then supplement this revitalization with a renovation or destruction of surrounding areas that have fallen into disrepair. One of the main social issues that can arise from urban renewal strategies that focus on this type of development is the feeling that an area is being “gentrified” and meant solely for the upper class. This proposal focuses on the current downtown redevelopment in Muskegon, Michigan, and is centered around a series of alternative design strategies that will reinvigorate the city’s downtown area.

GENTRIFICATION: the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

The Problem: Located on Lake Michigan, directly across from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the city of Muskegon is heavily invested in moving many of its businesses and residents back into the downtown area. Much of this movement falls in line with the practice of gentrification, however, as many of the moves to revitalize the area utilize upper-class stores, restaurants, and residences (Muskegon Chronicle). This ignores the adjacent neighborhoods of Muskegon Heights to the Southeast, a large working class neighborhood which has been strongly linked to the downtown area for over a century. The city instead reaches out to the wealth of the Norton Shores community to the Southwest. While this will help fuel the economic health of the downtown area, it is exclusive in nature rather than inclusive. This thesis proposal seeks to offer an alternative to the current path of revitalization and the effect that gentrification could have on the adjacent communities with regards to the possibility of rising property values and the lack of anything that appeals to the residents of the Muskegon Heights area. This will be done through educational and public design interventions as well as a new urban plan for the surrounding area. These interventions will focus on the placement of performance, athletic, and trade training facilities, which I believe to be great equalizers, in the downtown center that manage to be completely open to the community as a whole, while remaining economically viable enough to warrant a place in the downtown area. Inclusivity is the focus rather than exclusivity. These proposed programmatic insertions have been coupled with an analysis of current conditions that read as barriers, spatially and socially, to the adjacent Muskegon Heights community. This proposal seeks to link these neighborhoods to the downtown area through a series of streetscape modifications that focus on walkability and accessibility. All of this is then brought together with a modification of the waterfront, that creates a series of piers tied together by an expansive greenway that acts as a spine for the whole design runs parallel to the entire downtown center. Ultimately, the project is socially driven, with a series of programmatic interventions that supplement the overall design goals.



*Fig 1 | Downtown Muskegon | With Proposal
Author*

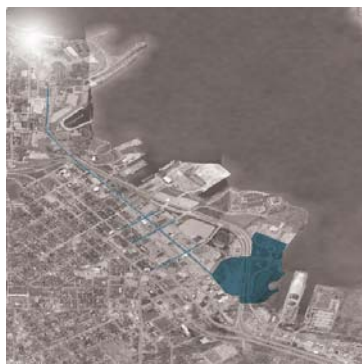


*Fig 2 | Downtown Muskegon | Current Aerial
Author*



*Fig 3 | Muskegon Regional Relationships
Author*

The diagrams on the following page show the current neglect, with Muskegon Heights in dark gray, and the possible benefits of the new design interventions that I am proposing for the downtown area. Of note is the piece to the East that is the current location of Muskegon Community College.

*Reinvigorating Downtown Muskegon
Muskegon, Michigan*

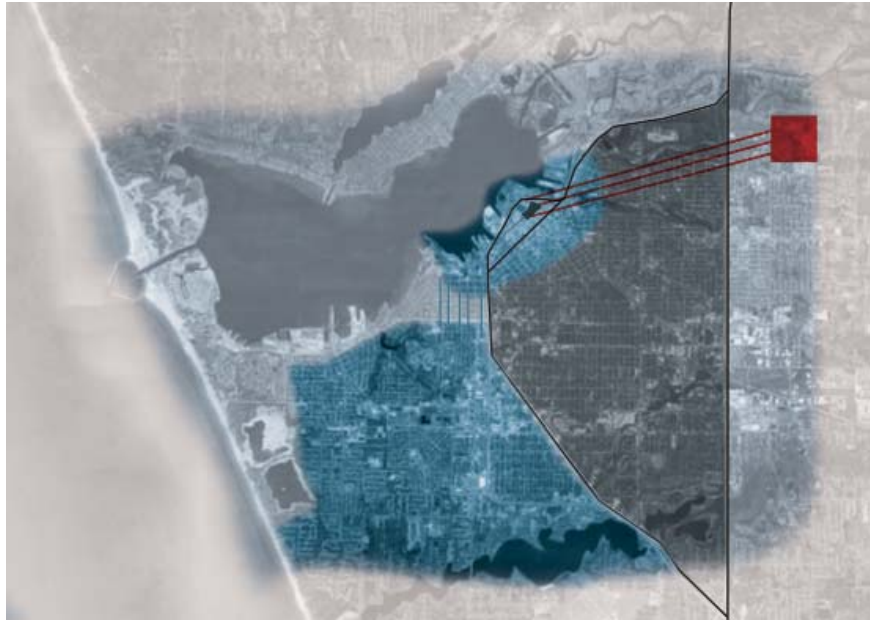


*Fig 4 | Diagram of Current Conditions in Muskegon | Neighborhoods Ignored by Downtown Development
Author*

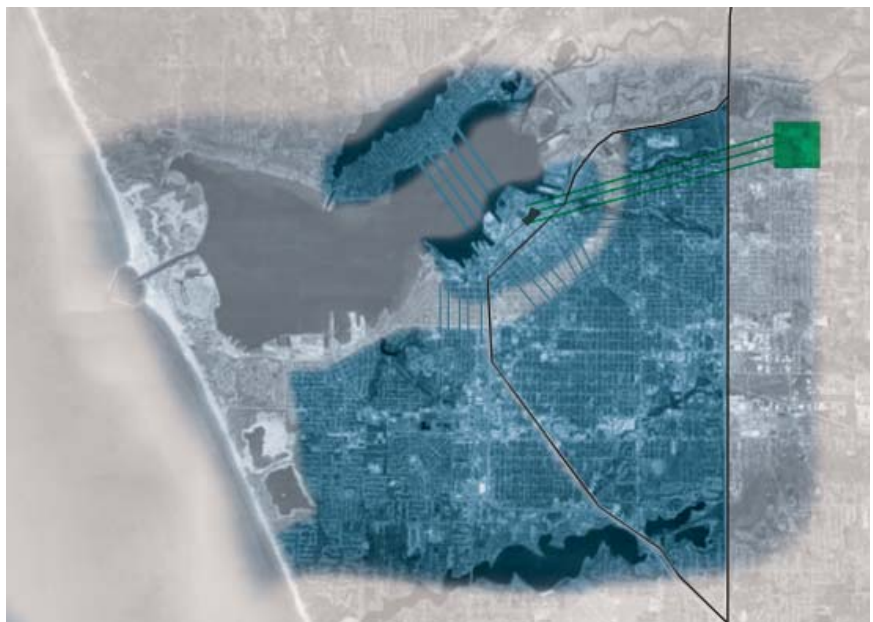


*Fig 5 | Diagram of Proposed Conditions in Muskegon | Neighborhoods Included by Downtown Development
Author*

2.0 | THE QUESTION

3

The Questions: A myriad of questions arise with this topic. The first is “why a return to downtown?” Andres Duany and his Lexicon of the New Urbanism, an examination of the idealized city, supports the notion that the center of a city should be the densest area. Thus much of the focus should be on or around downtown. In the case of Muskegon, where the downtown was once the lifeblood of the entire city, utilizing this strategy is incredibly important. Duany’s use of the “transect,” a “rural-to-urban” diagram where the densest part of a city is at its urban core, contrasts with the current situation in Muskegon. The following diagram demonstrates the transect, and the general organization and plan that an idealized city should take on. The proposal will generally fall under the T-4 General Urban and T-5 Urban Center Zones.



Fig 6 | Diagram of A Transect
Andres Duany

The “Charter of the New Urbanism” states that “growth should occur in more compact forms, that existing towns and cities should be revitalized, that affordable housing should be fairly distributed throughout the region, that transit should be more widespread, and that local taxes should be equitably shared.” (2001, 1). This notion of a fair distribution of affordable housing is fundamental to the proposed design intervention, and is one of the strategies employed when attempting to counter or ease the possible blow of gentrification on the Muskegon Heights Community. Allan B. Jacobs and Donald Appleyard wrote “Toward an Urban Design Manifesto”, which showed up in the Journal of the American Planning Association in 1987. They touch on the concept of “Centrifugal Fragmentation,” which most certainly applies to Muskegon, as it has “spread out and separated to form extensive monocultures and specialized destinations reachable often only by long journeys - a fragile and extravagant urban system dependent on cheap, available gasoline, and an effective contributor of social groups from each other.” (Jacobs, Appleyard 102). This is extraordinarily applicable to the current suburban big box stores and the fragmentation of the various neighborhoods of the greater Muskegon area, and is most certainly a problem contributing to the social and financial isolation of the working class.

The next question is “what does the city of Muskegon itself think about a return to downtown?” There is already a huge push, publicly and bureaucratically, to return the focus of the city to downtown. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County (cffmc.org) opens their statement on the subject with, “a city’s downtown is a source of pride. A thriving city center can be the beating heart driving the community. Downtowns across America are coming back to life at an amazing rate and Muskegon is no different. People want live-work-play environments with the culture and convenience that can’t be found in traditional suburbs” (CFFMC). The website mlive.com, which encompasses news across all of Michigan, features articles from the Muskegon Chronicle, many of which deal with the downtown

revitalization efforts. These articles have shown various plans for downtown, businesses returning or starting up in downtown, and efforts from the local community college to have a large presence downtown. The amount of money put into these projects (for example the 24+ million dollars for Muskegon Community College) demonstrate the concerted effort of the city to revitalize their downtown areas. What makes this even better however, is that each of these articles has a comments section attached to it, with numerous comments coming from citizens. A majority of the reactions to the city spending money on the downtown area are positive. However, there are also some negative reactions, as some worry that these developments will only address the wealthy upper class and become exclusive in nature. As such it is very interesting to see both sides of the argument, and how the citizens of the city feel about many of these decisions.



Fig 7 | Current Downtown Aerial With Main Streets Labeled and Barriers Addressed
Author

The final question is “are issues with gentrification present in other cities?” The answer is yes. There is an incredible amount of literature dedicated to the concept. I will open with a history on the subject of gentrification, and then delve into the concepts that I believe support my own beliefs on the subject.

3.0 | GENTRIFICATION

5

For the purpose of this thesis, I will examine the concept of gentrification as it has evolved over the past 50 years, and the writers who seem to be most prominent when it comes to discussing the subject, as well as several recent case studies that pertain to my own investigations.

I would like to open this introduction to gentrification with a quote from University of Chicago policy analyst John Betancur, who states that, “there is an aspect of gentrification that mainstream definitions ignore. Descriptions of gentrification as a market process allocating land to its best and most profitable use, or a process of replacing a lower for a higher income group, do not address the highly destructive processes of class, race, ethnicity, and alienation involved in gentrification. The right to community is a function of a groups economic and political power” (2002, 807). This is the crux of my own argument, as I want to solidify the current community base around the downtown area. Essentially, when a more dominant economic group enters a neighborhood, rather than benefiting the community, it has really taken away their own sense of community, and transferred it now to the wealthier residents.

The British sociologist, Ruth Glass, coined the term gentrification in 1964. Glass, who was, “a Marxist, a refugee from Nazi Germany” (Lees 4), stated that, “one by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences... Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed” (Glass 1964: xviii-xix). This demonstrates that the notion of gentrification has been present, and viewed as an issue in urban design and city planning, for almost 50 years.

There are several different categories of gentrification. “Classical Gentrification” is one of the types that applies the explorations of Muskegon found in this proposal. It is, “the type or wave of gentrification that Ruth Glass based her coinage of the term. Here, disinvested inner-city neighborhoods are upgraded by pioneer gentrifiers and the indigenous residents are displaced. Working-class housing becomes middle-class housing.” (Lees 10). The other type of gentrification is “New Build Gentrification”, which also applies to my current investigations, as there are also many examples of new construction in the downtown area of Muskegon that are almost exclusively for the upper-class. Researcher Loretta Lees established this notion, arguing in “New Build ‘Gentrification’” that it “causes displacement, albeit indirect and/or sociocultural. In-movers are the urbane new middle classes. A gentrified landscape/aesthetic is produced. Capital is reinvested in disinvested urban areas” (Lees 1169-1170).

Before describing some of the negative affects that gentrification can have on a preexisting community, I must step back for a second, and acknowledge that gentrification certainly has its advantages, as it can prove extraordinarily beneficial to a blighted area both economically, and sometimes socially. J.P. Byrne, who is a professor of Law at Georgetown University is most certainly pro-gentrification, and his article “Two Cheers for Gentrification” reaffirms this notion. He argues here that, “increases in the number of affluent and well-educated residents is plainly good for cities, on balance, by increasing the number of residents who can pay taxes, purchase local goods and services, and support the city in state and federal political processes” (2003, 405-406). He believes that this is good for the poor and minorities as well. However, throughout his writing, he fails to acknowledge displacement and other issues associated with the total gentrification of an area. He even acknowledges

his own, somewhat biased, “rosy view of gentrification.” There are others who share in this belief as well. In her analysis and collection of articles entitled “Gentrification” Loretta Lees quotes architect Ken Pring, who believes that “the present trend towards a rising proportion of the middle classes in the population will continue. This will help create a better social balance in the structure of the community, and the professional expertise of the articulate few will ultimately benefit the underprivileged population” (2008, 208). There is certainly a valid notion that the wealthier can benefit the poor with their presence in an area as it brings more immediate services to an area. Again, however, it fails to address the fact that many of these residents that could benefit from the presence of more affluent or wealthier neighbors are many times displaced due to rising property values. This also tends to work against minority populations. Displacement is a problem that has plagued many areas throughout the country. Harlem is an important example of how gentrification has not only created economic divisions within a community, but racial tensions as well. For example, in 5 years from 2000 to 2005, 32,500 African American residents left their homes in Harlem, and 22,800 White residents moved in. “Many argue that this displacement of blacks from the neighborhood is a result of increased housing costs.” (<http://www.humanityinaction.org>) Even in small interventions, it seems that gentrification can have fairly dire consequences on an area. When examining New York’s efforts to rezone 125th Street, literally one street, “studies indicate that as many as 71 African American owned businesses and their 975 workers might be displaced by these plans” (<http://www.humanityinaction.org>) Again, a loss of jobs, means an inability to pay already rising rent costs, and as such, these residents would most likely be displaced by this move. This is something that can happen in any city at anytime, and Muskegon is not exception.

The following diagram demonstrates the close link between the downtown area and the Muskegon Heights community. Currently, the average income of the households in this area is between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year (city-data.org). Unfortunately the downtown area, in order to replenish itself, is currently reaching out to the wealthier areas, and as a result, much of the program in the downtown redevelopment is geared towards higher end communities. While gentrification is a reality, and economically beneficial to a city, the proposal that this thesis puts in place will create an economically beneficial alternative design scheme that is inclusive to all rather than only a few. This will give many of the current residents in the surrounding area a reason to stay in their neighborhoods, rather than eventually being pushed out and displaced by the current influx of wealth.



Fig 8 | Connection Between Downtown Muskegon and Muskegon Heights_Author

There are others who feel even more strongly about the negatives of gentrification. Neil Smith, professor of anthropology at the City University of New York, describes gentrification as a “revanchist” issue. “Revanchist Gentrification” is the notion that gentrification is basically a form of revenge enacted by the middle and upper class against those in the lower class who they believe have taken their neighborhoods. While these views may be a bit extreme, these revanchist concepts certainly acknowledge much of the anger felt by those displaced by gentrification.

To close on the subject of gentrification, I will reference a series of case studies done to mitigate the effects of gentrification. These come from a 2006 study titled “IN THE FACE OF GENTRIFICATION: Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement” by Diane K. Levy, Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. This study focuses on 6 communities. They are:

1. St. Petersburg, Florida - Bartlett Park
2. Sacramento, California - Oak Park
3. Atlanta, Georgia - Reynoldstown
4. Los Angeles, California - Figueroa Corridor
5. Seattle, Washington - Central Area
6. Chicago, Illinois - Uptown

The downtown area of Muskegon is in the early stages of revitalization, so I will focus most directly on the first 2 case studies, St. Petersburg, Florida, and Sacramento California. The following table demonstrates the general strategies involved in making sure that residents can remain in their current neighborhoods, and are not displaced by the effects of revitalization. (Levy)

Site	Stage: revitalization/ gentrification	Key strategies	Additional strategies	Neighborhood organization
Bartlett Park St. Petersburg, FL	Early	Housing rehabilitation Infill development	Zoning changes Economic development	Active organizations
Oak Park Sacramento, CA	Early	Vacant property redevelopment	Housing Trust Fund Homebuyer programs	Active organizations
Reynoldstown Atlanta, GA	Middle (early)	Housing rehabilitation Affordable housing production	IDA Program Community building	Active organizations
Figueroa Corridor Los Angeles, CA	Middle (late)	Housing Trust Fund	Code enforcement Rent stabilization Land trust	Active organizations Active residents
Central Area Seattle, WA	Late (early)	Infill development Housing levy	Home repair Regulation reviews Employment	Active organization Moderate resident involvement
Uptown Chicago, IL	Late	Voluntary inclusionary zoning	Nonprofit retention strategies Tax assistance	Active organizations Active residents

Fig 9 | Gentrification Studies

Essentially, in order to maintain a strong presence in communities that are to be possibly affected by gentrification, a number of similar steps are taken. Rehabilitating the houses of the current owners allows their property to grow with the possibly increasing property values. Repairs are done to houses and streetscape beautification begins to benefit the area. This is typically organized by community leaders, local churches, or developers, but often it is beneficial to have the city government get involved and support this as well while continuing to revitalize the area. Another strategy, infill development, falls in line with the concepts of Smart Growth as it takes vacant lots and buildings and ensures that these become affordable housing or properties. In Sacramento, this has come in the form of the Vacant Lot Development Program (VLDP). VLDP ensures that while property values increase, affordable housing maintains a strong foothold in the community. All of these moves have successfully mitigated much of the displacement problems that may have otherwise occurred in Bartlett Park, and Oak Park residences.

I feel that these strategies can be applied to the current development in Muskegon as well. Putting forth programs that repair and revitalize existing neighborhoods will certainly benefit the current neighborhoods. With regards to future plans for downtown redevelopment, making sure that there is a fairly distributed amount of affordable housing will ensure that residents of different economic backgrounds can live side by side in relative economic harmony.

With respect to Bartlett Park in St. Petersburg Florida, “Most respondents talked about the interconnection between housing and economic development—that both needs should be addressed simultaneously in order to improve the lives of incumbent residents and to attract new residents to Midtown. If economic development is carried out in a way that increases employment and earnings opportunities for current residents, then the dual approach for revitalization can strengthen the hand of residents so that they are less likely to be displaced as housing prices continue to rise.” (Levy 27).

I believe that these strategies, combined with programs that engage the residents, in the form of educational, public, and performance spaces, will ensure that the Muskegon Heights community is not disparaged by the current trend of downtown revitalization. Current economic development can work in harmony with these extra measures taken to ensure benefit for all.

Much of this supports my own issues with the subject, and is one of the very base reasons that I am proposing to bring a series of Community College programmatic insertions into the public space of downtown Muskegon so as to create a strong foothold for the current residents in the area, and encourage them to stay, rather than leave these neighborhoods. I want this design intervention to maintain a certain middle ground, acknowledging the benefits of downtown redevelopment, but also championing a certain type of redevelopment that is inclusive rather than exclusionary. Hence, the proposal to place programmatic pieces and public spaces that benefit all, rather than focusing on the privileged, and may even serve as a gateway for the impoverished to springboard into a life of higher income.

The following diagrams demonstrate the overall timeline of Muskegon's development, and when gentrification came into play. I want to balance out the current trend by proposing the education and performance centers, as well as waterfront public spaces, that work together with the downtown commercial development to make the area as successful as possible.

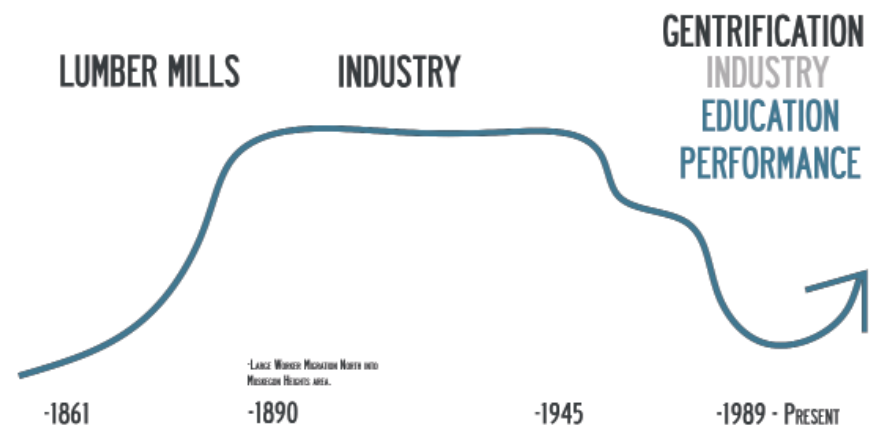


Fig 10 | Muskegon Timeline
Author

Issues of gentrification are currently being addressed on a local level in Muskegon. The most specific article comes from the Muskegon Chronicle this year about the movement of the farmers market to the downtown area, entitled "Letters: Gentrification of the Farmers Market Has Racist Overtones." The problem that many have had with the movement of the Farmers Market to the Downtown area seems to be based around the fact that it is currently located in the Jackson Hill neighborhood. One of the citizens writes, "deciding to move a desirable component of a historically black and working class neighborhood to a new location for the benefit of an imaginary future wealthy (white) condo-living people and thus, deciding to take from the working class and people of color to give to wealthy white people

is racist. Making decisions based on money and profit without regard for the destructive racial and economic consequences for working class communities and communities of color is racist” (Muskegon Chronicle). This represents many of the sentiments covered in my research. There is a feeling of something being taken, so in that same area, I want to give.

By inserting these performance, athletic, and craft training facilities, as well as public spaces, into the same area, I feel that I can help mediate some of these negative sentiments and continue to provide for the entire community rather than a select few.

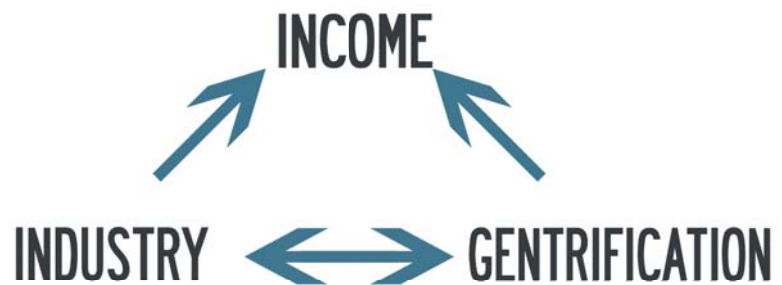


Fig 11 | Relationship Between Income and Downtown Development
Author

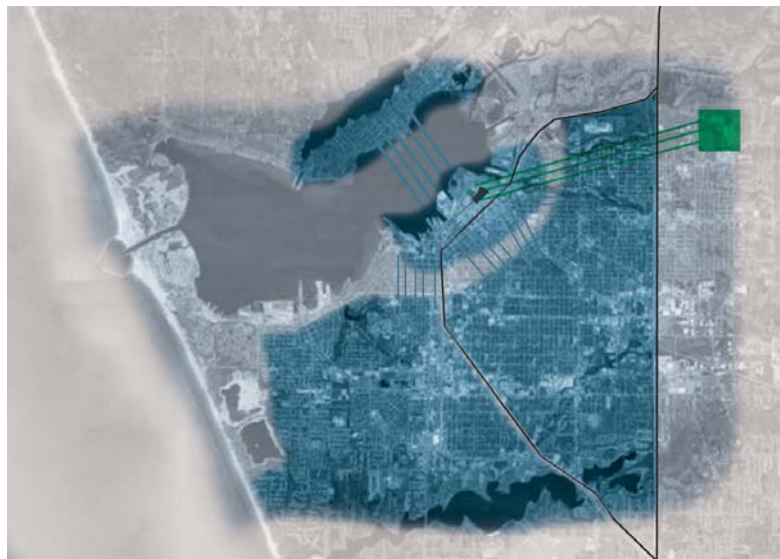


Fig 12 | Hypothetical Results of Proposed Downtown Development
Author

4.0 | SITE AND PROPOSAL

Founded as Muskegon Village in 1861, the city of Muskegon, Michigan has a rich history centered around industry. Muskegon Lake was dredged out completely to Lake Michigan in the early 1800's, and the area quickly became fertile ground for the development of lumber mills. These mills reached their peak in 1871, when 47 different mills surrounded Muskegon Lake. This was due, in part, to helping rebuild Chicago after the fire of 1871.



Fig 13 | Downtown Muskegon, Michigan | 1874



Fig 14 | Muskegon Lumber Mill

After the lumber mills began to run out of resources, it became apparent that the city would need to adapt to a new form of production and that came in the form of industry. This was wildly successful, and by 1890, the population had grown to 37,036 people. This industry fed the economy, and many working class areas, such as Muskegon Heights, began to grow quickly. This prosperity lasted through the 1950's, until much of the industry began to falter.

To counter this, and keep the downtown area healthy, the city decided to use commercial developments in the area to reinvigorate what was becoming a dead zone in the city, with much of the focus drifting out towards the suburbs to the South and North. This resulted in the construction of a large mall that tore up much of the original downtown infrastructure, but managed to appeal to the wealthier communities in the area. This helped downtown reestablish itself for the next 40 years. The problem, however, is that where industry once benefited the entire community, the commercial zones only reached out to the upper class. A barrier began to form between downtown Muskegon, and it's closest communities in Muskegon Heights. These areas were largely ignored.

With the failure of the mall in the 1990's, and a new development plan for the area being instituted in the present day, the area is still doing little to address this barrier. New development is typically of the commercial variety, with high end condos and shops springing up throughout the downtown area. This has done much to reinvigorate the downtown, but has done little to address it's most glaring problem, the consistent refusal to remain open to everyone in the community rather than a select few.

A new development has occurred, however, as the city has voted to put 24 million dollars towards the insertion of programmatic spaces for the Muskegon Community College. I want to capitalize on this opportunity by designing a series of performance, athletic, and trade training facilities that I believe can be economically beneficial to the community, but also inclusive to the community as a whole.

One can imagine area sports teams playing their games on a neutral downtown field along the waterfront, and members of the community learning various craftsmanship trades and business skills in the downtown area. The insertion of a theater creates the opportunity for local plays to be put on that everyone in the area comes to see and support. These developments, I believe, will create a downtown area that is vibrant, and healthy, and break down possible economic barriers that still continue to exist.

5.0 | EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS

13

The Strategy: I am investigating the downtown area of Muskegon Michigan. The city is heavily invested in moving many of their businesses and residents back into the downtown area. Much of this movement falls in line with the practice of gentrification, however, as many of the moves to revitalize the area fall into the category of upper-class stores, restaurants, and residences (Muskegon Chronicle). This proposal challenges this movement and provides programmatic elements and spaces that are inclusive to all residents. This will come in the form of a design intervention that has two different goals. The first is to tear out the almost entirely useless Shoreline Drive that separates the downtown area from the waterfront. This will “take back” the waterfront so to speak, allowing access between the downtown and Lake Muskegon, which represents the birth of the city in the first place. The next step is to begin to insert these programmatic elements for the Community College - Performance, Sports, and Trade Training - into the North end of the downtown area. I want to scatter these areas in such a way that the inclusive space begins to weave through and penetrate into the “exclusive” space. Additionally, I would like to look at creating a push and pull with the water and land, highlighting these canals as possible recreation areas. In terms of public transportation, there is a rail line and greenway/bike trail that weaves through the area as well and could be utilized to provide even more public access. As a final step, I would like to look at creating a waterfront pier/ferry center that can shuttle people to and from North Muskegon and the beaches of Pere Marquette on Lake Michigan. As a final step, I will be incorporating a community market into the design. The following maps and diagrams are initial ideas that would later be incorporated into the design.



Fig 15 | General Site Placement
Author

The site itself, North of downtown along the waterfront, is about 70 acres in size. The stretch of Shoreline Drive that would be implemented into the design as well totals about 1.5 linear miles. This would provide an extensive greenway that links up with two smaller greenways feeding into the downtown area from the west and the northeast.



Fig 16 | Downtown Muskegon Extension of Program and Removal of Shoreline Drive_Author

Above is the general plan to extend the program of the downtown area towards the waterfront. These spaces will allow me to disperse the Community College Program within developments. Shoreline Drive (shown here by the thick blue line) will be replaced with a greenway system that culminates in a community market space.



Fig 17 | Bringing Waterfront into the Downtown Area_Author

Above is a diagram presenting the proposal to bring canals of water into the site itself, retaking the waterfront in a somewhat radical manner by bringing the city up to the waterfront and also bringing the waterfront up to the city. Ideally these canals would at times stretch all of the way to the proposed Shoreline Drive greenway.

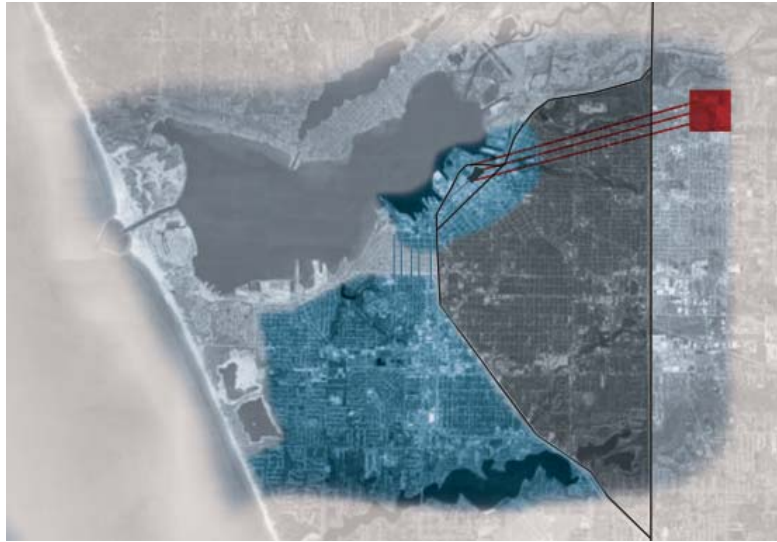


Fig 18 | Downtown Muskegon | Current Relationship to Muskegon Heights_Author

Above are Present Conditions - Downtown reaching out to the wealthier neighborhoods and neglecting the adjacent areas.

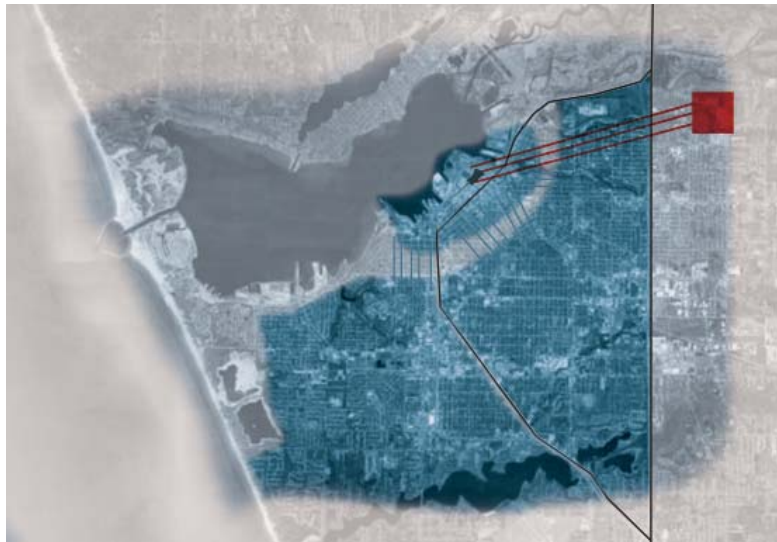


Fig 19 | Downtown Muskegon | Proposed Relationship to Muskegon Heights_Author

Above is the possible outcome of bringing community college program downtown. Performance, athletic, and trade training/craftsmanship facilities.

6.0 | SITE INVESTIGATION



Fig 20 | View down Western Avenue _Author



Fig 21 | Intersection of Western and 3rd



Fig 22 | Western Avenue Shops _Author



Fig 23 | Alcoa Foundation Plaque _Author

Notes from Site Visit June 20, 2014: Approaching downtown Muskegon, I am immediately struck by the inaccessibility to the area. Shoreline Drive, the road on which I am currently driving, acts as a barrier through the area. As I approach the city center, I can see clearly visible instances in which this road has severed the original grid of the city. Entire streets are cutoff by Shoreline Drive at awkward intervals, many simply resulting in dead ends, demonstrating the quick, concise cut that this road made through the area. After noticing this, I set about to getting my car onto Western Avenue, the Main Street of this downtown area. I have decided that the best way to really get a feel for the downtown area is to start at one end of the main street, and walk to the very end. Arriving at my destination, I am faced with an initial stretch of street that has fallen into disrepair. Strips of tar on the road demonstrate “quick fixes” rather than long term solutions of completely repaved streets. Coupled with the fact that all around me are vacant parking lots, this is already a bit disconcerting. Poor accessibility, road conditions, and use of space would lead one to believe that very little effort has been made to revitalize this downtown area.

As I walk a couple of blocks toward the center of downtown, however, I am pleasantly surprised by what I begin to discover. The disrepair of the beginning of Western Avenue has transformed into a nicely maintained street with cobblestone pedestrian crossings. A roundabout sits at the center of the area with an enormous statue. Nicely manicured landscape runs throughout the area. The area is quite beautiful, and stands in stark contrast to the asphalt ruins at the beginning of Western Avenue. The theater on the corner advertises tickets being sold out for a show that very evening, demonstrating that this area still holds viability in the community. The arena for the Muskegon Lumberjacks sits in this general area, and while it is empty right now, one can imagine the place being jam packed with people during the wintertime, considering the popularity of hockey in the area. Across the street, I can see a series of storefronts that have been painstakingly restored to what appears to be their original condition. The city of Muskegon is clearly putting a tremendous amount of money into the revitalization of this area. As I walk along, various discoveries only serve to strengthen that notion.

Walking to the other end of the roundabout, I am faced with a stone wall that seems to be a monument. Upon further investigation, I discover that it is a dedication to this particular section of downtown, which is called “Alcoa Square”. The plaque on the wall thanks all those who began the rebuilding of downtown Muskegon in 2008, and this ranges from citizens, to city commissions, to the Alcoa Foundation, which one would assume is the Foundation that this Square is named after. This assures me that the city, and the people of Muskegon, are very much in favor of a “return to downtown”.

Continuing down Western Avenue, I discover more signs of downtown revitalization. In a vacant lot that is currently an eyesore, I see a poster featuring renderings for a new stretch of buildings, commercial and residential, that will occupy this empty area. Walking just a block farther, I discover another one of these “previews” of what is to come. The longer I walk, the more I begin to understand that there is clearly a concerted effort to bring people back into this part of the city. As I walk along I see more historic storefronts, with one of the buildings proudly displaying a plaque that it was first constructed in the early 1900’s. This stretch of buildings is currently under renovation, and I am sure will soon look like the previous block of historic storefronts that I passed by.

Another noticeable feature of the area is a prevalence of adaptive reuse. Pictured on the right is one of several buildings that have been renovated to house residential, commercial, or the city’s art gallery. Upon closer inspection of the one pictured on the right, I gathered that



Fig 24 | View down Shoreline Drive_Author

this was once a factory, with it's large windows, and heavy construction. This certainly demonstrates an effort to not only reinvigorate the area, but to call attention to the industrial history of the city.

As I near the end of my walk down Western Avenue, I discover one more sign in a vacant lot. This one is for the Muskegon Farmer's Market, which will be finished in the Spring of 2014. This is wonderful news, as it all but assures that thousands of people will be in the downtown area on a given weekend. This is great because it addresses one very significant problem that I encountered on my walk.



Fig 25 | Terrace Street leading to Shoreline Dr.

Over the course of an hour and a half during my investigation of the downtown area, I literally crossed paths with 5 other people. The downtown area, in some ways, mimics the qualities of a ghost town. It was almost eerie at times, as I would look across these newly renovated buildings and streetscapes and there would be nobody else around. I do believe, however, that these various construction projects as well as the farmers market will continue to pump life back into the downtown area. (A return trip that evening also demonstrated a much higher presence of people, whether it was for the show at the theater or for dining or drinking at one of the restaurants and bars in the area.)



Fig 26 | Waterfront Site_Author

At the end of my walk, I am confronted with one final problem, and that is the very road I came in on, Shoreline Drive. This arterial street has not only severed the original grid of the city, but it also acts as a 70 foot asphalt barrier between the downtown area and the waterfront of Lake Muskegon (which leads immediately to Lake Michigan) and the greenways and various other amenities as well. In stopping to observe this problem, I am struck by the fact that over the course of several minutes, I have seen no vehicular activity on this roadway. This tells me that the road serves very littler purpose. Upon returning during peak driving hours at 5 pm, I still find very little traffic on the road. Shoreline Drive, in that case, is basically an asphalt ruin, that acts as a divisive barrier between downtown area (and adjacent neighborhoods) and the waterfront and greenways that the city so generously provides. As such, this has led to much of the waterfront being undeveloped around the downtown area. This problem could be remedied by re-purposing this stretch of Shoreline Drive and providing free flowing pedestrian access between the downtown area and the waterfront and adjacent greenways.



Fig 27 | View Down Pine Street_Author

Walking South down Pine Street toward Muskegon Heights, I find the street to be very unfriendly to the pedestrian. Heavy street traffic runs at 4 lanes, and there is very little in the way of crosswalks. This is another element that needs to be addressed in my intervention, as I believe walkability to be of utmost importance.

7.0 | THE PROPOSAL

18

With the site investigation taken into account with my overall design goals, I will adhere to a series of principles in this intervention.

PRINCIPLES:

1. EMPHASIS ON PUBLIC SPACE

2. INCLUSIVE RATHER THAN EXCLUSIVE | FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE, ATHLETIC, AND TRADE TRAINING FACILITIES AS WELL AS A COMMUNITY MARKET THAT FEATURES PRODUCE AND LOCAL FISH AND MEAT | EACH OF THESE PROGRAMMATIC PIECES ARE GREAT EQUALIZERS, AND APPEAL TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE RATHER THAN A SELECT FEW

3. UTILIZE CURRENT NORTHSORE DRIVE AS A GREENWAY AND A BRIDGE BETWEEN DOWNTOWN AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

4. UTILIZE A DESIGNED TENSION BETWEEN LAND AND WATER TO CREATE A SERIES OF DYNAMIC PUBLIC SPACES

5. DESIGN STREETS THAT REACH DOWN INTO MUSKEGON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY BECOME MORE WALKABLE AND MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY OVERALL

6. ULTIMATELY MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF ORIGINAL INTENT OF FIRST 5 PRINCIPLES IN ALL DESIGN DECISIONS

With these principles in mind, I will move forward with the design itself. The intervention will work at three scales.

Scale 1. The Neighborhood Scale _Includes downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.



Fig 28 | Overall Neighborhood and Downtown Plan _Proposed Conditions _Author

Scale 2. Downtown and the Waterfront



Fig 29 | Waterfront Design with Programmatic Layout_Author

Scale 3. Focus on Immediate Market_Theater_Athletic Site



Fig 30 | Market_Theater_Field House Plan_Author

Utilizing these three scales, I want to create a design intervention that reaches out to the Muskegon Heights Community, focuses on walkability and accessibility, has an emphasis on public space, and capitalizes on extensive waterfront usage. Two “arms” of walkable streets will stretch south, with the greenway (replacing Shoreline Drive) acting as the spinal chord of these arms. A series of pier cuts will bring the waterfront closer to downtown, with the focus on the eastern Theater and Market pier.

8.0 | PRECEDENTS

THE HIGH LINE

Diller | Scofidio

Designed by Diller and Scofidio, with help from Friends of the High Line, the High Line turns an unused rail line in New York City's Meatpacking District into a greenway.

This design was pertinent to my own intervention as it takes existing transportation infrastructure and transforms it into a pedestrian friendly walkway that traverses a great distance through the neighborhoods.

This notion can be readily applied to my own approach to the issue of Shoreline Drive, which acts as a barrier between Downtown Muskegon and the waterfront. By transforming this expansive piece of infrastructure into a pedestrian friendly greenway, I can not only provide a continuous path that parallels the downtown area, but I can also use it as an open threshold space that allows pedestrians to flow freely from the downtown area to the waterfront.



Fig 31 | The High Line



Fig 32 | Pedestrian View

LA ALBUFERA

Valencian Community, Spain

Located in Valencia, Spain, this case study was a series of canals that were cut into the community. This idea framed one of my initial design schemes, which had to do with transforming the entirety of Shoreline Drive into a canal. The design unfortunately was cast aside as it became a similarly divisive piece acting as a barrier between Downtown Muskegon and the waterfront.

Although the canal design was dropped in favor of a greenway, the manner in which the water cuts into the land began to influence how I cut the water into the downtown grid. The interaction between land and water can still be seen in my own design.

The edge conditions, the manner in which roads, and pedestrian walkways, run parallel to the water greatly influenced the esplanade design and roadways that ran along the downtown area and the waterfront.



Fig 33 | La Albufera Aerial



Fig 34 | Canal Cut



Fig 35 | Canal Cut and Esplanade

BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK

An ongoing project in Brooklyn, New York, the Brooklyn Bridge Park takes many of the piers along the waterfront and transforms them into park spaces. This project was the most influential with regards to my own design. The pier design shows up along my waterfront design intervention, as I elected to cut a series of waterways into the city grid. This was ultimately tied together with a greenway, which would allow easy access from pier to pier.

Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

The tension between water and greenscape is visually pleasing, and I wanted to incorporate this move into my own intervention.

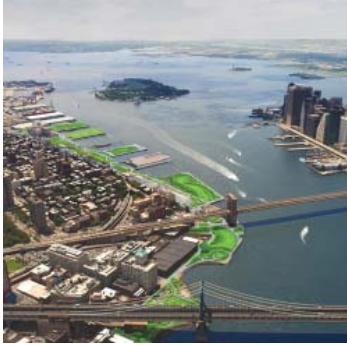


Fig 36 | Brooklyn Bridge Park Aerial



Fig 37 | Brooklyn Bridge Park Rendering



Fig 38 | Brooklyn Bridge Park Rendering 2



Fig 39 | Brooklyn Bridge Park Photo

MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAMS TO BE MOVED INTO THE DOWNTOWN AREA



Fig 40 | Campus Program_Author

1. APPLIED TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT AND TRADE TRAINING FACILITIES

-40,000 SF for applied technology. - Manufacturing, trade training, crafts-manship.

2. BUSINESS DEPARTMENT'S ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

-40,000 SF for Business Department.

Idea is that many of these programs are not necessarily for "typical" students (ie age 18-24 range) and that many of these students in these programs will be adults and parents in the community.

-Entrepreneurial studies program focused on manufacturing and retailing
- Coordinator Dave Stradal "proposed establishing "selling pods" where community members, college students and even high school students could sell products and services to develop a presence."

3. SCIENCE CENTER

PROPOSED INITIALLY, BUT NOT CHOSEN BY CITY:

CHOSEN, HOWEVER, FOR PERSONAL DESIGN INTERVENTION

1. ATHLETIC COMPLEX

-The idea is that not only will these spaces serve Muskegon Community College, but they can serve as neutral sites for city games between high, middle, and elementary schools across the city. This would be an excellent way to bring the community together for various games throughout the year.

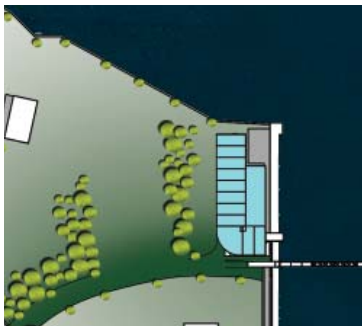


Fig 41 | Athletic Complex and Greenway
Author



Fig 42 | Theater_Author

2. PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

-With Height Requirements, and overall programmatic idea, this becomes the centerpiece of the design.

-Program includes:

- Lobby
- Auditorium
- Stage
- Backstage/Dressing Rooms
- Music Rooms

-As Development Continued, it became the gateway to the entire space.

OTHER PROGRAM TO BE INCLUDED:

1. FARMER'S MARKET AND COMMUNITY MARKET

2. LIGHT RAIL STATION

-This will be incorporated within the Theater and Storefronts that run along Western Avenue.

3. GREENWAY

-2 Miles of Shoreline Drive becomes extensive park space running parallel to rail line and greenway.



Fig 43 | Community Market_Author



Fig 44 | Greenway_Author

10.0 | DESIGN EXECUTION

25

As stated previously, this design intervention occurs at three scales, the neighborhood scale, the downtown and waterfront scale, and the immediate scale of the Market and Theater. I will progress through each of these three scales as I explain my design execution, with all three of these scales working together to create an accessible, pedestrian friendly, downtown area full of vibrant, dynamic spaces.

The first issue that I faced in this design challenge was the two main physical barriers that handicapped much of my goals for accessibility. In order for this project to be successful, these issues needed to be addressed. The first barrier occurred at the neighborhood scale, and dealt with extensive asphalt blocks that hampered walkability. In the diagram below, the dark purple represents this first barrier, with Pine Street highlighted.



Fig 45 | Barriers Diagram_Author

This problem, coupled with streets that were not pedestrian friendly, necessitated an intervention at the neighborhood scale. In order to allow people access to the downtown area from Muskegon Heights by foot, I needed to create a walkable streetscape. From this problem, the notion of the “arms” reaching out into the community was born. The focus of this part of the intervention was Pine Street (highlighted above). This street was vitally important to my design, as it ran into the focal point of my intervention, at the corner of Western Avenue, and what would be the end of the greenway. At the other end of the future greenway, 4th Street penetrated into the Muskegon Heights area with a pedestrian friendly streetscape. It consisted of a 2 lane street with parking on either side. Wide sidewalks and greenery continue down the street, and the intersections feature crosswalks. I sought to utilize this strategy with regards to Pine Street, resulting in a similar effect. Pictured below is my neighborhood plan for Pine Street:



Fig 46 | Pine Street Plan_Author

The density of the area is increased with the addition of numerous mixed use buildings. The streets are cut down to 1 lane each way, with a turn lane in between. Crosswalks are at each intersection with expanded sidewalks and greenery. As pedestrians progress down Pine Street, several blocks have been transformed into park spaces, allowing for moments of pause. This allows for a much more walkable path into the downtown area. Below is an aerial of the condition, demonstrating the park spaces as well as new building interventions, providing more opportunities for living, working, and shopping as one progresses towards the downtown area.



Fig 47 | Pine Street Aerial_Author

The following sections demonstrate the ratio of streetscape to sidewalk and greenery, as well as how several blocks along the street can open up into park spaces. The first section is the typical street section cut.



Fig 48 | Pine Street Section_Author

This is followed by a section along a park space block.



Fig 49 | Pine Street Section along Park Block_Author

After the neighborhood scale, we come to the design intervention for the waterfront and downtown area. This came in the form of a series of piers created through a penetration of waterfront into the grid of the downtown area. Historically, the waterfront ran fairly close to the downtown main street of Western Avenue, and I want to utilize this context to bring dynamic public spaces and expansive water frontage into the area. These piers would then be tied together with a greenway system that was created in the place of the second major barrier, Shoreline Drive. As stated previously, I will remove the 4 lane highway, and replace it with a greenway system that acts as a threshold and a filter rather than a barrier. The following diagram, displayed previously, demonstrates the barrier that is Shoreline Drive, with the area of isolation and exclusion being represented in pink.



Fig 50 | Barriers Diagram Repeated_Author

With this final barrier acknowledged, I attacked the problem through the greenway and pier cuts. The following diagrams demonstrate this.

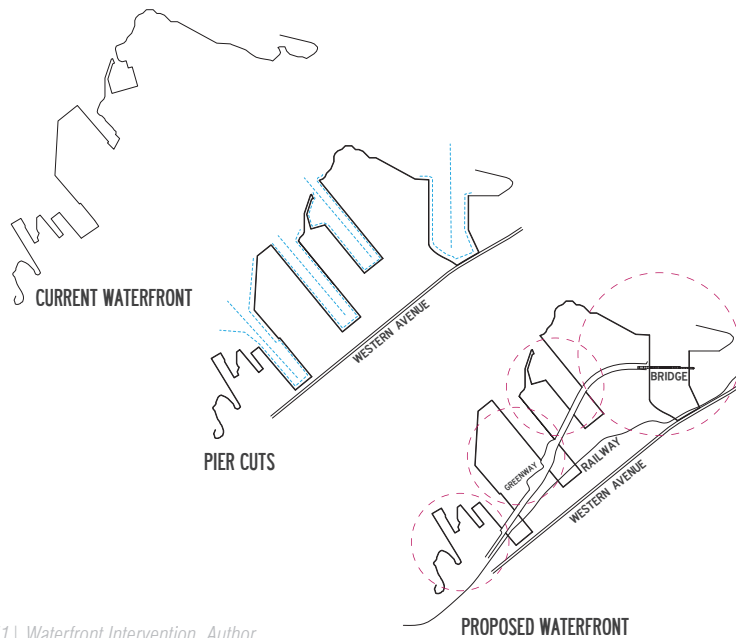


Fig 51 | Waterfront Intervention_Author

The tension created between land and water, the push and pull, allows for extensive waterfront access. The greenway, in every bay but the final, runs across the water as a land bridge, creating separate areas of community swimming holes along the downtown area, while allowing boat traffic to approach the greenway from the North. Not only does the greenway tie each of these piers together, but it ultimately links up with 4th Street, and my own Pine Street intervention, to act as the spine for the two arms reaching out into the Muskegon Heights community, symbolically welcoming citizens to the downtown area.

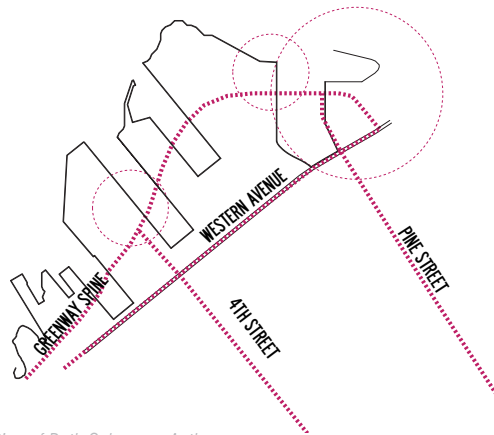


Fig 52 | Connection of Both Schemes_Author

This spine physically connects the entire system, but it also symbolically links my Neighborhood Scale to the Waterfront and Downtown Scale. It will ultimately lead to the final, more intimate Theater and Market Scale as well. At the scale of the waterfront, however, it physically joins each of the piers. It is in this manner that I want to break down the expansive Shoreline Drive barrier, while also utilizing the piers themselves to denote different areas of program along the design intervention. This can be seen below.

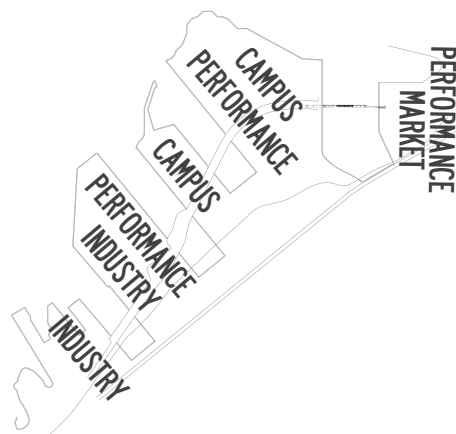


Fig 53 | Piers, Program, and Greenway Connection_Author

The link of the neighborhood and waterfront scales provides a nice link to the final scale, the immediate scale of the theater and market spaces. The following plan shows the entire scheme, with the theater and market area called out. The arms reaching out into the community, braced by the spine of the greenway, and the pier cuts with distinct program are all accounted for in this plan.

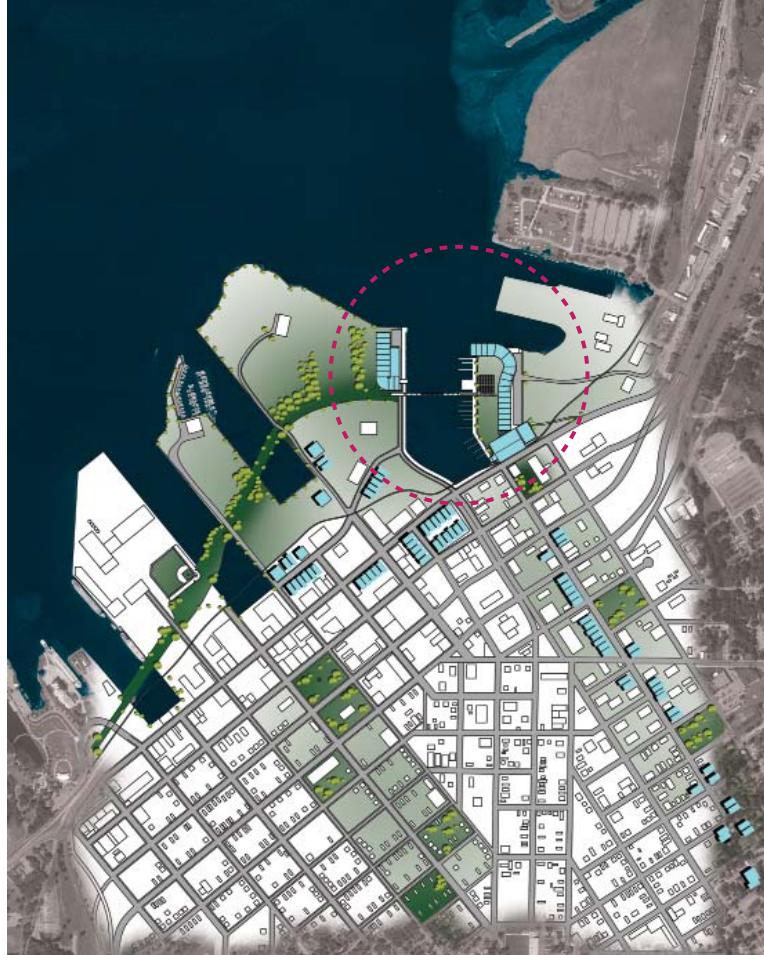


Fig 54 | Overall Plan_Author

The theater and marketplace pier, sitting across from the field house, acts as the knuckle, the joint between the spine of the greenway and the arm of Pine Street. The theater runs parallel to Western Avenue, housing a series of shops, a light rail station, an observation tower, and its own ticket booth and lobby. Its prominence makes it the gateway for those traversing Pine Street towards the downtown area, and market spaces and waterfront beyond. The market space and theater act as the culmination of the greenway as well as pine street, creating a space that holds utmost significance in the overall scheme of the design. With its siting, it became necessary to elevate the theater, turning it into a literal gateway, and threshold space between the spine and the arm of the scheme. The following images demonstrate the theater in this manner.



Fig 55 | Theater Aerial_Author



Fig 56 | Theater as a Gateway to Beyond_Author

The theater itself is designed in such a manner to call back to the history of the city. The heavy timber exoskeleton uses the lumber mills of old as influence, while the theater itself sits much like a boat hull suspended in a warehouse. Elevating the theater also serves to physically elevate the importance of performance in this design. A heavy concrete colonnade grounds the design, providing space for shops and a light rail station. Another solid slab of concrete rises out of the water, providing a base for the observation tower at the western end of the theater. As one passes through the theater, they are met with the open market spaces, and the field house across the water. The idea is that this entire area will be full of activity, as people come and go from the market spaces, and the theater and field house performances draw viewers from all across the city. The markets are local in nature, encouraging residents of the community purchase and sell local produce and fish from Lake Michigan. The field house holds an important piece in this program as well, as the basketball courts inside would be the site of any high school basketball games that happen to be between two local schools. This would again elevate the importance of these “great equalizers” of performance and athletic spaces, as people from across the city

would gather to witness these games. A pedestrian bridge links these programs over the water. Below is the view of the field house after one passes through the theater gateway. The esplanade that runs along the boat docks can also be seen in this image. The series of benches, and steps down to the dock itself, provide moments of pause where the community can take in the beauty of the waterfront itself.



Fig 57 | View towards Field House_Author

If one chooses to head towards the market spaces themselves, they are faced with long, linear spaces that feature extensive storefront. The plan below demonstrates the manner in which the public can pass under the theater and into these spaces. The markets feature an extensive use of doorways along the storefront that allow for open air spaces in the spring and summer, but also provide the opportunity for conditioned spaces in the winter.

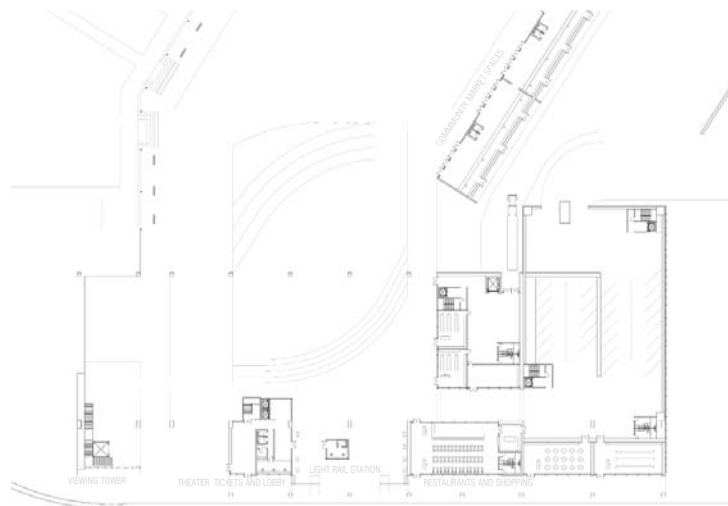


Fig 58 | Ground Floor Plans_Author

As one approaches the market spaces, they are faced with a series of terraces leading to an outdoor stage, that can serve as the site for impromptu or more informal displays or performances. Further enhancing the dynamic community aspect, this outdoor stage can double as an ice skating rink in the winter, providing for recreation opportunities as the market continues to thrive through the winter. The idea is that these spaces will continue to be activated even as winter approaches. Basketball season is in full swing at the field house, plays continue in the theater above, with ice skating below, and market shopping continues through the winter. Finally, a greenhouse that acts as the anchor to the open market area as well as the pedestrian bridge, becomes a display box winter garden during the cold Michigan months. The following image demonstrates how the spaces could be activated during the winter.



Fig 59 | Winter Views_Author

If one approaches the market pier from the west across the pedestrian bridge, they will be able to readily see the theater rising up over the public spaces below. Water recreation is in the foreground as one looks into the mark space beyond, the docks and esplanade acting as the threshold space between the water and markets. Again, dynamic public activity is present in every facet of this piece of the design. Spaces are inclusive, rather than exclusive.



Fig 60 | View From Pedestrian Bridge_Author

As one reaches the end of the pedestrian bridge, they are in close proximity to the market spaces themselves. One can imagine these spaces in the spring and summer completely open to the elements, while children play in the greenspace between the markets and the water. Beyond, an outdoor performance could be going on in the outdoor theater space as people look on at the display.



Fig 61 | View From Markets_Author

Finally, if one chooses to go up into the theater, they are met with a dynamic space in and of itself. Two different theaters reside in the space, one primary theater, and a secondary theater. The primary theater thrusts the stage into the middle of the seating, challenging the separation between viewer and performer. This can be seen in the plan below.

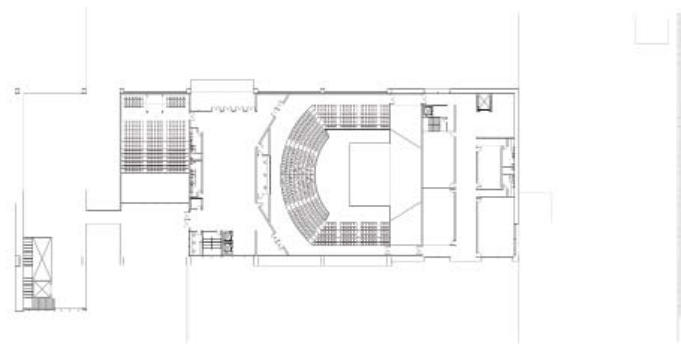


Fig 62 | Theater Main Floor Plan_Author

Both of these theater spaces are designed to accommodate various performance typologies, plays, ballets, concerts, and in the case of the secondary theater, movie viewing. All of these elements again express the importance of performance as a great equalizer in the community, and the theater's elevated importance, along with the markets and field house,



Fig 65 | Transverse Section 1_Author



Fig 66 | Transverse Section 2_Author



Fig 67 | Longitudinal Section_Author

ensure that these spaces are held in the highest regard in this design intervention, allowing for a series of publicly inclusive spaces that welcome any and all in the community. The following images demonstrate the theater spaces themselves. The first image depicts a more formal theatrical presentation.



Fig 63 | Primary Theater Viewing_Author

While the second image depicts a less formal movie viewing in the secondary theater.



Fig 64 | Secondary Theater Viewing_Author

Ultimately, even the most formal of plays in this theater would be done by local performers, instilling pride in the community and its own performing arts. Much like a local basketball game, these performances would be displays that the entire community could rally around, yet again creating equal standing.

11.0 | CONCLUSION

36

All three of these scales work together to create a series of dynamic and inclusive public spaces that maintain economic viability. This ensures that not only will the community thrive in these inclusive spaces, but Downtown Muskegon itself will become a vibrant city center, continue to thrive, and return to the prominence it once held.

One can imagine area sports teams playing their games on a neutral downtown field along the waterfront or in the field house, and members of the community learning various craftsmanship trades and business skills in the downtown area. The insertion of a theater creates the opportunity for local plays to be put on that everyone in the area comes to see and support. These developments, I believe, will create a downtown area that is vibrant, and healthy, and break down possible economic barriers that still continue to exist.



Fig 68 | View From Water _Author

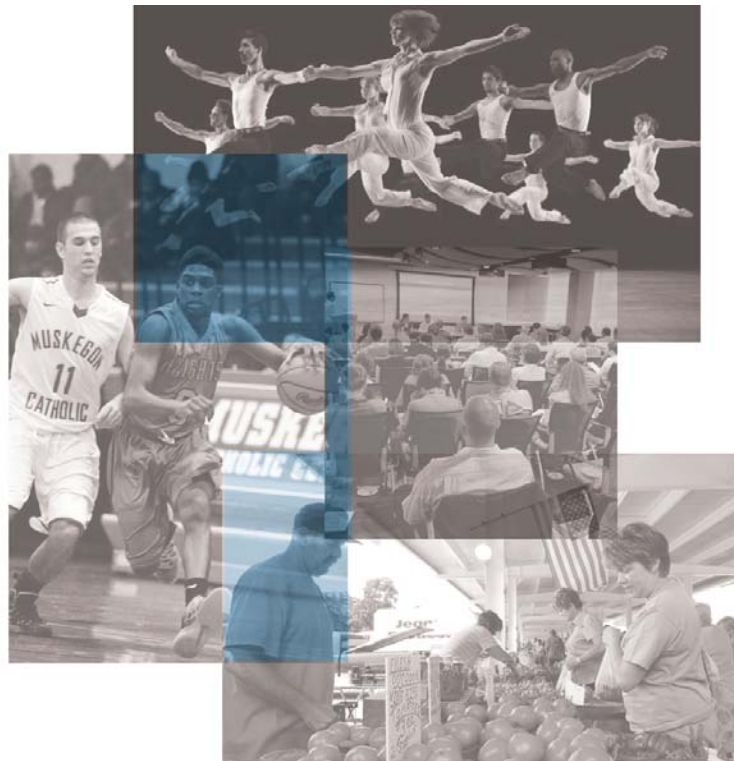


Fig 69 | Equal Standing _Author

List of References

- Appleyard, Donald. *Toward an Urban Design Manifesto*. Berkeley: Institute of Urban & Regional Development, University of California, 1982. Print.
- Betancur, J. (2002) 'The Politics of Gentrification; The Case of West Town in Chicago', *Urban Affairs Review* 37; 780-814.
- Byrne, J. Peter, "Two Cheers for Gentrification" (2003). Georgetown Law Faculty Publications and Other Works. Paper 930.
- Caulfield, J. (1992), Gentrification and Familism in Toronto: A Critique of Conventional Wisdom. *City & Society*, 6: 76–89. doi: 10.1525/city.1992.
- Crawford, Margaret, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles Over Public Space in Los Angeles," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49/1 (1995), pp. 4-9
- Diamond, B. (2010), Safe Speech: Public Space as a Medium of Democracy. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 64: 94–105.
- Duany, Andres, Plater-Zyberk, Elizabeth. *The Lexicon of the New Urbanism*. [S.l.]: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co., 2000. Print.
- Duany, Andres, Jeff Speck, and Mike Lydon. *The Smart Growth Manual*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010. Print.
- Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point, 2000. Print.
- Eyler, Jonathan. *Muskegon County: Harbor of Promise : An Illustrated History*. Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1986. Print.
- Glass, R. (1964) 'Introduction: Aspects of Change,' in Centre for Urban Studies (ed.) *London: Aspects of Change* (London: MacKibbon and Kee)
- Glass R. (1989) *Cliches of Urban Doom* (Oxford: Blackwell)
- Jacobs, Allan, "Starting to Look" and "Observing and Interpreting Naglee Park," in *Looking at Cities*, Cambridge, MA & London, England: Harvard, University Press 1985, pp. 1-29
- Judd, Dennis R., and Dick W. Simpson. *The City, Revisited: Urban Theory from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2011. Print.
- Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater, and Elvin K. Wyly. *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2008. Print.
- Leccese, Michael, and Kathleen McCormick. *Charter of the New Urbanism*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2000. Print.
- Levy, Diane K., Jennifer Comey, and Sandra Padilla. *In the Face of Gentrification: Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2006. Print.
- Read, Frederic. *The First Two Hundred Years in Muskegon*. S.l.: S.n., 1976. Print.
- Shaw, K. (2008), Gentrification: What It Is, Why It Is, and What Can Be Done about It. *Geography Compass*, 2: 1697–1728.
- Slater T. (2008), 'A Literal Necessity to be Re-Placed': A Rejoinder to the Gentrification Debate. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32: 212–223
- Smith N. (1979) 'Toward a Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, not People', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, 4: 538-548

-Slater, T. (2011) Gentrification of the City, in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (eds G. Bridge and S. Watson), Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK

Websites:

<http://www.cffmc.org/>

<http://cffmc.org/learn/leadership/downtown>

<http://www.downtownmuskegon.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/DowntownMuskegon>

<http://www.muskegon-mi.gov/departments/planning/>

http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2013/09/city_of_muskegon_supports_down.html

http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2013/01/heard_on_the_street_10_serious.html

http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2013/08/muskegon_community_college_com_1.html

<http://www.rapidgrowthmedia.com/cities/muskegon/muskegon.aspx>

http://www.pbs.org/pov/flagwars/special_gentrification.php

<http://www.metropulse.com/news/2013/apr/24/does-gentrification-deserve-our-support-or-warrant/>

<http://www.worldmapsonline.com/historicalmaps/MI-Muskegon-1874.htm>

<http://mydowntownmuskegon.blogspot.com/>

http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-daJWDOKivtc/TpXtibiVOil/AAAAAAAAA6I/Qmol1z_Kkno/s1600/Const9.jpg

http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2011/09/from_shopping_malls_to_theater.html

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/eridony/2338429062/sizes/l/in/set-72157601059788760/>

<http://bettercities.net/sites/default/files/a4-1-transect-2001a-blueedit1.jpg>

<http://newyorknatives.com/gentrification-the-citys-gain-or-the-citys-loss/#.UoMBoYoo7IU>

<http://righttothecitymtl.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/dscf0424.jpg>

http://blackagendareport.com/sites/www.blackagendareport.com/files/imagecache/feature400/gentrification_harlem-01.jpg

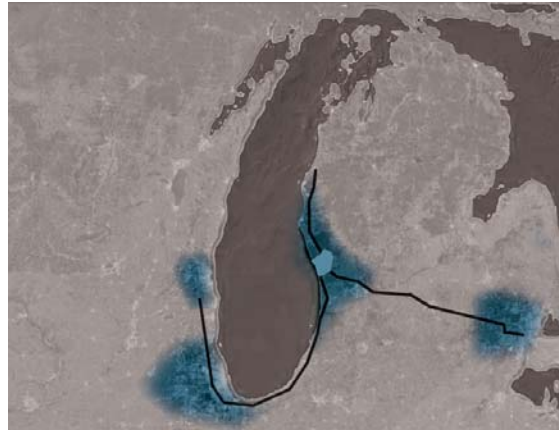
<http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/79-gentrification-and-displacement-in-harlem-how-the-harlem-community-lost-its-voice-en-route-to-progress>

Appendix | Historical Timeline

APPENDIX | A HISTORY | FULL TIMELINE



Downtown Muskegon 1868



-Muskegon, Michigan, In Relation to Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee.



Downtown Muskegon 1874



Downtown Muskegon

- 1861 - Muskegon Village Founded - Township beforehand - pop - 1,442
- The main street of the young downtown area is Western Avenue.
- The grid in the immediate area has remained relatively the same to this day.
- Each block measured around 440 feet by 300 feet. This again carries through to this day in many parts of the downtown area.



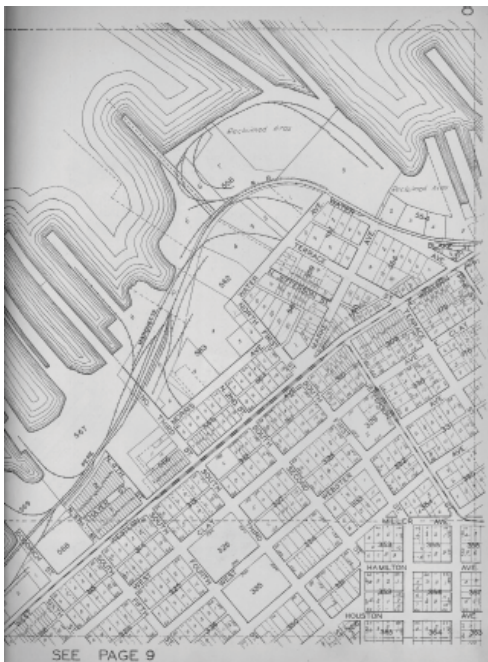
Plan of Downtown Muskegon in 1900



-1871 - Lumber from Muskegon helps rebuild Chicago. Sometimes known as "City that Rebuilt Chicago". At this time, 47 lumber mills surrounded Muskegon Lake. Population increases to 14,892. (muskegonmuseum.org)

-1890 - Population of Muskegon reaches 37,036 (muskegonmuseum.org) Although lumber mills beginning to produce less. Movement towards industry.

-1891 - Muskegon Heights incorporated as part of the Muskegon Improvement Company's goal to purchase 1,000 acres of new land. New industries (4 significant companies) begin to enter the area. (Read, 27) African Americans from the South begin to move into the area.



Plan of Downtown Muskegon in the 1920's



-1910-1920 - Southeast of Downtown, Muskegon Heights population increases from 2500-10,000 residents. World War I brings in even more industry to the Muskegon area. Downtown area flourishes along lakefront. (Read, 29)

- 1937 - "Industrial Jobs at All-Time High of 18,000" (Read, 36). Newspaper headline from 1937

- 1941 - World War 2 - Full-time employment in Muskegon - Most industries and plants switch to war production.



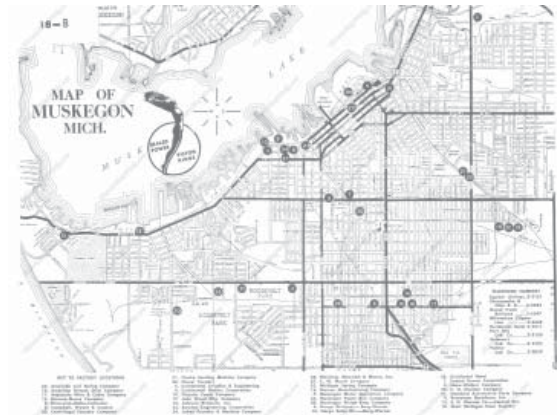
View Down Western Avenue_1915



- 1950's - "What was then Norton Township (now the city of Norton Shores) began to expand and it quickly led the entire area in new growth, particularly in the construction of new homes. Shopping complexes, Meijer's Thrifty Acres, Penney's, K-Mart and others followed. Major retail businesses, once centered in the downtown area, decentralized all over the place. This was going on everywhere, not just in Muskegon, but Muskegon was slow to do anything about it. The decentralization had been coming for quite awhile. As neighborhoods were developed, new business areas moved in to serve them. Even more important were the parking problems and the real estate problem for traditional downtown businesses." (Read 42)



View down Western Avenue_1950



- 1960's - "Communities were upgrading their declining and increasingly decrepit downtown areas by malls and other much more drastic examples of downtown urban renewal." (Read 42) Industries in the area begin to falter. New direction for downtown is needed to keep it alive.



Overall Area of Mall Intervention



Occidental Hotel and Surrounding Buildings Pre-Demolition

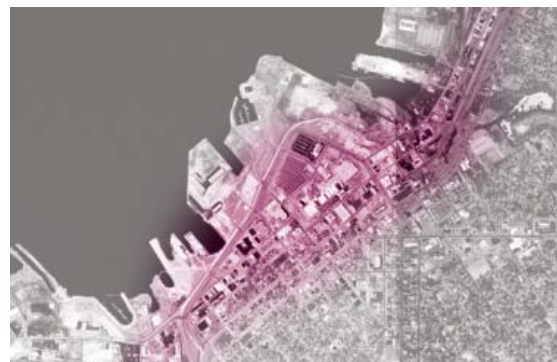


Destruction of Occidental Hotel and other Buildings

- 1960 - Seaway Drive - then Norton-Glad Expressway - opens. I-96 expressway between Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Detroit. I-96 business route = Seaway Drive - at this time it fed into the downtown district through West Michigan and Seaway.

- L. C. Walker Arena finished.
- Suburban shopping threatens downtown Muskegon.

- 1968 - Renewal plans for downtown - much of it torn up. Western Avenue unusable.



- 1974 - Muskegon Area Development Council - "If the community is to take advantage of its economic potential, it is essential that something rather dramatic be done to provide a focal point of pride for the entire area."

The area has remarkable resources of natural beauty. It also has a long-awaited downtown mall development which will provide the beginning of revitalization of the community's service center... The MADC are committed to water-related economic development if we are to enhance the quality of living in our community." (Read 45)



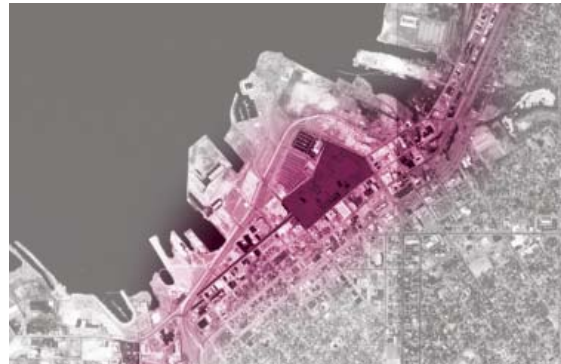
Muskegon Mall Downtown_Cutting off Western Avenue



Muskegon Downtown Mall Construction

-Nov. 2, 1974 - Groundbreaking for the construction of the Muskegon Mall — the innovative suburban-type, enclosed shopping mall over three blocks of West Western Avenue. (Muskegon Chronicle)

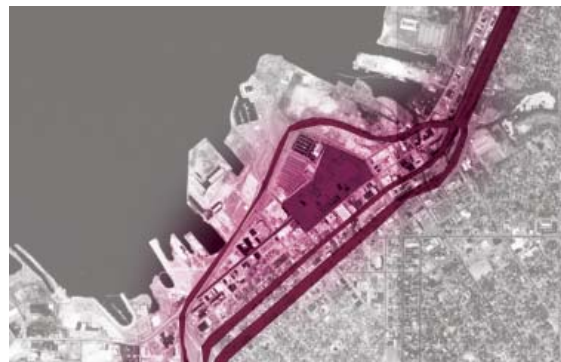
- 1975 - Demolition of the Occidental Hotel marks the major changes that Muskegon Mall brought to the downtown.



- 1976 - Downtown Mall formally dedicated
 - Lakey Foundry removed from the downtown area completely.

-March 14, 1976 - Grand opening of Muskegon Mall hailed by community leaders as keeping the retail focus downtown.

-Shoreline Drive extends off of Seaway to help feed parking and act as a bypass around downtown.





- 1989 - Muskegon Mall hits a peak as the No. 1 shopping destination in Muskegon County. Chronicle survey found 71 percent of all adults had visited the shopping center within the past 30 days. (Muskegon Chronicle) This unfortunately ignores the adjacent Muskegon Heights community (gray)

- 1992 - Muskegon Mall sold to private owners Harold Back and silent partner Richard Perlman by the city of Muskegon and Muskegon County. (Muskegon Chronicle)



Destruction of Mall



- 2001 - The mall's decline following the opening of The Lakes Mall in Fruitport Township ended with the closing of the shopping center to general retail trade. The Muskegon Mall closes. (Muskegon Chronicle)

- 2002 - Downtown Muskegon Development Corp. gains community control of Muskegon Mall DMDC takes chains off the mall parking lots and hires The Chesapeake Group Inc. of Baltimore to plan the downtown redevelopment and Charter Development LLC of Southfield becomes interested in the mall site. (Muskegon Chronicle)

- 2003 - The community-driven Imagine Muskegon plan is formulated.
 - Muskegon Mall demolition begins, community debates what “historic” buildings to save. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2004 - The final “shopping day” on the mall site, as Daniels Office Plus closed its doors amid final demolition. It reopens in a new building in Norton Shores on Monday. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2004 - Charter Development abandons downtown plans, DMDC takes over as developer. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2005 - Public funding is secured to rebuild street system. (Muskegon Chronicle)



- 2006 - West Western Avenue reopened through the mall property including a new traffic circle at Third and Western. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2007 - First Taste of Muskegon downtown event held.
 - Hegg's Furniture Gallery opens in historic Muskegon Century Club building and first Muskegon Bike Time downtown event held. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2008 - Highpoint Flats Condominiums announced for former Comerica Bank tower and .
 - The Hines Building opens, the first new facility in the redeveloping downtown and Heritage Square Town Homes begin to be built. (Muskegon Chronicle)
- 2008 - The Sidock Building opens. (Muskegon Chronicle)

- 2009 - Baker College's Culinary Institute of Michigan opens and the Third Street Promenade takes shape. (Muskegon Chronicle)



-The current direction of downtown redevelopment focuses again on the wealth of the Norton Shores community to the Southwest, while continuing to ignore the Muskegon Heights Community (gray) to the Southeast. There is also the possibility that the new influx of wealth could begin to displace the residents of the Muskegon Heights area.

VITA

Ben Dance was born and raised in Lynchburg, Virginia. After attending high school at Virginia Episcopal School, he went on to attend The University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from UVA in 2011, and went on to spend a year working for CJMW Architecture in Lynchburg, Virginia. In 2013, he began pursuing a Master of Architecture Degree at The University of Tennessee. He graduated in May 2014, and will soon begin work for Centric Architecture in Nashville, Tennessee.