



MASTER PLAN | CITY OF WALKER, MI

**Book 4:**

**1998–2018**

**Sub-Area Plans**

# Acknowledgements

The participation and cooperation of the numerous community leaders and residents in the preparation of the City of Walker Master Plan is greatly appreciated. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following individuals:

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# Contents

**Book 1: Citywide 2040 Vision**

**Book 2a: Alpine Avenue Neighborhood Cluster**

**Book 2b: South Walker Neighborhood Cluster**

**Book 2c: Standale Neighborhood Cluster**

**Book 2d: Northwest Neighborhood Cluster**

**Book 3: Past Walker Master Plans**

**Book 4: 1998-2018 Sub-Area Plans**

**Book 5: Appendix**

<b>1. 2016 Subplan #1: Future Land Use Plan.....</b>	<b>1</b>
The 2006 Sub Area #1 Master Planning Process.....	2
The 2014-15 Subplan #1 Master Planning Process.....	3
Updating the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan .....	4
Approving the Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan .....	7
January 6th 2016 Planning Commission Work Session .....	12
January 6th 2016 Planning Commission Resolution Approving 2016 Subplan #1 Master Plan Update and Report .....	13
Subplan #1 Implementation Items .....	14
<b>2. 2019 Subplan #1-A: Future Land Use Plan.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Development of the 2019 Subplan #1-A Master Planning Process .....	18
The 2014-16 Subplan #1 Master Planning Process.....	19
The 2018-19 Sub Area #1-A Land Use Planning Process .....	19
Distribution of the Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan .....	29
Final Public Hearing and Approval .....	29
The Official 2019 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan .....	29
Subplan #1-A Implementation Items .....	30
<b>3. 2006-07 Sub Area #2: Future Land Use Plan.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Introduction .....	34
Sub-Area #2.....	35
Existing Sub Area #2 Conditions.....	36
Sub-Area #2 Project Timeline.....	38
Community Forum #1 – Held on 10-12-05 .....	39
Community Forum #2 – Held on 11-30-05.....	42
Community Forum #3 – Held on 1-25-06 .....	45
The Planning Commission “Makes The Plan” .....	47
Policy Recommendations For Implementation .....	49

<b>4. 2007 Sub Area #3-A: South Alpine Avenue Future Land Use Plan</b>	<b>51</b>
Introduction	52
Sub-Area 3A	53
Existing Sub-Area 3A Conditions	54
2006 Master Plan Key Concepts	56
Policy Recommendations For Implementation	58
<b>5. 2007 Sub Area #3-B: Bristol East Future Land Use Plan</b>	<b>59</b>
Introduction	60
Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East	61
Existing Bristol East Conditions	63
Sub-Area #3-B Project Timeline	66
Community Forum #1	67
Community Forum #2	68
Community Forum #3	71
The Planning Commission “Makes The Plan”	72
Policy Recommendations For Implementation	76
<b>6. 2007 Sub Areas #4-A and #4-B: Standale / Downtown Walker &amp; West Standale</b>	<b>77</b>
Introduction	78
Sub Area 4-A Standale / Downtown Walker	80
Sub Area 4A Existing Conditions	81
2007 Sub Area 4-A Master Plan Update: Description	83
2007 Sub Area 4-A Master Plan Update: Key Concepts	84
Standale / Downtown Walker Public Meeting	87
Policy Recommendations For Implementation of Sub Area 4-A Master Plan	88
Sub-Area 4-B – West Standale	89
Sub-Area 4-B Existing Conditions	89
2007 Sub Area 4-B Master Plan Update: Process	92
Public Survey Comments Received From April 18, 2007 Open House Meeting	92
2007 Sub Area 4-B Master Plan Update: Key Concepts	94
Policy Recommendations For Implementation of Sub Area 4-B Master Plan	99
<b>7. 2019 Subplan #5: Kloet and Pannel Area Future Land Use Plan</b>	<b>101</b>
Background of the Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan	102
The 2015-18 Subplan #5 Planning Process	103
Work Session # 1	104
Work Session # 2	107
Work Session # 3	108
Proposed 2018 Future Land Use for Subplan # 5	111
Distribution and Approval of the Subplan #5 FLU Plan	113
The Official 2019 Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan	114
Subplan # 5 Implementation Items	114

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*On the following pages, for historic record, are sub-area plans adopted by the City of Walker between 2005 and 2018. These plans provide context for the 2040 vision, and should be used to aid in decision making and action planning within the geographic areas that they cover. However, when there is a conflict between these plans and the 2040 vision, the 2040 vision shall be considered the official policy of the City.*

# 1.

## 2016 Subplan #1: Future Land Use Plan

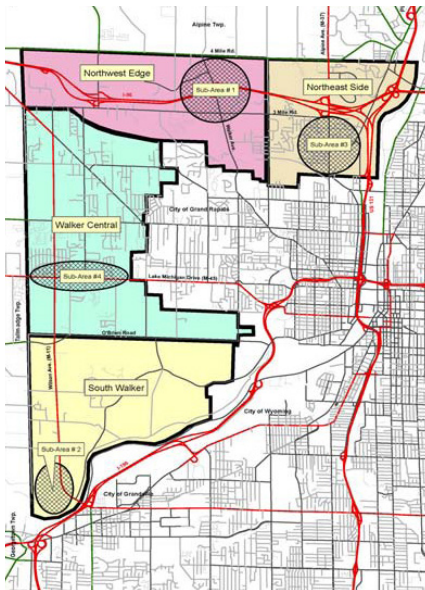
# 2016 Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

**Final and Official: 1.25.2016**

# The 2006 Sub Area #1 Master Planning Process

**Figure 1: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map**



The City of Walker places significant emphasis on the community planning process. The last official update to the entire “Walker Master Plan” took place in 1998. However, since that time, the City has been in an almost-continuous state of master plan review, evolution and subplan implementation.

In 2005, City officials recognized the diversity of neighborhoods in Walker and created the map shown here as Figure 1. Based on these general neighborhood boundaries, focal point Sub Area Plans were developed and adopted in 2006 and 2007. These specific area subplans reflected the increasing importance of neighborhood-level planning and zoning decisions in Walker.

The first subplan was called the Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan. The main goal of the Sub Area #1 master planning process was to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that would be understood and supported by citizens while concurrently addressing the economic, social and environmental realities facing the City of Walker.

On August 16th, 2006, the original Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan was approved. This document is attached as Appendix A and serves as a useful and ongoing reference for the content of this document.

The community planning process and resulting land use recommendations adopted in 2006 for Sub-Area #1 provided a sound foundation on which to base future land use and zoning decisions. However, a major commercial / mixed use development plan, which spurred the planning for a “Village Center” in the Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan, failed to materialize beyond the rezoning stage, leaving the City with a large assembly of properties reserved for potentially unrealistic future land uses.



# Updating the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan

## Work Session #1

The planning commission held a master plan work session on December 17th, 2014. The meeting minutes are attached as Appendix D. The work session was interactive and constructive comments were received from several members of the public and the Walkerview developers.

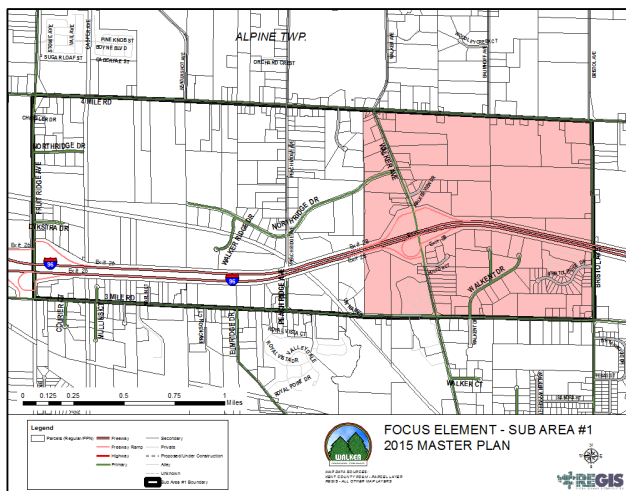
After significant deliberation, the planning commission affirmed that the 2007 Sub Area #3B Land Use Plan was current and realistic and amendments were not necessary.

The planning commission also decided to open the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan for updates and specific amendments. The planning commission expressed concern that the original plan might no longer have a basis in reality from the standpoint of market economics, political support or citizen desire.

## Work Session #2

The planning commission held a second master plan work session on January 21st, 2015. The meeting minutes are attached as Appendix E. The goal of this second work session was to decide on a preferred future land use map for the “Focus Element” of Sub Area #1, as shown in pink on Figure 4. Note that the Focus Element included the Walkerview project area (former Village Center) plus the “Walker Wedge” lots west of Walker Avenue and north of Northridge Drive.

**Figure 4: Focus Element – Sub Area #1**



The Focus Element also included land north of 3 Mile Road extending westerly from Bristol Avenue through the Meijer corporate campus. Certain lots in this area required updates to future land use classifications based on historical and existing operations.

Note that while the entire Sub Area #1 study boundary was open for discussion, master plan details outside of the Focus Element had been affirmed as current by the planning commission during Work Session #1. As such, content approved in the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan outside of the Focus Element would remain official Walker master plan policy.

Walker staff established the informational backbone for Work Session #2 by providing the planning commission with multiple “decision support” maps and tables that displayed the following:

Figure 5	Current Master Plan Future Land Use Map
Figure 6	2015 Zoning Map
Figure 7	Wetlands, Creeks, & 2' Contours Map
Figure 8	2012 Aerial with 2014 Parcels Map
Figure 9	Water, Sewer & Road Precise Plat Map
Figure 10	2003 Land Use and Land Cover Map
Figure 11	2014 Tax Classification Summary Map



Figure 5: Current Master Plan Future Land Use Map

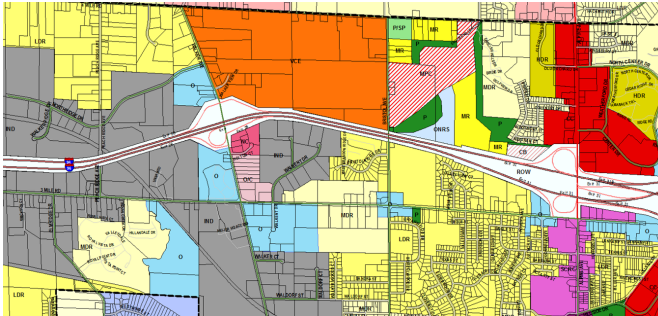


Figure 6: 2015 Zoning Map

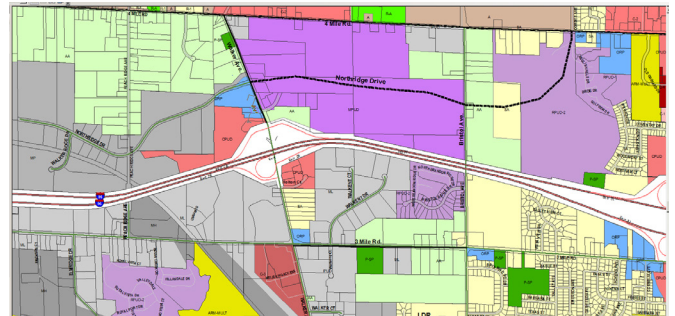


Figure 7: Wetlands, Creeks & 2' Contours Map

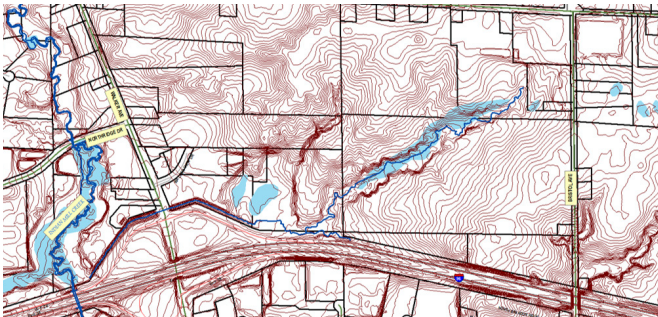


Figure 8: 2012 Aerial with 2014 Parcels Map

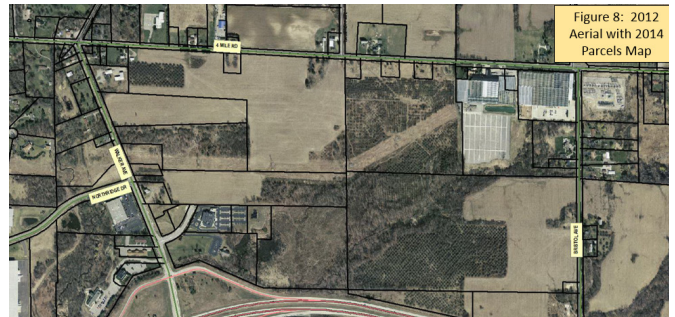


Figure 9: Water, Sewer & Road Precise Plat Map

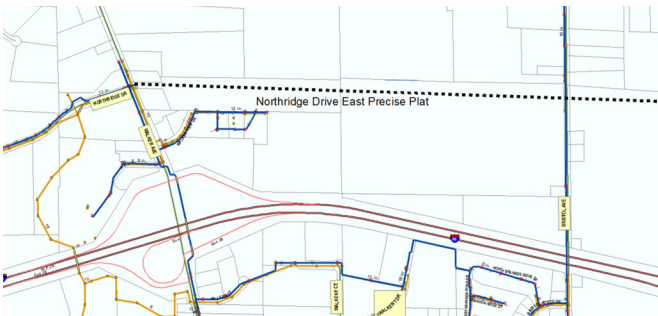


Figure 10: 2003 Land Use and Land Cover Map

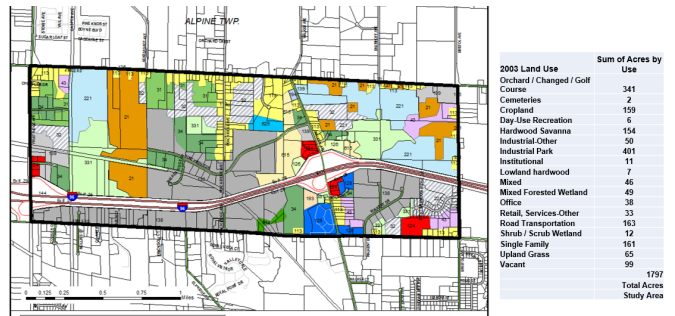


Figure 11: 2014 Tax Classification Summary Map

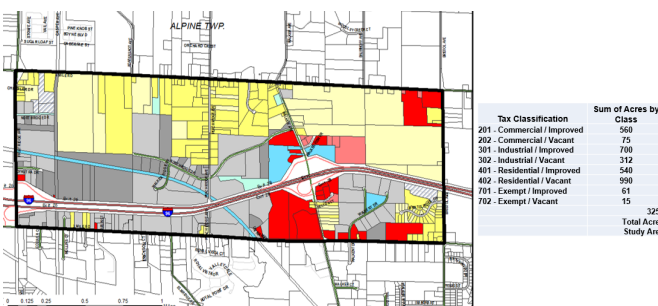


Figure 12: Future Land Use Plan – Option A

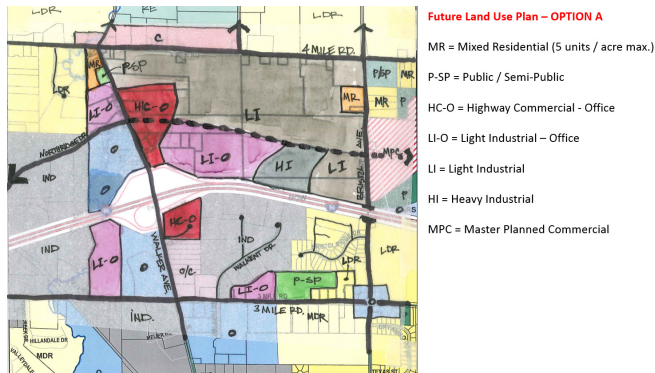


Figure 13: Future Land Use Plan – Option B

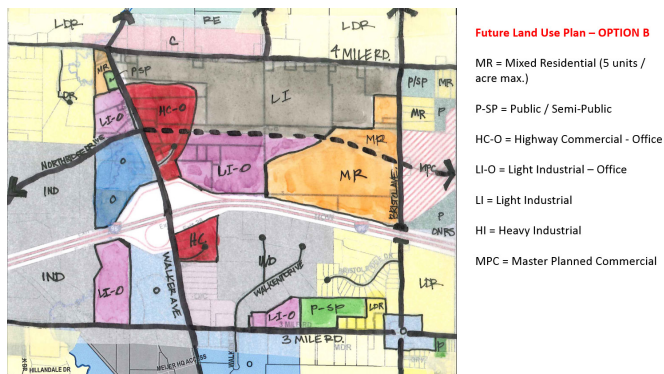
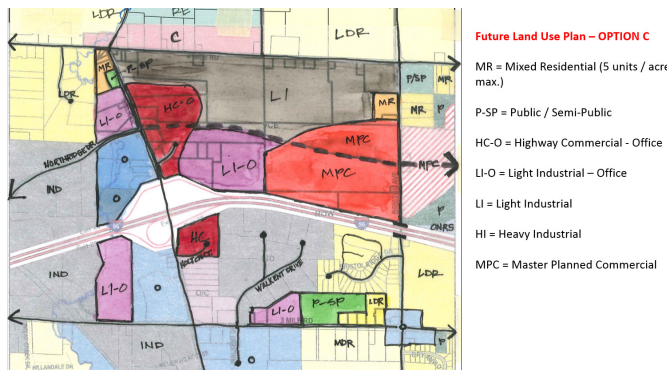


Figure 14: Future Land Use Plan – Option C



After substantive discussion of the decision support maps and data, the planning commission considered three potential Future Land Use Map options for the Sub Area #1 Focus Element, as follows:

1. Option A would change the former Village Center area from Village Commercial Entertainment to Industrial with a Light Industrial-Office area near Grand Rapids Ophthalmology and Highway Commercial-Office at Walker Avenue and Northridge Drive. The Walker Wedge was shown as transitioning from Mixed Residential on the north to Light Industrial-Office. Existing homes west of Bristol and south of Mast Greenhouses would be planned for Mixed Residential uses to match with the affirmed Sub Area #3B Land Use Plan (Figure 12).
2. Option B suggested the general arrangement of future land uses as option A except that the southeast quadrant of the former Village Center / current Walkerview site would be Mixed Residential with a maximum density matching what is planned for Sub Area #3B (Figure 13).
3. Option C suggested that the Walker Wedge be planned for Light Industrial-Office. Otherwise, Option C offered the general arrangement of future land uses as Option A, except that the southeast quadrant of the former Village Center / current Walkerview site would be Master Planned Commercial, matching what is planned east of Bristol Avenue for Sub Area #3B (Figure 14).

Please review Appendix E for a narrative summary of the planning commission's selection of Option A-1 as the new Future Land Use Map for the Focus Element of the Sub Area #1 study area. Option A-1 is shown in Figure 15 below, with Table 1 meeting the master-plan-to-zoning-district requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA).

Note that an area south of 3 Mile Road and east of Walker Avenue was added and the future land use designation updated to "LI-O Light Industrial Office" based on the current mixture of uses on these parcels. This addition includes the lot currently owned by the City of Walker south of 3 Mile Road and east of Walkent Drive. Also note that Northridge Drive was proposed to sweep further south to provide more spacing from nearby residences.



**Figure 15: Future Land Use Map for Focus Element of Sub Area #1**Option A-1 Categories

MR = Mixed Residential

MDR = Medium Density Residential

O = Office

O / C = Office / Commercial

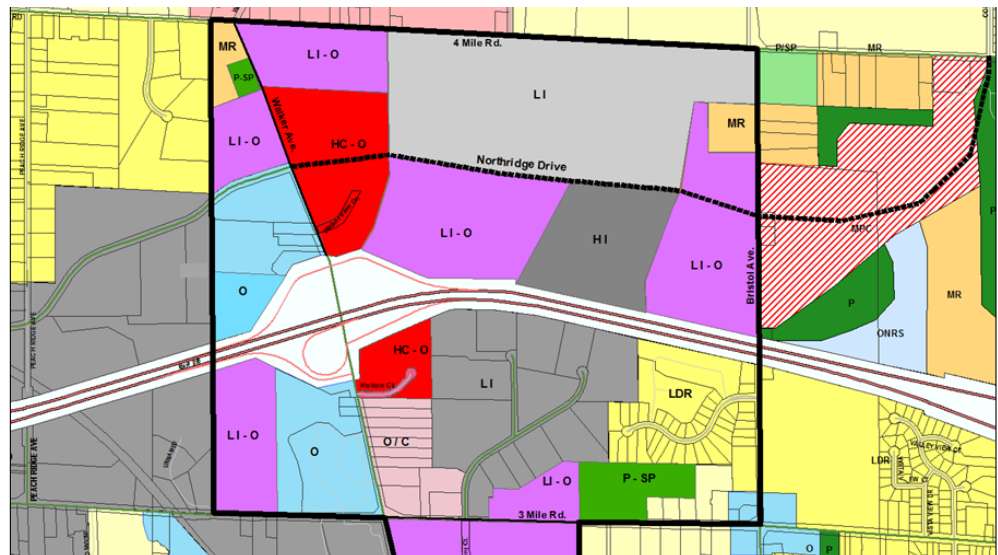
LI - O = Light Industrial - Office

LI = Light Industrial

HI = Heavy Industrial

HC-O = Highway Commercial - Office

P-SP = Public - Semi=Public

**Table 1: 2015 Land Use Plan (FLUP) – Subplan #1 Focus Element**

FLUP Label	FLUP Description	Walker Zoning Districts
LI-O	Light Industrial - Office	O, ML, MP, IPUD
HC-O	Highway Commercial - Office	O, C1-C3, CPUD
HI	Heavy Industrial	ML, MH, IPUD
LI	Light Industrial	ML, IPUD
P-SP	Public - Semi-Public	P-SP
LDR	Low Density Residential	A, S, SA, RPUD-1
MR	Mixed Residential	A, S, SA, A2, RPUD-1, RPUD-2
MDR	Medium Density Residential	A, S, SA, A2, RPUD-1
O	Office	ORP
O/C	Office / Commercial	ORP, C1-C3, CPUD

## Approving the Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan

The planning commission reviewed a more formal yet still draft subplan amendment on 2-18-15, the minutes of which are included as Appendix G. City staff led the planning commission through the draft document, noting the emphasis on the Focus Element and the chosen Option A-1 Future Land Use Plan.

After thorough discussion and debate, the planning commission decided to move the draft Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan to the city commission with a recommendation to release the document for distribution and advisory comments, per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

The city commission had previously asserted the right to final approval or denial of master plan or subplan amendments via Resolution #15-334, which is attached as Appendix F. After careful review and consideration, the city commission approved distribution of the draft plan via Resolution #15-345 on 3-23-14, which is attached as Appendix H.

The draft Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan was distributed for comments on 3-24-15 according to the direction noted in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The comment period ended on 5-26-15 without any comments received.

A planning commission public hearing was then held on 7-1-15 to consider the final draft of the Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan. Detailed minutes from this public hearing are attached as Appendix I.

On 7-1-15, Walker staff noted that the final draft subplan before the planning commission was substantially the same document as had been considered by the planning commission on February 18, 2015. Staff noted that some minor corrections were made by the city commission prior to distributing the final draft subplan to neighboring communities.

Walker staff noted that there was a property owner request to expand the Subplan #1 Focus Element / study area to include the properties at the southwest corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue. Walker staff clarified that the original Subplan #1 Focus Element / study area had been expanded by staff to include certain properties south of 3 Mile Road. This was done to clean up minor conflicts between the 1998 Future Land Use Map and the types of developments that had matured since that time. (See Figures 5 and 6)

Walker staff clarified that the request was from a property owner representing the ongoing sand mining operations on lots owned by the Wisniewski family. Robert Wisniewski was requesting that all of the sand mining lots switch from the future land use category of MDR - Medium Density Residential to I - Industrial. Public comment was mixed in response to this request, with an area business owner generally in support of Mr. Wisniewski's proposal and residents concerned about potential impacts from future industrial operations adjacent to their homes.

After significant discussion and deliberation, the planning commission directed staff to work with Mr. Wisniewski to prepare more substantive material for discussion at a future subplan work session, with additional public comment to be taken.

This next public work session was held on August 19, 2015 during a regular meeting of the planning commission. Robert Wisniewski presented a more detailed land use plan for his Stanley Orchards properties, located at the southwestern corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue. Detailed meeting minutes are attached as Appendix J.

The planning commission engaged with Mr. Wisniewski and members of the public regarding the current sand mining operations, the current mineral mining permit to operate the sand mine, the approved restoration plan for the sand mining area, and the future land use plan offered by Mr. Wisniewski for both the 41-acre sand mine lot and the forested 14-acre lot to the south. (See Figure 16)

**Figure 16: Wisniewski / Stanley Orchards Lot**



The planning commission again deliberated the pros and cons of the following:

- Labeling the entire Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards 41 acres for future industrial uses
- Keeping this property master-planned for medium density residential uses
- Finding some logical split between the two future land use categories, as industrial and potentially office would transition to residential uses adjacent to Bristol Avenue.

Walker staff reminded the planning commission and those in attendance that potential conflicts between industrial and residential land uses are not a new planning topic. The 1998 Walker Master Plan describes the challenges inherent to industrial land uses coexisting with a residential individual neighborhood. The 1998 Master Plan document contains several general recommendations to be applied during site plan review to ease the transition between industrial and residential uses.

Staff then noted that there may be an opportunity in this subset area of Subplan #1 to list implementation measures for application during future site plan reviews to ensure a better fit between the land uses. Staff also noted the design potential

inherent to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, instead of non-PUD site plan reviews, on large and transitioning parcels, such as the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lots.

The planning commission engaged in further deliberation and discussion with Walker staff and those in attendance. The planning commission felt it was important to conduct a more detailed land suitability analysis on the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards properties. On 8-19-15, the planning commission directed Walker staff to develop land-use concepts that considered residential buffering, a road network, tree preservation, existing and proposed topography, and master plan level options for future land uses. The planning commission then noted that a future public hearing would be held to consider these master planning options for the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lots and adjacent properties.

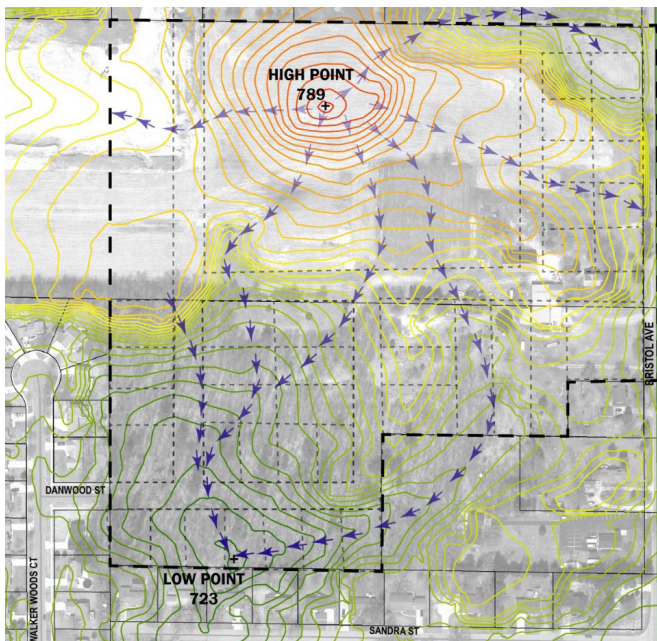
As a follow-up to the August 19, 2015 planning commission meeting, Walker staff requested that a working group of planning commissioners walk the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lots to gain a real-world understanding of existing and proposed uses on the subject properties. This working group consisted of Walker Planning Commissioners Tyler Korfhage and Al Parent, Walker City Engineer Scott Connors, Walker Staff Planner Dan Power, Walker Assistant City Manager Frank Wash and property owner Robert Wisniewski.

On October 2, 2015, the group started in the Mol Belting parking lot and proceeded uphill into the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards 41-acre lot. The group then walked east towards Bristol Avenue, comparing the existing and proposed topography, the location of the adjacent residential neighborhood and the overall land-use character of the area.

The group then proceeded first northerly and then westerly to the western border of the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards 41-acre lot. The ongoing sand mining operation was examined. The existing and proposed topography was again analyzed in comparison to the adjacent land uses along 3 Mile Road, along Bristol Avenue and along Waldorf Avenue.

The group decided that enough real world information was gathered to conduct the land suitability analysis as directed by the planning commission on August 19, 2015.

**Figure 17: Drainage Analysis for Key Development Areas**



Data source: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and REGIS, 2015, with 2003 topographic contours. Future lot and street lines are conceptual only.

### Wisniewski / Stanley Orchards Land Suitability Analysis

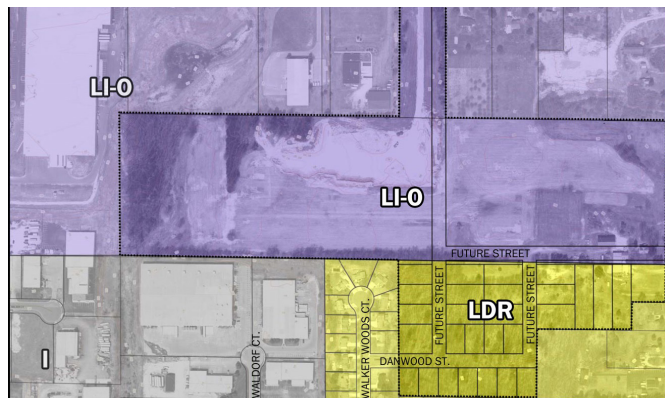
The ongoing sand mining operation on the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards 41-acre lot verifies the site's sandy soil profile. However, as with most Fruit Ridge / glacial moraine soils, the profile is not homogenous. An examination of the current sand mining operation on October 2, 2015 revealed the presence of varying layers of clay soils intermixed with the marketable sand. There are, however, significant opportunities for future infiltrative stormwater best management practices as the site urbanizes.

Figure 17 below displays 2003 topography and historical routes for drainage. The Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards sand mining operation will obviously change the topography in a significant manner. The approved mining reclamation plan converts the site into a valley cross-section as opposed to the historical hill. However, stormwater from the Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards 41-acre lot onto the 14-acre parcel will generally still move from north to south. The predominance of sandy soils on these two lots suggests that future urbanized stormwater should be infiltrated back into the ground.

Any future urban land uses on the two Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lots will be serviced by public sanitary sewer and public water main. Therefore, the suitability limitations inherent to private water well and septic systems do not apply on these properties.

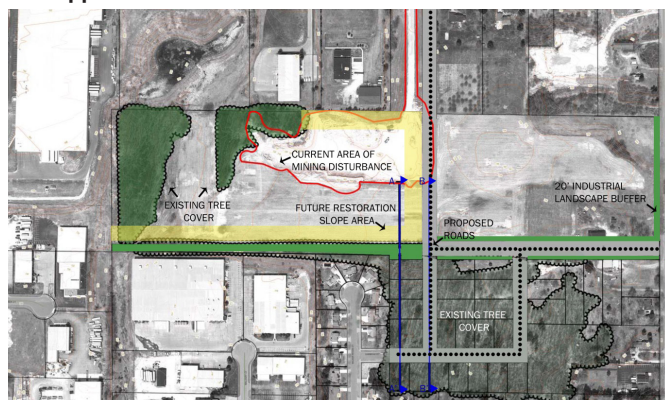


**Figure 18: Future Land Use Plan Option 1: Light Industrial / Office and Low-Density Residential.**



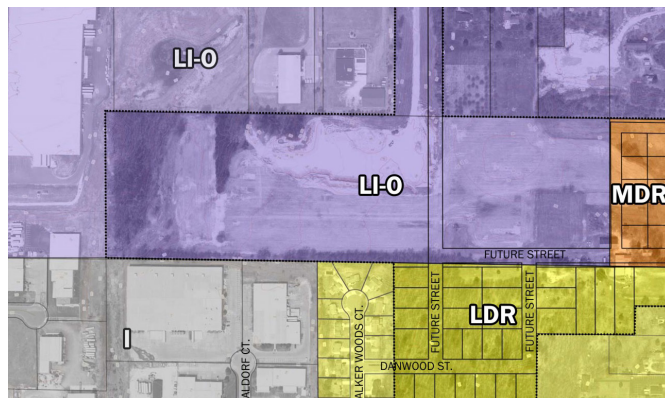
Parcel data source: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and REGIS, 2015, with 2014 Kent County orthophotography.

**Figure 19: Future Land Use Development Option 1: Light Industrial / Office and Low-Density Residential – Constraints and Opportunities**



Parcel data source: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and REGIS, 2015, with 2014 Kent County orthophotography.

**Figure 20: Future Land Use Plan Option 2: Light Industrial / Office, Low-Density Residential, and Medium-Density Residential**



Parcel data source: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and REGIS, 2015, with 2014 Kent County orthophotography.

The main challenge from a master planning standpoint continues to be the compatibility and practicalities of adjacent industrial and residential uses. The following graphics present two alternatives to consider when selecting the preferred future land use map for the properties at the southwest corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue.

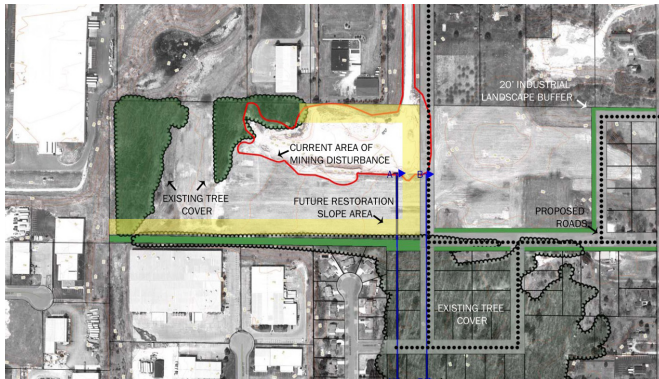
Figure 18 above depicts a scenario in which large Office and/or Light Industrial (LI-O) uses will occupy the entirety of the 41-acre Wisniewski sand mining parcel. In this scenario, a future public street right-of-way (the “north-south connector street”) will divide the LI-O areas to create a minimum of two new lots with light industrial or office zoning. To the south on the 14-acre lot, a public street network will connect to this right-of-way and to the extension of the Danwood Street right-of-way to enable the construction of up to 28 Low Density Residential lots (LDR). Figure 19 above suggests that, under the first future land use option, numerous constraints exist, including the need to ensure all current mining cells are restored to a 1:5 slope around the perimeter. Much of the west end of the mining site, as well as nearly all of the area to the south slated for LDR, are covered with dense tree cover. Due to steep slopes, the creation of accessible public rights-of-way will require a significant amount of earth movement.

Existing tree cover and topography should be preserved wherever possible. Industrial properties will be required to maintain or create a 20’ landscaping buffer where adjacent to residential properties. A 30’ no disturb buffer is currently in place along the south end of the sand mine per the requirements of Chapter 34, the Mineral Mining Ordinance.

Figure 20 above shows the 41-acre Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lot further divided to allow a transition from Light Industrial – Office (LI-O) future uses to Medium Density Residential future land uses (MDR) along Bristol Avenue, while maintaining Low Density Residential uses (LDR) to the south. This would allow the development of up to 10 MDR lots, served by a private or public street along the western and northern edges.

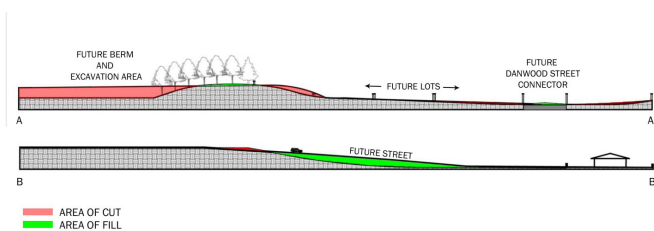
Figure 20 continues to project a hierarchical system of connected streets. Contextually appropriate traffic calming methods should be implemented to fit the land use transition areas. Keeping with adopted Walker policy, these future roads should be designed using “Complete Streets” details.

**Figure 21: Future Land Use Development Option 2: Light Industrial / Office, Low-Density Residential, and Medium-Density Residential – Constraints and Opportunities**

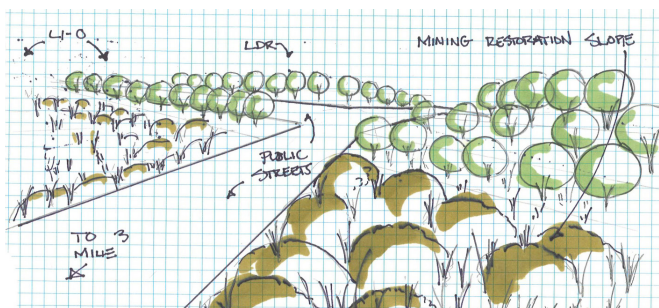


Parcel data source: Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and REGIS, 2015, with 2014 Kent County orthophotography.

**Figure 22: Future Lots and Streets: Anticipated Grading**



**Figure 23: North-South Connector Street View**



**Figure 24: Future Land Use Scenario Option 2: Medium Density Residential Lot and Landscaping Concepts**

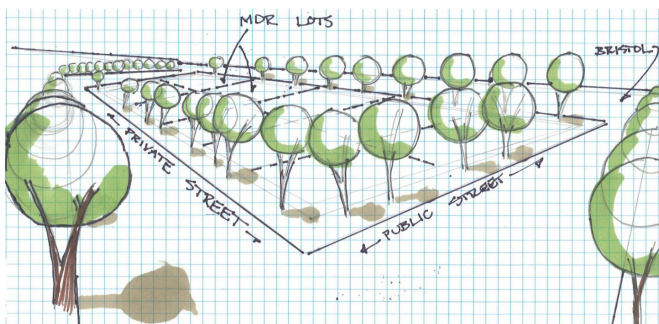


Figure 21 above repeats all constraints and opportunities that will exist per Figure 19. However, the MDR planned adjacent to Bristol Avenue increases the area of interaction between different land use types. A network of 20' industrial landscape buffers will be created where LI-O uses are adjacent to MDR lots along Bristol Avenue. Site specific building setbacks and other "PUD type" site plan review details should be implemented.

The future connection of Danwood Street into the 14-acre Wisniewski / Stanley Orchards lot will probably raise public controversy. However, this public street connection has been planned since the original Walker Woods subdivision was designed and will provide redundant access for residents and public safety vehicles. The existing Walker Woods cul-de-sac is approximately 1,200 feet in length, serving 26 single family homes.

Figure 22 above is a conceptual section drawing that depicts the anticipated grading necessary to accommodate lots and a public street right-of-way for a future public street that will head north from the future extension of Danwood Street. Significant earth work may be required to accommodate public street rights-of-way, while individual residential lots may have more grading flexibility. Figure 22 builds upon the constraints shown in plan view in both Figure 21 and Figure 19. The take-away point is that there will continue to be significant grading changes as the 41-acre and 14-acre Wisniewski / Stanley Orchards lots transition to LI-O, MDR and/or LDR land uses.

Figure 23 depicts a rough view of the potential landscape resulting from a restored sand mine operation, transitioning into a formal buffer and public street parkway which separates industrial and residential land uses. The viewpoint is from 3 Mile Road looking south into the current sand mining pit. This graphic displays conceptual future landscape plantings consistent with 1:5 slope restoration and the Walker "Complete Streets" design policy.

Figure 24 depicts the potential landscaping buffers, street rights-of-way, and lot layout associated with the application of Medium Density Residential (MDR) uses along Bristol Avenue. The design concepts are again consistent with Walker "Complete Streets" policy and landscaping details.

The take-away point from Figures 23 and 24 is that there should be significant emphasis on the following future site plan details:

- Hierarchical and interconnected streets
- Complete Streets & Context Sensitive Design
- Site specific setbacks and landscaping buffers
- Site specific use transitions for lighting, signage, drainage, etc.



## January 6th 2016 Planning Commission Work Session

On January 6, 2016, the planning commission held a public work session to review options for the Subplan #1 future land use plan, specific to the lots at the southwest corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue. The two Wisniewski/Stanley Orchards lots were the main features of this master planning discussion. Appendix K contains the planning commission meeting minutes from 1-6-2016.

Figure 25 is a 2015 aerial image flown by Solum Imaging for the Walker Mineral Mining Review Board. This image served as the backdrop for discussion at the work session

**Figure 25: 2015 Aerial / SW Corner 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue – Looking East**



**Figure 26: Approved 2016 Future Land Use Map for SW Corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue**



Planning Commissioners engaged the public and the owners of the Wisniewski / Stanley Orchards lots in a strategic land use discussion. Topics covered included public street interconnectivity, drainage management, buffering between land uses, ongoing sand mining activities and maintenance of existing neighborhood character.

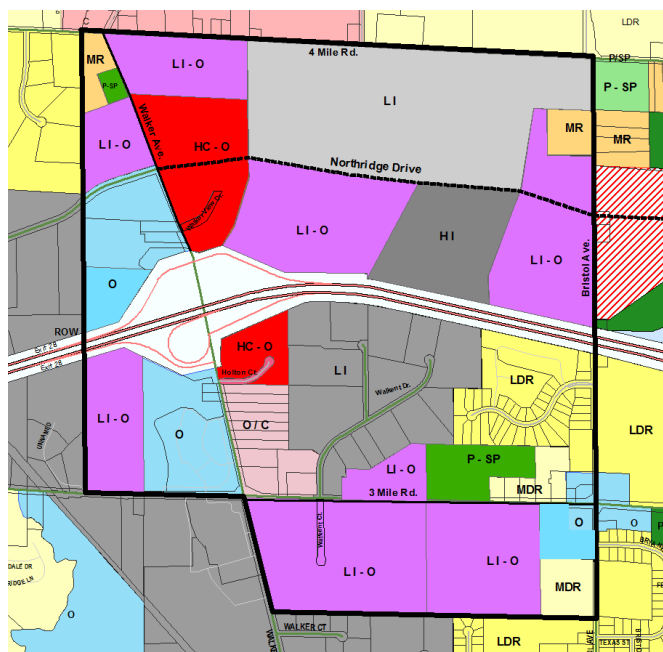
The planning commission then crafted an “Option 2-A” as the chosen future land use map for the southwesterly corner of 3 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue. This map is shown below as Figure 26.

On Figure 26, the planning commission clarified the general location of future land use categories. This area has been, and will continue to be, defined by transitions between industrial, office and residential uses of varying densities. Future rezoning decisions should be based on Figure 26. However, reasonable flexibility should be applied based on the content of specific future rezoning and site plan applications.

It will be very important to filter future rezoning applications and site plan reviews through the implementation items found at the end of this report.



Figure 27: Adopted 2016 Future Land Use Map for Subplan #1



## January 6th 2016 Planning Commission Resolution Approving 2016 Subplan #1 Master Plan Update and Report

After clarifying the content of Figure 26, the planning commission next passed Resolution 16-1, which is attached as Appendix L. This Resolution approved the content of this report as an official update to the City of Walker Master Plan. As such, Figure 27 below shows the updated Future Land Use Map for Subplan #1.

Table 2 below relates the future land use categories shown on Figure 27 to actual zoning districts in the city of Walker. Table 2 meets the master-plan-to-zoning-district requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA).

Table 2: 2016 Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) Zoning Districts – Subplan #1

FLUP Label	FLUP Description	Walker Zoning Districts
LI-O	Light Industrial – Office	O, ML, MP, IPUD
HC-O	Highway Commercial – Office	O, C1-C3, CPUD
HI	Heavy Industrial	ML, MH, IPUD
LI	Light Industrial	ML, IPUD
P-SP	Public – Semi-Public	P-SP
LDR	Low Density Residential	A, S, SA, RPUD-1
MR	Mixed Residential	A, S, SA, A2, RPUD-1, RPUD-2
MDR	Medium Density Residential	A, S, SA, A2, RPUD-1
O	Office	ORP
O/C	Office / Commercial	ORP, C1-C3, CPUD

The Walker City Commission reviewed the final Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan, as approved by the planning commission, on January 25th, 2016 and officially adopted the document via Resolution 16-381, which is attached as Appendix M

## Subplan #1 Implementation Items

- According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), the proper term for a Sub Area Plan should be a “Subplan.” As such this document will be implemented as the Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan. Historical comments and comparisons will continue to reference the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan.
  - Content approved in the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan outside of the 2015 Focus Element, shown on Figure 27, will remain official Walker master plan policy.
- Subplans set the stage for the implementation of site plan details, zoning decisions, infrastructure improvements, regional cooperation efforts, community engagement, economic development, capital budget priorities, parks and recreation upgrades and natural resources management.

The 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan contained significant and carefully explained directions to future decision makers regarding site specific implementation details. The parts of Sub Area #1 outside of the 2015 Focus Element should still be filtered through those implementation details. This is why the 2006 Sub Area #1 is included as Appendix A. In many ways, the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan is still a living and current master planning document for the City of Walker.

However, the Focus Element updates as identified in this report, and based on Figure 27 and Table 2, should take the place of the location-based concepts and site specific details described in the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan.

The first level of what is commonly referred to as Edge Matching / Regional Planning should be implemented as follows:

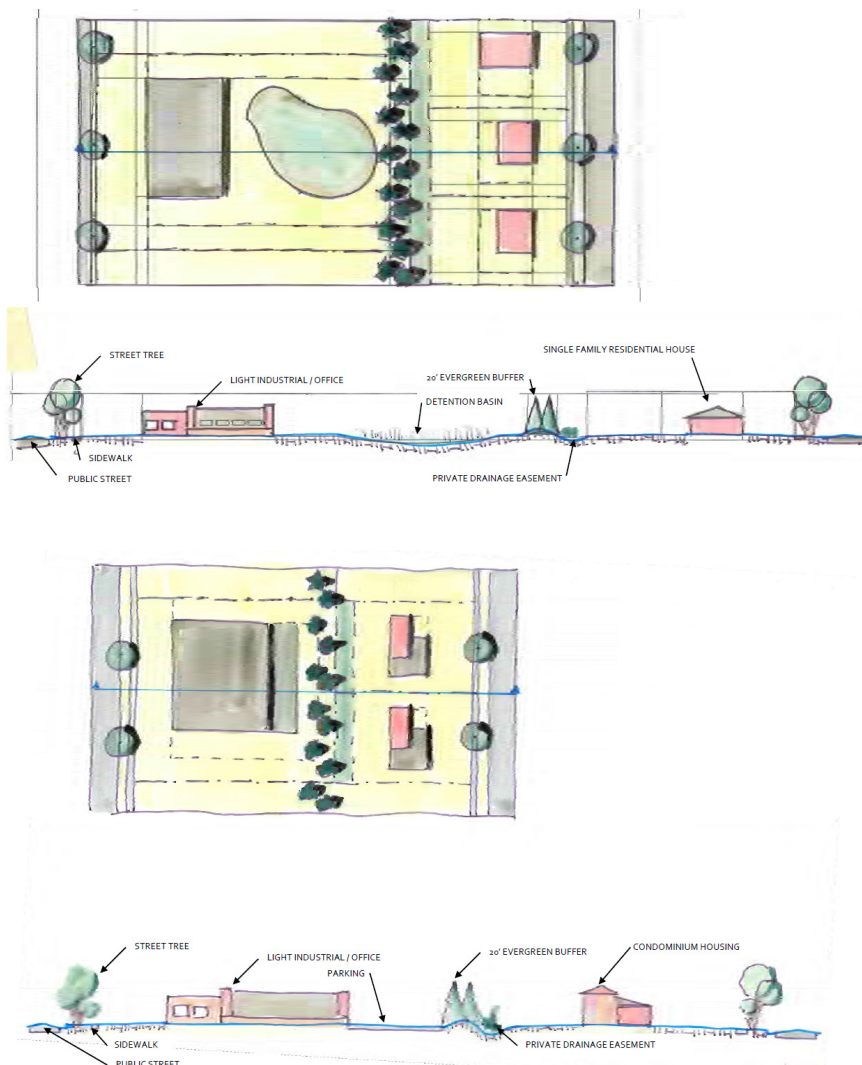
- Public Water. Future public water services should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the City of Grand Rapids, Alpine Township and the Plainfield Water System.
- Public Sanitary Sewer. Future public sanitary sewer services should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the City of Grand Rapids, Alpine Township, the Kent County Health Department and the North Kent Sewer Authority.
- Complete Streets. Future street, bridge and highway projects should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the Kent County Road Commission, Alpine Township and MDOT. Based on Context Sensitive Design principles, the details of Complete Streets best management practices should be constructed, especially on local streets.
- Roads and Highways. Future street, bridge and highway projects should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the Kent County Road Commission, Alpine Township and MDOT. A system of interconnected and hierarchical roadways should be planned and constructed. Access management principles should be implemented during local site plan reviews. Further improvements to the intersections of Walker Avenue and 4 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue and 4 Mile Road should be studied and constructed.
- Compatible adjacent land uses and aesthetics. The City of Walker and Alpine Township should review plans together to ensure that:
  - Landscaping and buffering along 4 Mile Road will improve the public streetscape and soften views of existing and future development.
  - Future land use categories and zoning districts along 4 Mile Road will “edge match” and minimize the potential for land use conflicts.
- Stormwater and natural resources management. The City of Walker, Alpine Township, the Kent County Drain Commission and MDEQ should partner on watershed-based planning and implementation measures relatives to stormwater management, localized floodplain restrictions, wetland preservation and natural habitat protection.

Specific to the final and expanded Focus Element, and based on Figure 27 and Table 2, the following implementation measures should be enforced by the City of Walker Planning Commission, based on the general directions noted in the Edge Matching / Regional Planning statements.

- The localized public streetscape will be carefully designed with landscaping and buffering methods to soften views of existing and future development projects.
- A public sidewalk system will be constructed on both sides of all existing and future public roads.
- Northridge Drive will be constructed from the current intersection with Walker Avenue easterly to a new intersection with Bristol Avenue. (The Precise Plat for Northridge Drive east of Walker Avenue has been officially adjusted to meet the location shown on Figure 25.)

- Planned Unit Development zoning should be used wherever practical, and especially on vacant properties, to ensure that new development is carefully designed and coordinated with surrounding properties.
- The construction of new parks and recreation features should match the Action Program of the current City of Walker Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Public water and sanitary sewer mains, tanks and service lines will be constructed. A new public water tank will be constructed. The need for these improvements will be quantified by engineering studies.
- Stormwater will be controlled according to current ordinances and laws. Larger regional basins will be preferred. Stormwater infiltration will be encouraged. Low Impact Design methods should be implemented to address both water quality and water quantity.
- Localized floodplain elevations should be used to determine the lowest floor levels for new and repurposed buildings.
- Updated wetland mapping should be used to protect natural features and stormwater recharge areas.
- Public transit extensions should be studied and implemented in partnership with ITP / The Rapid.
- Much of the Subplan #1 area consists of transitional land uses...past, present and future. As such, careful attention to design details will be of paramount importance during future site plan reviews to ensure site compatibility and neighborhood resilience.

The following illustrations portray many of the components noted in this implementation section, particularly for transitions between land uses.



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# 2.

## 2019 Subplan #1-A: Future Land Use Plan

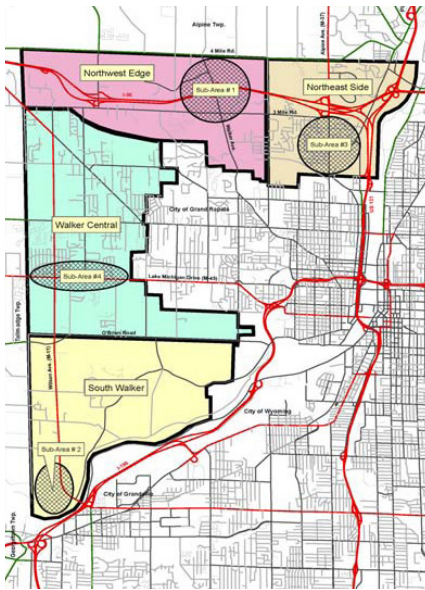
# 2019 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

Final and Official: 2.25.2019

## Development of the 2019 Subplan #1-A Master Planning Process

Figure 1: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map



The City of Walker places significant emphasis on the community planning process. The last official “Walker Master Plan” was approved in 1998. However, since that time, the City has been in an almost-continuous state of master plan review, evolution and subplan implementation. And, starting in 2018, the City embarked on a full update to the 1998 Walker Master Plan.

As part of this “Walker 2040 Master Plan” effort, City staff have suggested a continuation of the subplan / neighborhood planning process.

In 2005, City officials recognized the diversity of neighborhoods in Walker and created the map shown here as Figure 1. Based on these general neighborhood boundaries, focal point Sub Area Plans were developed and adopted in 2006 and 2007. These specific area “subplans” reflected the increasing importance of neighborhood-level planning and zoning decisions in Walker.

The first subplan was called the Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan. The main goal of the Sub Area #1 master planning process was to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that would be understood and supported by citizens while concurrently addressing the economic, social and environmental realities facing the City of Walker.

On August 16th, 2006, the original Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan was approved. This document is attached as Appendix A and serves as a useful and ongoing reference for the content of this document.

The community planning process and resulting land use recommendations adopted in 2006 for Sub-Area #1 provided a sound foundation on which to base future land use and zoning decisions. However, a major commercial / mixed use development plan, which spurred the planning for a “Village Center” in the Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan, failed to materialize beyond the rezoning stage, leaving the City with a large assembly of properties reserved for potentially unrealistic future land uses.

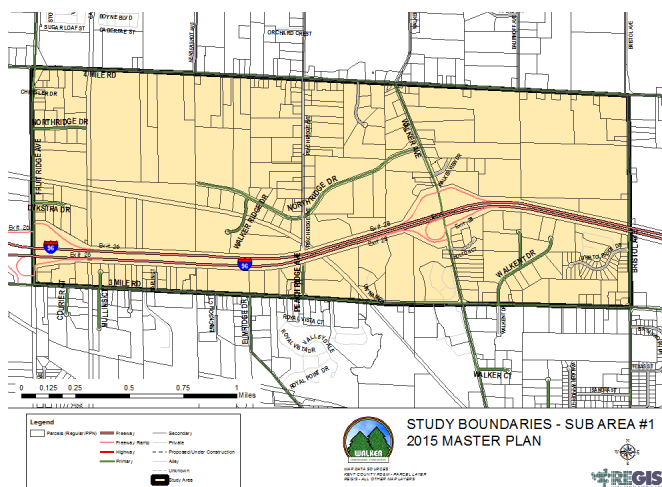
# The 2014-16 Subplan #1 Master Planning Process

A strategic limitation in the Walker community planning platform was formally identified in late 2014 subsequent to a new development plan for the +/- 250-acre former “Village Center” assembly of properties. The new “Walkerview” developers requested amendments to the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan to allow a mixture of commercial, office and industrial uses on land identified as the “Village Center - Entertainment” area.

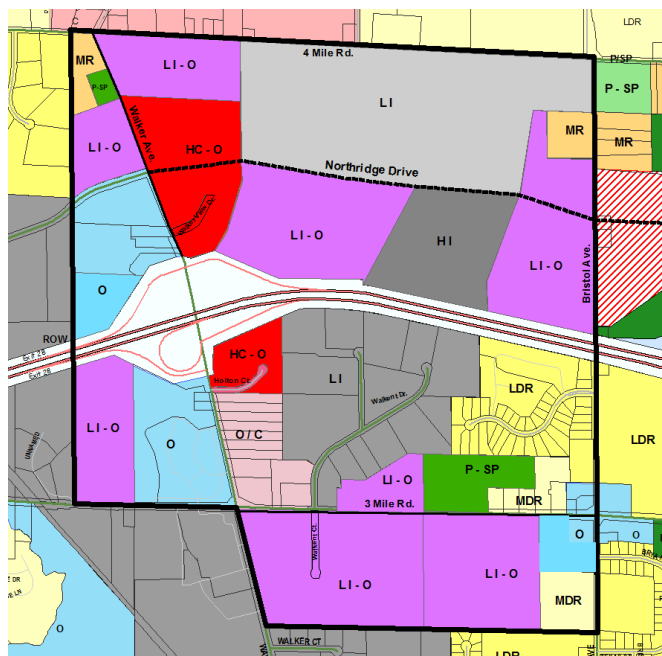
A new Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan was approved on January 25th, 2016, following over a year of public meetings and strategic planning sessions. The final report is attached to this document as Appendix B and serves as a valuable reference for the content of ongoing subplan and master planning work.

The 2016 Future Land Use Map for Subplan #1 is shown below as Figure 3. Note the outlined area, which we called the “Focus Element.”

**Figure 2: Study Boundaries - Sub Area #1, 2015 Master Plan**



**Figure 3: Adopted 2016 Future Land Use Map for Subplan #1**



## The 2018-19 Sub Area #1-A Land Use Planning Process

In late 2017, City staff approached the planning commission with a recommendation to initiate a subplan study of the “Northwest Edge” of Walker. Staff justified this recommendation based on the following:

- Increasing development interest along the precisely-platted route of North Ridge Drive.
  - A “West North Ridge” strategic planning process had been ongoing since 2015 via a working group with membership from Walker, MDOT, property owners, development interests, Consumers Energy and The Right Place.
- A need to review the 1998 and 2016 Future Land Use Map classifications from I-96 to 4 Mile Road, west of Walker Avenue to the Ottawa County line.

The planning commission agreed with staff and noted that residents, land owners and development interests would again play an important role in the subplan review process. These groups would provide input and act as a sounding board for the City. The guiding principles for public participation would again be to:

- Provide the public with opportunities to actively participate and be heard.
- Ensure the master planning process was transparent, fair and open to all.
- Establish respect for a diversity of ideas and opinions.



The planning commission approved the study area for Subplan 1-A, as shown below in Figure 4. The I-96 at Fruit Ridge interchange/bridge was noted as an important component for study by Walker and MDOT, given the regional transportation impacts.

It should be noted that the City had previously sent “Notice of Intent to Plan” documentation as required by the MPEA.

## Work Session #1 – March 28th, 2018

**Figure 4: 2018 Study Area - Subplan #1-A**

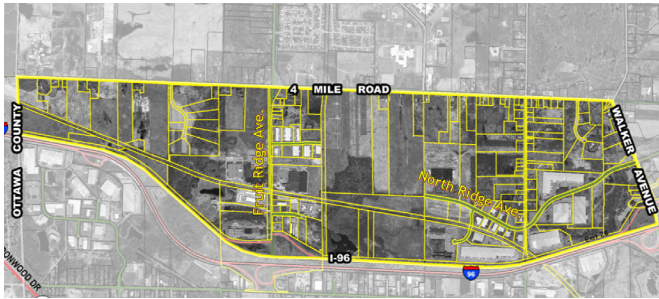


Figure 5 displays the parcel layer for the study area. The area contained 1,283 acres divided into 188 lots.

Figure 6 displays public utilities and easements in the study area. The REGIS public water main data did not show the extent of public water service along built sections of North Ridge Drive.

Significant public investment was recently made in a new water tower south of 4 Mile Road, which is shown a blue dot on Figure 6.

This water tower was planned to allow public water service west to Fruit Ridge Avenue, where a loop would be made to existing infrastructure.

Public sanitary sewer was planned years ago to service the study area based on topography.

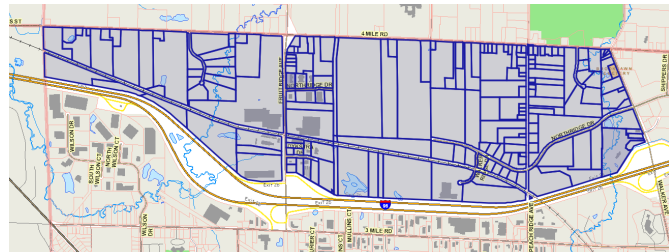
Figure 7 is a close-up of existing utilities and easements along the built sections of North Ridge Drive.

Note the water line detail at this scale and the link to the new water tank.

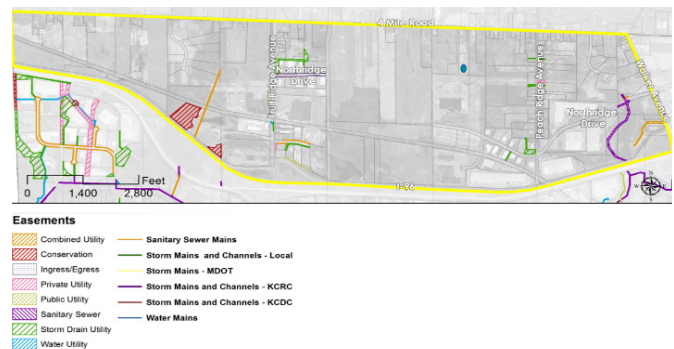
The planning commission held a master plan work session on March 28th, 2018. The meeting minutes are attached as Appendix C. The work session was interactive and constructive comments were received from many in attendance.

Staff began the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation, which is attached as Appendix D. Staff analyzed the study area using the following maps and figures.

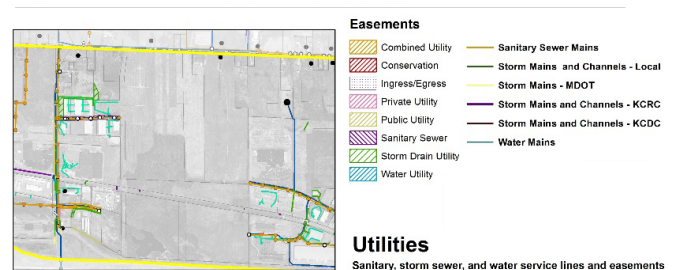
**Figure 5: Study Area Parcel Data**



**Figure 6: Study Area Utilities and Easements**



**Figure 7: Close-Up Study Area Utilities & Easements**





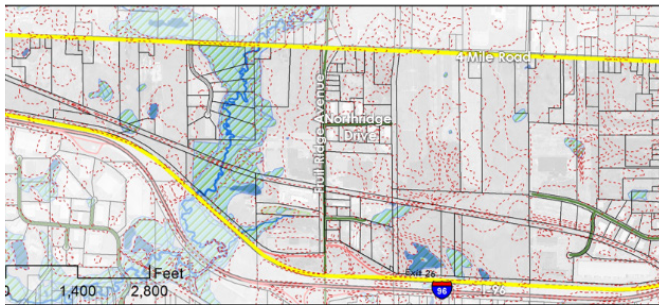
**Figure 8: Study Area Topo & Hydro**

Figure 8 displays topography and hydrography in the study area. Two floodplains and watersheds bisect the study area.

Topography is typical of the southerly Fruit Ridge. Small hills are bisected by localized drainage patterns.

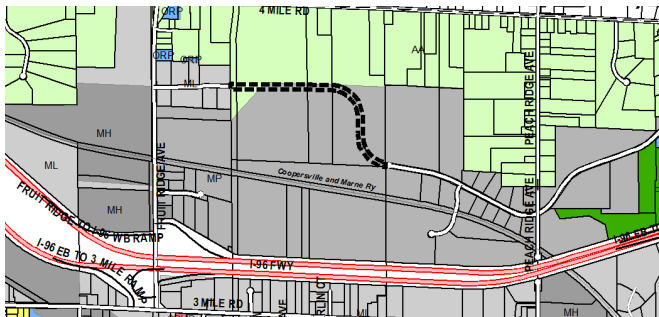
**Figure 10: North Ridge Precise Plat**

Figure 10 displays the "precisely platted" future route of North Ridge Drive through the "Focus Element". This precise plat is codified as Walker Zoning Ordinance 94-37.

Based on previous Figures, it becomes apparent that the connection of existing North Ridge Drive dead-ends will take careful planning, engineering and design.

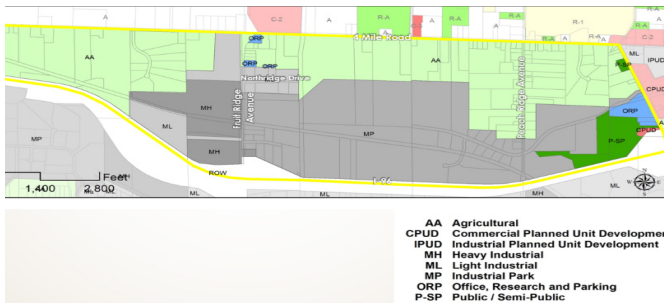
**Figure 12: Study Area Zoning (2018)**

Figure 12 displays the 2018 zoning classifications with the study area. We included zoning districts in Alpine Township (north of 4 Mile Road) for "edge matching" review. The study area is clearly an "urban edge". Community planning "on the edge" is a challenge, as the local rural heritage can seem incompatible with economic development.

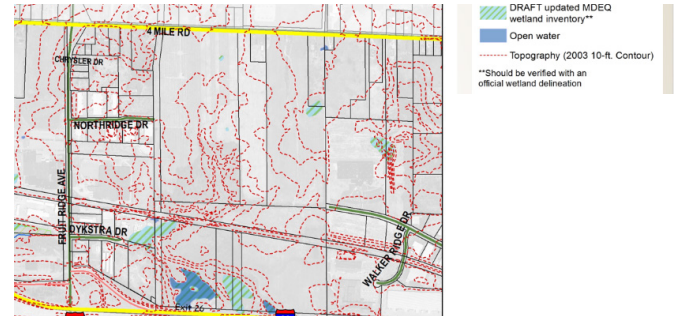
**Figure 9: Close-Up Topo & Hydro**

Figure 9 displays a close-up of topo and hydro between existing dead-ends of North Ridge Drive.

This "Focus Element" of Subplan #1 has long been planned for development, including residential and industrial.

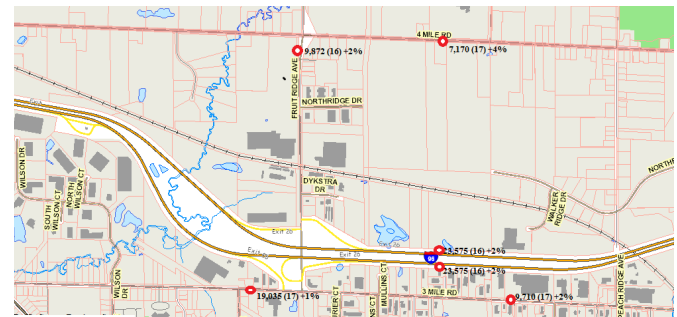
**Figure 11: Study Area Traffic Counts**

Figure 11 displays traffic counts on federal-aid roads during 2016 and 2017.

The study area has seen a significant increase in traffic and economic development post-recession.

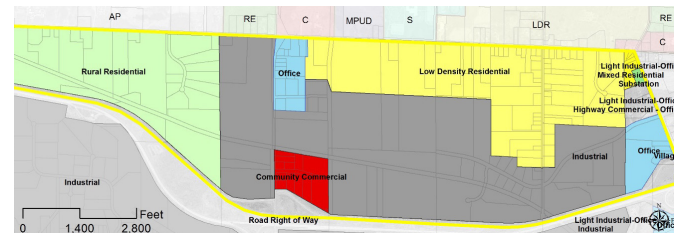
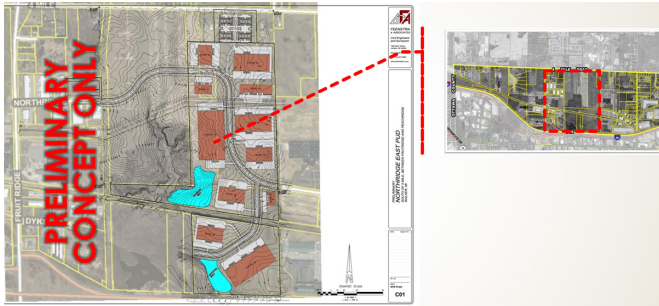
**Figure 13: Study Area Future Land Use Map (1998 & 2016)**

Figure 13 displays the current future land use categories in the study area. We again included Alpine Township's data to review edge matching compatibility. This is clearly a study area with a "hard edge," given the abrupt lines between residential uses and future development districts.

### Development Interest Concept Plan



While not included as a “Figure” in this report, the concept drawing below was offered by development interests for the area south of 4 Mile Road, north of I-96 and between the current dead-ends of North Ridge Drive. This concept drawing was included in the staff presentation to illustrate potential projects within the study area.

Following the staff presentation, those in attendance were asked to provide their future land use plan desires for the study area. Some attendees used trace paper over parcel maps to draw their concepts. Others chose to either write comments on a whiteboard or verbalize their opinions to planning commissioners, elected officials and staff.

Work Session #1 was called to a close per the meeting minutes. Staff was directed to compile comments received from attendees and to create documentation and presentations for a Work Session #2.

### Work Session #2 – June 13th, 2018

The planning commission held a second Subplan #1-A work session on June 13th, 2018. The meeting minutes are attached as Appendix E. The agenda for this second work session included:

- Review of regional zoning, land use plans, utility districts and other community planning variables
- Review of public feedback from Work Session #1
- Consideration of future land use options, based on the previous two items.

The meeting format changed from an interactive, open house style to a more formal planning commission meeting.

Staff began the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation, which is attached as Appendix F. Staff analyzed the study area using the following maps and figures.

Figure 14 displayed the current future land use plan maps for the City of Walker and Alpine Township, which are adjacent along 4 Mile Road.

Staff opined that, generally speaking, the two communities have compatible future land use maps along the 4 Mile Road and Alpine Avenue corridors.

The Fruit Ridge Avenue corridor, in the opinion of staff, was also reasonably compatible, given the land uses north of 4 Mile Road and the corridor’s function as a regional alternative to M-37.

Figure 15 displayed the current zoning for Alpine Township and the City of Walker in and around the study area. Staff opined that each community appeared to be implementing its future land use map via zoning decisions and site plan reviews. This

Figure 14: Edge Matching – Master Plan Maps

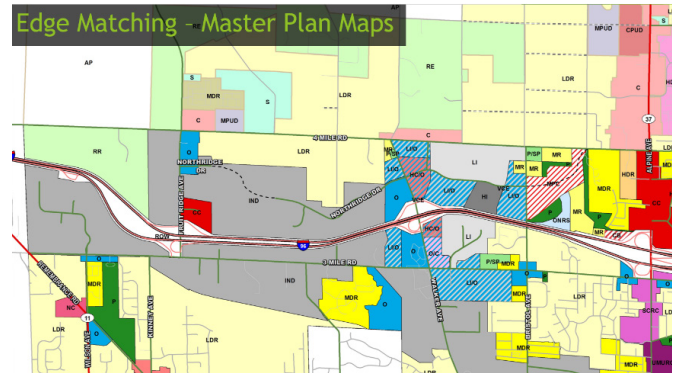
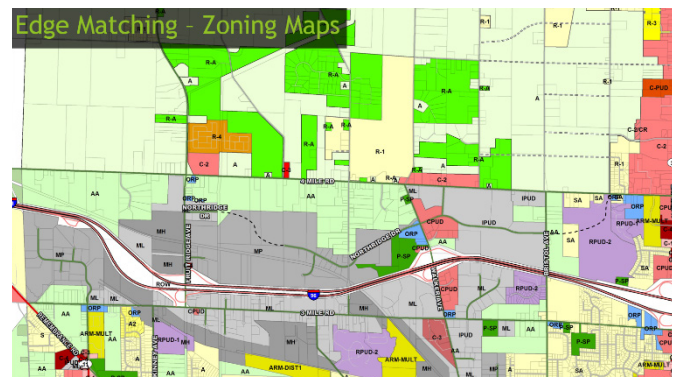


Figure 15: Edge Matching - Zoning Maps



meant development was tracking according to plan and with reasonable compatibility.

Figure 16 was displayed to show that Walker residential zoning south of 4 Mile Road and north of the North Ridge Drive precise plat extended to a depth of approximately 1,300 feet, stopping near the cross-country electrical transmission towers.

The planning commission had asked for this measurement to help determine what zoning depth might allow for reasonable residential development south of 4 Mile Road.

Figure 17 displays the planned public water service districts for Alpine Township and the City of Walker. Alpine Township is served by the Plainfield Water System. Walker is served by the City of Grand Rapids Water System.

Staff explained that districts might not be currently served by actual water mains. The districts are used for long-term capital planning and budgeting.

Figure 18 displays the planned service districts for public sanitary sewer. Alpine Township is served by the North Kent Sewer System. Walker is served by the Grand Rapids Sewer System.

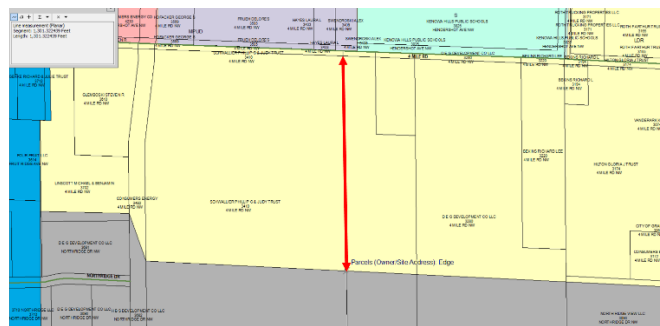
Staff again explained that districts might not equate to current service lines. Sewer districts are used for long-term capital planning and budgeting.

Staff explained that the take-away points, relative to the Subplan #1-A study area, could be summarized in this way:

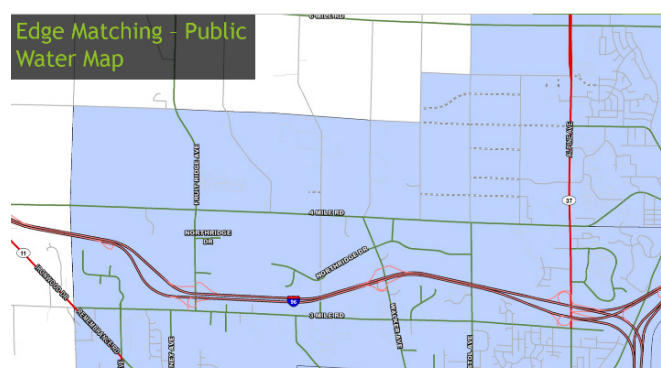
- Based on planned water and sanitary sewer districts, farmland preservation is not foreseen in or adjacent to the study area.
- Therefore, a reasonable future land development plan should be created for the study area.
  - Given the existing land uses in Subplan #1-A, a “Focus Element” should be targeted south of 4 Mile Road, north of I-96, and along the precisely platted route for North Ridge Drive.
  - Outside of the Focus Element, the current future land use map and associated uses should remain the same.

The planning commission next reviewed public feedback from Session #1, held on 3-28-18. Staff displayed the following two slides (Figures 19 and 20), which summarized feedback from the drawing exercises, whiteboard comments and conversational suggestions.

**Figure 16: Depth of Walker LDR Zoning**



**Figure 17: Regional Public Water Districts**



**Figure 18: Regional Sanitary Sewer Districts**

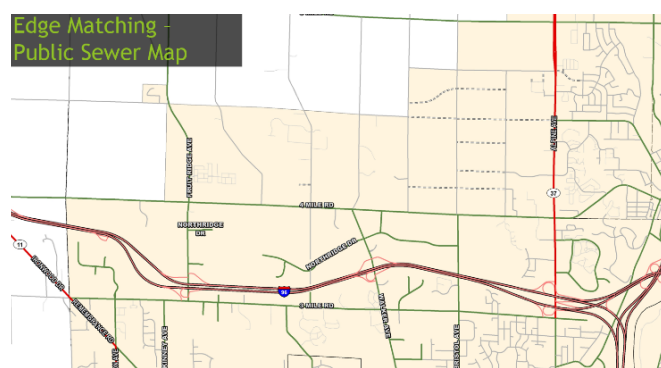




Figure 19:

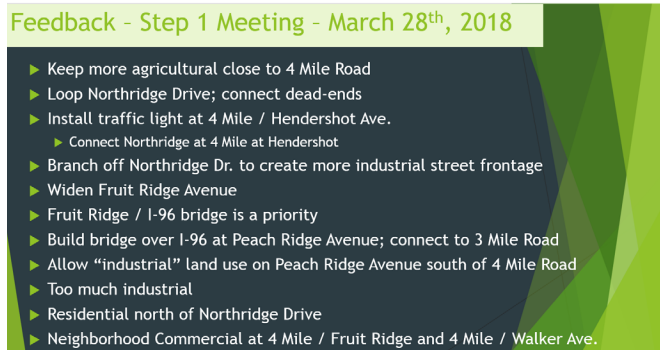
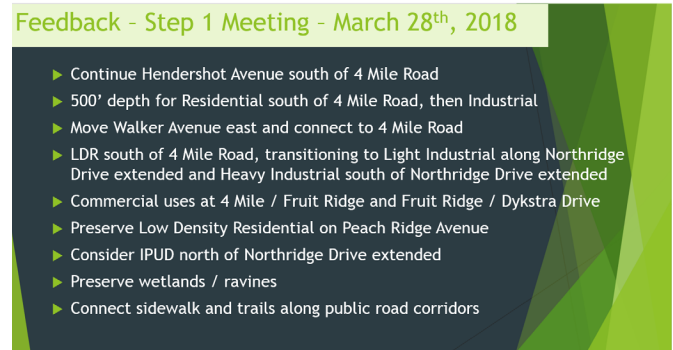


Figure 20:



As is often the case, public feedback represented competing interests and differing points of view. This is considered an essential part of the community planning process. The challenge is to weave public feedback into the eventual master plan in a manner that is reasonable and acceptable to the community.

The planning commission discussed the feedback and compared their initial opinions. More detail can be found in Appendix E.

Walker staff next presented the following three future land use plan options, based on public feedback, existing land uses, utility service districts, traffic system planning, and previous edge-matching information.

Figure 21:

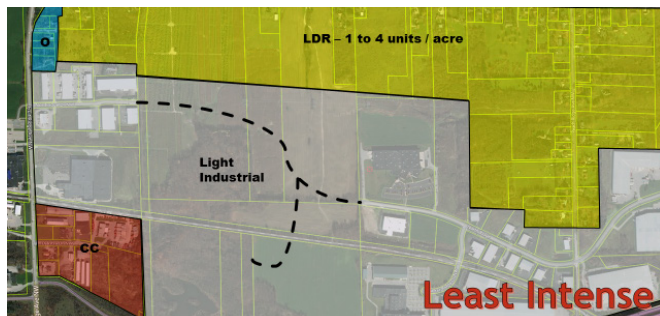


Figure 21 displays the “Least Intense” future land use plan for the Focus Element area. This option is very similar to the existing future land use map.

North Ridge Drive is displayed per the precise plat, with a “hook” road crossing the railroad to provide access to lots along I-96.

Figure 22:

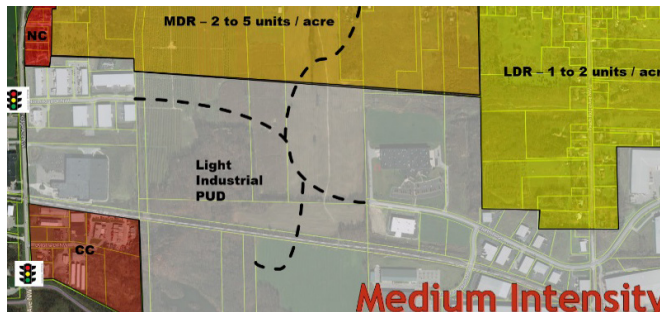


Figure 22 displays a “Medium Intensity” future land use option for the Focus Element. Medium Density Residential (MDR) replaces the LDR south of 4 Mile Road. LDR remains along Peach Ridge Avenue. Neighborhood Commercial (NC) replaces Office at the southeastern corner of 4 Mile Road and Fruit Ridge Avenue. Existing and planned traffic signals have been added.

Figure 23:

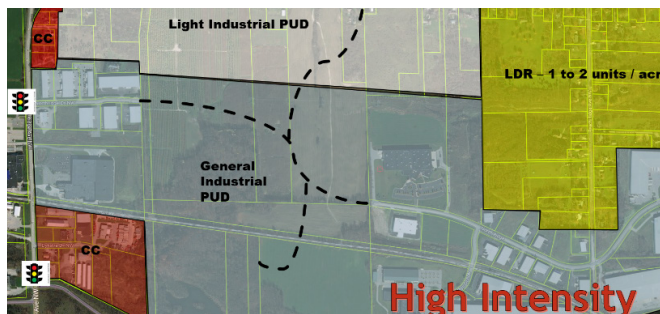


Figure 23 displays a “High Intensity” future land use option for the Focus Element.

Light Industrial Planned Unit Development (PUD) now extends to 4 Mile Road. This transitions to General Industrial PUD south to I-96. Transportation infrastructure is again shown.

#### Key

- LDR – Low Density Residential
- O – Office
- CC – Community Commercial

Figure 24:

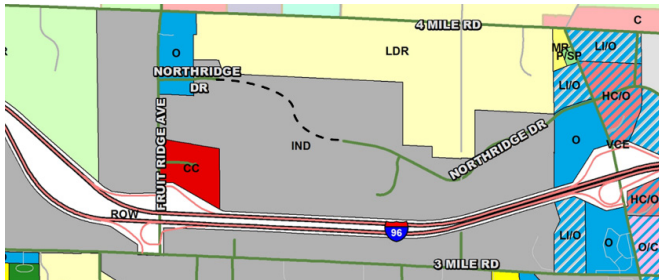
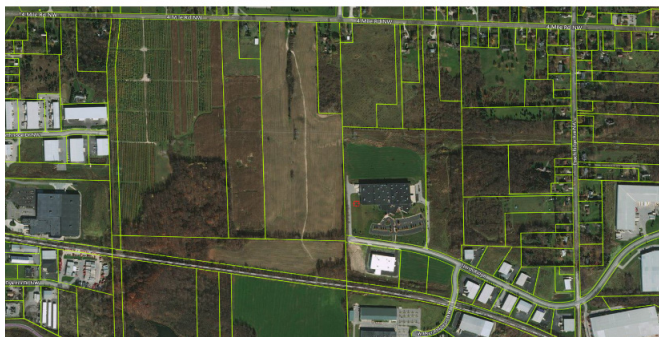


Figure 25: Focus Element Aerial

**Author's Note:**

Although not included at Subplan #1-A presentations, staff offers Figure 26 to provide the reader with additional land use context. This Figure was originally developed for the 2016 Subplan #1 update. The Subplan #1-A study area is outlined in red dashed lines.

Figure 26:

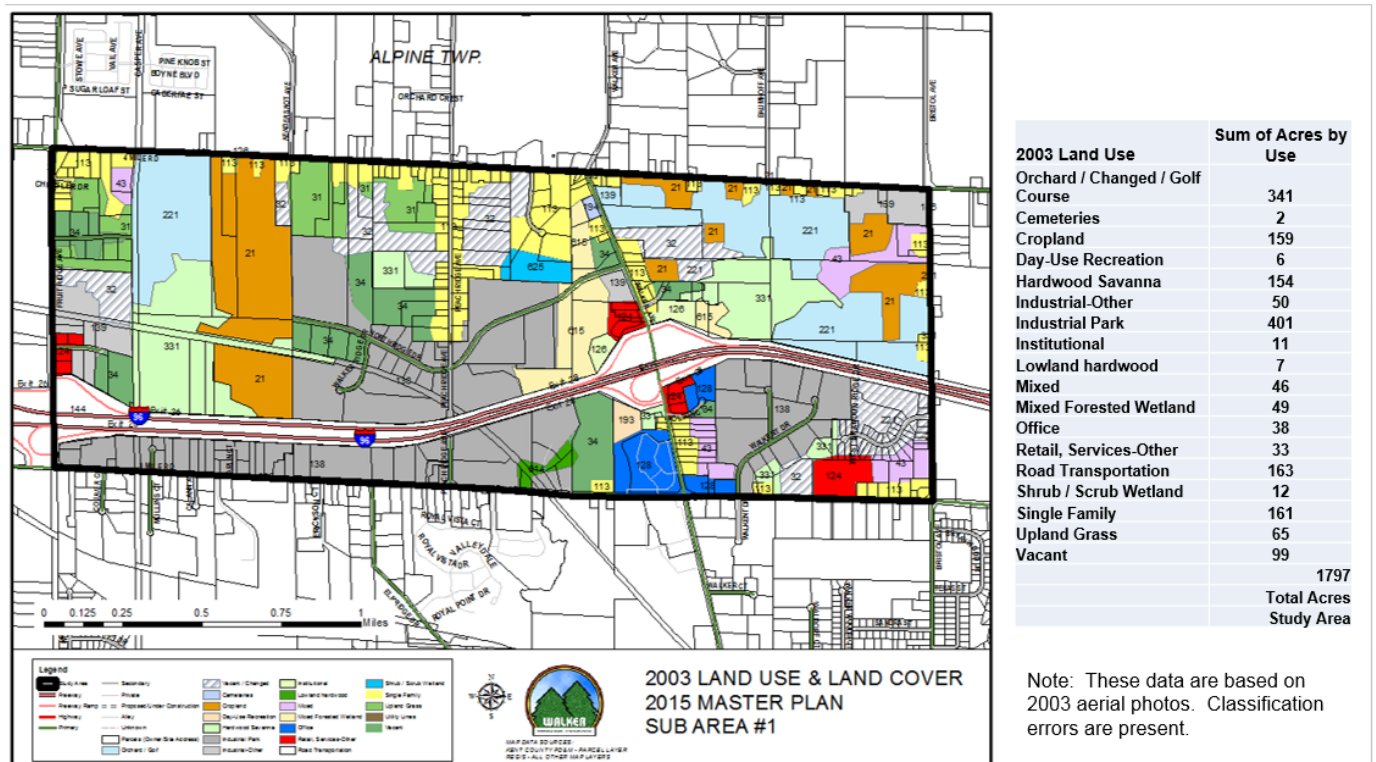




Figure 27: Subplan #1-A Focus Element

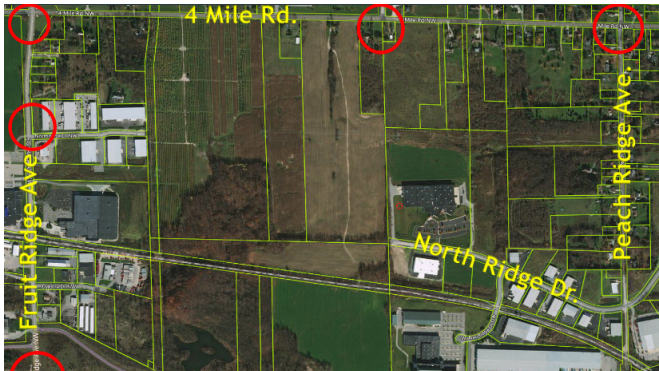


Figure 28:

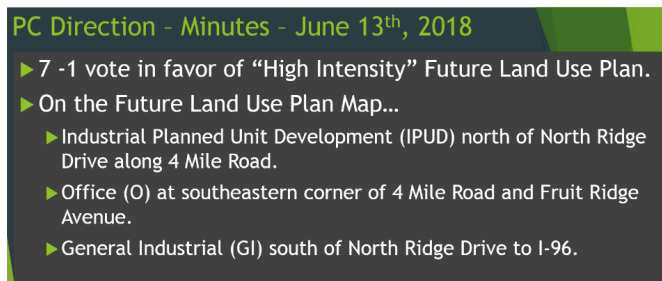


Figure 29:

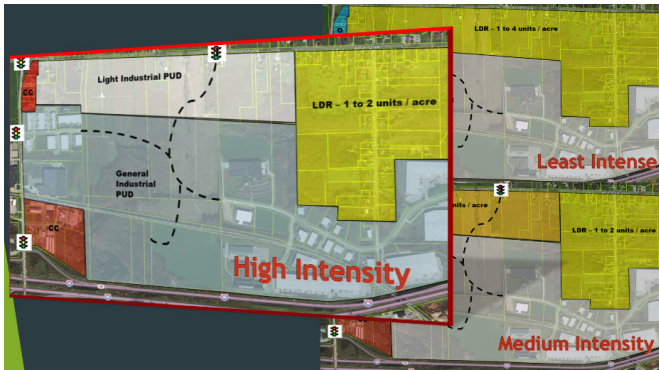
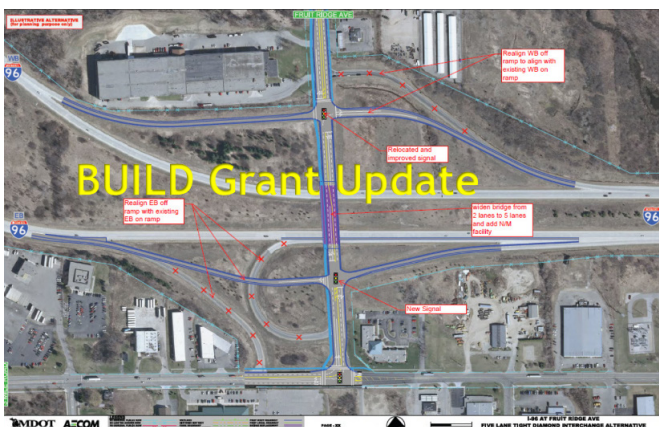


Figure 30: BUILD Grant Plan



## Work Session #3 – September 19th, 2018

The planning commission held a third Subplan #1-A work session on September 19th, 2018. The meeting minutes are attached as Appendix G. The agenda for this third work session included:

- Review of content and progress from Work Sessions #1 and #2
- Consideration of a preferred future land use map and associated text details.

The meeting format was a typical planning commission meeting. Staff began the session with a PowerPoint presentation, which is attached as Appendix H. Staff analyzed the study area using the following maps and figures.

Figure 27 displays the “Focus Element” within the Subplan #1-A study area. The red circles identify important intersections that interact with and enable present and future land uses.

This graphic reoriented the planning commission to the specific study area.

Staff then displayed Figure 28, which lists the direction provided to staff by the planning commission at Work Session #2.

Figure 29 displays the selected “High Intensity” future land use plan, subject to the planning commission’s noted direction.

The background shows the two other future land use options considered on 6-13-18.

Walker staff next brought the planning commission up to current regarding the following three items of interest to the Subplan #1-A study area:

- BUILD Grant Application for I-96 / Fruit Ridge Interchange
- North Ridge Precise Plat Amendment Request
- Signal now operational at 4 Mile Road and Hendershot Avenue

Figure 30 is the plan submitted by MDOT to the Federal Highway Administration via a BUILD grant application.

This BUILD grant application was a joint effort between MDOT, Walker, The Right Place, legislators, business owners and other supporters.

If approved, the project would modernize the I-96 / Fruit Ridge interchange. The bridge would be replaced and the ramps would be improved





Figure 35:

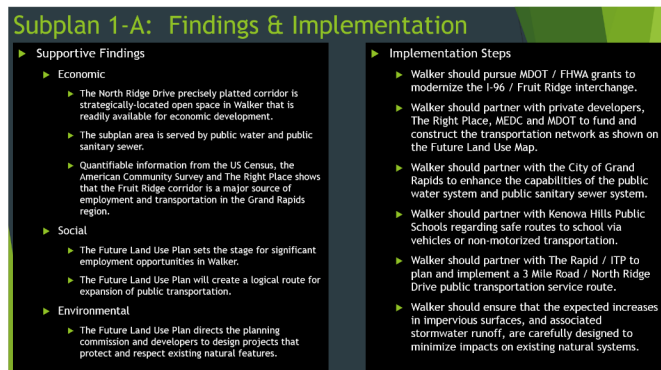


Figure 35 explains the components of the future land use map in semi-narrative format. To meet MPEA requirements, existing zoning districts have been linked to each future land use category.

The LDR category links to all single-family zoning districts in the City of Walker. However, the maximum density will be limited to 1-2 units per acre.

Walker staff reminded the planning commission and those in attendance that potential conflicts between industrial and residential land uses are not a new planning topic. The 1998 Walker Master Plan describes the challenges inherent to industrial land uses coexisting with residential neighborhoods. The 1998 Master Plan document contains several general recommendations to be applied during site plan review to ease the transition between industrial and residential uses.

Staff then noted that there may be an opportunity in this Focus Element of Subplan #1-A to list implementation measures for application during future site plan reviews to ensure a better fit between the land uses. Staff also noted the design potential inherent to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, instead of non-PUD site plan reviews, on large and/or transitioning parcels via the application of the following:

- Hierarchical and interconnected streets
- Complete Streets & Context Sensitive Design
- Site specific setbacks and landscaping buffers
- Site specific use transitions for lighting, signage, drainage, etc.

Figure 36:

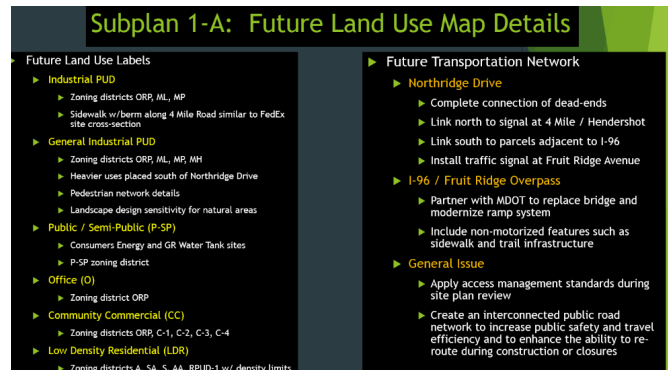


Figure 36 lists findings that support the draft Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan and, specifically, the Focus Element. A “triple bottom line” approach has been applied.

Figure 36 also lists several implementation steps for Subplan #1-A and the Focus Element. More implementation details are included at the end of this report.



## Distribution of the Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan

On 9-19-2018, as described in Appendix G, the planning commission decided to move this draft Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan to the city commission with a recommendation to release the document for distribution and advisory comments per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

**Note:** The city commission had previously asserted the right to final approval or denial of master plan or subplan amendments via Resolution #15-334, which is attached as Appendix I.

On October 8th, 2018, and after careful review and consideration, the city commission approved distribution of the draft Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan via Resolution #18-489, which is attached as Appendix J.

The draft Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan was distributed for comments on October 9th, 2018, according to the direction noted in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. The comment period ended on December 10th, 2018. No comments were received.

## Final Public Hearing and Approval

A planning commission public hearing was held on February 6th, 2019 per the MPEA to consider the final draft of the Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan. Detailed minutes from this public hearing are attached as Appendix K.

Walker staff noted that the final draft subplan before the planning commission was substantially the same document as had been considered by the planning commission on September 19th, 2018. Staff noted that some minor corrections were made by the city commission prior to distributing the final draft subplan to neighboring communities.

The planning commission, after careful deliberation, approved the 2018 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan on February 6th, 2019 via Resolution #19-1, which is attached as Appendix L.

The Walker City Commission reviewed the final Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan, as approved by the planning commission, on February 25th, 2019 and officially adopted the document via Resolution #19-509, which is attached as Appendix M.

## The Official 2019 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan

**Figure 37: Official 2019 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Map**

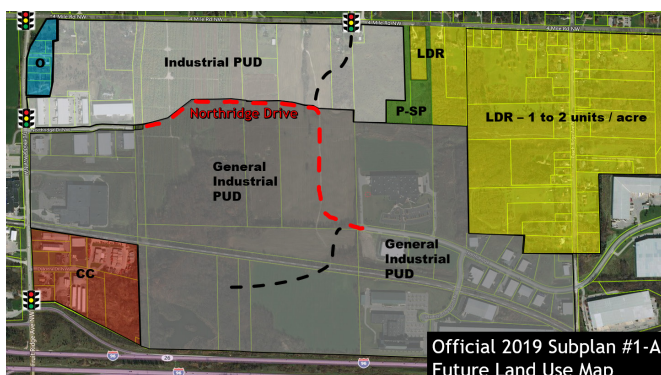


Figure 37 displays the official 2019 Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Map for the Focus Element. (Note that no changes were recommended outside of the Focus Element.) This figure provides transportation and land use guidance that should be implemented by City of Walker boards, committees and departments during rezoning requests, project reviews, capital improvement planning, grant writing, and the annual budget development process.

Figure 37 is an illustrative snapshot, subject to the Future Land Use Map Details listed in Figure 35. Supportive findings are displayed in Figure 36.

The following implementation items go deeper into the details required to fully plan, zone, design and develop the Subplan #1-A Focus Element.

## Subplan #1-A Implementation Items

- According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), the proper term for a Sub Area Plan should be a “Subplan.” As such this document will be implemented as the Subplan #1-A Future Land Use Plan.
- Content approved in the 1998 Master Plan (as updated), the 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan, and the 2016 Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan that fall outside of the 2019 Subplan #1-A Focus Element will remain official Walker master plan policy. See Figure 4 for the initial and entire Subplan #1-A study area.
- Subplans set the stage for the implementation of site plan details, zoning decisions, infrastructure improvements, regional cooperation efforts, community engagement, economic development, capital budget priorities, parks and recreation upgrades and natural resources management.

The 2006 Sub Area #1 Land Use Plan and 2016 Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan contain significant and carefully explained directions to future decision makers regarding site specific implementation details. The parts of Subplan #1-A outside of the 2019 Focus Element should still be filtered through those plan implementation details. This is why the 2006 Sub Area #1 is included as Appendix A and the 2016 Subplan #1 Future Land Use Plan is included as Appendix B. In many ways, those previous plans are still living and current master planning documents for the City of Walker.

However, the 2019 Focus Element updates as identified in this report should take the place of the location-based concepts and site-specific details described in previous future land use plans.

The first level of what is commonly referred to as Edge Matching / Regional Planning should be implemented as follows:

- **Public Water.** Future public water services should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the City of Grand Rapids, Alpine Township and the Plainfield Water System.
- **Public Sanitary Sewer.** Future public sanitary sewer services should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the City of Grand Rapids, Alpine Township, the Kent County Health Department and the North Kent Sewer Authority.
- **Complete Streets.** Future street, bridge and highway projects should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the Kent County Road Commission, Alpine Township and MDOT. Based on Context Sensitive Design principles, the details of Complete Streets best management practices should be constructed, especially on local streets.
- **Roads and Highways.** Future street, bridge and highway projects should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the Kent County Road Commission, Alpine Township and MDOT. A system of interconnected and hierarchical roadways should be planned and constructed. Access management principles should be implemented during local site plan reviews. Further improvements to affected intersections should be studied together, planned and then constructed.
- **Compatible adjacent land uses and aesthetics.** The City of Walker and Alpine Township should review plans together to ensure that:
  - Landscaping and buffering along 4 Mile Road will improve the public streetscape and soften views of existing and future development.
  - Future land use categories and zoning districts along 4 Mile Road will “edge match” and minimize the potential for land use conflicts.
- **Stormwater and natural resources management.** The City of Walker, Alpine Township, the Kent County Drain Commission and MDEQ should partner on watershed-based planning and implementation measures relatives to stormwater management, localized floodplain restrictions, wetland preservation and natural habitat protection.

Specific to the Focus Element, and based on Figure 37, the following implementation measures should be enforced by the City of Walker Planning Commission, based on the general directions noted in the Edge Matching / Regional Planning findings in this report.

- The localized public streetscape will be carefully designed with landscaping and buffering methods to soften views for existing neighbors and future development projects.
- A public sidewalk system will be constructed on both sides of all existing and future public roads.
- North Ridge Drive will be completed by connecting the current dead-ends.
- Planned Unit Development zoning will be used wherever practical, and especially on vacant properties, to ensure that new development is carefully designed and coordinated with surrounding properties.
- The construction of new parks and recreation features will match the Action Program of the current City of Walker Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Public water and sanitary sewer mains, tanks and service lines will be constructed. The need and location for these improvements will be quantified by engineering studies.
- Stormwater will be controlled according to current ordinances and laws. Larger regional basins will be preferred. Stormwater infiltration will be encouraged. Low Impact Design methods should be implemented to address both water quality and water quantity.
- Localized floodplain elevations will be used to determine the lowest floor levels for new and repurposed buildings.
- Updated wetland mapping will be used to protect natural features and stormwater recharge areas.
- Public transit extensions will be studied and implemented in partnership with ITP / The Rapid.
- Much of the Subplan #1-A area consists of transitional land uses...past, present and future. As such, careful attention to design details will be of paramount importance during future site plan reviews to ensure site compatibility and neighborhood resilience.

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# 3.

## 2006-07 Sub Area #2: Future Land Use Plan

# 2006-07 Sub Area #2 Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

Approved: 9.24.2007

## Introduction

The City of Walker has undertaken an update of its 1998 Master Plan. The goal of this process was to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that would be understood and supported by the community at-large.

Much of the 1998 Plan remains valid. However, various planning issues have arisen since then, requiring additional review. To that end, four “Sub-Areas” have been selected by the Walker City and Planning Commissions for detailed study, including (see Figure 2 - Neighborhood Map, Page 5):

- Sub-Area 1 - defined by Four Mile and Three Mile Roads and Bristol and Fruit Ridge Avenues. The master plan update for this Sub-Area was adopted in August of 2006.
- Sub-Area 2 - located west of Wilson Avenue, north of I-196 in South Walker.
- Sub-Areas 3A - located near the 3 Mile Road, Ann Street and Alpine Avenue corridors and 3B – located east of Bristol Avenue to Alpine Avenue.
- Sub-Areas 4A - located along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor in Standale between Wilson Avenue and Kinney Avenue and 4B - located on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive, west of Wilson Avenue and north of O'Brien Road.

These four general Sub-Areas represented four disparate “neighborhoods” contained within the City of Walker. There are effectively four different communities within the borders of the City of Walker. The 2006-07 Master Plan Update process sought to work within this reality to better address local issues.

Together, the planning process and the resulting land use recommendations for these Sub-Areas provide a sound foundation on which to base future decisions, while at the same time providing effective implementation measures that accurately reflect community desires. Implementation actions that may be undertaken as a result of this effort are updates to the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Figure 1: Sub Area #2 Base Map



The overall master plan update process was designed to encourage citizen participation at two junctures.

The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in the development of land use and planning concepts.

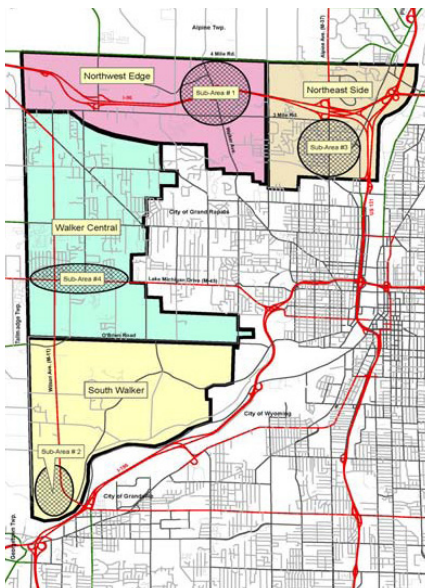
The second opportunity for public interaction would occur when, based on the outcomes of the first Community Forums, future land use concepts would be presented and discussed. During this second round of Community Forums, the public would have the opportunity to comment and provide opinions. These comments would prove helpful in completing the final future land use plan for each Sub-Area.

This elaborate and ambitious process was only used to its fullest extent for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3B. Budget restraints required that the other Sub-Areas be managed using a modified version of the originally intended master plan update process.

**This report will deal specifically with Sub-Area #2 in South Walker.**

## Sub-Area #2

Figure 2: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map



The planning process and resulting land use recommendations for Sub-Area #2 provide a sound foundation on which to base future land use decisions.

This Sub-Area #2 plan will act as an effective community planning tool that reflects a balance between citizen desires and the long-term best interests of the City of Walker. Actions that may be taken as a result of this effort include updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Although elected and appointed officials adopted the Sub-Area #2 plan, the public played an important advisory role in this process. Public turnout was impressive. Citizens provided constructive comments and acted as an effective sounding board for both the Planning Commission and the City Commission.

The guiding principles for public participation were to:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to actively participate and be heard.
- Ensure the master planning process was fair and open to all.
- Establish respect for a diversity of ideas and opinions.
- Master plan with a practical and realistic approach.

The master planning process focused on citizen participation at two junctures.

The first occurred during the initial planning phase for Sub-Area #2 (held 10-12-05) during a Community Forum. The public was given the opportunity to learn about the planning process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for the Sub-Area, and participate in the analysis of land use and planning concepts via a facilitated Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise.

Planners, designers and members of the Walker Planning Commission and City Commission used results from this initial Community Forum to develop draft land use concepts for the Sub-Area that would be later tested and evaluated by the public.

The second opportunity for public participation occurred when, based on the outcomes of the previous public meeting, the draft land use concepts were presented and discussed (meeting held on 11-30-05).

During this second Community Forum, the public had the opportunity to comment in writing using survey cards. These comments proved helpful and insightful when completing the final future land use plan for Sub-Area #2.



## Sub-Area 2

Sub-Area #2 is defined as an area bounded by Burton Street on the north, Kenowa Avenue on the west, the Grand River on the south and M-11 / Wilson Avenue on the east (see Figure 1 on page 2 and Figure 3 below).

Sub Area #2 contained 33 parcels totaling some 380 acres. Most of the property was vacant and/or underutilized. A Land & Company mixed use / condominium project on the “Fenske Site” had been under review by the Planning Commission in mid-2005. This plan was tabled to allow an update to the 1998 Master Plan to be conducted in this area to better reflect current regulatory situations and public concerns.

## Existing Sub Area #2 Conditions

### Existing Land Use

Sub Area #2 is best characterized as a rural, open space area with a history of infamous land uses along the Grand River. MDEQ data and local historians describe the presence of at least one illicit landfill operation on the former “Fenske Site.” As is often the case, the extent of historical contamination and current effects are poorly understood. However, the present owner of the former Fenske Site has worked with MDEQ and the City of Walker to establish a brownfield clean-up project onsite.

Kent County’s Johnson Park lies across Wilson Avenue to the East. This is a large, sprawling park with active and passive recreational features. A connection between Johnson Park and Kent County’s Millennium Park is currently being planned.

Sub Area #2 is sparsely populated. Sand mining continues on the East side of the area. Patches of natural vegetation shield many interior land uses from public view along Wilson Avenue.

Land use patterns change rapidly across the Grand River to the Southeast. There, the 28th Street commercial corridor gains momentum and the rural patchwork transitions to more intense, mature suburban patterns.

Figure 3: Sub Area #2 Base Map

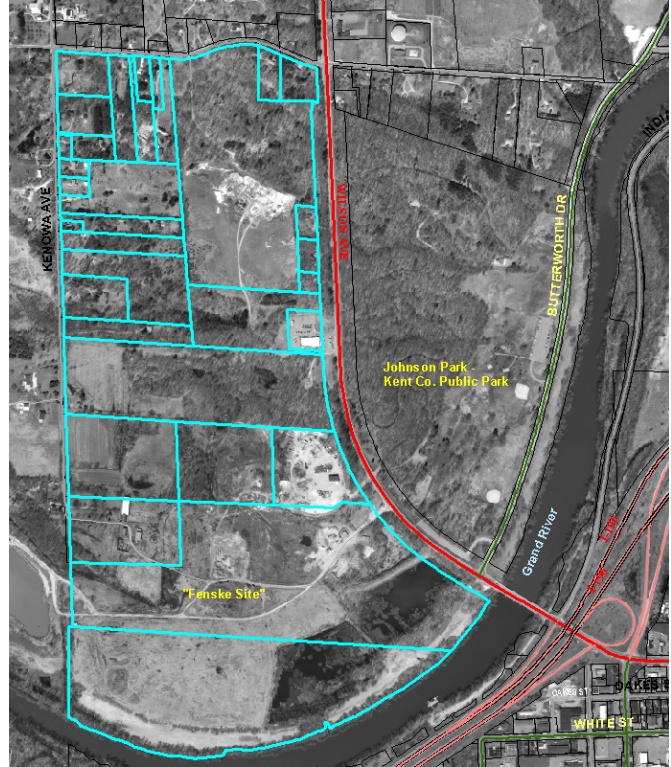
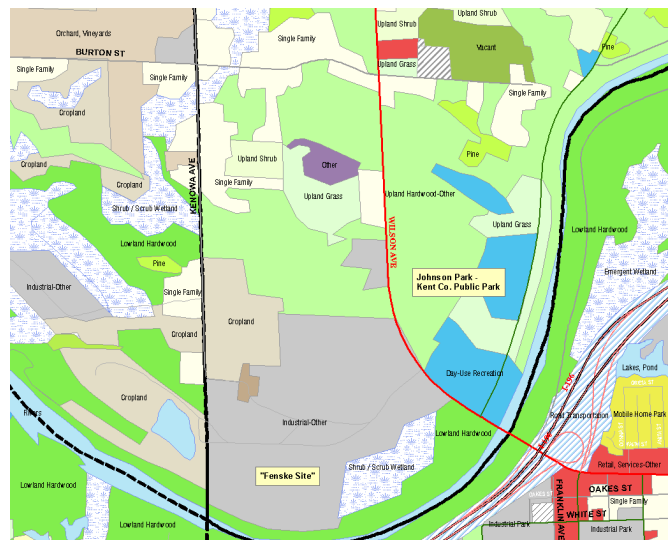


Figure 4: 2003 Existing Land Use Map





## Existing Zoning - 2007

Sub-Area #2 has two main zoning types – Agricultural/Rural Residential and Industrial. The northerly half of the area is zoned AA – Agricultural, which functions as a rural residential district in Walker. The large block of land often called the “Fenske Site,” now owned by Land & Company, is zoned a mixture of ML – Light Industrial and MH – Heavy Industrial.

Rural zoning prevails to the East and also to the West in Tallmadge Township. Once across the Grand River, the rural zoning pattern changes abruptly to urban commercial and business districts.

Sub Area #2 is clearly an “urban edge” site where past, present and future land uses are rubbing together.

## 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

The 1998 Walker Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map projected “Rural Residential” on the North half of Sub Area #2. The remainder was planned for “Industrial” uses. Tallmadge Township was planning for rural land uses west of Kenowa Avenue.

## Existing Natural Features

The most significant natural features within Sub Area #2 are present along the Grand River and its associated backwaters. Figure 7 below identifies the 100-year floodplain levels in blue, per the 2005 FEMA update.

The several industrial properties immediately to the North of the Grand River floodplain are largely without natural features after decades of clearing and grubbing. The northerly parts of Sub Area #2 contain patches of forest cover, as noted on Figure 4.

The existing topography, as shown on Figure 7 below with 2' contour intervals, currently includes several areas of rugged terrain near Burton Street. Some of these hills are planned for sand mining.

## Existing Public Utility Infrastructure

Sub Area #2 is not currently serviced by public water or public sewer facilities. Providing these services to Sub Area #2 will be challenging due to topographical limitations, financial impacts and public utility agreements with the City of Grand Rapids.

Figure 5: 2007 Zoning Map

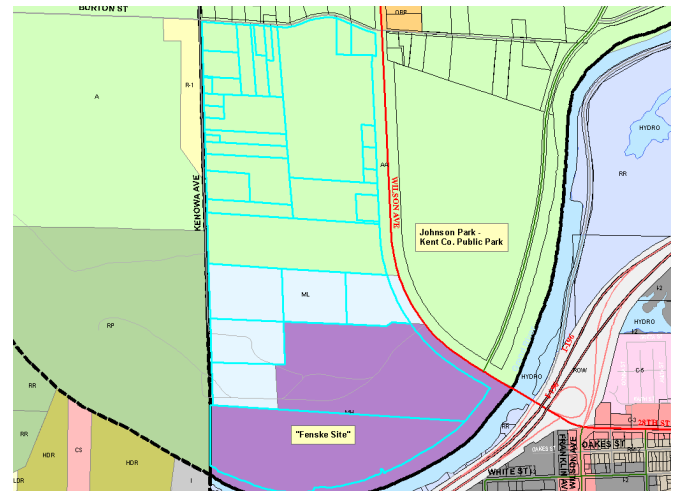


Figure 6: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

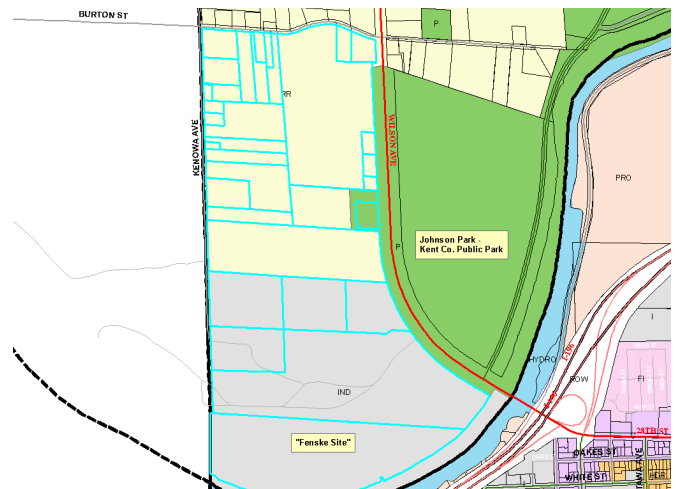
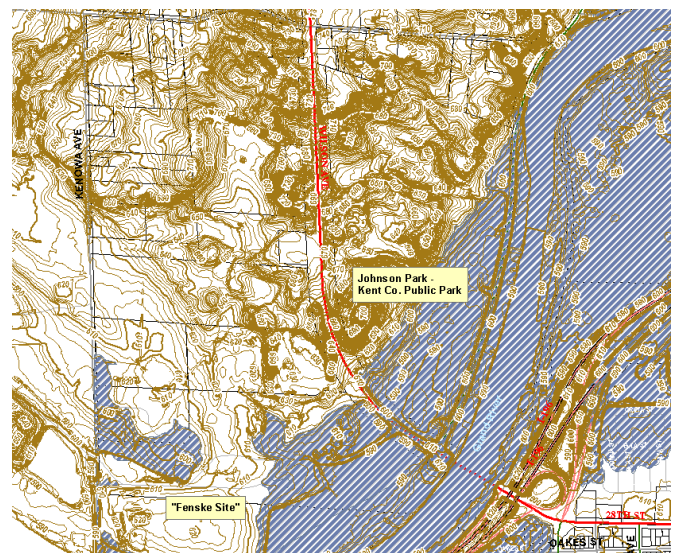


Figure 7: 2' Contour Topography and 2005 FEMA Floodplain Map



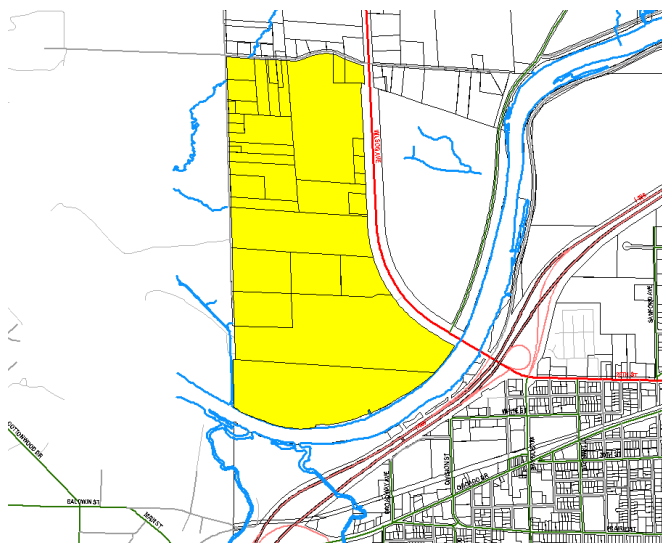
## Existing Roadway Network

Sub Area #2 is bordered on the south by I-196, which connects US-131 with US-31. The northerly border is Burton Street. A traffic signal at the intersection of Burton Street and Wilson Avenue / M-11 was recently installed by MDOT. The westerly border is Kenowa Avenue, which was designed and functions as a local rural road.

The easterly border is Wilson Avenue, which is State of Michigan Highway M-11. Wilson Avenue is currently a three/two-lane highway in this area. Traffic volumes are reaching the design capacity of the roadway. MDOT continues to improve major intersections with Wilson Avenue. In addition, the City of Walker and MDOT have recently completed an access management plan for Wilson Avenue.

The Future Roadway Challenge: Is there a way to intelligently design “context sensitive” connectivity into future Sub Area #2 land uses that might help preserve the carrying capacity of Wilson Avenue while providing safe and efficient local site access?

Figure 8: Existing Road Network



## Sub-Area #2 Project Timeline

The Walker City and Planning Commissions adhered to the following master plan update process:

- First, engage the public via community meetings and workshops;
- Second, provide community leadership via decisions made by the elected and appointed officials, based largely on citizen input, with recommendations offered by the Walker planning department.

The following list displays the steps taken to create this draft plan:

- 10/12/05: Community Forum 1 SWOT exercise: +/- 100 people in attendance.
- 11/30/05: Community Forum 2 public survey exercise: +/- 100 people in attendance.
- 1/25/06: Community Forum 3. Presentation of draft future land use plan to City and Planning Commission; Public comment session; +/-100 people in attendance.
- 6/6/07: Planning Commission “creates plan,” holds extra public hearing and forwards Sub-Area #2 Update to City Commission.
- 6/25/07: City Commission approves draft plan for distribution.
- 8/27/07: Review period ends.
- 9/5/07: Planning Commission holds final public hearing.
- 9/24/07: City Commission grants final approval to Sub-Area #2 Update.

# Community Forum #1 – Held on 10-12-05

As previously noted in this report, the public participation process was an important element in creating future land use concepts for Sub-Area #2.

Community Forum #1 was well attended, with +/- 100 participants. The primary meeting goals were 1) to determine key public issues, opportunities and concerns for Sub Area #2; and 2) allow the public to interact with subject matter experts from MDOT, Walker Engineering and Walker Planning at three separate comment stations.

Staff informed the public that, although not every idea, desire, or concern could be reflected, many would be incorporated into the draft master plan maps. Staff explained that, as is always the case when engaging the public, many competing interests arise. And as is increasingly the case, the public's tolerance for land use change is quite low.

This combination makes the development of a compelling, visionary and realistic master plan a tremendous challenge. Economic, environmental, transportation and social needs present difficult and sometimes conflicting issues to incorporate into a master plan.

Walker Planning and LSL Planning staff facilitated a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) strategic planning exercise with citizens. Attendees considered existing land uses, parcel lines, topography, zoning, traffic issues and future land uses as part of the SWOT process.

The following are notes taken by staff during the facilitated SWOT process with the public during Community Forum #1.

## Current Strengths:

- Current Industrial zoning is a good "holding zone" until M-11 is improved.
- Current Industrial zoning generates less traffic than residential uses.
- The site has Grand River access.
- The site is adjacent to large parks.
- The site has ample State Highway access.

## Current Weaknesses:

- Site access to M-11 is poor for either residential or industrial uses due to traffic congestion.
- The history of local environmental pollution (old Type II landfill) and lack of clarity in the clean-up process generates public health concerns.
- M-11 is maxed out for daily traffic trips. See M-11 Access Management Study (2005).
- The site is not served by public water or sewer lines.
- The site is landlocked on the south by the Grand River.

## Future Opportunities:

- Joint master planning with Tallmadge Township.
- County park extension.
- Industrial will have less service burdens than residential.
- Industrial will have less traffic congestion impacts than residential.

- Potential for new I-196 access through site and along Grand River west to mall.
- Create industrial park with office-style design restrictions.
- Any future development needs both M-11 and Kenowa Avenue access.
- Improve M-11 before any development of the site.
- Tie master plan / zoning changes to infrastructure improvements (concurrency).
- Design a multiple use site...industrial, office, residential and a public park.
- Keep industrial onsite to offset local job losses.

## Future Threats:

- Ongoing drastic grading and clearing of the site will have negative environmental and quality of life impacts.
- Industrial development is not in-line with South Walker community character.
- Residential development would impact Kenowa Avenue more than industrial.
- Any development would further impact natural systems.
- Residential would impact school system more than industrial.
- M-11 becomes more congested with any development of the site.
- We may make short-term decisions due to current burden of M-11 traffic congestion.
- How do we stop the industrial at Burton Street? How do we buffer the neighbors?

There was considerable disagreement regarding the preferred future use of the area. However, a few common themes came through loud and clear:

1. Fix M-11 now. It will only get worse in the future.
2. Regardless of the preferred use, make the DESIGN of the site progressive, pleasing to the eye, respective of the natural environment and sustainable for the long term.
3. Plan together with Tallmadge Township.
4. We have had the best of all worlds in South Walker for decades. We want to keep it that way.

The following were comments generated by citizens at the Planning/Zoning/Parks comment station after the SWOT exercise:

#### What I Like About South Walker...

- 1 acre or more lot minimum area for residential.
- Large lot frontage requirements for residential.
- Rural setting and wildlife.
- Low density residential.
- Best of all worlds...rural yet close to everything.

#### What I Don't Like About South Walker...

- Need to improve all infrastructure, including public roads plus police and fire department services.
- Too many apartments and trailer parks along M-45.
- Move Burton Street traffic signal to Riverbend Drive on M-11.

The following are comments generated by citizens at the Engineering comment station after the SWOT exercise:

#### Engineering Positives...

- Interest in public sewer due to failing septic systems (a positive and negative).
- If development happens, public water would be available.
- Well water is fine; we do not need public water.

#### Engineering Negatives...

- Bad well water quality.
- Public water too expensive?
- Citizens nervous about increased density with increased public services.
- Costs of either a new private well or new public water system.
- Costs of long-term maintenance of private well water treatment systems.

The following were comments received by Keith Skilton of MDOT at his Wilson Avenue comment station after the SWOT exercise:

- M-11 is at capacity and MDOT should improve the road.
- Turning onto/off M-11 is difficult, even at improved intersections.
- Peak hours are very congested on M-11.
- Citizen input is useless, as Walker and MDOT do as they please.
- Burton Street signal is bad. Signal should have been at Riverbend.

- Lower the speed limit on M-11.
- Cut down the hill at Fennessy; do not restrict the road access.
- A new highway should be built by MDOT to relieve M-11 congestion.
- How are signals designed and installed?
- Does MDOT play a role in the City of Walker's master plan process?
- How are roadway improvements initiated?

Walker Planning Department staff offered the following comments in a memo to members of the Master Plan Committee following Community Forum #1:

### Looking back:

South Walker as a whole, including Sub Area #2, has a history of natural resource extraction that has reduced the push to develop the area. An examination of present and historical aerial photos reveals the mineral mining and earth changes that have taken place over several decades.

Some of the natural resource extraction has created public health concerns, as oil well leaking and/or flushing threatens shallow private water wells. The underground extraction of gypsum has also reduced the development potential of South Walker. And, as we now know, the Grand River floodplain on the former Fenske Site has been negatively impacted by a poorly controlled landfill, with some question as to the extent of remediation. South Walker, including Sub Area #2, has a history of high-impact land uses that have served their market purposes, yet whose side effects pose significant challenges for the present and future.

### The double-edged sword:

If Wilson Ave./M-11 is widened to four or five lanes, the safety of the road might improve but the increased capacity will make South Walker more desirable for development. If we extend public water and/or sewer lines, public health concerns will be reduced, yet we will be faced with increasing density and intensity to make the extensions cost effective. If we improve the local road system, we might increase safety yet travel speeds and traffic volumes will likely rise. Eventually the market will “find” South Walker & Sub Area #2.

There is seemingly little chance to address all of the aforementioned concerns and comments in a way that will satisfy the majority of South Walker citizens. South Walker has had the benefit of remaining rural yet being remarkably close to the region’s core city. Location, location, location...and eventually the market will follow. Development continues to wrap around South Walker, as sprawl creeps further into Jenison, Grandville, Tallmadge and Allendale.

We should explicitly acknowledge the citizen’s concerns. Traffic congestion, water wells, failing septic systems, etc. But then we should also let the public in on the unintended consequences of fixing these problems. It may be impossible to correct the present problems and keep South Walker rural.

In a nutshell, if we reduce the traffic congestion on M-11 and the local roads plus offer public water and sewer service, South Walker will be hard-pressed to remain rural.

We need a regional perspective via REGIS. We should start with a look at a regional aerial photo. Highlight the street/highway network. Look at the development trends and parcels. Point out public sewer and water service districts. Point out the short drive to downtown Grand Rapids. Introduce the potential Grand River synergy with Johnson and Millennium Parks. Contrast with the present South Walker development patterns.

### The facts of the matter:

1. There are approximately 2,000 “vacant” acres in South Walker. These numbers do not include the land south of Butterworth, as that property is planned for Millennium Park.
2. There are approximately 380 acres within Sub-Area #2, half of which is the “Fenske Site” area. Most of these acres should be considered “vacant” for the purposes of this exercise.
3. Landowners have the right to sell their property. Many South Walker residents have benefited from the previous sale of road frontage lots. We are now faced with the development of the “Back 40” farms, woodlots and old mines...the very amenities that drew the road frontage purchasers to South Walker. You can’t buy your view without a parkland purchase or PDR /TDR plan in place.

### For the former “Fenske Site”...

**Option 1)** Present an all-industrial plan with “office park” design guidelines. Offer pros and cons.

**Option 2)** Present an all-residential plan that starts with higher density along the Grand River and reduces to a rural layout at Burton Street. Offer pros and cons.

**Option 3)** Present a mixed-use plan that plugs residential of different styles and densities together with light industry and office in a coherent, progressively-designed plan. Offer pros and cons.

### For South Walker in general...

**Engineering presentation:** Best guess at costs for extending water lines. Where? How? Timelines?

**Clustering question:** Given a net density of 1 unit per acre, would the public be willing to allow clustering of lots in exchange for preservation of open spaces (e.g., woodlots, wetlands, meadows, etc.)?

**Road improvements question:** Would the public support a road improvement millage that would be targeted at local road upgrades plus a match towards major M-11 projects?

If we cover all this ground, we should have a solid foundation on which to build recommendations for the PC and CC.



## Community Forum #2 – Held on 11-30-05

Community Forum #2 (held on 11/29/06) was also well attended. Approximately 100 people were involved. Representatives from Tallmadge Township and Grandville Public Schools were invited by staff and were in attendance.

The first item on the agenda was a presentation on the future of public water line extensions in South Walker. Walker City Engineer Scott Conners and Al Pennington from Moore & Bruggink discussed conceptual projects and potential special assessments.

The second agenda item was a review of Community Forum 1. Results from the SWOT analysis were examined, as was feedback from the three subject matter expert stations.

Val Lazdins from LSL Planning then introduced two potential future land use alternatives for Sub Area #2. They are shown below.

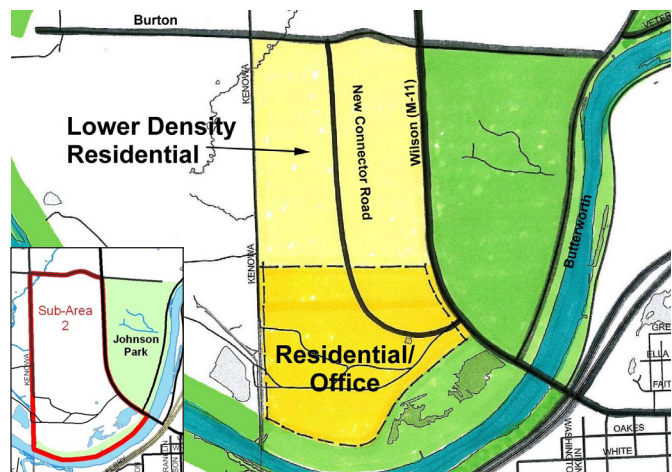
Staff warned the public that “Alternative B” would likely take at least 10 and possibly 20 years to reach fruition, given the economic challenges facing the Michigan economy. Staff further advised the public that, given the existing MH – Heavy Industrial zoning on most of the former “Fenske Site,” that heavy outdoor industrial uses such as concrete crushers, concrete batch plants, refuse operations, auto recyclers and composters would likely utilize the area for the foreseeable future.

Staff encouraged the public to consider the long-term benefits of “Alternative A”, as regional park and trail systems continue to expand and Land & Company had already submitted a site plan for a mixed use project on the former Fenske Site.

Participants were then given an opportunity to review and comment in writing on the two Sub Area #2 future land use alternatives using the form shown below.

The public was also asked to comment on how they would like their future land use alternative choice to look. LSL Planning and city staff distributed the following survey, which was linked to the series of photos on the next page.

Figure 9: Alternative A



Alternative A –

- 1) Creative combination of residential at varying densities and office near M-11 and the Grand River.
- 2) Internal public connector road designed with context sensitive details.

**Rationale –**

- Take advantage of synergy with regional parks and trail systems to immediate East.
- Seek to design a future mixed-use center of public and private activities.

Figure 10: Alternative B – Improved Status Quo

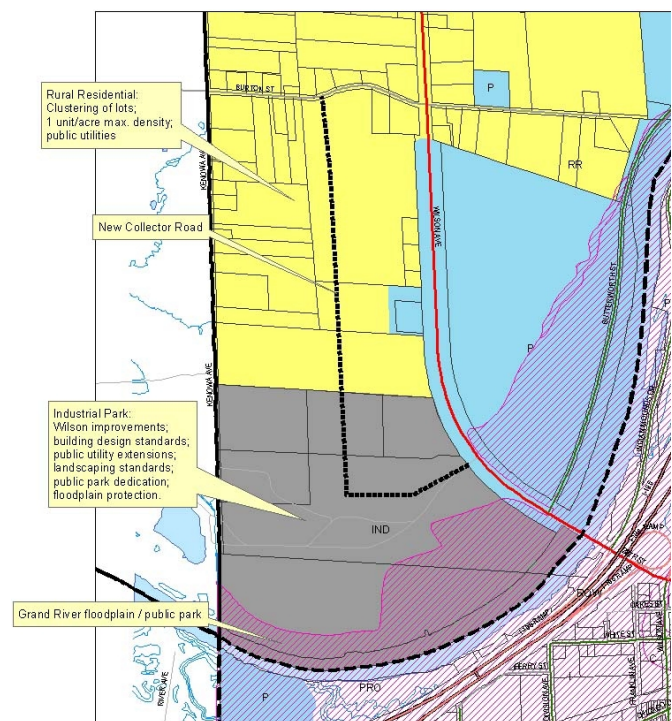


Figure 11: Future Land Use Alternatives Survey

**Sub Area #2 Master Plan Update**  
November 30, 2005

**Place of residence?**

☐ Walker ☐ Tallmadge Township ☐ Other

**Do you like Land Use Alternative A (all residential) for Sub Area #2?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What don't you like about Alternative A?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any suggestions?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please turn card over for additional comments on Land Use Alternative B.*



INDUSTRIAL LAND USE



Figure 12: Design Preferences Survey

**Sub Area #2 Master Plan Update**  
November 30, 2005

**Place of residence?**

☐ Walker ☐ Tallmadge Township ☐ Other

Based on Land Use Concept Plans A and B there are three possible land uses within the study area: **INDUSTRIAL, RESIDENTIAL and OFFICE**. Of these three, please indicate whether you like or dislike the proposed images and add additional comments as needed.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1=strongly dislike; 5=strongly like; please rank the images as listed under each land use category. Please add additional comments as needed.

**INDUSTRIAL**

A. ____ Preference	B. ____ Preference	C. ____ Preference	D. ____ Preference
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

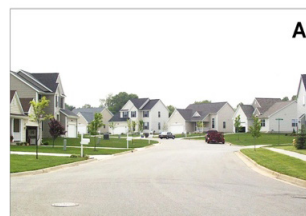
*Please turn card over for additional comment and feedback.*



OFFICE LAND USE



RESIDENTIAL LAND USE



Feedback from the public surveys is displayed below:

## Alternative A: Number liked – 10

### Comments:

1. I believe the change of the surrounding area would be diminished. More traffic control.
2. Minimum lot sizes should be 10 acres, that way, public water won't be needed. Why should we help pay for a developers project? They will get rich, while we get the shaft. Minimum 1 acre lots are too small. Make some of this area parkland or a rural preservation area in conjunction with Tallmadge Township. Those of us west of Wilson belong in Tallmadge, not Walker. Walker does not coincide with what we want for our area.
3. Keep density very low. If the land is developed as residential and multifamily apartments are built, as Land & Co. wish to do, not only will traffic increase dramatically, but low-income, low rent people will be attracted and this does not fit with my image of Walker.
4. No, but if this is used make the restriction 1 unit per 10 acres.
5. All this is about is a land owner / developers that has used the land for profit, destroying the area in the process and is now looking for ways to off-load this land for more profit. Make this Industrial Zone into the preservation zone as in Tallmadge. At least the surface may be able to revert to what was there before.
6. This would mean a zoning change and that is what Land & Co. want, then we who live here would have lost and Land could do what they want "make money", leave the zoning as is!
7. Traffic generated would be a problem.
8. No, it doesn't make sense to put housing on a landfill. Shouldn't move any more traffic onto Wilson with a new road.
9. The map shows that it is residential / office. I would be more in favor of this mix than just residential. I like the park or preserved area in the flood plain. Being close to Grandville's downtown and the river and I-96 there is a lot of potential for the site. I would like to see an intergration of uses residential, office, commercial, industrial. We need jobs for the increase in residents.
10. Have a good mix, don't pack to many homes into one area.
11. Work with the county and extend the park.
12. More traffic at peak times would result in more accidents. The child / student impact would not facilitate newer schools. Plan does not include Riverbend hookup.
13. Yes, industrialization of this area would destroy the residential character of this area. I would, as a resident of the Riverbend area, like to have water service. However, I hope that septic service will NOT be part of that package.
14. Great Idea - makes sense with the river. Industrial would bring in parking lots, more truck traffic, loading docks, etc. Proper planning can regulate traffic appropriately.
15. We have other needs and plans for our property, NO new roads please.
16. Poor use of river
17. No, mixed use will provide a more balanced use. Large traffic impact; an improved Wilson will draw industrial, so might as well plan to integrate it.

## Alternative B: Number liked – 7

### Comments:

1. Any inclusion of residential development.
2. Yes, but would rather the zoning remain as is presently.
3. Industrial only.
4. Somewhat, industrial would generate less traffic.
5. No. Industrial makes sense by the expressway, however, I think there should be more than just industrial here. I would suggest having industrial, then office, then residential as you head North on Wilson.
6. I live on W Riverbend and could handle the water, but not sanitary waste/sewer.
7. Yes, area needs more job opportunities. Higher cost for water and sewer to current residents.
8. No, industrial sprawl and minimum size of residential lots at one acre. We residents should not pay 1 cent in taxes to help developers further their riches.

Comments received from the design preference survey were sparse and inconclusive.



# Community Forum #3 – Held on 1-25-06

Community Forum #3 was also well attended. Approximately 100 people were involved.

As noted in the overall master planning process introduction, the third community forum was primarily reserved for preliminary decision making by the City and Planning Commissions. Additional public comment was also taken.

Staff presented summaries from Community Forums #1 and #2. Results from the public surveys were provided to the City and Planning Commissions.

Staff then presented three future land use plan options for Sub Area #2.

Staff offered the following PROS and CONS for Option A:

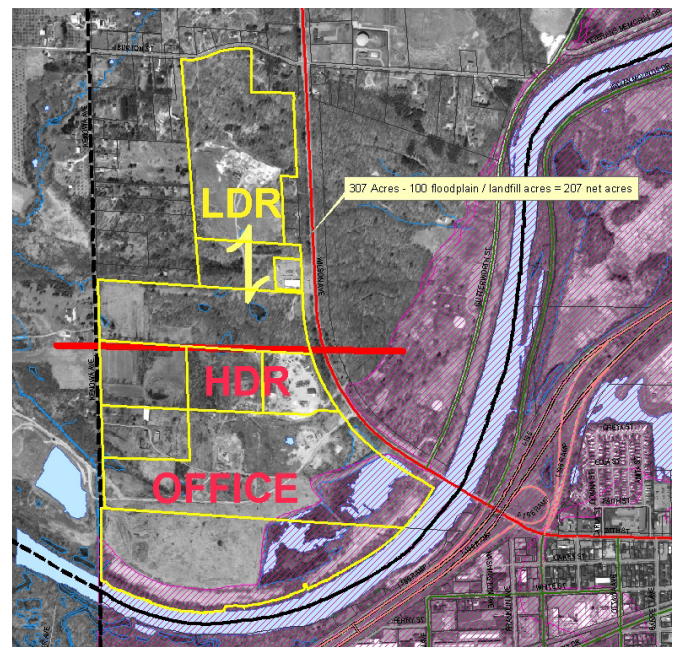
## PROS

- Significant economic development potential
- Could create business/employment center in South Walker
- Easy access to M-11, M-45, I-196, I-96, US-131 and M-6
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Possible Grand River trail extension
- Meet future housing needs in South Walker
- Close to area services and commerce
- Could offer variety of housing options, including clustered subdivisions in LDR area.

## CONS

- Would create significant peak hour traffic
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Office market is questionable – absorption?
- M-11 improvements required
- May open door to further South Walker development.

## Option A – Residential and Office



### LDR – Lower Density Residential

- 106 acres
- 1 house / 1 acre = 106 homes

### HDR – Higher Density Residential

- 61 acres
- 3 houses / 1 acres = 183 homes (likely attached units)

### OFFICE = 40 acres

- 40 acres x .22 Floor Area Ratio = 8.8 acres or 383,328 sq. ft. of gross floor area for office spaces.

Staff offered the following PROS and CONS for Option B:

### PROS

- Significant economic development potential
- Could create business/employment center in South Walker
- Easy access to M-11, M-45, I-196, I-96, US-131 and M-6
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Possible Grand River trail extension
- Meet future housing needs in South Walker
- Close to area services and commerce
- Could offer clustered subdivisions in Rural Residential area.

### CONS

- Would create significant peak hour traffic – semi-truck movements onto M-11
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Industrial park market is questionable – absorption?
- M-11 improvements required
- May open door to further South Walker development.
- May create conflicts with future land use plan in Tallmadge Township.

Staff offered the following PROS and CONS for Option C:

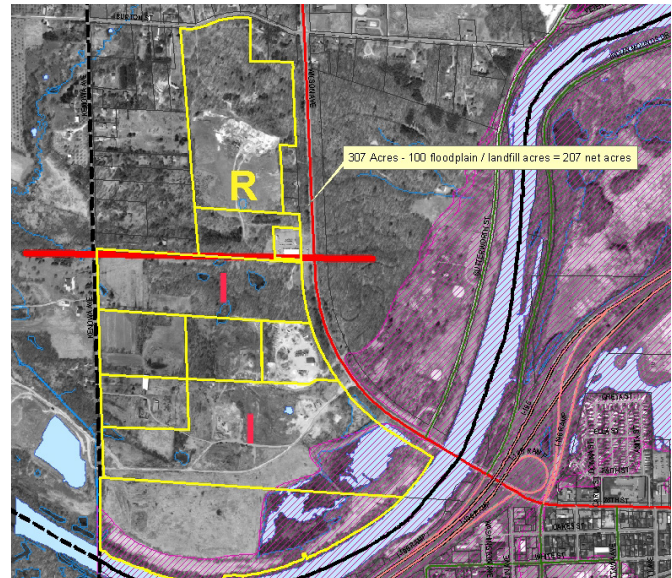
### PROS

- Significant economic development potential
- Could create business/employment center in South Walker
- Easy access to M-11, M-45, I-196, I-96, US-131 and M-6
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Possible Grand River trail extension

### CONS

- Would create significant peak hour traffic – semi-truck movements onto M-11
- Public water and sewer extensions required
- Industrial park market is questionable – absorption?
- M-11 improvements required
- How do you stop “Industrial Creep”?
- May create conflicts with future land use plan in Tallmadge Township.

### Option B – Improved Status Quo



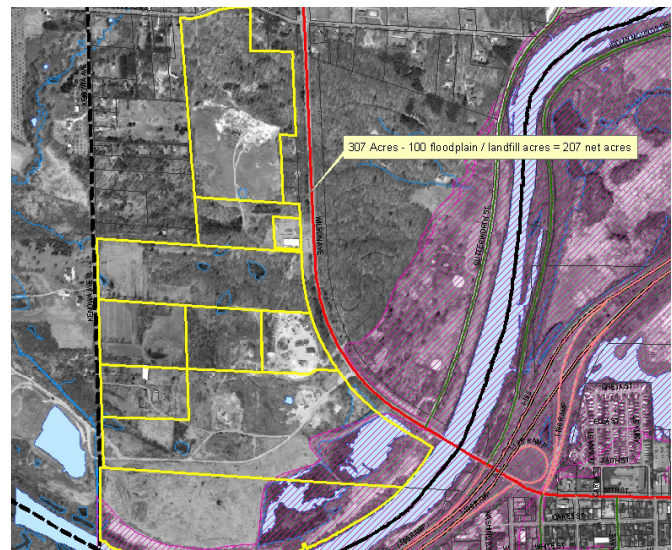
#### R – Rural Residential

- 68 acres
- 1 home / 1 acre = 68 homes

#### I – Industrial

- 139 acres x .15 Floor Area Ratio = 20.85 acres or 908,206 sq. ft. of gross floor space for industrial buildings.
- Comparison to other industrial buildings in Walker:
  - o Grand Rapids Press = 183,464 sq. ft.
  - o Grooters Warehouse = 334,065 sq. ft.

### Option C – All Industrial



- 207 acres
- 207 x .15 Floor Area Ratio = 31.05 acres or 1,352,538 sq. ft. of gross floor area for industrial buildings.
- Comparison to other industrial buildings in Walker:
  - o Grand Rapids Press = 183,464 sq. ft.
  - o Grooters Warehouse = 334,065 sq. ft.
  - o Ridgeview Stamping = 190,882 sq. ft.

Staff then challenged the City and Planning Commission with the following questions:

- Is rural preservation realistic along M-11 next to I-196?
- Should rural preservation be considered within the City of Walker? What about infill densities and urban sprawl?
- What happens in Sub-Area #2 if/when Wilson Avenue is widened?
- Which of the future land use options presented:
  - Best fits with/restores/enhances the natural environment?
  - Will benefit the City most from an economic development standpoint?
  - Can be creatively designed?
  - Can complement existing and proposed parks and trail systems?
  - Meets current and future City of Walker social and economic needs?
  - Most efficiently uses available land?
  - Matches best with Tallmadge Township's master plan?
  - Will least impact the current M-11 traffic congestion situation?

The City and Planning Commissioners then engaged the public in a workshop style comment and critique session. Planning staff filtered the comments being generated and conducted some “sketching on the fly.”

Options A and C were clearly not preferred by the public. A consensus seemed to be developing towards the “Option B – Improved Status Quo” plan.

Staff sketched a detailed future land use plan for Option B (Figure 13 below). That plan became the preferred choice of the public plus the City and Planning Commissioners.

## The Planning Commission “Makes The Plan”

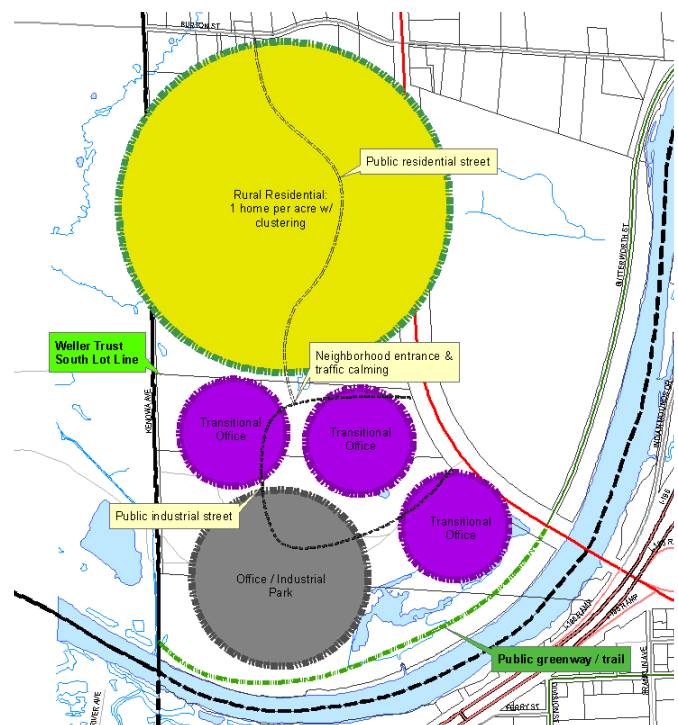
The City of Walker Planning Commission, following State of Michigan Law, held an official review of the draft Sub-Area #2 master plan amendment on, June 6th, 2007.

Although not required by law, the Planning Commission noticed the meeting as a public hearing and accepted additional public comments. The final draft of the Sub-Area #2 master plan / future land use map is shown below.

The Sub-Area #2 future land use map incorporated previous public comments and attempted to address several primary public concerns, including:

- Potential for traffic management at major intersections during peak hours
- An improved open space and natural area buffer for existing residences
- A public greenway / trail along the Grand River
- Maintenance of rural residential and industrial land uses.

Figure 13: Sub Area #2 Future Land Use Map





Future land use details applicable to the 2007 Sub-Area #2 Future Land Use Map include the following:

### General Concepts

- The design intent of the 1998 Master Plan has been refined to raise expectations for creative site planning and the integration of multiple sites and uses under one comprehensive planning umbrella.
- Transitions from use to use should be gradual and assisted by public open spaces, context sensitive streets, landscaped areas and pedestrian connections.
- Sub-Area #2 will be designed to evolve over time and adapt to changing conditions.
- Sub-Area #2 will exhibit a sustainable foundation of land use design, form and function for the City of Walker in the 21st Century.
- It is understood that, given the current economic climate, the master plan for Sub-Area #2 will likely not reach fruition in the near future. In the interim, the status quo will continue under the current zoning of the affected properties.

### Parks, Open Space, Buffers and Natural Areas

- A public trail system / greenway would be established along the Grand River.
- The Grand River floodway, floodplain, backwaters and wetlands would be preserved.
- Existing trees along perimeter public streets would be preserved.
- A significant buffer area would be created/preserved between the office/industrial areas and the rural residential neighborhoods.

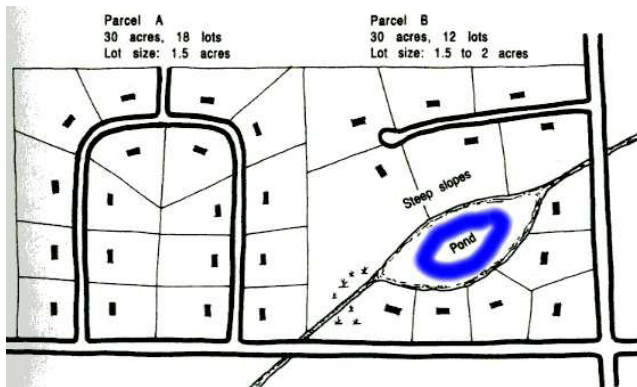
### Streets, Traffic Management and Pedestrian Safety

- An internal connector / collector public street system would be constructed concurrent with development from Wilson Avenue north to Burton Street. The transition from office/industrial to rural residential would be accommodated by using context sensitive roadway design applications. Street connectivity will be essential.
- Internal sidewalks and/or trails would be linked into the future public trail system along the Grand River.

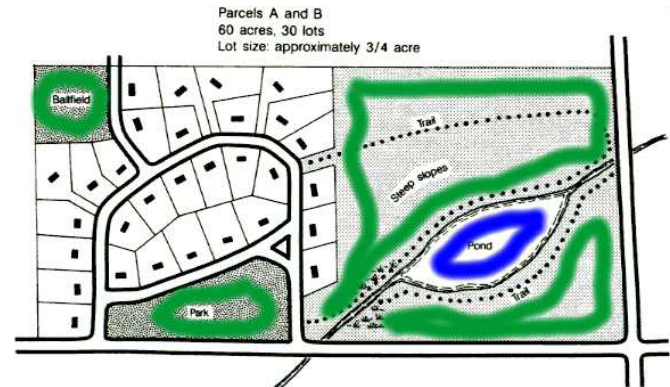
### Future Land Use Categories

- The area south of the current Weller Trust lot line to the Grand River floodplain would become Office / Industrial Park & Transitional Office.
  - Industrial and office uses in a business park setting would be placed outside of the Grand River floodplain and in the brownfield reclamation area.
  - Transitional office outlots would ring the site, fronting on Wilson Avenue and providing a buffer for the rural residential neighborhoods to the North.
  - The majority of parking spaces would be moved to the sides or rear of buildings.
  - Sidewalks would link parking areas to buildings in a safe and creative manner.
  - Landscaping would use development park design details and techniques.
  - The use of ground signs and canopy signs would be encouraged instead of pylon signs and typical commercial wall signage.
  - Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
  - Shared driveways, parking lot connections, shared parking lots, service drives and connected streets would be used to implement local and regional access management techniques.
  - In summary, this area should be comprehensively designed to fit and function as one business park, not a jumbled collection of independent sites.
- The area north of the current Weller Trust property line would become Rural Residential.
  - The physical design of this residential area would either by large lot residential or clustered subdivisions, placed to take advantage of their relative locations, and enhanced by pedestrian access, trails, parks and open spaces.
  - The maximum overall housing density allowed would be one (1) unit per acre.
  - The preservation/enhancement of existing natural features would be a priority.
  - Existing topography would be preserved or minimally altered.
  - Adequate parking for visitors would be provided in strategic locations.
  - Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
  - In summary, this area should be comprehensively and creatively designed to meet housing market needs, take advantage of relative location and work with the existing topography and natural features.





Examples of typical large-lot rural residential development.



Example of lot clustering on same parcels of property.

Allows more open space preservation, retains rural views and protects natural features. More cost effective infrastructure.

## Policy Recommendations For Implementation

1. The AA – Agricultural zoning district should be amended to allow clustered lot developments. Densities should be limited to one unit per acre. The revised AA ordinance should establish a quantifiable process for reviewing cluster developments, in order to avoid excessive densities and to clarify the site design process.
2. The land south of the current Weller Trust lot line should eventually be rezoned to Industrial Planned Unit Development (IPUD) or Industrial Park (MP) to coordinate land planning, design and development.
3. Funding mechanisms such as Special Assessment Districts should be considered to complete public street and utility improvements, drainage upgrades and pedestrian access.
4. The City of Walker should continue to work with MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission regarding future improvements to and access management on Wilson Avenue.
5. The City of Walker should continue to work with the Kent County Parks Department to extend a greenway / trail system along the Grand River.

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**4.**

## **2007 Sub Area #3-A: South Alpine Avenue Future Land Use Plan**

# 2007 Sub Area #3-A S. Alpine Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

Approved: 8.27.2007

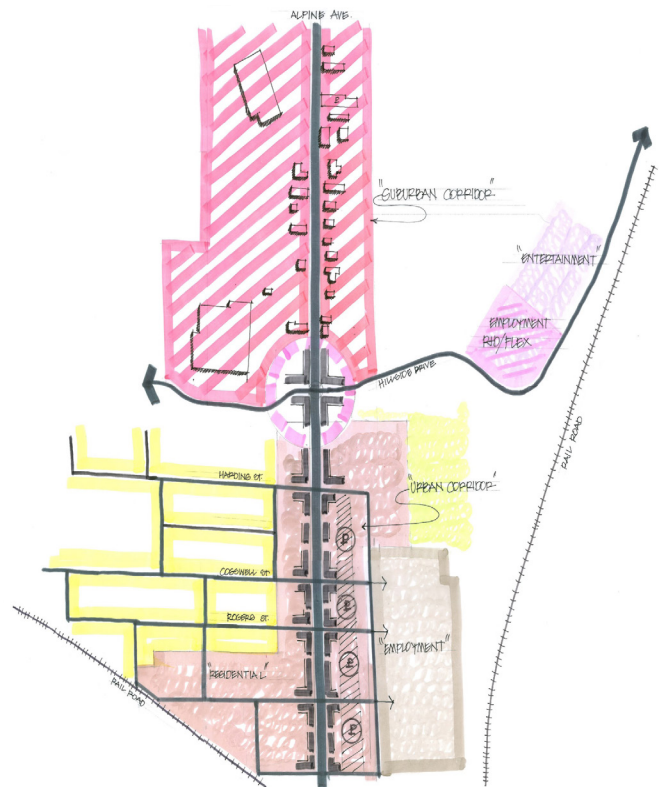
## Introduction

The City of Walker has undertaken an update of its 1998 Master Plan with an over-riding goal to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that will be understood and supported by the community at-large. Much of the 1998 Plan remains valid. However, various planning issues have arisen since then that require additional review. To that end, four Sub-Areas have been selected by the Walker City and Planning Commissions for detailed study, including (see Figure 2 - Neighborhood Map, below):

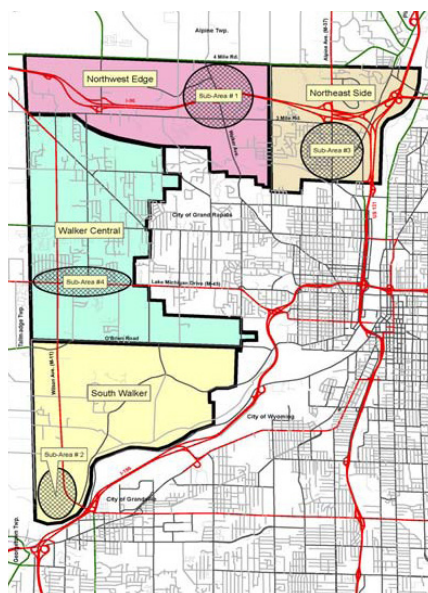
- Sub-Area 1 - defined by Four Mile and Three Mile Roads and Bristol and Fruit Ridge Avenues.
- Sub-Area 2 - located along Wilson Avenue adjacent to I-196.
- Sub-Areas 3A - located near the Ann Street and Alpine Avenue corridors and 3B - located east of Bristol Avenue to Alpine Avenue.
- Sub-Areas 4A - located along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor in Standale between Wilson Avenue and Kinney Avenue and 4B - located on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive, west of Wilson Avenue and north of O'Brien Road.

These four general Sub-Areas reflected the four disparate “neighborhoods” contained within the City of Walker. There are effectively four different communities within the borders of the City of Walker. The 2006 Master Plan Update process sought to work within this reality to better address local issues.

Figure 1: Sub Area 3A South Alpine Avenue Future Land Use





**Figure 2: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map**

Together, the planning process and the resulting land use recommendations for these Sub-Areas provide a sound foundation on which to base future decisions, while at the same time providing effective implementation measures that accurately reflect community desires. Other actions that may be undertaken as a result of this effort are an update to the City's Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Although elected officials adopted the Sub-Area plans for the City of Walker, the public played an important advisory role in this process, providing input and acting as an effective sounding board for both the Planning Commission and the City Commission. The City of Walker's ultimate goals for public participation were:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to participate and be heard.
- Make sure the process was fair.
- Respect everyone's ideas and opinions.

The master plan update process was originally designed to encourage citizen participation at two junctures. The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in the development of land use and planning concepts.

Planners, designers and members of the Walker City and Planning Commissions would use results from these Forums to develop an initial land use concept for each Sub-Area that would be later tested and evaluated by the public.

The second opportunity would occur when, based on the outcomes of the previous public meeting, future land use concepts would be presented and discussed. During this second round of Community Forums, the public would have the opportunity to comment and provide opinions. These comments would prove helpful in completing the final future land use plan for each Sub-Area.

This elaborate and ambitious process was only used to its fullest extent for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3B. Budget restraints required that the other Sub-Areas be managed using a modified version of the originally intended master plan update process.

The process for Sub-Area 3A was modified to include public input after the redevelopment concept alternatives had already been generated. While this was a slightly abbreviated process, it still provided citizens an opportunity to review proposed plans and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise.

Citizens provided comments and concerns at a public meeting (held at the former Lear Plant on Alpine Avenue) that were ultimately used by the Planning and City Commissions in their deliberations and final decisions. Although written comment cards were offered to all 75 citizens at the meeting, none were returned.

## Sub-Area 3A

Sub-Area 3A focuses on the Alpine Avenue corridor between I-96 on the north and the city limits on the south. It is unique from the other Sub-Areas because of its proximity to downtown Grand Rapids and the I-96 and US-131 corridors; that it contains a broad array of concentrated land uses; that the age and condition of infrastructure and existing development is mature; that it is economically challenged due to the loss of major employers; and that it is surrounded by mature residential neighborhoods that can help support current and potential commercial, industrial or mixed use developments. Sub-Area 3A is also near natural features that can serve as key recreational destinations, such as Indian Mill Creek and the Grand River.

Sub-Area 3A is being studied as part of a broader planning effort, Using Regional Collaborations and the Hidden Assets for Urban Revitalization, by the West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WSMA), in concert with the Grand Valley chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Grand Valley). The results of a design and planning workshop for this area, held January 27-29, 2005, were shared at three separate presentations for each of the three communities that make up the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) – Grand Rapids, Holland and Muskegon. The ongoing, intergovernmental planning effort, known as GrandWalk, has served as an important resource for the Sub-Area 3A master planning effort.

## Existing Sub-Area 3A Conditions

Alpine Avenue south of I-96 is best characterized as an aging business corridor. Many properties are in decline and new investment has taken the path of least resistance, occurring to the north of I-96.

However, significant private investments have recently been made in the corridor, which could lead to positive change. Examples include a major upgrade to the Meijer store and the proposed transformation of the closed Lear Plant.

Sub-Area 3A businesses are supported by existing infrastructure, including public utilities, streets and railroads. A potential labor force lives in surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The landscape features rolling topography that flattens into the Indian Mill Creek and Grand River floodplains. Existing and proposed pedestrian and bike paths are, or will be, in close proximity.

### Current Issues

The Alpine Avenue corridor south of I-96 developed over many years with little forethought given to land use planning. This has led to the establishment of some incompatible land uses abutting or in very close proximity to one another.

Because of this incompatibility, much of the housing stock in these “transition” areas is of modest quality, as are many of the commercial and industrial uses.

Further stressing the area is the closing of the Lear Plant. As a former large employer, Lear had a synergy with many surrounding businesses. The economic effects are, therefore,

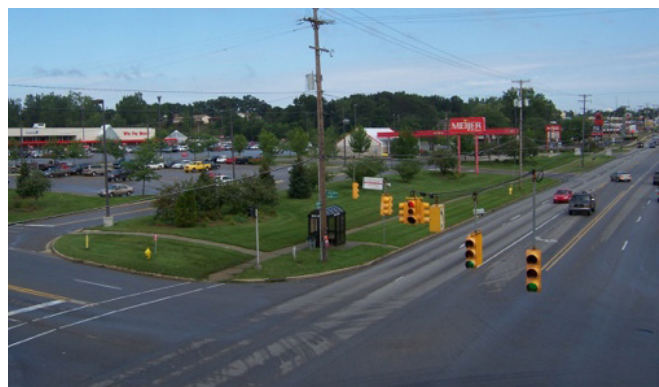
**Figure 3: Sub Area 3A**



**Figure 4: Looking South on Alpine from Hillside Overpass**



**Figure 5: Looking Northwest on Alpine from Hillside Overpass**



felt by not just those who lost their jobs at the factory, but also by those owning and operating nearby businesses.

As stated in the GrandWalk study, the Sub-Area lacks a cohesive identity or sense of place. General public concern is that Sub-Area 3A will decline without a clear vision and plan for restoration and reinvestment.

In order to establish a framework for a future land use plan, it helps to clearly spell out the specific needs of an area before attempting to create a set of goals and implementation tools. According to the GrandWalk studies, Sub-Area 3A needs to:

- Enhance the business climate
- Increase sustainability of housing
- Soften transitions between uses
- Extend road and service drive access into sites
- Establish gateways and an identity
- Enhance/develop social centers
- Address social issues
- Enhance and protect natural feature assets

## Unique Strengths

After pointing out area needs, it is good to assess existing strengths and future opportunities. Some of the following are either located outside of the Sub-Area or do not directly apply to just South Alpine Avenue. However, the general area does have a number of attributes that should be targeted to serve as catalyst projects or energized to their full potential. The following assets are attributable to Sub-Area 3A:

- Well-kept, urban residential neighborhoods with quality employees
- Future GrandWalk Bike Trail Connector
- Redeveloping former Lear Plant
- Topography that provides natural edges and vistas
- Proximity to downtown Grand Rapids
- Local, family-owned businesses
- Grand River access and greenbelt opportunities
- Indian Mill Creek access
- Excellent highway access
- Neighborhood schools
- Major commercial anchors

**Figure 6: Looking North on Apline from Hillside Overpass**



**Figure 7: Former Lear Plant**





## 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

The 1998 Walker Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map projected a continuation of the current uses and development patterns along the South Alpine Avenue corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods.

# 2006 Master Plan Key Concepts

## Alpine Ave. North of Hillside Drive

- The City of Walker should promote the redevelopment of a high quality commercial corridor on Alpine Avenue north of Hillside Drive. While suburban in character, its redevelopment should follow the best design practices of such an environment, including:
  - Buildings with architectural character, that relate to the street, that are constructed of durable, high quality materials such as brick, that contain ample windows to avoid blank walls and increase street appeal and that have clearly defined and articulated entrances.
  - Professionally designed, urban, landscaped parking lots that are not over-illuminated.
  - A clear hierarchy of commercial signs that are appropriately scaled and do not overwhelm the streetscape. Ground signs are preferred.
  - Streets and service drives that allow convenient and safe access from business to business without traveling back onto Alpine Avenue.
  - A complete system of interconnected sidewalks from neighborhoods to destination points.
- Owners of the Delta Plex should be encouraged to keep their site functioning as an entertainment venue. The City of Walker should permit under-utilized onsite parking lots to transition to mixed-use employment centers. Shared parking should be emphasized to meet the different peak parking needs of these uses.

Figure 8: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

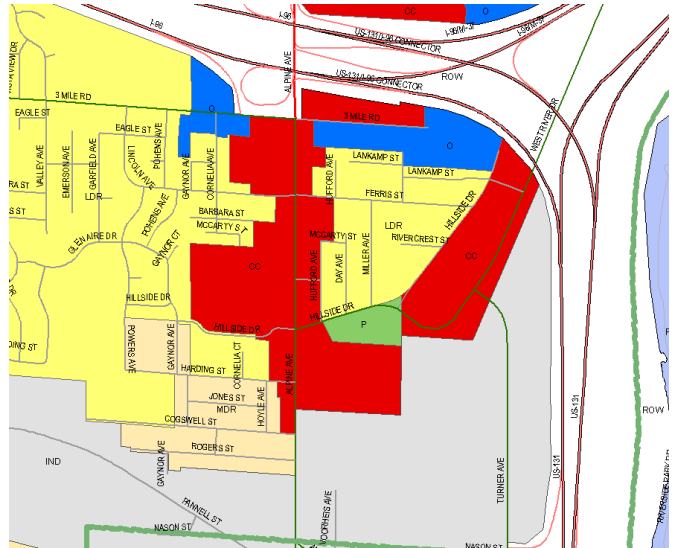


Figure 9: See Figure 1 for Details

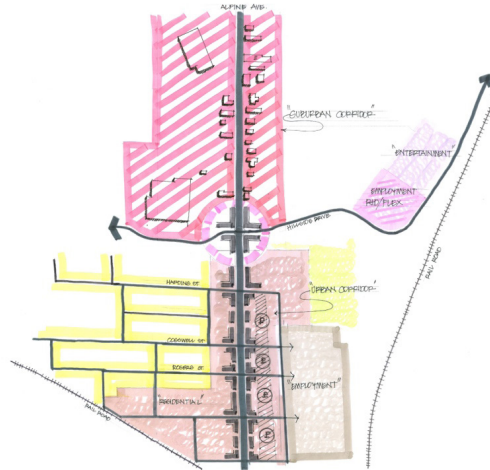


Figure 10: Future Streetscape for Alpine Ave. North of Hillside





## Alpine Ave. South of Hillside Drive

- The City of Walker should partner with landowners and local businesses to redevelop the Alpine Avenue corridor south of Hillside Drive as a traditional, mixed-use area containing:
  - Multi-story, brick buildings fronting on Alpine Avenue that accommodate residential or office uses on upper floors and retail on the ground floor. The ground floors should achieve a high degree of transparency via glass windows and doors to improve street appeal and create visual interest.
  - Development of higher density residential uses that allow a blend of different types of homes, ranging from small lot single-family to townhomes and flats in new neighborhoods.
  - Recreation of traditional development patterns that are typically found in older mixed-use neighborhoods, including:
    1. Two and three story buildings located at or near the Alpine Avenue sidewalk.
    2. Short, walkable blocks and interconnected streets with sidewalks to promote pedestrian freedom of movement.
    3. Residential garages that are located in the rear yard or are set back behind a line extending across the front façade of a building.
    4. Orientation of buildings toward public streets, with parking lots either to the side or behind buildings at the center of a block.
- The City of Walker should support ongoing redevelopment efforts for the former Lear Plant, emphasizing the creation of new jobs, new, interconnected public streets (Roger and Voorheis), internal service drives, urban landscaping improvements and sharing of parking lots with new uses fronting on Alpine Avenue.

Figure 11: Future Streetscape for Alpine Ave. South of Hillside



Figure 12: Future Alpine Ave. Streetscape for Former Lear Site



## Hillside Drive and Alpine Avenue Intersection

- The City of Walker should partner with landowners and local businesses to create a “Four Corners” gateway intersection at Alpine Avenue and Hillside Drive. The City should permit taller buildings and higher intensity uses at this intersection, consistent with the development pattern proposed for Alpine Ave. south of Hillside Drive.

Such a gateway intersection would help create an identity for Sub-Area 3A, signaling the transition from a suburban commercial corridor to a mixed-use urban environment.

Major intersection improvements could include re-design as a high-capacity, modern round-a-bout. At the very least, the intersection should be reconstructed using traffic calming measures to facilitate pedestrian crossings and a refuge area for access to the Route 9 Alpine Avenue bus.

## Urban Design Template

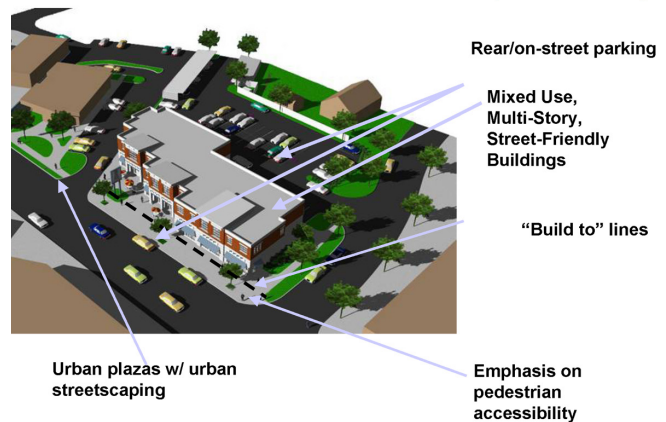
- The City of Walker should consider amending its zoning ordinance to regulate the proposed urban redevelopment plan noted above for the area along Alpine Avenue south of Hillside Drive and the “Four Corners” intersection.

Such a new ordinance could follow the general principles of a form-based zoning code, combined with essential features of a traditional, Euclidean ordinance. The result would be a composite or hybrid zoning district.

The ordinance could require developers to construct a traditional, urban development pattern. The ordinance could also maximize property values by allowing more of a given property to be developed, thereby lessening the amount of land dedicated to suburban style setbacks.

Basic components of a traditional, urban development pattern are shown below on Figure 13.

Figure 13: Basic Urban Design Components



## Policy Recommendations For Implementation

1. The ongoing GrandWalk study process has recommended the cities of Walker and Grand Rapids consider entering into cooperative agreements leading to the financing and project management of the physical, social and economic changes envisioned in these master plan concepts. The planning commissions and governing bodies of both cities may consider an agreement on the policy objectives included in these concepts.
2. The City of Walker should consider the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority along Alpine Avenue. State of Michigan Public Act 280 of 2005 establishes enabling legislation for the creation of Corridor Improvement Authorities along aging business corridors. South Alpine Avenue should be strongly considered for use of this urban revitalization tool.

Funding mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing Districts and Special Assessment Districts could be used to complete street and service drive improvements, drainage upgrades, landscape upgrades and improved pedestrian safety and access. In addition, the establishment of a South Alpine Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority could create a local business association. Such an association could promote communication between businesses, landowners, citizens and the City, thereby laying the foundation for a new identity for the area.

3. The City of Walker should continue using the Brownfield Redevelopment Process and Renaissance Zone opportunities to fuel private sector reinvestment in Sub-Area 3A. Turner Avenue is an excellent example of using the brownfield process to clean-up contaminated sites while promoting beneficial economic development and job creation. The former Lear Plant site has received a significant brownfield clean-up loan from the MDEQ and the City of Walker is now considering the establishment of a Renaissance Zone on this property.
4. The City of Walker should continue to be actively involved in the GrandWalk study process. The synergy created in such multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary enterprises will most likely result in direct and indirect benefits to Sub-Area 3A.
5. As previously noted in this report, the City of Walker should consider the creation of a new “hybrid” zoning district for the “Four Corners” and “Alpine Ave. South of Hillside” areas. The traditional, suburban zoning currently in place in these areas will not allow redevelopment to occur as proposed in this master plan update.

# 5.

## 2007 Sub Area #3-B: Bristol East Future Land Use Plan

# 2007 Sub Area #3-B Bristol East Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

Approved: 8.27.2007

## Introduction

The City of Walker has undertaken an update of its 1998 Master Plan. The goal of this process was to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that would be understood and supported by the community at-large.

Much of the 1998 Plan remains valid. However, various planning issues have arisen since then, requiring additional review. To that end, four “Sub-Areas” have been selected by the Walker City and Planning Commissions for detailed study, including (see Figure 1 - Neighborhood Map, Page 6):

- Sub-Area 1 - defined by Four Mile and Three Mile Roads and Bristol and Fruit Ridge Avenues. The master plan update for this Sub-Area was adopted in August of 2006.
- Sub-Area 2 - located along Wilson Avenue adjacent to I-196.
- Sub-Areas 3A - located near the 3 Mile Road, Ann Street and Alpine Avenue corridors and 3B – located east of Bristol Avenue to Alpine Avenue.
- Sub-Areas 4A - located along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor in Standale between Wilson Avenue and Kinney Avenue and 4B - located on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive, west of Wilson Avenue and north of O'Brien Road.

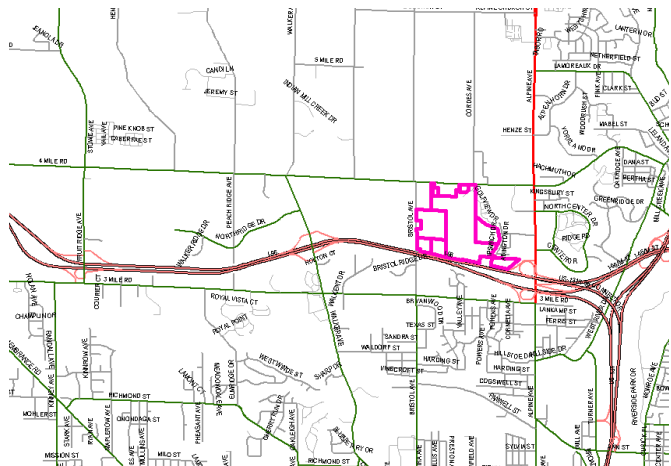
These four general Sub-Areas represented four disparate “neighborhoods” contained within the City of Walker. There are effectively four different communities within the borders of the City of Walker. The 2006 Master Plan Update process sought to work within this reality to better address local issues.

Together, the planning process and the resulting land use recommendations for these Sub-Areas provide a sound foundation on which to base future decisions, while at the same time providing effective implementation measures that

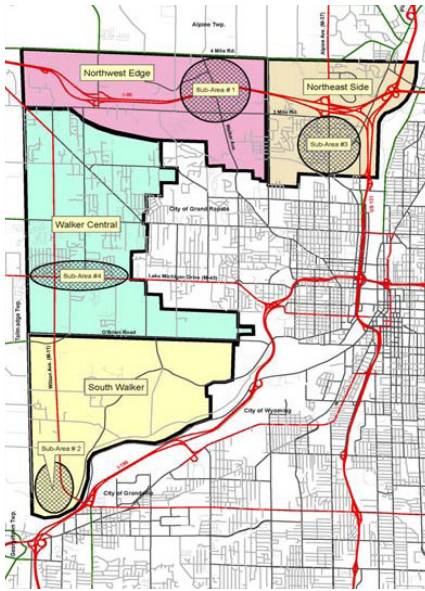
Bristol East: 11 Parcels, 217 Acres



Regional Context





**Figure 1: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map**

accurately reflect community desires. Implementation actions that may be undertaken as a result of this effort are updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

The overall master plan update process was designed to encourage citizen participation at two junctures.

The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in the development of land use and planning concepts.

The second opportunity for public interaction would occur when, based on the outcomes of the first Community Forums, future land use concepts would be presented and discussed. During this second round of Community Forums, the public would have the opportunity to comment and provide opinions. These comments would prove helpful in completing the final future land use plan for each Sub-Area.

This elaborate and ambitious process was only used to its fullest extent for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3B. Budget restraints required that the other Sub-Areas be managed using a modified version of the originally intended master plan update process.

This report will deal specifically with Sub-Area #3B.

## Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East

The planning process and resulting land use recommendations for Sub-Area #3B provide a sound foundation on which to base future land use decisions.

The Sub-Area #3B plan will act as an effective community planning tool that reflects a balance between citizen desires and the long-term best interests of the City of Walker. Actions that may be taken as a result of this effort include updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Although elected and appointed officials adopted the Sub-Area #3B plan, the public played an important advisory role in this process. Public turnout was impressive. Citizens provided constructive comments and acted as an effective sounding board for both the Planning Commission and the City Commission.

The guiding principles for public participation were to:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to actively participate and be heard.
- Ensure the master planning process was fair and open to all.
- Establish respect for a diversity of ideas and opinions.
- Master plan with a practical and realistic approach.

The master planning process focused on citizen participation at two junctures.

The first occurred during the initial planning phase for Sub-Area #3B (held 10-25-06) during a Community Forum. The public was given the opportunity to learn about the planning process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for the Sub-Area, and participate in the development of land use and planning concepts via a design charrette exercise.

Planners, designers and members of the Walker Planning Commission and City Commission used results from this initial Community

Forum to develop draft land use concepts for the Sub-Area that would be later tested and evaluated by the public.

The second opportunity for public participation occurred when, based on the outcomes of the previous public meeting, the draft land use concepts were presented and discussed (meeting held on 11-29-06).

During this second Community Forum, the public had the opportunity to comment in writing using survey cards. These comments proved helpful and insightful when completing the final future land use plan for Sub-Area #3B.

It should be noted that each Community Forum meeting was noticed using the following methods:

- Direct mailing of post cards
- Notices in the Advance newspapers
- Posting of meetings on the City Hall entryways
- Posting of meetings on the City of Walker website.

Following the two public participation meetings, a third meeting was held. This third Community Forum (held on 1-10-07) was also open to the public, yet was primarily reserved for decision-making processes for the Walker City and Planning Commissions. Public comment was taken, however.

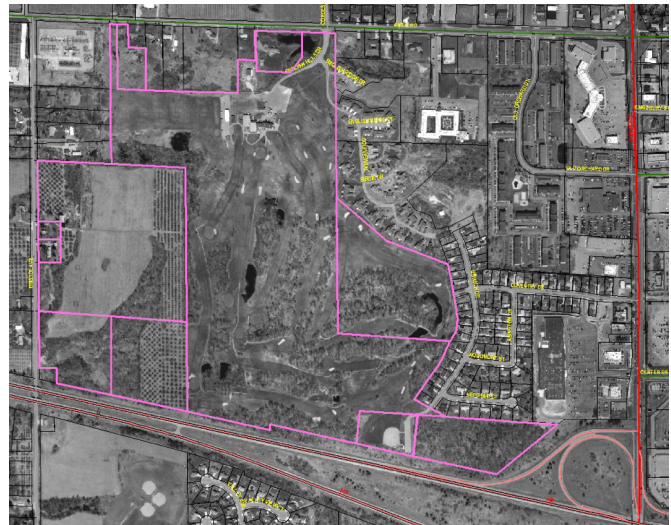
Staff and consulting planners reviewed the progress to date, analyzed gathered information and offered recommendations on future land use plans for Sub-Area #3B. The City and Planning Commissions then deliberated and eventually decided upon a draft Sub-Area plan, which was then plugged into the formal State of Michigan Planning Act's review and approval process.

## Sub-Area 3-B: Bristol East

Sub-Area #3B was an area bounded by Four Mile Road on the north, Bristol Avenue on the west, I-96 on the south and Alpine Avenue on the east. The name given to this Sub-Area was "Bristol East" (see Bristol East map on page 2 and Figure 2 below).

The Bristol East planning area contained 11 parcels totaling some 217 acres. Most of the property was vacant. A Pulte condominium project had been given preliminary site plan and rezoning approval in 2004 on the English Hills Golf Course. 660 residential units were approved on the preliminary site plan (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 2: Bristol East**



**Figure 3: Originally Approved Preliminary Area Site Plan for Pulte / English Hills Condos**





# Existing Bristol East Conditions

## Existing Land Use

Bristol East is best characterized as a farmland / golf course / open space area. However, the study area is wedged between the M-37 / Alpine Avenue commercial corridor on the east and a major employment center south of I-96 (see Regional Context map, Page 3). The junction of I-96 and US-131 is nearby to the east.

4 Mile Road is a Kent County Road Commission primary street. A comprehensive plan for the future design of 4 Mile Road is underway via a partnership between the Grand Valley Metro Council, MDOT, Kent County Road Commission, Alpine Township and the City of Walker.

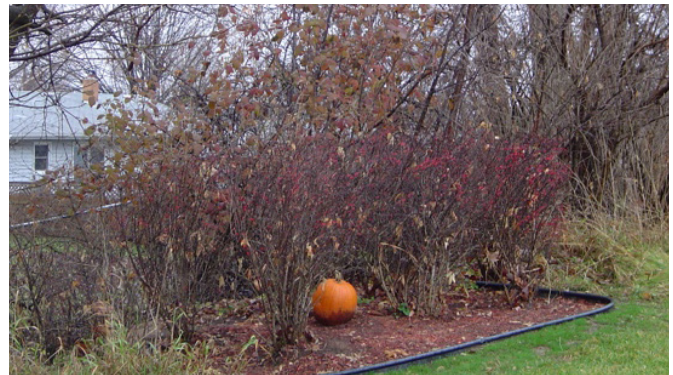
Land use to the north in Alpine Township is primarily agricultural but master planned for residential development. A Wal-Mart super-center addition has been recently approved and a public road connection from the Alpine Avenue commerce core will be made to Cordes Avenue via an extension of Henze Street. This will likely increase traffic volumes at the 4 Mile Road and Cordes Avenue intersection.

Residential uses, at subdivision and condominium densities, are adjacent to the English Hills Golf Course to the north and east. Many existing homes are quite near their property lines, presumably to take advantage of golf course views. Significant concern was, therefore, expressed by homeowners regarding the removal of the golf course.

The most significant adjacent land use, however, may be the evolving Orchard Park project, which has received preliminary approvals between Walker and Bristol Avenues, south of 4 Mile Road. Orchard Park is currently planned as a large and rather urban mixed-use planned unit development. Orchard Park has the potential to trigger dramatic changes in the immediate area, including Bristol East.

Also of note is an existing City of Walker public park at the end of Ipswich. This park, English Hills Park, is an 8-acre facility that includes a parking lot, basketball hoop, tot lot and baseball diamond. The park overlooks I-96 and provides existing residents with a community open space.

Existing Residential Adjacent to English Hills Golf Course



Existing English Hills Park



The following table presents general information for three existing housing projects near Bristol East. Numbers are shown on Figure 4 for project location.

**Table 1: Existing Housing Projects near Bristol East**

Name	Type	# of Housing Units	Total Acres	Density
1 - Old Orchard	Rental / Apts.	663	32.2	20.6 units/acre
2 - English Hills Plat	Owner Occupied – Single Family	96	24.4	3.9 units/acre
3 - English Ridge & English Hills Condominiums	Owner Occupied	93	36.5	2.6 units/acre

## Existing Zoning

The dominant zoning in Bristol East is the RPUD-2 district established over the English Hills Golf Course properties. The remaining lots are zoned SA- Suburban Residential Single Family and AA – Agricultural. Zoning surrounding Bristol East is a mixture of residential districts of varying densities, office, commercial, mixed use PUD, industrial and agricultural.

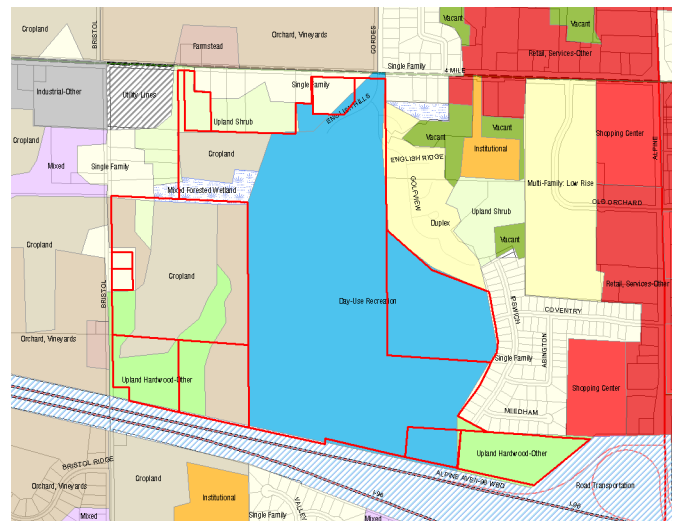
This is clearly an “urban edge” area where past, present and future land uses are rubbing together.

## 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map plus 2006 Sub-Area #1 Update

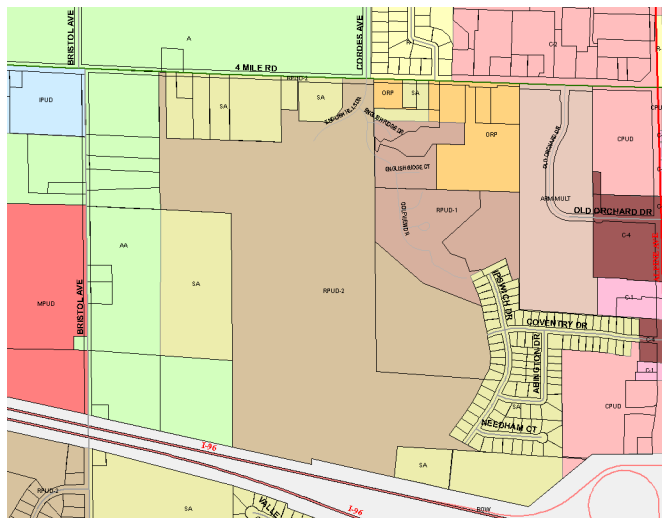
The 1998 Walker Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map projected a conversion to medium density residential (MDR) for Bristol East. The 1998 Plan identified MDR as “density up to 8 dwelling units per acre.”

The 2006 Sub-Area #1 Master Plan update projected a mixed use, village center complex between Walker and Bristol Avenues, south of 4 Mile Road.

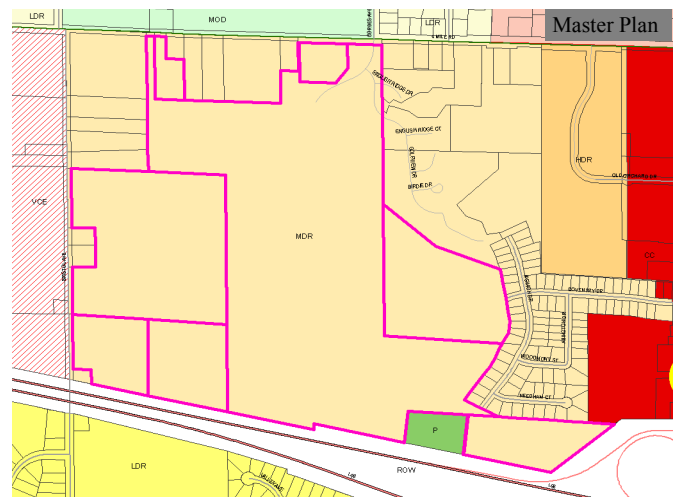
**Figure 4: 2003 Existing Land Use Map**



**Figure 5: 2007 Zoning Map**



**Figure 6: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map w/ '06 Sub-Area #1 Update**





## Existing Natural Features

Bristol East is presently defined by farm fields and the English Hills Golf Course. Within the golf course property are significant stands of trees, several ponds and rolling hills. A large ravine bisects the southwestern portion of Bristol East.

The existing topography includes rolling hills, which are common to the southerly edge of the Fruit Ridge – itself a series of end moraines generated by historical glacial activity. Topographical relief is severe at the southeastern edge of Bristol East (see 3-D Topography Map, below).

## Existing Public Utility Infrastructure

Bristol East is currently served by public water lines and sanitary sewers. However, both require upgrading and expansions (see Utilities Map, below).

A water storage tank is planned near the intersection of Hendershot Avenue and Four Mile. This tank will improve water line pressures in westerly portions of Bristol East.

Sanitary sewer problems are due to overburdened facilities downstream. The Indian Mill Creek service district, serving the westerly portion of Bristol East, is planned for a \$12 million, three-phase reconstruction project that is slated during 2005-08. Pump station improvements to the easterly sewershed may also be required.

## Existing Roadway Network

Bristol East is bordered on the south by I-96, which connects US-131 with US-31 (see Bristol East maps on Page 2).

The northerly border is 4 Mile Road, a Kent County primary roadway. A comprehensive 4 Mile Road study is reaching completion. Future cross-sections for 4 Mile Road and improvements to deficient intersections with Bristol and Walker Avenues will be recommendations in the final report.

To the west of Bristol East is the Walker Avenue interchange with I-96. Major reconstruction of the interchange is now complete. The overpass bridge has been widened to six lanes. Two left turn lanes have been added onto southbound Walker Avenue from the westbound off-ramp. A partial cloverleaf to the southwest quadrant of the interchange has been added, permitting unimpeded movement onto eastbound I-96 from southbound Walker Avenue.

The current Bristol Avenue is not designed to handle large amounts of traffic. In addition, the I-96 underpass on Bristol Avenue was constructed with bridge piers located close to the pavement edge, thus affecting the potential to widen Bristol Avenue.

Figure 7: 3D Topography Map

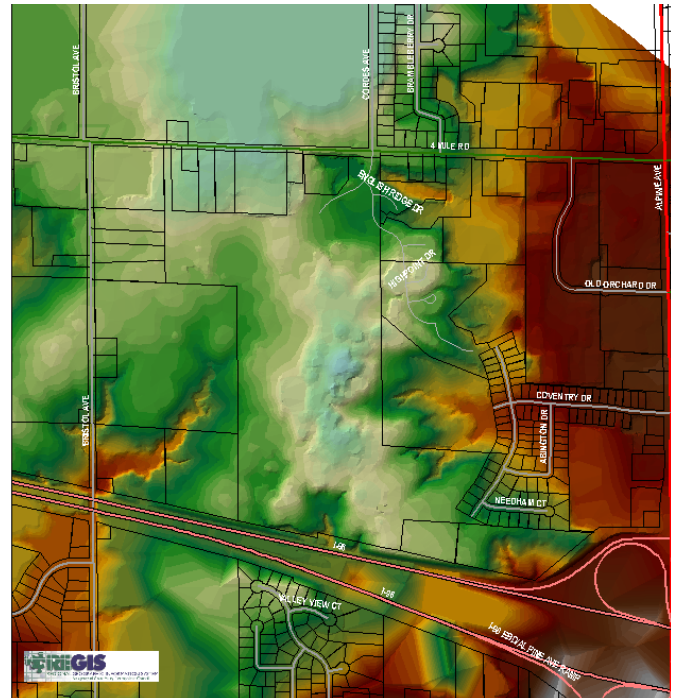
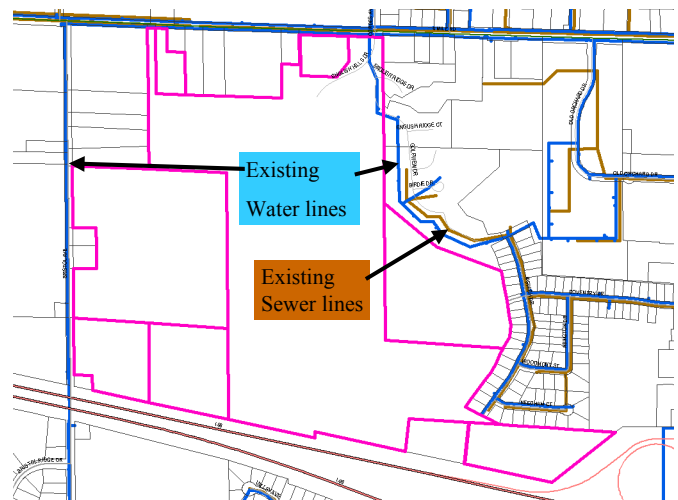


Figure 8: Public Utilities Map



The Alpine Avenue commercial corridor lies just to the east. This is state highway route M-37. Traffic volumes have been heavy since the 1970s on this stretch of M-37. The maturation of the Alpine Avenue commercial strip has generated many more vehicle trips per day. The intersection of 4 Mile Road and Alpine Avenue has been, is and will remain dysfunctional at peak hours for the foreseeable future.

As part of the Sub-Area #1 recommendations, North Ridge Avenue is now planned to extend across Bristol Avenue to align with Cordes Avenue at 4 Mile Road. North Ridge extended will be a major city street, which will help disperse traffic loads and lessen peak hour congestion at existing intersections.

Existing local street connections in the immediate area are poor. Continuing the status quo system of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets will exacerbate future congestion problems.

The Future Roadway Challenge: Is there a way to intelligently design “context sensitive” connectivity between Bristol East and surrounding major and local roads while lessening the load on the 4 Mile Road and Alpine Avenue intersection? Can a local street connection be made to Alpine Avenue and Center Drive?

## Sub-Area #3-B Project Timeline

The Walker City and Planning Commissions adhered to the following master plan update process:

- First, engage the public via community meetings and workshops;
- Second, provide community leadership via decisions made by the elected and appointed officials, based largely on citizen input, with recommendations offered by the Walker planning department.

The following list displays the steps taken to create this draft plan:

- 10/25/06: Community Forum 1 design charrette exercise (+/- 50 people in attendance).
- 11/29/06: Community Forum 2 public survey exercise (+/- 50 people in attendance).
- 1/10/07: Community Forum 3 Presentation of draft future land use plan to City and Planning Commission; Public comment session; Presentation of revised conceptual plan for English Hills Golf Course by Jeff Chamberlain of Haworth Homes (50+ people in attendance).
- 3/7/07: Planning Commission “creates plan,” holds extra public hearing and forwards Sub-Area #3B Update to City Commission.
- 5/21/07: City Commission approves draft plan for distribution.
- 7/24/07: Review period ends.
- 8/15/07: Planning Commission holds final public hearing.
- 8/27/07: City Commission grants final approval to Sub-Area #3B Update.

# Community Forum #1

As previously noted in this report, the public participation process was an important element in creating future land use concepts for Sub-Area #3B.

Community Forum #1 (held on 10/25/06) was well attended, with +/- 50 design charrette participants. The primary meeting goals were 1) to determine the key issues, opportunities and concerns for Bristol East; 2) develop initial land use, transportation, open space and infrastructure ideas via an interactive design charrette.

Planning staff first facilitated a SWOT analysis with citizens. Attendees considered existing land uses, parcel lines, topography, zoning, traffic issues and future land uses as part of the SWOT process. The following are notes taken by staff during the facilitated SWOT process with the public during Community Forum #1.

## Current Strengths of Bristol East

- Rolling topography
- Scenic views of fireworks and downtown Grand Rapids
- Alpine Avenue access
- Close to businesses but buffered
- Quiet / not crowded
- Defined, friendly community
- Island within an urbanized area
- Strong neighborhood ties
- Wildlife / Natural habitat/ woodlands/ wetlands
- Low traffic on local streets

## Current Weaknesses of Bristol East

- Lack of setbacks and buffers for existing neighborhoods
- Lack of comprehensive road network
- Streets and intersections are congested

## Future Opportunities for Bristol East

- Improved public road access and street connectivity
- Wildlife corridors and open space preservation via enlightened site planning
- Trail system construction and connections
- Adjacent landowner opportunities to buy buffer space
- Regional stormwater management systems

## Future Threats to Bristol East

- Inadequate buffering between existing and news land uses
- Increased traffic and no fixes
- More road connectivity would hurt neighborhoods

Following the SWOT process, attendees were provided pens and base maps of Bristol East. Staff advised participants to next apply the findings of their SWOT process and sketch their ideas for future roads and land uses. Staff directed participants to work with the following general land use categories:

- Commercial
- Residential
- Office
- Parks/Open space
- Natural Areas

Staff also encouraged participants to add details regarding the proposed intensity of commercial and office uses plus the density of future residential areas. Staff also noted that the former Pulte preliminary area site plan for the conversion of the English Hills Golf Course was still in effect and should be considered during the map-making exercise. "How can we make the Pulte plan better?" staff asked the participants.

Community Forum #1 ended with staff receiving numerous maps and notes. Staff advised attendees that the materials would be grouped into themes and future land use options would be created. Community Forum #2 would allow citizens to review and comment on the draft future land use plans.

Staff noted that, although not every idea, desire, or concern could be reflected, many would be incorporated into the draft master plan maps. Staff explained that, as is always the case when engaging the public, many competing interests arise. And as is increasingly the case, the public's tolerance for land use change is quite low.

This combination makes the development of a compelling, visionary and realistic master plan a tremendous challenge. Economy, environment, transportation and social needs present difficult and sometimes conflicting issues to incorporate into a master plan.



## Community Forum #2

Community Forum #2 (held on 11/29/06) was also well attended. Approximately 50 people were involved. Participants were given an opportunity to review and comment in writing on three Bristol East master plan map options.

These three future land use options are shown below.

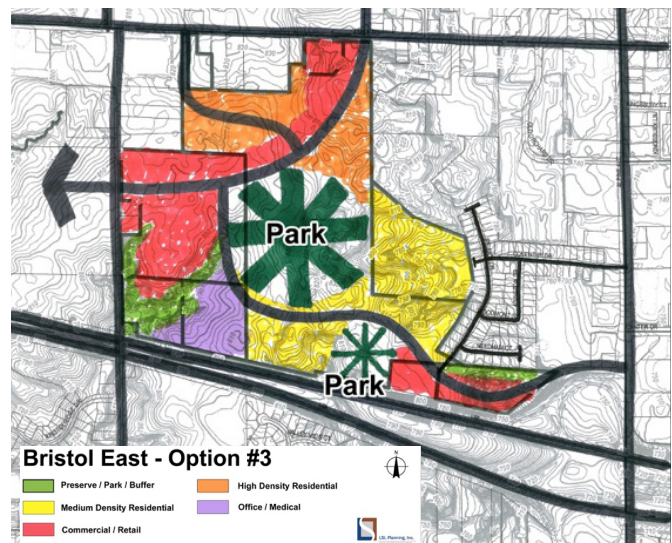
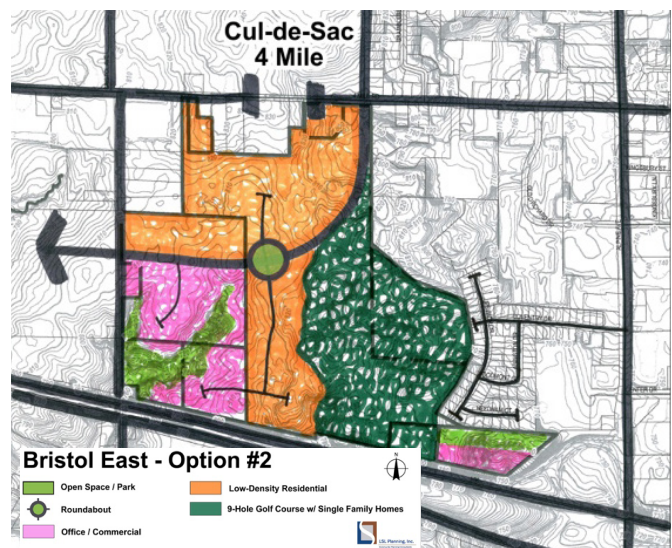
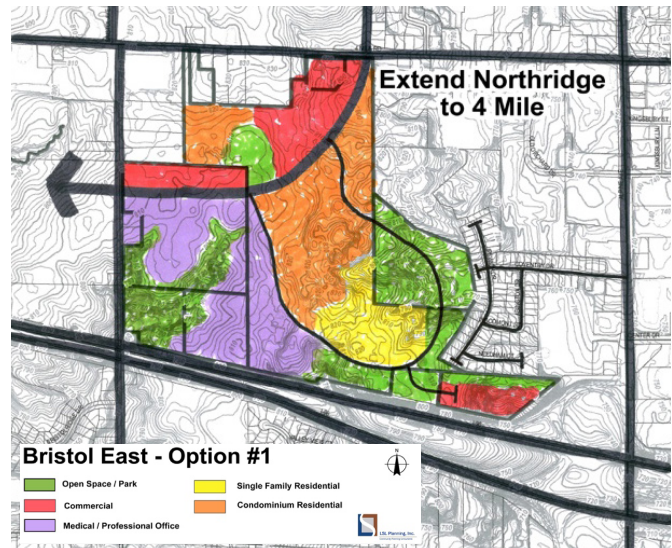
Staff presented the three master plan maps options and highlighted similarities and differences. Staff also called out the potential for a local road connector along I-96 to the signalized intersection of Alpine Avenue and Center Drive. “Perhaps a four-way signal could be negotiated with MDOT if Center Drive continued west of M-37,” was stated by staff.

Staff next introduced the public comment process for Community Forum #2. A questionnaire was distributed, containing four questions.

The questions and summarized public responses are noted below.

### Bristol East Questions and Public Responses from 11/29/06

1. **Which future land use option do you prefer - Option 1 / Option 2 / Option 3? Why did you choose that option?**
  - Option 3 because of the new outlet road to Alpine Avenue. This would really help the traffic going east on 4 Mile to Alpine and the traffic coming from the Orchard Park businesses. I also like the extension of North Ridge to Cordes via English Hills country club. This would help the traffic also.
  - Option 2 - use golf course as buffer zone – extend Cordes to Bristol via North Ridge...this still allows for new housing and commercial. Option #1 looks good except for the road going through the park. If the park at the end of Ipswich stays the same, it could use another basketball net. I walk the neighborhood almost every day and about 40% of the time kids are waiting to use the hoop. A lot of baseball players don't know how to be considerate with their parking. For years, the park has been a good place to watch July 4th fireworks. My main concern is to keep English Hills as it is and to have adequate green space with trees.
  - The option including the 9-hole golf course, which would preserve at least part of the setting for which we bought our condo.
  - Option 3 with the park next to our condos. However, I think that is the least likely. I think Option 2 is the best we can hope for.





- Option 2- preserve 9-hole golf course next to condos. We bought on Golf View Drive to live on a golf course. A park would also be fine like in Option 1.
- Option 1 – I would prefer as much green space as possible. Match condos to size and quality of existing units next door. Like to see high end single family homes with berm and trees.
- Upon further reflections on the three options presented. Option #1 is the most realistic compromise of the three options. It has the Ipswich neighborhood buffer. Option #2 is too good to be true but if it is feasible we vote for this. It preserves the environment we bought into. I recall that Option #3 had access from the PUD to Alpine with a frontage road roughly paralleling I-96. My concern is if the street infrastructure in the existing Plaza capable of handling any volume of cars that may seek to egress from the English Hills PUD as a short cut to the freeway. The traffic currently using the parking lot is a little awkward with traffic passing through from Coventry which we supports but is not to traffic engineering standard squaring the parking lot corner at the retention pond, traffic crossing through the TGI Friday's parking lot mixing through traffic with pedestrians going to the main store fronts, and traffic passing through the Logan's overflow parking in the Rent-to-Own lot, and finally egress stacking at the light which is currently acceptable but could become problematic if the Loeks Property is developed and would certainly be over capacity if English Hills is tied in. Second, Option #3 (or any others that place a street between the neighborhood park and the neighborhood safety, the unnecessarily dangerous for existing neighborhood pedestrians. Third, if there is a land swap placing the park as a buffer, will the city get a fair exchange i.e. trading the parks prime location and premium land value for land that is unbuildable or economically not viable for the developer. The Ipswich residents sees this option as desirable because it preserves quality of life for the existing residents and animal natural habitats of the gullies, ponds, and mature woodlots.
- As stated many times the neighbor on Ipswich request and equal set back from the property line to the PUD building and mirrored zoned structures, single story / single family to SGL SGL family and condo-to-condo. Also that structure that are on higher elevations than mirrored perimeter be limited to one story. We have concerns for the neighbors on 4 mile who are fewer in number but have like concerns seeking a buffer zone. We agree with the plans that cul du sac the English Hill residents of Ipswich from the PUD. We recommend that a park strip be created north of Coventry paralleling Ipswich to preserve mature trees that buffer the PUD. If structures are place on the rolling hill of the English Hill PUD I recommend that the secluded lots of Egypt Valley following the terrain, preserving the lot of trees, and integrating the natural surroundings.

### Local Road Connector to Alpine and Center?



- Option 2 – preserve the golf course – the reason people bought into the neighborhood.
  - As mentioned at the meeting, I think it is important that you carefully note people's comments in support of their preferred option for east of Bristol. Note that while many people may indicate support to, for example, option 2 due to the large buffer on the east, these people may not necessarily prefer option 2 with respect to the 60 acre Engman parcel. With respect to that parcel, these people may prefer option 3 but felt compelled to select option 2 because it most directly impacted their interests as neighbors to the Pulte development. This is just one example, and this analysis applies across the board to the three options presented.
  - Option 1 is preferred because of the Ipswich buffer. 4 Mile and Bristol residents needs buffer treatment as well.
  - Option 1 – I live near the park and the terrain warrants a bigger buffer between existing homes and new homes. 100' is not enough.
  - Option 3 – I like the commercial immediately east of Bristol to complement tourist oriented retail to west.
  - Option 3- puts commercial uses along new North Ridge road connector with transitional development / office out away from corridor. Not sure if park is practical.
2. **Please describe future opportunities to make your selected option become a reality.**
- Keep public informed. Work with the owners of English Hills condos so they are in favor of the decisions and make sure they don't overpopulate this property in the name of GREED. Make sure MDOT and whoever else gives approval for the roads.
  - If a developer of quality homes, a local resident with local contractors, bought this land, I truly believe there are very nice options to build a lovely community using the existing topography. Large lots of one acre or more. Too many homes will add to the traffic problems. We could already use a traffic light at 4 Mile and Cordes...a problem that was non-existent when we moved in.

- With upscale housing on some of the land you might be able to attract highend medical personnel.
  - High end housing would attract professional type people.
  - If Cabela's is coming, I believe a golf course close to their site would be a positive. Also a good selling point to home buyers.
  - Option 2 would be nice but probably not economically feasible.
  - North Ridge to be extended to 4 Mile at Cordes Ave.
  - With potential development west of Bristol, the Bristol East area should be complementary and compatible.
3. **Please describe practical difficulties that might limit the ability of your selected option to become a reality.**
- Owners of the property (English Hills Golf Course) unwilling to use too much of the land for roads, thereby losing home sites. Putting too many commercial sites along the extended North Ridge Drive.
  - I don't think that the builder will go along with the golf course but he might turn ½ of that area into a park or green area. Either way, I hope the road set-up stays the same.
  - If current developer goes forward, it would likely cause him to lose too much ground for housing units.
  - A builder/developer is in business to make as large a profit as possible and would not choose to consider the condo residents desire for green spaces.
  - Money. I want a green area. Who is going to buy and area and keep it green?
  - 660 homes would create a terrible traffic problem. Run down atmosphere with town homes, which do not age well.
  - The Pulte site plans that the City extended until July – which we as homeowners have no control over. What a shame.
  - Traffic and privacy.
  - Alpine connector road to Center Drive should traverse boundary of Engman / Haworth site to benefit both properties. Former Pulte development could not be done because it becomes unrealistic.
  - Planning for this area should be refined further to make the master plan practical. Great potential to do an end-to-end North Ridge connector plan. I don't know who is going to pay for the parks.
4. **Do you have any further suggestions for the City and Planning Commissions to consider regarding the future land use of the Bristol East area?**
- Keep the density of homes and condos to a more practical number. 600 plus is and was way too many for this property.
  - Left turn light at 4 Mile to go flashing from 10 PM to 5 AM. Make a park area behind the houses on Ipswich to create a bigger buffer zone.
  - Traffic light at 4 Mile and Cordes very important. Moving setback beyond the Pulte plan's 100 feet – very important. Limit thru traffic. If extension of North Ridge happens, install proper traffic control for safe access to English Hills condos. Widen 4 Mile Road.
  - Preserve the farms and orchards via farmland preservation methods.
  - We paid extra to live with a golf course view. Please try to keep English Hills condo area as green as possible.
  - Ask Orchard Park developers to purchase the golf course. They seem like more "people friendly" business people.
  - General thoughts: Someday we may and will regret that English Hills is turned into a development, probably one of the most diverse natural habitats with ponds, seasonal creeks, springs, and woodlots in the area. What if we developed it into a premier park with a circular drive roughly following the perimeter fairways with picnic areas, ballparks, ect. This would be on par with Johnson Park, Palmer Park, and other diverse and wonderful sanctuaries in Kent County. We may need such a buffer, a Central Park, when the land north of the freeway is fully built out. Now that the commanding view of the Green Ridge Shopping Plaza has been razed for Kohls and vacant Cracker Barrel what else do we have beside English Hills? Frank, I have appreciated your sensitivities to the neighbor's concerns and I think the second public hearing evidenced the growing trust the neighbors are investing in you. The challenge is to find the best solution for all the stakeholders blending the interest of the old and the new. It is ironic that developers raze the nature features of a property, distorting it character, and in a perverse way name it after an entity that no longer exists as Green Ridge or Orchard Park.
  - Traffic – traffic – traffic.
  - Another road is a great idea. I don't know which choice would work best. We need a light at 4 Mile and Cordes!
  - If you extend North Ridge, you need to add higher value uses to fund the special assessment to construct the road.
  - Complement the Orchard Park plan to the west. Do not stick residential in areas better suited to commercial or office uses. Keep transitional uses in strategic locations.

## Community Forum #3

Community Forum #3 (held on 1/10/07) was also well attended. Approximately 50 people were involved.

As noted in the overall master planning process introduction, the third community forum was primarily reserved for preliminary decision making by the City and Planning Commissions. However, in addition to this function, the third community forum for Bristol East included a presentation on the revised English Hills Golf Course plan by Jeff Chamberlain of Haworth Homes. Additional public comment was also taken.

Staff presented summaries from Community Forums #1 and #2. Results from the public surveys were provided to the attendees. Staff then presented a draft future land use plan for Bristol East. (See below, Figure 9)

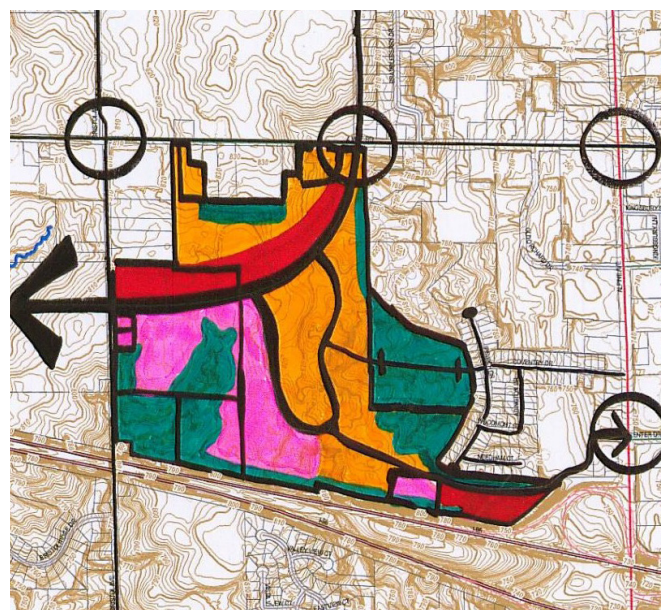
The draft future land use map presented on 1-10-07 incorporated many previous public comments and attempted to address several primary public concerns, including:

- Improving traffic congestion at major intersections during peak hours
- An improved open space and natural area buffer for existing residences
- A new traffic signal at 4 Mile Road and Cordes Avenue
- A re-alignment of the 4 Mile Road and Bristol intersection
- An improvement in English Hills Park via a relocation and enlargement
- A local road connection to Alpine Avenue at Center Drive
- Residential densities matching existing condo developments
- Preservation of the existing ravine in the SW corner
- Extension of North Ridge to serve as a new major city street
- A mixture of uses along North Ridge extended to provide a means for developer-provided construction of the new public streets.

Jeff Chamberlain from Haworth Homes next presented a conceptual plan for the English Hills Golf Course property and adjacent vacant land under developer control. (See Figure 10, below)

Mayor Ver Heulen then facilitated a public comment session. The general theme of public comment was that the revised "Pulte Plan" looked much better and addressed most major concerns of local residents.

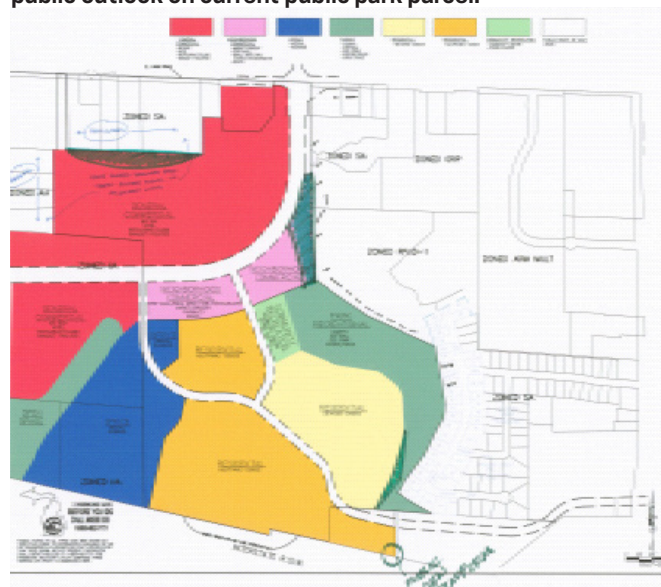
Figure 9: Draft Future Land Use Map



### BRISTOL EAST FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



Figure 10: Haworth Homes Conceptual Plan, presented on 1-10-07, with staff additions for perimeter green space and a public outlook on current public park parcel.





Some constructive criticism was raised, including:

- The need to widen the proposed open space adjacent to Ipswich near the existing English Hills Park.
- The need for “equal value” in the potential land swap of old park area for new parkland.
- The need to keep Coventry and Ipswich detached from any new road systems.
- The need for a multi-use trail system.
- The topographical challenges involved with constructing the local access connector to Alpine Avenue at Center Drive.
- The need for a buffer between the existing condos and the proposed “neighborhood commercial” along North Ridge.
- Concern over the design quality and concentration of rental units.
- The desire for a public overlook within the current park site.
- The need for a buffer between the existing homes on 4 Mile Road and Bristol Avenue (almost all owned by the Haisma family) and the proposed general commercial area.

The general public comment regarding the draft future land use plan for Bristol East was very similar and included many of the same suggestions and concerns.

Mayor Ver Heulen then asked the City and Planning Commissioners if they were comfortable moving the draft future land use plan for Bristol East to the Planning Commission for the first official review in the overall State of Michigan master plan approval process. The City and Planning Commissioners gave their approval.

Staff then asked Doug Haisma if he would be willing to provide written comment regarding 20-year future plans for the several lots owned by his family along Bristol Avenue and 4 Mile Road. Mr. Haisma agreed to do so. Staff followed up with a letter to Mr. Haisma on 1-19-07, reminding him to discuss the issue with his family and provide written correspondence. Mr. Haisma provided written correspondence on 1/29/07, expressing concern that, given potential land uses changes of significant impact in the area, there may be little interest in family members to continue living on their lots.

## The Planning Commission “Makes The Plan”

### Revisions to Draft Sub-Area #3B Future Land Use Map

The City of Walker Planning Commission, following State of Michigan Law, held an official review of the draft Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East master plan amendment on March 7, 2007.

Although not required by law, the Planning Commission noticed the meeting as a public hearing and accepted additional public comments. The final draft of the Sub-Area #3B master plan / future land use map is shown below.

Future land use details applicable to the 2007 Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East Future Land Use Map include the following:

### General Concepts

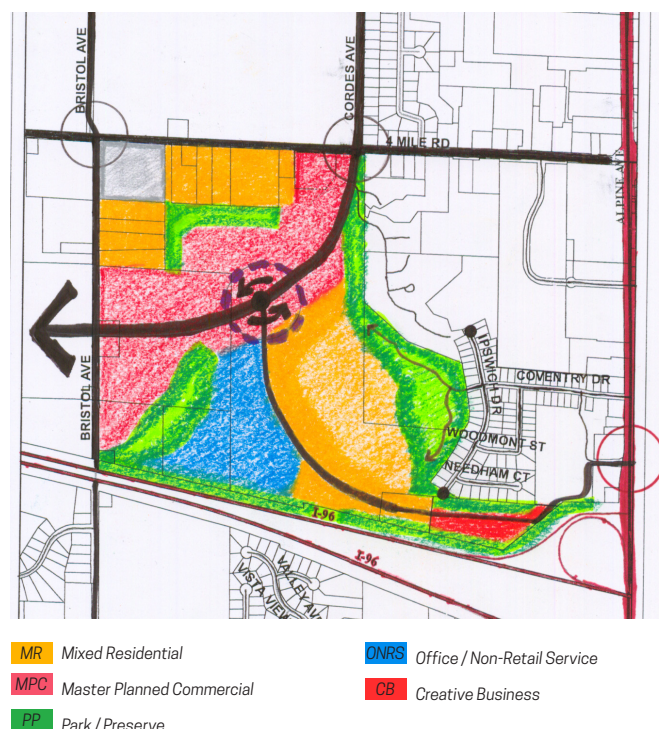
- The design intent for Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East has been refined to raise expectations for creative site planning and the integration of multiple uses under one comprehensive planning umbrella.
- Transitions from use to use should be gradual and assisted by public open spaces, squares, parks, context sensitive landscaped areas and pedestrian connections.
- Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East will be designed to evolve over time and adapt to changing conditions.
- Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East will exhibit a sustainable foundation of land use design, form and function for the City of Walker in the 21st Century.



## Parks, Open Space, Buffers and Natural Areas

- English Hills Park would be relocated to act as a buffer for new and existing residents.
  - The park would be increased in land area and number of facilities.
  - Natural feature preservation would be the priority adjacent to existing residences.
  - Active recreation courts and fields would be set back from existing residences.
  - A system of trails and pedestrian walks would be installed.
  - Access from Coventry would either be a gated street or a 12' wide paved trail.
- The ravine in the southwestern portion of Bristol East would be preserved.
- Existing trees along I-96 would be preserved.
- A significant buffer area would be created west of existing condominiums and north of the relocated English Hills Park.
- A public outlook area would be created along I-96, allowing citizens to watch holiday fireworks and benefit from scenic views of downtown Grand Rapids. This public outlook area could be a stand-alone facility or incorporated as part of a restaurant or other business open to the public.

Figure 11: 2007 Sub-Area #3B – Bristol East Future Land Use



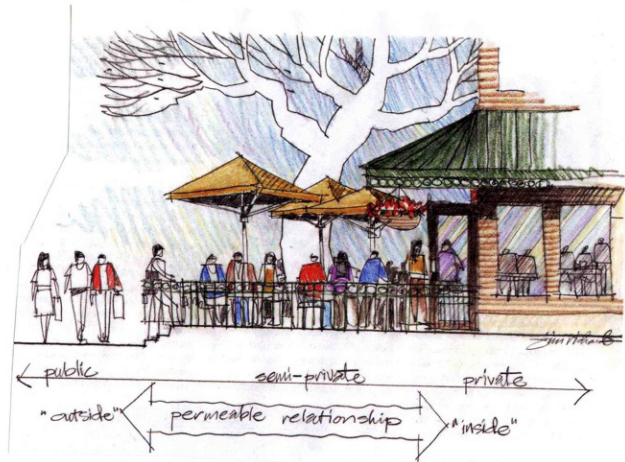
## Streets, Traffic Management and Pedestrian Safety

- A new traffic signal would be installed, in partnership with the Kent County Road Commission, at the improved intersection of Cordes Avenue and 4 Mile Road.
- Internal sidewalks and/or trails would be linked into the 4 Mile Road trail, based upon the Kent County Parks and Recreation Department's successful bid for Federal funding for a trail system that would link the Musketawa and White Pine Trails via 4 Mile Road.
- A local street connector to Alpine Avenue at Center Drive would be constructed adjacent to I-96. This street (either a public road or a non-gated private road constructed to public specifications) would connect to the intersection of Alpine Avenue and Center Drive. City staff would work with MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission to improve the signalized intersection of Alpine Avenue and Center Drive to a full-movement design.
- North Ridge Avenue would be constructed from Bristol Avenue to Cordes Avenue and function as a major city street and potential relief route 4 Mile Road. North Ridge would be constructed as a 4-lane boulevard for access management, pedestrian safety and traffic efficiency purposes. Bump outs for public transit stops would be incorporated in partnership with The Rapid / ITP.
- A modern round-a-bout would be centered between Cordes Ave. / 4 Mile and Bristol Avenue on North Ridge Drive. This round-a-bout would serve as a traffic calming device and an urban design focal point for the surrounding North Ridge Business District.
- An internal, interconnected and hierarchical public street system would link North Ridge Drive extended to the local connector road to Alpine Avenue at Center Drive. The careful application of context sensitive design would be essential to plan this street system for vehicles, bicycle riders and pedestrians.
- The current dead-ends on Coventry and Ipswich would remain.
- The Bristol Avenue / 4 Mile Road off-set intersection would be fixed in partnership with the Kent County Road Commission and affected property owners.

## Future Land Use Categories

- The area on both sides of North Ridge extended would become **Master Planned Commercial**.
  - The physical design of this area would avoid the standard “suburban commercial strip” appearance of massive front parking lots and blank box buildings and would be designed at a pedestrian scale.
  - The focal point round-a-bout intersection area would be designed to provide an inviting and interesting public streetscape (see sketches below).
  - The area would include a planned mixture of synergistic uses, including retail, service, office and residential.
  - Buildings of all sizes would orient to the North Ridge street frontage.
  - The majority of parking spaces would be moved to the sides or rear of buildings.
  - Sidewalks would link parking areas to buildings in a safe and creative manner.
  - Landscaping would be planned using urban design details and techniques.
  - The use of ground signs and canopy signs would be encouraged instead of pylon signs and typical commercial wall signage.
  - Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
  - Shared driveways, parking lot connections, shared parking lots, service drives and internal public streets would be used to implement access management techniques.
  - In summary, this area should be comprehensively designed to fit and function as one business district, not a jumbled collection of independent strip mall sites.
- The area south of the Master Planned Commercial would become Office / Non-Retail Service.
  - The physical design of this Office / Non-retail service area would avoid the standard “suburban office strip” appearance of isolated front parking lots and box buildings.
  - The area would be designed at a pedestrian scale.
  - The area would include a planned mixture of synergistic uses, such as professional, medical and technical offices, educational centers, hotels, etc.
  - The majority of parking spaces would be moved to the sides or rear of buildings.
  - Sidewalks would be provided, linking parking areas to buildings in a safe and creative manner.

### Sketch concepts for North Ridge Master Planned Commercial streetscape and pedestrian appeal at the focal point round-a-bout



- Landscaping would be planned using urban design details and techniques.
- The use of ground signs and canopy signs would be encouraged instead of pylon signs and typical commercial-style wall signage.
- Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
- Shared driveways, parking lot connections, shared parking lots, service drives and internal public streets would be used to implement access management techniques.
- In summary, this area should be comprehensively designed to fit and function as one office-service district, not a jumbled collection of independent sites.

### The Master Planned Commercial and Office / Non-Retail Service areas together would appear and function as one unit – the North Ridge Business District.

- The area south and east of the North Ridge Business District would become Mixed Residential.
  - The physical design of this residential area would integrate a mixture of housing types, placed to take

advantage of their relative locations, and enhanced by pedestrian access, trails, parks and open spaces.

- The maximum overall housing density allowed would be five (5) units per acre.
  - Rental housing would not be concentrated in massive buildings or complexes, but would rather be of low intensity, with pedestrian access to recreational facilities and open spaces, and placed along main streets or I-96.
  - The majority of housing units would be single-family homes or condominiums up to four attached units.
  - Senior housing facilities of varying intensity would be allowed.
  - The preservation/enhancement of existing natural features would be a priority.
  - Existing topography would be preserved or minimally altered.
  - Adequate parking for visitors would be provided in strategic locations.
  - Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
  - In summary, this area should be comprehensively and creatively designed to meet housing market needs, take advantage of relative location and work with the existing topography and natural features.
- The area in the southeast corner of Sub-Area #3B along I-96 would become Creative Business.
    - The physical design of this area would have to be creative and flexible, given the severe topography and location adjacent to I-96 and a major Alpine Avenue intersection.
    - The area presents an excellent opportunity to maximize views of the Grand River valley and downtown Grand Rapids via multi-story buildings, which would be limited to four stories or 45 feet in height.
    - The area would include a planned mixture of synergistic uses, such as retail, office and potentially residential in multi-story, multi-use buildings.
    - Sidewalks would be provided, linking parking areas to buildings in a safe and creative manner.
    - Landscaping would be planned using urban design details and techniques.
    - The use of ground signs and canopy signs would be encouraged instead of pylon signs and typical commercial wall signage.
    - Stormwater management systems would treat both runoff quantity and quality using creative design tools.
    - Shared driveways, parking lot connections, shared parking lots, service drives and internal public streets would be used to implement access management techniques.
    - In summary, this area should be comprehensively and creatively designed to take advantage of its unique location-based strengths while overcoming its inherent topographical limitations.



## Policy Recommendations For Implementation

1. The entire Bristol East area should be rezoned to the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MPUD) district. This would allow the few property owners involved to work together in a comprehensive planning process with the Walker City and Planning Commissions plus MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission.
2. The City of Walker should consider the exchange of the current English Hills Park for a larger and more useful land area to the north on the existing English Hills Golf Course. Obviously, the City Commission should be ensured of “equal value” in this property swapping action. Such a transaction could provide a better buffer for existing homes, expand and improve a city park and allow the construction of the local access road connector to the Alpine Avenue and Center Drive intersection.
3. Funding mechanisms such as Special Assessment Districts should be used to complete street and service drive improvements, drainage upgrades, landscape upgrades and improved pedestrian safety and access. The main project that would trigger consideration of a Special Assessment District would be the extension of North Ridge Drive.
4. The City of Walker should continue to work with MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission regarding traffic circulation and access management improvements on all public roadways. The intersection of Alpine Avenue and Center Drive should be re-examined as part of a plan to construct the local connector road previously mentioned in this report.



**6.**

**2007 Sub Areas #4-A  
and #4-B: Standale /  
Downtown Walker &  
West Standale**

# 2007 Sub Areas #4-A and #4-B Standale/Downtown Walker & West Standale

## City of Walker

Approved: 9.24.2007

## Introduction

The City of Walker has undertaken an update of its 1998 Master Plan. The goal of this process is to create a guidebook for future land use decisions that will be understood and supported by the community at-large. Much of the 1998 Plan remains valid. However, various planning issues have arisen that require additional review. To that end, five Sub-Areas have been selected by the Walker City and Planning Commissions for detailed study, including (see Figure 5 - Neighborhood Map, below):

1. **Sub-Area 1** - defined by Four Mile and Three Mile Roads and Bristol and Fruit Ridge Avenues.
2. **Sub-Area 2** - located along Wilson Avenue adjacent to I-196.
3. **Sub-Areas 3A** - located near the Ann Street and Alpine Avenue corridors and 3B - located east of Bristol Avenue to Alpine Avenue.
4. **Sub-Areas 4A** - located along the Lake Michigan Drive corridor in Standale between Wilson Avenue and Kinney Avenue and 4B - located on the south side of Lake Michigan Drive, west of Wilson Avenue and north of O'Brien Road.

These five general Sub-Areas reflected the disparate “neighborhoods” contained within the City of Walker. There are effectively several different communities within the borders of the City of Walker. The 2007 Master Plan Update process sought to work within this reality to better address local issues.

The planning process and resulting land use recommendations for these Sub-Areas provide a sound foundation on which to base future decisions, while at the same time providing effective

Figure 1: 2007 Sub Area 4A Future Land Use Map

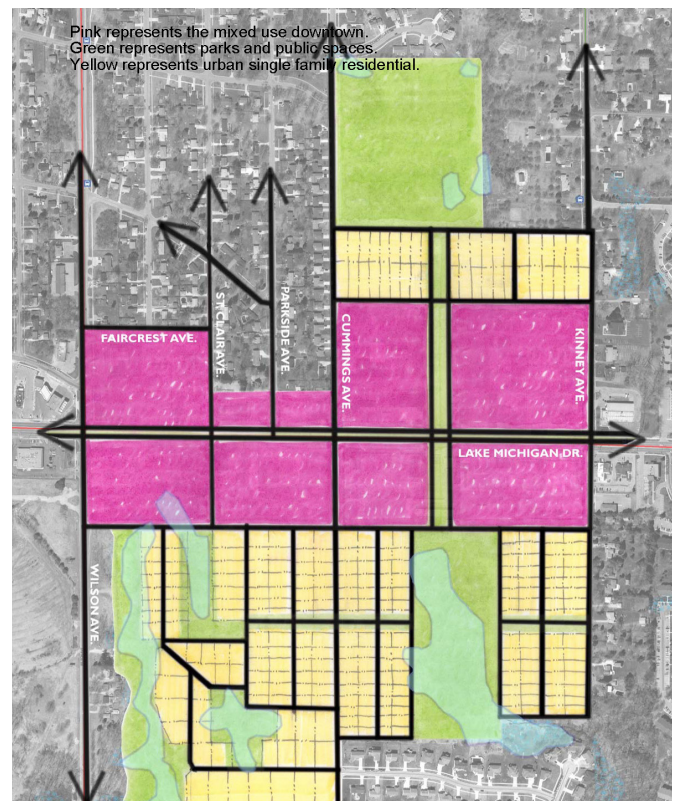


Figure 2: "Downtown Walker" Physical Design Master Plan

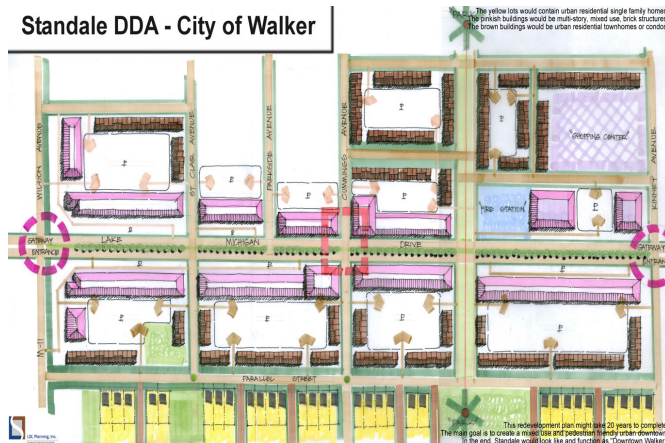
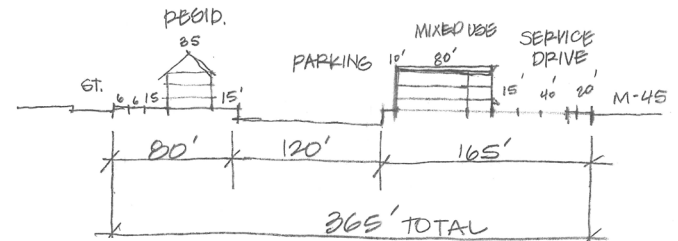


Figure 3: Proposed Cross Section for "Downtown Walker"



implementation measures that accurately reflect community desires. Other actions that may be undertaken as a result of this effort are an update to the City's Zoning Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Although elected officials adopted the Sub-Area plans for the City of Walker, the public played an important advisory role in this process, providing input and acting as an effective sounding board for both the Planning Commission and the City Commission. The City of Walker's ultimate goals for public participation were:

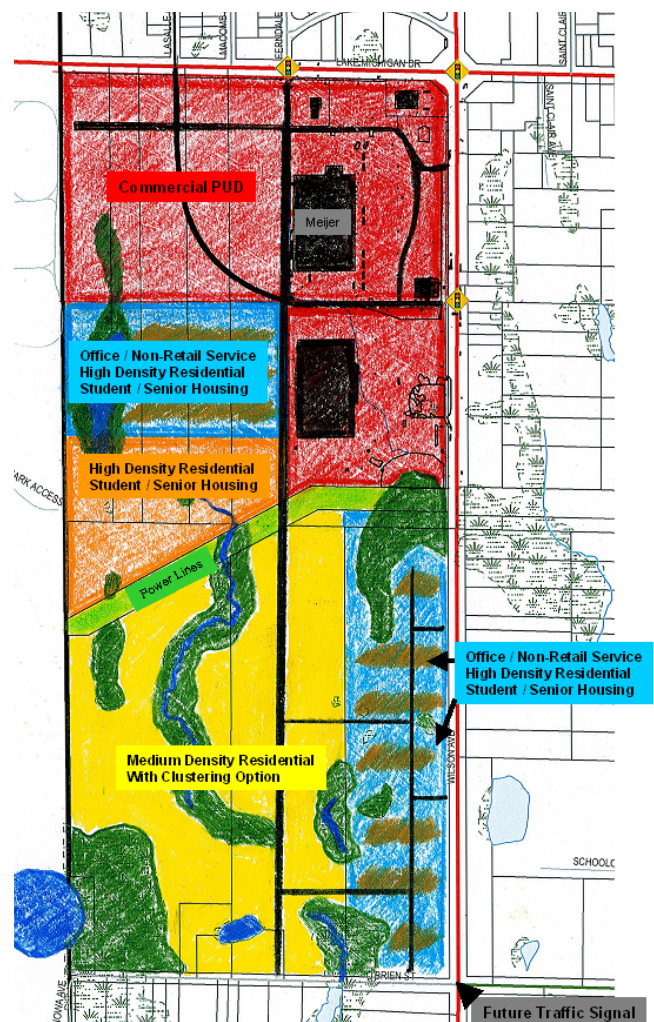
1. Provide the public with an opportunity to participate and be heard.
2. Make sure the process was fair.
3. Respect everyone's ideas and opinions.

The master plan update process was originally designed to encourage citizen participation at two junctures. The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the planning process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in the development of land use and planning concepts.

Planners, designers and members of the Walker City and Planning Commissions would use results from these Forums to develop an initial land use concept for each Sub-Area that would be later tested and evaluated by the public.

The second opportunity would occur when, based on the outcomes of the previous public meeting, future land use concepts would be presented and discussed. During this second round of Community Forums, the public would have the opportunity to comment and provide opinions. These comments would prove helpful in completing the final future land use plan for each Sub-Area.

Figure 4: 2007 Sub Area 4B Future Land Use Map





This elaborate and ambitious process was only used to its fullest extent for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3-B. Budget constraints required that the other Sub-Areas be managed using a modified version of the master plan update process.

The process for Sub-Area 4-A was modified to include public input after the redevelopment concept alternatives had already been generated. While this was an abbreviated process, it still provided citizens an opportunity to review proposed plans and provide comments and criticism.

Citizens provided comments and concerns at a public meeting on July 12th, 2006. A written survey / questionnaire was used to obtain comments from the public, which were ultimately used by the Planning and City Commissions in their deliberations and final decisions. The public comments were quite supportive of the proposed “Standale / Downtown Walker” plan.

The process for Sub-Area 4-B began with a meeting between staff and the site’s large landowner – the Goodale Family. Next, the City of Walker Downtown Development Authority reviewed and acknowledged a draft future land use map that had been generated by staff.

A public meeting was held on April 18th, 2007 to roll out the draft future land use plan while allowing the public to comment and critique the proposal. Written comment cards were distributed to the 50-60 people in attendance but only five cards were turned into the planning department. The comments were generally supportive of the future land use plan.

## Sub Area 4-A Standale / Downtown Walker

Sub-Area 4-A is located between Wilson (M-11) and Kinney Avenues on Lake Michigan Drive (M-45). Sub-Area 4-A extends north and south to include existing residential neighborhoods and undeveloped land.

Better known as Standale, the area has evolved over time as a strip commercial corridor that serves surrounding neighborhoods and the central part of the city.

Standale was severely damaged by a tornado in 1956. Rebuilding was quickly completed, establishing a strip commercial character that reflected the suburban development patterns gaining momentum across the country.

Figure 5: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map

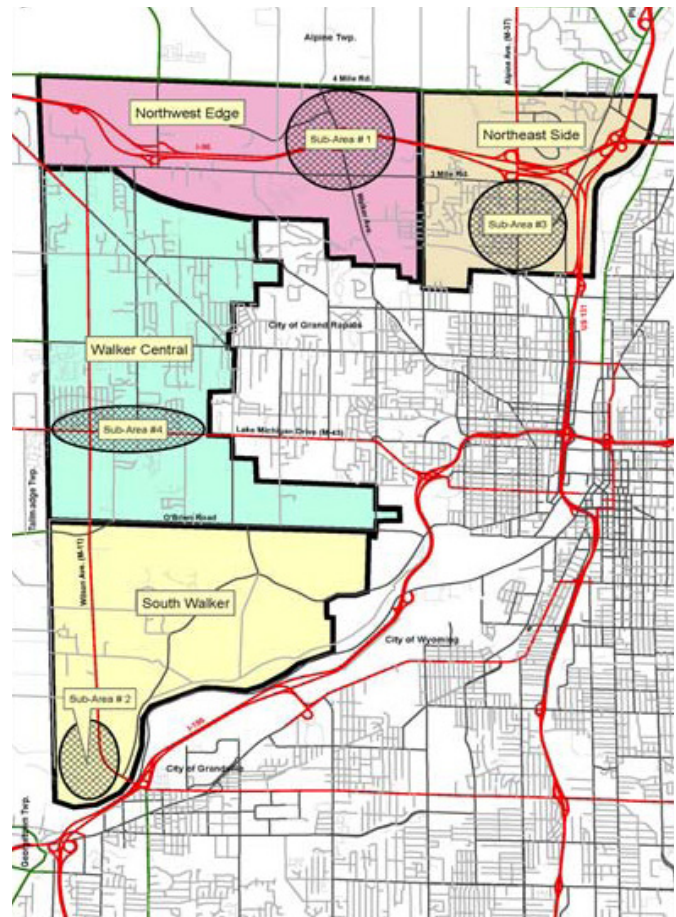


Figure 6: Sub Area 4-A

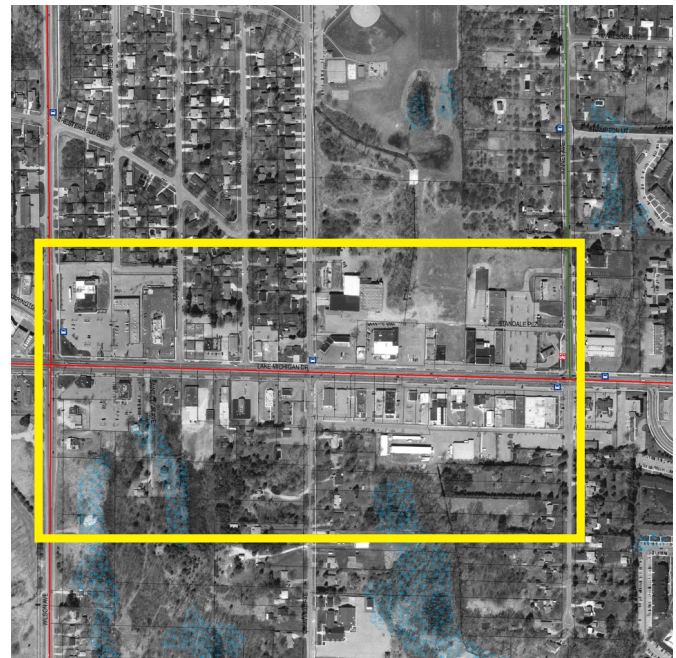




Figure 7: Post-Tornado Redevelopment



Figure 8: 1956 Tornado Damage



## Sub Area 4A Existing Conditions

### Land Use & Land Cover

Sub-Area 4-A is characterized by strip commercial development along Lake Michigan Drive, surrounded by stable residential neighborhoods. Its southern edge has a semi-rural atmosphere and contains numerous large-lot, single-family homes. Many of these parcels contain woodlots, streams and wetlands.

New and/or redevelopment activity includes the Meijer store at the intersection of M-45 and M-11, the City's Fire Station #2 and community room, the GVSU/ITP/City of Walker Park-N-Ride lot, 5th 3rd Bank, Independent Bank, Applebee's, Uccello's and numerous facelifts to existing businesses.

There exists a large amount of commercially zoned property that is either vacant or underutilized. The existing zoning for these properties requires a traditional, suburban strip commercial character to development.

### 2007 Zoning

Properties along Lake Michigan Drive are zoned for commercial uses that, for the most part, are automobile-oriented. The commercial districts are flanked by single-family residential districts. Existing regulations use a conventional approach to zoning. The current zoning codes are geared to isolate development on stand-alone parcels; they do not permit mixed land uses and they require a suburban strip, "non-downtown" style of development.



## Natural Features

Sub-Area 4-A was historically characterized by farms, woodlots and orchards supported by a small downtown business district. Much of the land base has since transitioned to urbanized uses but areas to the south remain largely undeveloped.

While overall topography is gently rolling, some areas, especially those to the south, are quite flat. As a result many parcels have not developed because they are constrained by wetlands and poor drainage. These lots have retained their rural residential characteristics.

## City And DDA Owned Properties

Several Sub-Area 4-A properties are owned by either the City of Walker or the Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The ability to purchase private property, market it for redevelopment via a Request For Proposals (RFP) process, then reinvest the profits by purchasing more property in Standale establishes a realistic mechanism to initiate and sustain the Sub-Area 4-A “downtown” redevelopment process.

## Transportation

Sub-Area 4-A is located at the crossroads of Lake Michigan Drive (M-45) and Wilson Avenue (M-11). Both are state highways of regional transportation importance. Wilson Avenue has historically been planned as the “West Beltline” for the Grand Rapids region. The intersection of M-45 and M-11 was improved in 2004 via a partnership between Meijer, the City of Walker, the Standale DDA and MDOT.

Regional development, including the expansion of Grand Valley State University’s Allendale and downtown Grand Rapids campus sites, has highlighted the importance of M-45 and M-11. While accommodating regional traffic movement is an important consideration, it must be balanced with the community’s desire for Standale to be restored as “Downtown Walker.”

A recent partnership between the City of Walker, Grand Valley State University, The Rapid / ITP and the Grand Valley Metro Council has enabled the construction of a GVSU Park-N-Ride lot behind the new Fire Station #2 building. This new public parking lot currently accommodates 90 vehicles. The ITP Route 50 bus will now stop at Fire Station #2 to facilitate student use of the new lot.

Figure 9: 2007 Zoning Map

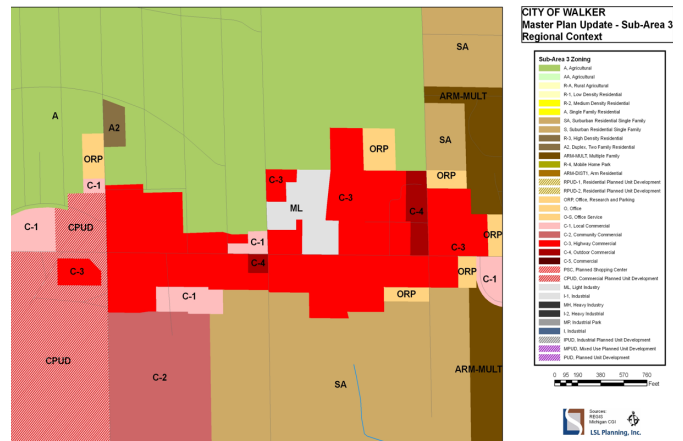


Figure 10: Natural Features Map. Note that wetland boundaries are preliminary only and not approved by MDEQ.

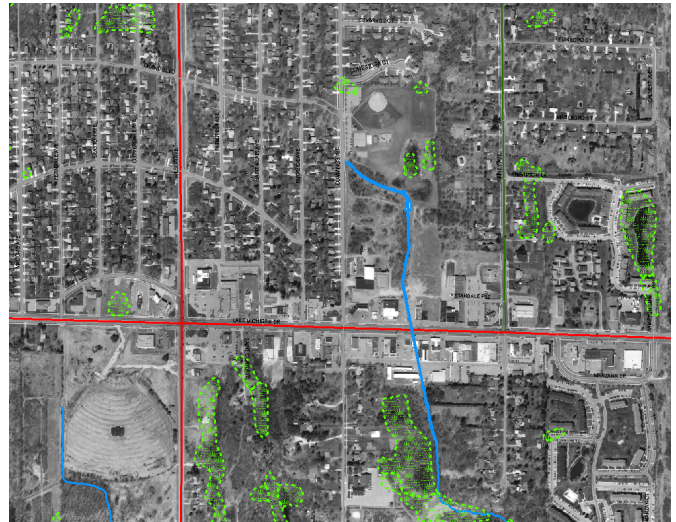
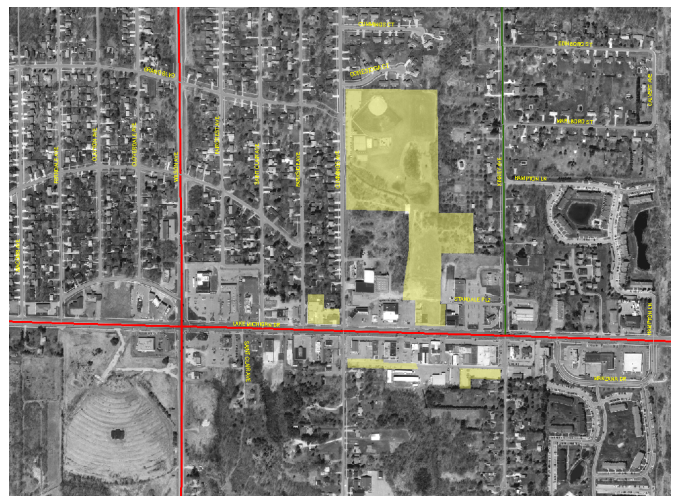


Figure 11: City of Walker and DDA Owned Parcels in Sub-Area 4-A. Lots under public ownership are highlighted in yellow.



## Public Utilities and Topography

Sub-Area 4-A is currently served by public water and sewer systems. Major upgrades to the Tallman Creek trunk sewer will be completed in 2007.

## 1998 Master Plan

The 1998 Walker Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map (Figure 14) projected a suburban strip commercial corridor through Standale. Vacant land outside of the commercial corridor was planned for residential uses of various densities.

Figure 12: Public Water and Sewer Map

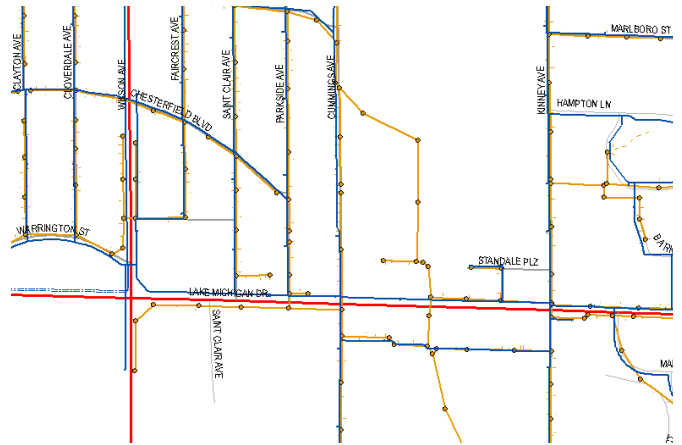


Figure 13: Sub-Area 4-A Topography (2' Contour Intervals)

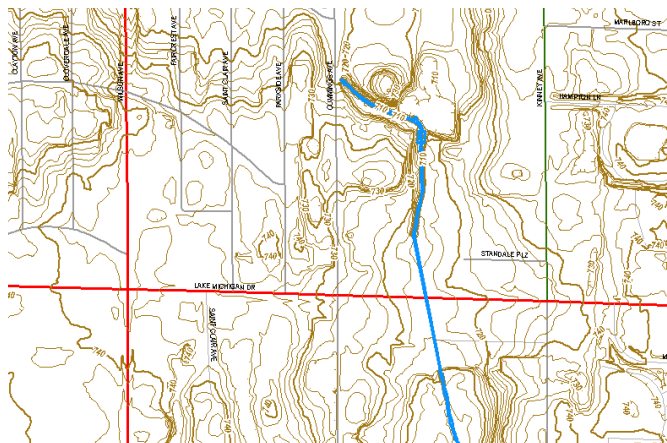
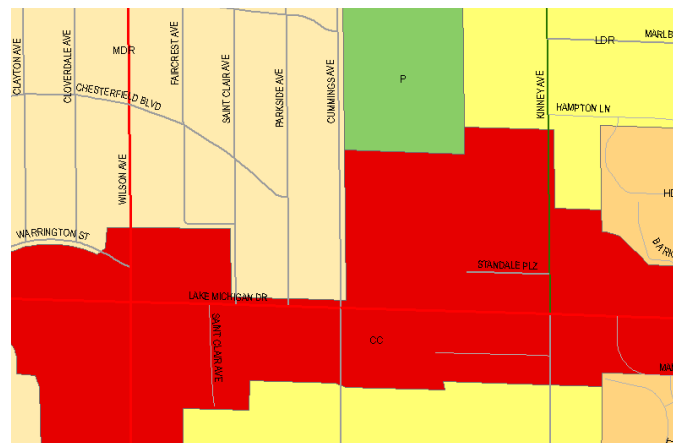


Figure 14: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map



# 2007 Sub Area 4-A Master Plan Update: Description

## Concept Alternatives

The creation of an overall Concept Plan and a more detailed plan for the Lake Michigan Drive Corridor (see Figures 15 & 16) was guided by a report titled "Market Analysis and Strategic Plan for Standale" prepared by the Chesapeake Group. This plan was reviewed and endorsed by the City of Walker Downtown Development Authority on March 29th, 2006 and became the foundation for the Sub-Area 4-A Master Plan. The following is a synopsis of those findings:

## Market Research Results

### Sub-Area 4-A Multi-Unit Residential Demand

- 5,400 Residents (2006 to 2015 estimated city-wide population increase)
- 1,641 to 2,199 Residential Units (2006 to 2015 city-wide increase in total number of households)
- 328 to 440 Multi-Family Units (20% of total city-wide residential units = non-single family units)
- 164 to 220 Multi-Family Units (50% market capture for study area)

### Sub-Area 4-A Single Family Residential Demand

- 1,313 to 1,759 Single Family Homes (80% of total city-wide residential unit demand)
- 328 to 440 Single Family Homes (25% capture for study area)

### Total Study Area Forecasted Demands (2006 – 2015)

- 492 to 660 Residential Units
- 46,000 to 101,500 Square Feet Retail
- 52,000 to 69,000 Square Feet Office

## 2007 Sub Area 4-A Master Plan Update: Key Concepts

### Land Use

- Promote mixed-use development (shown in pink on Figures 15 & 16) including a blend of residential, commercial and office uses in a “downtown” setting.
- Encourage multi-story buildings in the mixed-use downtown that accommodate residential or office uses on upper floors and retail / office on the ground floor.
- Support development of higher density residential (shown in yellow on Figures 15 & 16) in neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.
- Create traditional development patterns that are typically found in older residential neighborhoods:
  - Two and three story buildings located at or near the sidewalk.
  - Small blocks and narrow interconnected streets with sidewalks to promote walking.
  - Garages that are located in the rear yard or are set back behind a line extending across the front façade of a building.
- Orient buildings toward public streets and place parking lots either to the side or behind buildings at the center of a block.
- Formalize a service drive with on-street parking that parallels Lake Michigan Drive but is separated from the M-45 travel lanes by a sidewalk and parkway planted with street trees.

Figure 15: Concept Plan

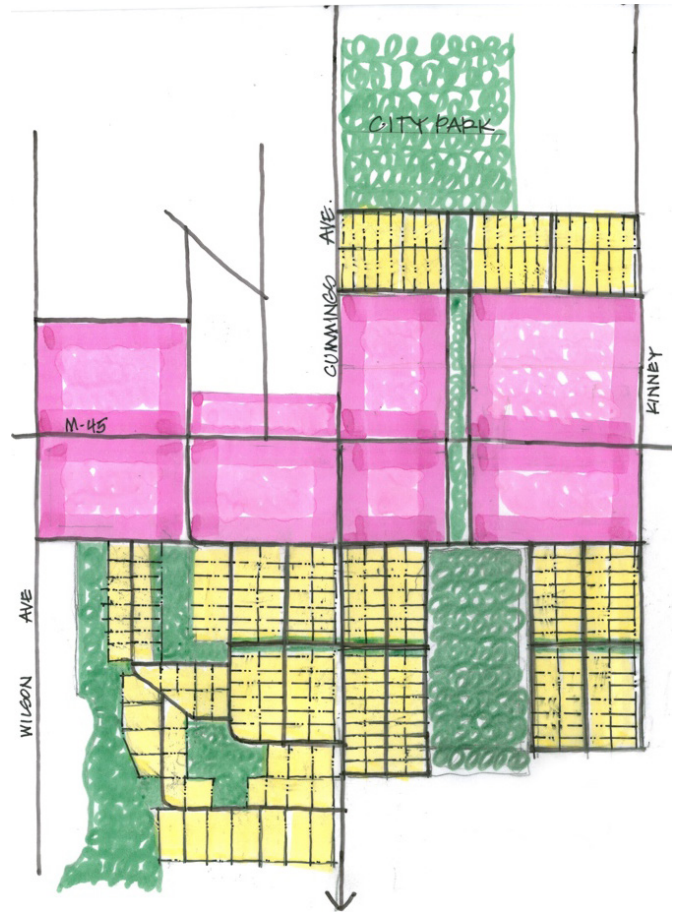
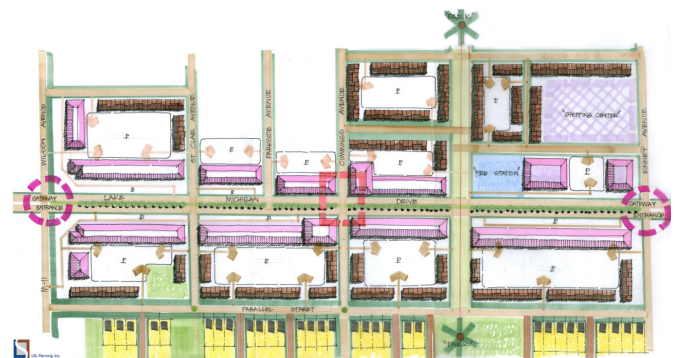


Figure 16: Lake Michigan Drive Corridor – Detailed Plan For “Downtown Walker”





- Design buildings near the intersection of Cummings Avenue and Lake Michigan Drive as the “4 Corners” focal point of Downtown Walker.
- Permit a blend of different types of homes in residential neighborhoods ranging from small-lot single family to town-homes, student housing and senior housing.

## Public Spaces

- Promote the development of an interconnected system of parks, sidewalks and natural areas.
- Create public spaces in the downtown to accommodate multiple-uses, events and activities.
- Preserve existing wetlands and tree stands where possible and incorporate them into an inter-connected open space and park system.

## Gateways and Entrances

- Celebrate and reinforce entrances into Standale / Downtown Walker via Lake Michigan Drive by encouraging signature buildings, special landscape design treatments and way-finding signs.
- Place existing overhead utilities underground to clean up the overall streetscape and to minimize conflicts with street trees.
- Transform Lake Michigan Drive into a tree-lined boulevard. The boulevard island would be narrow and urban in design.

## Downtown Building Orientation and Design

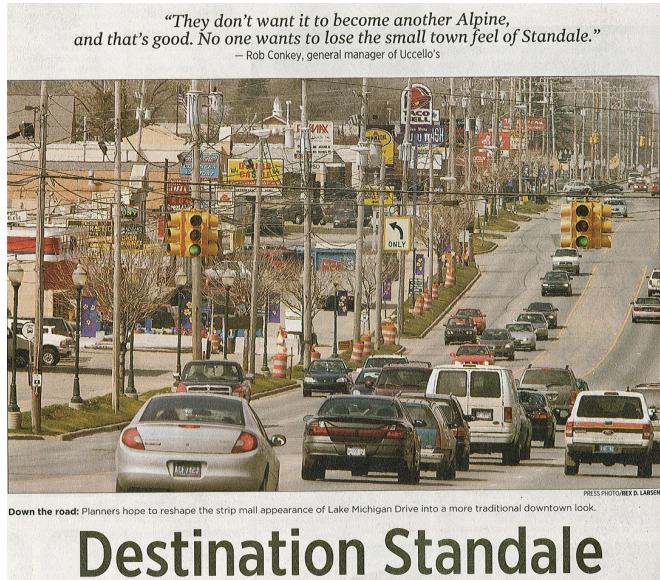
- Buildings along Lake Michigan Drive should:
  - Front on the parallel service drive;
  - Provide at least a 12' public sidewalk;
  - Provide parking in the rear, on the sides and along the parallel service drive;
  - Provide plazas and other common spaces;
  - Be multi-story;
  - Be primarily brick and block with the ground floor exhibiting a high percentage of window space.

Figure 17: Downtown Building Orientation Conceptual Guide





**Present and Potential Future of Lake Michigan Drive.** Note: Future image is lacking parallel M-45 service drive. Parking directly on M-45 is not proposed or recommended.



Downtown buildings will be constructed of brick, block and glass and will present onto public streets.



The downtown mixed-use area will establish an interesting, walkable and interconnected public frontage.



The downtown mixed-use area and supporting infill residential will be creative, constructed with durable materials and will offer “niche market” housing products.





# Standale / Downtown Walker Public Meeting

A public meeting to roll out the proposed Standale / Downtown Walker master plan was held at City Hall on July 12th, 2006. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting. Participants were given an opportunity to review and comment on the previously prepared "Downtown Walker" concepts for Sub Area 4-A. In addition, the public was afforded a more detailed assessment of the Lake Michigan Drive corridor and the Downtown Development Authority's market analysis.

In order to help explain the proposed master plan, photos and sketches were presented indicating possible land uses, residential densities and downtown-character options. These helped explain the proposed Standale / Downtown Walker concepts and aided the public in responding to a questionnaire.

The following are citizen comments from the questionnaire for Sub-Area 4-A:

## 1. What do you like about the plan for Standale / Downtown Walker?

- I like eliminating mid-block driveways.
- I like the connected buildings instead of stand alone buildings
- The high-density residential is good to have.
- I like all the access roads and the connection to/with the existing park and the planned one.
- I like the multi-story buildings.
- I like the new bus shelters at and across from Meijer. Possibly a sidewalk for de-boarding the back of the bus would be nice.
- I like having a Meijer.
- I like the 7 lanes at the cross roads of Wilson and Lake Michigan Dr. to slow the speed down to 35 m.p.h.
- Yes – Pedestrian common areas, green space, variety of housing.
- Focus on green and public areas, eating outdoors.
- Prospect of a farmer's market!
- Yes.
- Business
- Yes!! All the plans are great, just what Standale needs.
- Standale is at present dying. This new idea is great – long over due.
- First impression is ok. Trying to get traffic to slow down.
- Yes, it is very unique. I've seen similar idea in Maryland where our daughter lives. Especially one area that was an undesirable area, but today it is a pleasant place to shop and visit.
- Yes! The idea of rejuvenating Standale. The green spaces and walks. The idea of counter-balancing the "village" and Standale seems like the City of Walker making all her streets "people friendly."

## 2. Is there anything you don't like about the plan?

- I would like to see an access road from Kinney and Barkwood and Hampton Lakes drives, as well as from Kinney to Manzana Dr., so there is access to the traffic signal.
- I would like to see more on-street parking and less parking lots.
- I like how the cement sidewalks cross the asphalt driveways.
- I would like to see Ralph's become an Aldi's.
- I would like to see a Home Depot.
- Standale no more being a suburb but a city, but I guess that comes with the changing of times.
- The sidewalk/boulevard may not be wide enough for outdoor restaurant seating?
- Too many people move in.
- Absolutely not!!!
- Didn't discuss types of businesses would not be allowed. What types of current businesses would be expected to leave?
- Only that this vision takes time and I'd like to see that vision a reality.

## 3. Do you have any suggestions?

- There should be a better or more prominent memorial to Standale.
- I would like to see some way-finding signs at M-45 and the Standale bike trail emphasizing what is in Standale.
- Sidewalks should be raised above the grade of the service drives.
- Bury the power lines.
- Moving the library to Standale would be great.
- Make Fennessey Road on the east side of Wilson a park area and rest area with picnic tables.

- A post office
- Maintain historical look
- When rezoning, be very restrictive about sign size and height to help reduce the “Alpine” look of chain advertisements.
- Put into the design a bike path, bike lanes, bike parking, and perhaps connection to other trails and/or Millennium Park.
- Try to find a specialty grocery store as an anchor to complement
- Meijer’s less “fancy” foods, e.g., Whole Foods or Trader Joe’s, G.B. Russo’s.
- Create a bus exchange – a stop where the GR to GVSU bus meets with another bus route – one that circles around Walker –Remembrance, Kinney, Wilson, Leonard, Oakleigh, etc.
- Try as hard as possible to avoid chains and the look of chains –“McDevelopment”.
- Keep China Chef
- Consider consignment shops, organic/farm foods e.g., Sobie meats, etc., other organic farm goods. Sammy Gyros! (Eastown) ( We could ask him, that would be totally great!)
- Bike trail to Grand Rapids and also to Grand Valley!
- Be sure to bury wires.
- I would like to see a committee formed to work with the development of Standale. I would like to be a part of this committee or help develop it. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.
- Possibly expand area to bike trails. More inviting to stop. Welcome signs under power lines heading west. Some of the current buildings as a lead-in may make things less appealing.
- I would like to see a market. Suggest you check out Nashville, Tennessee Open Market with perhaps a meat, fish market – year around operation.
- Store suggestion – Tuesday Morning, Trader Joe’s.
- Yes! Farmer’s Market opposite days of the village and other activities would round out the city for all the citizens. I would consider volunteering on the committee to help!

## Policy Recommendations For Implementation of Sub Area 4-A Master Plan

1. The City of Walker should create a new “downtown” zoning district for Sub-Area 4-A. The suburban zoning currently in place will not allow redevelopment to occur as proposed in this master plan update.
2. The City of Walker Downtown Development Authority (DDA) should continue to invest in capital improvements. However, DDA activity should be expanded to include aggressive self-promotion and marketing.
3. The DDA should initiate a plan to eventually bury all utility lines.
4. The DDA should investigate potential façade improvements loans to local businesses.
5. The City of Walker should partner with MDOT to study the eventual reconstruction of Lake Michigan Drive / M-45 into a narrow boulevard cross-section. This boulevard should not be similar to the expansive design used on Lake Michigan Drive through Allendale. Rather, the Sub Area 4-A reconstruction plan should be an urban, compact boulevard design.
6. The City of Walker and the DDA should continue to partner with and support the Route 50 public bus between the two Grand Valley State University campus sites. Students provide an opportunity to help sustain the redevelopment of Standale / Downtown Walker.
7. The City of Walker and the DDA should aggressively pursue the purchase of property for permanent public parking areas. The Standale / Downtown Walker plan will not be successful without adequate public parking.





## 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

The 1998 Walker Master Plan and its Future Land Use Map projected commercial uses on the current Meijer CPUD properties. The remainder of Sub Area 4-B was planned for Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR). The 1998 Plan identified MDR as “density up to 8 dwelling units per acre.”

## Existing Topography

Sub Area 4-B drainage is best understood by viewing the three-dimensional contour map below. The area generally drains from North to Southwest. However, most of the Meijer CPUD site drains to the Southeast.

## Existing Public Utility Infrastructure

The northeasterly portions of Sub-Area 4-B are currently served by public water lines and sanitary sewer. Extensive and expensive public utility expansions will be required in order to serve future land development projects.

## Existing Roadway Network

Sub Area 4-B is bordered on the north by Lake Michigan Drive, which is M-45. The easterly border is Wilson Avenue, which is M-11. These two State of Michigan highways each move between 20,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day.

The City of Walker has recently partnered with MDOT and Meijer Incorporated to construct extensive improvements to the M-45 and M-11 intersection.

The southerly border is O’Brien Road. A traffic signal is planned at the intersection of O’Brien Road and Wilson Avenue.

The Future Roadway Challenge: Is there a way to intelligently design “context sensitive” connectivity between Sub Area 4-B and surrounding major and local roads? Can a local street network be constructed within Sub Area 4-B?

## Oil Wells

The City of Walker contains numerous oil wells. Most of these are located from Lake Michigan Drive to the Grand River. Sub Area 4-B contains several oil wells, most of which appear to have been closed and capped. However, at least five oil wells appear to be in current operation. Environmental health and safety issues will be important items to consider during future site plan reviews in Sub Area 4-B, especially where residential uses are proposed.

Figure 21: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

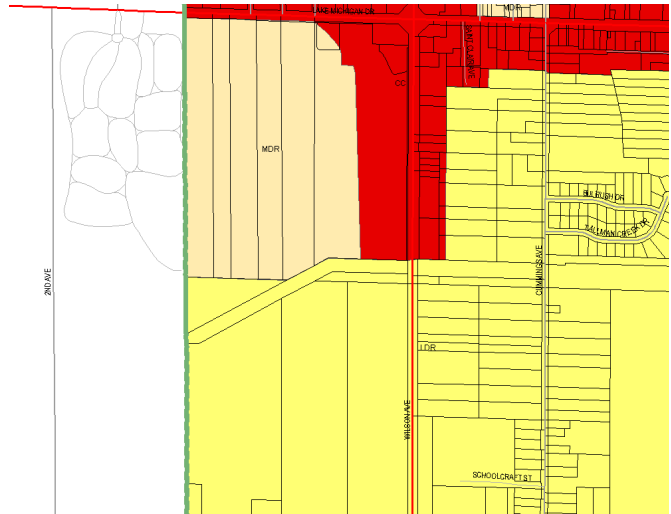
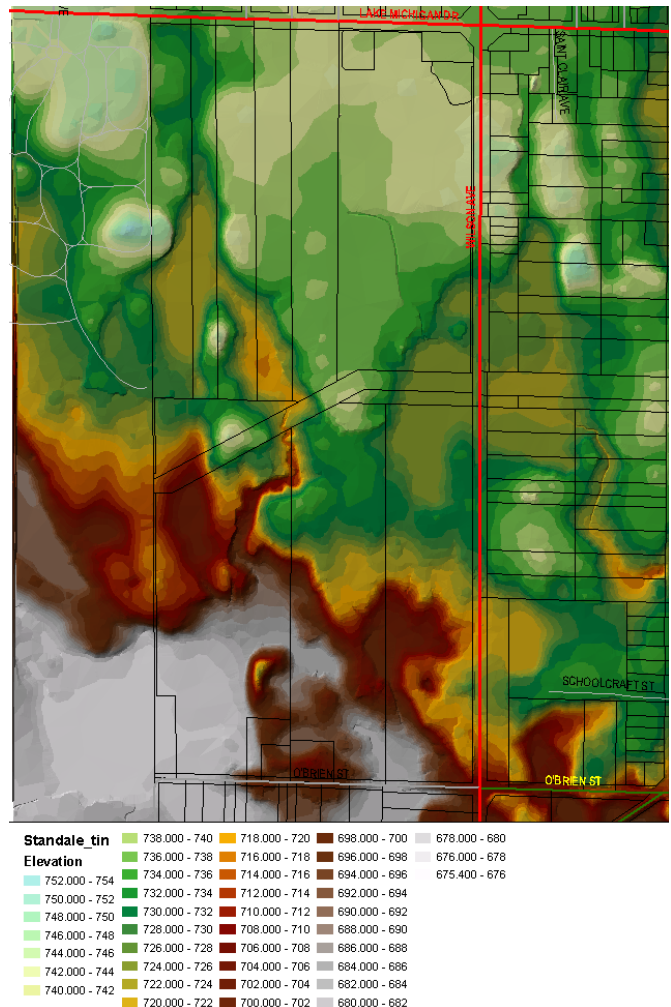


Figure 22: 3D Topography Map





## Wetlands and Floodplains

Several significant wetland and floodplain areas are present within Sub Area 4-B. The presence of these natural features will limit the extent of development on certain properties. However, preservation and enhancement of these natural areas will add value to future development projects, especially residential plans, via improved site features and aesthetics.

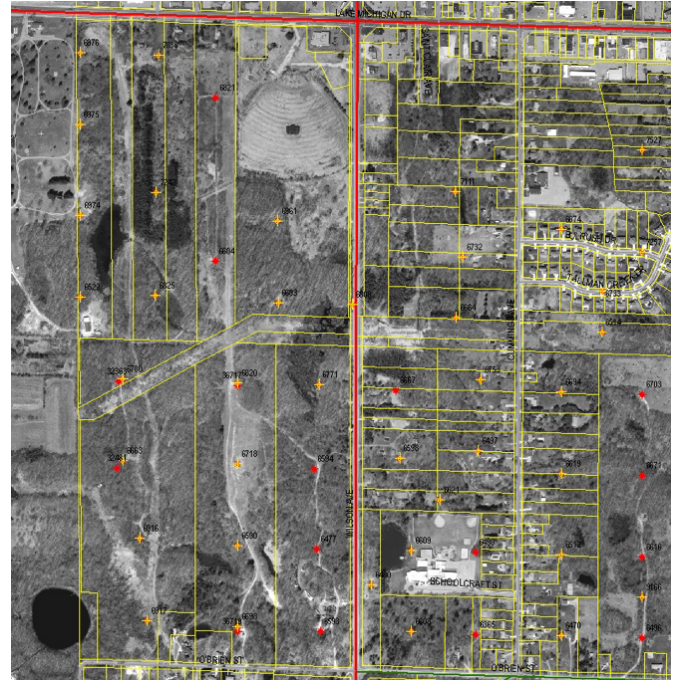
As noted in Figure 24, the location of wetlands and floodplains must be field verified and confirmed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

## Tallmadge Township Master Plan

Tallmadge Township, in their 2007 Master Plan, proposes public (cemetery) and low-density residential uses adjacent to Sub Area 4-B.

The Tallmadge Township Master Plan also proposes a commercial corridor along Lake Michigan Drive to the power lines west of 8th Avenue.

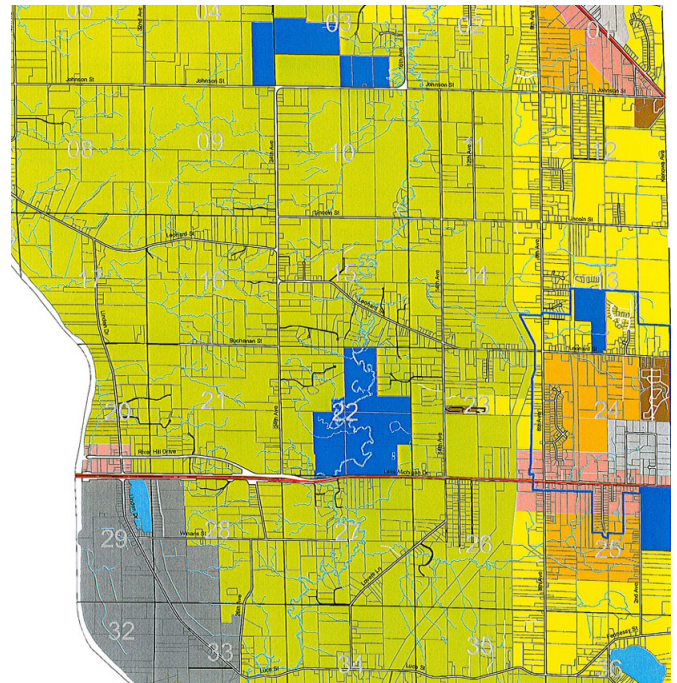
**Figure 23: MDNR Oil Well Data.** Note: Requires field verification by MDNR and MDEQ.



**Figure 24: Wetland and Streams.** Note: Approximate location only. Verification needed from MDEQ.



**Figure 25: Tallmadge Township Master Plan - 2007**



## 2007 Sub Area 4-B Master Plan Update: Process

Key concepts for Sub Area 4-B were developed in the following manner:

- **October 25, 2006:** Planning department staff first met with the primary owners of vacant land in Sub Area 4-B – Goodale Enterprises, Inc. Various planning and zoning issues were debated. A “bubble drawing” showing potential future land uses was developed.
- **January 16, 2007:** Planning department staff next engaged the City of Walker Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in a mini-design charrette for Sub Area 4-B. The DDA examined existing zoning, land use, topography, natural features, the 1998 master plan and the Tallmadge Township Master Plan. Staff then facilitated a “bubble drawing” exercise to draw and label potential future land uses.
- **March 26, 2007:** The Master Plan Committee met with planning department staff to review the “bubble drawings” to date. The Committee fine-tuned the bubble drawings and recommended changes to the proposed future land uses, including a limitation on the depth of future commercial along M-45 and the elimination of commercial uses south of the power lines on M-11. The former was proposed to reduce over-saturation of commercial development and potential negative impacts on Sub Area 4-A. The latter was proposed to reduce the potential of “strip commercial sprawl” seeping down Wilson Avenue to the south.
- **April 17, 2007:** Planning department staff provided the DDA with a preview of the proposed Sub Area 4-B Future Land Use Map. The DDA reviewed and acknowledged the master plan update proposal.
- **April 18, 2007:** A public meeting was held to roll out the Sub Area 4-B Master Plan Update and Future Land Use Map (see Figure 26). Staff facilitated a review of existing zoning, land use, topography, natural features, the 1998 City of Walker Master Plan and the 2007 Tallmadge Township Master Plan. Staff then walked the public through the proposed future land use plan for Sub Area 4-B. The relationship between Sub Areas 4-A and 4-B was explained.

Staff then encouraged the public to fill out and return the public survey. Although approximately 50 people were in attendance, only five chose to fill out and return their surveys.

Results from the surveys are shown below after the draft 2007 Sub Area 4-B Future Land Use Plan.

## Public Survey Comments Received From April 18, 2007 Open House Meeting

### 1. **What do you like about the proposed Sub Area 4-B master plan map?**

- We feel that the proposed changes are good, although we feel that some of the sizes of the areas should be modified. We think this will help the economic future of Standale.
- We definitely need housing for students. I like the idea of more small business sites, especially with the connecting service drives. I like the idea of apartments, condos and single dwelling homes. I like the fact that all wetlands, ponds, streams and lakes will be left as they are.
- Basically, very sound.

### 2. **What don't you like about the proposed master plan map?**

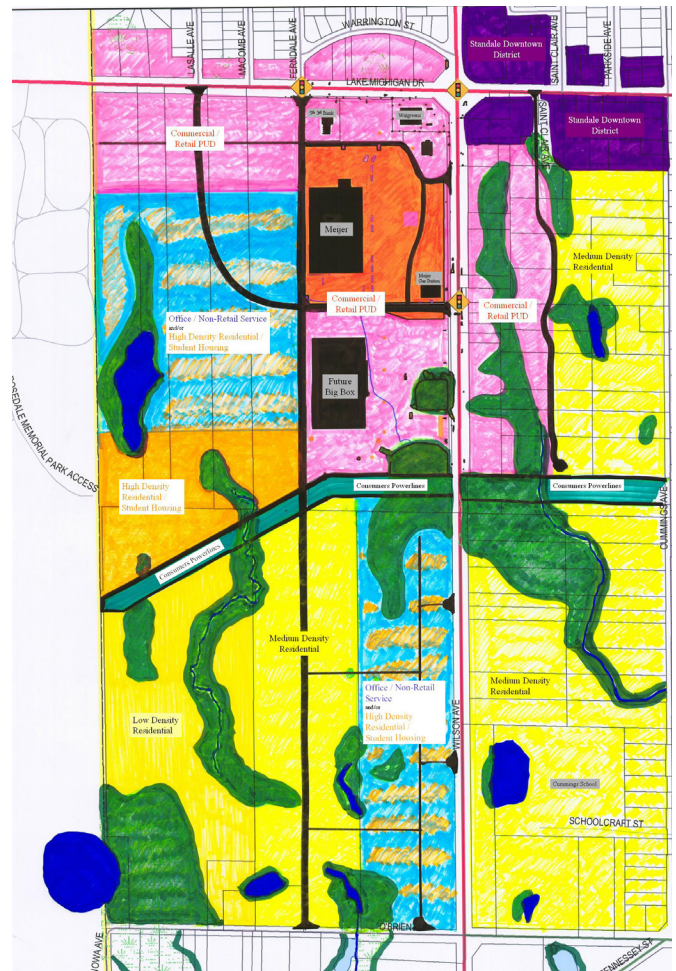
- We feel that the commercial area along Lake Michigan Drive needs to be larger.
- So far, I have no problems with this proposal.
- I don't want to see Standale turn into Alpine Avenue.



3. **Do you have any further suggestions for the City and Planning Commissions to consider regarding the master plan for the West Standale area?**

- Commercial zoning along Wilson Avenue south of the power lines should stay commercial.
- Some sort of shuttle service from student housing to the bus stops so that they don't park their vehicles in business parking lots.
- Take care in what types of "box" stores come so that they don't hurt our current businesses. I was told maybe a home improvement store might be sought. What about Standale Lumber, Ace Hardware and Standard Kitchen, along with Standale Interiors?
- Make ALL housing more affordable. Stay away from houses that cost \$200,000 or more. It will ensure that the houses get filled.
- I would like to see Pizza Hut, Quiznos and Burger King here; all with seating dining areas, not just carryout or drive up. I currently have to go to other communities to enjoy those. Maybe a buffet style place as well.
- I do not want to see Wal-Mart here. They undercut other businesses, are known for unfair labor practices, and despite revenues for the city, run a neighborhood down. The store on Alpine Avenue is disgusting.
- Traffic controls must be in place.
- Put traffic light at O'Brien Road and Wilson Avenue.
- Put traffic light at Cummings and Lake Michigan Drive.
- A traffic light needs to be put in at O'Brien Road and Wilson Avenue.

Figure 26: Draft 2007 Sub Area 4-B Future Land Use Plan



**June 6th, 2007:** The planning commission held a public hearing to "make the plan" before forwarding the draft report to the City Commission for distribution. The planning commission examined the draft future land use plan (Figure 26) and build-out calculations provided by staff.

The planning commission also discussed the boundaries on the future land use plan with representatives from Goodale Enterprises, the primary owners of vacant land in Sub Area 4B.

The planning commission directed staff to make the following alterations to the April 18th, 2007 version of the Sub Area 4B Future Land Use Plan (Figure 26):

1. Increase the amount of "Commercial / Retail PUD" along M-45 to match the southerly line of the Meijer building.
2. Reduce the amount of the "Office / Non-Retail Service – High Density Residential / Student Housing" to accommodate the increase in "Commercial / Retail PUD" noted above.
3. Change the "Low Density Residential" along the County Line to "Medium Density Residential with a clustering option".

Staff made these changes as directed by the planning commission. The revised Sub Area 4B 2007 Future Land Use Plan is shown below as Figure 27.

The planning commission also approved the design concepts and details found in the “Key Concepts” section that follows the draft future land use plan (Figure 27).

## 2007 Sub Area 4-B Master Plan Update: Key Concepts

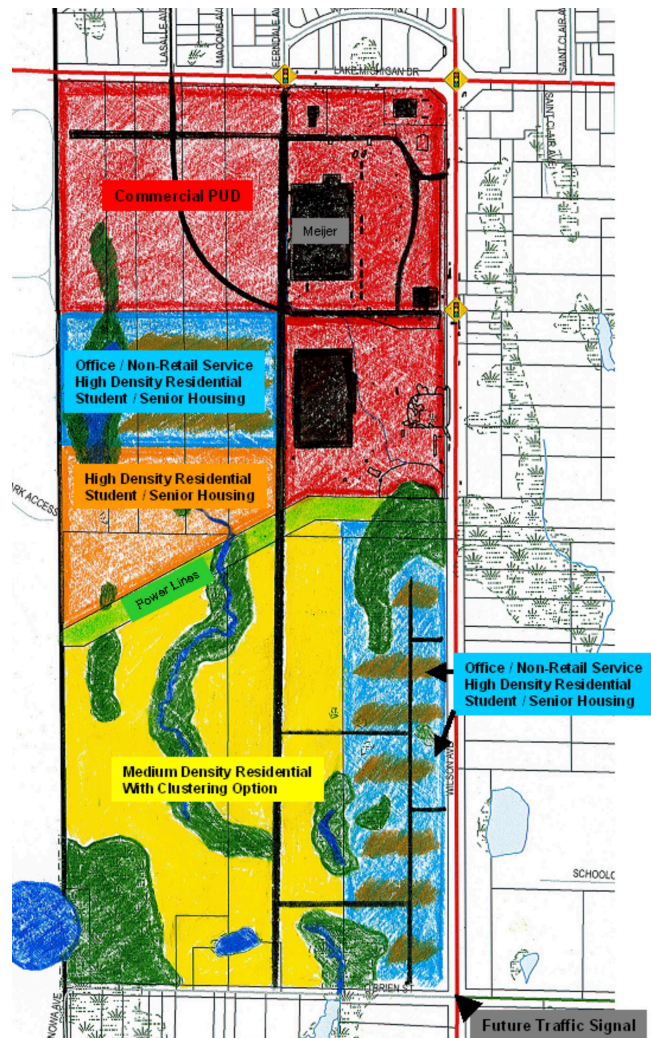
### Commercial Planned Unit Development (Areas in red on Figure 27)

- The City of Walker should promote the development of high quality commercial sites on Alpine Avenue and Wilson Avenue. While suburban in character, future commercial developments should follow the best design practices of such an environment, including:
  - Buildings with architectural character, that relate to the street; that are constructed of durable, high quality materials such as brick; that contain ample windows to avoid blank walls and increase street appeal; and that have clearly defined and articulated entrances.
  - Professionally designed, landscaped parking lots and streetscapes that are not over-illuminated.
  - A clear hierarchy of commercial signs that are appropriately scaled relative to the size of the buildings and do not overwhelm the streetscape. Ground signs are preferred.
  - Streets and service drives that allow convenient and safe access from business to business without traveling back onto Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue.
  - A complete system of interconnected sidewalks from neighborhoods to destination points.
  - Stormwater management designs and appurtenances that address water quality and water quantity.

### Build-out analysis of the Commercial Planned Unit Development (Areas in red on Figure 27):

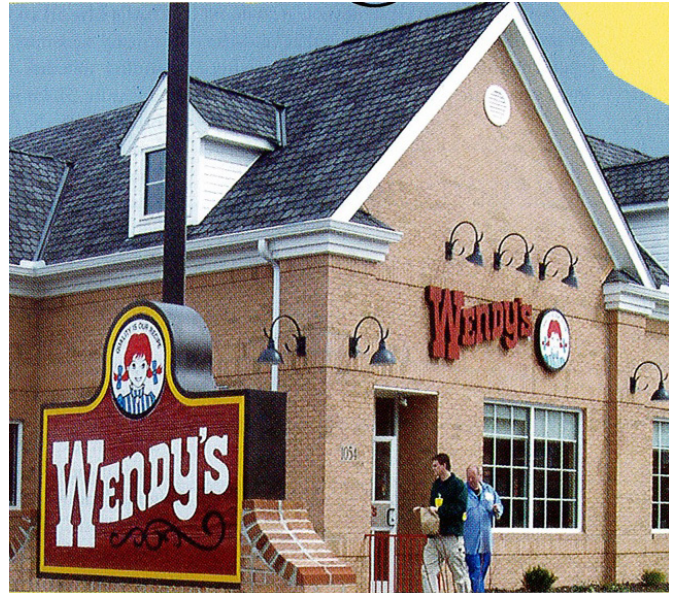
34 acres x 10% wetlands x 30% building coverage = 405,108 square feet of new commercial building space. Note: Does not include the vacant Meijer CPUD properties. Add 150,000 square feet of new commercial building space for the vacant Meijer CPUD properties.

**Figure 27: Sub Area 4B 2007 Future Land Use Plan**





Examples of suburban commercial best design practices



## Office / Non-Retail Service / High Density Residential – Student / Senior Housing (Areas in blue/orange on Figure 27)

- The City of Walker should promote the development of high quality office, non-retail service and high density residential / student housing projects within Sub Area 4-B. While suburban in character, future developments should follow the best design practices of such an environment, including:
  - Buildings with architectural character, that relate to the street, that are constructed of durable, high quality materials such as brick, that contain ample windows to avoid blank walls and increase street appeal and that have clearly defined and articulated entrances.
  - Professionally designed, landscaped parking lots and streetscapes that are not over-illuminated.
  - A clear hierarchy of signs that are appropriately scaled and do not overwhelm the streetscape. Ground signs are preferred.
  - Streets and service drives that allow convenient and safe access from site to site without traveling back onto Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue.
  - Public bus stops that are integrated into the pedestrian network via sidewalks and street calming methods. The City of Walker should continue to partner with Grand Valley State University and The Rapid to sustain and expand use of the ITP Route #50 public bus.
  - Access to Wilson Avenue should follow the guidelines set forth in the M-11 Access Management Plan.
  - Stormwater management designs and appurtenances that address water quality and water quantity.

Future land uses within the Office / Non-Retail Service / High Density Residential – Student / Senior Housing areas could include professional / medical offices; hotels; senior housing facilities of varying intensities; and attached housing units.

### Build-out analysis of the Office / Non-Retail Service / High Density Residential – Student / Senior Housing (Areas in blue/orange on Figure 27):

North of power lines: Estimated 21 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 30% building coverage for office / non-retail service uses = 274,428 square feet of new building space. Estimated 21 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 8 units per acre maximum for high density residential / student housing = 168 new residential housing units. Mixing the uses will reduce both the new building space and the number of housing units.

South of power lines along M-11: Estimated 29 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 30% building coverage for office / non-retail service uses = 378,972 square feet of new building space. Estimated 29 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 8 units per acre maximum for high density residential / student housing = 232 new residential housing units. Mixing the uses will reduce both the new building space and the number of housing units.

## High Density Residential – Student / Senior Housing (Areas in orange on Figure 27)

- The City of Walker should promote the development of high quality and high density residential / student housing and senior housing projects within Sub Area 4-B. While suburban in character, future developments should follow the best design practices of such an environment, including:
  - Buildings with architectural character, that relate to the street, that are constructed of durable, high quality materials such as brick, that contain ample windows to avoid blank walls and increase street appeal and that have clearly defined and articulated entrances.
  - Professionally designed, landscaped parking lots and streetscapes that are not over-illuminated.
  - A clear hierarchy of signs that are appropriately scaled and do not overwhelm the streetscape. Ground signs are preferred.
  - Streets and service drives that allow convenient and safe access from site to site without traveling back onto Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue.



- Public bus stops that are integrated into the pedestrian network via sidewalks and street calming methods. The City of Walker should continue to partner with Grand Valley State University and The Rapid to sustain and expand use of the ITP Route #50 public bus.
- Access to Wilson Avenue should follow the guidelines set forth in the M-11 Access Management Plan.
- Stormwater management designs and appurtenances that address water quality and water quantity.

**Build-out analysis of the High Density Residential – Student /Senior Housing (Areas in orange on Figure 27):**

Estimated 18 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 8 units per acre maximum for high density residential / student housing = 144 new residential housing units.

**Examples of high density residential / student housing best design practices.**





## Medium Density Residential With Clustering Option (Areas in yellow, south of the power lines on Figure 27)

- The City of Walker should promote the development of high quality, medium density residential projects within Sub Area 4-B. While suburban in character, future developments should follow the best design practices of such an environment, including:
  - Attached or detached buildings with architectural character, that relate to the street, that are constructed of durable, high quality materials such as brick, that contain ample windows to avoid blank walls and increase street appeal and that have clearly defined and articulated entrances.
  - Professionally designed streetscapes that are not over-illuminated.
  - Streets and service drives that allow convenient and safe neighborhood access without traveling back onto Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue.
  - Access to Wilson Avenue should follow the guidelines set forth in the M-11 Access Management Plan.
  - Stormwater management designs and appurtenances that address water quality and water quantity.
  - Creative clustering of lots to preserve and enhance existing natural features and improve property values.

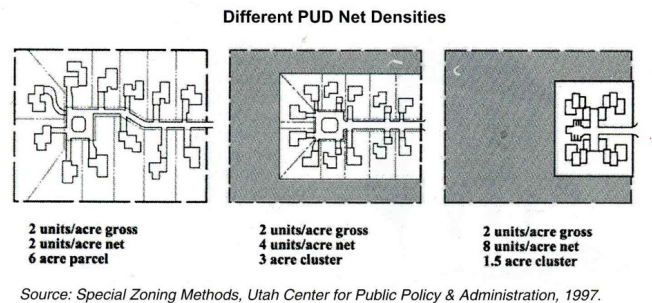
### Build-out analysis of Medium Density Residential (Areas in yellow, south of power lines on Figure 27):

Estimated 55.5 buildable acres (after subtracting wetlands) x 4 units per acre maximum for medium density residential = 222 new residential housing units.

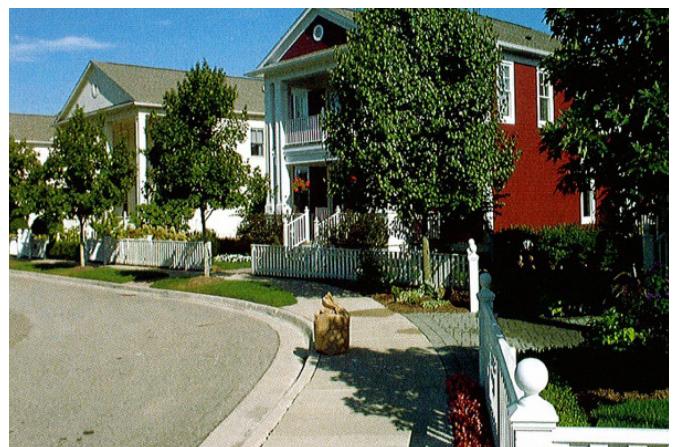
## Traffic and M-45 / M-11 Access Management Planning (proposed streets/drives shown on Figure 27)

- The City of Walker should require the development of interconnected public streets, private streets and service drives within Sub Area 4-B. The goal should be the creation of an internal transportation network for Sub Area 4-B. Such a network would allow shoppers, employees and residents to move from site to site without venturing back onto M-45 and M-11.
- Public streets, private streets and service drives should link to existing and proposed traffic signals on M-11 and M-45.
- Access management and traffic calming tools should be applied when developing the interconnected transportation network and when accessing M-45 and M-11.
- The MDOT / City of Walker M-11 Access Management Plan should be applied during the site plan review process.

Lot clustering option for medium density residential plans with onsite natural features.



## Examples of medium density residential best design practices.



## Policy Recommendations For Implementation of Sub Area 4-B Master Plan

1. The City of Walker Downtown Development Authority (DDA) should continue to invest in capital improvements. However, DDA activity should be expanded to include aggressive self-promotion and marketing.
2. The DDA should initiate a plan to eventually bury all utility lines.
3. The City of Walker and the DDA should continue to partner with and support the Route 50 public bus between the two Grand Valley State University campus sites. Students provide an opportunity to help sustain the redevelopment of West Standale and Standale / Downtown Walker.
4. The City of Walker should continue to partner with MDOT, Grand Valley State University and The Rapid to plan for and improve a multi-modal transportation system in Sub Area 4-B.
5. The City of Walker should resist the urge to extend commercial and retail strip land uses south of the power lines along Wilson Avenue. The land that is presently zoned commercial south of the power lines in Sub Area 4B should be rezoned by the City of Walker to match the 2007 Sub Area 4B Future Land Use Plan (Figure 27).



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# 7.

## **2019 Subplan #5: Kloet and Pannel Area Future Land Use Plan**

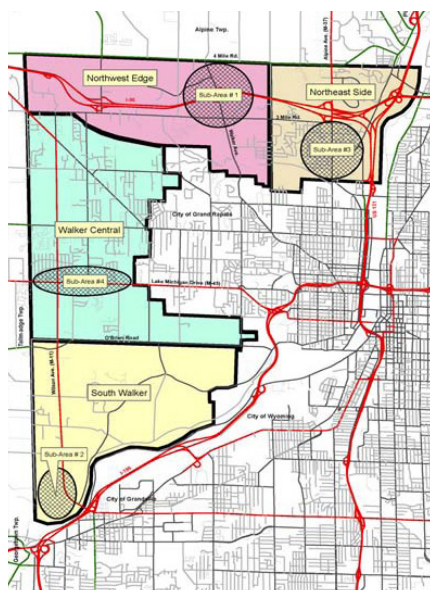
# 2019 Subplan #5 Kloet and Pannell Area Future Land Use Plan

## City of Walker

Final and Official: 3.04.2019

## Background of the Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan

Figure 1: 2005 Walker Neighborhood Map



The City of Walker’s last official update to its complete Master Plan occurred in 1998. A 2040 Walker Master Plan is now being completed with assistance from a master plan consultant. This plan will serve as a complete, comprehensive update to the 1998 Walker Master Plan.

Since the passage of the 1998 Master Plan, the City has been engaged in a series of master planning review and update efforts. These efforts expanded in 2005, when City officials recognized the diversity of Walker’s neighborhoods and began producing Sub Area plans based on the boundaries of four distinct neighborhoods:

- Walker’s northwest edge (Sub-Area 1),
- South Walker (Sub-Area 2),
- Alpine Avenue and the northeast side (Sub-Area 3), and
- Standale (Sub-Area 4). See Figure 1 for a map of neighborhoods identified in 2005.

Sub area plans specific to these neighborhoods completed in 2006 and 2007 reflected the increasing importance of neighborhood-level planning and zoning decisions in Walker. As the Walker 2040 Master Plan develops, individual Sub-Area planning efforts will be integrated into the master plan document. These sub-area master planning efforts will include sub-area topics of recent focus, including the Subplan Area #5 addressed in this document.

As plans were developed, implemented, and updated specific to the four identified neighborhoods between 2005-2015, a section of the City of Walker marked by a variety of street master planning concerns including railroad - road intersection management, street connectivity, traffic management, economic development and truck routing prompted focused efforts in what would become the “Kloet-Pannell area” or “Sub-Area # 5”. Broadly, this area is bordered by Walker Avenue to the west, Alpine Avenue to the east, 3 Mile Road to the north, and the southern boundary of the City of Walker to the south. See figures 2-a and 2-b. A specific focus area composed of properties along Pannell Street, Kloet Street, Bristol Avenue and Walker Avenue south of Waldorf Street emerged as the planning process continued.



These shared concerns evolved into a series of land use discussions and planning efforts which would form the basis of this sub-plan document. The main goal of the Sub Area #5 master planning process will be to create a guidebook for future land use decisions, specifically those involving the configuration of land and development around a transportation network. This guidebook should be understood and supported by citizens while concurrently addressing the economic, social and environmental realities facing the City of Walker.

## The 2015-18 Subplan #5 Planning Process

Land use in Sub-Area #5 underwent significant evolution between the completion of the 1998 Walker Master Plan and the present day. Some of these changes are summarized below:

- **1995:** Roughly 59 acres of land west of the dead end of Kloet Street underwent sand mining as the Triick Sand Mine by Velting Contractors, Inc. (the “Triick pit site”).
- **Late 1990s:** Betz Industries, headquartered at 2121 Bristol Avenue N.W., underwent expansion. A public street named Stehouwer Street was vacated.
- **2010:** A portion of the Triick pit site was approved for use by Velting Contractors, Inc. as a mineral processing and material storage operation.
- **2015:** The Triick pit site was restored, and mineral processing and material storage operations gradually ceased. Following mine closure, mineral processing and material storage operations were additionally phased out and new development interest in portions of the property emerged.
- **2017:** A roughly 7-acre site on the southern end of the Triick pit site was approved for development as a mini-warehousing / self-storage business.
- **2017:** Recognizing the need for comprehensive site planning on the Triick pit site, the Walker Planning Commission recommended adoption of, and the Walker City Commission adopted, a petition to rezone the Triick pit site to Industrial Planned Unit Development (IPUD).
- **2018:** Betz industries gained approval for development on the roughly 52 acres of undeveloped former mining property as a planned unit development project.

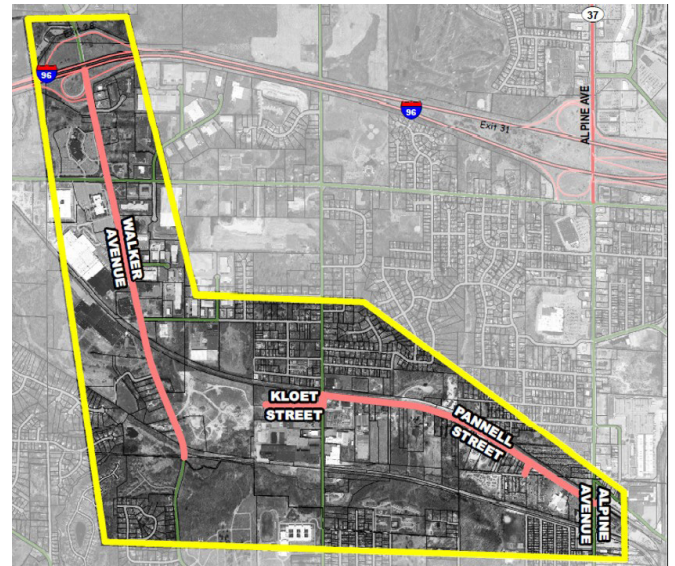
The current parcel configuration of Sub-area 5 is shown on Figure 5 on page 8. Existing land use according to 2003 data from the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) / REGIS, revised based on the above-mentioned industrial changes on the former mining properties, is shown on Figure 6.

Issues which were identified in the 1998 Master Plan as “Roadway System Improvement Plan” (see Figure 3) objectives reemerged as key concerns throughout the review of land use between 1998 and 2015. Broadly, these issues relate to the lack of a truck route bypass from the I-96 interstate highway on the south edge of Walker. Specifically, these issues are identified in two parts, shown fully in Figure 3:

- The realignment of the Bristol Avenue / Pannell Street Intersection
- The extension of Kloet Street, a public street which could serve as a vital truck route link between Walker Avenue and Bristol Avenue, particularly with the previously mentioned closure of Stehouwer Street to the south.

A Corridor Study was completed in 2000 which assessed a variety of alignment options for a public road connection between Walker Avenue and Bristol Avenue which would meet these goals. These alignment options are demonstrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 2: Study Boundaries – Sub Area #5**



Following the completion of mining operations on the Triick pit site, adjacent landowners gained new interest in street master planning. This interest led to the initiation of a community planning process in 2015. On May 6, 2015, the Walker Planning Commission held its first of a series of public meeting discussions regarding the Kloet / Pannell Street Area. This meeting was prompted by Micron Manufacturing, Inc., who sought to remove the “essential street connection” of Kloet Street as listed in the 1998 Master Plan from future master planning efforts. This meeting is documented in Appendix B. Resulting from this discussion, a traffic corridor study was initiated to explore the impact of different improvements on the Kloet Street Corridor. This study, titled the Kloet Street Connector Analysis, is provided in Appendix C.

Following the completion of the Kloet Street Connector Analysis in December 2015, two meetings were held in January 2017 and March 2017 to discuss the alignment of the study’s findings with specific conceptual development plans. These meetings are documented in Appendices D and E. The Kloet-Pannell Street area was taken up as a formally designated sub-area plan topic in 2018. As part of a formal Walker 2040 Master Plan update, a notice of intent to plan was submitted in January 2018. This is documented in Appendix F.

#### Creating the 2018 Sub Area #5 Future Land Use Plan

The formal initiation of sub-area planning efforts began with public meetings in 2018. Landowners, residents, and the development community were closely involved with these efforts. The guiding principles for public participation are to:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to actively participate and be heard.
- Ensure the master planning process was fair and open to all.
- Establish respect for a diversity of ideas and opinions.

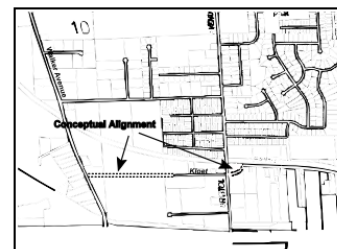
## Work Session # 1

The planning commission held a master plan work session on May 2nd, 2018. The meeting slides and minutes are attached as Appendices G-1 and G-2. For context and site orientation to those attending this work session, various maps and background information related to the study area were provided. Background maps are provided on the following pages, as indicated in the list below:

- Figure 5: 2017 Aerial with 2017 Parcels Map
- Figure 6: Sub-Area #5 Existing Land Use Map
- Figure 7: Future Land Use (FLU): City of Walker FLU Categories from 1998 Walker Master Plan and generalized City of Grand Rapids
- Figure 8: Specific Focus Area FLU in Walker
- Figure 9: Specific Focus Area Zoning
- Figure 10: Specific Focus Area 2018 Tax Classification Summary Map
- Figure 11: Wetlands, Creeks & 2’ Contours Map
- Figure 12: Water, Sewer Storm Utilities Map
- Figure 13: Generalized USGS Land Cover Map

**Figure 3: 1998 Walker Master Plan Roadway System Improvement Plan Excerpts – Bristol Avenue / Pannell Street Intersection Realignment and Kloet Street Extension.**

5. *Bristol Avenue/Pannell Street Intersection Realignment.* Under existing conditions, the Pannell approach (westbound) meets Bristol very close to the adjacent railroad overpass. This results in very poor sight distance and unsafe intersection operations especially in light of the substandard width of Bristol under the overpass. Pannell Street should be shifted southward as it approaches Bristol Avenue to provide a safer intersection environment. The shift distance may very dependent upon the potential for alignment of Pannell with (or sufficient offset from) Kloet Street on the opposite side of Bristol.
6. *Kloet Street Extension.* Currently the only nearby east-west connection between Walker Avenue and Bristol Avenue is the residential Waldorf Street. This improvement would provide a better commercial connection by extending Kloet westward to connect with Walker. Final alignment of this extension will be defined by topographic and sight distance constraints. As noted above, this improvement would need to be coordinated with the realignment of Pannell Street and reconstruction of the Walker Avenue railroad overpass.



**Figure 4: 2000 Bristol to Walker Industrial Corridor Study: Connection Alternatives.**

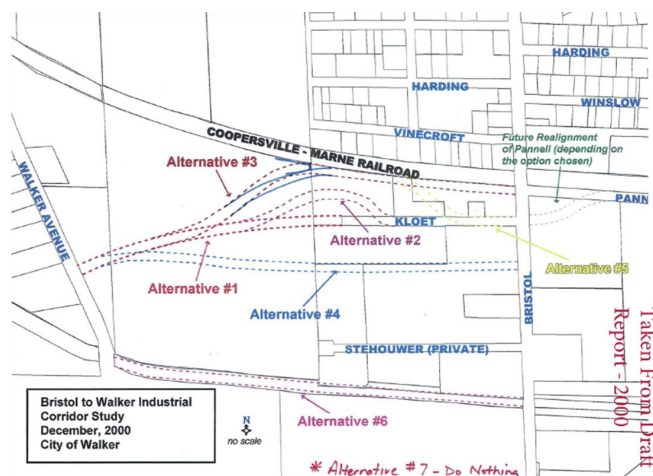




Figure 5: 2017 Aerial with 2017 Parcels Map

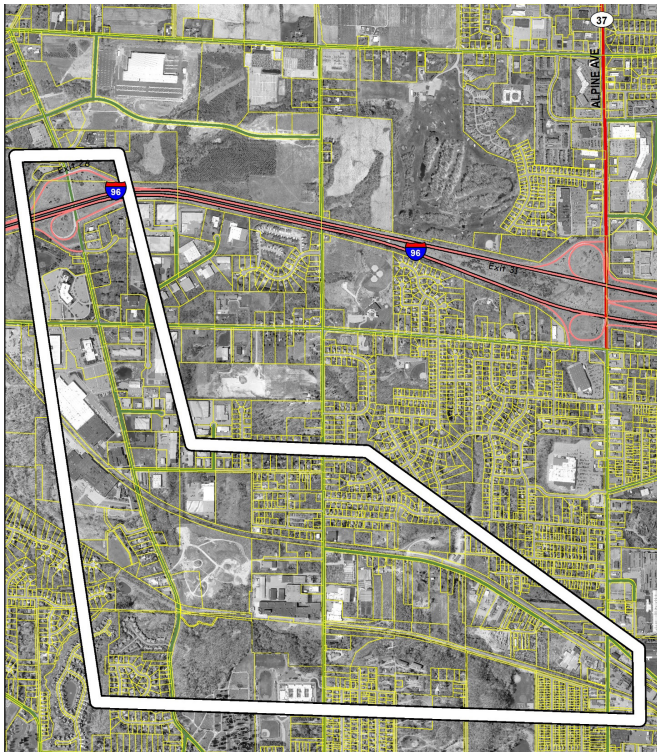


Figure 6: Sub-Area #5 Existing Land Use Map

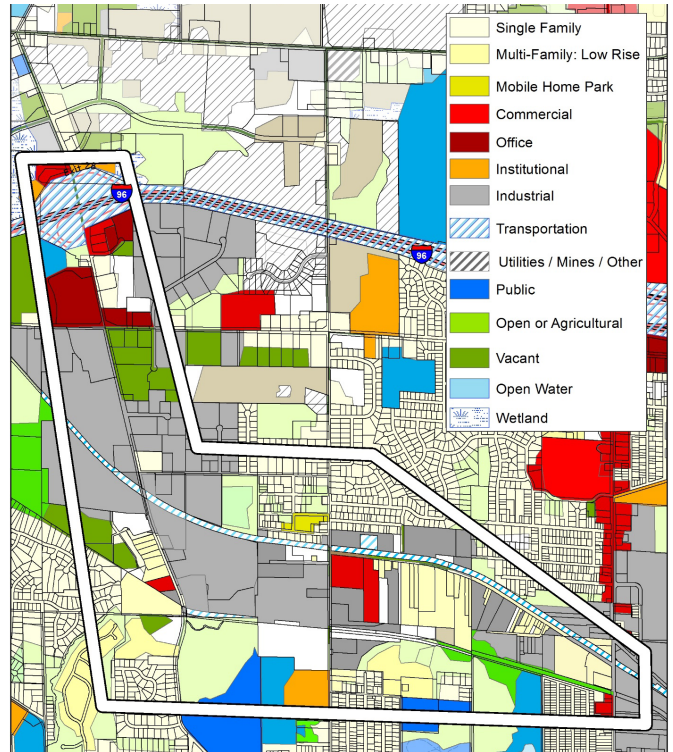
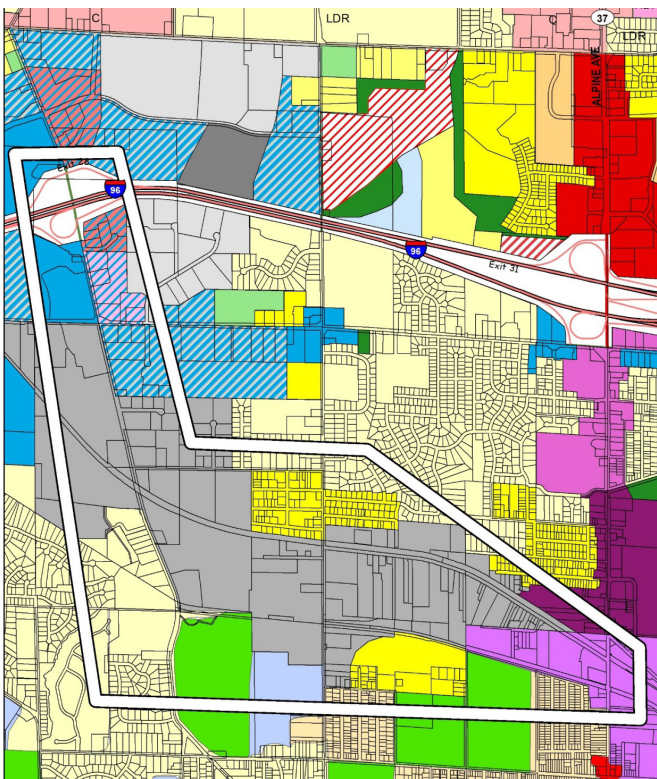


Figure 7: Future Land Use (FLU): City of Walker FLU Categories from 1998 Walker Master Plan and generalized City of Grand Rapids.



Source: Grand Valley Metro Council and REGIS, 2018

Figure 8: Specific Focus Area FLU in Walker

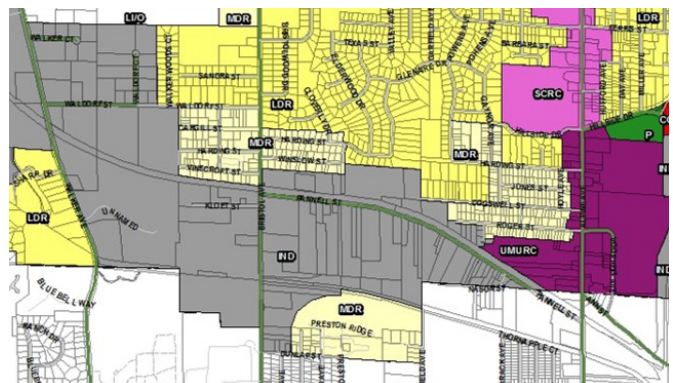
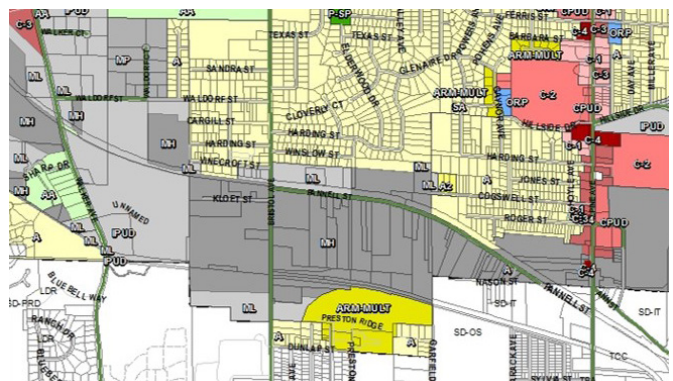


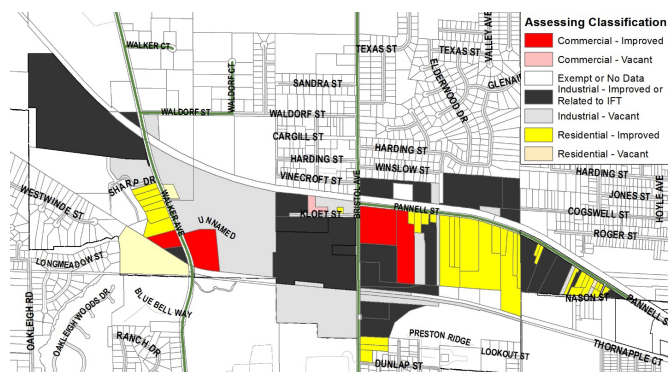
Figure 9: Specific Focus Area Zoning



Source: City of Walker 2018 Zoning Map

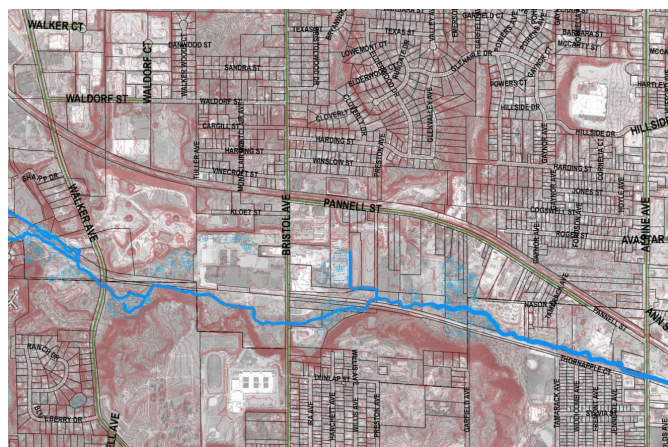


**Figure 10: Specific Focus Area 2018 Tax Classification Summary**



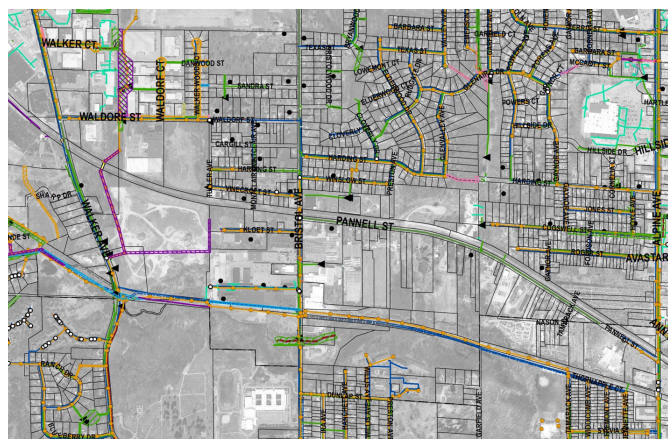
Source: City of Walker Assessor's Portal

**Figure 11: Wetlands, Creeks and 2' Contours**



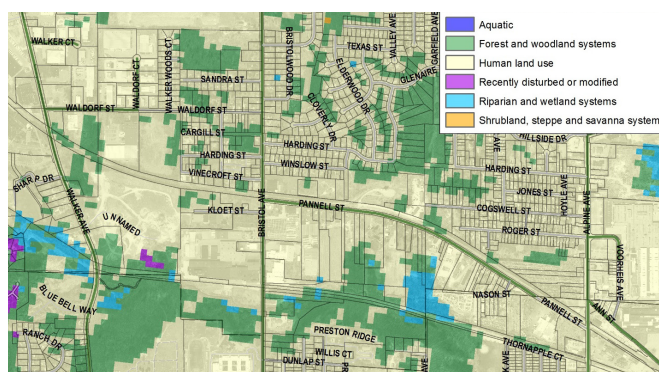
Source: Grand Valley Metro Council and REGIS, 2018

**Figure 12: Water, Storm Sewer and Sanitary Sewer Utilities**



Source: Grand Valley Metro Council and REGIS, 2018

**Figure 13: Generalized USGS Land Cover Map, 1998**



During the first work session, area stakeholders were asked to disperse to tables with base maps which demonstrated the study area boundaries. Several “focus elements” were identified within the specific focus area. Participants were tasked with listing ideas for improvements in these focus elements. A summary list of comments received from this exercise is provided below:

- Change the one lane traffic flow back to two lane flow south of Pannell Street on Alpine Avenue.
- Fix the turn signal on Ann Street at Alpine Avenue.
- Remove the train bridge to grade level at Walker Avenue.
- Use traffic signals / install a traffic light system.
- Widen the railroad bridge to allow two-lane traffic at Bristol Avenue.
- Do not allow a connection of Kloeet Street through the Micron property.
- Go west along the railroad to Walker or west along the old Stehouwer alignment.

After facilitating significant discussion, the Planning Commission asked staff to develop alternative options for consideration at each of the areas discussed.

## Work Session # 2

Work session # 2 was held on June 13, 2018. Slides and Minutes are attached as Appendices H-1 and H-2. The goals of this meeting were to decide on a preferred set of planning options for three distinct focus elements identified as a result of the work session # 1 discussion, to determine if an essential truck route connection in the study area between Walker Avenue and Bristol Avenue would be identified, and if so, what that connection would be. The three focus elements are displayed as Figures 14-16 below and on the following page.

A number of key economic, social, and environmental findings should influence how the planning options discussed at the second work session translate into implementation:

### Economic Findings

- Roughly 272 acres of existing or pending industrial or high-intensity commercial land use south of Waldorf Street exist within the focus area.
- An interstate bypass currently does not exist to enhance the mobility of goods and services for these properties.
- Difficult maneuvering and low levels of service may impair economic activity.

### Social Findings

- The study area is shared by residential, industrial and commercial users.
- Street master planning lays the framework for the road network interactions that preserve the quality of life and safety of residents, and mobility of a variety of road users.
- Any changes to future land use categories should be based on the availability of public water / public sewer, adjacencies of compatible land uses, and the avoidance of high-intensity use adjacent to residential land.

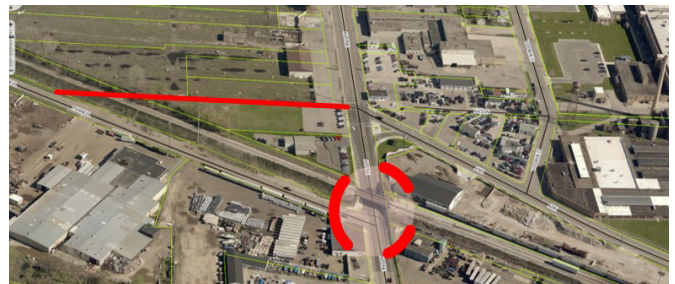
### Environmental Findings

- The focus area lies in close proximity to the base of the nearly 11,000-acre Indian Mill Creek watershed. Site-specific improvements must be carefully managed not to impose additional burdens on this sensitive watershed.
- Efforts toward site-specific improvements must also recognize and account for the environmental legacy of the focus area, including impacts from the railroad and a variety of industrial and agricultural operations.

**Figure 14: Sub-Area #5 Focus Element #1 – Walker Avenue Railroad Bridge**



**Figure 15: Sub-Area #5 Focus Element #2 – Pannell / Alpine Intersection (City of Grand Rapids)**



**Figure 16: Sub-Area #5 Focus Element #3. Pannell / Bristol / Kloet / Walker Area**



These findings provided the premise for broad and specific recommendations. Broadly speaking, planned land use should be re-assessed in the Sub-Area #5 focus area. Note that while the entire Sub Area #5 study boundary was open for discussion, master plan details outside of these identified focus elements were not discussed in detail. Specific planning recommendations were developed for these three focus elements.

The second work session primarily generated recommendations related to the interactions between land uses, and specific traffic management and transportation design recommendations, rather than parcel-based land use recommendations.



## Work Session # 3

Work session # 3 was held on September 19, 2018. After refining and expanding upon the recommendations received during work session # 2, staff created a draft subplan document. This document contained a set of analyses included in specific focus element topics which were visualized and discussed with the Planning Commission during work session # 3. An analysis of the recommendations for each focus element, along with an analysis of challenges associated with these recommendations, is provided in the following sections. Traffic impact studies, grading and stormwater studies, environmental assessments, and fiscal planning should be used to determine the feasibility of any specific recommended improvement.

### Focus Element # 1 Analysis - Walker Avenue Railroad Bridge

The Coopersville-Marne Railroad and the Grand Rapids Western Railway each have jurisdiction over sections of the single rail line that transects the study area. This rail line, which is oriented southeast-to-northwest, crosses major roads at difficult angles and poses transportation challenges due to issues related to height clearance, road maintenance, and sight distance. This issue is especially pronounced at the Walker Avenue Railroad bridge / overpass. This two-lane bridge crossing currently functions as a pinch point which restricts the flow of traffic to a northbound access point on interstate I-96 from several industrial businesses, including Bissell Homecare, Inc., one of Walker's largest employers.

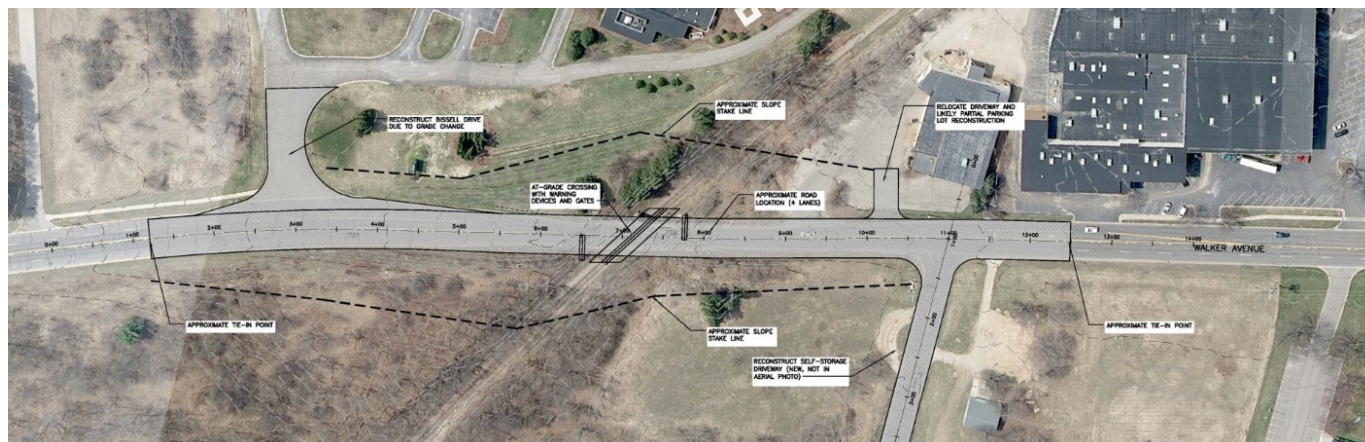
The estimated cost of removing the existing Walker Avenue railroad bridge and providing an at-grade crossing was estimated to be \$2 to \$3 million as of June 2018. At the second work session, the Planning Commission evaluated that this short-term cost would be exceeded by long-term benefits, including improved traffic flows and avoidance of longer-term bridge maintenance costs.

#### Focus Element # 1 recommendation: Proceed with pursuing opportunities to provide an at-grade crossing at this location.

The City of Walker was successfully awarded a Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) Category A – Targeted Industries Program grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in November 2018. The execution of this at-grade crossing project will involve a number of steps, some of which have been completed:

- Partnership and buy-in from the development community;
- Fiscal planning;
- Securing of MDOT TEDF-Category A Grant Funding; and
- Approval from the Coopersville and Marne Railroad and MDOT.
- Note: Preliminary engineering plans are shown as a “Proof of Concept” drawing in Figure 17

Figure 17: Proof of Concept: Walker Avenue Railroad Bridge Re-grading





## Focus Element # 2 Analysis - Pannell / Alpine Intersection (City of Grand Rapids)

The second focus element highlighted the irregularly aligned intersections of Pannell Street and Alpine Avenue, Ann Street, and the Grand Rapids Eastern railroad. See Figure 18 for a general overview of truck and rail freight movements at and adjacent to this intersection.

The irregular intersection of Alpine Avenue and Pannell Street limits mobility by those using the corridor of roads adjacent to and extending east from Bristol Avenue. Business owners reliant on trucking freight have expressed frustration regarding delays and poor levels of service at the intersection of Pannell Street and Alpine Avenue. A focused discussion was held regarding challenges and potential improvements at this intersection. Potential improvements are shown in Figure 19. A summary of potential improvements and challenges is listed below:

Potential Improvement	Challenge(s)
Coordinated Traffic Signal with Ann Street ("Option 1")	City of Grand Rapids jurisdiction
Realignment with Ann Street – north option ("Option 2")	City of Grand Rapids jurisdiction
	Unknown environmental history
	Significant grading required
Realignment with Ann Street – south option ("Option 3")	Private property acquisition required in coordination with landowners
	City of Grand Rapids jurisdiction
	Unknown environmental history
	Significant grading required
	Private property acquisition required in coordination with landowners
	Impacts of significant disturbance and environmental assessment needs related to proximity of this alignment to the Indian Mill Creek.

The Planning Commission determined that an advisory recommendation for signalization improvements to the City of Grand Rapids, with the intended goals of improving the flow of traffic and level of service, would serve as the primary recommendation for this focus element.

**Focus Element # 2 Recommendation: Advisory recommendation for the City of Grand Rapids to consider coordinated signals at Ann Street and Pannell Street at Alpine Avenue.**

Figure 18: Regional Connectivity: Ann/Pannell and Alpine Intersection

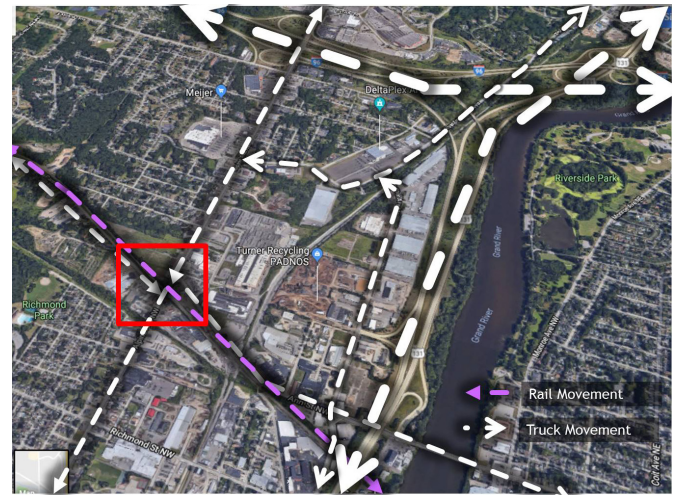
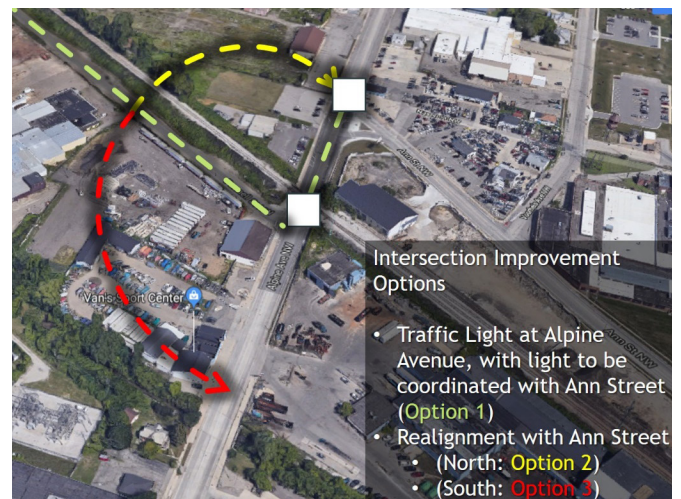


Figure 19: Realignment and Signalization Options



Additional recommendations include:

- Partnering with agencies such as the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) and the City of Grand Rapids to promote east-west truck, passenger vehicle, and pedestrian continuity;
- Facilitating regular edge-matching efforts to ensure that transportation management strategies are being sought which improve pedestrian, passenger vehicle, and truck freight mobility for both the City of Walker and the City of Grand Rapids; and
- Seeking continual opportunities for pedestrian and trail linkages throughout the region as opportunities arise.

### Focus Element # 3 Analysis - Pannell / Bristol / Kloet / Walker

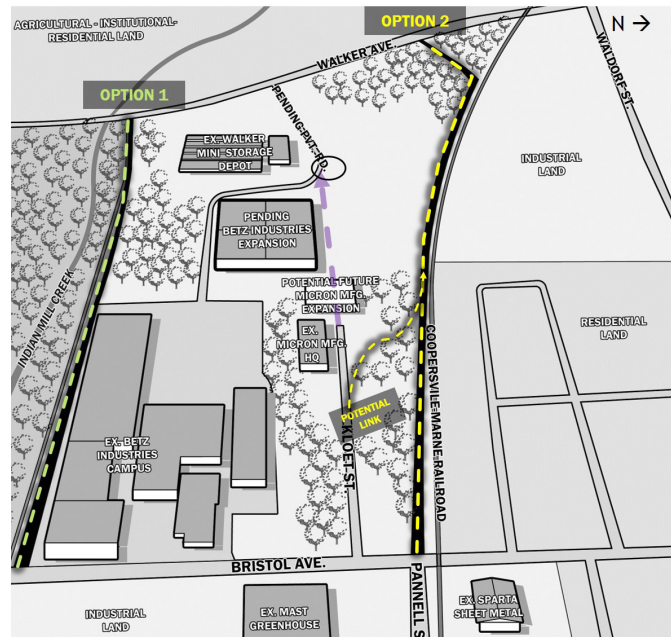
Focus Element # 3 covers the area extending from the railroad intersection with Bristol Avenue, southward and westward, to the Triick pit site. This is the broadest of the three focus elements, and its discussion produced recommendations for a comprehensive set of transportation improvements that would affect multiple properties and road rights-of-way. Circulation improvements, access management, and truck routing are key considerations in this area.

Development trends led to a consensus that Kloet Street would be removed from the master plan as an essential street connection between Bristol Avenue and Walker Avenue. In establishing this consensus, the Planning Commission highlighted other potential connections along the northern and southern edges of the 59-acre former mine site. These potential future connections and existing, pending, and potential future land uses are demonstrated on Figure 20. It should be noted that, while Kloet Street has been removed as an essential connection, this does not mean that there could not be a connection from Kloet Street to Walker Avenue if there is an eventual agreement between public and private stakeholders regarding how this could occur.

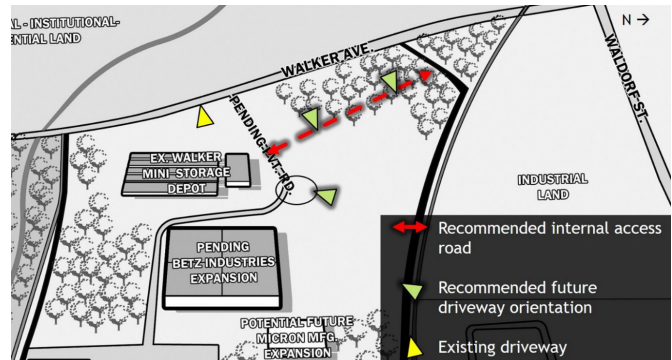
Challenges have been identified regarding either of the specifically identified “option 1” or “option 2” connections:

- Existing utilities, including 48” water and sanitary sewer mains south of the Betz Industries property;
- Land acquisition and easements;
- Grading challenges;
- Intersection design of proposed streets or private driveways at Walker Avenue;
- Alignment with, and spacing between, proposed streets or private driveways with Walker Avenue;

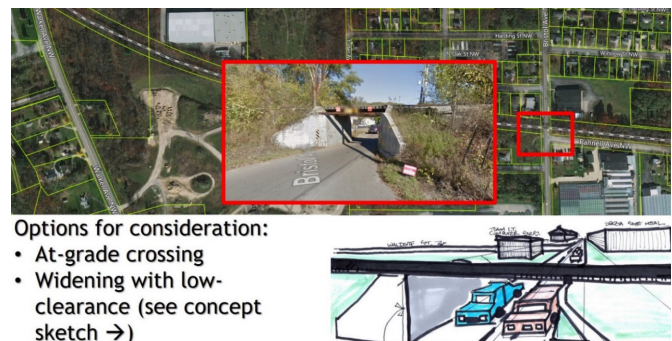
**Figure 20: Focus Element 3: Potential Future Connections Options**



**Figure 21: Focus Element 3 Special Focus Area: Betz Industries PUD Project Access Management**



**Figure 22: Focus Element 3 Special Focus Area: Bristol Avenue Railroad Bridge**



- Wetland and Floodplain / Indian Mill Creek preservation;
- Environmental history / potential contamination; and
- Soil integrity and ensuring the presence of stable soils for construction.

The evolution of industrial campuses inside of this focus element should serve as an opportunity for road connections, as supported by adequate grading design, soil compaction testing, traffic, and environmental studies. Access management standards are also integral to future development on the Triick pit site. An internal road network should be created which orients driveways inward to the development site and prohibits a series of driveways from being installed on Walker Avenue. This will minimize line of sight issues and hazardous turning movements onto Walker Avenue, where industrial traffic and residential traffic converge. See the special focus area identified in Figure 21.

These recommendations reinforce the need to pre-plan the overarching grading, utility, and circulation design of the Triick pit site. If this is done correctly, it will provide a foundation for strategic future development.

Focus element # 3 additionally addressed the problematic intersection of the railroad bridge with Bristol Avenue. This has been cited by residents, employees, and business owners of the vicinity as a high priority problem site. One-way traffic flow and visibility substantially limit travel along the Bristol Avenue. The primary benefit of this current configuration is that it provides a barrier against the movement of truck freight northbound on Bristol Avenue, which is lined by residential lots to the north.

Recommendations specific to this intersection are demonstrated on Figure 22. These recommendations include the assessment of allowing Bristol Avenue railroad crossing improvements without allowing northbound truck traffic on Bristol Avenue.

#### **Focus Element # 3 recommendations:**

- **Explore “Option 1” or “Option 2” truck route connections.**
- **Explore options for improving the Bristol Avenue railroad crossing without allowing northbound truck traffic on Bristol Avenue.**
- **Pursue Light Industrial Planned Unit Development Future Land Use on the Triick pit Site.**

## Proposed 2018 Future Land Use for Subplan # 5

Recommendations for each Focus Element were not based on specific future land use assignments. However, the transportation network design and planning recommendations will warrant an integrated land use approach which motivates connected transportation, utility, and environmental networks and coordinated transportation, utility, and environmental improvements. For these reasons, master planned or planned unit style future land use assignments should be applied to large, contiguous properties in this area. Specifically, the roughly 59-acre property west of Kloet Street in focus element # 3 has been assigned a “light industrial planned unit development” future land use category in this document.

In other areas, the fragmented parcel fabric should be allowed to retain conventional designations such as “low density residential” west of Walker Avenue and “industrial” along Pannell Street. These designations will allow parcels to proceed as have been historically planned. Should those parcels be in a position to consolidate and redevelop in the future, PUD zoning and planned unit-style development should be encouraged. Subject to affirmation by the Walker Planning Commission, planned land uses in those areas will remain as they have been planned since 1998. Where those land uses overlap with more recent master planning efforts from the 2007 Sub-Area 3 Master Plan and the 2016 Sub-Area 1-A Future Land Use Plan, planned land use categories identified in those sub-areas will remain the same. Certain sites or specific lots may emerge as a nexus for revised future land use planning efforts.



Table 1 below relates the future land use categories shown on Figure 23 to actual zoning districts in the city of Walker. Table 2 meets the master-plan-to-zoning-district requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA).

**Table 1: 2019 Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) Zoning Districts – Subplan #5**

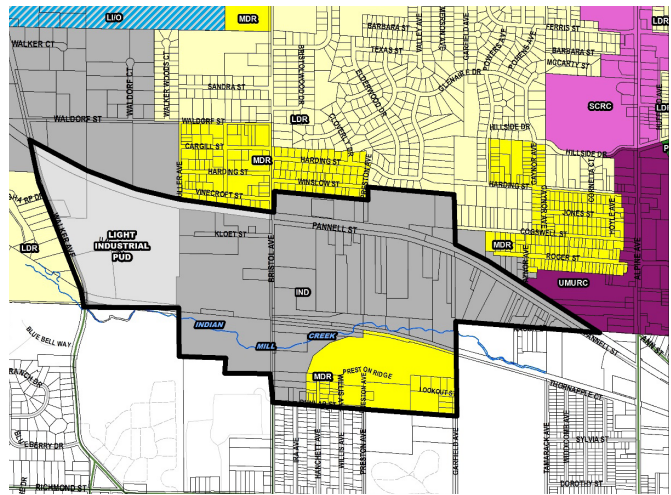
FLUP Label	FLUP Description	Walker Zoning Districts
IND	Heavy Industrial	ML, MH, MP, IPUD ORP
LI-PUD	Light Industrial Planned Unit Development	ML, MP, IPUD, ORP
LDR	Low Density Residential	A, S, SA, RPUD-1
MDR	Medium Density Residential	A, S, SA, A2, RPUD-1, RPUD-2*

\* Note that RPUD-2 Zoning should apply to the MDR FLUP Category when the designated area's density is limited based on current standards for medium density. The current density limit is 8 units per acre.

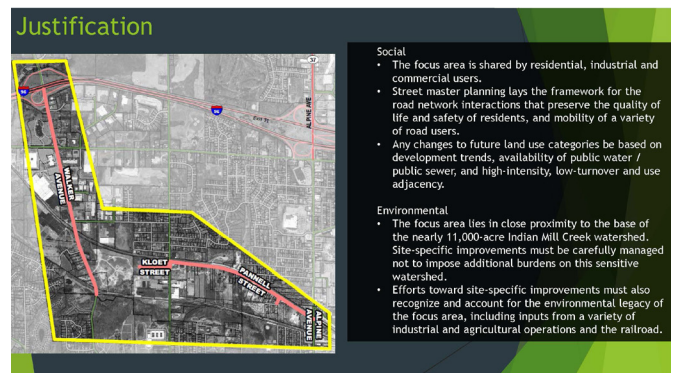
Figures 24 and 25 list findings of social, environmental, and economic justification that support the draft Subplan # 5 specific focus area Future Land Use Plan.

Figures 26 and 27 on the following page list combined recommendations presented to the Planning Commission during work session # 3. It also lists a summary of implementation steps for the Subplan #5 specific focus area. A more expansive list of implementation items appears at the end of this report.

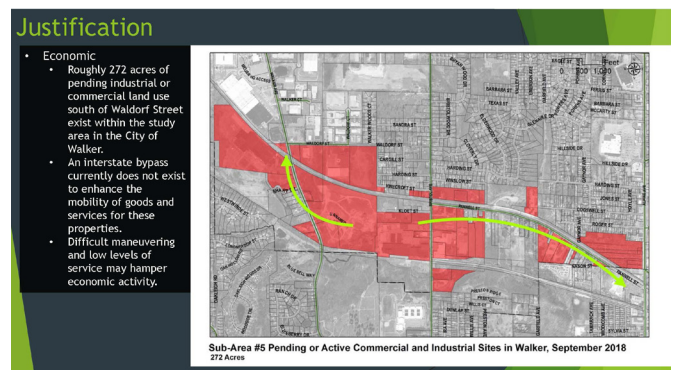
**Figure 23: Proposed 2018 Future Land Use Map for Subplan #5**



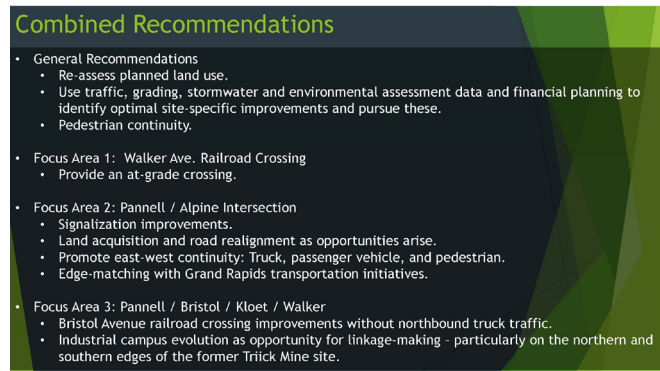
**Figure 24: Social and Environmental Justifications**



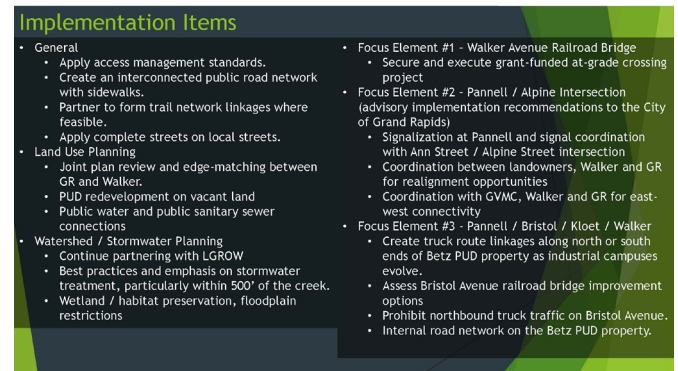
**Figure 25: Economic Justifications**



**Figure 26: Combined recommendations presented during Work session # 3**



**Figure 27: Combined implementation items presented during Work session # 3**



## Distribution and Approval of the Subplan #5 FLU Plan

Following the Planning Commission's review of recommendations in this report during work session # 3 on September 19, 2018, the Planning Commission recommended the finalization of a draft report and the forwarding of the draft document to the Walker City Commission.

Note: The city commission had previously asserted the right to final approval or denial of master plan or subplan amendments via Resolution #15-334, which is attached as Appendix K.

Then, after careful review, via Resolution # 18-491, the City Commission approved the distribution of the draft Subarea Plan document for review on October 22, 2018. The draft Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan was distributed for a 63-day comment period per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act on October 24th, 2018. No formal comments were received.

Edits were made by staff and a Planning Commission public hearing was then held on February 20th, 2019 per the MPEA to consider the final draft of the Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan. PowerPoint presentation slides and detailed minutes of this hearing are attached as Appendices L-1 and L-2.

Walker staff noted minor adjustments to implementation items based on comments observed and received, but also that the focus element options, future land use decisions, and implementation items within the draft subplan were consistent with the recommendations that had been considered by the Planning Commission on September 19th, 2018.

During a public hearing held on February 20, 2019, the Planning Commission advised staff to complete two changes to the future land use map to adjust an "industrial" future land use designation where housing exists adjacent to Dunlap Street and Roger Street in and adjacent to the Subplan 5 specific focus area and convert these areas to "medium density residential" and "low density residential", respectively. Pending this change, and after careful consideration, the Planning Commission approved the 2019 Subplan # 5 future land use plan on February 20th, 2019 via Resolution # 19-4, which is attached as Appendix M.

The final changes were made to this document at the direction of the Planning Commission and The Walker City Commission reviewed the final Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan, as approved by the Planning Commission, on March 11, 2019, and officially adopted the document via Resolution # 19-\_\_\_, which is attached as Appendix N.

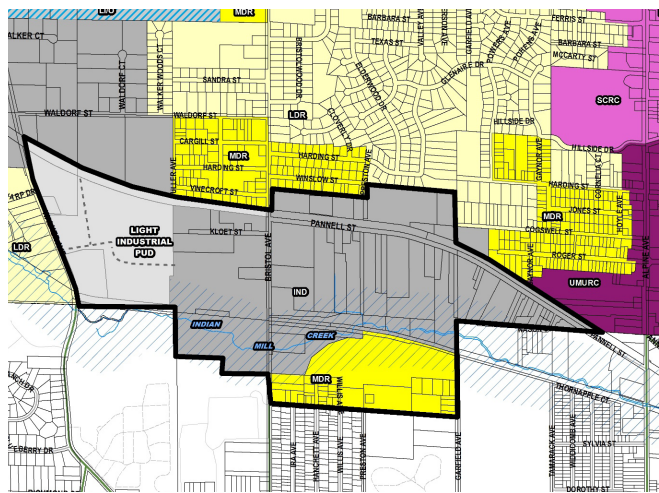
# The Official 2019 Subplan #5 Future Land Use Plan

Figure 28 shows the official 2019 Subplan #5 future land use plan for the specific focus area. This figure includes the updated Light Industrial PUD designation for the Triick pit site and adjacent Coopersville and Marne Railroad. This map also displays, for illustrative purposes:

- A 500' radius hatched buffer surrounding the Indian Mill Creek, as a reference for the proximity of properties within the specific focus area to this waterway; and
- A proposed future internal access network within the Triick pit site as a conceptual dashed line.

This information should be used as a reference for decisions by City of Walker boards, committees, and departments during rezoning requests, project reviews, capital improvement planning, grant writing, and the annual budget development process. Figure 28 is an illustrative snapshot, subject to zoning district assignments, recommendations, and justifications described in table 1 and figures 24–27.

**Figure 28: Official 2019 Future Land Use Map for Subplan #5**



## Subplan # 5 Implementation Items

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA), the proper term for a Sub Area Plan should be a “Subplan.” As such this document will be implemented as the Subplan #5 2018 Future Land Use Plan. Content approved in the Subplan # 5 2018 Future Land Use Plan outside of the described focus elements will remain in effect in accordance with prescriptions of the 1998 Walker Master Plan.

Subplans set the stage for the implementation of site plan details, zoning decisions, infrastructure improvements, regional cooperation efforts, community engagement, economic development, capital budget priorities, parks and recreation upgrades and natural resources management.

The sub-planning effort should contain significant and carefully explained directions to future decision makers regarding site specific implementation details. These directions are listed as specific, actionable implementation items in the list below.

### General Transportation Planning Implementation Items

- Apply access management standards during site plan review.
- Create an interconnected public road network to increase public safety and travel efficiency and to enhance the ability to re-route during construction or closures.
- Ensure sidewalks are required installed along both sides of any future public street.
- Partner with GVMC, the Walker Trails group, the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance to seek feasible trail linkage options, including potentially along railroad properties as they cease transporting active rail lines.
- Future street, bridge and highway projects should be modeled together by a group effort of the City of Walker, the City of Grand Rapids and MDOT. Based on Context Sensitive Design principles, the details of Complete Streets best management practices should be constructed, especially on local streets.
- Continue to implement site-specific treatments to maintain truck traffic only on designated truck routes.



- Dead-end streets should be designed for adequate maneuvering as completed cul-de-sacs or, where appropriate, may be considered for vacation and removal of maintenance obligations by the City in order to be converted for ownership and maintenance as private driveways.

### **General Land Use Planning Implementation Items**

- The City of Grand Rapids and The City of Walker should review plans together to ensure that future land use categories along the Pannell Street – Nason Street corridor and along Indian Mill Creek will “edge match” and minimize the potential for land use conflicts.
- Assess opportunities for public water and public sanitary sewer service connections for all properties not yet served by these utilities east of Walker Avenue, and promote, incentivize, and provide connections to these utilities on those properties where possible.
- Planned Unit Development zoning should be used wherever practical, and especially on large, vacant properties, to ensure that new development is carefully designed and coordinated with surrounding properties.

### **Watershed Planning and Stormwater Management Implementation Items**

- Continue a relationship with the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) to ensure site-specific transportation improvements align with efforts toward protecting and improving the Indian Mill Creek Watershed.
- Employ, and encourage landowners to employ, best practices from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) during development reviews and public development projects, particularly within 500 feet of the Indian Mill Creek, to emphasize stormwater quality and treatment.
- Partner with these agencies to encourage localized floodplain restrictions, wetland preservation, and natural habitat protection.

### **Focus Element #1 – Walker Avenue Railroad Bridge Implementation Items**

- Execute the TEDF Category A grant project for the at-grade Walker Avenue crossing.

### **Focus Element #2 – Pannell / Alpine Intersection Implementation Items**

- Formally advise the City of Grand Rapids on the following recommendations:
  - Signalize the Pannell Street / Alpine Avenue intersection and coordinate signals with Ann Street
  - Partner with the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) to seek opportunities to promote east-west connectivity along the Nason-, Ann-, and Pannell Street corridors.
  - Partner with the City of Grand Rapids and area landowners to explore the potential for specific properties for strategic road realignments.

### **Focus Element #3 – Pannell / Bristol / Kloet / Walker Implementation Items**

- Work with landowners including Betz Industries, CL Frost, Consumers Energy, and Micron Manufacturing to create truck route linkages via the creation of public streets, or rights-of-way, right-of-way easements, or private easement agreements which create the avenue for future truck route linkages along the southern (“Option 1”) or northern (“Option 2”) edges of the former Triick Mine property.
- Assess railroad bridge removal or underpass widening at Bristol Avenue after undertaking grading studies, traffic impact studies, and financial planning exercises.
- Prohibit the use of Bristol Avenue north of the railroad as a truck route.
- Ensure the continuation of development within the Betz Industries-owned (formerly Triick pit site) properties involves an internal road network which minimizes driveways on Walker Avenue.
- Light Industrial Planned Unit Development Future Land Use should be applied to the properties of the former Triick pit site.



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