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# Section 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The northwest side of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area is one of the more attractive communities in West Michigan. The northwest side is not only near to downtown Grand Rapids, but it also provides convenient access to Lake Michigan communities to the west. The 4 Mile Road corridor is a primary county route providing the boundary between the City of Walker and Alpine Township. The 4 Mile Road corridor parallels the regional interstate system, and three interchanges along I-96 provide a high level of mobility into the City of Walker and Alpine Township. Recent development proposals along 4 Mile Road—such as the 240-acre Orchard Park Town Center—are poised to potentially overburden the capacity of 4 Mile Road, which is primarily a two-lane rural road.

As traffic volumes grow, it is imperative that the interrelated issues of access management, land use development, and traffic operations along the 4 Mile Road corridor be comprehensively addressed. Coordinated land use decisions that balance access and mobility along 4 Mile Road are necessary to provide a safe and efficient roadway as development increases. In response to growing concerns regarding traffic along 4 Mile Road, the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) has funded the completion of a “4 Mile Road Corridor Study” in cooperation with Alpine Township, the City of Walker, the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The purpose of the “4 Mile Road Corridor Study” is to provide a framework of access management standards and regulations to ensure that future development (and redevelopment) is part of the solution—not the problem. The “4 Mile Road Corridor Study” includes a detailed examination of existing and future traffic volumes in order to determine the future roadway cross-section and an implementation plan that will allow the GVMC and local agencies to plan for future capital expenditures, including aesthetic treatments and non-motorized facilities.

The existing corridor is depicted in **Figure 1-1** on the following page.

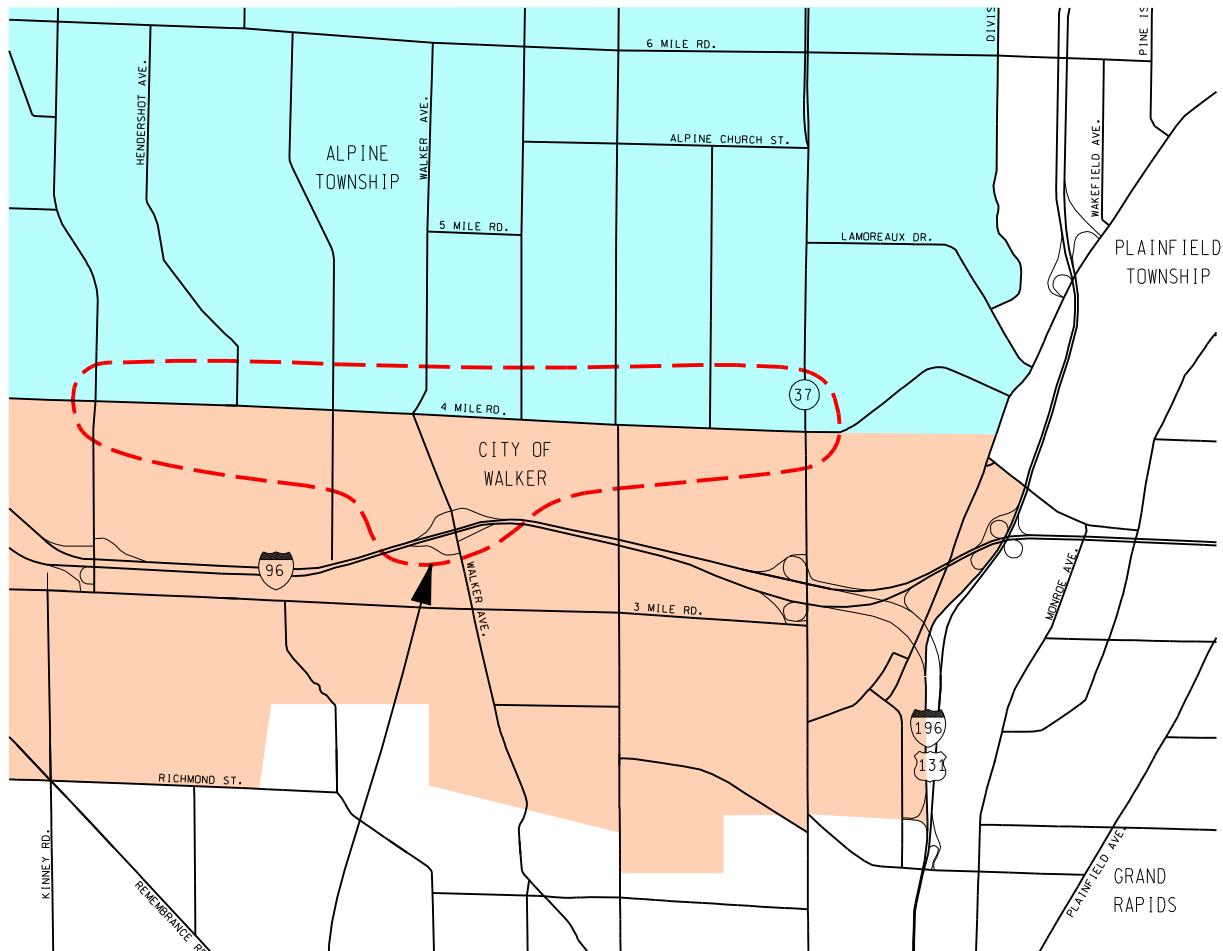
## 1.2 Report Organization

This report is organized into the following sections:

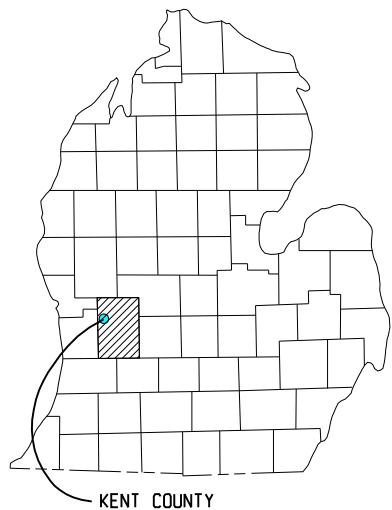
**Section 2. Existing Conditions** – This section provides an evaluation of existing (2006) traffic operations within the corridor from Fruit Ridge Avenue to M-37 (Alpine Avenue).

**Section 3. Future-Year Analysis** – This section provides an evaluation of traffic operations for two future-year scenarios: 2015 and 2030. The purpose of the analysis is to determine the proposed cross-section for 4 Mile Road between Fruit Ridge Avenue and M-37, accounting for Orchard Park Town Center and future land use plans.

**Section 4. Access Management** – This section provides a description of how access management can be utilized along 4 Mile Road to preserve safety and capacity while traffic volumes increase. A review of existing access issues are described as well as access management techniques. Proposed access management improvements are then depicted as an overlay to the proposed road improvements.



STUDY AREA



4 MILE ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY



GVMC



PREPARED BY:  
**URS**

STUDY AREA

FIGURE  
**1-1**