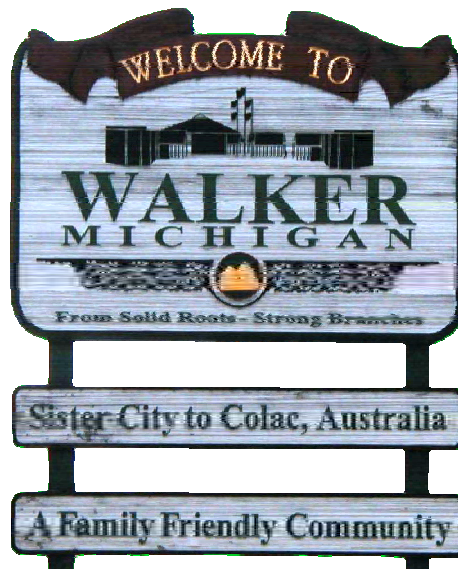


Approved September 24th, 2007

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

City of Walker, Michigan



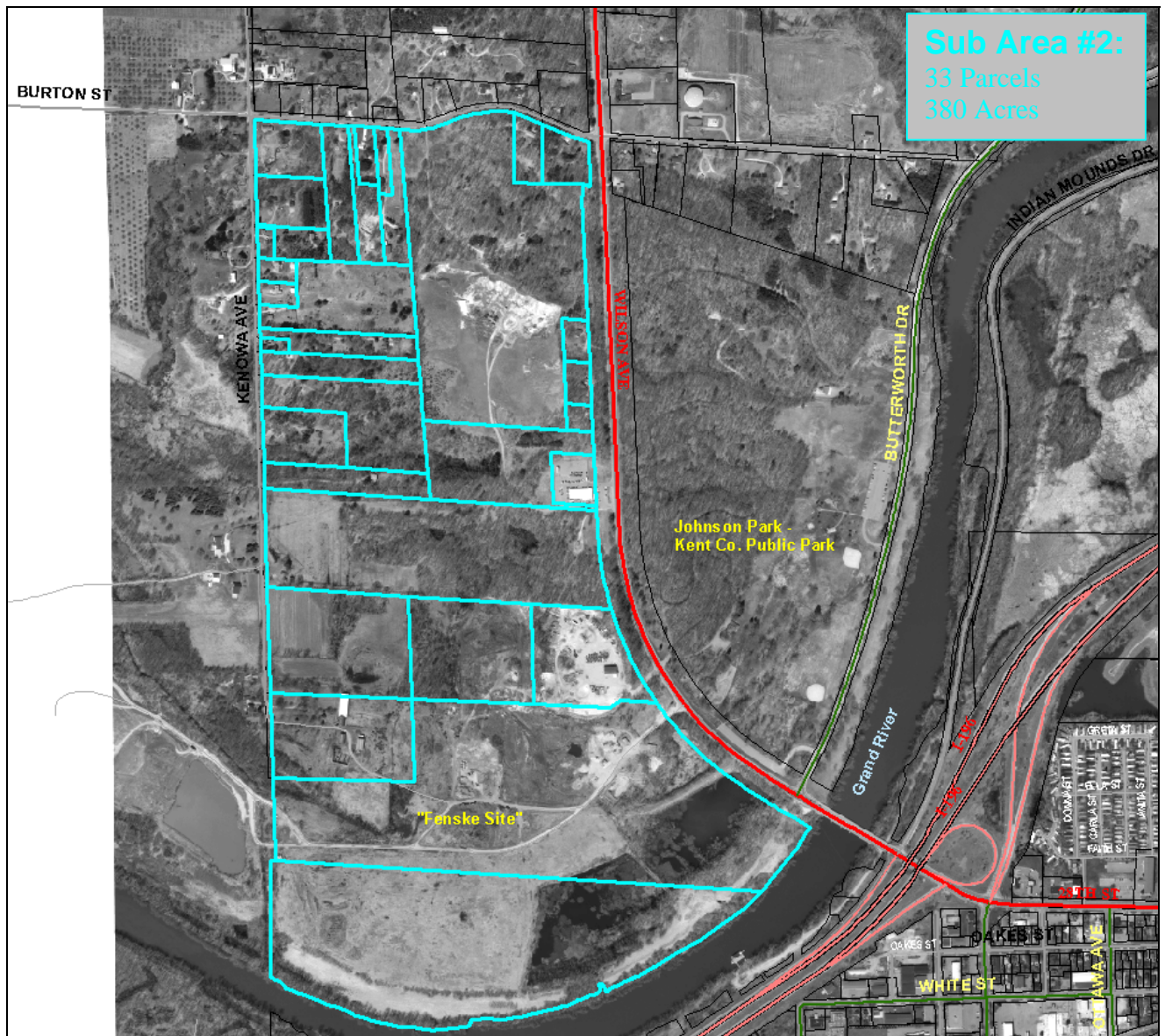


Figure 1: Sub Area #2 Base Map

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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.

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

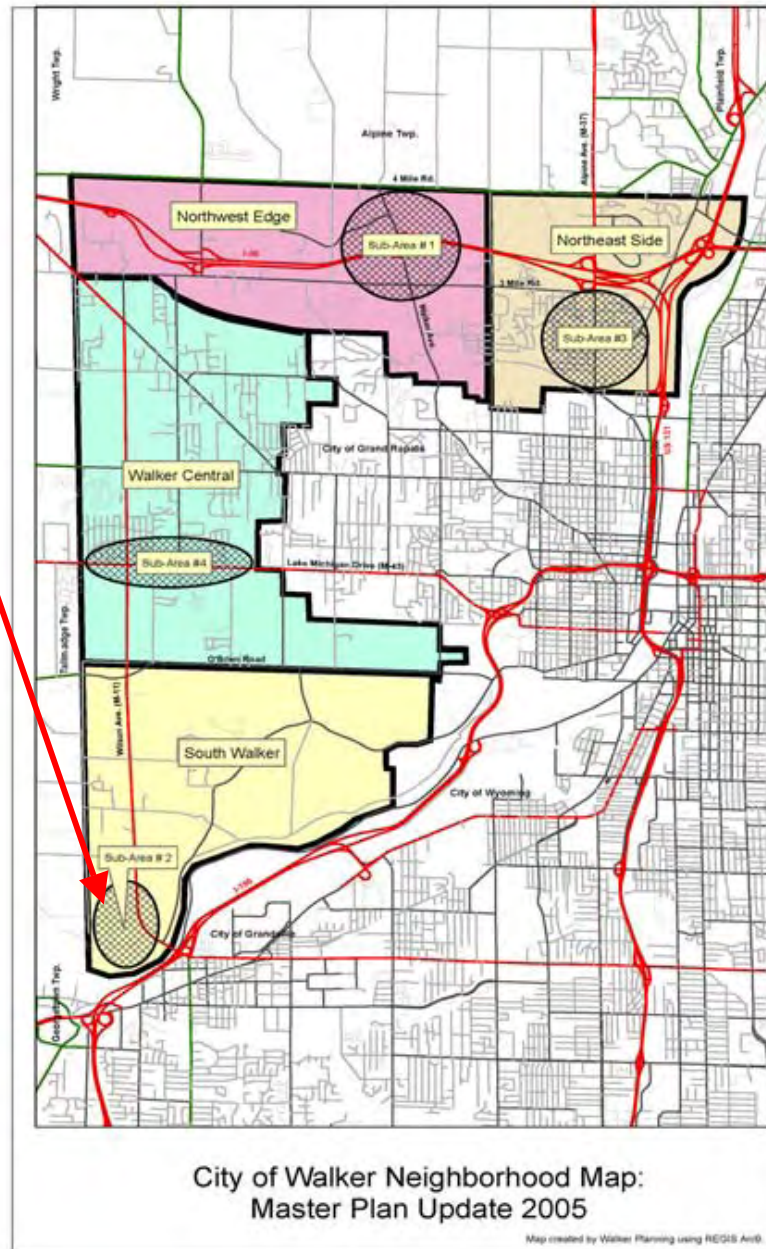
The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in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



**Figure 2 – Neighborhood Map
Original Version**

Sub-Area #2

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.

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 1-25-06) 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 #2. 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 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.

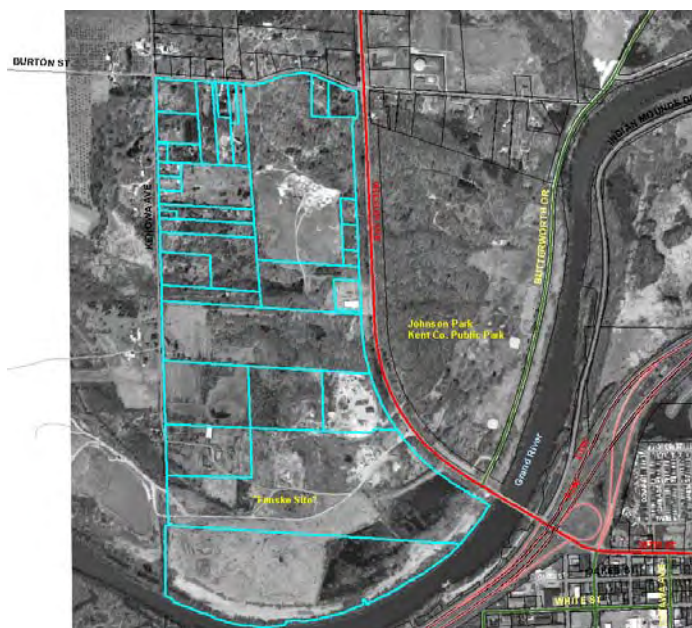


Figure 3: Sub Area #2

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.

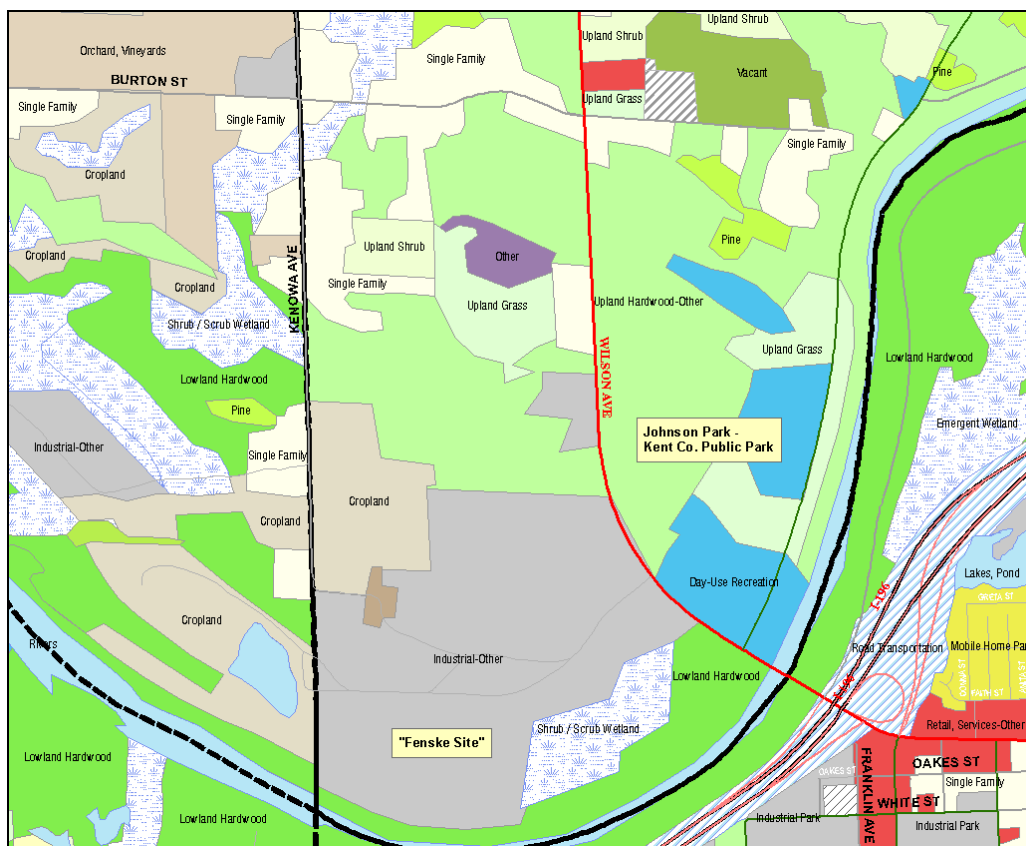


Figure 4: 2003 Existing Land Use Map

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.

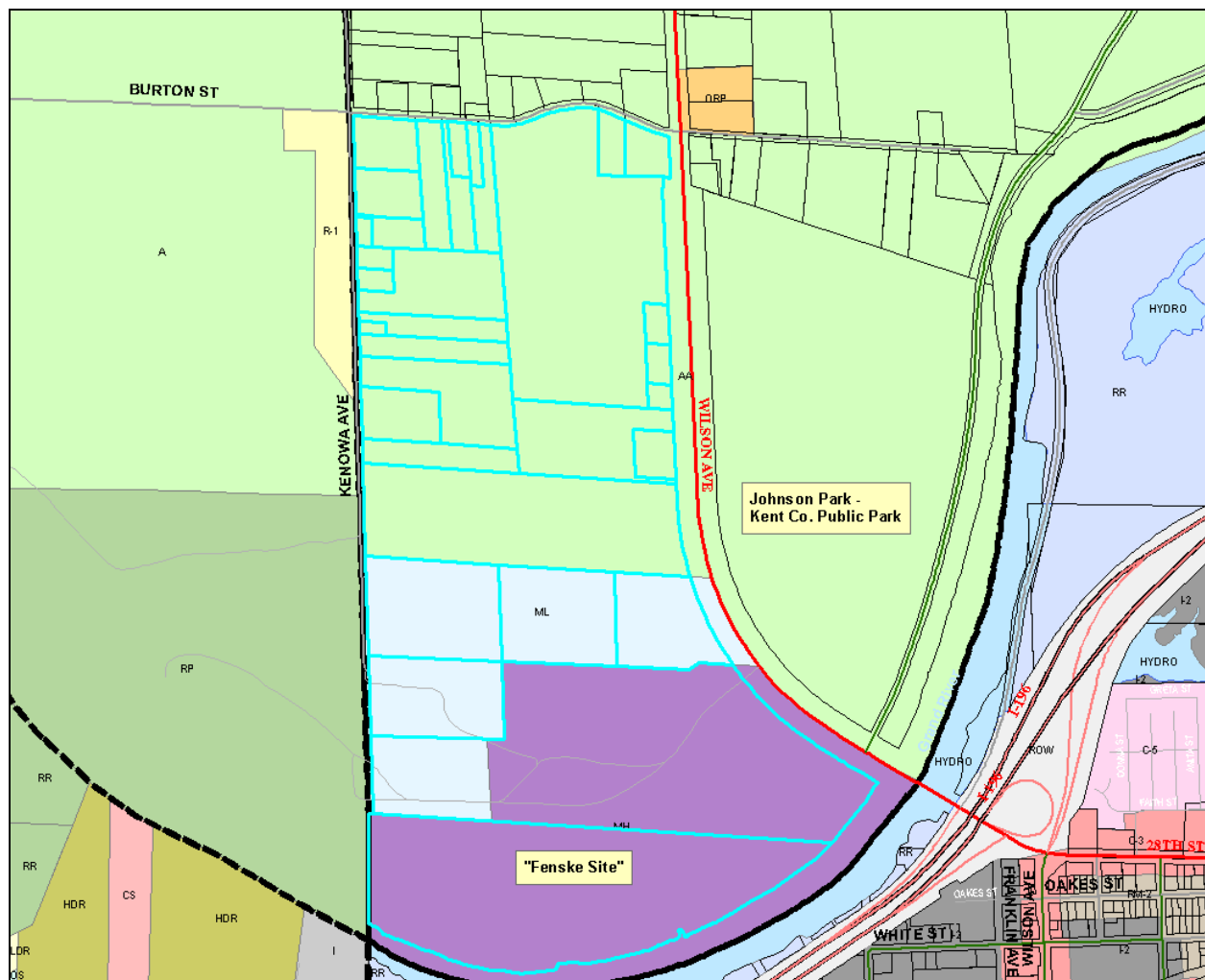


Figure 5: 2007 Zoning Map

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.

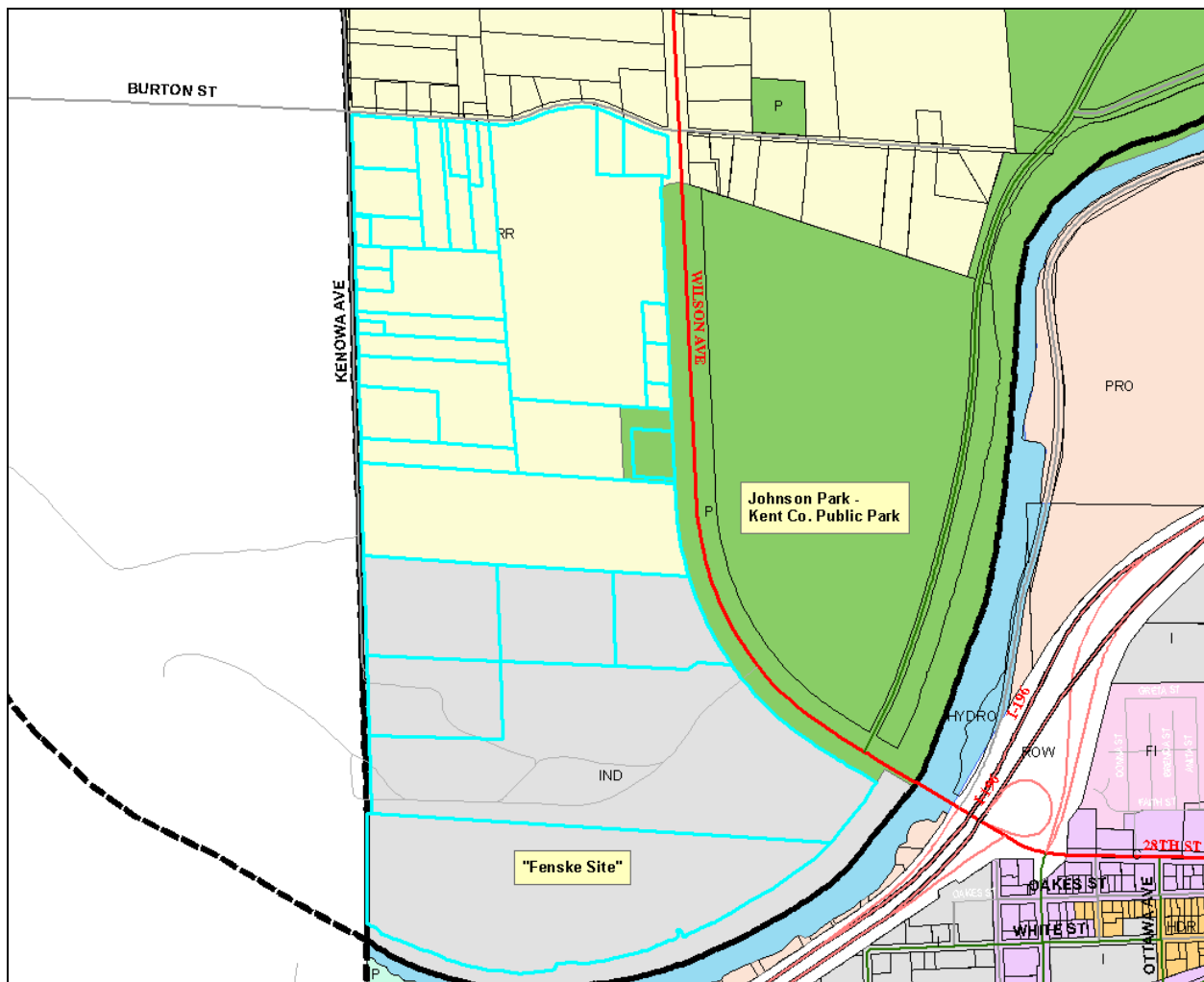


Figure 6: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map

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.

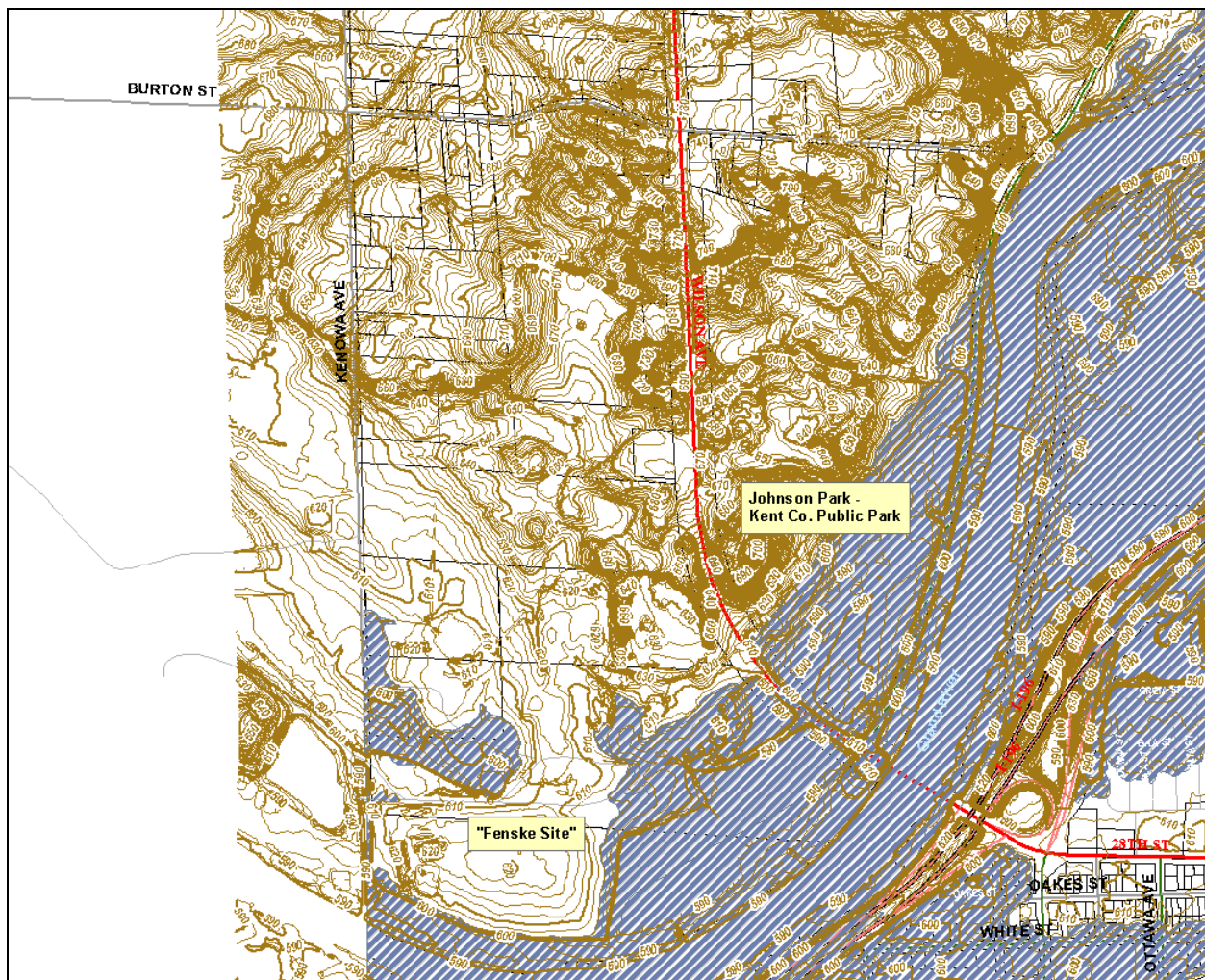


Figure 7: 2' Contour Topography and 2005 FEMA Floodplain Map

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.

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?

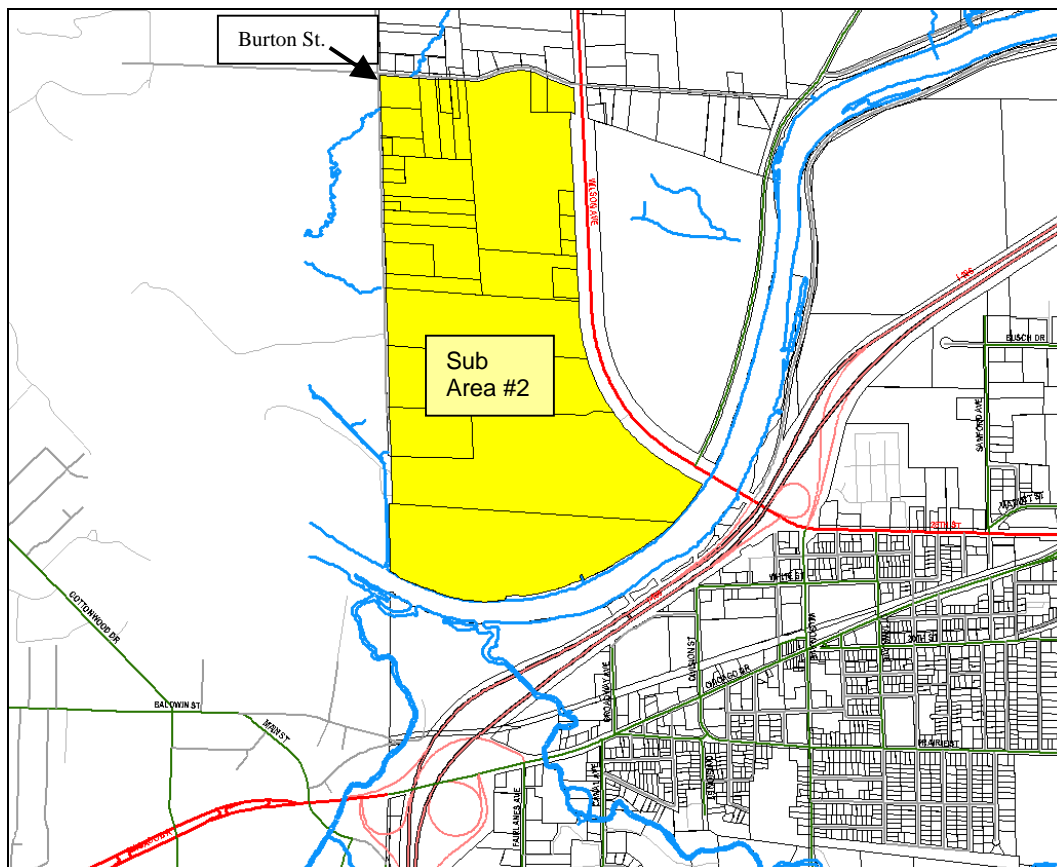


Figure 8: Existing Roadway Network

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:

Comments about Wilson Avenue...

- ◆ 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 Connors 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.

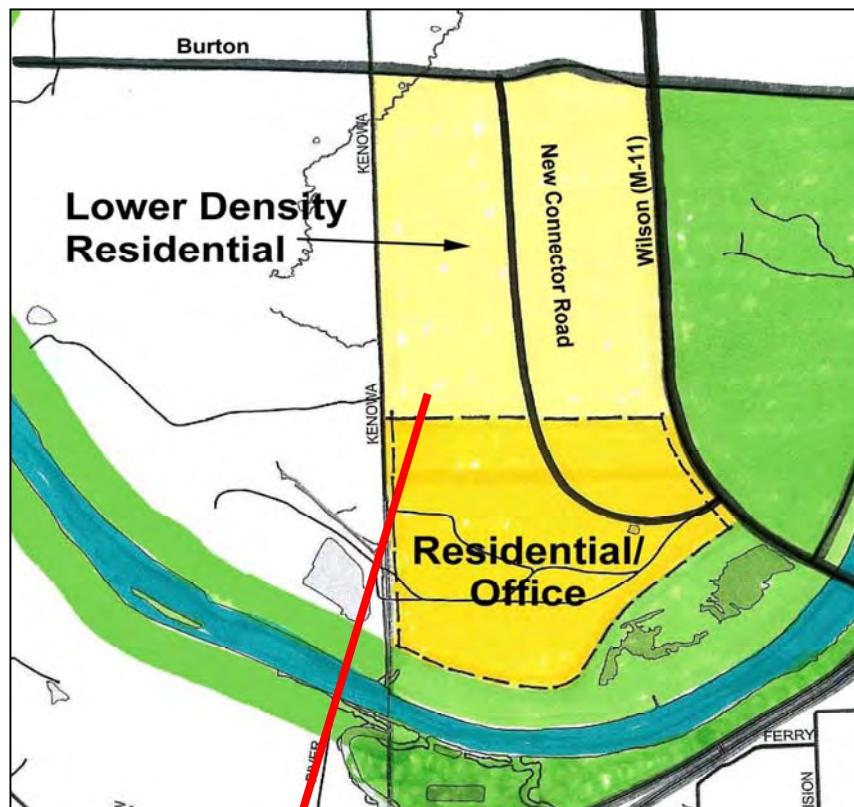


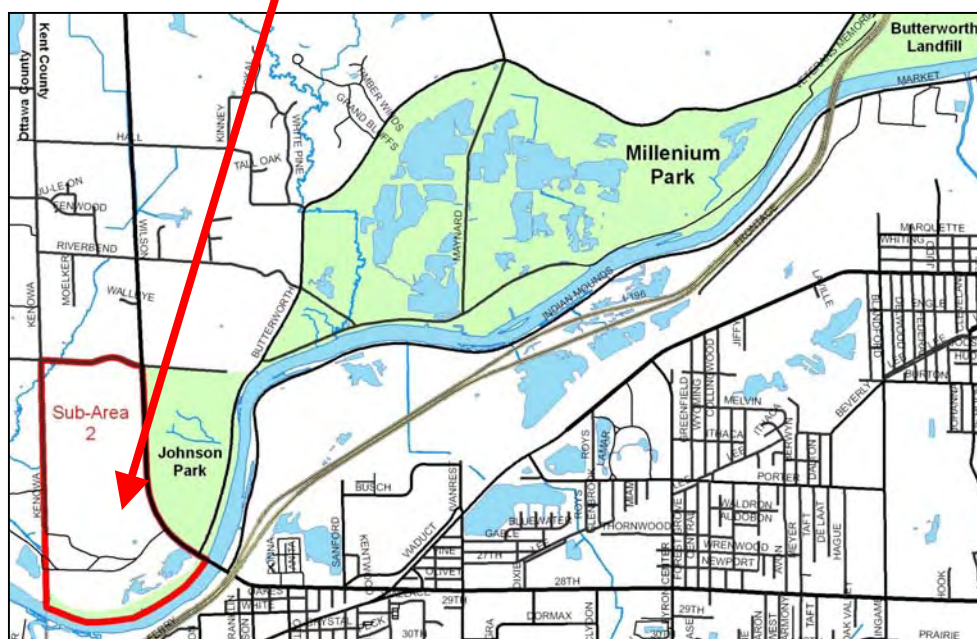
Figure 9:

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.



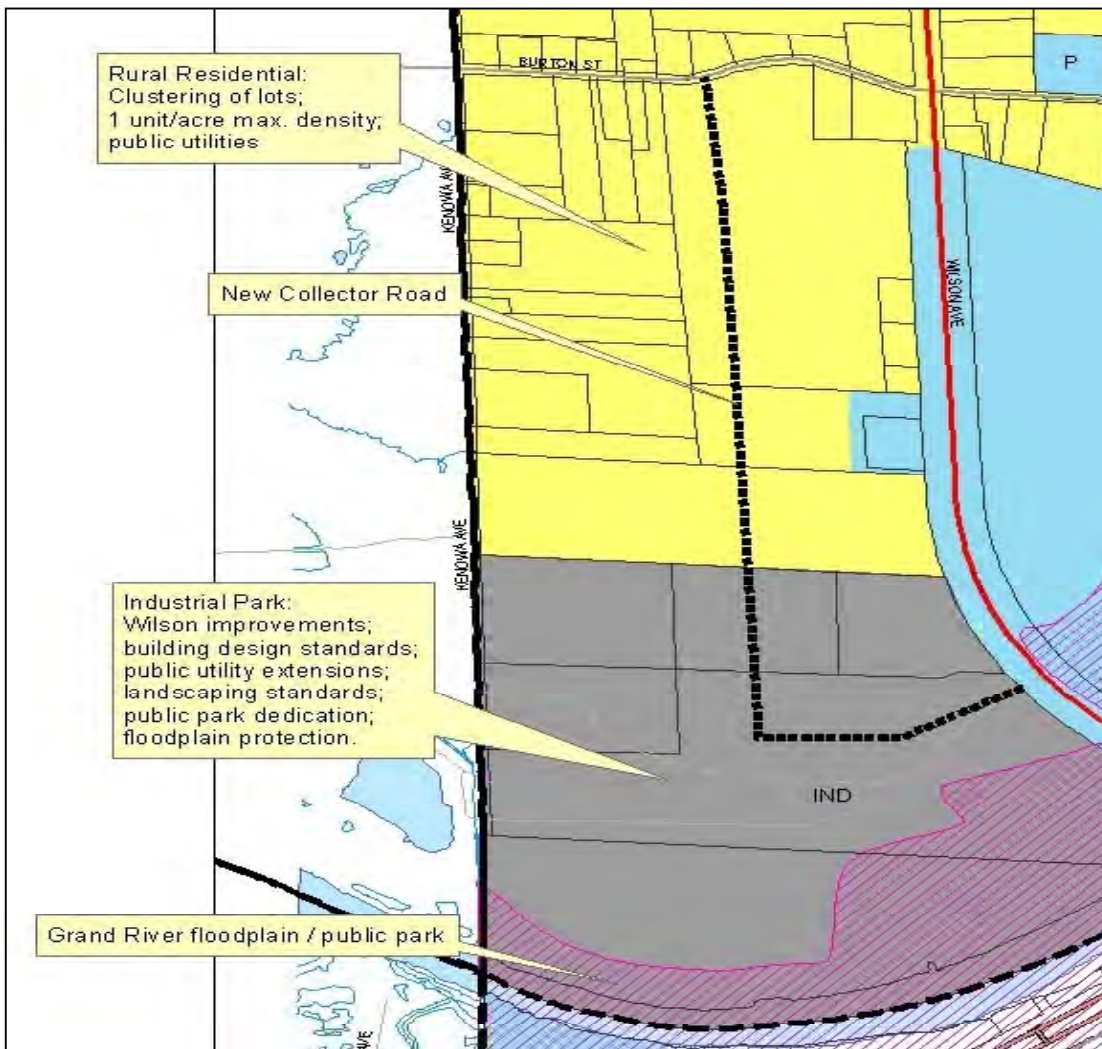


Figure 10: **Alternative B** – Improved Status Quo


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.

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.

Figure 11: Future Land Use Alternatives Survey

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.

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.

Figure 12: Design Preference Survey

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE



OFFICE LAND USE



RESIDENTIAL LAND USE



**Alternative
A
Number
liked - 10**

Feedback from the public surveys is displayed below:

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 Public 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.

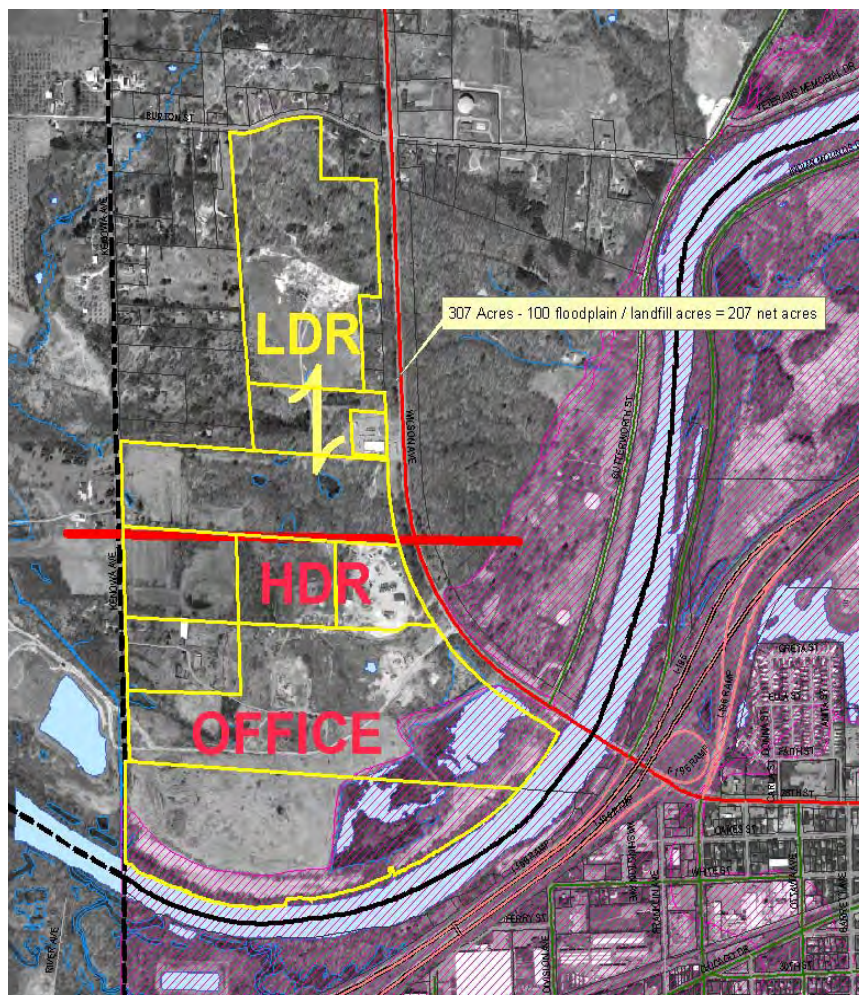
Community Forum #3 – Held on 1-25-06

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.



OPTION A – RESIDENTIAL & 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.

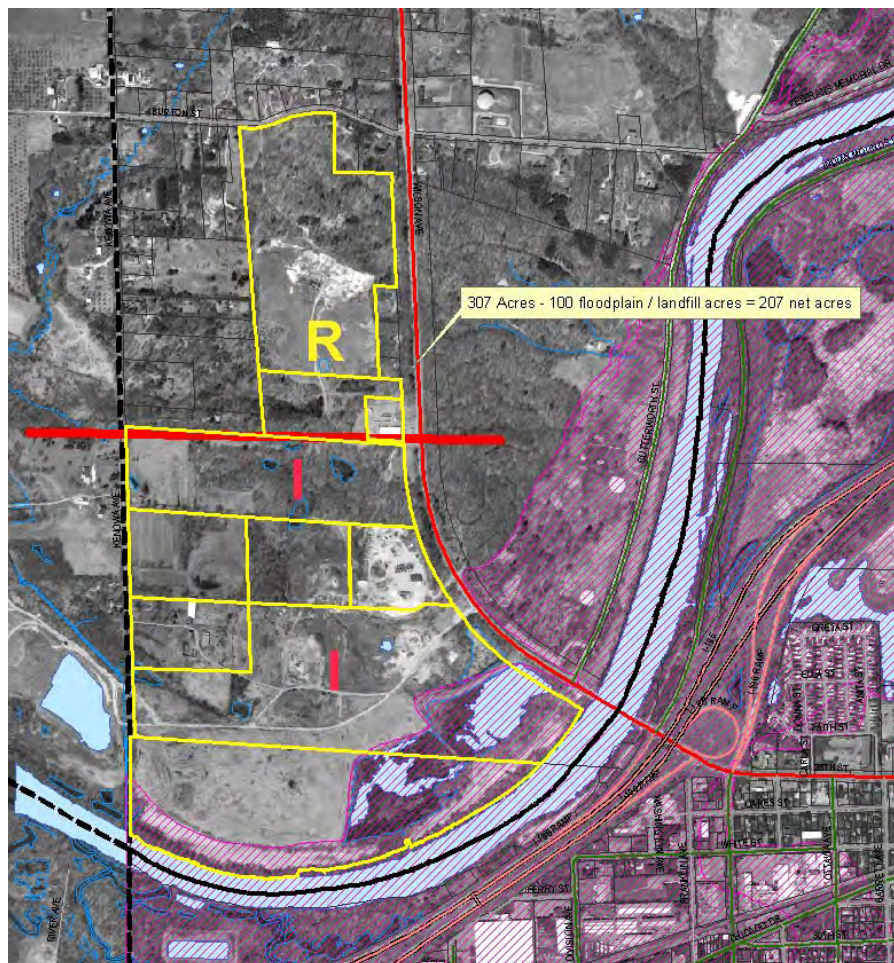
Staff offered the following PROS and CONS for Option A:

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 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:
 - Grand Rapids Press = 183,464 sq. ft.
 - Grooters Warehouse = 334,065 sq. ft.

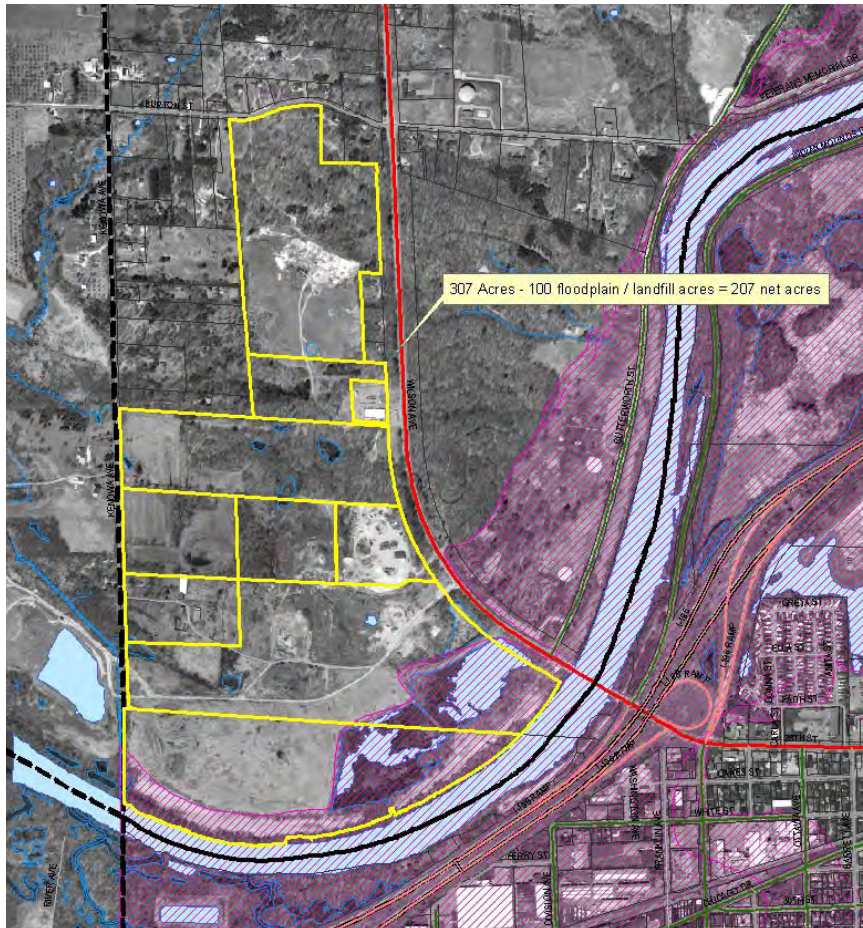
Staff offered the following PROS and CONS for Option B:

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.



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:
 - Grand Rapids Press = 183,464 sq. ft.
 - Grooters Warehouse = 334,065 sq. ft.
 - Ridgeview Stamping = 190,882 sq. ft.

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.

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.

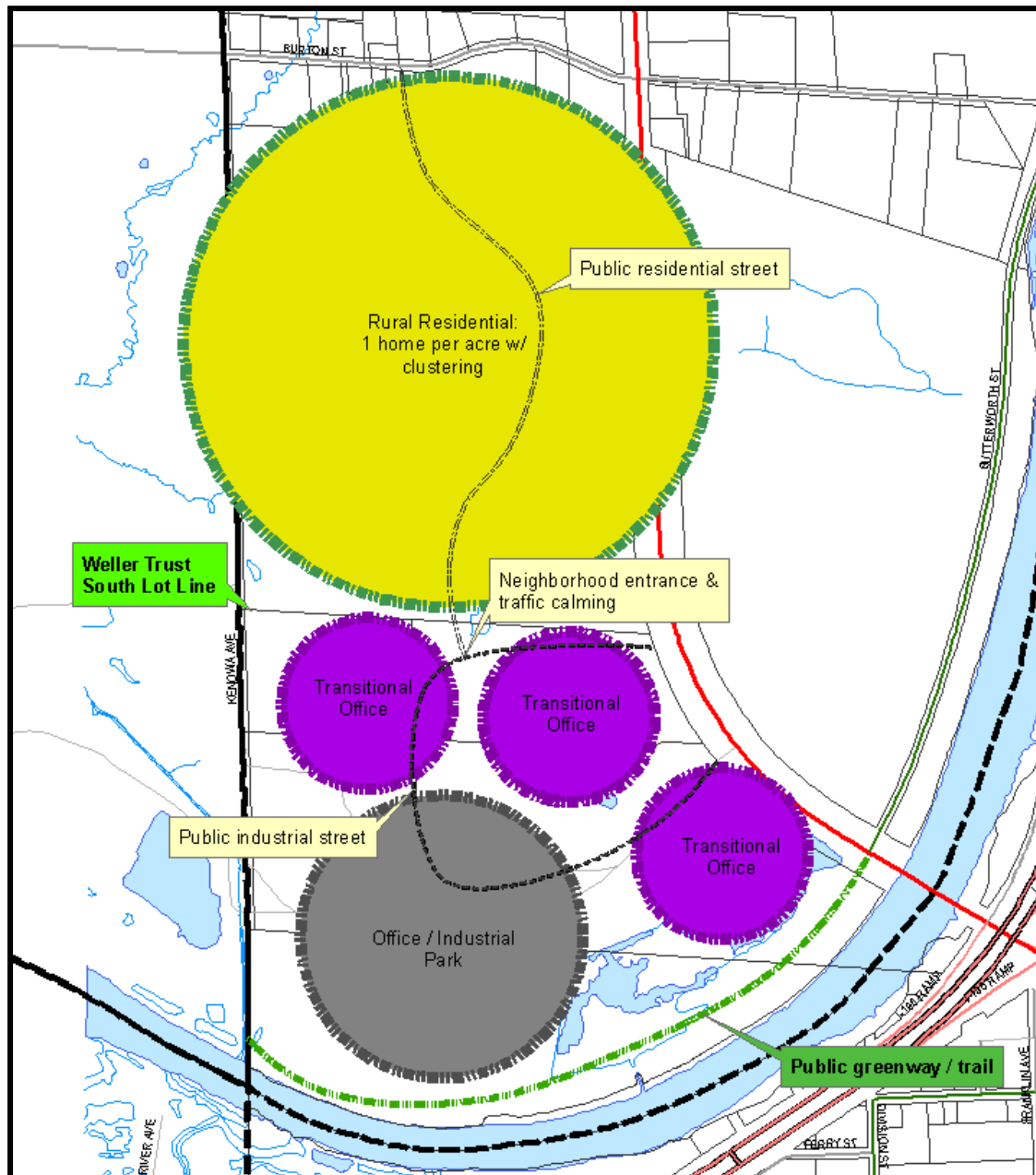


Figure 13: Sub Area #2 Future Land Use Map

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.

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.

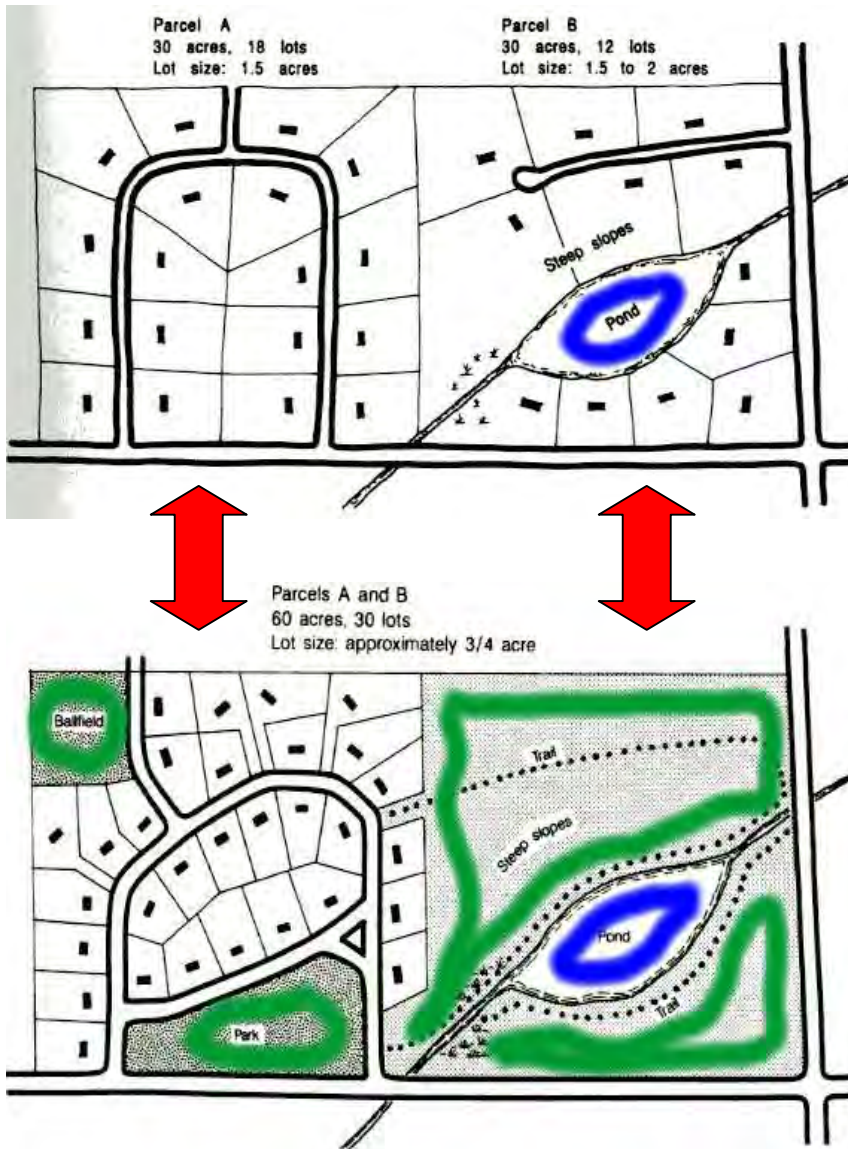
Streets, Traffic Management and Pedestrian Safety

- ❖ 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 be 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.

Implementation Recommendations – Next Page



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.