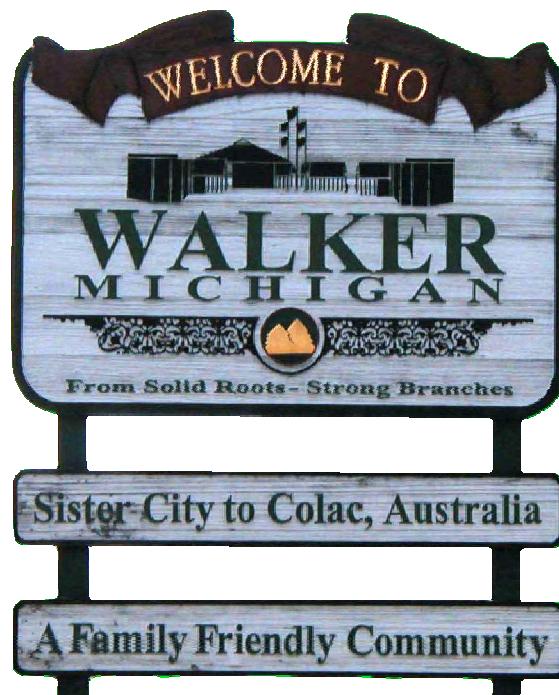


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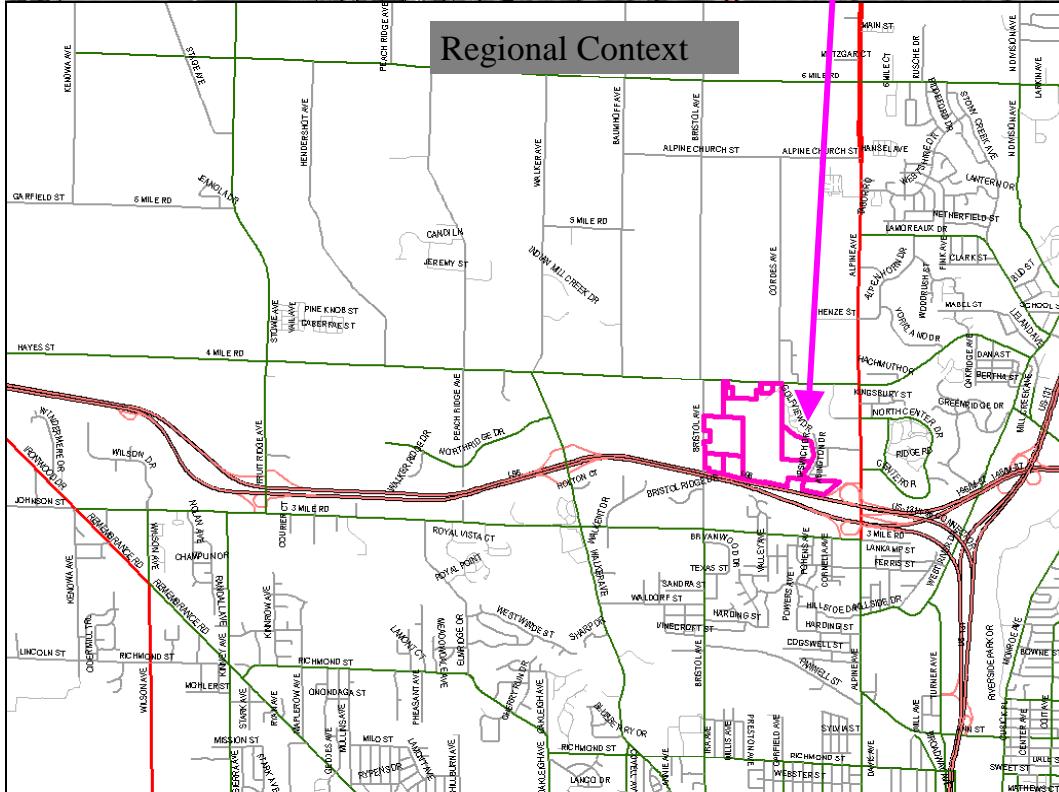
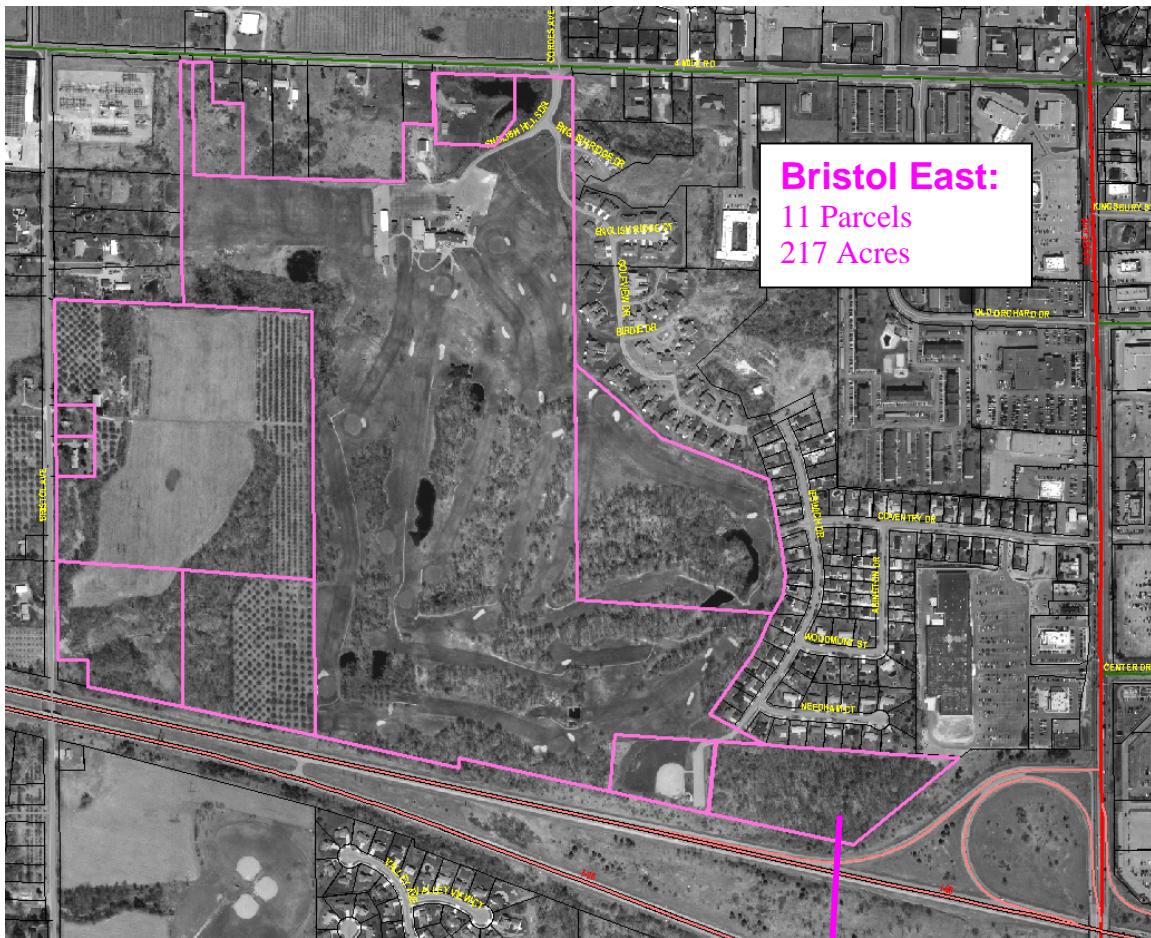
Sub-Area 3-B: Bristol East Future Land Use Plan
2007 Master Plan Update

City of Walker, Michigan



LSL Planning, Inc.





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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 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 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.

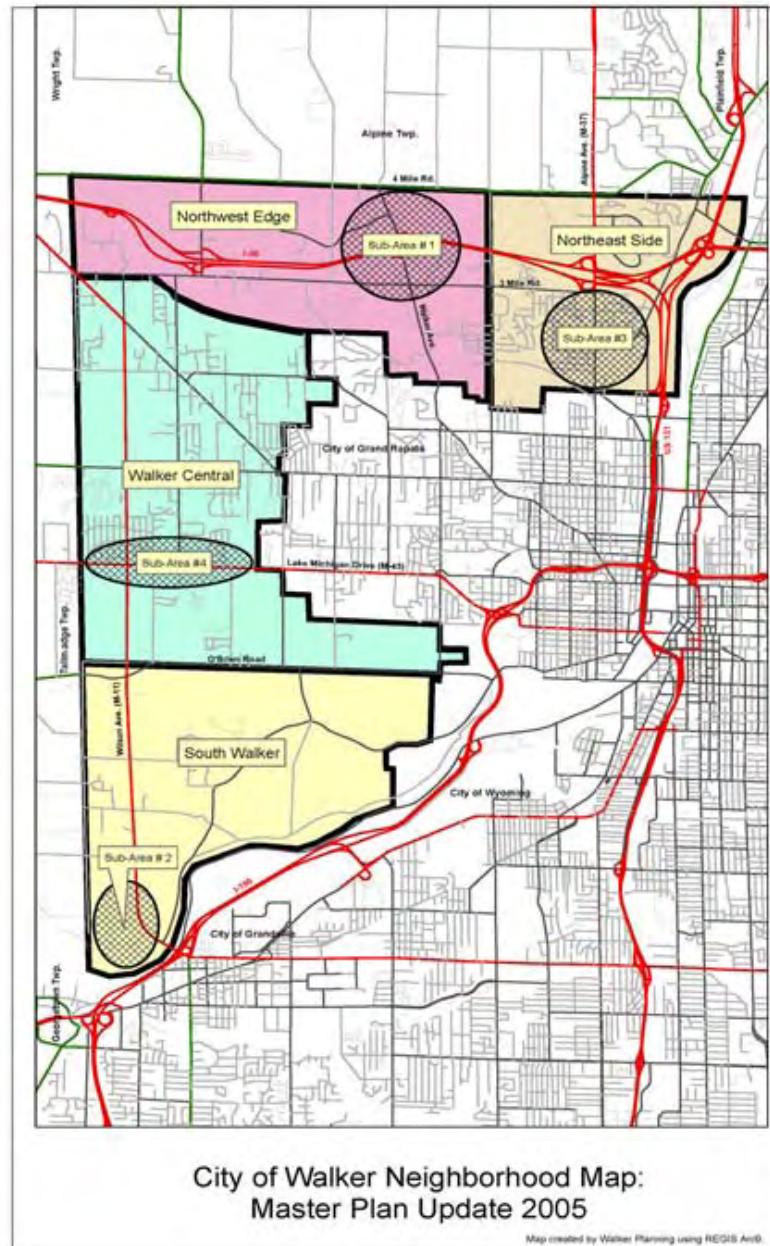
The first would occur during an initial planning phase for each Sub-Area during a Community Forum, where the public would be given the opportunity to learn about the process, identify relevant issues and opportunities, learn about the context and physical parameters for each area, and participate in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



**Figure 1 – Neighborhood Map
Original Version**

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).

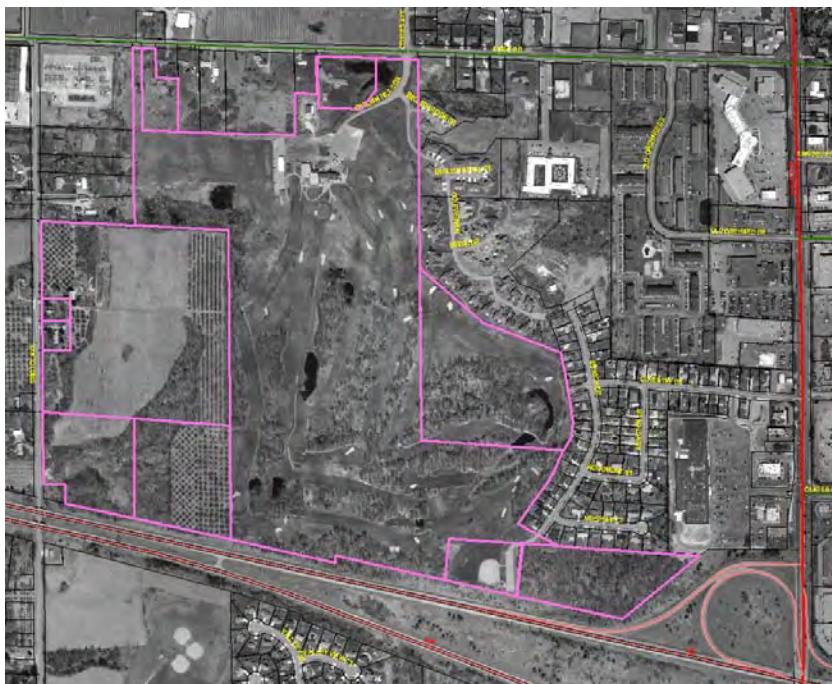


Figure 2: Bristol East



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.



Photos of existing residential adjacent to English Hills 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.



Photos of existing English Hills Park

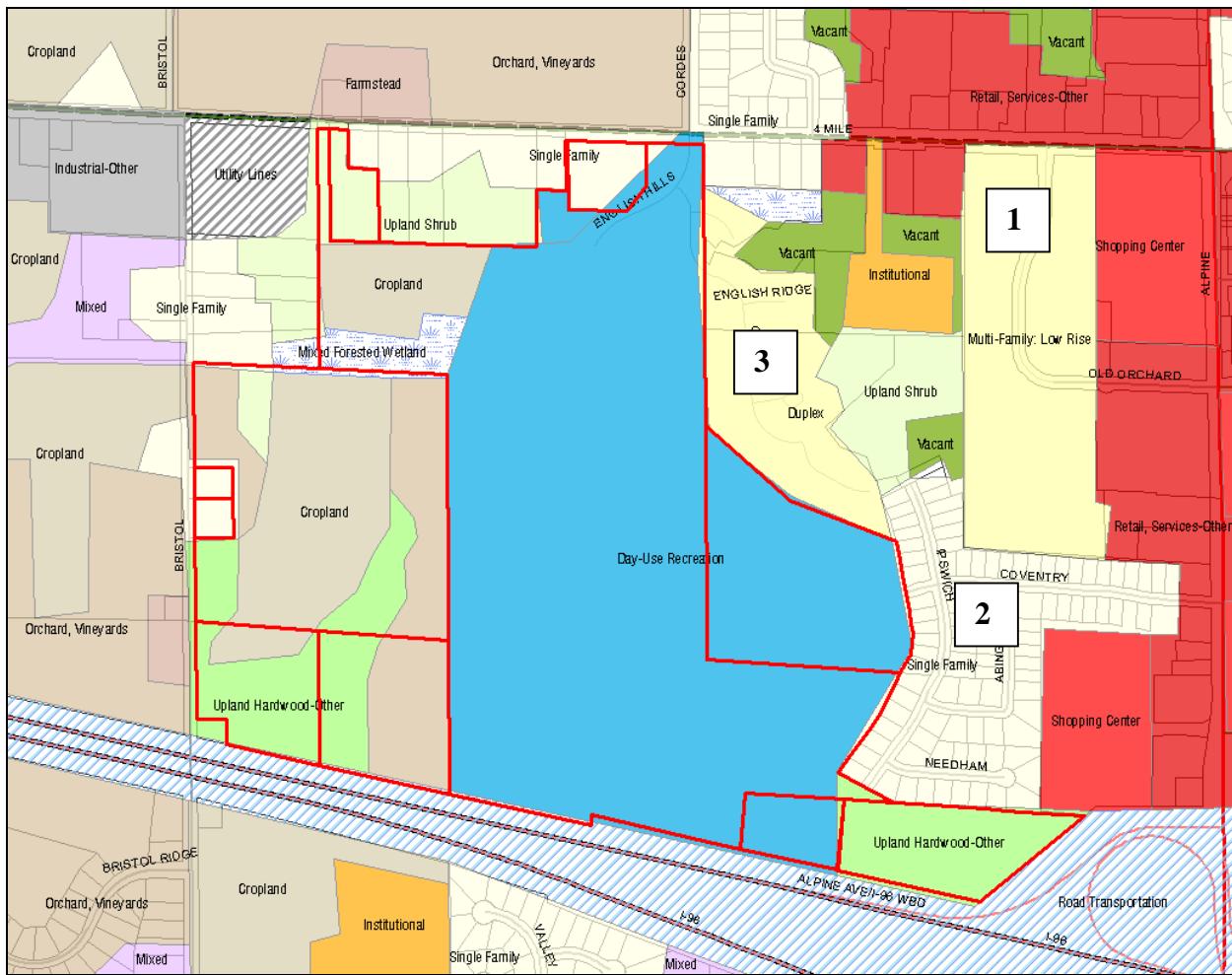


Figure 4: 2003 Existing Land Use Map

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

| 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.

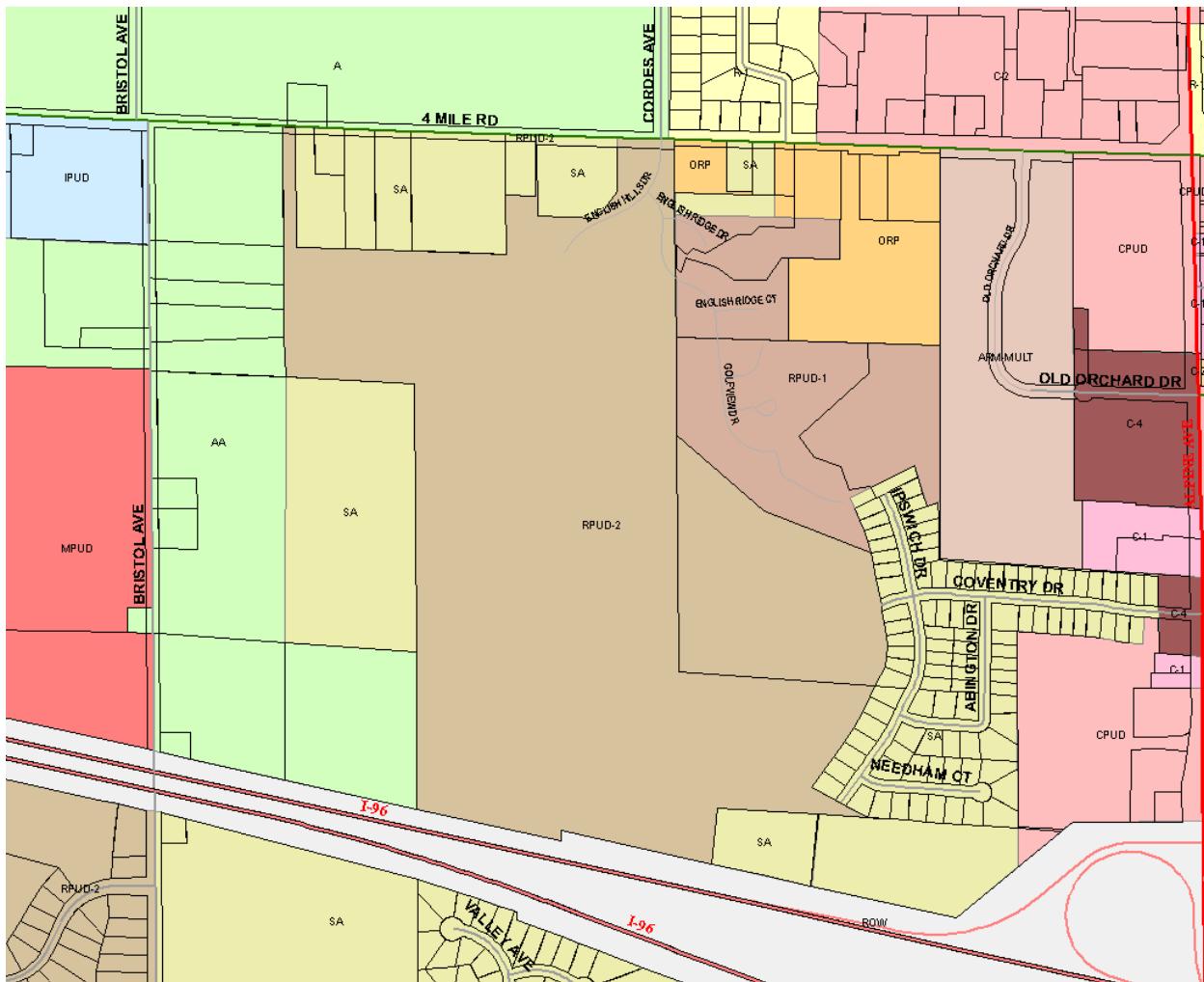


Figure 5: 2007 Zoning Map

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.

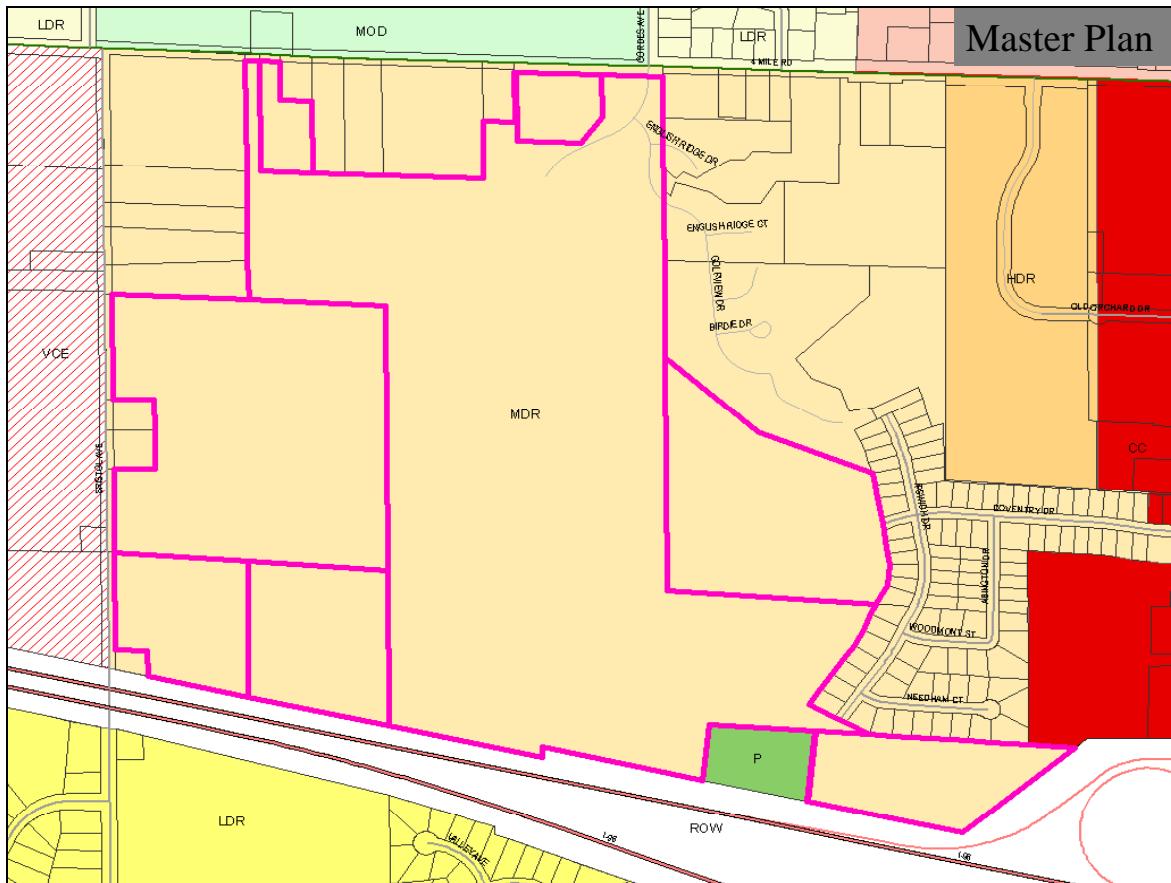


Figure 6: 1998 Master Plan – Future Land Use Map w/
'06 Sub-Area #1 Update

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).

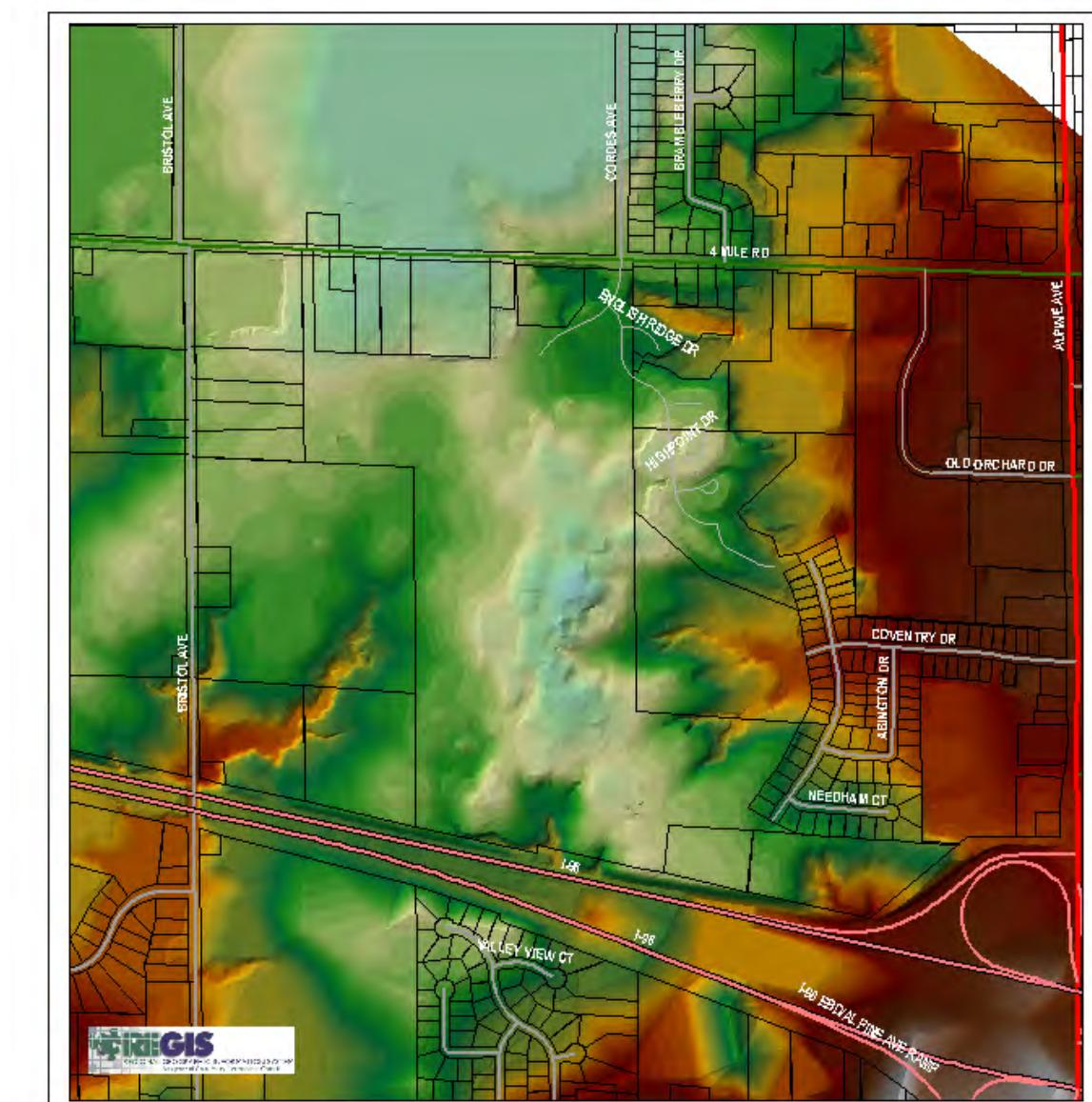


Figure 7: 3-D Topography Map

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.

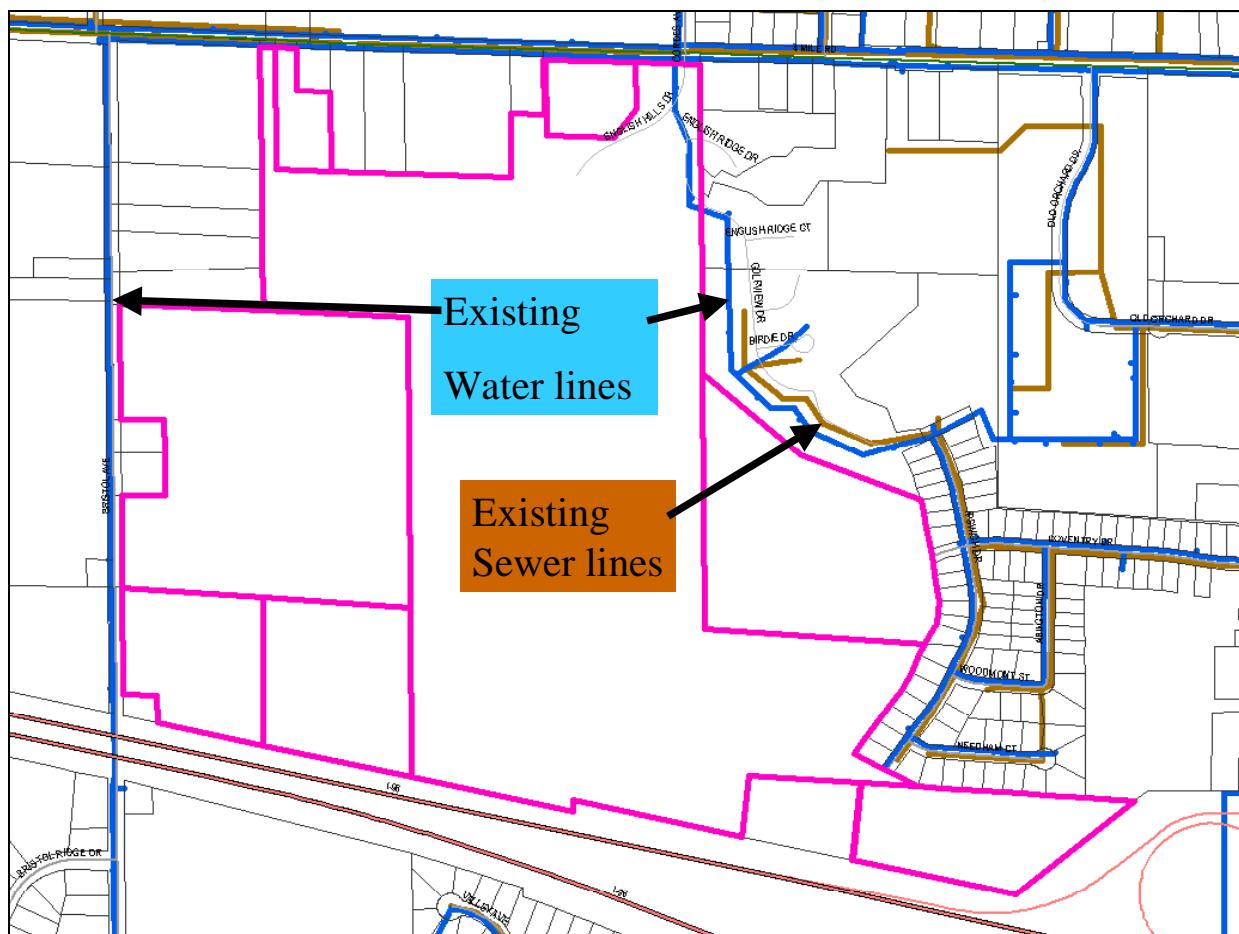


Figure 8: Public Utilities Map

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.

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 new 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.

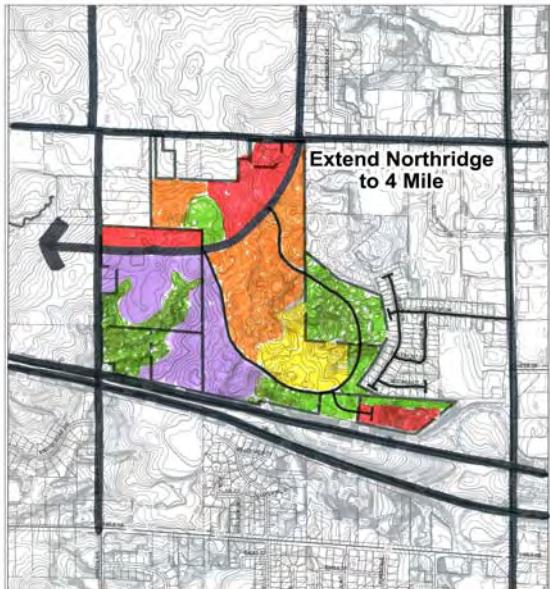
Staff noted that, although not every idea, desire, or concern could be reflected, many would be incorporated into the draft master plan maps. Staff explained that, as is always the case when engaging the public, many competing interests arise. And as is increasingly the case, the public's tolerance for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

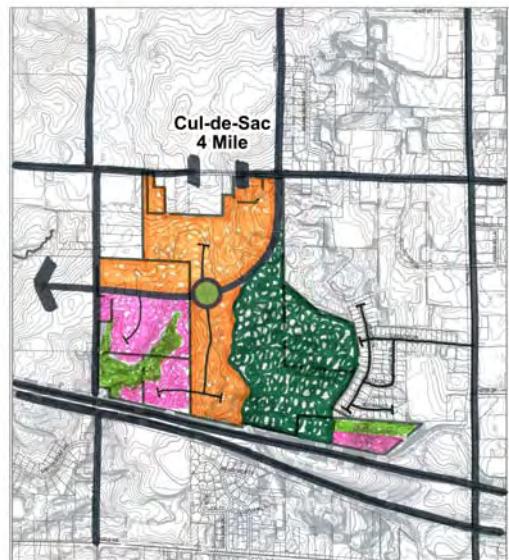
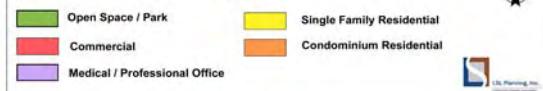
Community Forum #2

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.

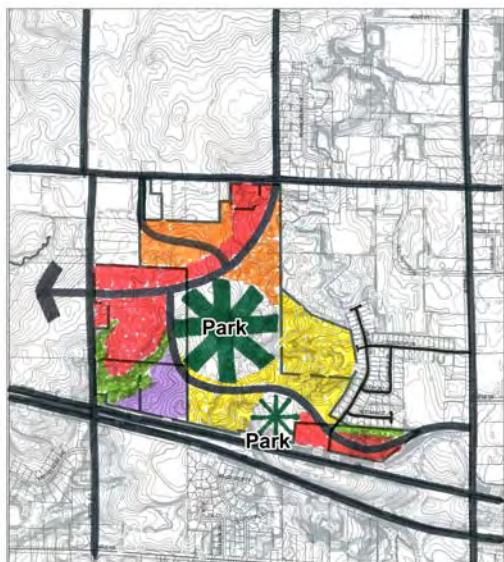
These three future land use options are shown below.



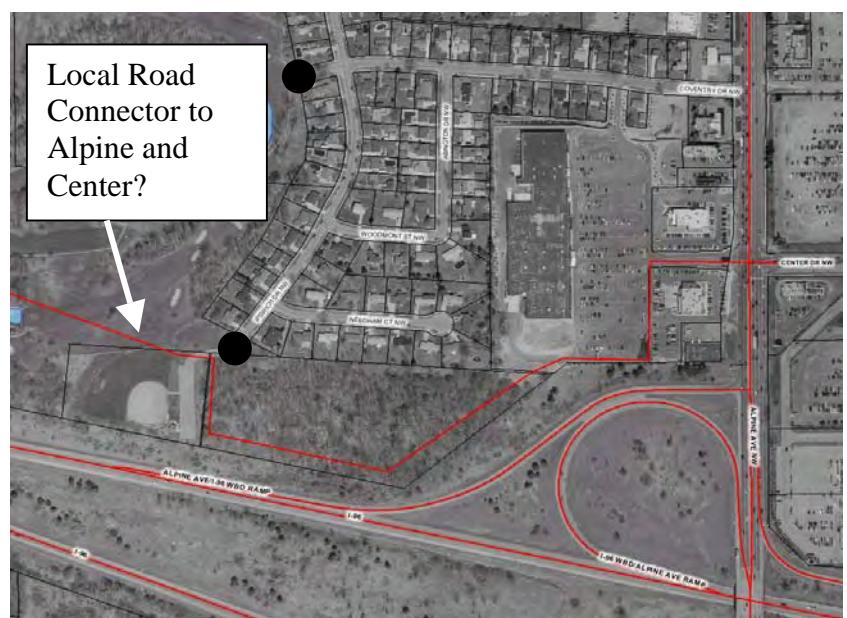
Bristol East - Option #1



Bristol East - Option #2



Bristol East - Option #3



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 Reponses 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 thought 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.
- 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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 its 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)

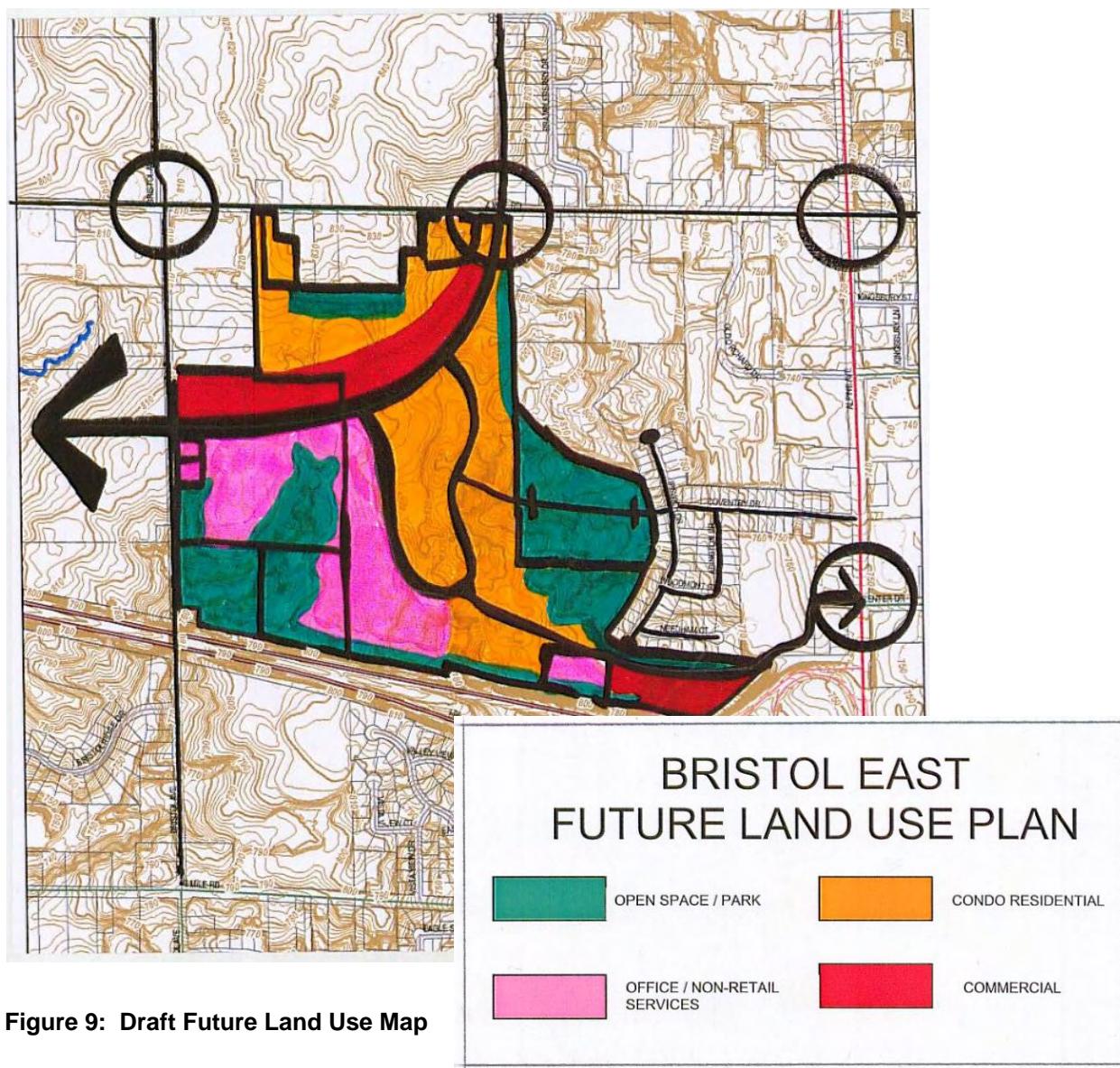


Figure 9: Draft Future Land Use Map

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)



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.

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.

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.

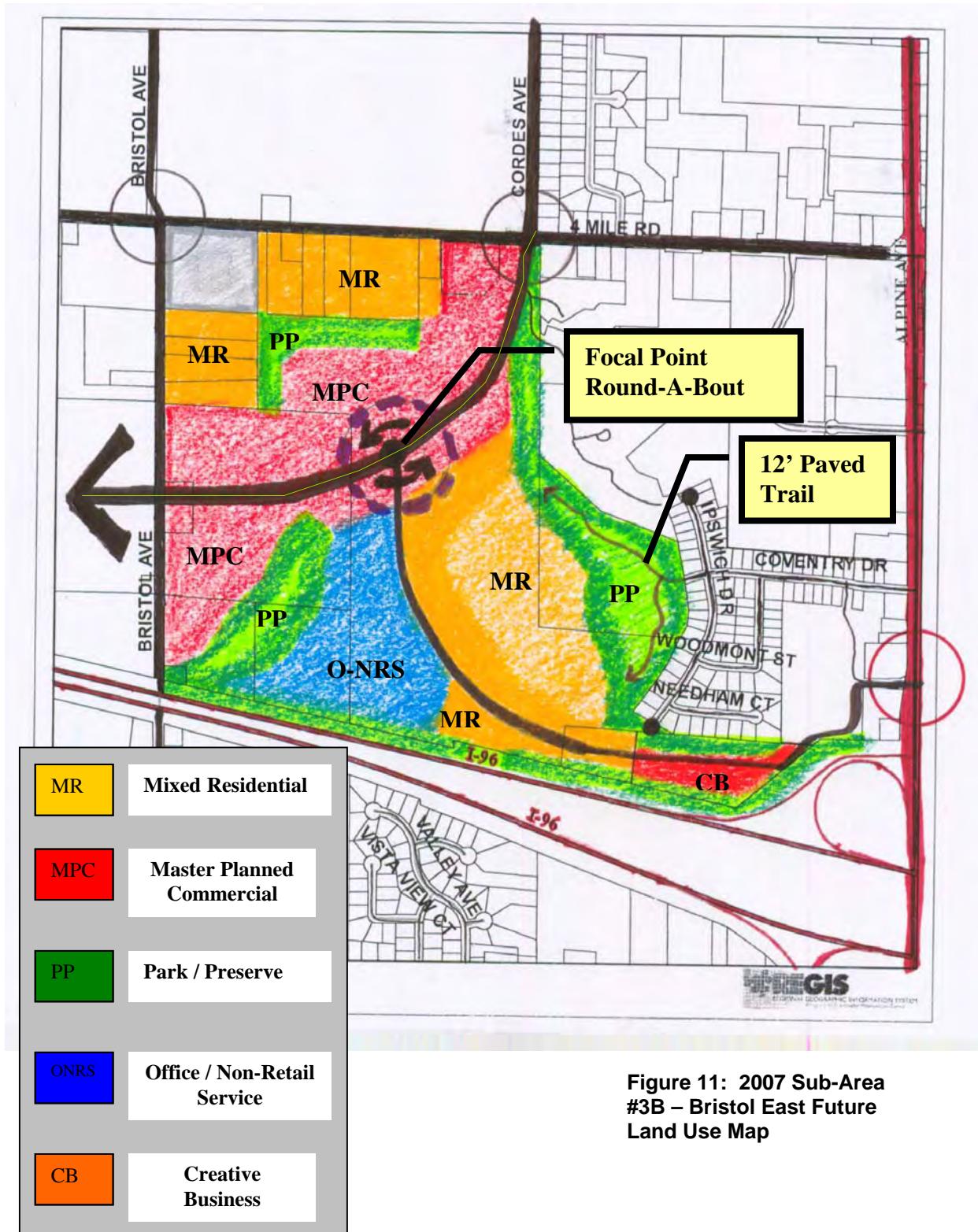
Staff then asked Doug Haisma if he would be willing to provide written comment regarding 20-year future plans for the several lots owned by his family along Bristol Avenue and 4 Mile Road. Mr. Haisma agreed to do so. Staff followed up with a letter to Mr. Haisma on 1-19-07, reminding him to discuss the 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.

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.



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



- ❖ 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.
 - 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.

Implementation Recommendations – Next Page



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.