

Hello Planning Commissioners and Master Plan Steering Committee Members.

This document will present material we will discuss on December 7th at 6 PM at City Hall.

Item 1: The Public Process for the Remembrance Wilson Gateways Sub Area

Our last master plan update process, from 2005 – 2007, utilized differing types of public involvement strategies.

We used a traditional “visioning process” for the large area of vacant land between Walker Avenue and Alpine Avenue, 4 Mile Road and I-96. We invited the general public to a series of meetings and asked them to create the future land use plan for the former “Orchard Park / Cabela’s” site and the English Hills Golf Course. Staff and our consultant honed the public’s ideas into a future land use plan. The final plan was rolled out to the public and was eventually adopted by the city.

For the South Alpine Avenue area, staff and consultants (some working pro bono) created the future land use “vision” and presented it to the public as a “do you like this” type of item. Since South Alpine Avenue was already a built environment (and somewhat abandoned at the time) this method seemed more appropriate.

We used a complex master planning process for “Downtown Standale.” We started with a DDA-funded private market analysis. Then we held focus groups to gather land use insights. Next we held public meetings to talk through the “downtown redevelopment” process, including a visual preference survey. Finally, we held public meetings to test the acceptance of what eventually became the “Downtown Standale Master Plan.” This process used up most of our private consultant money, given the deliberate and detailed steps and master planning methods.

DECISION: *What method or hybrid of methods should we use for the Remembrance Wilson Gateways Sub Area Master Plan?*

From a staff standpoint, I recommend an initial public meeting to discuss the future land use planning process. This would be less of a pure “visioning” exercise and more a gathering of feedback. We could use the SWOT- method to help attendees focus and articulate their thoughts and concerns.

The information gathered from the meeting would be processed and a draft future land use plan would be generated, along with a list of implementation strategies. The entire package would then be rolled out to the public at a second meeting.

Item 2: Functional Parts of the Master Plan for the Remembrance Wilson Gateways Sub Area

Once we decide on the public outreach method, we can start to crystallize the main issues to cover in the sub area planning process.

We can generally divide these issues into topic headings, such as Land Use, Economic Development, Transportation Planning, etc. We could present these initial findings to the public during the first master plan meeting.

Please start your lists of issues according to the general topic headings. Here are some that staff members have noted, starting at 3 Mile Road and heading south to Leonard Street for each:

Transportation issues, including “Complete Streets” components

- The Fruit Ridge Avenue overpass at I-96 needs replacement.
 - A sidewalk / bike lane should be part of the project, given the trail connector to the north.
 - MDOT & city issue.
- The intersection geometry at 3 Mile Road and Remembrance Road / Ironwood should be updated.
 - A traffic study (details to be determined) will likely be needed.
 - MDOT, city and inter-county issue.
- **Key Issue for the Sub Area:** The intersection at Wilson Avenue and Remembrance Road requires a thorough traffic study to determine upgrade / reconstruction options and a preferred solution.
 - Is this a good location for a modern roundabout? Pros / cons?
 - MDOT and city issue.
- The M-11 Access Management Plan (2006) should be formally adopted as part of the 2012 Walker Master Plan.
 - See Walker website / Master Plan Information page for this study.
- The 2012 Master Plan should detail the new trail and sidewalk networks, plus the Route 7 public bus route.
- Traffic count trends should be part of the new Master Plan.
- Is the intersection of Leonard Street and Remembrance Road a good site for a modern roundabout?
 - Is the current intersection geometry working in a safe manner?
 - Is the intersection safe for pedestrians and bike riders?

Land Use Issues, including current zoning and the 1998 Future Land Use Plan

- **The intersection of Wilson Avenue and Remembrance Road.**
 - Should the “NW Corner” lots all be changed to future “Industrial PUD”?
 - Should the large, vacant and commercially-zoned lots west of Wilson Avenue and north of Richmond Street remain master planned for “LDR – Low Density Residential” uses?
 - What other future land use ideas are reasonable?
 - Should the current “commercial” zoning of these lots be changed? Why or why not?
 - The “NE Corner” lots, including city-owned property, should not be zoned commercial.
- Is there too much “commercial” zoning and future land use planned around the intersections of Kinney/Remembrance Road and Richmond/Remembrance Road?
 - Is C-3 Highway Commercial appropriate for this area?
- **The impact of the vacant “D&W” store.**
 - Determine the built square footage versus the vacant square footage in this area.
 - Should the small and underutilized lots southeast of Mullins be allowed to redevelop in a more “urban” manner (i.e., mixed use, taller buildings, small setbacks, brick construction)?
 - Use Walker Roadhouse building as an example.
- **The MPUD area at the NE corner of Wilson and Leonard.**
 - How much commercial, if any, and what type, should be allowed on the area zoned “MPUD?”
 - What types of commercial uses should be restricted here?
 - How does commercial development here impact the Remembrance Road corridor and Downtown Standale?
 - Does the land zoned MPUD have significant / sensitive natural features that should be preserved?
 - How does the MPUD zoning fit with the M-11 Access Management Plan?
 - Should a tree-lined Wilson Avenue be preserved as part of the MPUD zoning?
 - Note: The MPUD site plan is expired but the zoning remains in place.
 - Based on the way the MPUD code is written, is there a more appropriate zoning and future land use designation for these parcels?
- Is there too much “commercial” zoning east of Wilson and south of Leonard? Should this zoning be changed? If so, to what classification?
- **The future zoning/land use adjacent to M-11: The “2030 West Beltline” or carefully located and limited commercial zoning / FLUP? Lessons from Alpine Avenue, Plainfield Avenue and the East Beltline along “M” roads? (Re)Investment in Standale and Rem. Road?**

Economic Development Issues: The “transportation” and “land use” components cover many / most of the economic development issues facing this sub area. However, the master plan might discuss the following implementation strategies:

- ❖ A private sector market analysis for the sub area, to be funded in partnership with the Walker Chamber of Commerce.
- ❖ The creation of a Remembrance Wilson Gateways Business Association.
- ❖ The creation of a neighborhood business district name / brand for the area around the vacant “D&W” site.

This should be enough information to frame our meeting on Wednesday night and to make good use of your time.

I look forward to seeing you there.



Frank Wash, AICP, PCP
City of Walker Planning Director

D&W Commercial Area Vacancy Analysis – REGIS and City Assessor as data sources – 12-8-11

Geographical Scope of Study



Site	Bldg. Area	Occupancy Status	Vacant Area	
Dollar General	9,170 sq. ft.	Full	0	
"Movie Gallery" Strip Mall	15,906 sq. ft.	75% vacant	11,930 sq. ft.	
Sobie's Meats	8,080 sq. ft.	Full	0	
Alfano's Pizza Mall	4,768 sq. ft.	50% vacant	2,384 sq. ft.	
Marathon Station	2,414 sq. ft.	Full	0	
Car Wash	3,067 sq. ft.	Full	0	
DeBartolo Realty	2,249 sq. ft.	Full	0	
"Pops" Strip Mall	12,160 sq. ft.	25% vacant	3,040 sq. ft.	
D&W	54,995 sq. ft.	Empty	54,995 sq. ft.	Vacancy Ratio
TOTALS	112,809 sq. ft.		72,349 sq. ft.	56%