



MASTER PLAN | CITY OF WALKER, MI

**Book 2d:**

# **Northwest Neighborhood Cluster**

# Acknowledgments

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

## **City of Walker Commission**

Gary Carey Jr., Mayor

Steven Gilbert, Mayor Pro Tem

Dan Kent

Roxanne Deschaine

Carol Glanville

Elaina Huizenga

Melanie Grooters

## **City of Walker Planning Commission**

Terry Schweitzer, Chair

Tyler Korfhage, Vice Chair

Jason Nyhuis, Secretary

Patrick Laurie

Mark Davey

Tom Byle

Joseph Taylor

Scott Funke

Steven Gilbert, Commissioner

## **City Staff**

Darrel Schmalzel, City Manager

Frank Wash, Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director

Scott Connors, City Engineer

Dan Power, Planning Director/Zoning Administrator

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- Book 2a: Alpine Avenue Neighborhood Cluster**
- Book 2b: South Walker Neighborhood Cluster**
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# 1.

## Introduction

# Northwest Neighborhood Cluster

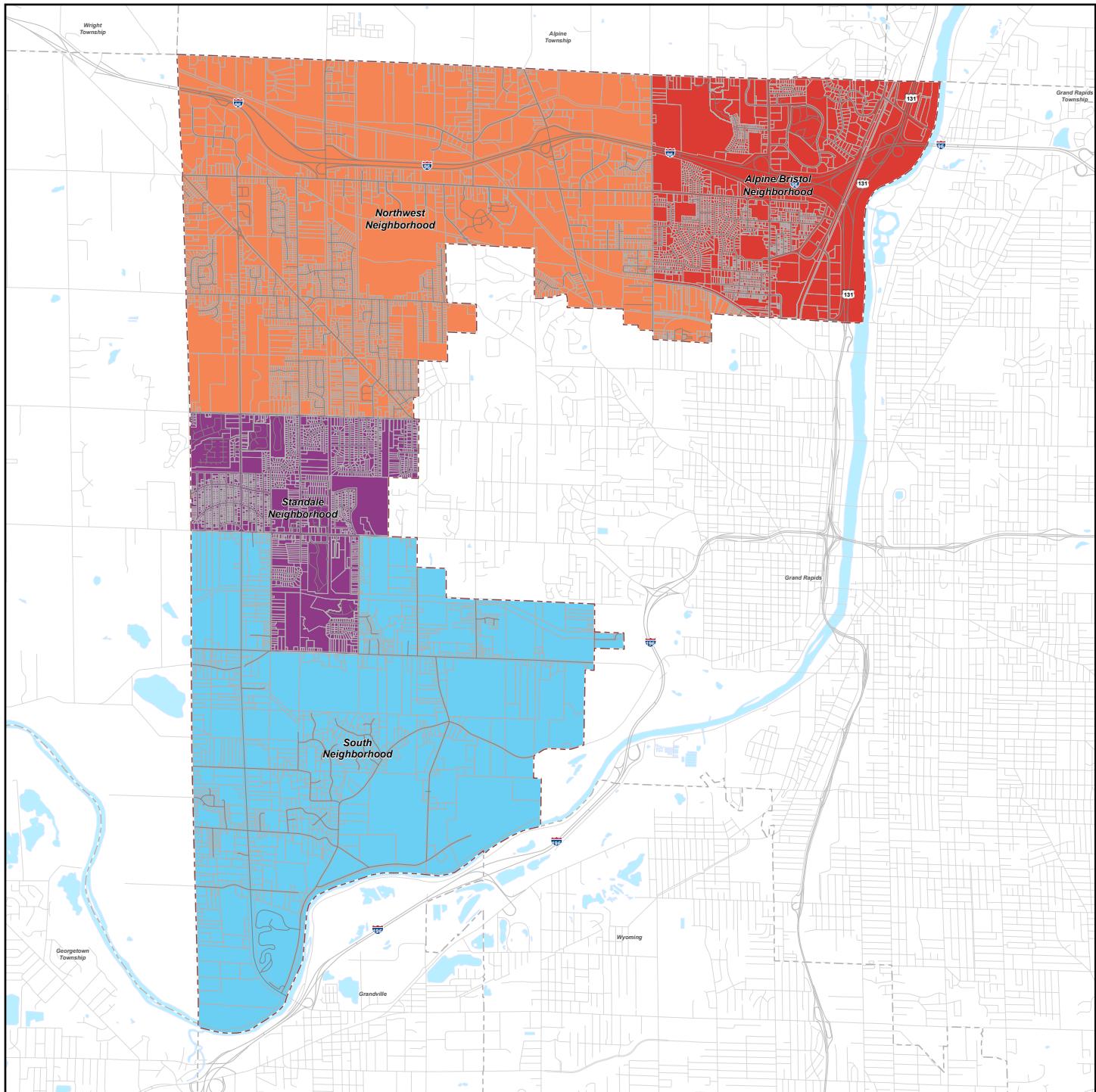
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The Northwest part of Walker is an economic driver for the entire Grand Rapids region. It is home to the Meijer and Bissell headquarters, as well as numerous other large employers. But it also contains quiet neighborhoods, the Walker's Civic Center, and some of the City's last remaining farmland.

In summary, the recommendations include:

- The preservation and protection of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Enhancing the Remembrance Road corridor, including mixed-use nodes at Leonard, Kinney-Richmond, and Wilson.
- Developing new neighborhoods that connect seamlessly, both in road network and character, into the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Promoting infill development in appropriate places, as designated by this plan, while discouraging it in places where it would harm neighborhood character.
- Improved connectivity, in the form of new road and trail connections, new transit routes, and new road designs that improve efficiency for all modes of travel.

The Northwest Neighborhood Cluster is shown in orange on the map on the following page.



# Neighborhood Clusters

City of Walker, Michigan

November 1, 2019



**SOURCES**  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2019.

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# 2.

## Existing Conditions

# Existing Conditions: Population

## Demographic Profile

Demographic analysis, or the study of the characteristics of the population, is a fundamental element of master planning. Future growth and development require consideration of how many people will need City services, how much housing is affordable, how many new houses will be built, and other vital signs. One must understand these existing conditions and past trends in order to appropriately anticipate and plan for the future needs of the community.

The comprehensive data source for the Northwest Neighborhood of the City of Walker is the U.S. Census in 2010, ESRI 2019 Forecasts (Utilizing Census data), as well as the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This analysis compares the Northwest Neighborhood to the City of Walker as a whole, in addition to comparisons to Kent County and the State of Michigan where appropriate. Differences in demographics may indicate issues or areas in which land use planning and public policies are warranted; may identify strengths or assets that can be further developed; or may identify weaknesses or issues that need to be addressed.

### Population Trends

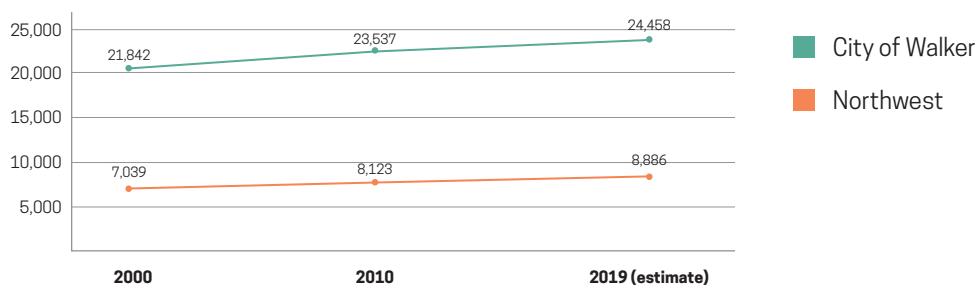
Changes in the number of people in an area serves as an important indicator of community health; examining these trends is an integral tool in community planning. Table 2d.1 shows the relative populations of the Northwest Neighborhood in comparison with the City of Walker as a whole, as well as Kent County and the State of Michigan.

**Table 2d.1: Population Change, 2000-2019, Northwest Neighborhood**

	2000	2010	2019 (estimate)	% Change 2000-2019	Average % Growth/Year
Northwest	7,039	8,123	8,886	26.24%	1.30%
City of Walker	21,842	23,537	24,458	11.98%	0.748%
Kent County	574,335	602,622	629,352	9.58%	0.635%
State of Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	9,909,600	-0.29%	-0.000007%

Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010); 2019 ESRI Forecasts

**Figure 2d.1: Population Change, 2000-2019, Northwest Neighborhood**



The Northwest Neighborhood has experienced a large gain in population over the last 19 years, with a yearly growth rate of about 1.30%, about 0.552% more of a growth rate than the City of Walker, which has experienced a yearly growth of about 0.748%. As populations increase in this neighborhood, the City of Walker must plan to be a place that can retain growth while maintaining and improving the quality of life for existing residents in the Northwest Neighborhood.

## Age Distribution Trends

The age of a community's population has implications for planning and development, whether it is a need for housing alternatives, an increased or decreased need for schools, or services for empty nesters and older residents.

**Figure 2d.2: Median Age, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood**

The figure below compares the median age (the mid-point where half the population is younger and half is older) of the Northwest Neighborhood and the comparison communities.

39.7	34.6	34.4	38.9
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>City of Walker</b>	<b>Kent County</b>	<b>State of Michigan</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

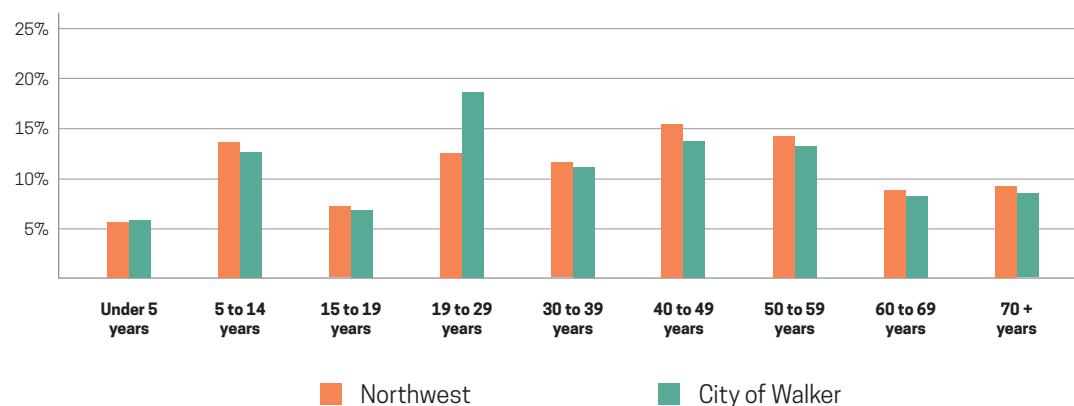
Age structure (analyzing which proportions of a municipality's populations are in which stages of life) gives a nuanced view of the makeup of a community. The age range percentages in the Northwest Neighborhood is fairly distributed, in which one age range does not significantly dominate over another. However, majority of the population is between the ages 40-59 years old. This is not similar to the City of Walker as a whole, in that the largest age bracket is 20-29 years old. Additionally, the median age of the Northwest Neighborhood tends to be slightly higher than that of the City of Walker. Table 2d.2 illustrates age structure in comparison with the surrounding City of Walker.

**Table 2d.2: Age Structure, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood**

	Northwest Neighborhood		City of Walker	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Under 5 years	459	5.65%	1,396	5.93%
5 to 14 years	1,131	13.92%	2,994	12.72%
15 to 19 years	624	7.68%	1,625	6.90%
19 to 29 years	1,048	12.90%	4,379	18.60%
30 to 39 years	997	12.27%	2,794	11.87%
40 to 49 years	1,255	15.45%	3,255	13.83%
50 to 59 years	1,161	14.29%	3,139	13.34%
60 to 69 years	717	8.83%	1,936	8.23%
70 years and Over	731	9.01%	2,019	8.58%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8,123</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23,537</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 2d.3:  
Age Structure,  
2010, Northwest  
Neighborhood**



## Racial Distribution

Table 2d.3 illustrates these racial distributions for the area in comparison with the City of Walker, as well as Kent County and the State of Michigan. As the table outlines, whites make up the highest percentage in all of the sample comparison communities.

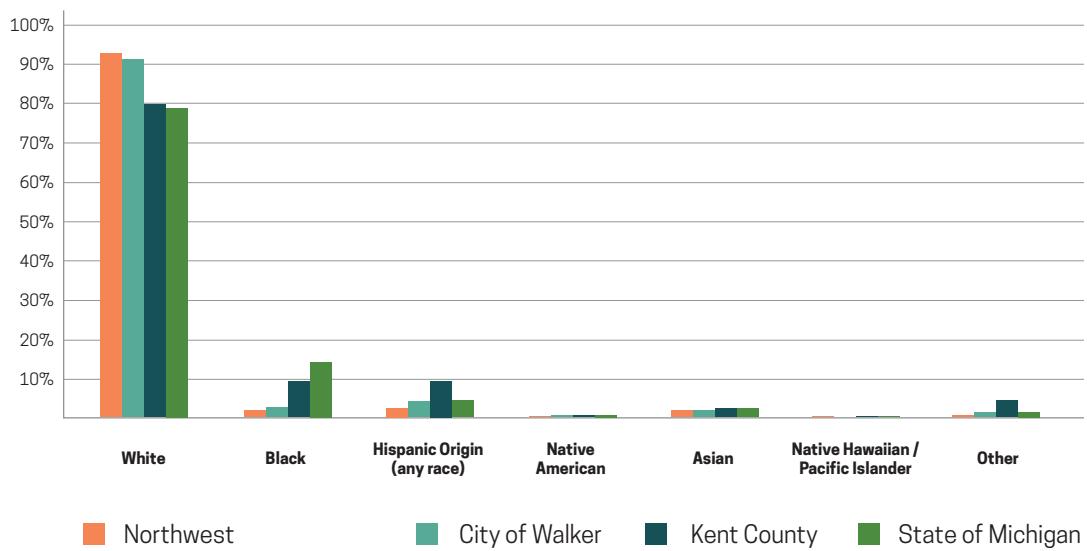
**Table 2d.3: Racial Distribution, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood**

	White	Black	Hispanic Origin (any race)	Native American	Asian	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Other
Northwest	91.7%	1.8%	3.1%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.14%
City of Walker	91.3%	2.8%	4.1%	0.5%	1.9%	0.0%	1.4%
Kent County	79.9%	9.7%	9.7%	0.5%	2.3%	0.04%	4.5%
State of Michigan	78.9%	14.2%	4.4%	0.6%	2.4%	0.026%	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI Converted Census 2010 Data.

Portions of the population may be left out of these counts due to identifying as two or more races. This information is provided for reference purposes and will not influence land use decisions.

**Figure 2d.4:**  
**Racial Distribution, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood**



## Housing Profile

The quality, affordability, and availability of a community's housing stock has a significant impact on the vitality and quality of the community as a whole. The following analysis of trends relating to the number of housing units, the amount of owner-occupied, rental, and vacant units, and households by type helps evaluate the health of the Northwest Neighborhood's housing stock.

### Housing Units

As of the 2010 Census, the Northwest Neighborhood had 3,446 total housing units, which makes up about 33.03% of the total housing units in the City of Walker. Each housing unit represents one dwelling unit- a house, apartment, condominium, etc.

The Northwest Neighborhood has seen a significant increase in the number of housing units in the last 19 years at 30.29%. The rate of growth in housing units between 2010 and 2019 in the Northwest Neighborhood is about 18.55% higher than the City of Walker and 19.12% higher than Kent County. During the sample years, the Northwest Neighborhood has experienced the highest growth in housing units compared to the surrounding communities.

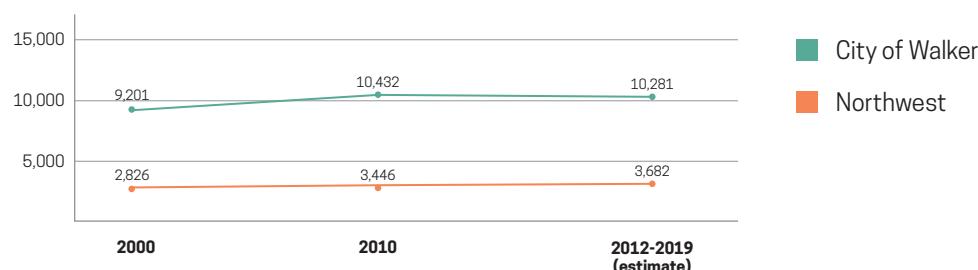
Table 2d.4: Change in Number of Housing Units, 2000 - 2019, Northwest Neighborhood

	2000	2010	2012-2019 Estimates	Change in Number of Housing Units (2000 - 2019)	Change in Percent of Housing Units (2000 - 2019)
Northwest	2,826	3,446	3,682	856	30.29%
City of Walker	9,201	10,432	10,281	1,080	11.74%
Kent County	224,000	246,901	249,029	25,029	11.17%
State of Michigan	4,234,279	4,532,233	4,544,920	310,641	7.34%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 Census

\*2019 ESRI Estimates

**Figure 2d.5:**  
Change in Number  
of Housing Units,  
2000-2019,  
Northwest  
Neighborhood



## Housing Tenure

Housing tenure describes how housing is occupied – by the owner, by a renter, or whether it is vacant. The table below shows that owner occupied housing in the Northwest Neighborhood is significantly more common than renter occupied housing, by about 48.48%. Additionally, there is a very small percentage of vacant housing in the Northwest Neighborhood at 2.28%. Compared with the surrounding communities, the Northwest Neighborhood has the highest owner occupied housing, but least number of units.

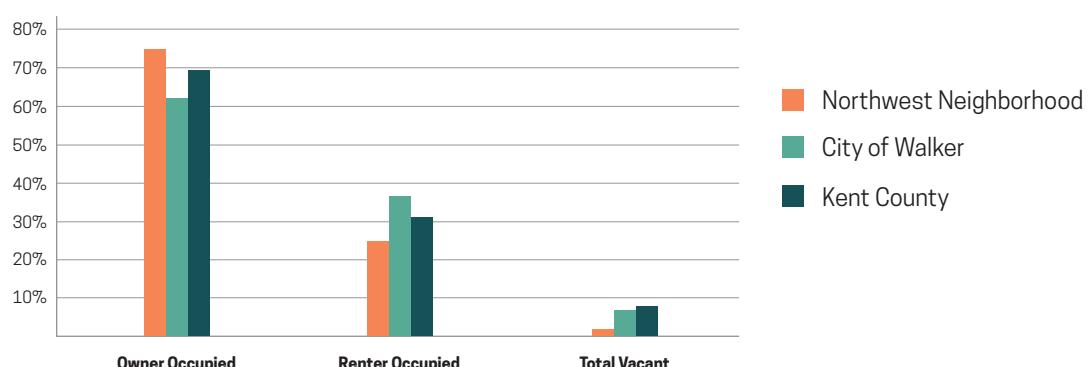
Table 2d.5: Housing Tenure, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood

	Total Occupied Dwellings	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Total Vacant		Total Units
		Units	Percentage*	Units	Percentage*	Units	Percentage	
Northwest Neighborhood	8,066	5,988	74.24%	2,078	25.76%	184	2.28%	8,250
City of Walker	9,684	6,081	62.79%	3,603	37.21%	748	7.17%	10,432
Kent County	227,239	158,301	69.7%	69,938	30.3%	19,662	8.0%	246,901

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

\*Numbers appear as a percentage of the Occupied Dwellings

**Figure 2d.6:**  
Housing Tenure,  
2010, Northwest  
Neighborhood



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## Households

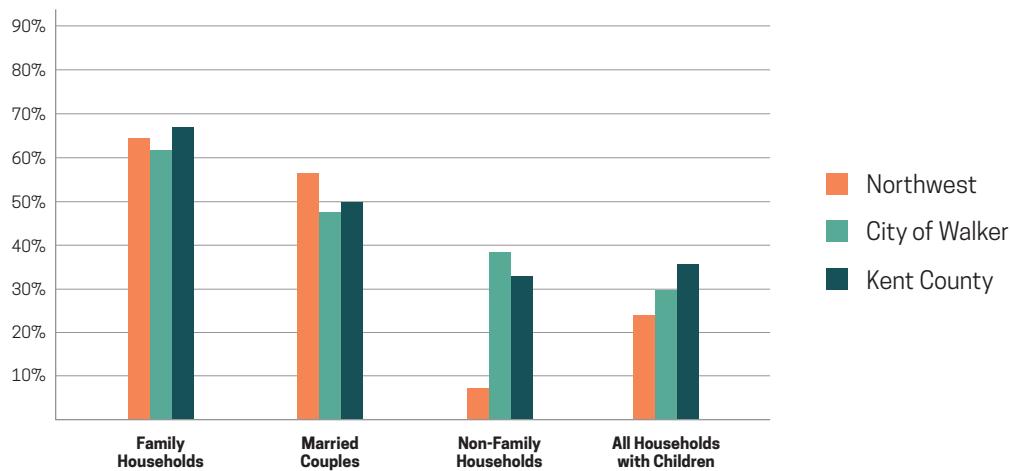
Table 2d.6 below breaks down the types of households in the Northwest Neighborhood area, as well as the City of Walker and Kent County. The Northwest Neighborhood has a slightly smaller average household size than the City of Walker as whole, as well as a smaller percentage of non-family households. The Northwest Neighborhood also has a significantly smaller number of households compared to the larger sample communities, the City of Walker and Kent County.

**Table 2d.6: Households by Type, 2010, Northwest Neighborhood**

	Total	Family Households	Married Couples	Non-Family Households	All Households with Children	Average Household Size
Northwest	3,262	64.0%	57.9%	5.6%	23.3%	2.32
City of Walker	9,684	61.2%	47.8%	38.3%	29.9%	2.40
Kent County	227,239	67.0%	50.0%	33.0%	35.5%	2.60

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 2d.7:**  
**Households by Type,**  
**2010, Northwest**  
**Neighborhood**



# Existing Conditions: Economy

## Economic Profile

This section describes the employment distribution, income, educational attainment, and other economic information of the population of this Subarea. It compares the Northwest Neighborhood with the City of Walker as a whole, Kent County, and the State of Michigan to allow comparisons to be made by readers. It also includes a Tapestry Segmentation profile, which summarizes the segments, based on demographics and socioeconomic factors, that can be found in the Neighborhood.

### Occupation Summary

This section addresses the employment of residents of the Northwest Neighborhood in comparison to the City of Walker as a whole. This is not an analysis of what kinds of jobs are available or what businesses are located within the community, but rather in what occupations residents are employed, regardless of where they work. Major occupational sectors for residents of the area include services, retail trade, and manufacturing.

**Table 2d.7: Occupational Sectors, 2018, Northwest Neighborhood**

Industry	Northwest*	City of Walker
<b>Total Employed Persons Over 16 Years of Age</b>	<b>3,675</b>	<b>13,211</b>
Agriculture/Mining	0.0%	0.5%
Construction	2.7%	4.0%
Manufacturing	21.3%	15.3%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%	2.7%
Retail Trade	14.3%	12.9%
Transportation/Utilities	2.7%	3.8%
Information	3.4%	2.1%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	5.1%	7.2%
Services	52.3%	49.2%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.6%	11.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	24.0%	22.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.4%	11.1%
Other services, except public administration	4.5%	4.5%
Public Administration	1.3%	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
\*ESRI forecasts for 2018 utilizing converted U.S. Census 2000 data into 2010 geography

### Top 5 Occupational Sectors

#### Northwest

1. Educational services, and health care and social assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Retail Trade
4. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services
5. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services

#### City of Walker

1. Educational services, health care, and social assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Retail Trade
4. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services
5. Arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation, and food services

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Book 2d: Northwest Neighborhood Cluster

## Income and Poverty

The median household income for the Northwest Neighborhood Subarea is \$67,461, according to the 2019 ESRI Forecasts. This means that half of all workers earned more than this amount and half earned less. The median income for the City of Walker is \$55,781 and \$57,302 for Kent County, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This places the Northwest Neighborhood at an income bracket that is fairly comparable with the surrounding communities.

According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, about 6.4% of the households in the Northwest Neighborhood earned an income in the last 12 months that places them below the poverty level.

## Educational Attainment

This section is analyzes the educational attainment in the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster and the comparison communities for persons age 25 and older. Generally, the Northwest Neighborhood has similar levels of educational attainment compared to the City of Walker as a whole, with slightly higher levels of residents with a Bachelor's degree.

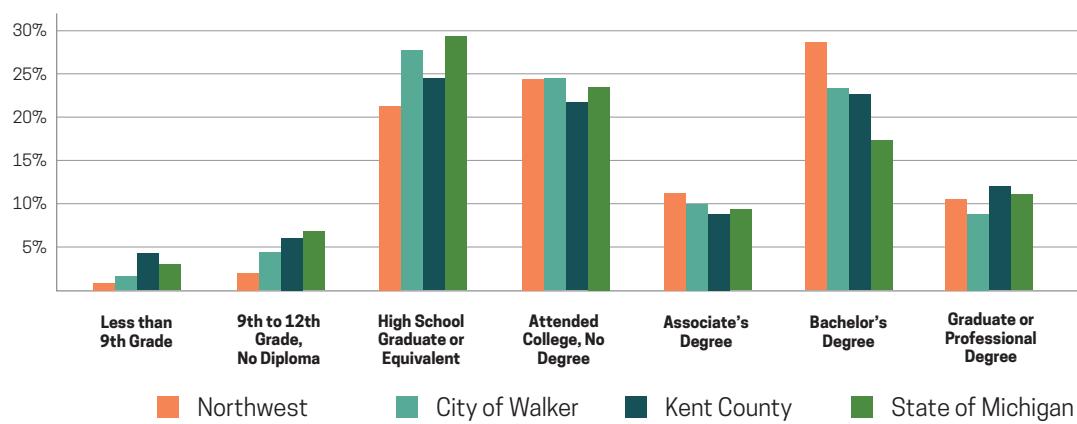
Table 2d.8: Educational Attainment, Northwest Neighborhood

Education Level	Northwest Neighborhood* (2019)	City of Walker (2017)	Kent County (2017)	State of Michigan (2017)
Less than 9th grade	1.0%	1.6%	4.2%	3.0%
9th to 12th grade, No Diploma	2.2%	4.4%	6.0%	6.7%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	21.5%	27.7%	24.5%	29.3%
Attended College, No Degree	24.5%	24.4%	21.7%	23.6%
Associate's Degree	12.2%	10.0%	8.9%	9.3%
Bachelor's Degree	27.8%	23.3%	22.7%	17.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.7%	8.7%	12.0%	11.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010), ESRI Forecasts for 2019

Figure 2d.8:  
Educational Attainment,  
2010, Northwest  
Neighborhood



## Commuting

An indication of this area's economic position relative to the surrounding City and region can be illustrated in travel time to work for residents. The following table further outlines the time residents, age 16 and older, spend traveling to their place of employment, as well as which places of work can be reached in that radius. Table 8.9 illustrates that the majority of the residents in the Northwest Neighborhood work within the Walker, Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Grandville area, with over 55% of commuting only 10 to 25 minutes to their place of employment.

**Table 2d.9: Commuting Destinations, 2016, Northwest Neighborhood**

Travel Time to Work	Places of Work Within this Commute Radius	% of Population
Under 10 minutes	Walker/Grand Rapids	12.8%
10 to 25 minutes	Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Grandville	56.6%
25 to 40 minutes	Grand Rapids/Holland/Dorr/Rockford	27.7%
40 to 60 minutes	Muskegon/South Haven/Big Rapids/Portland	1.3%
Over 60 minutes	Lansing/Chase/Ludington/Benton Harbor	1.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## Tapestry Segmentation Profile

Tapestry segmentation profiles provide an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods, classifying them into unique segments based not only on demographics, but also socioeconomic characteristics. For the Northwest Neighborhood, there are three major segments which can provide information about the neighborhoods and its residents.

### Midlife Constants, 22.2%

The Midlife Constants are seniors who are either at, or approaching retirement. Therefore, Midlife Constants are usually older individuals, with a median age of 47 years old and an average household size of 2.31 people. Midlife Constants are below average labor force participation and above average net worth with a median household income of \$53,200. Many Midlife Constants are located predominately in metropolitan areas, but tend to live outside central cities in smaller communities.

### Middleburg, 20.5%

The Middleburg group tend to be a conservative family-oriented consumer, but relatively young with a median age of 36.1 years old. The median household income for this group is \$59,800 and an average household size of 2.75 people. Additionally, majority of individuals in this group own their home, at over 73% ownership and only about 26.6% rent their homes. However, the Middleburg age group tends to invest into their futures, but are willing to carry limited debt.

### Soccer Moms, 18.1%

Soccer moms are characterized as an affluent family-oriented market. This group is partial to new housing, but tend to live in close proximity to professional job centers. The average household size for this group is 2.97 people, and a median age of 37 years old. This group has a low unemployment rate, and high rate of college graduates, at over 40%. The Soccer Moms group also tends to carry more debt such as a mortgage, multiple car loans, and student loans. Similar to the Middleburg group, the Soccer Mom group has a higher percentage of homeownership, at almost 85%, and homes tend to be more expensive than the Middleburg group with a median home value at \$257,400.

Source: ESRI Tapestry Segmentation Profiles, ESRI and Infogroup.

# Existing Land Use

## Overview

Knowledge of current land uses allows the City to consider the compatibility of new land uses and is a valuable tool when considering the day-to-day problems associated with land management and the delivery of key public services. The existing land use survey provides an inventory of land use within the community and is a key source of background information used in developing the Master Plan.



### Single Family Residential

The Northwest Neighborhood contains a high concentration of single-family residential, which consists of single-family detached homes at typical suburban densities. Single family residential neighborhoods in the Northwest Neighborhood are typically contained in neighborhoods and residential streets located along Remembrance Road, between 3 Mile Road and Leonard Street.



### Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential sites are those that contain attached housing units, with two or more units per structure, such as duplexes, townhouses, and apartment buildings. Multi-family housing in the Northwest Neighborhood is limited. These few multi-family residential developments include the two-family units located on Kinnrow Avenue, Walker Village Apartments located on Leonard Street, Pineridge Apartments located south of 3 Mile Road, and Royal Vista Apartments and Townhomes. Although these multi-family developments are not concentrated in a single location of the Neighborhood, majority of these developments are located between 3 Mile Road and Richmond Street.



### Commercial

Commercial sites are those that contain real estate intended for use by for-profit businesses, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and malls. Commercial districts in the Northwest Neighborhood are few, but are located in small pockets along Remembrance Road. Some of the uses include restaurants, ice cream parlors, child care centers, fitness centers, and small retail shops such as dollar stores.



## Public/Semi-Public

Public/Semi-Public sites include any site for facilities such as governmental offices, hospitals, and churches, and utility sites that serve the public. Public/Semi-Public uses in the Northwest Neighborhood area include City Hall, the Walker District Branch of the Kent District Library, Walker District Court and various churches. Schools are also included in this category.



## Open Space

Open Spaces are areas that are left open as woodland, prairie, grass etc. Open spaces are those that are currently undeveloped, and often exist between single-family housing in this area. Most of the undeveloped open space in the Northwest Neighborhood exists just east of Remembrance Road, along Milo Street and along Richmond Street, just north of the Blandford Nature Center.



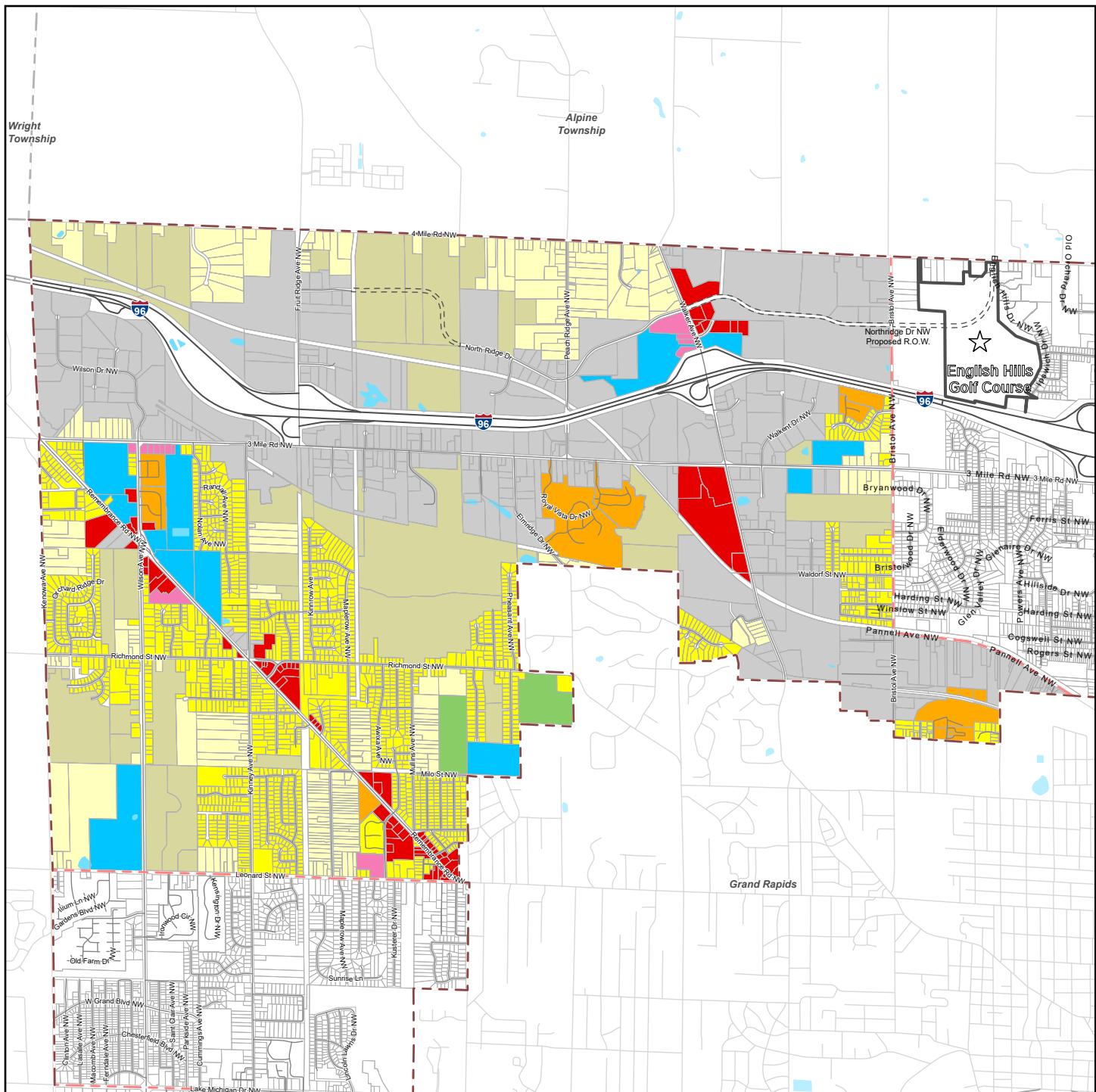
## Industrial

The Northwest Neighborhood includes the vast majority of the City's industrial uses, which are primarily located within close proximity to highway I-96, 3 Mile Road, and Northridge Drive.



## Agricultural

The Northwest Neighborhood in the City of Walker also includes agricultural land. Agricultural land uses typically include farming, dairying, forestry operations, and other rural activities. Specifically, in the Northwest Neighborhood, the agricultural uses include small local farms with on-site residential dwellings. The Agricultural land uses in the Northwest Neighborhood are located on the northern border of the City along 4 Mile Road.



# Existing Land Use

## Northwest Neighborhood City of Walker, Michigan

November 1, 2019



MCKENNA

## Legend

The legend is organized into two columns. The left column lists land use categories with corresponding colored squares: Agriculture and Open Space (olive green), Rural Residential (pale yellow), Single-Family Residential (bright yellow), Multi-Family Residential (orange), Mobile Home Park (brown), Commercial (red), Office (pink), Industrial/Major Impact (light gray), and Extractive Mining (dark gray). The right column lists boundaries and infrastructure with corresponding line patterns: Parks and Recreation (light green), Public/Semi-Public (light blue), City of Walker Boundary (dark red), Neighborhood Boundaries (red), Other Municipal Boundaries (light gray), Roads (thin gray line), and City of Walker Parcels (white box with black border). A small blue square at the bottom right is labeled 'Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains'.

**SOURCES**  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019, McKenna 2019.

# Existing Conditions: Mobility

## Road Network

The road system is of vital importance to the overall well-being of the City of Walker and its residents. At its most basic level, the road system provides the means of transportation, of moving people and goods.

Due to the many functions of the road network, transportation has a significant impact on the environmental quality, economy, energy consumption, land development, and the general character of the City. Accordingly, it is important to identify and understand deficiencies in the road system and to prepare alternatives to address those deficiencies.

The road network in the Northwest Neighborhood in the City of Walker contains several major thoroughfares into neighboring communities such as the Interstate 96 (I-96), Remembrance Road, 4 Mile Road, 3 Mile Road, Wilson Avenue, and Leonard Street. Each of these routes provides significant connections to a variety of uses such as industrial parks, residential areas, and retail development.

A large part of the Northwest Neighborhood cluster is dedicated to industrial uses, mostly concentrated on the northern portion of the Neighborhood. As such, 3 Mile Road provides easy highway access, as well as access to nearby industrial parks, and to I-96. Additionally, the Neighborhood's accessibility to I-96 is significant to the operation of industrial businesses for the movement of goods and services as well as for the workforce to access their place of employment from adjacent municipalities.

Major primary roads such as Remembrance Road provides access to residential developments and institutional buildings such as schools, City Hall, and the District Library. The northern boundary at 4 Mile Road provides access to majority of the agricultural land in the Northwest Neighborhood cluster.

To access the larger retail and restaurant opportunities, residents are likely to utilize thoroughfares 4 Mile Road or I-96 to access adjacent Alpine-Bristol neighborhood cluster to the east, and Alpine Township to the north.

## Road Classifications

### Road Classifications

The intended purpose of each specific road or highway can be best communicated through classification. Road classifications also identify the type and volume of traffic that are appropriate for each segment of the road network.

For the purposes of transportation planning and this master plan, the following classifications have been assigned to the roads in the Northwest Neighborhood:

## Regional Street

Regional streets are those that carry traffic between the Northwest Neighborhood and other communities in the region. Regional streets serve the major centers of activity in an area and are often the highest traffic volume corridor. There are several regional streets within the Northwest Neighborhood cluster. These include: Walker Avenue, and Wilson Avenue, which are both prevalent truck routes that provide accessibility into Alpine Township, the City of Grand Rapids, and the City of Grandville. Remembrance Road also can be utilized to access State trunkline highway M-11, to access the City of Wyoming, the City of Grand Rapids, and Wright Township. Additionally, Remembrance Road is a major access point in the Northwest Neighborhood that reaches I-96, which opens up accessibility across the State of Michigan.

## Major City Street

Major City Streets are those that carry traffic throughout the Northwest Neighborhood and the City of Walker a whole, as well as to adjacent parts of the region. The Northwest Neighborhood's Major City Streets include Leonard Street, providing east-west access into both neighboring Ottawa County and the City of Grand Rapids, 3 Mile Road, and 4 Mile Road which provide east-west access across the City as well as into adjacent communities such as Wright Township, Marne, Comstock Park, and the City of Grand Rapids.

## City Collector

City Collector streets provide shorter distance movements in the Northwest Neighborhood, collecting traffic from local streets and higher volume Regional and Major City Streets. Examples of City Collector streets in the City of Walker Northwest Neighborhood include those such as Kinney Avenue, Richmond Street, and Fruitridge Avenue.

## Residential/Local Street

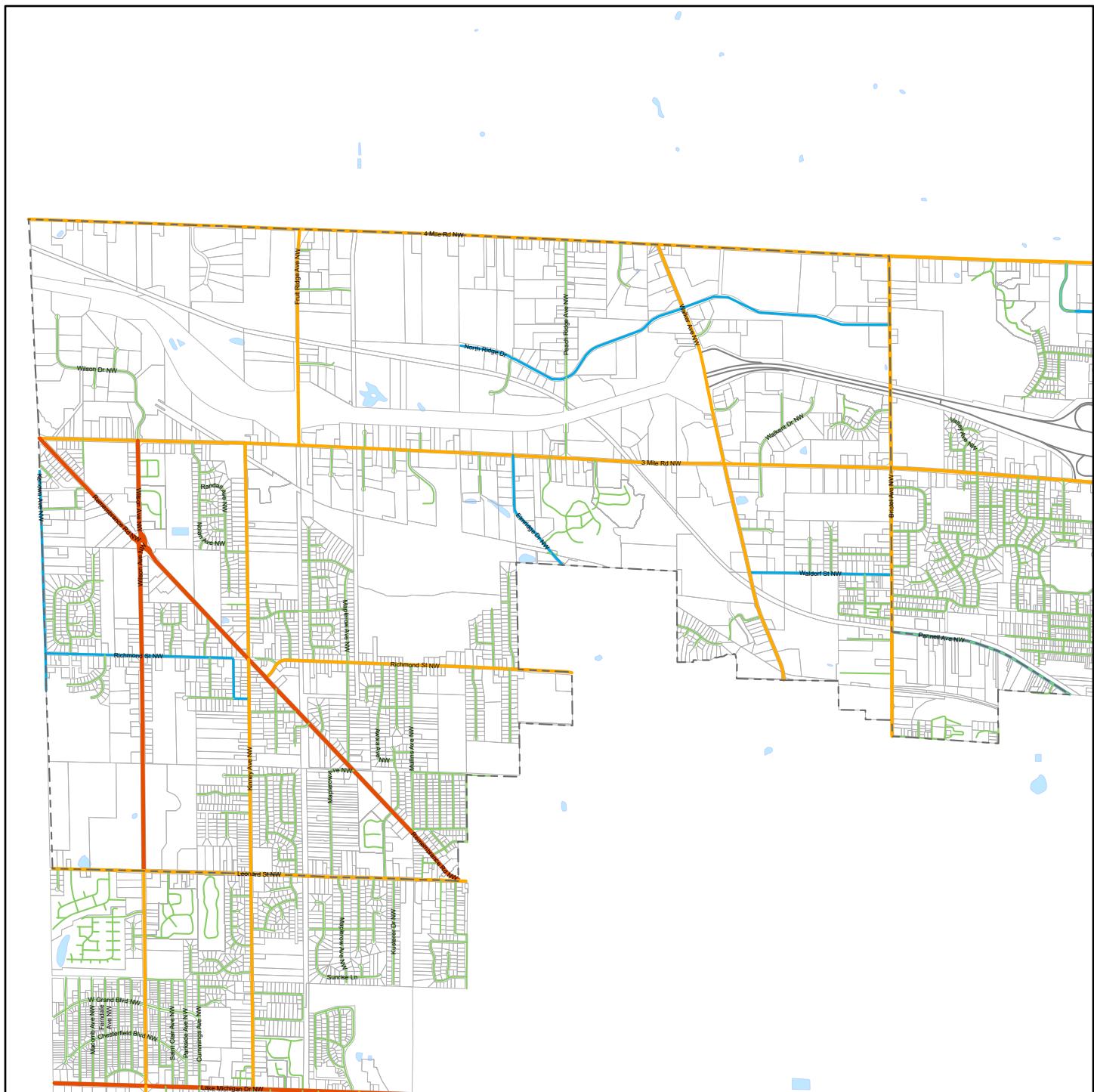
Local/residential streets are those that are lightly traveled and meant to provide residents access to residential areas. Movement of through traffic is generally discouraged on local streets. Examples of Local/Residential Streets in the Northwest Neighborhood cluster are generally found in single family residential neighborhoods, such as Maplerow Avenue, Mullins Avenue, and Northridge Drive.

# Access Management

The capacity of a highway or road can be quickly depleted and traffic safety compromised if development is allowed to occur without proper attention to access control. Access management can benefit properties on all types of roads within the community. With the growth the City of Walker and the greater Grand Rapids region has experienced thus far, and is projected to experience in the future, the presence of traffic on Remembrance Road, 3 Mile Road, Wilson Avenue, and Leonard Street will increase. Good access management design will reduce potential congestion on streets, vehicle-pedestrian conflict points, and on-site congestion.

# Transit Service

The Rapid, a public transit system operated by the Interurban Transit Partnership, provides service to the Grand Rapids metropolitan area and beyond. In the City of Walker Northwest Neighborhood, access to The Rapid is available at several transit stops largely located on the southern portion of the Neighborhood on Remembrance Road. Some of these stops include Walker Village, located at Leonard Street and Remembrance Road, Walker City Hall located on Remembrance Road, and other residential clusters located on Remembrance Road and Kinney Avenue and Remembrance Road and Wilson Avenue. These transit stops are all located on The Rapid Bus Route 7, which connects to Rapid Bus Routes 12 and 50. These Bus Routes intersect at the Standale Meijer located on Lake Michigan Drive.



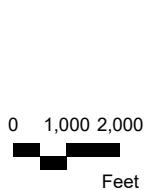
## Existing Road Network

Northwest Neighborhood Cluster  
City of Walker, Michigan

June 15, 2020

### Legend

- Regional Road
- Major City Street
- City Collector
- Residential/Local Street
- Freeways
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains
- Neighborhood Boundary



**SOURCES**  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2019.

# Non-Motorized Transportation

Non-motorized transportation is an important component of a City's transportation infrastructure. Unlike motorized transportation, modes that focus on efficient and safe movement of individuals and bicycle and pedestrian circulation play an important role in improving the community's connectivity, physical & mental health, and perception of safety.

## Pedestrian Networks

As a residential center combined with retail activity, pedestrian activity and safety are an important component of the Northwest Neighborhood. As it stands, the City of Walker as a whole is very car dependent, with almost all errands requiring a car. In the Northwest Neighborhood, many of the residential areas provide sidewalk facilities for pedestrian use, with the exception of small residential pockets located along Benning Avenue and Richmond Street, which do not have sidewalk access.

Additionally, the industrial parks located along the northern portion of the Northwest Neighborhood do not include a fluid connected pedestrian network to nearby residential areas. For example, the multi-family and single family residential developments located along the north side of Remembrance Road do not have safe pedestrian facilities connecting to the nearby industrial park.

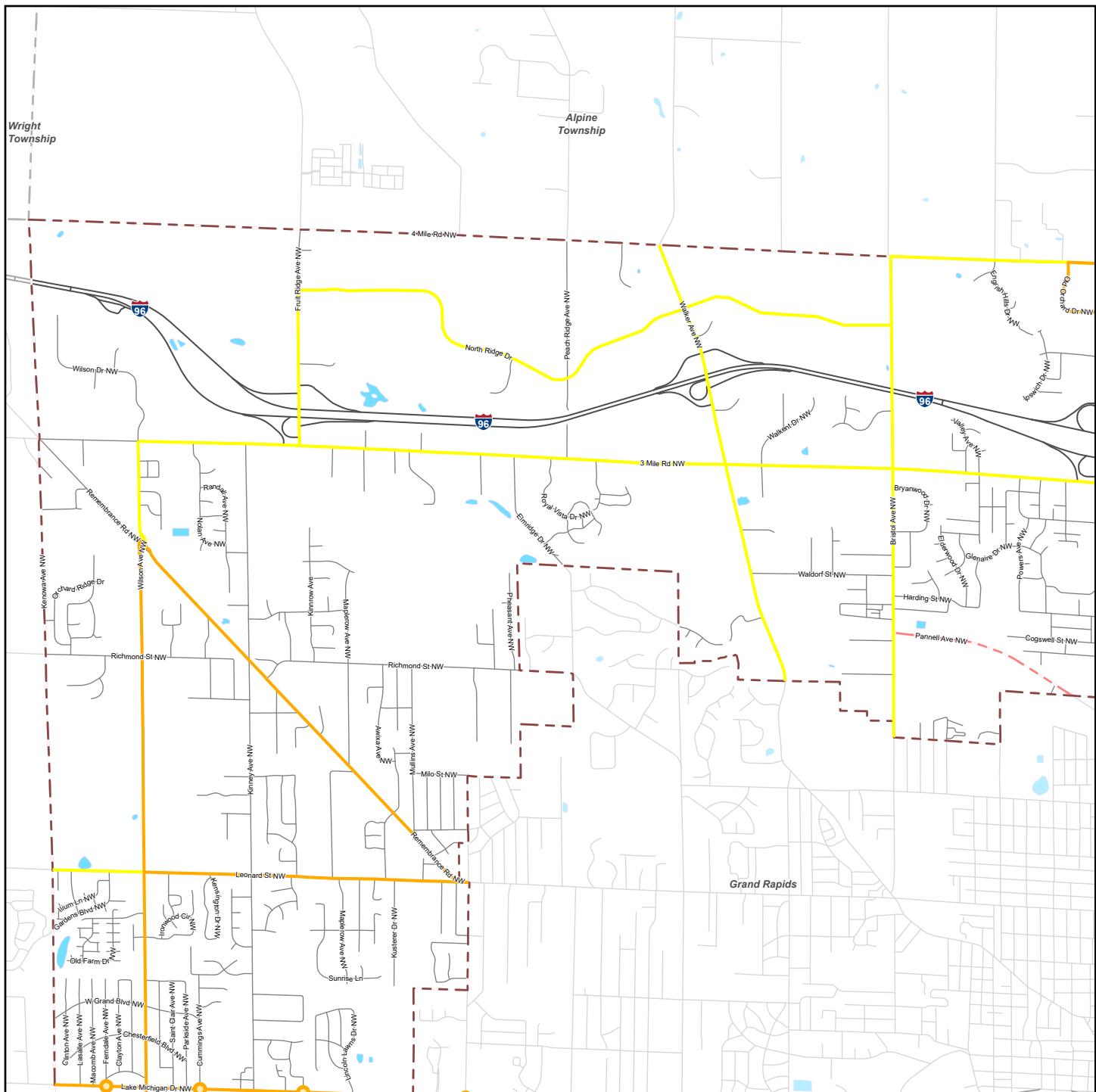
## Bicycling

Biking is an environmentally friendly and healthy travel mode, as well as a key component of a multi-modal transportation system. The Northwest Neighborhood includes two prominent bike trails that provide both north-south and east-west access across the City, as well as connect to additional regional trails in adjacent communities. The trails located in the Northwest Neighborhood include the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail and the Fred Meijer Standale Trail.

The Fred Meijer Standale Trail connects to many other trails in the region, such as the Millennium Trail network and Kent Trails that runs through Millennium and Johnson Park in Walker, as well as beyond in the greater Grand Rapids region. These systems are connected to one another and provide residents with safe recreational opportunities.

The Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail is planned to connect to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail and the Riverside Park Trail, both located in the City of Grand Rapids. Additionally, the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail provides connection to the Musketawa Trail, which then offers non-motorized accessibility to neighboring Ottawa County and Muskegon County.

However, among these regional trail opportunities in the City of Walker, there is not a connection between the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail and the Fred Meijer Standale Trail. A potential north-south connector route along Fruitridge and Kinney Avenue is being explored by the City to join the two regional trails within City limits. Additionally, the Blanford Nature Center, also located within the Northwest Neighborhood, is currently not accessible by bike facilities.



# Transit Routes

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

November 1, 2019

## Legend

- BRT Stops
- High Priority Transit Route
- Future Transit Route
- City of Walker Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Freeways
- Roads
- Walker\_SurroundingRoads
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains



0 1,000 2,000  
Feet

**SOURCES**  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2019.

# Existing Conditions: Infrastructure

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## Water and Sewer

### **Existing Conditions**

A majority of the parcels in the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster are served by municipal water and sanitary sewer. Water service and sanitary sewer are provided by the City of Grand Rapids. The Indian Creek Sewer, the major trunk line sewer for the area, was upgraded to a 20 inch diameter gravity sewer within the past 15 years and has sufficient capacity to serve the area in to the future.

### **Capacity and Development Considerations**

Currently, the water and sewer systems have sufficient capacity to serve the existing land use. New construction and redevelopment would require evaluation of each instance to determine available capacity and if upgrades are needed.

In the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, much of the infrastructure for water and sewer is built out except for a few key parcels. These parcels or areas include two larger areas north of I-96, a large parcel north of Richmond St. (between Kinney Ave. and Elmridge Dr.) and the south west portion of the subarea (north side of Leonard St. west of Kinney Ave.). The framework (transmission mains and trunk sewers) exists to extend service to these areas if needed. Intensity and type of development will drive whether or not upgrades to the water and sanitary sewer system are needed.

The City of Grand Rapids completed a 2015 update to their Comprehensive Master Plan that included intensive study of their water distribution and sanitary sewer systems. Two projects were identified in the plan:

- 100 feet of 12-inch water main on Leonard Street crossing Wilson Avenue
- 600 feet of 12-inch water main on Richmond Street from Cider Mill Trail west to the Kent County Line
- 3,200 feet of 12-inch water main on Northridge Drive from 1,300 feet east of Fruitridge Avenue to 1,300 feet west of Walker Ridge Avenue

No specific sanitary sewer system upgrades were identified in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

# 3.

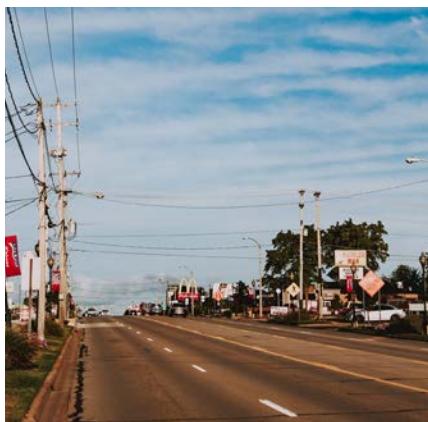
## Goals and Objectives

# Goals and Objectives



## Housing & Neighborhoods

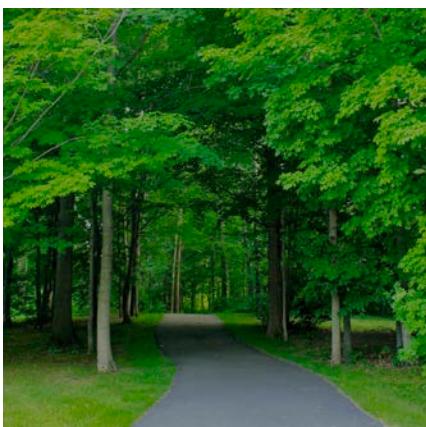
1. **To maintain Walker's place in Kent County as a City that provides safe, attractive, and vibrant neighborhoods that can accommodate residents at all stages of life.**
  - a. Support a system of organized land use to provide greater housing choices, where new and redevelopment areas respect existing neighborhoods, while seamlessly connecting to them.
  - b. Encourage residential developments which are needed by persons of all ages, incomes and household sizes.
  - c. Retrofit diverse types of multiple family "missing middle" housing within new and existing mixed use corridors and nodes, through infill development and strong urban design.
  - d. Promote the development of multiple small-scale and walkable mixed use nodes that serve the immediately adjacent neighborhoods.
  - e. Preserve the rural residential areas along Walker's northern border, and ensure that appropriate transitions occur between these areas and adjacent land uses.



## Transportation

2. **Invest in improving and maintaining Walker's vehicular and non-motorized infrastructure to ensure that the City's transportation network provides accessibility and connectivity to City destinations, is designed for people, and responds to advances in transportation technology.**
  - a. Maintain the subarea's existing network of highways, roads, streets, and sidewalks to accommodate the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.
  - b. Create new connections and redesign streets as necessary to ease traffic congestion and increase desirability of use by non-motorized transportation modes.
  - c. Promote the use of alternative modes of transportation such as ridesharing, bicycling, and walking, throughout the subarea.
  - d. Improve the subarea's network of trails, bicycle amenities, and other connections.
  - e. Implement a comprehensive pedestrian network that focuses on creating safe intersections and crossings, encourages pedestrian-scale streetscapes, and supports walkable land use arrangements.

- f. Implement contextually appropriate street designs on key corridors and at nodes, including Remembrance Drive, Wilson Avenue, and 3 Mile Road.
- g. Partner with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to program safety improvements along the Wilson Avenue corridor that create a safer environment for pedestrians, and for vehicles making crossing and turning movements. These improvements should deprioritize capacity expansion in favor of contextually appropriate design solutions.
- h. Prepare for the emergence of new transportation technologies by revisioning traditional uses of the transportation network and by investing in new mobility strategies and “smart” infrastructure.



### Sustainability & Resiliency

- 3. **Support land use planning efforts that encourage environmentally-friendly development including efforts that promote air pollution and greenhouse gas reduction as well as energy and water conservation.**
  - a. Promote land use patterns that increase sustainability and resiliency in buildings and transportation systems by making sustainability a critical element when developing new zoning regulations and modifying old regulations and the comprehensive map.
  - b. Conserve and restore open spaces, waterways, tree canopies, and other natural resources to increase resiliency, adaptability, and biological integrity.
  - c. Think beyond first costs and consider long-term, cumulative impacts when making infrastructure and policy decisions.
  - d. Prepare the public and city staff for emergencies by updating emergency plans and expanding emergency management initiatives.



### Economic Development Goals

- 4. **Retain and promote Walker’s mix of commercial and industrial uses in defined locations throughout the City that provide desired employment, goods, and services for residents, visitors, and workers alike. Encourage economic development that responds to the changing economy while positioning the City to enhance its tax base and maintain a stable and diverse revenue source.**
  - a. Assist the education and business communities in developing a competitive workforce to provide job skills demanded by the regional market place and employment opportunities for local graduates.
  - b. Focus on retaining existing businesses and industry operating at all scales. This Objective pertains to the retention of legacy businesses that lend to the subarea’s unique character and sense of place, and to creating a vibrant and sustainable city attractive to prospective candidates for jobs at major corporations.
  - c. Target outreach to innovative companies (knowledge-based and high technology industrial) to ensure a diverse and resilient economic base.
  - d. Establish a framework to incentivize creative redevelopment of unoccupied and declining “big box”, highway commercial, and single-use strip center retail.

- e. Establish a framework to allow the large land areas occupied by enterprise business to flexibly transition to other uses, should structural changes to the local, state and national economy occur in the medium to long term.
- f. Ensure a wide range of creative business and industrial uses can be accommodated in enterprise and community enterprise areas, to provide the ability for local and regional entrepreneurs to easily do business in the city, thereby creating long-term value.
- g. Promote incremental urban design interventions within established single-use business areas to ensure walkability, provision of access to multimodal transportation options, and to cultivate a sense of place. These interventions are especially important in large office districts whose companies' continued presence in the city is desirable, and whose companies' pool of talented potential future employees demand to work in more vibrant, active contexts.



### Parks, Trails and Open Space

- 5. Reinvest in existing recreation facilities, and consider new facilities, to provide quality of life benefits for Walker residents, including active living, accessibility to recreation, and environmental preservation.
  - a. Provide greenspace, parks, and/or pocket parks within all new development and retrofitted existing development.
  - b. Preserve and/or incorporate natural drainage and flood plains wherever possible into park and recreation sites.
  - c. Pursue funding sources and develop partnerships and advocates to ensure open space preservation, and study creation and management of future nature preserve areas within the subarea.
  - d. Provide for targeted natural preservation areas that reinforce contextual transitions between lower-intensity and higher-intensity land uses in the subarea.
  - e. Develop, maintain, and preserve sufficient open space and recreation facilities to fully satisfy the wide variety of recreation needs of residents.
  - f. Improve the subarea's network of trails, bicycle amenities, and other connections.



## Infrastructure Goals

6. Invest in improving and maintaining City infrastructure to ensure that City services can be available for all current and future development. Implement innovative and effective strategies for maintenance and improvement of the stormwater, wastewater, solid waste, and recycling systems to ensure the health and safety of Walker's residents.
  - a. Invest in and implement comprehensive and innovative urban water management, green infrastructure practices, and renewable energy systems.
  - b. Provide appropriate resources for staff to maintain and improve infrastructure systems.
  - c. Explore opportunities for infrastructure system improvements as new technology becomes available.
  - d. Increase the use of renewable resources to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.



## Urban Design

7. Achieve a positive and lasting community image by encouraging high quality and durable materials as well as current best practices for human scale and aesthetic character. Strive to incorporate design elements that contribute to a sense of place within the community.
  - a. Incorporate unique and functional community design components with all new developments, public spaces, and streetscapes.
  - b. Develop detailed policy guidance, such as form-based codes and pattern books, to ensure the predictable and orderly transition of single-use suburban retail districts to mixed-use districts with a high level of urban design.
  - c. Develop detailed policy guidance, such as form-based codes and pattern books, to unify existing corridors by ensuring that infill development and redevelopment of existing buildings achieve consistency and quality architecture.
  - d. Develop detailed policy guidance, such as specialized design standards, to cultivate vibrancy and activity in single-use business and industrial districts.
  - e. Enhance landscaping and site design through redevelopment to enhance the sense of place along all corridors.
  - f. Reserve underdeveloped land for high quality development emphasizing the use of high quality materials and the establishment of a sense of place.

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4.

## Community Character Plan

# Future Land Use

The Future Land Use map shows the generalized, at-a-glance development pattern that is planned for the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster. It provides the framework upon which the Community Character Plan is built.

Each Future Land Use Category contains one or more Character Areas, which more specifically articulate the vision, and tie into zoning recommendations, including appropriate zoning categories to implement the vision of the Character Area.

## Future Land Use Categories



### **Residential: Existing Density**

This future land use category indicates residential areas that are not intended to increase in density, or change in character, over the life of the plan. While significant change is not planned, these neighborhoods can still be upgraded with sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, and other improvements.

#### **Character Areas:**

- Neighborhood Preservation



### **Residential: Growth 4-8 Units Per Acre**

This future land use category indicates areas that are planned for residential growth, with the resulting built-out neighborhood featuring between four and eight units per gross acre of land. The type of residential unit may vary (duplex, townhouse, small apartment buildings, large apartment buildings, etc), but the density should remain between five and ten units per acre.

#### **Character Areas:**

- Residential Growth 4-8 Units Per Acre



### **Residential: Growth 2-4 Units Per Acre**

This future land use category indicates areas that are planned for residential growth, with the resulting built-out neighborhood featuring between two and four units per gross acre of land. The type of residential unit may vary (single family, duplex, townhouse, small apartment buildings, etc), but the density should remain between two and four units per acre.

#### **Character Areas:**

- Residential Growth 2-4 Units Per Acre



## Rural Residential: 0-1 Units Per Acre

This future land use category indicates areas that are planned to retain their rural character, with housing built at a density no higher than one unit per acre, which less density preferred.

### Character Areas:

- Rural Residential 0-1 Units Per Acre



## Mixed Use

This future land use category indicates areas that are planned for a mix of uses. The specific mix, and anticipated character and design, are articulated by the various future land use categories.

### Character Areas:

- Neighborhood Corridor
- Neighborhood Node

## Business

This future land use category indicates areas that are planned primarily for industrial and commercial businesses, and not for residential uses. Within these areas, efficient business operations should be prioritized, except where nearby residential areas need to be protected from negative impacts.

### Character Areas:

- Community Enterprise
- Enterprise

## Public-Semi Public

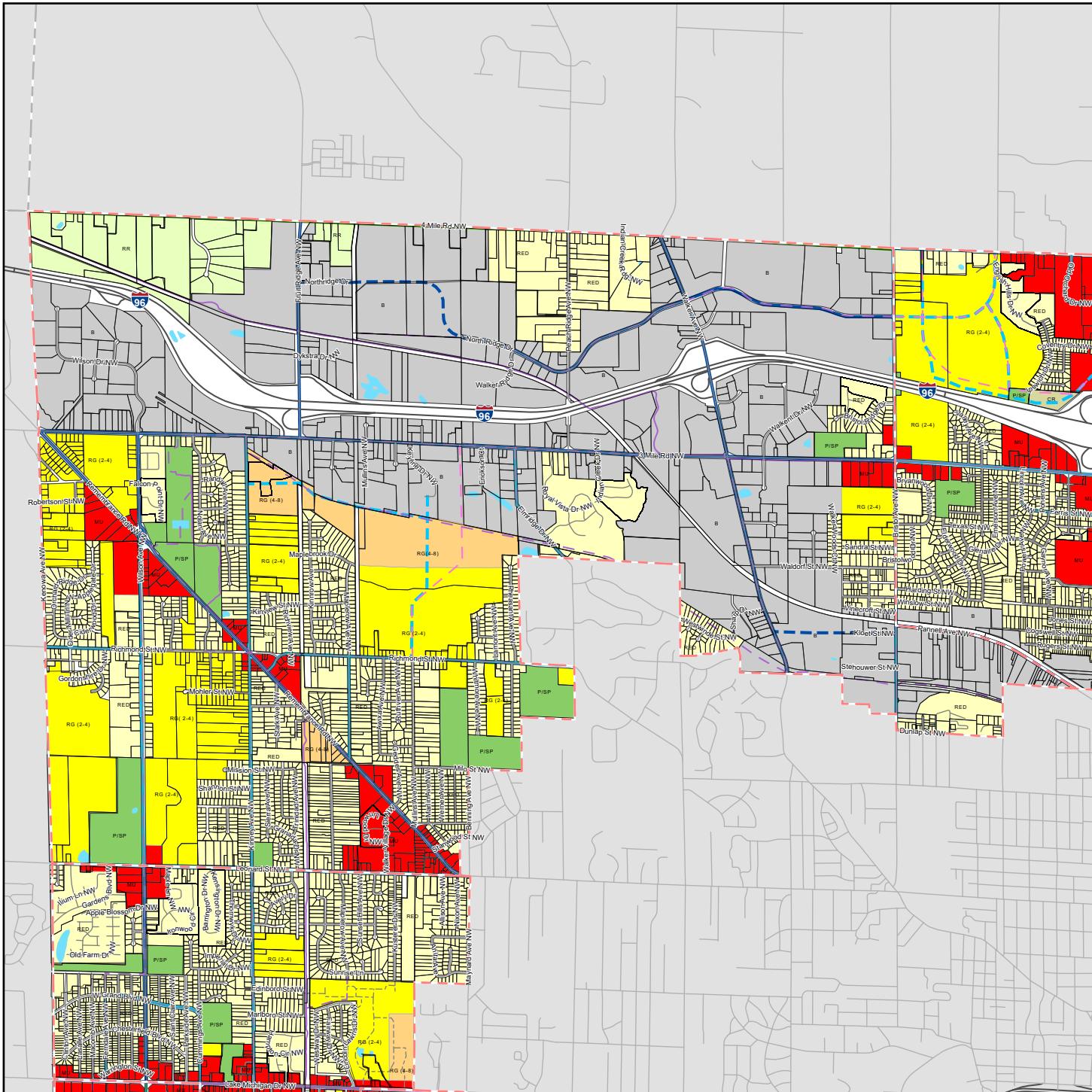
This future land use category indicates areas that contain public amenities and facilities, which are planned to stay in place.

### Character Areas:

- Parks
- Schools
- Civic/Municipal Facilities







#### LEGEND

<span style="color: red;">■</span> Neighborhood Boundaries	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Urban Throughway
<span style="background-color: lightgreen;">■</span> Rural Residential (0-1 Units/Acre) - RR	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Business Connector
<span style="background-color: lightbrown;">■</span> Cluster Residential (0-1 Units/Acre) - CR	<span style="color: cyan;">■</span> Neighborhood Connector
<span style="background-color: yellow;">■</span> Residential Growth (2-4 Units/Acre) - RG (2-4)	<span style="color: green;">■</span> Natural Beauty Corridor
<span style="background-color: orange;">■</span> Residential Growth (4-8 Units/Acre) - RG (4-8)	<span style="color: darkgreen;">■</span> Natural Beauty Throughway
<span style="background-color: darkorange;">■</span> Residential Growth (8-12 Units/Acre) - RG (8-12)	<span style="color: grey;">■</span> Neighborhood Street
<span style="background-color: lightyellow;">■</span> Residential Existing Density - RED	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Proposed Business Connector
<span style="background-color: grey;">■</span> Business - B	<span style="color: cyan;">■</span> Proposed Neighborhood Connector
<span style="background-color: red;">■</span> Mixed Use - MU	<span style="color: grey;">■</span> Proposed Neighborhood Street
<span style="background-color: green;">■</span> Public/Semi-Public - P/SP	<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Existing Bike Path
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Regional Throughway	<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Proposed Bike Path
	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Existing Bike Lane
	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Proposed Bike Lane

# Future Land Use

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

October 16, 2020

0 1,000 2,000  
Feet



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2020.

# Community Character Plan



Walker's Future Land Use plan is conveyed using a "Community Character Plan" which identifies how different areas of Walker should look and function, in addition to what the land uses should be. A Community Character Plan establishes land uses and dimensional requirements like a traditional future land use plan, but it also discusses the look and feel of streets, how buildings should look and function, how uses relate to each other, and overall intensity of development within the context of a specific area.

The purpose of a Community Character Plan is to recognize distinct land use areas like residential, industrial, and commercial, and identify all of the parts that add up to create character, such as use, design, and density. The Plan establishes several Community Character categories, each with the following components:

1. **Land Use:** Uses which are appropriate within the character area.
2. **Buildings:** How the building looks and functions and where it is located on the lot.
3. **Design:** How lots, streets, and frontages are designed, and how lots relate to each other in the public realm.

The Community Character Plan serves as a guide for how the community envisions itself in the next 10 to 15 years. It is based on an analysis of land uses issues in the city, existing land use, demographics, housing conditions, retail market potential, housing market potential, community infrastructure, transportation and circulation, public input from workshops and online engagement, and the goals and objectives set forth by the community.

The Community Character Plan constitutes the development policy of the City. The Plan should be updated on a regular basis to address the impact of new developments or other changing conditions. The elected and appointed officials of Walker are responsible for the interpretation of the intent of the Community Character Plan.

Each Community Character category is explained in greater detail on the following pages with the guidelines specifying the preferred land uses, buildings, and designs for each area, as well as pictures showing the existing and planned character of each area.

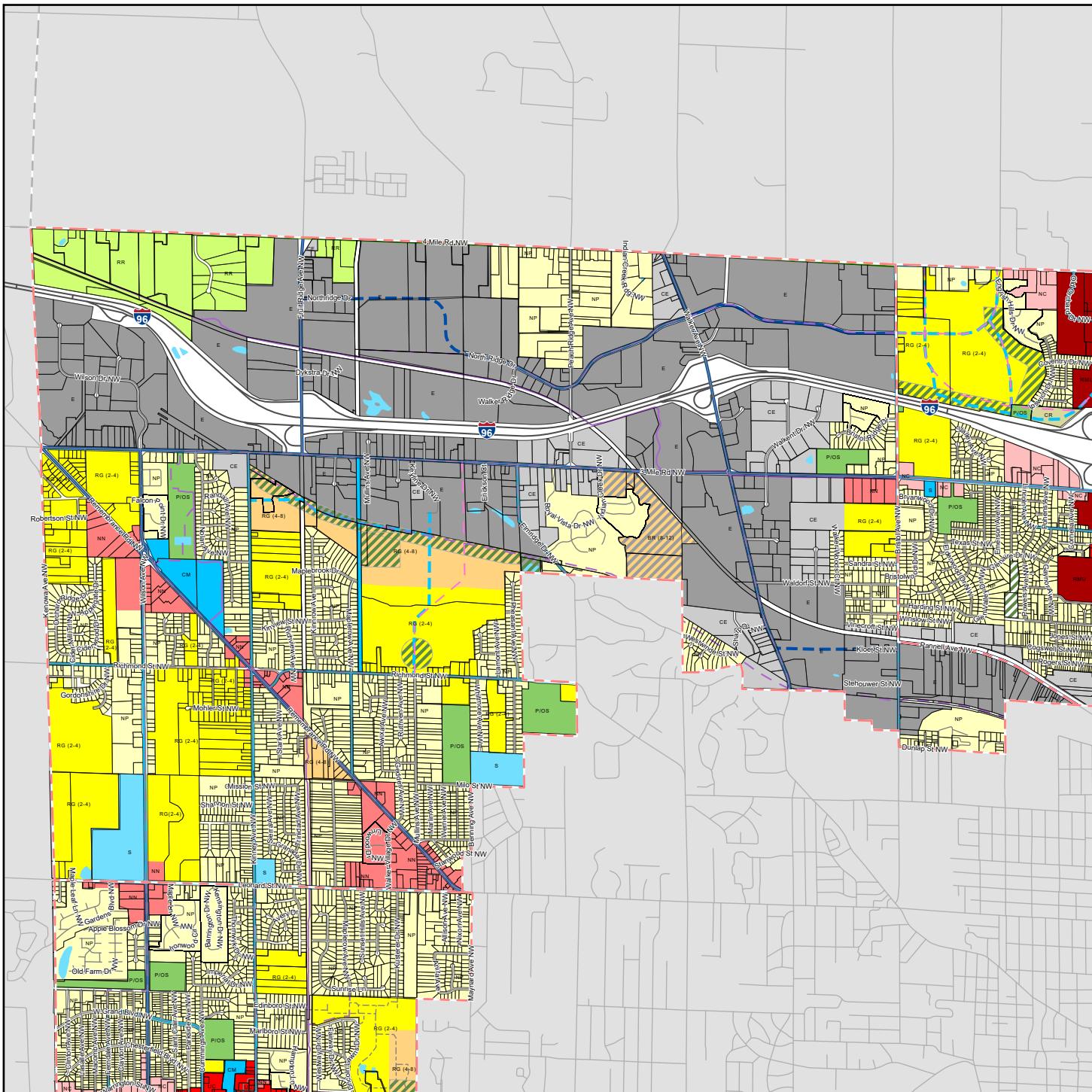
## Types of Multi-Family Buildings

The descriptions of the Community Character Categories on the following page frequently reference "Small", "Medium", or "Large" Apartment/ Multi-Family Buildings. Those terms should be understood to have the following meaning:

**"Small" Apartment Buildings** include between 3 and 6 units, and should be no more than two stories in height.

**"Medium" Apartment Buildings** include 6 to 12 units, and should be up to three stories in height.

**"Large" Apartment Buildings** include more than 12 units, and can be up to the maximum height permissible in the Community Character District.



### LEGEND

■ Neighborhood Boundaries	■ Schools - S
■ Neighborhood Preservation - NP	■ Park/Open Space - P/OS
■ Rural Residential (0-1 Units/Acre) - RR	■ Preserved Open Space Overlay
■ Cluster Residential (0-1 Units/Acre) - CR	■ Regional Throughway
■ Residential Growth (2-4 Units/Acre) - RG (2-4)	■ Urban Throughway
■ Residential Growth (4-8 Units/Acre) - RG (4-8)	■ Business Connector
■ Residential Growth (8-12 Units/Acre) - RG (8-12)	■ Neighborhood Connector
■ Community Enterprise - CE	■ Natural Beauty Corridor
■ Enterprise - E	■ Natural Beauty Throughway
■ Business/Residential (8-12 Units/Acre) - BR (8-12)	■ Neighborhood Street
■ Neighborhood Corridor - NC	■ Proposed Business Connector
■ Neighborhood Node - NN	■ Proposed Neighborhood Connector
■ Urban Corridor - UC	■ Proposed Neighborhood Street
■ Retrofit Mixed Use - RMU	■ Existing Bike Path
■ River Enhancement - RE	■ Proposed Bike Path
■ Public/Semi Public, City Municipal, Utility - CM	■ Existing Bike Lane
	■ Proposed Bike Lane

# Community Character

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

October 16, 2020

0 1,000 2,000  
Feet



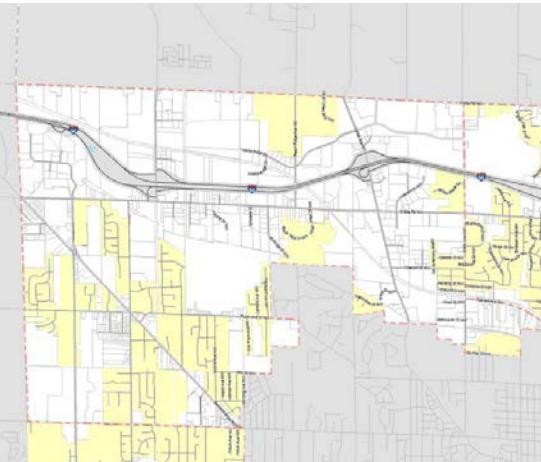
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2020.

## Northwest Community Character Map Footnotes:

1. **Blandford Elementary School and Nature Center.** Although the Blandford Nature Center is mostly within the City of Grand Rapids, the "Back 40," as well as the Elementary School grounds, are within the Walker City Limits. Blandford is a private facility, but is designated as public-semi public in this plan because it is planned to remain in place through the life of the plan.
2. **Residential/Community Enterprise Flex Area.** This area is surrounded by both multi-family residential uses and industrial/business uses. Therefore, future development could be either residential growth (appropriate density 4-8 units per acre) or business growth following the Community Enterprise character area.
3. **Richmond Farms Buffer.** If the Richmond Farms property is developed, along the northern edge, a wooded buffer should be preserved to protect the residential development from the industrial businesses to the north. The planned bike trail in this area could run through the wooded buffer.
4. **Richmond Farms Park.** If the Richmond Farms property is developed, a public park should be reserved within the neighborhood, preferably closer to Richmond Street, to preserve the wooded character of the street.
5. **Richmond Farms Density Restriction:** The portion of the Richmond Farms area that is designated for Residential Growth at 4-8 Units Per Acre should be restricted to no more than 4 units per acre, unless a new road is constructed connecting Richmond Farms to either 3 Mile Road or Kinney Avenue (preferably both). This restriction shall not obligate the City to construct the road, and the Planning Commission may determine that, in the event that the road connections are deemed too impractical to connect, the site should be developed with a density limit of 4 units per acre.



# Neighborhood Preservation



## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- Keep current zoning,
- Or rezone as necessary to keep consistency with surroundings, using the following districts:
  - A Residential
  - SA Suburban Residential,
  - S Suburban Residential

## General Characteristics

This designation is characterized by existing residential areas that are fully or nearly built-out, and have an existing character that is highly valued by the residents. These neighborhoods are planned to remain as-is in terms of character and density, although enhancements such as park spaces and new sidewalks/bike paths are recommended where envisioned by this plan. Undeveloped land within Neighborhood Preservation areas should be developed with a similar character and density to the surrounding homes, or acquired by the City as new park space.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Appropriate uses include dwelling units matching the character and density of the surrounding uses, schools, parks, and other compatible municipal and civic uses.

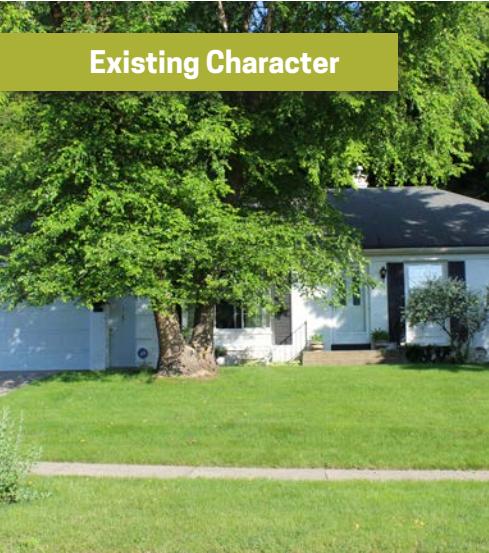
## Streets and Transportation

Residential streets should be designed for slow traffic and easy pedestrian and bicycle usage. However, they should form a connected, logical pattern with as many connections to the existing street system as possible, including connections to neighborhoods in the surrounding townships. Culs-de-sac are highly discouraged, except where they already exist, or where there are no realistic alternatives.

## Building and Site Design

New homes should be designed with quality materials and should be consistent with surrounding homes in terms of scale, massing, and site design. Garages should be located so that they do not dominate the front façade of the home.

### Existing Character



### Planned Character



### Design Guidelines

#### Lot Dimensions

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
Consistent with surrounding character

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
Consistent with surrounding character

#### Building Setbacks

**Minimum / Maximum / Side / Rear:**  
Consistent with surrounding character

#### Building Height

**Minimum:**  
Consistent with surrounding character

**Maximum:**  
Consistent with surrounding character

#### Street Frontages

Front porch  
Lawn / greenscape  
Trees and landscaping

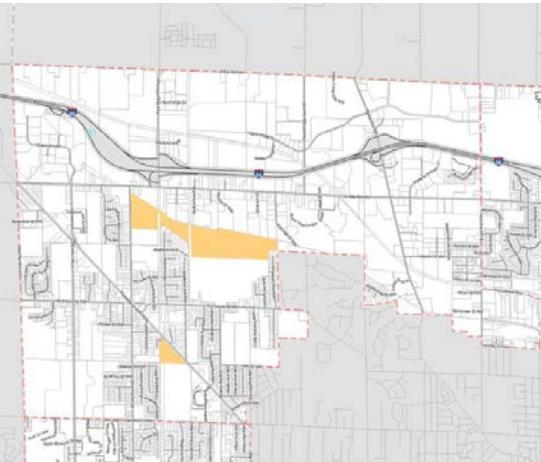
*(unless other street frontages are consistent with surrounding character)*

### Recommended Zoning Amendments

- Address frequently requested variances and barriers to investment in existing properties by amending zoning to reflect the built character of neighborhoods.
- Consider allowing existing setbacks and building heights to always be considered conforming.
- Require new construction to meet the massing and design of existing homes in the neighborhood.

# Residential Growth

## 4-8 Units Per Acre



### General Characteristics

This designation is characterized by residential housing units in neighborhoods with densities of 4-8 units per gross acre of land. Gross acreage is used in order to incentivize the creation of compact developments that retain important natural features such as wetlands, woodlands, and topographical changes.

Single family houses, as well as “missing middle” housing types such as townhouses, duplexes, quadplexes, and small multi-family buildings are encouraged. Large apartment buildings are also appropriate, which differentiates this Character Area from less dense character areas. Neighborhoods should be designed with connected street patterns, including connections to existing neighborhoods where possible, and should have amenities (such as parks and schools) within their boundaries. Businesses and retail should be within walking distance, along major corridors.

### Appropriate Land Uses

Typical uses include residential dwelling units, schools, parks, open space, and other compatible municipal or civic uses.

### Streets and Transportation

Streets should follow a connected pattern that respects topography and natural features, and therefore may not constitute a true “grid.” Streets should feature elements such as sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and a tree canopy. Some streets may be “Neighborhood Connectors” (see Mobility Plan) and may be appropriate for bike lanes.

### Building and Site Design

Sites should be designed to give homes a front and back yard, while maintaining a human, walkable scale that promotes social interaction and reduces unnecessary and unused lawn space.

Buildings should be designed with quality materials and consistent with architectural styles common in Walker and the greater Grand Rapids area. Alternative architectural styles may be appropriate in some neighborhoods, provided that the unique design enhances the general character of the area. Buildings should include front (street) entrances to encourage connection to the street, and garages should be located in rear yards to the extent possible.

**Existing Character****Planned Character****Design Guidelines****Lot Dimensions**

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
5,000-10,000 square feet, in order to accommodate 4-8 units per gross acre.

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
50-70 feet

**Building Setbacks**

**Recommended Front Setbacks:**  
15-25 feet

**Recommended Side Setbacks:**  
5-10 feet, with space for a driveway on one side.

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:**  
30-40 feet

**Building Height**

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 3 stories, with a maximum height of 45 feet.

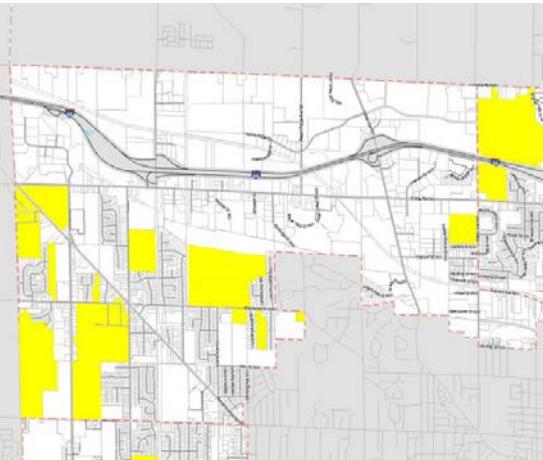
**Street Frontages**

Front porch  
Lawn / greenscape  
Trees and landscaping

**Recommended Zoning Amendments**

- Work closely with developers to ensure that the neighborhood will provide high quality of life, and be appropriately supported by infrastructure.
- Allow for creativity in lot size and design to allow for retained open space where envisioned by this plan.
- Allow a variety of housing types, provided that the overall density is between 4 and 8 units per gross acre.
- Require a connected grid of internal streets, multiple connections to thoroughfares, and stub streets along interior lot lines.
- Require connections to existing stub streets, and other connections to existing neighborhoods where possible.
- Require a central gathering place or park in new neighborhoods.
- Require sidewalks in new neighborhoods.
- Require streets to be designed in accordance with the Corridor Design Plan in this document.

# Residential Growth 2-4 Units Per Acre



## General Characteristics

This designation is characterized by residential housing units in neighborhoods with densities of 2-4 units per gross acre of land. Gross acreage is used in order to incentivize the creation of compact developments that retain important natural features such as wetlands, woodlands, and topographical changes.

Single family houses, as well as housing types such as townhouses, duplexes, quadplexes, and small multi-family buildings are encouraged. Neighborhoods should be designed with connected street patterns, including connections to existing neighborhoods where possible, and should have amenities (such as parks and schools) within their boundaries. Businesses and retail should be within walking distance, along major corridors.

Larger multi-family buildings are also appropriate, when included within cluster developments that consolidate units within larger buildings in order to preserve natural and recreational space elsewhere on the site.

## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- A Residential
- A-2 Residential
- SA Suburban Single Family
- S Suburban Residential
- RPUD-1 Low Density Residential PUD
- Choose district in order to achieve a density of 2-4 units per gross acre

## Appropriate Land Uses

Typical uses include residential dwelling units, schools, parks, open space, and other compatible municipal or civic uses.

## Streets and Transportation

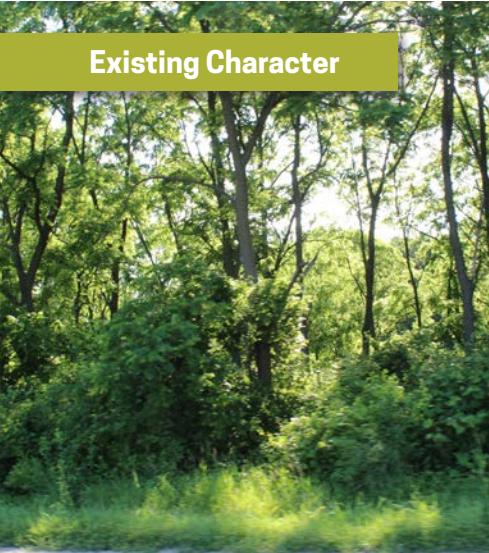
Streets should follow a connected pattern that respects topography and natural features, and therefore may not constitute a true “grid.” Streets should feature elements such as sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and a tree canopy. Some streets may be “Neighborhood Connectors” (see Mobility Plan) and may be appropriate for bike lanes.

## Building and Site Design

Sites should be designed to give homes a front and back yard, while maintaining a human, walkable scale that promotes social interaction and reduces unnecessary and unused lawn space.

Buildings should be designed with quality materials and consistent with architectural styles common in Walker and the greater Grand Rapids area. Alternative architectural styles may be appropriate in some neighborhoods, provided that the unique design enhances the general character of the area. Buildings should include front (street) entrances to encourage connection to the street, and garages should be located in rear yards to the extent possible.

### Existing Character



### Planned Character



### Design Guidelines

#### Lot Dimensions

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
5,000-15,000 square feet, in order to accommodate 2-4 units per gross acre while retaining natural open space

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
50-100 feet

#### Building Setbacks

**Recommended Front Setbacks:**  
15-35 feet

**Recommended Side Setbacks:**  
5-10 feet, with space for a driveway on one side.

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:**  
30-50 feet

#### Building Height

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 3 stories

#### Street Frontages

Front porch  
Lawn / greenscape  
Trees and landscaping

### Recommended Zoning Amendments

- Allow for creativity in lot size and design to allow for retained open space where envisioned by this plan.
- Allow a variety of housing types, provided that the overall density is between 2 and 4 units per gross acre.
- Require a connected grid of internal streets, multiple connections to thoroughfares, and stub streets along interior lot lines.
- Require connections to existing stub streets, and other connections to existing neighborhoods where possible.
- Require a central gathering place or park in new neighborhoods.
- Require sidewalks in new neighborhoods.
- Require streets to be designed in accordance with the Corridor Design Plan in this document.

# Rural Residential 0-1 Units Per Acre



## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- AA Agricultural
- No PUDs should be approved within this Character District

## General Characteristics

This designation intends to preserve rural character by prohibiting commercial and industrial development, and restricting housing development to less than one unit per acre.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Single family homes and farmland, as well as preserved open space, will be the primary uses.

## Streets and Transportation

New streets should not be necessary, nor should public transportation. Existing thoroughfares should generally be Natural Beauty Corridors. Bike paths may be appropriate in some circumstances.

## Building and Site Design

Sites should be designed to preserve natural features by locating homes relatively close to the road (though setbacks appropriate to a rural character are permissible and appropriate).

**Existing Character****Planned Character****Design Guidelines****Lot Dimensions**

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
1 acre or larger.

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
100 feet or larger

**Building Setbacks**

**Recommended Front Setbacks:**  
35-50 feet

**Recommended Side Setbacks:**  
20 feet or larger

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:**  
As large as necessary to preserve natural features.

**Building Height**

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 2 stories

**Street Frontages**

Front porch  
Lawn / greenscape  
Trees and landscaping

**Recommended Zoning Amendments**

- Consider increasing the minimum lot size to 10 or more acres, or restricting the number of splits for lots under 10 acres, in order to preserve farmland and rural character.

# Neighborhood Corridor



## General Characteristics

The Neighborhood Corridor area is a low intensity mixed use character districts intended for Walker's thoroughfares that run through predominantly residential areas. The Neighborhood Corridor districts should provide amenities to the surrounding residential areas in a human scale and walkable, though not necessarily urban, format.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Low-intensity businesses such as personal services, small offices (including medical offices), and convenience stores, as well as religious institutions, schools, and similar uses. Residential uses, including small multi-family and "missing middle" style housing units, are also appropriate.

## Streets and Transportation

All streets lined with Neighborhood Corridor uses should have sidewalks or bike paths on both sides. Streets should be Neighborhood Connectors (see Mobility Plan).

## Building and Site Design

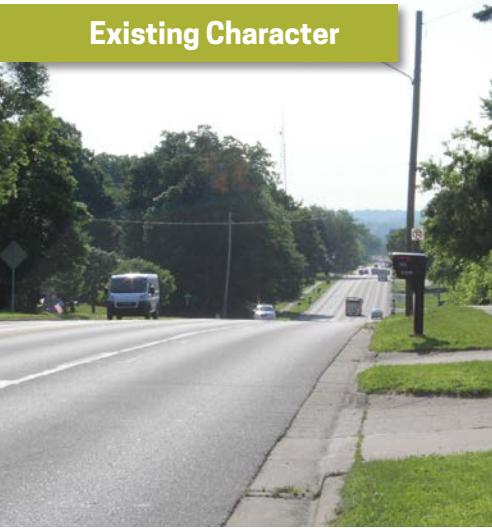
Buildings should be built with high-quality materials and should be architecturally compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings with a connection to the street, including designs with attractive front facades, entrances, and porches are all highly encouraged. Open spaces should be functional and allow for recreational enjoyment and the preservation of natural features. Architectural variation is highly encouraged to create a character on long and connected facades.

Parking areas may be located in the front, side, or rear yards for buildings, but, where practical, buildings should front the street and provide parking to the rear. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees. Parking space requirements may vary based on the location of the development and availability of shared parking.

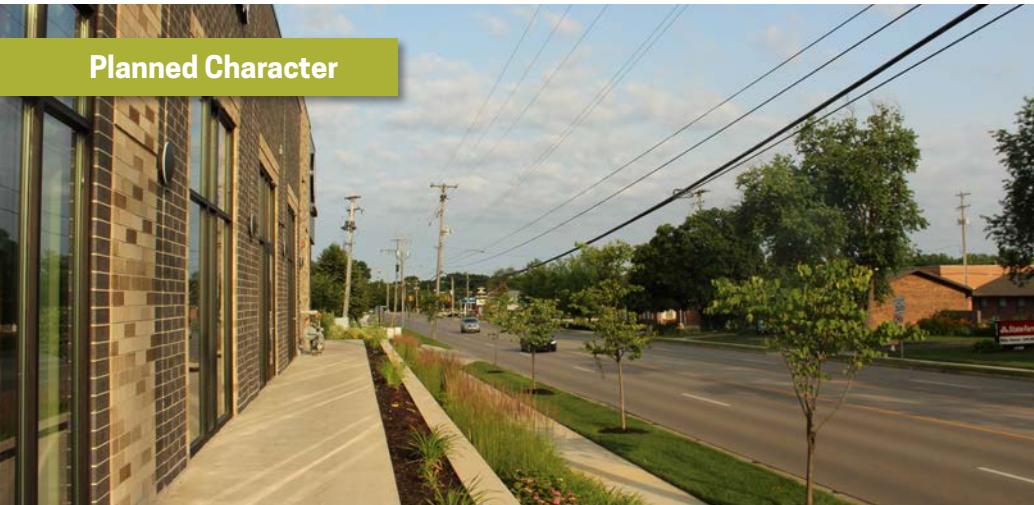
## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- ORP Office Research and Parking
- ARM Multiple Family
- ARM Multiple Family-1
- MPUD Mixed Use PUD
- P-SP Public/Semi-Public
- RPUD-2 High Density Residential PUD
- Consider creating new "Suburban Mixed Use" Zoning District
- CPUD Commercial Planned Unit Development in certain circumstances

## Existing Character



## Planned Character



## Design Guidelines

### Lot Dimensions

**Recommended Lot Areas:** 20,000 to 60,000 square feet, though larger or smaller lots may be appropriate in some areas

**Recommended Lot Width:** 100-200 feet

### Building Setbacks

**Recommended Front Setbacks:** 15-35 feet

**Recommended Side Setbacks:** 10-20 feet, though larger setbacks to allow driveways to rear parking could also be appropriate

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:** As needed for parking and loading

### Building Height

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 4 stories, though lower heights may be necessary near residential, and taller buildings may be appropriate when supported by appropriate infrastructure and not out of scale with the surrounding character

### Street Frontages

Welcoming office/institutional entrances  
Retail storefronts  
Outdoor patio / seating areas  
Lawn / greenscape

## Recommended Zoning Amendments

- Reduce minimum front setback requirements.
- Consider a maximum front setback requirement.
- Increase maximum building height.
- Reduce minimum parking requirements.
- Consider a new Suburban Mixed Use zoning district, permitting community, religious, educational, institutional, office, and research uses, as well as multi-family housing.

# Neighborhood Node



## General Characteristics

The Neighborhood Node area is a low intensity mixed use or commercial district intended to serve 1-3 neighborhoods and provide services, small-scale retail, and amenities. Neighborhood Node districts should provide amenities to the surrounding residential areas in a human scale and walkable format, while keeping a “small town”, rather than “urban” character.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Low-intensity businesses such as small retail stores, personal services, small offices (including medical offices) should populate ground floors of buildings. Residential uses or office uses should be on upper floors.

## Streets and Transportation

All streets lined with Neighborhood Node uses should have sidewalks or bike paths on both sides. Streets should be Neighborhood Connectors (see Corridor Design Plan). On-street parking is encouraged where possible. Bike racks, street trees, benches, trash cans, and other streetscaping should also be included.

## Building and Site Design

Buildings should be built with high-quality materials and should be architecturally compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings should be constructed with storefront-style first floors, although the use may not necessarily be retail. Individual buildings are encouraged, even if they do not have side yards, rather than large, wide buildings that take up entire lots.

Parking areas should be located in the side or rear yards for buildings. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees. Parking space requirements may vary (or be waived completely) based on the location of the development and availability of shared parking.

### Existing Character



### Planned Character



### Design Guidelines

#### Lot Dimensions

**Recommended Lot Areas:** 5,000 to 20,000 square feet, though larger lots featuring multiple buildings with shared parking would also be acceptable.

**Recommended Lot Width:** 40-60 feet, except as described above.

#### Building Setbacks

**Recommended Front Setbacks:** 0-10 feet

**Recommended Side Setbacks:** 0-15 feet, though larger setbacks to allow driveways to rear parking could also be appropriate.

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:** As needed for parking and loading

#### Building Height

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 4 stories, though lower heights may be necessary near residential.

#### Street Frontages

Welcoming office/institutional entrances  
Retail storefronts  
Outdoor patio / seating areas

### Recommended Zoning Amendments

- Reduce minimum front setback requirements.
- Consider a maximum front setback requirement.
- Eliminate required side setbacks, or only require side setbacks if a building has windows.
- Increase maximum building height to 3 or 4 stories.
- Reduce minimum parking requirements – consider automatically waiving parking requirements if shared, public, or on-street parking can be made available.
- Allow upper-floor residential uses in the C-1 and ORP districts.

# Community Enterprise



## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- ML Light Industry
- MP Industrial Park
- ORP Office, Research, and Parking
- C-2 Community Commercial
- IPUD Industrial PUD

## General Characteristics

Community Enterprise is intended for office, manufacturing, and research and development business uses that are in close proximity to residential. They should be designed and operated to be respectful of their surroundings, with minimal truck traffic, noise, odor, dust, or outdoor storage/operations.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Appropriate uses include office, light manufacturing, artisan production, food and beverage production, and research and development uses. Parking areas and loading zones are properly buffered and landscaped.

## Streets and Transportation

Streets should be designed in a pattern that allows access from residential areas, but does not encourage cut-through traffic by employees and trucks. Within the Community Enterprise district, the streets should be designed to be sufficient for business-traffic. Non-motorized and transit connections are encouraged, but are only necessary along major corridors.

## Building and Site Design

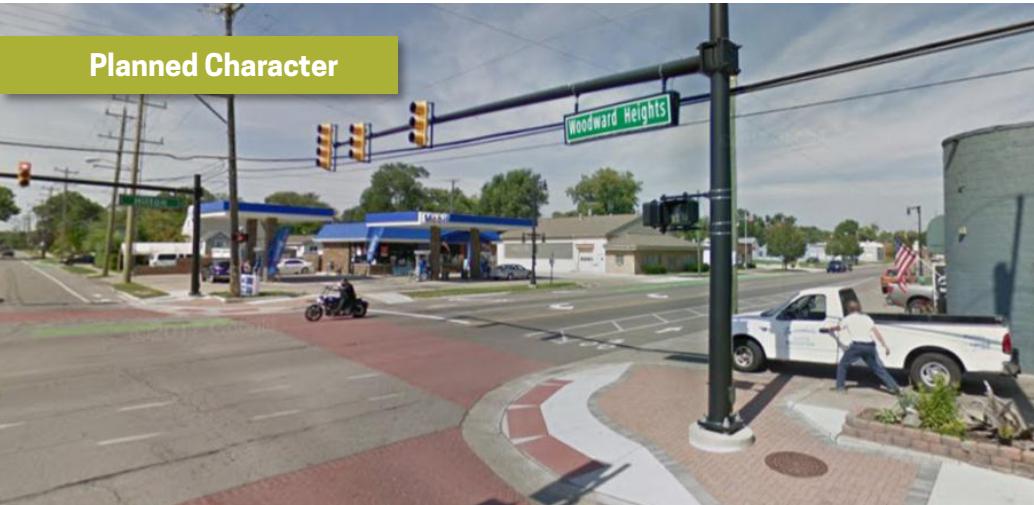
Buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials which wrap around the entire building and feature attractive signage. Robust landscaping should be installed throughout the site, especially adjacent to residential areas.

Commercial buildings should be supported by sufficient but not overly excessive parking areas. Parking areas may be located in the front, side, or rear yards for buildings. Large areas of parking should be broken up with landscaped islands and trees.

### Existing Character



### Planned Character



### Design Guidelines

#### Lot Dimensions

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
50,000 to 100,000 square feet, though larger or smaller lots may be appropriate in some areas

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
100-300 feet, though larger may be necessary for business operations

#### Building Setbacks

**Recommended Front Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations

**Recommended Side Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations, without negatively impacting residential

#### Building Height

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 4 stories, though lower heights may be necessary near residential, and taller buildings (or structures) may be appropriate when not out of scale with the surrounding character

#### Street Frontages

Welcoming business entrances

Operational space

Parking

### Recommended Zoning Amendments

- Reduce setback requirements from roads and other industrial properties, to allow for increased operational flexibility.
- Increase setbacks from residential districts, to protect residential.
- Increase buffer requirements between businesses and residential, and make them apply when residential is across the street or across a railroad right-of-way from industrial or commercial.



# Enterprise



## General Characteristics

This designation provides an exclusive area for medium to high intensity Industrial uses, as well as large corporate campuses, which are vital to the City's economy. Large plants that involve manufacturing products, stamping, and machine operations are well-supported here. Industrial areas have heavy buffers and deep setbacks to minimize impacts to adjoining properties.

## Appropriate Land Uses

Examples include large plants that involve manufacturing products, stamping, and machine operations. Large institutional operations and large corporate campuses are also encouraged to locate within Enterprise districts. The Enterprise District also includes the Deltaplex, and is appropriate for regional entertainment venues and similar attractions.

## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- ML Light Industry
- MP Industrial Park
- MH Heavy Industry
- ORP Office, Research, and Parking
- IPUD Industrial PUD

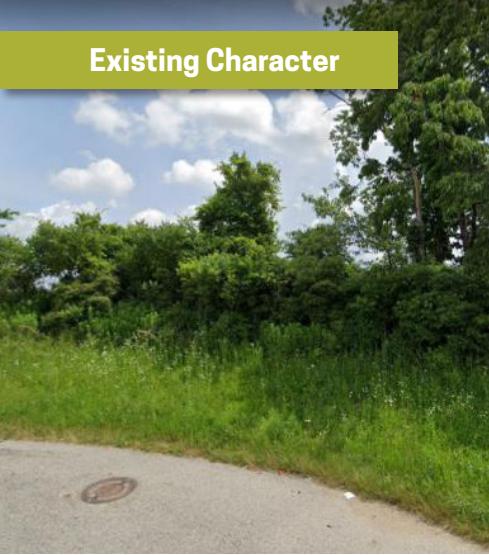
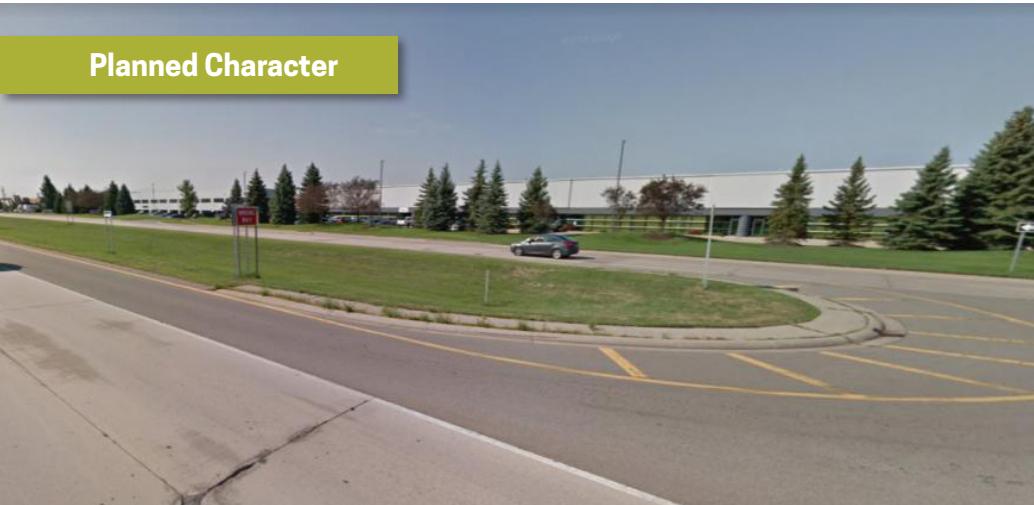
## Streets and Transportation

Roads in the industrial areas should be designed to be sufficient for truck traffic, without making them unsafe for pedestrians or bicyclists. New road connections should be built as needed to connect the industrial districts with arterial roads without disturbing residential areas. Connecting 3 Mile Road to West River Drive is an example of such an improvement (see Mobility Plan).

## Building and Site Design

Buildings in this district should be designed to be long-lasting and to support efficient industrial and/or business practices. High-quality appearance is encouraged, however, sites should be designed to minimize off-site impacts and reduce pollution and site contamination to the extent possible.

Parking lots should be sufficient to support employee parking and truck maneuvering, but should not be excessively large.

**Existing Character****Planned Character****Design Guidelines****Lot Dimensions**

**Recommended Lot Areas:**  
As needed for business operations

**Recommended Lot Width:**  
As needed for business operations

**Building Setbacks**

**Recommended Front Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations

**Recommended Side Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations

**Recommended Rear Setbacks:**  
As needed for business operations, without negatively impacting residential

**Building Height**

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** 4 stories, though taller buildings (or structures) may be appropriate when not out of scale with the surrounding character. The maximum height should be 65 feet, to accommodate specialized equipment.

**Street Frontages**

Welcoming business entrances

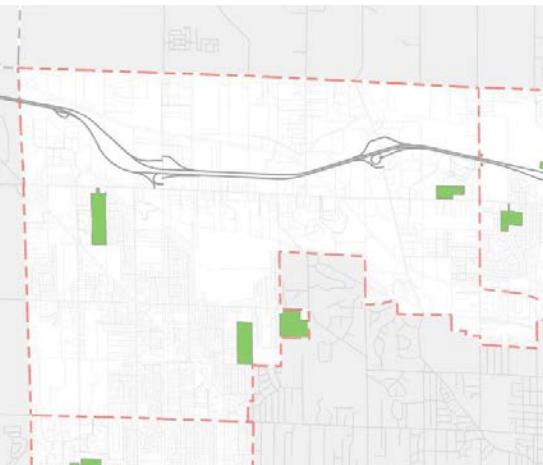
Operational space

Parking

**Recommended Zoning Amendments**

- Reduce setback requirements from roads and other industrial properties, to allow for increased operational flexibility.
- Increase building heights, to allow for increased operational flexibility.
- Ensure that research and development operations, as well as offices, are permitted within the ML, MP, and MH districts, to allow for maximum business flexibility.

# Parks



## Appropriate Zoning Districts

- P-SP Public/Semi-Public

## General Characteristics

This designation identifies park land and open space as well as land not owned by the City that could be acquired in the future, or could be used for private outdoor recreation. Areas within this designation can be used for both passive and active recreation. Natural features and developed parklands should be compatible with the surrounding landscape and neighborhood.

**Parks and Open Space Target Areas** are less specific than land designated solely for parks and open space. They indicate general areas where new parks or preserved open space could be located.

## Appropriate Land Uses

All areas should maintain uses which promote the inclusion of the public and provide recreational and gathering opportunities.

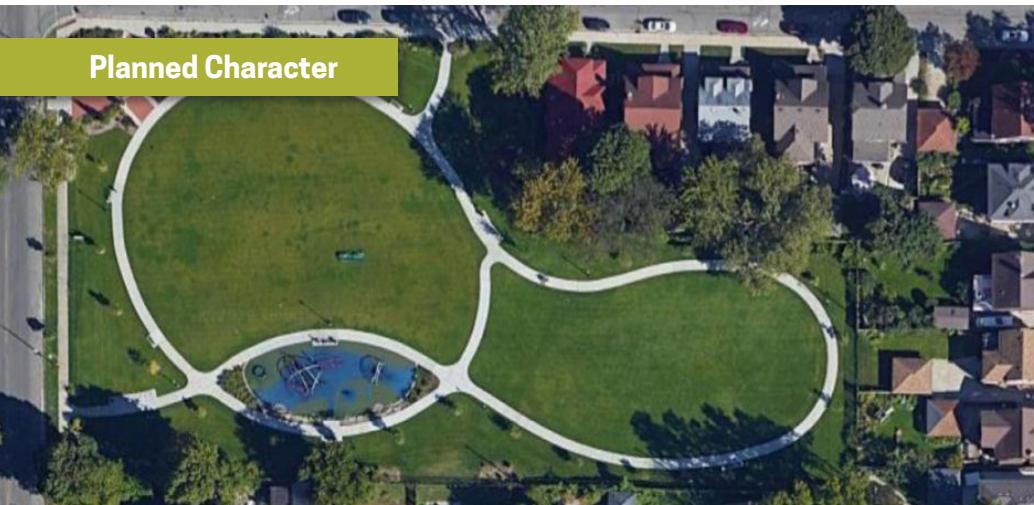
## Streets and Transportation

Existing pedestrian and cyclist trails should be maintained. Additional pathways and associated amenities (e.g. bicycle racks, water fountains, wayfinding signage, lighting, etc.) should be constructed as needed. The connection of such pathways to connect the parks is strongly encouraged.

## Building and Site Design

There are no specific Building and Site Design recommendations in this Plan for the Parks district, although high quality architecture is encouraged. Buildings should be well lit, highly visible, and provide public amenities. Parks should be maintained and upgraded as needed.

Sufficient parking should be provided for public facilities. Parking areas should be designed to minimize stormwater runoff and implement low-impact development techniques (pervious pavement, bioswales, etc.)

**Existing Character****Planned Character****Design Guidelines****Lot Dimensions**

**Recommended Lot Areas:** N/A

**Recommended Lot Width:** N/A

**Building Setbacks****Minimum / Maximum / Side / Rear:**

As necessary for park amenities

**Building Height**

**Minimum:** 1 story

**Maximum:** As necessary to accommodate use

**Street Frontages**

Recreational amenities

Lawn / greenscape

Preserved trees

**Recommended Zoning Amendments**

- Ensure that parks are permitted uses (or special uses if deemed appropriate) in most or all zoning districts.
- Consider a new zoning district or overlay for areas where conservation or open space are the planned land use.
- Consider a Transfer of Development Rights program for private property where the planned land use is conservation or open space.

# Schools and Civic / Municipal Facilities

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These facilities are planned to remain in place. If renovated or expanded, they should strive to enhance the character of the surrounding area. If they are re-located or removed, redevelopment should proceed consistent with the immediately adjacent Community Character areas.

# 5.

## **Remembrance Road Redevelopment Plan**

# Remembrance Road Redevelopment Plan



## Introduction – Historic Context

The Remembrance Road corridor extends northwesterly for approximately 2 miles from Leonard Street to Wilson Avenue. The diagonal alignment of Remembrance Road hints at its historic role as a transportation corridor in the region, and thus to the origins of Walker's growth from rural township to regional suburb.

Indeed, the path taken by Remembrance Road was originally occupied by an electric interurban railroad known as the Lake Line, operated by the Grand Rapids, Grand Haven & Muskegon Railway Co. between 1902 and 1928. The Lake Line connected its three namesake communities, and Walker Station was sited where the railroad's right-of-way bisected the four-way intersection of Kinney Avenue and Richmond Street. One of the railroad's two substations was located here, and its building survives today, operating as a veterinary clinic on the northwest quadrant of the intersection.

Residential development, small businesses, and light industrial buildings clustered around Walker Station during the railroad years, and the Kinney/Richmond intersection became the namesake center of Walker Township (though Township Hall had, since 1867, been located three miles southeast at the intersection of Leonard Avenue and Covell Avenue, an area annexed by Grand Rapids in 1959).

The decline and closure of the Lake Line occurred in tandem with the rise of private automobile transportation and better road infrastructure. The railroad right-of-way was redeveloped as a highway by the Michigan State Highway Department (the predecessor agency to the Michigan Department of Transportation). Due to its direct, diagonal alignment, Remembrance Road was designated as a portion of US Highway 16 in 1926. In the pre-Interstate Highway era, US-16 extended over 1,000 miles, connecting its eastern terminus of Detroit with Grand Rapids and Muskegon, then extending west via ferry to and through Milwaukee and LaCrosse, WI; continuing westward via Sioux Falls and Rapid City, SD; and terminating in central Wyoming, near Yellowstone National Park.

The Remembrance Road corridor through Walker was, therefore, the main route into and out of the Grand Rapids metro area from the 1920s to the 1950s. Its importance can be traced through buildings exhibiting high-quality early-20th Century roadside architectural traits, such as the Walker Roadhouse building at the intersection of Remembrance and Leonard, the former Texaco gas station in the southeast quadrant of that intersection, and the transmission shop building in the northeast quadrant. The Riviera Motel at the intersection of Remembrance and Wilson Avenue is an additional legacy of the corridor's importance.

# Basis for the Vision

After Walker incorporated as a city in 1962, growth continued at pace along the Remembrance corridor. Neighboring farm fields gave way to single-family residential subdivisions developed in the typical mid-20th Century style. A new Walker City Hall was constructed in 1964 on Remembrance near Wilson Avenue, and this area has grown into a complete civic center with a full complement of facilities.

The Walker Center area at Kinney and Richmond continued to serve local commercial needs through the 1970s, but entered a period of diminished importance for the community with the completion of several suburban-style commercial developments near the Remembrance/Leonard intersection during the 1980s and 1990s. One such development, an approximately 55,000 square foot D&W Fresh Market store, was built to serve the area's growing residential population in the early 1980s. This store had closed by 2008, due to poor siting and new competition in the region. After sitting vacant for a number of years, it is currently used as a private storage unit facility.

The Walker City Commission and Planning Commission developed a sub-area plan for the Remembrance corridor in 2011-2013, as an update to the 1998 Walker Master Plan. The corridor was referred to in that plan as Sub-Area 6: The Gateways. This sub-area plan identified several objectives relating to traffic calming along the Remembrance Road corridor that were since achieved:

- Installation of a roundabout at the Remembrance/Wilson intersection (completed in 2015);
- Reconstruction of the Remembrance/Leonard intersection from a “fork” configuration to a T-intersection (completed in 2015);
- Implementation of a road diet along Remembrance, reducing the roadway from four travel lanes to three, and adding bike lanes (completed in 2016);

In addition, the plan specified an objective of adding continuous sidewalks along both sides of Remembrance. This had been achieved on the north side of the road by 2018, in conjunction with an extension of the Fred Meijer Standale Trail along Remembrance to the civic center area. The south side of Remembrance lacks sidewalks between the Coventry Woods Apartments north of the Walker Center Drive intersection, to a point across from the civic center in front of the ACE Hardware store.

## Issues relating to land use and future development addressed in the sub-area plan included:

- Development of a master plan for the former D&W site and immediately surrounding area, incorporating high-quality urban design principles, a mix of uses, and access to a mix of transportation modes;
- Anticipating a nodal approach to future growth along Remembrance, with new development clustered at the intersections of Leonard Avenue, Kinney Avenue, and Wilson Avenue;
- New development at the nodes should be light in imprint, be easily accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, and serve the neighborhoods immediately adjacent.



# The Remembrance Road Corridor Vision

Due to its history—first as a rail line, later as a major national highway, and today as a local road—Remembrance traverses a low-density development pattern that has four principal areas of focus: The Leonard Avenue intersection, the D&W Site, the Walker Center area, and the civic center area.

Each of these four areas lacks the intensity of development achieved in the Standale or Alpine sub-areas of the city, and a nodal approach to future development here anticipates preserving the lower-intensity character of the overall corridor in perpetuity. New development, and redevelopment along the corridor will occur, but it will be gentle, contextual, and traditional in urban form.

## Design Focus: Family Walkable

While Remembrance Road is Walker's civic Main Street, it also serves as a commercial Main Street for those residents who live in the adjacent neighborhoods. Any concept for future development along Remembrance should be tested with the following question: Could a family group - some combination of adults, children, and seniors - feel safe, comfortable, and happy walking to and along Remembrance, either simply for exercise, to treat themselves to ice cream, or to purchase daily necessities?

To ensure that the answer is 'yes', the concept of Family Walkable design must be kept front of mind. This requires that both sides of the corridor have pleasant and safe provision for pedestrians and cyclists; that development is concentrated at nodes spaced relatively evenly along the corridor; and that neighborhood-serving uses are allowed to locate at each node.

Design concepts for the four nodes along Remembrance have been formulated taking into account history, past planning efforts, community feedback, and principles of high-quality urbanism. When achieved, Walker will have a civic Main Street that functions as a memorable and vital part of the community.



## Node 1: Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway node is centered on the intersection of Remembrance Road and Leonard Avenue, and extends northwest along Remembrance for approximately 0.25 mile. It contains several popular businesses including the Walker Roadhouse, the Double Dip Ice Cream shop, and Wonderland Party Store. While bordered to the east by Grand Rapids, this intersection once functioned as the demarcation line between what was perceived as the far outskirts of Grand Rapids and the open countryside beyond: the architectural legacy of several historic gas stations and the Walker Roadhouse speak to the fact that it was the proverbial “last chance” gas and rest stop before reaching Muskegon.



The guiding principle for the Southern Gateway is to maintain a degree of informality in this area while ensuring new buildings orient the rights-of-way, and can be accessible to those arriving without cars. Traffic along Remembrance is further calmed through the addition of on-street parking and narrowed lanes, to create a more comfortable outdoor atmosphere for diners.

### Southern Gateway Design Concept – Key Components

- On-street parallel parking is added to Remembrance Road between Leonard Street and Van Portflet Drive;
- The triangular area at the northwest apex of the Remembrance/Leonard intersection, currently used for parking, is developed as a small plaza with a decorative feature. This plaza can be used as an outdoor seating area for the Walker Roadhouse, and for a new business occupying the small building immediately adjacent formerly housing an appliance repair shop;
- 9,000 square feet of mixed-use infill buildings are developed on the west side of Remembrance; additional activity generated by these buildings will complement and enhance the social energy of the Walker Roadhouse and ice cream stand;
- A new 4,000 square foot mixed-use building anchors the southeast corner of Leonard and Nixon Avenues, providing a greater sense of enclosure. This building could feature Art Moderne architectural styling to pair with the neighboring historic former Texaco gas station building;
- 11,500 square feet of mixed-use buildings are added to the north side of Remembrance, framing the existing transmission shop building. The easternmost of these buildings is set to front the former right-of-way line of Remembrance, preserving the informal character of this corner;
- Neighborhood connectivity is enhanced over time by the eventual extension of Van Portflet Drive and Laughlin Drive to Remembrance. A new north-south ‘B-Street’ connection with on-street parking is constructed along the western edge of the mixed-use area for additional access.
- The small triangular area in front of the electrical substation is re-envisioned as a grassed plaza with a decorative feature.

## Node 2: D&W Site

The D&W Site encompasses the area bordered by Remembrance Road, Walker Village Drive, and the east-west and north-south property lines of the former D&W store. The guiding principle for the D&W Site is to create a mixed-use node for the surrounding neighborhoods with a greater degree of formality in design and architecture, while efficiently using the oddly-shaped parcel to introduce a combination of 'Missing Middle' and new single-family housing to the area, in a pocket neighborhood configuration.

New 'Missing Middle' housing could be developed in a townhouse or rowhouse format, and aimed at seniors or other groups whose housing format preferences are not being met in this part of the city. Single-family homes would be built to a high level of architectural design, and incorporate front porches and other design features found in traditional neighborhood homes.

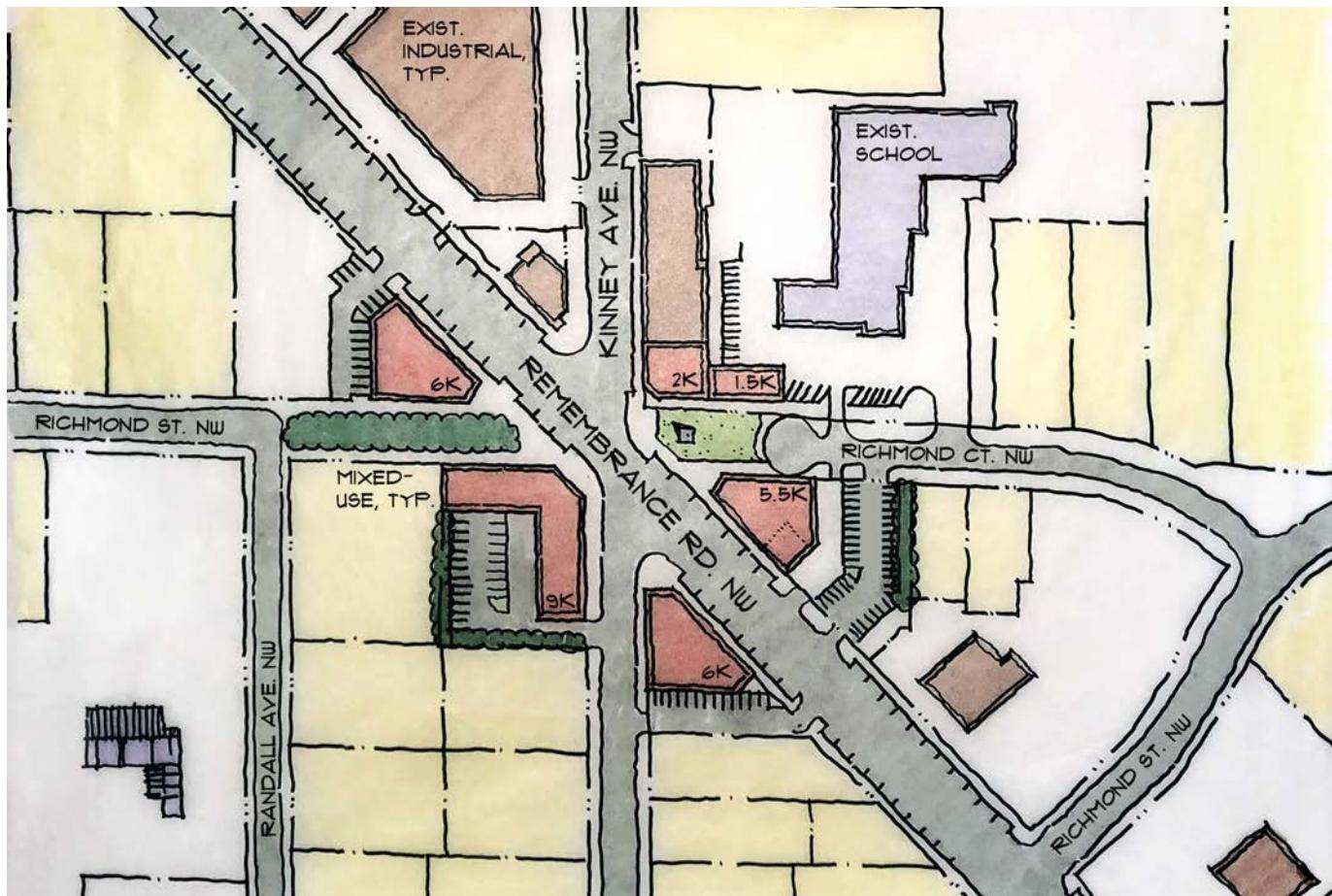


### D&W Site: Key Components

- Approximately 85,000 square feet of mixed-use infill buildings are added to the south side of Remembrance Road, focused on the intersection of Walker Village Drive. These will ideally contain retail uses on the ground floor, with a mixture of office and loft apartments above. The buildings framing the corner of Remembrance and Walker Village Drive will have ornamented façades to denote the importance of the intersection as a neighborhood center;
- An outdoor plaza is located in the rear of the mixed-use buildings, along with surface parking;
- On-street parallel parking is added to Remembrance Road on either side of Walker Village Drive, further calming traffic;
- A pocket neighborhood is developed by connecting Mullins Avenue to Linwood Drive. This neighborhood is built around a small triangular public square, fronted by single-family homes and rowhouses/townhouses. The buildings occupying these lots would be designed to a higher standard than others, so as to frame the public space and reinforce its importance;
- Approximately 20-25 rowhouse/townhouse units are included in the neighborhood, paired with 16 new single-family homes;
- A rain garden occupies the center of the site, providing an attractive bioretention facility.

## Node 3: Walker Center

Walker Center is the historic village center of Walker, developing in parallel with the interurban railroad station. The neighboring residential densities can allow this area to support a variety of small-scale commercial uses, co-existing with the light industrial buildings that operate in the area. Walker Center requires a very light design intervention; its revitalization is contingent on calming traffic along Remembrance, providing sidewalks along the south side of Remembrance, and ensuring new buildings are built to the right-of-way lines.



### Walker Center: Key Components

- Remembrance Road is redesigned to further calm traffic for a distance of 0.25-mile on either side of the Kinney Avenue intersection, to provide a smooth contextual transition between suburban and village contexts. Interventions include adding on-street parking on both sides of Remembrance, narrowing of travel lanes to 10 feet in width, and using brick or a similar tactile material for travel lane pavement.
- The area extending from the cul-de-sac of Richmond Court west to the intersection of Remembrance and Kinney Avenue is developed as a small park/plaza space, with outdoor seating and a decorative exhibit dedicated to the historical significance of the node;
- Remaining corners are infilled with small-footprint mixed-use buildings. These could contain up to 30,000 square feet of floorplate, with adequate room for parking in the rear. Buildings could be one to two stories in height, and contain traditional architectural cues. Uses could include professional office, retail, and second-story residential.

## Node 4: Civic Center

The northernmost node along the Remembrance Road corridor contains the Walker civic center, a restaurant and a hardware store. Taken together, these civic and community institutions are in close proximity, and regularly bring neighbors together. However, they are physically disconnected, both from each other and from surrounding neighborhoods. The design idea behind the Civic Center node aims to unite these community anchors, while building upon their strengths to create a node that anchors this important location in Walker.



### Civic Center: Key Components

- An infill grid of low-speed streets, with narrow widths and parallel on-street parking is created to seamlessly connect commercial and civic buildings to existing adjacent neighborhoods;
- A new street, extending between the restaurant and hardware store, will act as the focal point for a small town center, terminating at the civic campus. This termination point would contain a signalized mid-block crossing of Remembrance, or other traffic calming treatment to ensure natural pedestrian connectivity between the civic campus and the new neighborhood to the south;
- The hardware store and restaurant will be complemented by up to 20,000 square feet of small-scale retail and service businesses in a 'main street' format, either as small one-story buildings, or as traditional shopfront buildings with loft apartments on the second floor;
- The pocket neighborhood developed between Remembrance and Wilson Avenues will contain a mixture of single-family homes and 'Missing Middle' housing formats, including townhomes and rowhouses;
- New residential construction will be spaced appropriately for the transitional context of the area, and will incorporate wetlands preservation and other attractive bioretention features;
- A small park facility is included to serve residents of the existing and new residential areas.

# 6.

# Mobility Plan

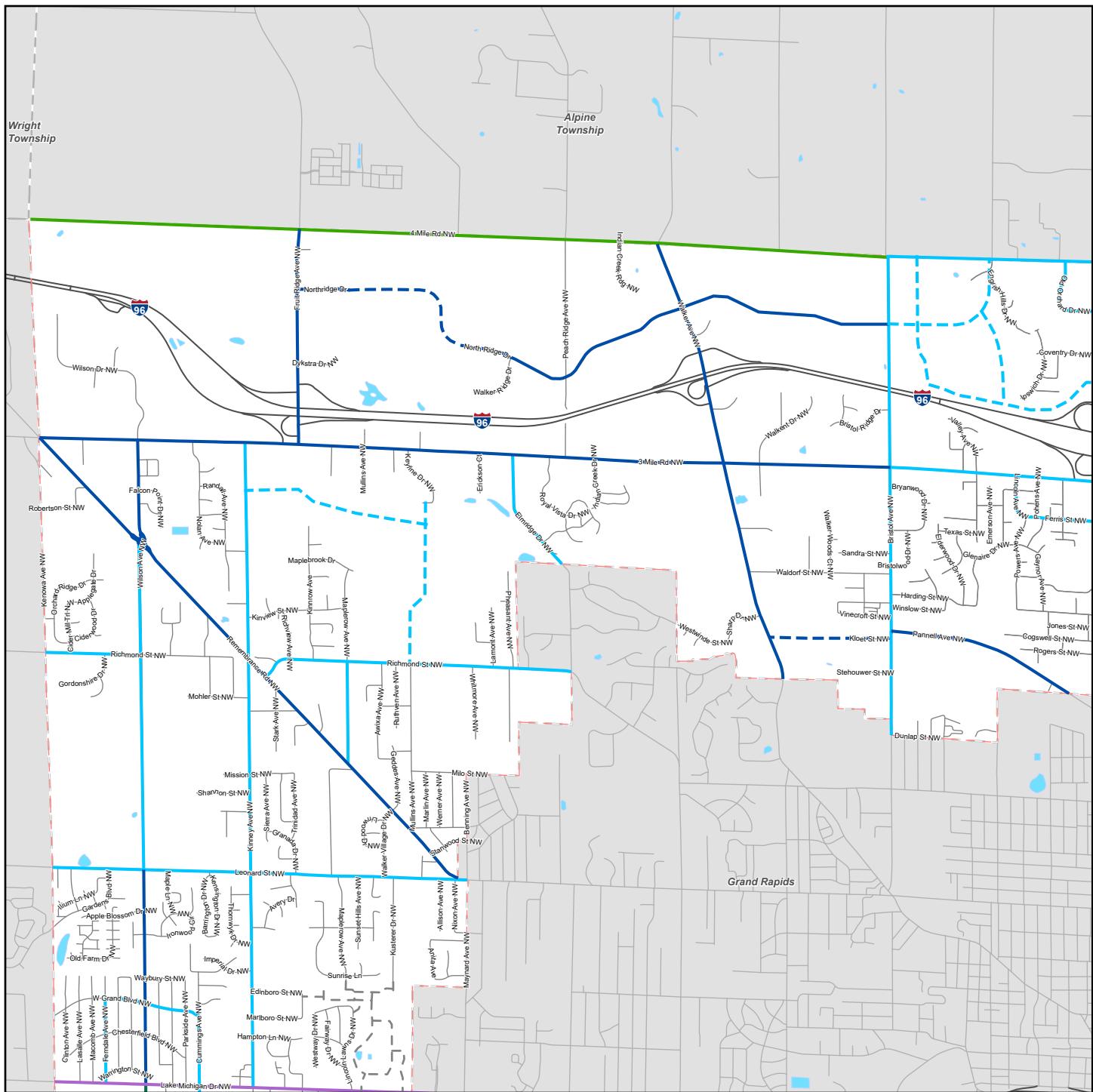
# Corridor Design Plan



## Introduction

The Corridor Design Plan is intended to give guidance and state goals for the corridors throughout Walker. Because specific contexts may vary from street to street and neighborhood to neighborhood, the images and text on the following pages should be taken as guidelines and best practices, rather than specific designs.

However, it is City's goal to achieve the concept of **Complete Streets** throughout Walker, designing corridors to be safe and attractive for all users, and ensuring that streets contribute positively to the vibrancy and economic vitality of the community. Therefore, the guidelines expressed in this plan contain recommendations to re-orient streets away from the needs of through traffic, and towards the needs of local traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists.



# Corridor Design Plan

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

February 20, 2020

## LEGEND

- Proposed Business Connector
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- Proposed Neighborhood Street
- Regional Throughway
- Urban Throughway
- Business Connector
- Neighborhood Connector
- Natural Beauty Corridor
- Natural Beauty Throughway
- Neighborhood Street
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains

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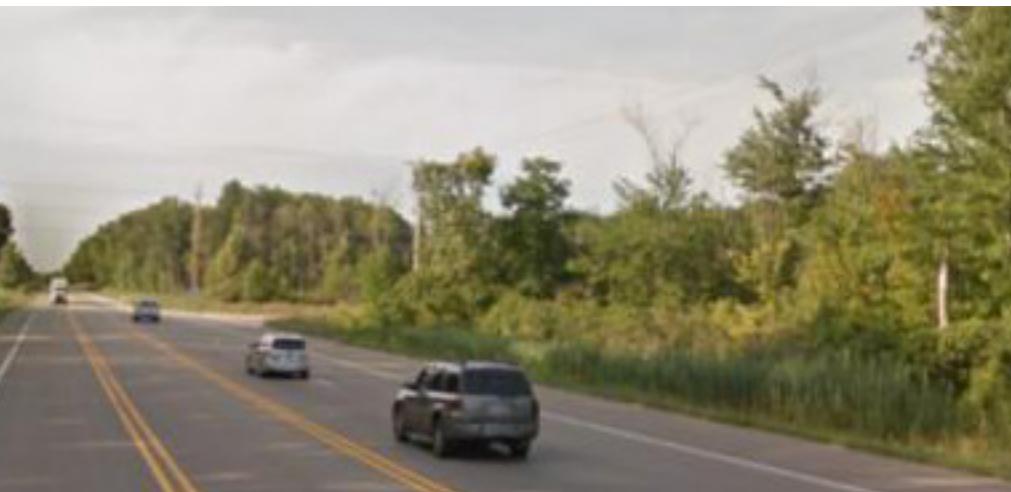
SOURCES  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2019.

## Corridor Design Plan Map Footnotes

1. **Kinney/Remembrance/Richmond.** This plan does not envision reconnecting Richmond Street for automobile traffic across the Remembrance/Kinney intersection. However, the unused public right-of-way where the road has been removed should be used for a public purpose, such as a bike path, parking, park space, a plaza, or pedestrian access.
2. **Richmond/Wilson.** Residents in this area noted that this intersection is frustrating and dangerous. The City should work with MDOT to evaluate the current configuration (stop signs on Richmond and no traffic control device on Richmond) to determine if improvements can or should be made.
3. **Ironwood/3 Mile/Kenowa.** Improvements to this intersection were planned at the time of this plan. This intersection should continue to be monitored for safety and efficiency.



# Business Connector

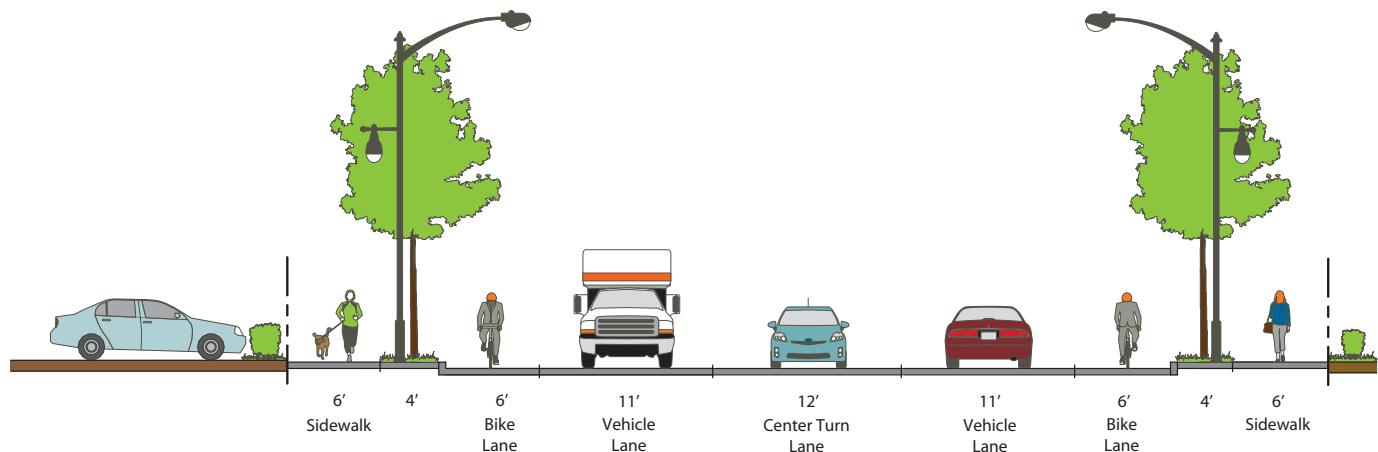


## General Characteristics

- 66-100 feet of ROW
- 10,000 to 25,000 cars per day (and heavy truck traffic)
- 30-45 MPH

Business Connectors are roadways that travel through non-residential areas – particularly Enterprise and Community Enterprise Character Areas. They are designed for high levels of truck traffic. While pedestrians and bicyclists should be able to traverse them safely, and transit access should be efficient, they are predominantly corridors for commercial traffic and commuters.

## Guidelines for Business Connectors



Business Connector

1. Business Connectors should have **wide lanes**, particularly turning lanes, to accommodate trucks safely.
2. Although other designs may be appropriate, business connectors should generally have a **3 or 5 lane cross section** with a **continuous center turn lane**. This prevents rear-end accidents, and allows for efficient through traffic and turning movements.
3. **Sidewalks** should be constructed where possible. **Bike lanes** (or other appropriate bicycle infrastructure) should be constructed where designated in this plan. **Bus bulbs** are desirable in these areas at transit stops to keep through traffic moving.

### **Business Connectors within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster**

- **Wilson Avenue Remembrance Road to 3 Mile Road**
- **Remembrance Road**
- **3 Mile Road**
- **Fruit Ridge Avenue**
- **Northridge Drive (including the planned portion that is not yet constructed)**
- **Walker Avenue**
- **Waldorf Street**
- **Pannell Avenue**

# Neighborhood Connector



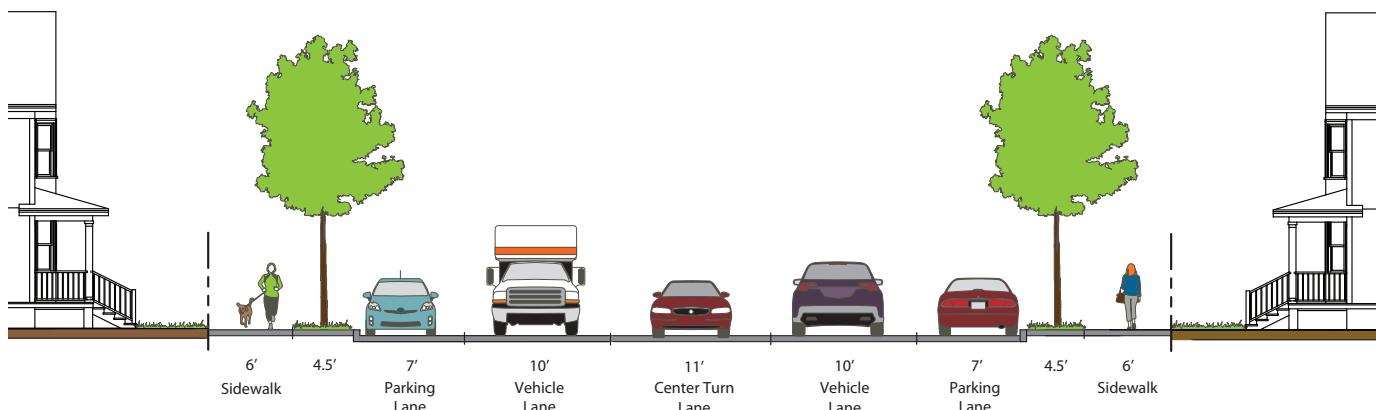
## General Characteristics

- 66-100 feet of ROW
- 5,000 to 25,000 cars per day
- 25-35 MPH (faster in undeveloped areas)

Neighborhood Connectors are roadways that travel through and between neighborhoods, connecting those neighborhoods together. Their land use context is generally residential, but could also include low-intensity retail/service businesses, religious or educational institutions, recreational areas, or preserved open space.

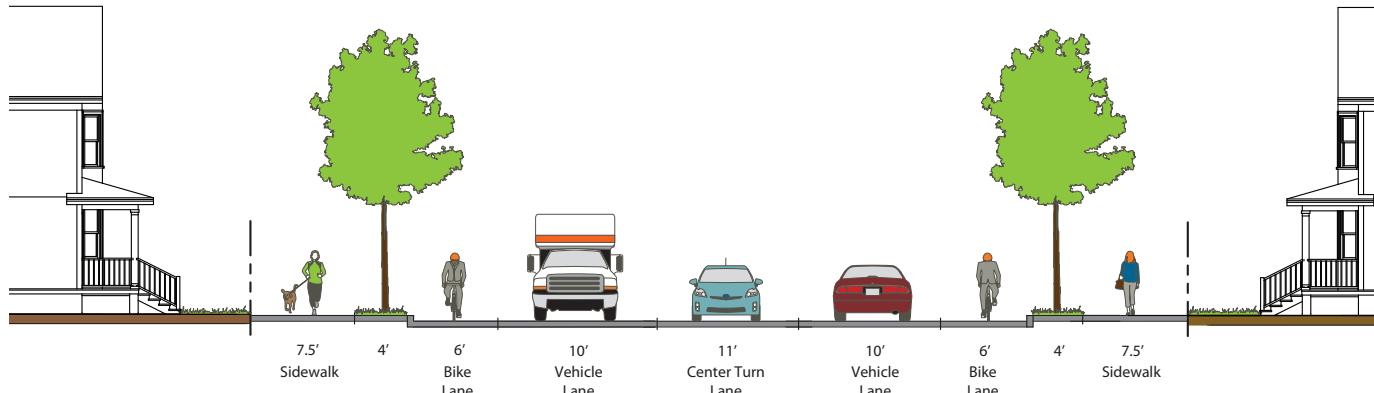
## Guidelines for Neighborhood Connectors

1. Neighborhood Connectors with frequent intersections and driveways should have a **three lane cross section** to allow for left turns and efficient movement of through traffic.
2. Where there are businesses nearby that need the support of **on-street parking**, it should be provided. On street parking is also appropriate in residential areas.



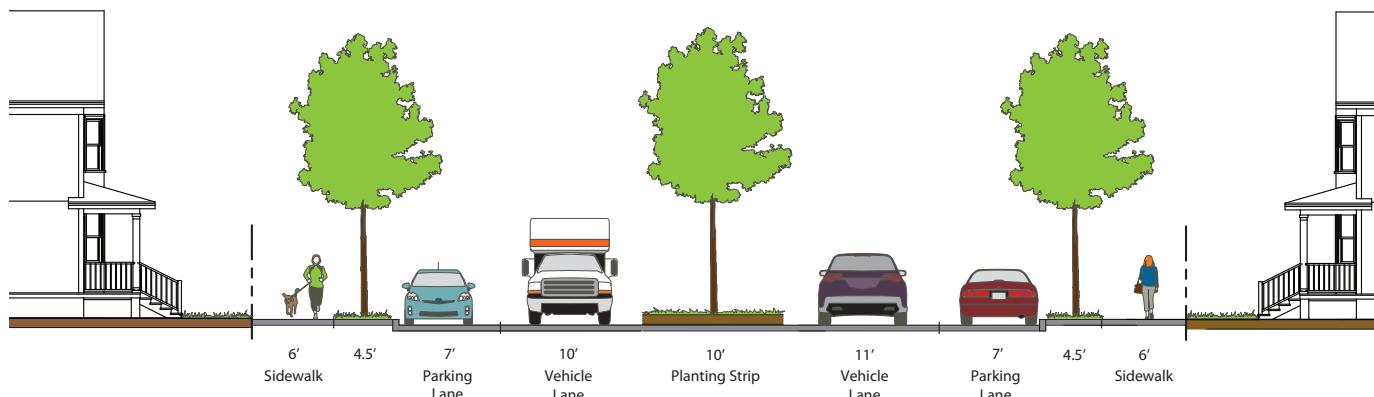
Neighborhood Connector - On Street Parking

3. Neighborhood Connectors should always have sidewalks, with wide, tree-lined buffer areas separating them from the automobile lanes.
4. Bike lanes (or other appropriate bicycle infrastructure) should be constructed where designated in this plan.



Neighborhood Connector - Bike Lanes

5. Bus bulbs are desirable at transit stops to keep through traffic moving.
6. In some areas, medians may be desirable, for aesthetic and tree canopy reasons, and to calm traffic. Medians are recommended for roadways with through traffic within residential areas.



Neighborhood Connector - Median

### Neighborhood Connectors within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster

- **Richmond Street (east of Remembrance Road and west of Wilson Avenue)**
- **Kinney Avenue**
- **Leonard Street**
- **Elmridge Drive**
- **Bristol Avenue**
- **A new road connecting Richmond Street to 3 Mile Road, starting at the intersection of Richmond Street and Mullins Avenue and running north to 3 Mile. This road has already been platted.**
- **A new road connecting Kinney Avenue and the proposed north-south road described above.**

# Neighborhood Streets



## General Characteristics

- 60-66 feet of ROW
- Local Traffic
- 25 MPH

Neighborhood Streets are low traffic corridors designed for local access, mainly to residential uses.

## Guidelines for Neighborhood Streets



1. Neighborhood Streets should be designed with narrow traffic lanes and space for on-street parking along the curbs.
2. All Neighborhood Streets should have sidewalks, buffered from the roadway by wide, tree-lined landscape areas.
3. Cycling on Neighborhood Streets should be encouraged, but bike lanes need not be specifically designated.
4. Transit lines and truck traffic should not be permitted on Neighborhood Streets.
5. Newly constructed Neighborhood Streets should be public roadways, dedicated to the City, and designed based on the guidelines of this plan and the City's engineering standards.

Neighborhood Streets within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster include all roadways not listed in one of the other categories. There are several new neighborhood streets envisioned to create connected residential road networks in the undeveloped portions of the neighborhood cluster.

# New Road Connections

**Richmond Farms Road:** A new **Neighborhood Connector** is envisioned running from the intersection of Richmond Street and Mullins Avenue, north to 3 Mile Road. This road will not be called Mullins Avenue, because there is already a segment of Mullins Avenue connecting to 3 Mile Road, and the new road will not connect to that segment.

**Kinney Connection:** A new **Neighborhood Connector** connecting Kinney Avenue to the new Richmond Farms Road.

## Expressways

- **I-96** traverses the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, with interchanges at Fruit Ridge Avenue and Walker Avenue.

## Truck Routes

Truck traffic is necessary for the function and efficiency of businesses throughout Walker, but it can also cause negative impacts on residential areas, educational and religious institutions, and small retail businesses. Within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, the following roads are designated as truck routes (in addition to **I-96**). On all other roads, truck traffic should be discouraged.

- 3 Mile Road
- Wilson Avenue
- Remembrance Road
- Leonard Street
- Fruit Ridge Avenue
- Northridge Drive
- Walker Avenue
- Pannell Avenue

## Transit Routes

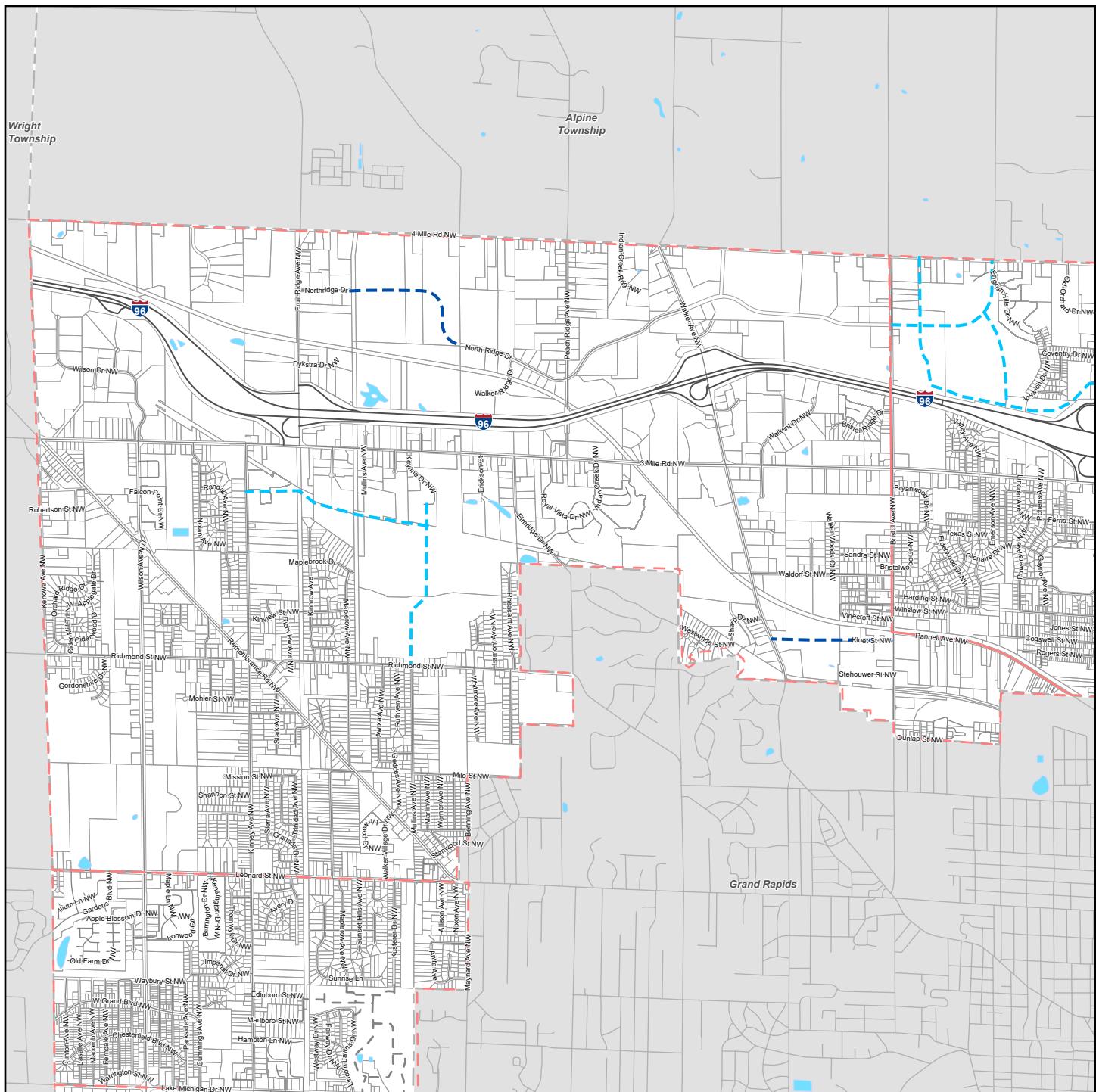
Public transportation is a crucial part of the transportation system. In some areas, the only way to reduce congestion is to take cars off the street by providing other options. Within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, the following routes are designated for transit:

### High Priority

- **Remembrance Road/Leonard Street.** The Rapid's existing Route 7 serves Remembrance Road, Wilson Avenue, and Leonard Street in a one-way loop. The City should work with The Rapid to improve service on these corridors so to make the routing more efficient. Creating Routes "7a" and "7b", with one providing service on Remembrance to the Walker Civic Center or the Wilson/3 Mile industrial park, and the other providing service to the Standale Meijer via Leonard and Wilson, would be one option. The Wilson Crosstown route described below would also improve service in the area.

### Future Vision

- **3 Mile Road/Bristol Avenue.** A 3 Mile Crosstown route would serve the many employers on the 3 Mile Corridor. The service could also proceed to Grand Rapids' Northeast side (via the Alpine Avenue, 4 Mile Road, and the North Park Bridge) to allow for transfers and serve residential populations. Alternatively, it could proceed south on Walker, Bristol, Alpine, or Turner Avenue and serve Downtown Grand Rapids. A separate service on Bristol could also be an option.
- **Walker Avenue/Northridge Drive.** Walker Avenue also serves a large employment base. A route along Walker could serve Downtown Grand Rapids, Bridge Street, and Stocking Avenue, and could also serve Northridge Drive.
- **Wilson Avenue.** A new Wilson Crosstown route should be created and operated by The Rapid. The new route will make a key north-south connection between Rivertown Crossings Mall, Downtown Grandville, Standale (including the Laker Line Bus Rapid Transit, and other Rapid routes), the Walker Civic Center, and, eventually, the industrial park at Wilson and 3 Mile Road.



# New Road Connections

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

September 28, 2020

## LEGEND

- Neighborhood Boundary
- Proposed Business Connector
- Proposed Neighborhood Connector
- Proposed Neighborhood Street
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains



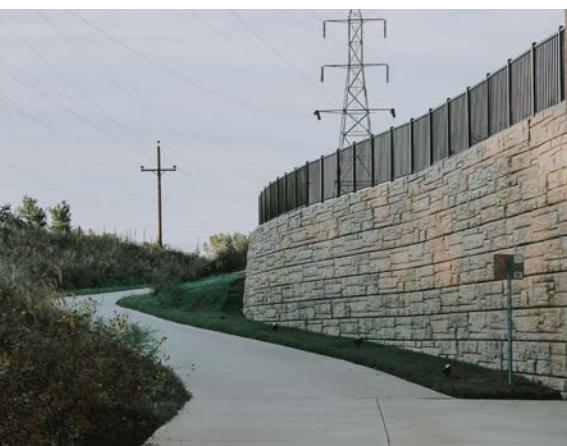
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Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2020.



# Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Non-Motorized Connectivity is crucial for sustainability, vibrancy, and transportation efficiency. This plan envisions the following non-motorized transportation improvements.



## Bike Paths

Off-street bike paths provide the highest level of safety and efficiency for cyclists, but they require right-of-way that is not always available. Therefore, they are best prioritized on high-traffic corridors and roads that run through lightly developed areas.

### **Within the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, the following bike paths already exist:**

- The Fred Meijer Standale Trail, running along the power line right of way between Kinney and Cummings Avenues, then along Remembrance Road, then through the Walker Civic Center to Central Elementary School.
- The Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail, running along 3 Mile Road, and then the old rail right-of-way north of I-96 into Ottawa County.

### **The following additional bike paths are proposed:**

- 3 Mile Road, from Central Elementary School (and a connection to the Standale Trail) to the Pioneer Trail.
- The old rail right of way south of 3 Mile Road, from where it intersects with 3 Mile to Bristol Avenue. Easements will need to be obtained where the rail right of way has been vacated. A portion of the route runs through the City of Grand Rapids, and Grand Rapids has planned for an eastward extension of the trail, so partnership will be necessary.
- Richmond Street, from Wilson Avenue to the Grand Rapids City Limits. The portions of the right-of-way that no longer contain road, due to the re-routing of Richmond near the Remembrance/Kinney intersection, could be used for the pathway. The Grand Rapids Bike Action Plan designates Richmond for bike lanes east of Elmridge, but not west of Elmridge. Walker should partner with Grand Rapids to add bike lanes to Richmond, and to plan the transition from the proposed path in Walker to the proposed bike lanes in Grand Rapids.
- Remembrance Road, from the Standale Trail to Leonard Street, and from the Standale Trail to Wilson Avenue.
- Wilson Avenue, from Remembrance Road to Leonard Street
- Walker Avenue, from 3 Mile Road to the Grand Rapids City Limits. Walker Avenue is planned for bike lanes within the City of Grand Rapids, so partnership will be necessary on the transition from a separated path to bike lanes.
- Bristol Avenue, from 4 Mile Road to the Grand Rapids City Limits. Bristol has existing bike lanes within Grand Rapids, so partnership will be necessary on the transition from a separated path to bike lanes.



## Bike Lanes

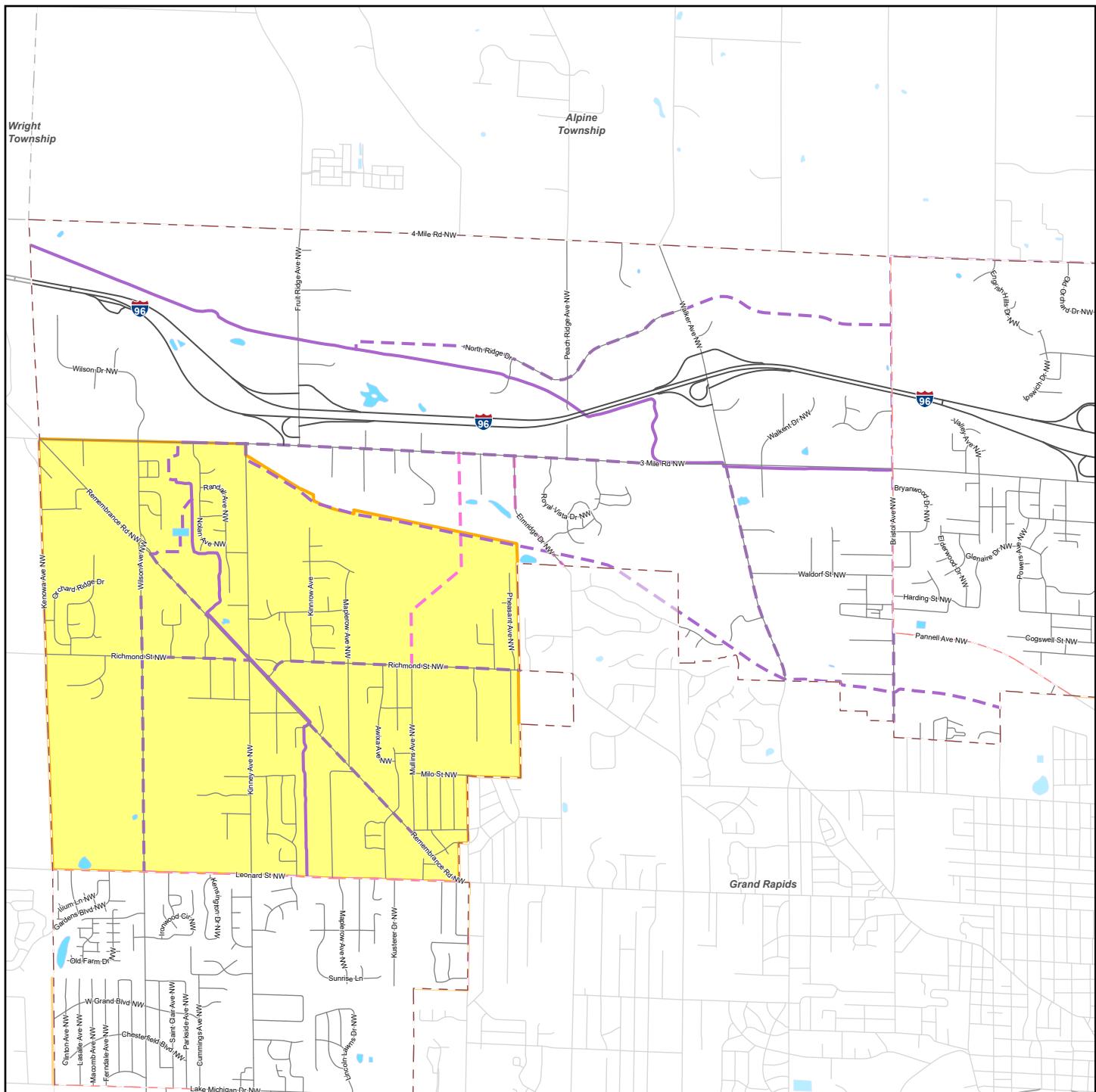
On-street bike lanes are an effective design when space is limited, and through areas where urban-style development is existing or planned. There are no existing bike lanes in the Northwest Neighborhood Cluster, but bike lanes are planned for the following corridors:

- Leonard Street, from Wilson Avenue to the Grand Rapids City Limits. There are already bike lanes on Leonard in the City of Grand Rapids. Walker should extend them.
- Elmridge Drive, from 3 Mile Road to the Grand Rapids City Limits. There are already bike lanes on Leonard in the City of Grand Rapids. Walker should extend them.
- The new “Richmond Farms” road.

## Sidewalk Improvement Zones

Within Sidewalk Improvement Zones, sidewalks should be repaired and widened where they exist and built where they do not exist. Crosswalks should be constructed at busy intersections, including signage and signalization where appropriate.

Sidewalks should be prioritized west of Elmridge Drive and south of 3 Mile Road.



# Non-Motorized Transportation

Northwest Neighborhood  
City of Walker, Michigan

November 1, 2019

## Legend

- Sidewalk Improvement Zone
- Existing Bike Path
- Proposed Bike Path
- Existing Bike Lane
- Proposed Bike Lane
- City of Walker Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundaries
- Freeways
- Roads
- Walker\_Surrounding
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Drains
- Neighborhood Whiteout



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**SOURCES**  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: City of Walker 2019. McKenna 2019.

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# 7.

# Action Plan

# Action Plan

The Action Plan table below details activities and actions needed to implement this plan over the 20 year planning horizon. Actions are listed in time based on when they are likely to be realistic and practical.

**Table 2d.10: Northwest Neighborhood Action Plan**

Land Use	Mobility	Infrastructure	Open Space and Parks
<b>Key Partners:</b> Developers, Business Owners	<b>Key Partners:</b> MDOT, Kent County Road Commission, The Rapid	<b>Key Partners:</b> City of Grand Rapids,	<b>Key Partners:</b> Kent County Parks
<b>2020 - 2025</b>			
Develop Richmond Farms according to the design goals of this plan.	Construct Northridge Drive along the previously platted route	Upgrade infrastructure as necessary to support development.	When Richmond Farms is developed, set aside a location for a new neighborhood park.
Ensure that development along Remembrance Road takes place according to this plan, including zoning revisions to support that development.	Construct the precisely platted road through Richmond Farms.		Set aside a buffer of preserved woodlands on the south side of the industrial uses along 3 Mile Road, from Kinney Avenue to Elmridge Drive.
Ensure that infill development throughout the Neighborhood Cluster is consistent with this plan.	Redesign Leonard Street, Kinney Avenue, Wilson Avenue, Richmond Street, Bristol Avenue and Elmridge Drive as Neighborhood Connectors as described in this plan.		
	Add bike lanes to Leonard Street and Elmridge Drive.		
	Redesign 3 Mile Road, Walker Avenue, Waldorf Street, Pannell Avenue, and Fruit Ridge Avenue as Business Connectors as described in this plan.		
	Utilize the vacant Richmond Street right-of-way near the Kinney-Remembrance intersection for a public purpose - but not for automobile traffic.		
	Upgrade intersection safety at Remembrance/3 Mile and Wilson/Richmond.		
	Improve transit service on Remembrance, Wilson, and Leonard.		
	Construct a bike path on 3 Mile Road from the Pioneer Trail to the Standale Trail.		

Land Use	Mobility	Infrastructure	Open Space and Parks
<b>Key Partners:</b> Developers, Business Owners	<b>Key Partners:</b> MDOT, Kent County Road Commission, The Rapid	<b>Key Partners:</b> City of Grand Rapids,	<b>Key Partners:</b> Kent County Parks
	Upgrade sidewalks in the Sidewalk Improvement Zones		
<b>2026 - 2030</b>			
Ensure that development along Remembrance Road takes place according to this plan.	Construct a bike path on Northridge Drive from Bristol Avenue to the Pioneer Trail.	Maintain existing infrastructure to support high quality of life	Maintain and upgrade parks as needed.
Ensure that infill development throughout the Neighborhood Cluster is consistent with this plan.	Construct a bike path on Walker Avenue from 3 Mile Road to the Grand Rapids City Limits.		
	Construct a bike path on Richmond Street from Wilson Avenue to the Grand Rapids City Limits, making use of the currently vacant right-of-way near Kinney Avenue.		
	Construct a bike path in the unused rail corridor south of 3 Mile Road, from 3 Mile to the Grand Rapids City Limits. Partner with Grand Rapids to make the trail consistent across city lines.		
	Construct a bike path along Wilson Avenue from Remembrance Road to Leonard Street.		
	Construct a bike path along Remembrance Road from Wilson Avenue to Leonard Street, where one does not already exist.		
	Add transit service to 3 Mile and Walker Avenues. Determine whether transit service should be added to Northridge Drive as well.		
<b>2031 - 2035</b>			
Ensure that infill development throughout the Neighborhood Cluster is consistent with this plan.	Evaluate the City's transportation network for upgrades.	Maintain existing infrastructure to support high quality of life	Maintain and upgrade parks as needed.
<b>2036 - 2040</b>			
Ensure that infill development throughout the Neighborhood Cluster is consistent with this plan.	Evaluate the City's transportation network for upgrades.	Maintain existing infrastructure to support high quality of life	Maintain and upgrade parks as needed.



Planning Consultants:



235 E. Main Street, Suite 105

Northville, MI 48167

**T:** 248.596.0920

**F:** 248.596.0930

**[www.mcka.com](http://www.mcka.com)**

John Jackson, AICP ..... President

Chris Khorey, AICP ..... Project Manager

Adam Cook, AICP ..... Sub-Area Planning

Mike Campbell, M.Arch, RA ..... Urban Design

Danielle Bouchard ..... Project Planner

Aislinn Droski ..... Project Planner

Cameron Carley ..... GIS Mapping

Carrie Leitner ..... Art Director

Erin Raine ..... Graphic Design

