

Grand Rapids Charter Township 2007 Comprehensive Plan



As Recommended by the Planning Commission on July 24, 2007

Grand Rapids Charter Township 2007 Comprehensive Plan

Township Board

Michael DeVries, Supervisor

Janice K. Hulbert, Clerk
Chris Afendoulis, Trustee
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Planning Commission

Susan Molhoek, Chairperson

Stephen Fry
Michael Fuller
James R. Saalfeld

Wayne Harrall
Edward Robinette
David A. Van Dyke

Adopted by the Grand Rapids Township Board
_____ 2007

Prepared with the Assistance of:
Tim Johnson, MainStreet Planning Company
Jan Johnson, MainStreet Planning Company
Robert Petko, Progressive AE
1811 4 Mile Road NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525-2442

Maps by Moore & Bruggink
2020 Monroe NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>CHAPTER</i>	<i>PAGE NUMBER</i>
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Significant Changes Since 1990	1
Other Studies and Plans	2
Planning Process	3
Chapter 2 Community Profile	5
Social and Economic Characteristics	5
Township History, Community Facilities and Services	7
Chapter 3 Goals, Policies, and Strategies	9
Residential	9
Sense of Community	11
Commercial and Office	11
Industrial	12
Parks and Recreation	13
Environmental	13
Public Facilities and Services	14
Chapter 4 Land Use Analysis	17
Primary Issues	17
Utilities	17
Streets and Traffic	19
Existing Land Use and Trends	24
Regional Influences	24

Adjacent Communities	26
----------------------	----

Chapter Five Target Areas	29
----------------------------------	-----------

Area 1	Grand Rapids Golf Course Property	29
Area 2	Knapp Street and Leffingwell Avenue	31
Area 3	South of Four Mile Road, at the East Beltline	33
Area 4	North of Three Mile Road at the East Beltline	36
Area 5	South of Three Mile Road, east side of the East Beltline	37
Area 6	South and west of Plainfield Avenue and 4 Mile Road	38
Area 7	Cascade Road Intersection with Forest Hills Avenue	40

Chapter Six Future Land Use	43
------------------------------------	-----------

Chapter Seven Implementation	51
-------------------------------------	-----------

TABLES

Table 33-Population Change for Grand Rapids Township and Surrounding Communities 1990-2000	5
Table 34: Traffic Counts and Level of Service (Additional Tables in Appendix A.)	23

APPENDICES

- A. Demographics and Community Facilities
(Prepared by Grand Rapids Charter Township)
- B. Online Survey
- C. Complete Results of Online Survey
- D. Stakeholder Interview Results

-
- E. Target Areas: Survey Results and Stakeholder Comments

MAPS

- 1. Wetland Inventory
- 2. Drain Inventory
- 3. Sanitary Sewer Atlas
- 4. Watermain Atlas
- 5. School Districts
- 6. Non-Motorized Trail Plan
- 7. Average Daily Traffic: East Beltline and I-96 - 2004 and 2030
- 8. Vacant Land
- 9. Northtown Center Concept Plan
- 10. Plainfield Avenue Roadside Cross Section
- 11. Forest Hills Neighborhood Concept Plan (Cascade Retail Center)
- 12. Future Land Use - Rear Pocket

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In August of 2005, the Grand Rapids Charter Township Planning Commission began gathering data and establishing goals in anticipation of revising the 1990 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In early 2006, the Planning Commission began the process of revising the Plan. The Grand Rapids Charter Township 2007 Comprehensive Plan has been prepared according to the requirements of the Township Planning Act (of Michigan), Public Act 168 of 1959 (MCL 125.321, *et seq.*), as amended.

The 1990 Plan has served the Township well, guiding growth and development for the past fifteen years. Significant changes have occurred in the Township over this time period. According to current Michigan law, the Planning Commission will now need to review the Comprehensive Plan every five years, and will determine at that time whether changes or updates are needed.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SINCE 1990

When viewed on a daily basis, the construction of new houses, roads, commercial establishments and offices appeared to happen gradually over the past 15 years, which allowed Township residents time to mentally adapt to their ever-changing environment. When viewed in retrospect, however, the changes since 1990 are significant and have changed the appearance and character of Grand Rapids Charter Township.

These changes include:

- ◇ Over 5,600 new residents were added to the population of the Township between 1990 and 2005 according to population projections from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission and building permit data. The population estimate for the year 2005 is 16,411, which is an increase of 34% since 1990.
- ◇ 2,021 building permits issued for new dwellings since 1990, bringing the total number of dwellings in the Township to almost 5,800.
- ◇ Three new schools were constructed; Northern Trails 5th and 6th grade on Leonard Street, Knapp Forest Elementary on Knapp Valley Drive, and Knapp Charter Academy on Leffingwell Avenue.

In addition, the Catholic Central Athletic Complex was constructed on the corner of Knapp Street and Leffingwell Avenue.

- ◇ In 2004, the Forest Hills Schools Fine Arts Center was completed adjacent to the Forest Hills Aquatic Center, which was built in 1990.
- ◇ Many new site condominiums have been constructed on private roads. Several of the larger site condominium projects include Flowers Mill, Kensington Woods, Catamount, Winter Wood, Blue Water Pines, Copperwood, and Deer View Estates. A number of platted subdivisions served by public streets were also constructed. Some of these include The Orchards, The Vineyards, Arbor Hills, Lenwood, and Hillside Estates.
- ◇ New commercial development occurred on East Paris south of Cascade, at the corner of 3 Mile Road and the East Beltline, and on the East Beltline between Leonard and Knapp.
- ◇ The Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park was completed in 1995 on the East Beltline, and has been expanded multiple times since then. It has become a major tourist destination in Michigan.
- ◇ The Township Park was completed in the 1990's to include ball fields, playgrounds and walking trails. The Doezema Farms Park on Leonard Street consisting of 120 acres was acquired with Township funds, State of Michigan grants and private donations. This park is proposed to be a nature preserve and interpretive center.
- ◇ Improvements to the East Beltline from I-96 to the Grand River, completed in 1991, included a four-lane boulevard. At that time, the 24-hour vehicle capacity of this roadway was predicted to be 45,000 vehicles per day. In 2004, the Michigan Department of Transportation determined that the East Beltline between Knapp and Leonard was carrying over 52,000 vehicles per day.
- ◇ Large sections of Township land at the intersection of Knapp and the East Beltline were annexed into the City of Grand Rapids in the 1990's. Large retail developments known as Celebration Village and Knapp's Corner, which includes a Meijer store, were constructed on these parcels.

OTHER STUDIES AND PLANS

In response to this growth, the Planning Commission conducted a number of studies and plans to further manage growth in the Township, especially along the East Beltline. These plans and studies included the following:

- ◇ *The 1992 Plan for the East Beltline* which was designed to establish access management and site development standards along this roadway.
- ◇ In 1995, the Planning Commission adopted *A Plan for the East Beltline Area Commercial Land Uses*.
- ◇ In 1998, the *Northeast Beltline Joint Development Plan* was prepared and adopted in conjunction with the City of Grand Rapids and Plainfield Township to address land use and transportation objectives. This plan was adopted by all three municipalities. *The Northeast Beltline Overlay Zone*, adopted by Grand Rapids Township in January of 2004, provides zoning regulations for lands along the East Beltline.

PLANNING PROCESS

Demographics and Community Facilities. In August of 2005, Township planning staff compiled social and economic characteristics based upon U.S. Census 2000 data. Updated information on community facilities was also completed at that time. Discussion of demographics and community facilities occurs in Chapter 2; complete data may be found in Appendix 1.

Planning Commission Goals. In August of 2005, the Planning Commission reviewed the goals and policies developed for the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, and made revisions based upon identified strengths and challenges. These revisions include policies and strategies for maintaining the desired quality of life as the Township continues to develop.

On-Line Citizen Survey. The Planning Commission gathered citizen comments early in the Comprehensive Plan process through an on-line citizen survey (see copy in Appendix 2). The survey was made available in paper copy to residents of Porter Hills Village retirement community, to Cook Valley Estates retirement community, and to any other citizens who preferred a paper copy. Included in the survey were questions regarding future land use in specific areas of the Township as well as questions regarding the future of Grand Rapids Township in general. In total, 241 citizens completed the survey. Complete results of the citizen survey may be found in Appendix 3.

Stakeholder Interviews. Concurrent with the citizen survey, interviews were held with community stakeholders identified by the Planning Commission. Five business stakeholders and four homeowners' associations were interviewed using a series of questions designed to elicit feedback regarding future land use in their organization's area specifically, and in the Township in general.

The stakeholder groups included:

- Forest Hills Foods
- Robinette's Apple Haus and Gift Barn
- Double Dutch Farms
- Northtown Shopping Center
- Eagle Management for Eaglecrest Office Park
- Whispering Pines Neighborhood Association
- The Orchards Homeowners Association
- Flowers Mill Homeowners Association
- Eaglecrest Condominium Association

The results of the interviews are in Appendix 4

Concept Plans for Sub-Areas. The Planning Commission identified two areas for more detailed land use analysis. These two areas are:

- The Northtown Shopping Center and a portion of the Plainfield Avenue Corridor.
- The intersection of Forest Hills Avenue with Cascade Road, including portions of the Cascade Road corridor.

Working with a landscape architect, the Planning Commission developed concept plans for these two areas as well as recommendations for implementation of preferred land use options and design standards. The concept plans are included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Preparation of Draft Comprehensive Plan

Between June and November the Planning Commission developed land use recommendations for the remainder of the Township. On December 19, 2006 the Planning Commission presented the Draft Plan to the Township Board which accepted it. The Plan was distributed to adjacent municipalities in late December of 2006.

Community Reaction Open House and Public Hearing

The Draft Plan was presented to the public at an open house on March 27, 2007 several hours before the official public hearing that same evening.

Adoption of Comprehensive Plan by Township Board

(date of adoption)

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Complete social, economic, and housing data can be found in Appendix 1.

Population Characteristics. Between 1990 and 2000, Grand Rapids Township grew in population by 3,296 persons, or 30.6%. Table 33 compares population growth in Grand Rapids Township over the 1990 to 2000 decade compared to surrounding townships that were most likely to experience similar growth and development issues. Compared to surrounding townships, Grand Rapids Township shows a growth rate that is somewhat higher than surrounding townships in terms of percentage increase, with the exception of Cannon Township. In terms of absolute numbers, Grand Rapids Township falls in the middle compared to surrounding townships.

Table 33
Population Change
Grand Rapids Township and Surrounding Townships
1990-2000

Municipality	1990	2000	Absolute Change	% Change
Cascade Twp.	12,869	15,107	2,238	17.4
Plainfield Twp.	24,946	30,195	5,249	21.0
Ada Twp.	7,578	9,882	2,304	30.4
Grand Rapids Twp.	10,760	14,056	3,296	30.6
Cannon Twp.	7,928	12,075	4,147	52.3

Source: 2000 US Census

Since 2000, the Township estimates the current population to be 16,411. This estimate is based upon building permits for the years 2001 to 2005, multiplied by the average number of people per residential dwelling unit (3). Population projections done by the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission through the year 2020 may be found in Table 3.

Grand Rapids Township tends to have a higher population of persons age 65 and over than other communities in the metropolitan area, which is likely due to the existence of three retirement communities (Porter Hills Village, Heather Hills, and Cook Valley Estates) as well as the Eaglecrest condominium community which attracts retirement age citizens (see Table 6).

Economic Characteristics. Median Household Income in Grand Rapids Township tends to be somewhat lower than in Ada, Cannon¹, and Cascade Townships, and the City of East Grand Rapids. However, Median Household Income is higher in Grand Rapids Township than in Plainfield Township, the City of Kentwood, and Kent County as a whole (see Table 11). Approximately 40% of all households in Grand Rapids Township fall within the \$60,000 to \$124,999 range in annual household income. However, approximately 44% of all households make less than that annually, and the remaining 16% make more than that. The wide range of incomes in Grand Rapids Township must be considered when making plans for public facilities and services.

Employment. In 2000, the industry that employed the greatest number of Grand Rapids Township workers was the educational, health, and social services category. The manufacturing sector is the second leading employer. Over the decade between 1990 and 2000, the number of persons employed in education and health professions increased while the number employed in manufacturing decreased -- a trend that will likely continue into the future. The employment distribution in Grand Rapids Township does not vary significantly from the employment distribution in Kent County as a whole, with some differences in manufacturing and educational services sectors (see Table 12).

Educational Attainment. In 1990, over 33% of Grand Rapids Township residents had a Bachelor's degree, a Graduate degree or another professional degree. By 2000, over 46% had attained a Bachelor's, Master's, professional or Doctorate degree.

Travel Time to Work. In 2000, approximately 59% of Grand Rapids Township residents traveled between 10 and 24 minutes to their place of work, while just over 17% of residents traveled less than 10 minutes to work. Another 19.5% of residents traveled more than 24 minutes to their place of work, while the remaining 4.5% of Grand Rapids Township residents worked at home.

¹ Cannon Township's Median Household Income (not included in Table 9) is \$70,925

Housing. Census 2000 housing data for Grand Rapids Township shows that over 58% of all households have lived in their current dwelling unit for 10 years or less, compared to over 68% for Kent County as a whole. Looking more closely at the data, Grand Rapids Township and Kent County have similar percentages of persons living in owner occupied dwelling units for 10 years or less (56.33% and 58.33% respectively).

However, when looking only at the persons living in renter occupied housing units, those who have lived in the unit for 10 years or less tends to be higher for both the Township and the County, with the County significantly higher at 91.95% than the Township at 73.77%. More detailed data can be found in Table 24.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Grand Rapids Township increased by 32.84% (see Table 25). By the year 2000, the Township had 5,006 dwelling units. From 2000 through 2005, another 963 units have been built, for an average of 160.5 units per year over the past six years.

In the year 2000 over 27% of all housing units in Grand Rapids Township are 10 years or less in age.

Renter occupied housing units in Grand Rapids Township make up 10.3% of all housing units, compared to approximately 28% of all units in Kent County as a whole.

TOWNSHIP HISTORY, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES & NATURAL FEATURES

In addition to social, economic, and housing data, information regarding Township history as well as community facilities and services, sidewalks and the Township Trail Plan may be found in Appendix 1. Additionally a wetlands map and drain map are found in the Maps Section along with a map of the school districts in the Township.

CHAPTER 3

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goals, policies, and strategies have been developed by the Planning Commission based upon goals stated in the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, a strengths and challenges workshop held in August of 2005, and input gathered via the citizen survey and stakeholder interviews administered as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan update.

The goals address residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational land use, as well as environmental quality. Policies for extensions of public facilities and services for future land use are also addressed.

The goals stress the importance of continuing the predominately single-family residential character of the Township, increasing opportunities for non-owner occupied housing, promoting a sense of neighborhood and community, requiring sidewalks, continuing pathway construction, preserving wetlands, and cooperating with adjacent communities.

The goal, policies, and strategies are as follows:

RESIDENTIAL

Goals

1. Provide a choice of housing type while continuing to encourage and maintain the Township's predominantly single family, traditional suburban residential character.
2. Encourage new residential developments which enhance the quality of life.
3. Preserve and strengthen the stability of the existing residential areas in the Township.
4. Encourage residential developers and individual single family homeowners to respect the natural features of the land.

Policies

1. Through the use of site design, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and gathering places, recreational opportunities and convenience retail and service amenities, promote a sense of neighborhood in residential developments.

2. Encourage the linking of new and existing neighborhoods with pedestrian paths; provide walkways between schools and new or existing neighborhoods.
3. Promote the development of single family homes on a neighborhood basis which can be adequately and economically served by public utilities, roads, and other public and community services.
4. Provide for a range of housing types, to accommodate varying needs in household size, location, style, and income levels, which are consistent with the needs of a changing population and compatible with the character of existing residences in the area.
5. Promote the preservation of existing housing through proper code enforcement.
6. Encourage the Planned Unit Development concept as a means of integrating residential, neighborhood retail, and office uses to be compatible with the suburban rural character of the Township.
7. In identified locations, plan for a mix of residential uses, retail, and open space in a traditional neighborhood layout.
8. Prevent the intrusion of vehicular traffic and incompatible uses into residential areas. Except as noted in No. 7, residential areas should be separated from commercial, industrial, and other intensive uses as well as traffic by open space, landscaped areas, and other buffering methods.

Strategies

1. Encourage development within the utility service boundary if serviced by public water and sanitary sewer service.
2. Encourage multi-family dwellings in identified locations and do not discourage non-owner occupied housing options.
3. Incorporate sidewalks as a required element in residential and commercial developments under certain provisions.
4. Develop mixed-use or village center ordinances that will result in traditional suburban or neighborhood development that meets the functional and aesthetic standards of the community.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Goals

1. Consider a location for a Township Center which may include shops, plazas, and civic facilities such as a Township hall and library.
2. Consider the possible implications of incorporating as a village or city in regard to future land use and to the future of the Township in general.
3. Promote interaction among Township residents through the Township website.

COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE

Goals

1. Commercial areas, where permitted, should be aesthetically pleasing.
2. Discourage the development of commercial uses in a strip pattern along major thoroughfares.
3. Encourage a mix of residential, retail, and office uses in planned developments.
4. Limit commercial land uses, in appropriate locations, to serve the convenience shopping needs of current and future Township residents.

Policies

1. Control commercial and office development along the East Beltline through zoning regulations and review of site plans by Township officials to reduce or eliminate land use and traffic conflicts. Emphasize review of visual impacts of development along the East Beltline and the contribution of these impacts to the overall character of Grand Rapids Township.
2. Neighborhood commercial uses should be designed and located so they complement and do not conflict with nearby residential uses. Consideration should be given to reducing impacts of commercial development that fronts upon the East Beltline and abuts residential uses.
3. Commercial and office development should be located and designed to minimize traffic congestion on and off site, to be compatible with community character and improve the aesthetics

of the area through proper landscaping, signs, and building design.

Strategies

1. Require cross access easement agreements in commercial developments where it will improve traffic flow and minimize congestion.
2. Consider adopting transitional use provisions and improve greenbelt and buffering requirements between commercial and residential areas.
3. Support and encourage improvements to the Plainfield Avenue and Four Mile Road corridors that will result in maintaining and improving the commercial viability of the area. Specifically, support the re-development plan for Plainfield Avenue as prepared by the Corridor Improvement Authority.
4. Include consideration for pedestrian and bicycle access and gathering areas when reviewing elements of proposed commercial development.

INDUSTRIAL

Goals

1. Limit industrial development to only those uses which would not erode the present rural-suburban residential nature of the Township, adversely affect residential or agricultural areas, unduly increase traffic congestion, or have other undesirable effects.

Policies

1. Continue to recognize the limited site potential for significant industrial development in the Township.
2. Where and when established, industrial areas should be separated from residential areas by appropriate buffer strips, open space, or other transitional land uses.
3. Industrial nuisances such as air pollution, noise, and vibration should be controlled by adequate zoning and performance standards.
4. Limit industrial uses to those areas where adequate public utilities and roadways are already in place.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Goals

1. Provide geographically balanced recreational opportunities with convenient and safe access for users.
2. Encourage the development of parks that will contribute to the unique rural-suburban character of the Township.
3. Assure that as the Township develops, adequate land is set aside for recreational purposes.
4. Encourage the availability of a wide variety of recreation opportunities for residents of all ages living throughout the Township.

Strategies

1. Development proposals should be reviewed with consideration to adequate provisions for inclusion of planned sections of the non-motorized path plan.
2. Incorporate sidewalks as a required element in residential and commercial developments under certain provisions.
3. Develop sidewalk and pathway construction standards and maintenance provisions.
4. Preserve rights-of-way along Kent County main roads for future non-motorized pathways and road improvements. For example, consider additional setback requirements for buildings as well as tree planting setbacks.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Goals

1. Preserve and protect sensitive environments and open space from the harmful effects of incompatible development.
2. Assure that all land development activity respects the features of the natural environment.
3. Attain a high level of environmental quality while at the same time fostering utilization of the Township's natural resources.

Policies

1. Support state and federal environmental regulations in order to protect wetlands, floodplains, slopes, and other sensitive natural areas.

2. Require environmental impact statements for developments in or near wetland areas.
3. Require all developments to provide appropriate landscaping in order to improve aesthetics, air quality, provide shade, and serve as buffer zones between different land uses.

Strategies

1. Consider developing a wetland protection ordinance for those wetlands not regulated by the State of Michigan.
2. Identify areas for long-term preservation.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Goals

1. Provide an adequate system of public sewers, water supply, and drainage controls to meet current and future needs.
2. Provide public services and community facilities in an economic manner.
3. Maintain high level of public safety provided by Township resources as well as cooperation with neighboring municipalities.
4. Provide a transportation system which takes into account the need for adequate north-south and east-west travel for local traffic, considering the presence in the Township of the East Beltline, a major north-south artery.

Policies

1. Discourage or prohibit non-residential development in areas not served by public water and sewer.
2. Encourage growth in logical and desirable areas and regulate growth in other areas by appropriate utility extension policies.
3. By rezoning restrictions, building code provisions, and other means, regulate growth in poorly drained areas. Require construction of drainage facilities where necessary.
4. Assure that fire protection, emergency medical service, and police services necessary to maintain the safety, security, and well-being of Township residents are being adequately provided.
5. Development a capital improvements plan to determine future public projects and needs, a schedule of implementation, and methods of financing.

6. Support an atmosphere of cooperation among adjoining units of government, school districts, and other public agencies to maximize utilization of public investments. Maintain and support joint planning and zoning along the northern portion of the East Beltline with the City of Grand Rapids and Plainfield Charter Township.
7. Encourage and support further education and professional growth of leadership and staff.
8. Enforce existing local ordinances.

CHAPTER 4

LAND USE ANALYSIS

PRIMARY ISSUES

Growth and development issues in Grand Rapids Township are primarily the result of five major factors:

1. The central location of Grand Rapids Township in relationship to the major employment centers in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.
2. The presence of the East Beltline (M-44 and M-37), a major north-south transportation route that runs the entire length of the Township.
3. The availability of municipal water and wastewater services.
4. The presence of excellent schools systems within the Township.
5. The predominately rural-suburban character of the Township.

In short, Grand Rapids Township is ideally located, not only for residents seeking a high quality of life, but also for retailers seeking high visibility and excellent access for customers. While these factors can all be viewed as positive assets, they do contribute to the constant need to balance growth opportunities with quality of life issues.

The following land use analysis addresses in more detail the factors that impact current and future land use in Grand Rapids Township, and will be an integral part in the rationale for the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

UTILITIES

Sanitary Sewer. Sanitary sewer service in Grand Rapids Township is provided primarily by the City of Grand Rapids. Plainfield Township provides sanitary sewer service to properties located in the extreme northwest portion of the Township. Several older residential subdivisions located in the northwest portion of the Township are not yet served by sanitary sewer, but are planned for sewer in the future if the need for a municipal system for these properties should arise.

Grand Rapids Township has a defined sewer service area, which encompasses all but the northeastern portion of the Township. (The Sanitary Sewer Atlas may be found in the Maps Section.) Due to

changes in topography, additions to the sewer service area in the northeast portion of the Township would present a challenge. Any changes to the boundary lines for the sewer service area are subject to review and approval by the Utility Advisory Board which is comprised of representatives from the City of Grand Rapids and sewer customers from other communities.

Two community sewer systems exist in the Township: one at Shear's Crossing on Knapp Street, and another at Sycamore Woods located at the northeast end of Shear Avenue. The remainder of homes and businesses in the Township are served by individual septic systems.

According to Kent County Health Department officials, no neighborhood areas are currently experiencing problems with septic system function.

Water. Most of the municipal water supply in Grand Rapids Township is provided by the City of Grand Rapids, while a number of properties in the northwest portion of the Township obtain water from Plainfield Township. The City of East Grand Rapids maintains the water lines serving properties along Robinson Road between Woodward Lane and Cascade Road, including those properties on Mercer Drive and Mercer Court. The water supply to this area is provided by the City of Grand Rapids.

The defined water service area includes all but the extreme northeast portion of the Township. (The Watermain Atlas may be found in the Maps Section.) Any proposed changes to the water service area would go before the Utility Advisory Board in the same manner as any changes to the sewer service area.

All other properties in the Township are served by private wells. According to Kent County Health officials, some areas of ground water contamination exist just north of the Township's northern boundary in the vicinity of Hoag Avenue at Four Mile Road. This contamination is the result of older waste disposal operations. Properties in Grand Rapids Township may be affected by this contamination at some point. Any opportunities to provide public water to those properties in the vicinity of Hoag and Four Mile Road would be viewed favorably by the Kent County Health Department.

Table 32 shows the number of Grand Rapids Township utility accounts as reported by the City of Grand Rapids.

Table 32
Water and Sewer Accounts
Grand Rapids Township
2005

Utility	Accounts
Water Only:	621
Sewer Only:	153
Both Water and Sewer:	3,027
Total Accounts:	3,801

27. City of Grand Rapids Water Department

STREETS AND TRAFFIC

Impacts of Residential Development. Grand Rapids Township is not unlike other historically rural townships in that it is composed of an increasing number of public and private residential local streets that are accessed via County local and primary roads that become more heavily traveled as residential development continues in the Township. A system of County roads that historically was intended to serve larger rural parcels now serves many smaller parcels that feed into a limited number of collector streets, minor arterials, and major arterials.

As of May 2005, the Kent County Road Commission has certified 17.36 miles of County Primary Roads in Grand Rapids Township, and 56.56 miles of County Local Roads. Many residential developments are served by private roads (see Street Classification Map).

The result of this development pattern is the continuous challenge to provide access for developing parcels while balancing planned densities with the capacity of roadways to handle increasing amounts of residential traffic, particularly during peak hours.

Impacts of East Beltline Development. Past and current commercial development on the East Beltline has had the most visible traffic impact within Township, while much of the East Beltline traffic is generated from beyond the Township’s municipal borders. Both Township residents and non-residents rely on this roadway as they commute to places of employment. Convenient access is provided to both Interstate 96 and 196 via the interchange located at the East Beltline between Bradford Street and Michigan Avenue.

Figure 1.2 in the Maps Section as prepared by Michigan Department of Transportation shows Existing and Future (2030) Average Daily Traffic. As more destination retail and service businesses develop along the East Beltline, traffic will continue to be a challenge, but mechanisms already in place such as the Plan for the East Beltline and the East Beltline Overlay District will help assure the continued functionality of this regionally important roadway.

Road Improvements. The Kent County Road Commission is planning for the following road improvements within the next five years in Grand Rapids Township:

- Widen Knapp Street east of the East Beltline.
- Widen Leonard Street east of the East Beltline.
- Widen Forest Hill Avenue south of M-21 (Fulton Street)

The Michigan Department of Transportation has planned several projects which will improve expressway access for Grand Rapids Township residents. Improvements, which are planned to begin in the year 2005 and continue through the year 2030, include:

- A ramp from eastbound I-96 to the East Beltline that will go over I-196 and eliminate the need to negotiate through eastbound I-196 traffic in order to exit at the East Beltline.
- Two ramps at I-96 and M-21 (Fulton Street) which will create a full-access interchange.
- An additional lane on each side of I-196 from Ottawa Avenue in downtown Grand Rapids to Cascade Road.

Improvements planned for the East Beltline include construction of a third through-lane in each direction from north of Knapp Street to M-21 (Fulton Street).

Traffic Counts. Recent traffic counts may be found in Table 34 below, which includes the Level of Service (LOS) and Volume to Capacity Ratio (VCR) at which the roadway is currently functioning.

Roadways are designed with a 24-hour Capacity or the number of vehicles that the roadway is intended to accommodate within a 24-hour period. Two-lane paved roadways generally are designed to carry 13,600 vehicles within a 24-hour period, with some variation dependent upon roadway width, geometry, and other factors such as number of driveways and location of turning movements.

Level of Services may range from A to F, with LOS A representing virtually ideal driving conditions and LOS F representing highly congested conditions where traffic may come to a standstill. LOS C is

typically regarded as acceptable driving conditions, and is present when the volume of a roadway falls within .51-.75 of the capacity for which it is designed. No roadways in Table 34 are functioning at less than a Level of Service C.

Table 34 does show that Forest Hill Avenue south of Fulton Street (M-21) is at Level of Service C and that traffic volumes have increased significantly since 2000. This road serves a number of adjacent older (Forest Hills) and newer (The Vineyards) subdivisions and also serves to connect Cascade Road and Fulton Street. This connection may account for much of the increase in traffic as drivers use this north south route as an alternative to the East Beltline or I-96 during peak traffic hours.

If traffic continues to increase and the Level of Service deteriorates widening may be necessary to improve the flow of traffic. Such widening would likely result in the removal of many mature trees which are located in the right of way. These trees define the character of this roadway, provide shade and a visual buffer for the houses fronting on this street, provide a pleasing driving experience and help to keep vehicle speeds lower because of their closeness to the street.

In the event that Forest Hill Avenue is widened, measures should be taken to preserve as many trees as possible in order to maintain the residential character of this street.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has prepared Level of Service (LOS) analysis for several intersections within Grand Rapids Township in advance of planned improvements to the East Beltline. Several intersections within the Township will be functioning at Level of Service F at Peak-Hour by the design year 2030 unless improvements are made.

These include: M-44/M-21; M-44/Leonard Street; M-44/Knapp Street. Improvements planned by MDOT are predicted to improve levels of service to D at the M-21 and Leonard Street locations, and to Level of Service C at the Knapp Street intersection.

North South Traffic

As traffic continues to increase on the East Beltline, north - south traffic flow through the Township will become more important to Township residents as they will likely seek alternate routes to the Beltline. Such alternate routes are Dunnigan, Maguire, Leffingwell, Hoag, Bird, Crahen and as noted above, Forest Hill Avenue. These roads, however, do not extend the length of the Township forcing local traffic back onto the Beltline to complete the journey.

New routes may need to be considered to connect major east west roads and provide a more continuous north-south vehicle travel path.

Several routes to be considered are: connecting Knapp and Leonard through Section 14; connecting Knapp Court and Leonard in Section 13; connecting Leonard and Michigan through Section 23 or 24; and providing a bridge over I-96 for the extension of Leffingwell to Michigan.

These connections can be provided in part as new residential developments are built.

**Table 34
Traffic Counts and Level of Service**

Street Name	Location	Direction	2000	Date	2002	Date	2003	Date	2005	Date	Increase	LOS	VCR
Dean Lake	North of 4 Mile	NB							7097	5/23		C	0.52
Dean Lake	North of 4 Mile	NB							7049	5/23		C	0.52
Dean Lake	South of 4 Mile	NB			5231	6/27			5137	5/23	-94	B	0.38
Dean Lake	South of 4 Mile	SB			4886	6/27			5076	5/23	190	B	0.37
3 Mile	West of Dean Lake	EB			4021	6/27			3730	5/23	-291	B	0.27
3 Mile	West of Dean Lake	WB			3924	6/27			3895	5/23	-29	B	0.29
3 Mile	East of Bird	EB			4178	6/27			4453	5/23	275	B	0.33
3 Mile	East of Bird	WB			3796	6/27			4444	5/23	648	B	0.33
3 Mile	West of Dunnigan	EB	1506	9/13			1851	6/12			345	A	0.14
3 Mile	West of Dunnigan	WB	1460	9/13			2041	6/12			581	A	0.15
3 Mile	East of McGuire	EB			957	6/27			1040	5/23	83	A	0.08
3 Mile	East of McGuire	WB			937	6/27			1051	5/23	114	A	0.08
Dunnigan	South of 3 Mile	NB	340	9/13			447	6/12			107	A	0.03
Dunnigan	South of 3 Mile	SB	307	9/13			458	6/12			151	A	0.03
Knapp	West of Leffingwell	EB	5382	9/14			5339	6/12			-43	B	0.39
Knapp	West of Leffingwell	WB	4713	9/14			4842	6/12			129	B	0.36
Knapp	West of Dunnigan	EB	5536	9/14			5830	6/12			294	B	0.43
Knapp	West of Dunnigan	WB	5124	9/14			4701	6/12			-423	B	0.35
Knapp	East of Dunnigan	EB	5316	9/14			5212	6/12			-104	B	0.38
Knapp	East of Dunnigan	WB	4637	9/14			4160	6/12			-477	B	0.31
Knapp	East of McGuire	EB							5539	5/9		B	0.41
Knapp	East of McGuire	WB							5681	5/9		B	0.42
Leffingwell	South of Knapp	NB	3529	9/14			3114	6/12			-415	A	0.23
Leffingwell	South of Knapp	SB	3248	9/14			2402	6/12			-846	A	0.18
Leonard	West of Crahen	EB	2382	9/20			2239	6/30			-143	A	0.16
Leonard	West of Crahen	WB	2976	9/20			2671	6/30			-305	A	0.20
Crahen	North of Fulton/M-21	NB			3753	7/1			5916	5/25	2163	B	0.44
Crahen	North of Fulton/M-21	SB			3918	7/1			4623	5/25	705	B	0.34
Forest Hills	South of Fulton/M-21	NB					4372	6/11	5715	5/31	1343	B	0.42
Forest Hills	South of Fulton/M-21	SB					4927	6/11	9403	5/31	4476	C	0.69
Forest Hills	South of Cascade	NB	5111	9/18			8292	6/11			3181	C	0.61
Forest Hills	South of Cascade	SB	6605	9/18			6406	6/11			-199	B	0.47
Ada	East of Forest Hill	EB	3774	9/19			3455	6/11			-319	A	0.25
Ada	East of Forest Hill	WB	3071	9/19			3907	6/11			836	B	0.29

Source: Kent County Road Commission Traffic Counts, 2000 – 2005 (Note: For these locations, the most recent traffic counts occur in 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2006).

EXISTING LAND USE & TRENDS

The Introduction section of this document describes many of the land use changes which have occurred since the adoption of the 1990 Comprehensive Plan. Through these changes Grand Rapids Township has continued to be primarily a community comprised primarily of single family dwellings on individual lots.

Commercial development along the East Beltline has certainly altered the appearance and function of this major roadway but residential growth continues to define the future of Grand Rapids Township as evidenced by the 2021 single family building permits issued since 1990. This trend of detached single family dwellings is expected to continue with more intensive land uses expected to be developed along and within one-quarter mile of the East Beltline. Much of the Township has been developed but a fair amount of vacant land remains.

In early 2006 the Grand Valley Metro Council produced a Vacant Land Map (Map Section) which illustrates the location of vacant land in the Township. The total acreage of these vacant parcels amounts to 1123 acres. These lands do not contain any buildings. Some of these parcels may not be buildable due to steep slopes, the presence of wetlands, or poor soils. Also this map does not consider those parcels which contain a house but are large enough to be sub-divided for additional lots and dwellings.

Assuming 75% of these 1123 acres can and will be developed (about 840 acres) at an average density of 2.5 dwelling units per acre, over 2000 new dwellings will likely be added to the existing housing stock. Assuming the 2000 US Census average household size of 2.78 remains somewhat constant these additional dwellings will add over 2300 residents to the 2005 population estimate of 15,803 for a total of 18,144 .

Table 3 in the Appendix provides a projected population of 22,152 in 2020. This may be high in light of the assumptions in the above paragraph. In order to achieve this projection, which is based on past growth trends, additional land will need to be developed and/or the average density or household size must increase.

REGIONAL INFLUENCES

Grand Valley Metro Council Residential Market Potential Study. Grand Rapids Township is a member of the Grand Valley Metro Council, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. Studies and information are made available to member communities with the intent of encouraging region-wide growth-management policies.

In October of 2004, the Metro Council contracted with Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc. to prepare an Analysis of Residential Market Potential specifically within urban centers, town centers, and new traditional neighborhoods. The study concluded that considerable demand exists for new housing within more compact forms of development such as Neighborhood Centers/New Traditional Neighborhoods. The range of housing types within these neighborhoods could include courtyard apartments, townhouses, live-work units, and detached single-family units. The study focused on the market for more compact forms for development while acknowledging that another segment of the market will still prefer low-density suburban or rural locations.

The relevance of this study to Grand Rapids Township Comprehensive Plan is that at least one market study supports planning for areas of compact, mixed-use residential neighborhoods with traditional neighborhood amenities such as parks and pedestrian access.

The Right Place, Inc. The Right Place, Inc. is a regional economic development organization that exists to promote the greater Grand Rapids area for business and investment opportunities.

A report published in October of 2005 highlighted the area's many strengths including high rankings in terms of knowledge capacity, capability, and sustainability. According to one index, the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) achieved a #1 ranking in term of Research and Development Expenditure by Business per Capita, and Private Equity Investment per Capita.

West Michigan in general is ranked highly as a family-friendly place to be, with entertainment and recreational opportunities readily available. Grand Rapids also ranked highly as a good place for young singles.

The information compiled by The Right Place, Inc., combined with the excellent school systems available in Grand Rapids Township, assures that the Township will continue to attract residents who locate within the greater Grand Rapids area.

North East Beltline Joint Development Plan. In June of 1998, the North East Beltline Joint Planning Board adopted the North East Beltline Joint Development Plan in cooperation with Plainfield Charter Township, the City of Grand Rapids, and the Grand Valley Metro Council. In addition, the Plan includes a Land Use Concept map, as well as recommendations for landscaping, architectural standards, access management, non-motorized access, and environmental protection. Grand Rapids Township has incorporated many of the

recommendations of the Plan into its East Beltline Overlay District regulations.

ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

Plainfield Charter Township. Plainfield Township is adjacent to the entire northern border of Grand Rapids Township at Four Mile Road. Preparation of the Plainfield Township Future Land Use Plan was in progress during the preparation of the Grand Rapids Township 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations of the Plainfield Township Future Land Use Plan are proposed to include the following:

- Rural Estate development adjacent to Sections 1 and 2 in Grand Rapids Township;
- Mixed Uses in the area of Four Mile Road and the East Beltline, with strong adherence to the East Beltline Joint Development Plan. Moderate density residential uses and limited office uses in a neo-traditional form are recommended for the west side of the East Beltline, while office and institutional uses transitioning to residential uses are recommended for the east side;
- Low density residential uses will continue adjacent to Sections 3 and 4 in Grand Rapids Township; and
- Commercial uses are planned to continue along the Plainfield Avenue corridor. Plainfield Township, along with Grand Rapids Township, is currently participating in the formation of a Corridor Improvement Authority, the purpose of which is to enhance the commercial vitality of the Plainfield Avenue Corridor.

Ada Township. Ada Township borders the entire eastern boundary of Grand Rapids Township (Patterson Avenue extended). An update of the Ada Township Master Plan was in progress during the preparation of the Grand Rapids Township Comprehensive Plan. The Ada Township Draft Plan is currently proposed to include the following recommendations:

- Rural and Agricultural Preservation adjacent to Sections 1, 12, and 13 with densities of one unit per three acres;
- Rural Development uses adjacent to Section 24 and the north half of Section 25, with densities of one unit per two acres or in some cases one unit per acre;

- Light Industrial uses are planned south of Fulton Street (M-21) adjacent to the southern half of Section 25 (currently, permitted uses in this area include offices);
- Low Density Residential uses adjacent to Section 36 with densities of 2.5 units per acre, with some possibility of higher densities within a planned development; and
- The Cascade Road corridor which is planned for Office-Service uses.

The current draft of the Ada Township 2006 Master Plan states “Retail uses, restaurant uses and other high traffic-generating uses will be discouraged along the Cascade Rd. and Spaulding Ave. corridors. Retail and food service needs of this part of the Township are sufficiently met in the Forest Hill business district at the intersection of Cascade Rd. and Forest Hill Ave. Professional office, business services, and personal service uses are encouraged...along Cascade Rd.”

City of Kentwood. Kentwood borders most of the southern boundary of Grand Rapids Township along Sections 35 and 36. The 2004 City of Kentwood Future Land Use Map recommends the following:

- Low Density Residential land use at a density of less than four units per acre east of I-96;
- Office uses are planned for that area between I-96 and East Paris Avenue; and
- Low Density Residential uses are planned for that area west of East Paris Avenue, except for an area that fronts on East Paris which is planned for Medium Density Residential at a density of four to eight dwelling units per acre.

City of East Grand Rapids. East Grand Rapids is adjacent to the south and west of that portion of Grand Rapids Township west of the East Beltline and south of Fulton Street. The 1999 City of East Grand Rapids Master Plan recommends that this area remain primarily Single Family Residential, with Parks/Public Open Space planned for those areas that include the Manhattan Recreation Area and the Gilmore and Hodenpyl Woods natural area.

City of Grand Rapids. The City of Grand Rapids is adjacent to all of the western boundary of Grand Rapids Township north of Fulton Street, and a small portion of the Township south of Fulton Street. The City of Grand Rapids Master Plan was updated and adopted in 2002. A summary of the future land use for those areas that border Grand Rapids Township is as follows:

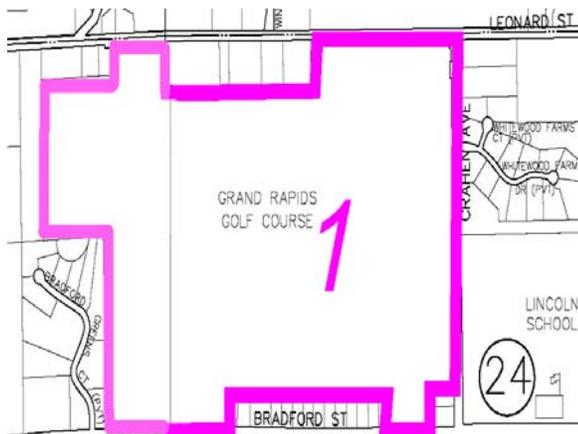
- A Village Center is planned for that area along the Plainfield Avenue corridor south of Grand Rapids Township and north of I-96; the Village Center is intended to be a mixed-use center whose purpose is "... to encourage the restructuring of existing commercial areas as compact, walkable centers that include a mix of commercial, civic and residential uses and serve as a focus of a neighborhood or larger market area "(p. 23, City of Grand Rapids 2002 Master Plan);
- The area at Knapp Street and the East Beltline is planned for a Sub-Regional Center with the same mixed-use characteristics as the Village Center described above including specifically high density residential uses; and
- Remaining adjacent areas are planned primarily for Low and Medium Low Density Residential, institutional, and office uses, all of which largely reflect existing land uses.

CHAPTER 5

TARGET AREAS - FUTURE LAND USE

Chapter 5 provides recommendations for the future land use of a number of critical areas in Grand Rapids Township which are likely to face change in coming years due to the following reasons: these lands are close to other developing parcels; they are on major roadways where increasing traffic volumes drive up land values and reduce the likelihood for low intensive land uses; the land has changed ownership in recent years and the present use is no longer as economically viable as it once was.

The recommendations are based on the results of the on-line survey, the comments of stakeholder interviews found in Appendix 5 and analysis of existing conditions and the recommendations of previous Township planning studies. The recommendations of this Section apply to the future land use and do not change the current zoning of the property.



TARGET AREA 1

Grand Rapids Golf Course

Planning Considerations

- Site is served by water; sanitary sewer nearby but not abutting property.
- Significant natural features on site; wetlands, rolling hills.
- Close to Forest Hills Schools.
- Adjacent to Doezema Farms Township Park and Township trail along Leonard and Crahen.
- Zoned SR- Suburban Residential: Min. Lot Size is 10, 200 sq. ft with both public water & sewer.

- 1990 Plan recognizes it as a Public use.
- Preservation of the natural features and assuring a blending of future uses with surrounding existing land uses is an important consideration for the future use of this property. A Planned Unit Development would allow for the flexibility necessary to develop this land.
- A PUD 1 (Low-Density Residential PUD) would allow for this property to be developed with single-family detached dwellings and up to a four unit multi-family building at a density of 5 dwelling units per acre.
- Twenty percent of the site would need to be set aside as permanent open space. Retaining a portion of the golf course could satisfy a portion of the open space requirement.
- The PUD 1 designation would allow for a mix of housing types, which was supported from the online survey results.

Plan Recommendation

- The property should be developed under the existing Suburban Residential Zoning District or in the alternative under the Planned Unit Development-1 Zoning District regulations. If developed as a PUD-1 the number of dwellings allowed should be similar to the number of dwellings which could be accommodated on the site were it to be developed under the SR district.
- Preservation of open space and natural areas could be accomplished by varying the size of the lots and arranging houses in a cluster pattern.
- To blend with existing nearby land uses, houses on the periphery should be on larger lots (1/3 to 1/2 acre) with houses arranged to provide open space along Crahen and Leonard. An alternative to this would be to retain the golf course fairways and greens along the adjacent roads and place the houses on the interior.
- The existing ponds and wetlands on the property should be set aside as common open space available to all residents.
- Some of the existing asphalt golf cart paths should be retained to provide interior walking trails and to connect with the planned Township walking trail along Leonard & Crahen.
- Pedestrian access should be provided from this property to the Doezma Township Park.

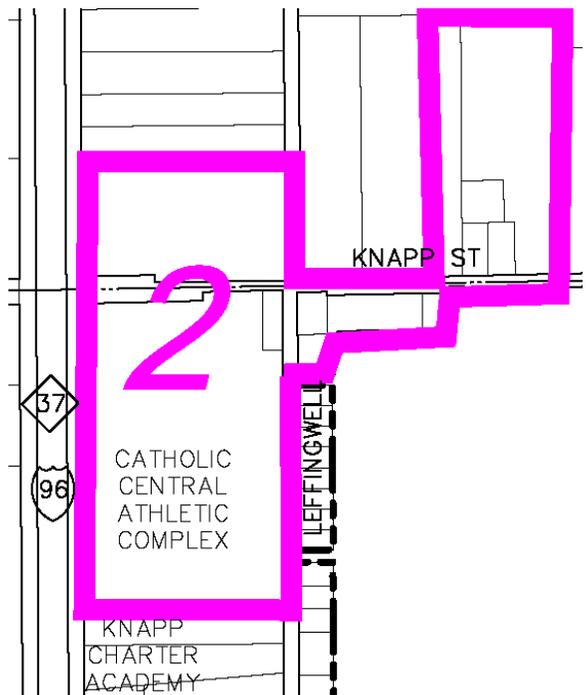
- If developed as a PUD, smaller lots and attached dwelling units should be located on the interior of the property.
- Interior roads should be arranged to disperse the traffic throughout the property to avoid having only one or two streets carry the majority of the traffic. Multiple access points should be provided along Crahen and Leonard to help accomplish this.
- Retain, as much as possible, the existing vegetation along the adjoining public streets to preserve the existing view.
- Retention of a portion of the existing golf course would be an option for the redevelopment of this property in conjunction with residential use. Retaining the existing golf course clubhouse would also be an option.
- The Plan would also encourage the development of neighborhood village squares or focal points for this neighborhood. A community building, swimming pool or other similar facility would also be encouraged.

TARGET AREA 2

Knapp and Leffingwell Area

Planning Considerations

- The land is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential.
- This area is served by public water and sanitary sewer.
- Traffic is increasing on Knapp.
- This area has a residential/institutional character given the existence of the Catholic Central Athletic fields, the Knapp Charter Elementary School, New Life Church and the Kent Intermediate School buildings.



- The City of Grand Rapids abuts the east side of this area with Meijer and Celebration Village comprising a substantial commercial land use.
- The 1990 Plan recommends Low Density Residential use for this area except for the Catholic Central Athletic fields, which are shown as public.
- In December of 2006 the Township Board rezoned land on the north east corner of Knapp and Leffingwell to the PUD -5 District for a mixed use development known as Garden Park. This project proposed attached condominiums, live-work units, central green areas and a small retail component.
- The East Beltline Plan calls for Target Area 2 to be developed with attached residential uses at a density of 5-8 dwellings per acre.
- An existing pond on the north side of Knapp serves as a transition and separation between the Celebration Village development and existing single-family homes on Knapp.

Plan Recommendations

Catholic Central Athletic Complex

The Future Land Use Map designates the Athletic Complex as Cultural & Institutional as the current use is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Should this land convert to another use in the future the Plan recommends it be developed as a planned unit development for a mix of residential and non-residential (primarily office) uses. This site would be well suited for senior housing because of the sidewalks along Knapp, the walking trail on Leffingwell and the services and shopping opportunities afforded by nearby Celebration Village and Meijer in the City of Grand Rapids. The land to the south which is occupied by Knapp Charter Academy is also recommended for the same type of mixed use should this use ever convert.

North of Knapp Street

A mix of land uses similar in use and density to Garden Park PUD is recommended for this area. The pond and mature trees along the north side of Knapp serves as a suitable transition from the commercial use in the city of Grand Rapids.

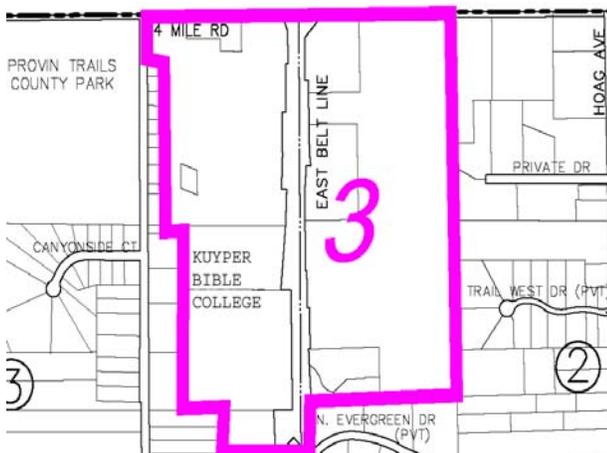
The Plan recommends development of this area as a Planned Unit Development 5 to allow for flexibility in design, housing types and lot sizes. This area would also be suitable for senior housing.

The online survey did show some support for retail and office uses in this area. However, placing retail use west of the pond will possibly require devoting land to another transition area such as landscaping. Such a transition, as noted above, is already adequately provided for by the pond.

Retail use on the Knapp frontage could also create compatibility problems with residential uses planned to the north and introduce more traffic movements on Knapp throughout the day and evening than office or attached residential use.

TARGET AREA 3

South of 4 Mile Road, both sides of the East Beltline



Planning Considerations

- This area is characterized by large institutional uses such as Sunshine Church, Kuyper College (formerly Reformed Bible College) and Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church north of 4 Mile in Plainfield Township.
- Robinette’s Apple Haus occupies the southwest corner. This is a combination of commercial and agricultural use.
- The topography south of Robinette’s and Sunshine Church is extremely hilly & wooded with some very low wetland areas.
- Public utilities, water and sewer, extend only as far north as Kuyper College.
- The land is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential.
- The East Beltline Plan calls for a continuation of the Robinette property as Urban Agriculture, but if conversion occurs the Plan recommends Low Density Residential in a clustering arrangement. The East Beltline Plan recognizes Sunshine Church and Kuyper College as continuing institutional uses.
- The southeast corner of 4 Mile and the East Beltline is an athletic field of about five acres owned by Sunshine Church. Because of its location and low intensity use this property could be split off from the church and converted to a more intensive land use.

- The Plan recognizes that the land values along this portion of the Beltline could, overtime, exceed the value of the buildings and therefore be converted to more intensive uses.
- Any redevelopment of the land within Target Area 3 must respect the existing single-family houses along Bird Avenue.
- Development in this area should respect the existing steep terrain, wetlands, ponds and preserve the existing trees along the East Beltline to maintain a natural view.
- The Master Plan for Plainfield Township to the north of Four Mile Road calls for a mix of office and moderate density residential (3-4 units / acre) in a neo traditional form on the west side of the Beltline with office and institutional uses along the east side of the Beltline.
- The Whispering Pines subdivision south of Four Mile and west of Bird consists of detached single family houses built in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's with a density of 2.5 to 3 units per acre.

Plan Recommendations

Robinette's Farm

The Plan recommends a continuation of the Robinette agriculture/retail use which is a longstanding Township landmark providing a unique rural flavor to an area converting to residential suburban use. Should it convert from its existing operation the Plan recommends Low Density Residential (LDR) use in keeping with the East Beltline Plan.

LDR is recommended as a low density land use pattern has been established in the area along Bird Avenue and to the west along Four Mile Road. LDR use would also be compatible with the proposed residential use to the north in Plainfield Township

Development of this parcel as a Planned Unit Development-1 which allows up to four attached dwellings per building may also be appropriate depending upon placement and design although single family detached dwellings should be the predominant use. Density should be around three dwelling units per acre to fit in with the nearby density in Whispering Pines Subdivision although a slightly higher density could be allowed if the layout is compatible with nearby land uses.

The Plan recommends that existing vegetation along the Bird Avenue portion and along the East Beltline be retained as much as possible to retain the existing view from the road.

Kuyper College Area

The Plan recommends a continuation of this land use and allows for expansion to the south as it becomes necessary. The current land use does contain an apartment-type building, which is a dormitory, along with multi-story office buildings. Should this property convert to something other than a college a PUD-2 type development, which would allow a higher density of up to 10 dwelling units per acre, could be considered for this property.

Given its relatively hidden location from the East Beltline and Bird Avenue, multi-family dwellings on this property could be a viable option in light of the lack of apartment units in the Township and the fact that good access is available from the East Beltline and shopping opportunities exist to the south for future residents of this property. Senior housing would also be suitable in this location.

The Future Land Use Map, however, designates Kuyper College as Cultural & Institutional as the current use is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

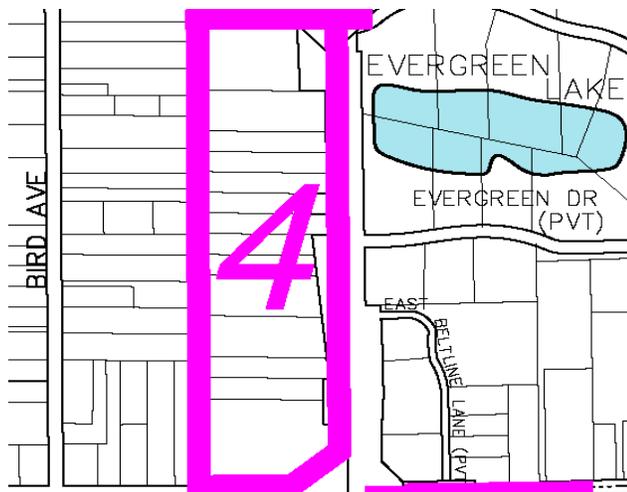
Sunshine Church Corner Property

The Plan recognizes the desirability of the land at the southeast corner of 4 Mile and the East Beltline for uses other than an athletic field. A mix of residential, office and open space in a traditional neighborhood layout for this area was supported by the online survey. Some supporting retail/service use such as a small coffee shop to serve on site residents and workers could be considered if relatively small in size.

The Plan would support this type of mixed use as a PUD-3 development with emphasis on residential and office in order to retain the current appearance and character along this portion of the Beltline and to maintain land use compatibility with planned and existing uses north of 4 Mile Road.

Several parcels are located at the southern end of the Sunshine Church property and north of North Evergreen Drive. Several single family houses are located here on land that is above the East Beltline and screened by mature trees. These parcels are zoned R-1 and remain viable for future residential use because of the location relative to the Beltline.

Combining these three parcels for office use or multi-family however would also be supported by the Plan as such uses would be compatible with nearby office and institutional uses.



TARGET AREA 4

North of Three Mile Road, west side of the East Beltline

Planning Considerations

- This area along the East Beltline is characterized by single-family houses on individual lots north of Universal

Office Park. Some of these houses are located on higher elevations than the East Beltline and several contain large wooded areas.

- The site is served by both public water and sanitary sewer.
- The land north of Universal, up to the detention ponds, contains about 12 acres.
- The East Beltline Plan and the Grand Rapids Township Comprehensive Plan call for these properties to be developed for multiple family residential with up to 16 dwelling units per acre.
- The current zoning is R-1.
- The land to the east across the East Beltline contains offices and neighborhood commercial uses.
- The Village of Orchard Hills, a retail center consisting of 388,000 square feet of retail space was approved by the Township Board for the southeast corner of Three Mile Road and East Beltline. This project will change the nature of the Three Mile/Beltline intersection and will have an impact on nearby land values. The zoning designation for the land containing this development is LC-PUD which became effective September 29, 2006.
- Development of these properties must respect the existing single-family homes along Bird Avenue to the west.

Plan Recommendations

The Plan recommends a mix of neighborhood commercial, office and multi-family based on the recommendations of the East Beltline Plan, the changing nature of this area and the uses which have been established since 1990 on the east side of the Beltline which are supported by nearby residents. The area should not however be devoted entirely to commercial use. Responses to the online survey

for Area 4 indicate a strong preference for a mix of uses on this property.

Commercial uses would likely front on the East Beltline and would provide convenience shopping for south bound East Beltline travelers and also an opportunity for support retail/service uses as an alternative to commercial uses in the nearby lifestyle center project.

The Plan recommends that these properties north of Universal be developed as a unit, perhaps as a PUD-5, which would allow for commercial, office and residential uses on this property.

Multi-family use would be appropriate in this location due to the lack of multi-family dwellings in this portion of the Township. Residential use of this property would be attractive due to the amenities provided by the future lifestyle center, nearby churches, Orchard View Elementary, as well as the neighborhood commercial to the east.

Driveway access onto the East Beltline should be limited. The Plan recommends that properties not be rezoned or developed individually but that all or most of these parcels be developed as a unit in order to better coordinate grading, landscaping and vehicle access.

The Plan supports the continuation of Universal Forest Products as an office use.

TARGET AREA 5

South of Three Mile Road, east side of the East Beltline

Planning Considerations

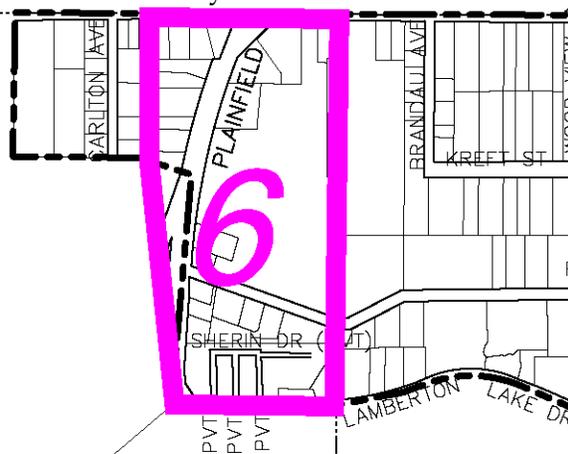
- The 1990 Master Plan recommended Neighborhood Planned Unit Development use for the corner of this area with the remainder planned for PUD-2.



- The site is somewhat hilly and tree covered with several single-family houses fronting on the East Beltline.
- Public utilities are available.
- The land to the south is in the city of Grand Rapids and is planned for a Sub-Regional Center with a Village Center design with emphasis on office use and High Density Residential (9-16 dwelling units per acre).
- In September of 2006 the Grand Rapids Township Board approved a rezoning of Area 5 to the LC-PUD zoning classification to permit a large retail development, the Village of Orchard Hills, with adjoining residential uses fronting on Dunnigan Avenue.

Plan Recommendations

Based on the rezoning approved by the Township Board the Plan recommends the property be used under the Life Style Center PUD Ordinance upheld by Township voters in August and November of 2006 for commercial and residential uses. The online survey results showed a strong preference for both retail and residential use in a unified plan setting as would be allowed under the LC-PUD designation. Because this area consists of multiple parcels the LC- PUD designation allows for coordinating the site grading for better stormwater management and driveway access onto the East Beltline.



TARGET AREA 6

East and west of Plainfield Avenue and South of 4 Mile Road

Planning Considerations

- The majority of this area is zoned C, General Commercial, except for the existing manufactured housing community on Rupert, which is zoned R-3.
- Three smaller lots with dwellings front on the south side of 4 Mile Road just west of Plainfield Avenue are master-planned commercial, but are zoned residential.

- All public utilities are available to this area.
- Plainfield Avenue lacks sidewalks and street trees.
- The Northtown Shopping Center has a number of vacancies and the large parking lot has great potential for redevelopment.
- Plainfield Township and Grand Rapids Township in 2006 formed an authority to prepare improvement plans for the Plainfield Avenue corridor.
- The 1990 Master Plan called for this entire area to be used for commercial use.

Plan Recommendations

As part of the 2006 Master Plan update the Planning Commission selected the Northtown Plaza area for in depth planning review and prepared a conceptual site plan to illustrate redevelopment possibilities. The conceptual site plan is contained in Appendix 7.

The Plan recommends continued commercial use for the Northtown Plaza area and those parcels fronting on Plainfield Avenue. However, the Plan strongly recommends improvements be made to the Plainfield Avenue corridor to include sidewalks, street trees and other aesthetic improvements as well as closing or combining driveways to improve traffic safety.

The Plan supports the efforts of Grand Rapids Township and Plainfield Township to beautify this corridor. In late 2006 these two townships formed the Plainfield Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority under Public Act 280 of 2006. The Authority is permitted to collect those property taxes which result from the increase in assessed valuation following the formation of the Authority and to use the property tax collection for physical improvements to the Plainfield Avenue Corridor. These improvements will likely include sidewalks, street lighting and landscaping

As an alternative land use recommendation the conceptual plan supports mixed use development of the Northtown Plaza site. Other similar layouts which include a variety of commercial, office and perhaps residential use in a configuration which promotes walking, creates open spaces for social interaction and provides appealing building design and landscaping would also be considered as future land uses for this site. Mixed-use projects of this type should be developed as a Planned Unit Development, perhaps as PUD -5, and a new set of zoning regulations will likely need to be prepared to allow this type of project.

The manufactured housing community located on Rupert south of Plainfield is currently zoned R-3. The Plan recommends long term commercial use of this property, which is in keeping with the recommendation of the 1990 Plan.

Commercial properties fronting on Plainfield Avenue are likely to be redeveloped in this planning period. As these properties redevelop new uses should provide sidewalks and landscaping in keeping with current zoning requirements.

The three single family zoned lots which are located on the south side of 4 Mile between the Chase Bank and Carlton are narrow and shallow and are only likely to be used for commercial use if all three are combined. A C-1 zoning would be most appropriate due to the smaller front and rear setbacks required by this district. Use of these lots for commercial would allow for the older homes on these lots to be redeveloped along a busy portion of 4 Mile Road close to the traffic signal, and also provide a transition to the residential use west of Carlton.

TARGET AREA 7

Cascade Road Intersection with Forest Hill Avenue

Planning Considerations

- The zoning at and near the intersection of Forest Hill Avenue and Cascade Road is a combination of General Commercial and Suburban Office.
- All public utilities are available.
- Several nearby public/institutional uses include: YMCA, Kent County Sheriff Substation, Forest Hills Aquatic and Fine Arts Center and the Heather Hills Retirement Center.
- The commercial uses, public and institutional uses along with the sidewalk and closeness of the buildings to the street create a sense of place and identity for this intersection.
- An older single-family neighborhood exists on the east side of Delray. These homes face the parking lots of commercial uses fronting on Forest Hill Avenue, creating a situation that may not



be desirable for long-term single-family residential use. This single-family neighborhood extends eastward of Delray and consists of homes along Kirk Drive and Orlando Avenue.

- Commercial uses fronting on the north side of Cascade, east of Forest Hill Avenue, back up to the single-family neighborhood along Delray, Kirk and Orlando.
- The single-family neighborhood has the potential to be re-developed for more intensive use.

Plan Recommendations

The Plan calls for continued office use along both sides of Cascade Avenue between I-96 and Forest Hill Avenue, which reflects the existing zoning and land uses which have developed there over the years.

As part of this Plan update the Planning Commission reviewed the re-development potential of the single-family neighborhood along Delray, Kirk and Orlando. This area is bounded by commercial uses to the east and south and institutional uses to the north. The single-family houses and lots in this area are smaller than contemporary housing and a number of the houses in this area are showing signs of needed repair and updating.

It is anticipated that over time land values may exceed the value of the houses creating an opportunity for re-development. A re-development concept plan for this area is contained in Appendix 8. This concept plan is but one possible illustration for this area.

Any future re-development plan would have as its major elements the following: commercial uses arranged for walking between buildings; a central focal point to create a downtown on the interior; improvements to Cascade Avenue and pedestrian and vehicular connection to the institutional uses to the north; and a transitional area into the single-family uses along Patterson Avenue.

This concept plan or one similar to it would help to establish a lasting sense of place and continue the Forest Hill neighborhood identity, which has developed over the years due to the commercial and institutional uses in this area.

The Plan calls for continued residential use of the area along Delray, Kirk and Orlando until such time that the economics of development make it feasible for redevelopment for all or a significant portion of this area. Piecemeal commercial development is not a suitable method for the redevelopment of this area due to the difficulty in providing

adequate buffer and transition edges and the difficulty in sustaining small commercial lots in the long term.

A new future land use category, Forest Hills Neighborhood PUD, has been applied to this area. New zoning regulations incorporating the above recommendations will need to be adopted to allow for this re-development concept to be carried out at the appropriate time.

CHAPTER 6

FUTURE LAND USE

This chapter contains the recommendations on the future use of land which will guide the development of Grand Rapids Township in the coming years. These recommendations were influenced by a number of factors:

- The viewpoints, concerns, and suggestions of Township residents voiced through the on line survey and stake holder interviews in the spring of 2006
- Analysis of past developments, existing circumstances and future needs.
- The influences of nearby municipalities.

Master Plan Concepts

The Future Land Use Map is based upon a number of major concepts for the general development of Grand Rapids Township. These concepts are derived from the goals stated in Chapter 4, the desires of Township citizens, observed growth trends, and basic principles of land development.

These major land use concepts are:

- The continuation of Grand Rapids Township as a rural - suburban community with single family detached housing as the predominant land use.
- Recognition and protection of the natural resources of the Township.
- The promotion of traffic safety and a logical land use development pattern along the East Beltline in accordance with the overall planning strategy and goals of the Northeast Beltline Joint Development Plan and Overlay Zone.
- Promoting a sense of neighborhood and community, requiring sidewalks, continuing pathway construction, and cooperating with adjacent communities.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Land Use Map (Map 10) recommends a number of different future land use classifications. The following descriptions of these classifications explain the type, intensity and location of the proposed uses.

The future land use recommended for an area may be the same as the zoning already existing in the area, while in some cases the future land use recommended is different from the existing zoning. Future Land Use Categories may or may not correspond to zoning districts existing in the Township; in some cases, a new zoning district is recommended as an implementation strategy.

The Future Land Use Map does not change the existing zoning in an area. A property owner or the Township will need to apply for a rezoning at some point in the future if the future land use category is different from the existing zoning. A property owner is allowed to use the property in accordance with the regulations of the zoning district in which the property is located.

SR - SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

This classification is intended to provide for single family residential development on lots with a minimum lot size of 10,200 square feet with public water and sewer. The density in this district is 4.27 dwelling units per acre. Without public utilities larger lots are required as dictated by the Suburban Residential Zoning District Regulations.

SR areas are proposed east of the Beltline in sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, and a portion of 14. This area is characterized by steep terrain, wooded areas and wetlands. Most of this area is served by or is proposed to be served by public water and sanitary sewer. Some of the more hilly areas in sections 2, 12 and 13 are not within the urban utility boundary and are not likely to be served by sanitary sewer.

The Grand Rapids Golf Course is planned for Suburban Residential Development as explained in Chapter 5.

LDR - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

This category recognizes much of the existing single family residential land uses in the Township. The LDR category is analogous to the R-1, Single Family Residential Zoning District. Single family houses are the predominant land use in this district and lot sizes can be a minimum of 8400 square feet where public water and sanitary sewer are provided. Low density residential areas are located in the north and west

portions of the Township and also east of East Beltline south of Leonard Street to the Township border. LDR areas should be served by public water and sanitary sewer.



MFR - MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The MFR category is analogous to the R-2, Medium Density Multi-family District. Single family homes are allowed in this zoning district, but this district is primarily established to permit multi-family residential buildings.

The future land use map recognizes the Porter Hills senior housing developments on Fulton Street and East Paris as multi-family housing communities.

O - OFFICE

This land use category recognizes the existing office developments at various locations in the Township; Cascade and Forest Hills Avenues, Three Mile and the East Beltline, I-96 and East Beltline and along East Paris south of Cascade Road.

The Plan continues to recommend office land use at the corner of Fulton and Crahen. Office use at this location would generate less traffic and be more compatible with nearby single family neighborhoods. The Plan also recommends an expansion of the office category at the northwest corner of Three Mile Road and the East Beltline in order to meet the expanding needs of Universal Forest Products.

NC - NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

The neighborhood commercial category is analogous the C-1, Zoning District. Land uses in this category are general retail, restaurants and general business use designed to serve local residents. The Plan recognizes neighborhood commercial uses at the northeast corner of Three Mile Road and the East Beltline and commercial uses along East Paris south of Cascade Road, which were developed in the 1990's.

GC - GENERAL COMMERCIAL

This category is the same as the General Commercial Zoning District. The Plan recognizes areas in the Township that are devoted to high activity businesses serving the day-to-day needs of the larger community and highway oriented markets. A wide range of service and retail uses are allowed. General Commercial areas are at 4 Mile Road and Plainfield Avenue and on Cascade Road bordering I-96 and along Cascade Road at the intersection of Forest Hills and Cascade. A conceptual redevelopment plan was prepared for the GC area at 4 Mile and Plainfield. This concept plan is found in the Appendix.

PUD-1 - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL PUD

PUD-1 areas allow a variety of single and multiple-family dwelling units with a density of five dwelling units per acre. Clustering of dwelling units is encouraged in order to preserve and increase open space areas and preserve natural features. PUD-1 areas are located in the southern portion of the Township in section 25 along Fulton Street and in several locations in section 35.

A PUD-1 is recommended as a zoning alternative for the southwest corner of 4 Mile Road and the East Beltline (Robinette property) should this land convert from its current agricultural/retail use. Low Density Residential (LDR) use is the preferred density with single family dwellings as the predominant land use. The PUD-1 designation allows for flexibility in the design of this property. The Plan also recommends that the Grand Rapids Golf Course be developed as a PUD-1 as an alternative to the Suburban Residential recommendation.

The lots on the northeast corner of Fulton and the East Beltline are proposed for PUD-1 type development as the traffic volumes at this intersection decrease the attractiveness of these parcels for detached single family housing. The PUD-1 regulations will allow the flexibility needed to design a multi-family development which can be marketed for residential use and yet still be compatible with the single family dwellings to the east. Access to the East Beltline for a future project on

these parcels should be considered due the difficulty in turning east onto Fulton Street

The Plan proposes a new PUD-1 area on the west side of the Beltline south of Cascade Road adjacent to East Grand Rapids. Public sewer will need to be extended to serve this area if developed with multi-family buildings. The PUD-1 category would continue the strong residential character along this portion of the East Beltline south of Cascade Road and would be compatible with land uses planned in East Grand Rapids

PUD-2 - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL PUD

The PUD-2 category is intended to provide locations for higher density residential uses than allowed in the PUD-1 category. An existing PUD-2 development is located at the northwest corner of Fulton and Crahen and along the southern Township border west of East Paris.

PUD-3 - RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE PUD

This type of PUD is proposed for both residential and office use. Higher density residential uses could be combined on the same site with offices in a manner that protects the residential uses from the operational characteristics of offices. This land use category is analogous to the PUD-3 Zoning District. The plan recognizes a number of existing PUD-3 areas such as Eagle Crest, Wind Crest and Grand Ridge on the East Beltline north of Leonard, and the condominiums located east of the offices on Evergreen Drive in Section 2. Land along the west side of the Beltline south of Three Mile Road is zoned for PUD-3 use. Because this area is adjacent to single family houses to the west, building design, placement, lighting and landscaping should be planned to protect adjacent residents.

Several new PUD-3 areas are recommended on the Future Land Use Map. One of these is the Catholic Central Athletic Complex in Section 15. This area is further described in Chapter 5. Another PUD-3 area is proposed on the east side of the Beltline just north of Evergreen Drive which is bordered on the south by an office park and on the north by a wooded area which would be difficult to develop due to the terrain. Offices or a multi-family building would be compatible with these adjacent land uses and fit with the developing character of this portion of the Beltline.

PUD-4 - OFFICE PUD

The PUD-4 category is proposed for larger office developments with zoning regulations designed to provide flexibility in developing a project which will respect the natural features of the site and which can be compatible with nearby existing residential areas. PUD-4 would

also allow some limited restaurants, retail and services uses designed primarily designed to serve on-site workers with convenience goods and services. The Plan recognizes existing PUD-4 areas around Evergreen Lake in Section 2 and on Kenmoor Avenue north of Cascade along I-96. A smaller PUD-4 is located along Fulton Street adjacent to the railroad tracks and on Eagle Run Drive in Section 14.

PUD-5 - COMMUNITY SERVICES PUD

The PUD-5 category is analogous to the PUD-5 Zoning District, which is intended for a variety of land uses. These uses would include multi-family, service uses, retail and institutional uses such as churches and governmental uses. PUD-5 areas should be located on major roadways and should be served by public utilities.

The Plan calls for a PUD-5 area to be established on the East Beltline north of Universal Forest Products. The rationale for this recommendation is contained in Chapter 5.

Another PUD-5 area is proposed at the northeast corner of Leffingwell and Knapp. The Garden Park ("Celadon") PUD-5 project was approved by the Township Board in December of 2006. Based on this approval, the land to the east is also being proposed as a PUD-5 as this land would be located between the Garden Park project and Celebration Village in the City of Grand Rapids. The PUD-5 designation makes good planning sense as it allows for flexible design options in fitting a mixed use project on this property so it can be compatible with nearby land uses.

Another PUD-5 area is proposed on the East Beltline north of Celebration Village as this abuts a residential neighborhood.. The PUD-5 category does allow for flexibility in site design so that uses can be compatible with nearby single family homes and developed to respect the natural features on this property.

Another PUD-5 is proposed to the east of the above PUD-5 across the Beltline. This land abuts the Village of Orchard Hills PUD which is primarily commercial, the land fronts on the East Beltline for exposure to passing traffic and would be compatible with land to the south in the City of Grand Rapids where multi-family, office and limited commercial is planned. Commercial uses on this site should be designed so there is little impact on residents to the east facing on Dunnigan.

NC-PUD - NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL PUD

This category is intended for commercial uses of limited scope in order to provide commercial and service opportunities for the local community with flexible design options afforded by the PUD

regulations. This area would not permit large scale commercial centers and is intended to serve primarily the Township and the nearby surrounding area with smaller stores of limited scope.

The Plan recognizes the NC-PUD development on East Paris Avenue, which was developed in the late 1990s and which contains a number of retail shops and restaurants. An NC-PUD is recommended on the west side of the East Beltline north of Celebration Village. This area was approved for an NC- PUD development in 2005, but has not materialized

TC-PUD - TOWN CENTER PUD

The category includes the Township offices, fire station and park at the southeast corner of Knapp and East Beltline. This category was first put forth in the 1990 Township Comprehensive Plan and is intended to provide for a blend of commercial, recreational, cultural and limited retail and service uses which could serve as a gathering place or town center for residents of the Township.

The site proposed on the Township Master Plan is the same as contained in previous plans. The Zoning Ordinance contains regulations for the development of this property.

LC-PUD - LIFESTYLE CENTER PUD

This land use category recognizes the land that was rezoned to the LC-PUD Lifestyle Center category in 2006. Specifically this land is the Village of Orchard Hills PUD. This land is located along the east side of the Beltline south of Three Mile Road. This category permits a mix of commercial, office, residential and common open space with regulations designed to achieve a main street style shopping area. Construction of the lifestyle center project is expected to begin in 2007.

FH-PUD - FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PUD

This future land use category wraps in the area bounded by Ada Drive, Forest Hill Avenue, Cascade Road and Patterson Avenue. This area was selected for more in depth analysis and future land use planning and is more fully described in Chapter 5. The FH PUD category indicates development of this largely residential area to commercial uses with downtown design, emphasis on pedestrian access and providing connections to nearby cultural and residential uses. The Plan recommends that this area be redeveloped with large blocks of land and not on a small lot individual basis.

P - PUBLIC

This future land use category recognizes those lands and facilities that are owned or operated by a government agency or are supported by public funds and include government buildings and parks, cemeteries and public schools including colleges. Such uses are the Doctor J. Michael Washburn Forest Hills Aquatic Center and Fine Arts Center, Kuyper College, Knapp Charter Academy, Forest Hills Northern High School and the Grand Rapids Township offices and parks and Kent County parks.

***CI -CULTURAL / INSTITUTIONAL***

The land in this classification include places and buildings which are used for private recreation and religious purposes, such as the Cascade Country Club and Sunshine Church or which are non-profit cultural, or medical facilities such as the Frederick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park and the Heather Hills Care Center. Private schools and colleges are included in this category.

Cascade Country Club is included in this category and this use is expected to continue for some time. The Plan, however, recognizes that this land may be developed for other uses in the future and the Plan would anticipate some type of detached or attached residential uses at a density compatible with nearby neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to serve as an effective guide to the continued development of Grand Rapids Charter Township, it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Board, the Planning Commission and the Township staff. This is done through a number of methods which include ordinances, programs, and administrative procedures.

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan itself has no legal authority to regulate development in order to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This implementation must come from the decisions of the Board and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures relative to the use of the land.

The private sector, which includes individual land owners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan by the actual physical development of land and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the Township. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 4 of the Plan sets forth goals and objectives which serve to guide the future development of Grand Rapids Charter Township. Some of the specific implementation recommendations of this chapter are taken from these objectives, while others are taken from the land use recommendations made in Chapters 5 and 6.

The following sections identify the major activities which the Township Planning Commission should pursue in order to be proactive in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

ZONING

Zoning represents a legal means for the Township to regulate private property to achieve orderly land use relationships. It is the process most commonly used to implement community Master Plans. The zoning ordinance consists of an official zoning map and zoning ordinance text.

The official zoning map divides the community into different zones or districts within which certain uses are permitted and others are not. The zoning ordinance text notes the uses which are permitted and establishes regulations to control densities, height, bulk, setback, lot sizes, and accessory uses.

The zoning ordinance also sets forth procedures for site plan review, conditional uses, and sign controls. These measures permit the Township to control the quality as well as the type of development.

In order that the recommendations and goals of the Comprehensive Plan be implemented, the following amendments to the Zoning Ordinance should be prepared and adopted:

1. Delete the Rural Residential district text from the Zoning Ordinance. This category was removed from the Zoning Map and replaced as the Suburban Residential Zoning District. The Township should now take the necessary step of deleting Chapter 5 from the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Develop zoning regulations to allow for the redevelopment of the Northtown Shopping Center as depicted on the conceptual site plan. This may involve preparing a new PUD chapter or simply a revision of the PUD-5 chapter to allow for the mix of uses envisioned in the conceptual plan.
3. Prepare planned unit development regulations for the possible redevelopment of the Forest Hills neighborhood as recommended in Chapter 5.
4. Consider amending the provisions of the North East Beltline Overlay District ordinance, to more specifically and clearly prohibit the removal of trees and the grading of steep slopes at any time, even if a site plan has not been submitted.
5. Consider amending the language in the Town Center PUD chapter to better reflect the goals of the Township.

Additional Recommendations

1. Work with Kent County Road Commission officials and land owners to provide for future north-south roads as noted in Chapter

3. If lands become available the Township Board should monitor this and possible acquire such land for future road construction.
2. Support the work of the Plainfield Corridor Improvement Authority. This may involve the creation of an overlay zone for Plainfield Avenue.
3. Amend the Northeast Beltline Plan to reflect the recommendations of the 2007 Grand Rapids Township Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Commission Work Program

The Plan recommends that the Planning Commission prepare an annual work program in the beginning of each year. This work program would set forth the tasks of goals which the Planning Commission determines to accomplish for the upcoming year. This will allow the Commission to stay focused on important tasks, in order to develop and implement goals and strategies identified within this Plan.

Planning Education

The Planning Commissioners should be kept informed of planning seminars to learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. These seminars are regularly sponsored by the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and are a valuable resource for Planning Commissions.

The Michigan Citizen Planner Program which is administered by the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service is also an important education program for Planning Commissioners. There are also several planning publications which are useful information tools for Planning Commissions. The main publications are Planning and Zoning News and Michigan Planner Magazine.

Revisions to Master Plan

Amendments to the Township Planning Act effective on January 9, 2002 require Township Commissions to review their Comprehensive Plans every five years and determine whether to ratify the Plan, amend the Plan or adopt a new Plan. This review allows the Commission to be responsive to new growth trends and current citizen attitudes. As growth occurs over the years, the Plan's goals, land use information,

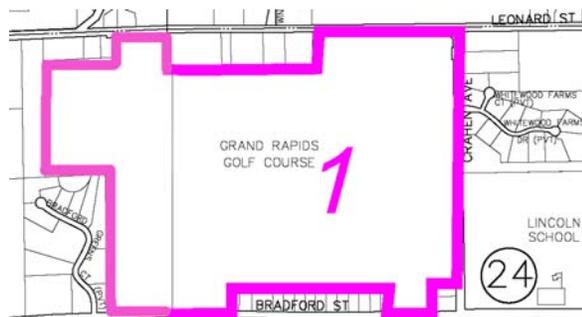
population projections, and other pertinent data can then be reviewed and revised as necessary so the Plan can continue to serve as a valid guide to the growth of the Township.

APPENDIX E TARGET AREAS - SURVEY RESULTS AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

TARGET AREA 1 Grand Rapids Golf Course

On Line Survey Results Votes

Area 1 - The Grand Rapids Golf Course property. The best future use of this property is (Choose one):



All single-family residential homes in a traditional suburban layout. **103**

All single-family residential homes in a traditional neighborhood layout. 27

A mix of residential uses such as single-family homes and attached units such as condominiums, townhouses and apartments. 32

A township center that could include such things as Township offices, a mix of residential uses, retail uses, and parks in a traditional neighborhood layout. **70**

Stake Holder Comments

- Area #1: Could include a Forest Hills Schools campus
- Traditional single-family neighborhoods would be ok on the golf course property (Area #1) along with two-unit condominiums;
- Future developments should have a suburban layout.
- Preserve the park and the Township Hall in its current location.
- Some mixed use on the Grand Rapids golf course sounds ok, possibly relocate the Township offices there;

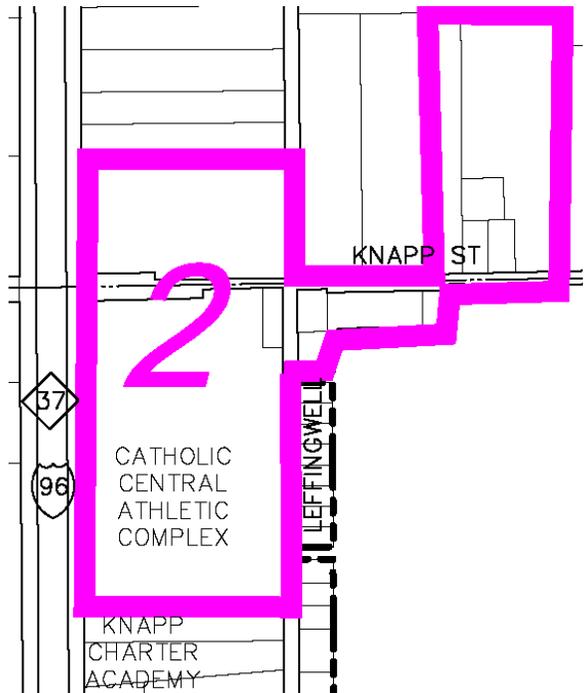
TARGET AREA 2

Knapp and Leffingwell Area

On Line Survey Results Votes

Area 2 - The area where Knapp Street and Leffingwell Avenue intersect. Considering uses in the adjacent City of Grand Rapids, what types of uses would best suit this area in the future? Choose as many as you wish:

All single family homes within a traditional suburban layout.	83
All single family homes within a traditional neighborhood layout.	53
A mix of residential uses such as single-family homes and attached units such as condominiums, townhouses and apartments.	51
A mix of residential, retail, and office uses in a planned development.	70



Stake Holder Comments

- Future developments should have a suburban layout

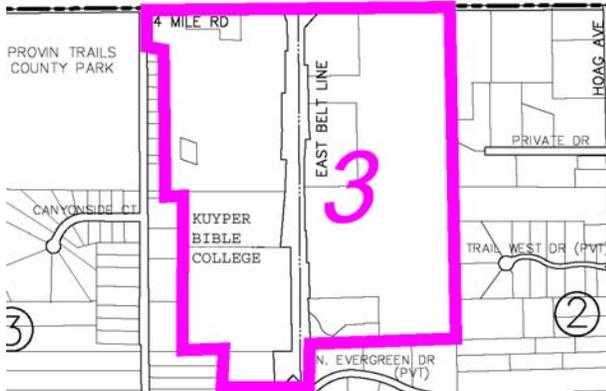
TARGET AREA 3

South of 4 Mile Road, both sides of the East Beltline

On Line Survey Results

Votes

Area 3 - South of 4 Mile Road, both sides of the East Beltline. Choose as many as you wish:



Offices	41
Commercial uses including retail shops, offices, and restaurants	52
Residential uses in a mix of single-family homes and attached units such as condominiums, townhouses and apartments.	51
A mix of residential, retail, and office uses in a planned development	63
A mix of residential uses, retail and open space in a traditional neighborhood layout.	78

Stake Holder Comments

- Area #3-leave as is to bring a balance of intensity of uses along the East Beltline.
- Look into preservation of any remaining agricultural uses or other open spaces.
- Areas #3 and #4: Plan for mixed uses that are not so intense.
- North-south traffic flow; allow more density; relax height restrictions and allow more stories for both multi-family residential and office uses.
- Wishes the Township would use more mixed zoning.
- Something the Township could do for this business is permit mixed zoning. Robinette’s is really a commercial use.
- Area #3-family neighborhoods, not heavy retail.
- Most pressing issues: East Beltline development; traffic and safety;
- Area #3: No superstores; some commercial ok, but not intensive

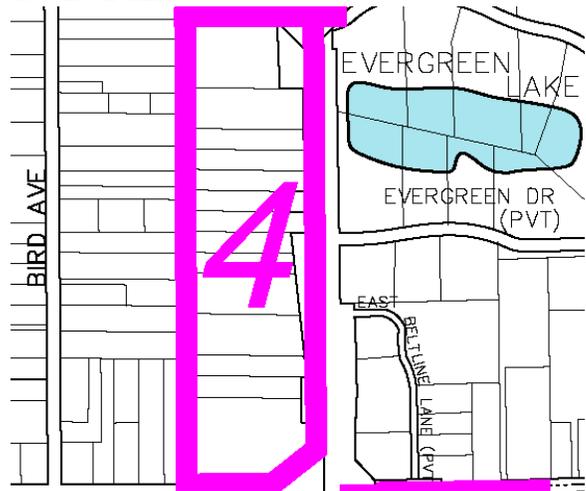
TARGET AREA 4

North of Three Mile Road, west side of the East Beltline

On Line Survey Results Votes

Area 4 - North of Three Mile Road, west side of the East Beltline. Choose as many as you wish:

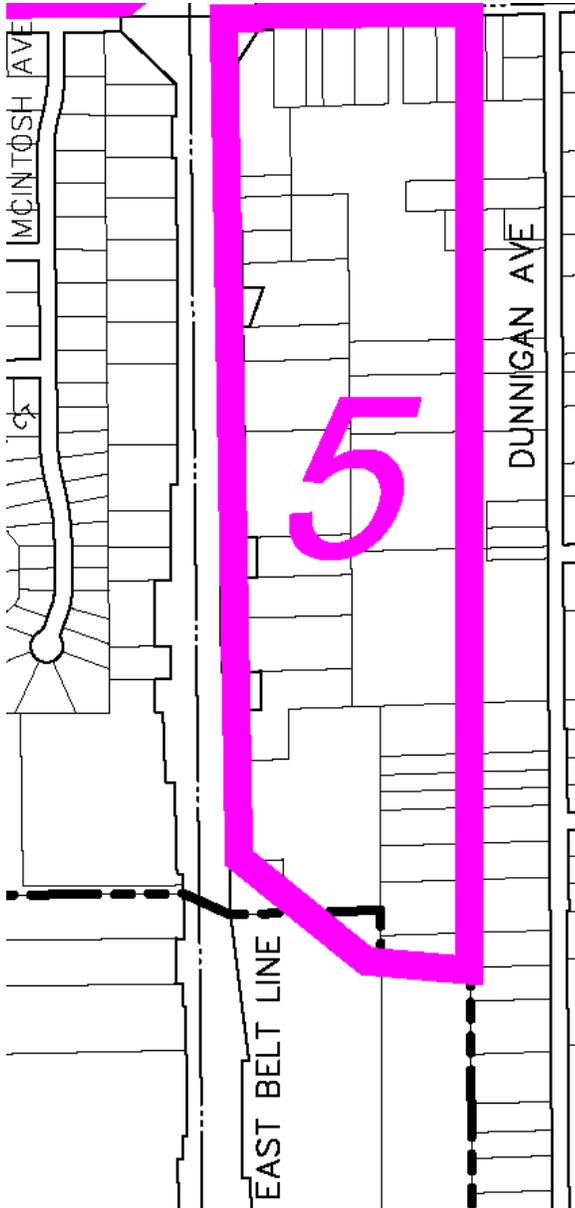
Multi-family residential	63
A mix of multi-family and commercial neighborhood uses	87
Office and neighborhood commercial uses	92



Stake Holder Comments

- North-south traffic flow; allow more density; relax height restrictions and allow more stories for both multi-family residential and office uses.
- Something the Township could do for Universal is approve the request for rezoning on the additional parcels that Universal has acquired.
- Most pressing issue facing the Township is the capacity on the East Beltline; it appears to be inadequate for the existing commercial; does MDOT have enough right-of-way now to widen if necessary?
- Universal continues in Grand Rapids Township because they like the area; they fit in well; they like the campus-like setting of Universal. They would like to continue to fit in with the neighborhood.
- Area #4 (north of Universal)-office is best and commercial would fit as well.
- Areas #3 and #4: Plan for mixed uses that are not so intense.
- Grand Rapids Township is growing rapidly; a contradiction exists between the retail and the people to support it; the Township is not providing its own services.
- The Township could use a neighborhood grocery store; no change in rural areas; the East Beltline should have some offices, some retail no more chain restaurants or big box users; more locally owned restaurants; restaurants at Northtown Shopping Center would be ok.
- Future developments should have a suburban layout.

TARGET AREA 5
South of Three Mile Road, east side of the
East Beltline



On Line Survey Results

Votes

Area 5 - South of Three Mile Road, on the east side of the East Beltline. Choose one:

A mix of residential, office, and neighborhood commercial uses in a planned development 129

Lifestyle Center type of development that may include residential and commercial uses, walkways, plazas, and restaurants along interior streets. 97

Stake Holder Comments

- Lifestyle center design is preferable over that which has developed at Celebration Village.
- Avoid the 28th St. look
- Most pressing issues facing Grand Rapids Township: North-south traffic flow; allow more density; relax height restrictions and allow more stories for both multi-family residential and office uses.
- Wishes the Township would use more mixed zoning.
- Reaction to Citizen Survey: Is it too late in the process to influence development on the golf course and at 3 Mile?

TARGET AREA 6

South and west of Plainfield Avenue and 4 Mile Road

On Line Survey Results

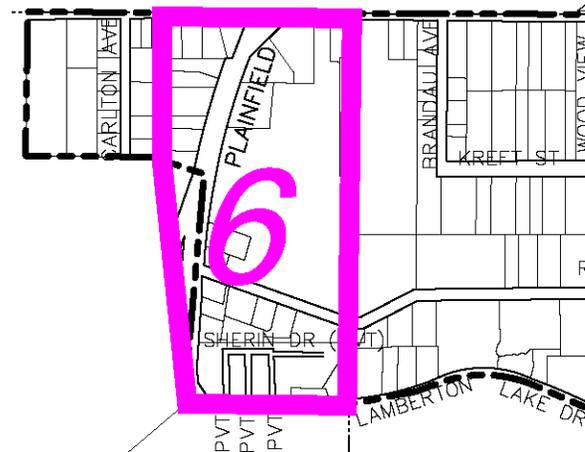
Votes

Area 6 *The northwest area of the Township including a portion of the Plainfield Avenue corridor. This area includes commercial uses and a small manufactured housing community. The Northtown Shopping Center is located in this area. Future development in this area should be (check as many as you wish):*

A mix of residential, office, and commercial uses in a planned development 37

Lifestyle Center type of development that may include residential and commercial uses, walkways, plazas, and restaurants along interior streets. 77

Maintain commercial uses and make improvements in landscaping, sidewalks, and sign design for those uses that front along Plainfield Avenue and Four Mile Road. 128



Stake Holder Comments

- Provide incentives for redevelopment of Northtown Shopping Center.
- Support the citizen survey results that favored improvements along Plainfield Avenue such as landscaping, sidewalks, signs, etc.
- Did not support the redevelopment of the Northtown Shopping Center as a mix of uses facing interior streets since this is already proposed for 3 Mile and the East Beltline.
- Office or residential uses of property not likely.
- The Township could use a neighborhood grocery store; no change in rural areas; the East Beltline should have some offices, some retail no more chain restaurants or big box users; more locally owned restaurants; restaurants at Northtown Shopping Center would be ok.

TARGET AREA 7

Cascade Road Intersection With Forest Hills Avenue

On Line Survey Results

Votes



Area 7- *The Cascade Road intersection with Forest Hills Avenue. This area is currently a mix of residential, office, and neighborhood commercial uses. Future development in this area should (check as many as you wish):*

Include improvements in landscaping, sidewalks, and sign design for those uses that front along Cascade Road and Forest Hills Avenue. 97

Include improvements in architectural and site design which reflect a small-town atmosphere such as two story-buildings, streetscape design, and gathering places. 102

Not change significantly. 92

Stake Holder Comments

- Would like the Township to create a commercial hub with good access around the corner where Forest Hills Foods is located
- One of the most pressing issues facing the Township is to make sure that growth does not compromise the current “small feel” of the Township
- In ten years, the Township should have defined commercial areas with good traffic flow, and park, recreation, and residential areas connected to the commercial areas with bike/footpaths.
- Responding to the citizen survey results that supported streetscape improvements for Cascade Road and the intersection of Cascade Road with Forest Hills Avenue: “I think the survey was pointing to the need for a central commercial area with easy access by car, foot, and bike. I would like this also but given the traffic volume on Cascade this may be very difficult to achieve.”