

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT PLAN



ADOPTED OCTOBER 8, 2002



Department of Planning and Community Development
410 East Washington Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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CITY OF IOWA CITY

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www.icgov.org

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INTRODUCTION

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for Iowa City, provides a strategy for realizing the vision, and sets policies for the growth and development of specific geographic areas of the city. Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1997, the City has embarked on a series of District Planning efforts in order to provide vision and guidance for development that is more closely tailored to specific areas of the City. District plans are intended to promote patterns of land use, urban design, infrastructure, and services that encourage and contribute to the livability of Iowa City and its neighborhoods. District plans are advisory documents for directing and managing change over time. They serve as guides to decision-making, public deliberation, and investments.

The Southwest District Plan establishes planning principles, goals and objectives that relate specifically to the history and existing conditions of specific areas within Southwest Iowa City. The plan addresses issues of housing, transportation, commercial development, public and neighborhood services, and parks, trails and open space. Since the Southwest Planning District includes older neighborhoods, new subdivisions, and also areas that have yet to be developed, it is difficult to establish specific goals and objectives that would apply to all areas of the district. Therefore, the plan divides the district into four subareas: the Roosevelt Subarea, the Willow Creek Subarea, the Weber Subarea, and the Rohrer South Subarea. While there are basic planning principles that apply to the entire Southwest District, the plan highlights specific issues and corresponding goals and objectives for each of the four subareas and illustrates a vision for future land use on plan maps for each subarea.

The planning principles, goals, and objectives within this plan are intended to be consistent with community-wide goals and policies that are embodied in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan. Establishing sound planning principles and a vision for the future will benefit citizens living or working in the Southwest District as well as citizens in Iowa City as a whole.

The Plan is divided into two sections:

- I. ***The Southwest District: Past and Present***, which describes the location, history and existing conditions in the Southwest District;
- II. ***The Southwest District: Planning for the Future***, which sets forth the planning principles, goals and objectives that will act as a framework on which to base future development decisions. This section includes a discussion of district-wide issues such as transportation and public infrastructure as well as more detailed guidelines for each of the four subareas in the district. Plan maps and concept plans in this section help to illustrate plan goals and objectives.

Planning Process

The Southwest District Plan is based on the input of many individuals, neighborhood groups, and other interested organizations. During the summer and fall of 2001, staff from the City's Department of Planning and Community Development collected background information about the area through historical research, interviews, and site visits. To kick off the public process, the City sent over 5,000 individual notices to invite area residents to a planning workshop on November 8, 2001. The workshop was also promoted through area schools, on the City's website and in the local newspaper. Over 200 citizens responded to this outreach effort and requested to be kept informed of the planning process as it unfolded.



At the first workshop, participants used the background information gathered by city staff to inform their own knowledge and experience as they worked to formulate a vision for the district. Approximately 100 citizens spent the evening examining issues relating to housing, commercial development, transportation, parks and open space, and discussed ways to make the district more livable over time. On February 5, 2002, citizens met at a second workshop to build on the work accomplished in November. Participants worked in small groups to develop more specific goals and objectives for the plan.



It became apparent during the workshop process that more specific direction was needed for different geographical areas in the district. A plan for the development of new neighborhoods was needed for the outlying areas of the district, while existing zoning, traffic, and redevelopment issues are a priority for inner neighborhoods and commercial areas. In addition, specific recommendations were requested by the City Council for the area bounded by Miller Avenue, Benton Street, Harlocke Street, and

Highway 1. This area was placed under a development moratorium to allow time to complete a planning study to determine the most appropriate zoning and land uses for the remaining undeveloped land. A smaller working group of citizens and planning

staff was formed to help identify specific concerns and discuss possible scenarios for future development.

The planning principles, plan maps, and concept plans contained in this document were developed from the public input gathered throughout the planning process. Citizens generated many of the specific policies and design concepts in the plan.



A draft plan was presented to the public in July of 2002. The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed and discussed the plan with citizens at several public hearings in August and September and forwarded their recommended draft to the City Council for review and adoption. The City Council discussed the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommended draft at a public hearing in September. After consideration of public comments, the City Council adopted the Southwest District Plan on October 8, 2002, making it an integral part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

How Will the Southwest District Plan Be Used?

The Southwest District Plan is intended to be a guide to development within the district for the next twenty to twenty-five years. As the City reviews subdivision and rezoning requests, the plan will be consulted to help ensure that new development fits into the surrounding neighborhoods. The City will refer to the Plan when setting funding priorities for public projects and services. Property owners, developers and others may also use the plan when making decisions regarding investment in the Southwest District. Continued citizen input will be important during the implementation of the plan. Private investment and neighborhood initiatives to enhance or improve housing and commercial areas and to protect valuable environmental and historic resources will be essential to the implementation of the Southwest District Plan.

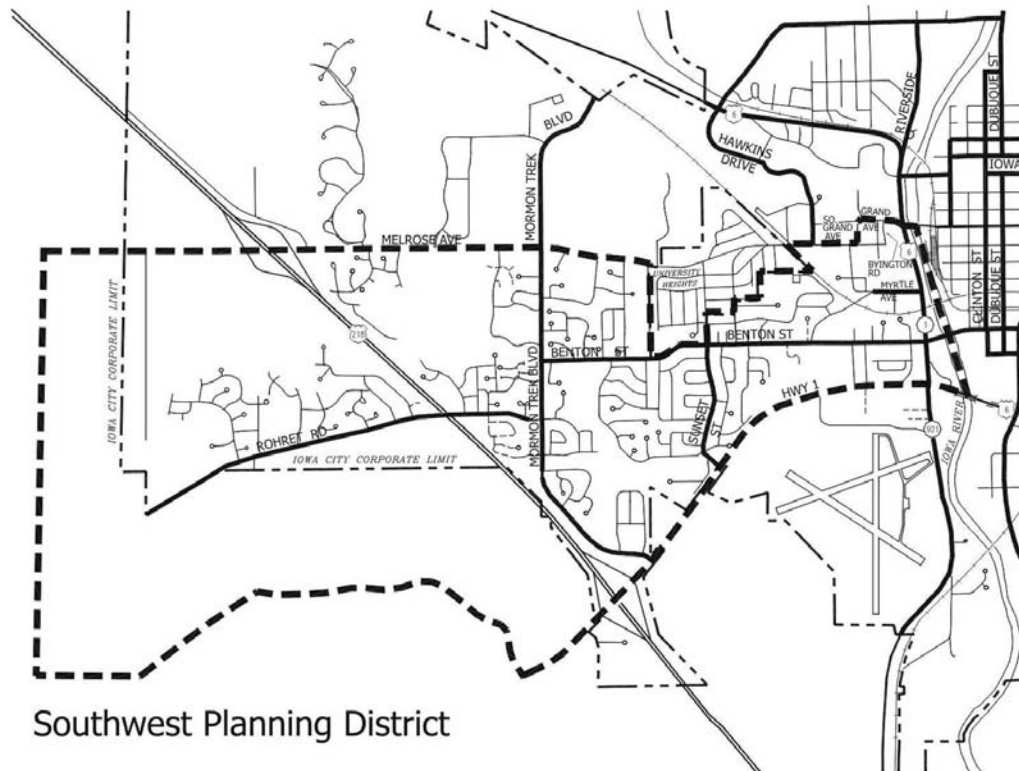
The Southwest District

Past and Present

- ◆ Location
- ◆ History & Existing Conditions



LOCATION



The Southwest Planning District extends from the Iowa River west to the City's western growth area limit. It is bounded on the north by Melrose Avenue and Grand Avenue and on the south by Iowa Highway 1. In the mid-1990's the City's growth area limit was expanded westward to the future alignment of Highway 965, which will eventually skirt the eastern edge of the Iowa City Landfill.

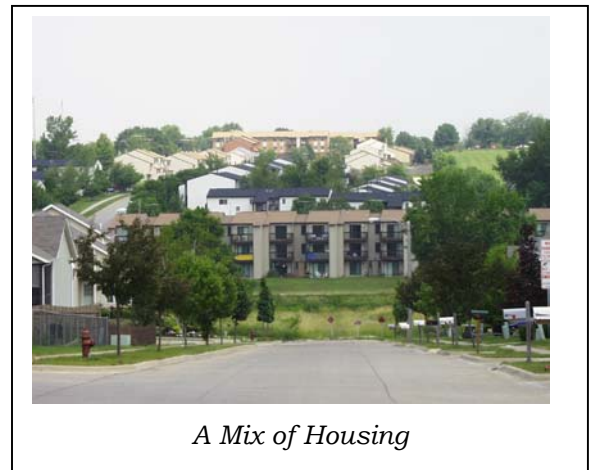
HISTORY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Southwest District consists primarily of residential development, although it also contains important commercial areas along Riverside Drive, Highway 1 and Mormon Trek Boulevard. The residential neighborhoods and commercial areas are linked to the rest of Iowa City by a network of arterial streets and regional trails, including Melrose Avenue, Benton Street, Rohret Road, Mormon Trek Boulevard, Riverside Drive, the Willow Creek Trail, and the Iowa River Corridor Trail. Along Melrose Avenue the District abuts University Heights, which is incorporated as a separate city.

The land use map on the previous page is provided as a reference. It indicates the various land uses in existence at the time this plan was developed.

Housing

The map on the following page illustrates the existing development pattern in the Southwest District. As one can see from this map, the residential uses in the District range from low-density single-family homes to high-density apartments in areas along the north side of Benton Street and along Mormon Trek Boulevard. While the area located east of Highway 218 is nearly completely developed, the area west of the highway contains low-density single-family subdivisions bordering large areas of agricultural land.



A Mix of Housing

While much of the land south of Rohret Road and west of Highway 218 is still used as farmland, vestiges of early country living still remain in the eastern part of the



Pratt –Soper House

district along Melrose Avenue and Benton Street. The earliest-known house of record is at 817 Melrose Avenue. Two blocks east is the Billingsley-Hills-Widness house, which was originally a 34-acre country estate. Constructed in 1870, this Italianate structure is one of three former estates on Melrose Avenue listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The other two houses are the Cannon-Gay and Pratt-Soper houses at 320 and 503 Melrose Avenue, respectively.

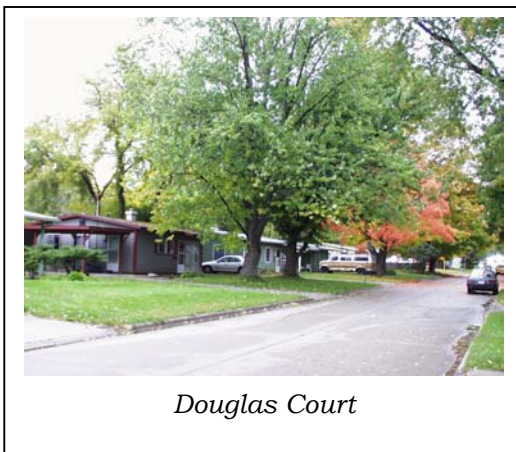
There are also a number of historic houses on Benton Street, including the Williams-Unash house located just east of Roosevelt School at 602 W. Benton Street, and the Cyrus S. Ranck house at 747 W. Benton Street, which was recently designated an

Iowa City Landmark. Built at the turn of the century, the house was originally surrounded by a 22-acre orchard. The current owners continue to maintain a large part of this property as natural woodland.

The vacant property across from the school was once occupied by another historic brick structure, the William Butterbaugh house, which was built in 1884 on a 160-acre farm. Behind the house were several barns and other farm structures. In 1925 Charles W. Ruppert, Sr. purchased the property and rented it to William Sanger who operated a dairy farm at this location. The Rupperts still own portions of the original farm, however the house was abandoned and eventually demolished. The Ruppert property is one of the few large, undeveloped tracts remaining in the eastern part of the District.

The earliest subdivisions within the Southwest District were developed between 1921 and 1924 in the area south of Melrose Avenue and north of the former Rock Island Railroad and Myrtle Avenue. These included Melrose Place, Circle and Court, as well as Brookland Place, Brookland Park, and Triangle Place. This neighborhood has narrow streets, and a wooded, rugged character that makes it intimate and distinct. Another early subdivision occurred along Miller and Hudson Avenues south of Benton Street. Many of the homes along these streets were built as a part of the Baily and Beck Addition, which was platted in 1927.

Much of the area along Benton and Orchard Streets was platted in the late 1940s. A World War II aviation manufacturer constructed the small ranch-style homes along Douglas Street and Douglas Court, which was platted in 1954. Further development in the 1950s took place between Myrtle Avenue and the Iowa Interstate Railway (formerly the Rock Island Railway). Others areas south of Melrose Avenue and north of Highway 1 continued to develop through the 1970s in a rather ad hoc manner.



Douglas Court

Another factor in the development of Southwest Iowa City was an increasing need to house university students. The University expanded its west side dormitory space with the construction of Rienow Hall and Slater Hall in the late 1960s. In addition, a number of apartment blocks were developed among the small subdivisions. The Seville, Carriage Hill and Benton Manor apartment complexes were constructed at the top of the Benton Street Hill. Apartment complexes were

constructed around "University Lake" between University Heights to the north and 1960s-era single-family neighborhoods to the south. Additional apartment blocks were built along Oakcrest Street.

Larger subdivisions in the Southwest District were not platted until after the 1960s. From the late 60s through the 70s, most of the area south of Benton Street and east

of Willow Creek Park was platted and built. The subdivisions west of Willow Creek Park were all platted in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

In the western portion of the Southwest District, development is occurring primarily in the area north of Rohret Road. The Galway Hills subdivision continues to develop near the intersection of Highway 218 and Melrose Avenue. A new retirement community was recently constructed in this vicinity, directly adjacent to West High School. West of Highway 218, Wild Prairie Estates and Country Club Estates continue their build-out near Weber Elementary School.

Urban development is not likely to expand very quickly south of Rohret Road due to the difficulty in providing sanitary sewer service. Many of the homes in this area are located outside the city limits in Johnson County. These residences have private wells and their own septic systems.

Public Institutions

The Southwest District is home to a number of public institutions that serve the community. These institutions are markers of the district's individuality. Not only do they serve the citizens of the Southwest District, but they also bring people from other areas of the city to the district.

The University of Iowa has a significant presence in the northeast part of the district, including the Boyd Law Building overlooking the Iowa River, several parking lots, and scattered properties along Melrose Avenue used as rental property and child daycare. In addition, the University influences development in the Southwest District because it owns much of the property directly north of the District, including the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, the Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Nursing, the university's athletic facilities, and several dormitories.



Weber Elementary

The Iowa City Community School District has a number of schools in southwest Iowa City. Both Roosevelt and Horn elementary schools are located along Benton Street. West High School has a large campus along Melrose Avenue and Weber Elementary School is located in the western part of the district along Rohret Road. These schools serve both educational and community purposes and are often a gathering place for people in the surrounding neighborhoods.

One of the Southwest District's largest undeveloped properties is owned by Johnson County and was formerly the site of an important public institution. Located on Melrose Avenue near Slothower Road, the Johnson County Poor Farm provided care to those who were unable to care for themselves, including both the indigent and the mentally disabled, from the 1850s until the 1960s. The intent was for the farm to be partially self-supporting.



From its earliest days, farming was an important part of its operations. Residents of the poor farm were expected to do what farm chores they could manage in order to compensate the county for their care. In 1964, a newer facility was built on the site. Chatham Oaks, a privately run institution for persons with mental illness, is currently housed in this building. Johnson County continues to own and maintain the property and leases the remaining farmland to a local farmer. In 1977, the remaining wing of the original 1859 asylum building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This structure was restored by the County and opened to the public in 1990. In addition to the historic asylum building, a number of early farm buildings and the Poor Farm cemetery are notable features of the site.

Transportation

Melrose Avenue, Benton Street, Highway 1, Riverside Drive, Mormon Trek Boulevard and Rohret Road form the backbone of the transportation network in the Southwest District. These arterial streets serve two important functions, to provide travel routes for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians through and to different parts of the community, and to provide access to adjacent properties via collector and local streets. Highway 218, which cuts diagonally through the district, also provides access to the southwest portion of Iowa City, although its primary function is to serve motorists travelling through the metropolitan area.

Many of these streets were also important in the early development of the district. Melrose Avenue was once called Snooks Grove Road and known popularly as the Poor Farm Road. Snooks Grove was a settlement located on Bear Creek in Poweshiek County. The residents of Snooks Grove Road eventually rebelled and it was renamed Melrose Avenue. This name became the basis for the naming of Melrose Place, Melrose Circle and Melrose Court. However, the origin of "Melrose" is not known.

The topography in certain areas along Benton Street is quite steep. For years, what is now referred to as the Benton Street Hill was called Ranck Hill. The steep hill has always been difficult in the winter months. Irving Weber notes accounts of Roosevelt schoolteachers having to “gun” their engines and push their vehicles to reach the school. To the children living in the area, however, the hill was a popular location for sledding until 1952, when the City paved it.



The sledding hill on Benton Street

Rohret Road was named for Bavarian immigrant Wolfgang Rohret. He, his wife Katrina, and four sons had staked out a claim along Old Man’s Creek in 1840. Wolfgang and his sons traveled the early road daily to and from Iowa City and their employment as construction workers on the new state capitol building. The Rohret sons were later hired by Lyman Dillon to plow the 100-mile-long Dillon’s Furrow between Iowa City and Dubuque.



Mormon Trek Boulevard

In 1856, Iowa City was the westernmost stop for the railroad. During that year, five parties of Mormon converts from England, Scotland, Wales, Norway, and Denmark passed through Iowa City on their trek to Salt Lake City, Utah, which they believed to be the promised land. The first party arrived in May and they spent four weeks at a camp along Clear Creek. While encamped, they built handcarts for hauling their belongings on the continuation of their journey. By the end of July, the last party left Iowa City for Utah with their handcarts in tow. Because of the late start, however, they encountered severe winter weather, and

between 135 and 150 died en route. Legend has it that five Mormon graves are located near their Iowa City camp, but none have yet been discovered. The Mormon Handcart Park and Trail commemorate this camp and Mormon Trek Boulevard was named in honor of their journey.

The decision in the late 1970s to construct Highway 218 as a diagonally-routed, limited-access highway through southwestern Iowa City has had, and will continue to have, a major influence on development in this part of the city. Highway 218 forms part of what will eventually be the “Avenue of the Saints,” an expressway between Saint Paul, Minnesota and Saint Louis, Missouri. While providing an important transportation route, Highway 218 is a substantial barrier separating the neighborhoods southwest of it from the rest of Iowa City. Melrose Avenue, Rohret Road, and Highway 1 are the only streets that bridge across the highway. Integrating and connecting the neighborhoods west of Highway 218 to the rest of the community will remain a challenge as the City develops westward. Trail connections under the

roadbed may help to integrate new neighborhoods into the community and provide connections to important destinations, such as West High School, on the east side of the highway. Additional north-south street connections between Melrose Avenue, Rohret Road and Highway 1 will improve traffic circulation within the area and will help to connect these westernmost neighborhoods with neighborhoods east of the highway.

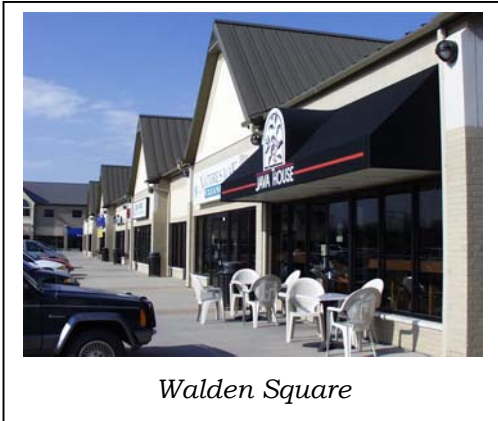
Improvements to Melrose Avenue, Mormon Trek Boulevard, and Rohret Road in the past decade have improved the capacity of the arterial street system in western Iowa City. However, insufficient capacity and poor access control along streets such as Benton east of Sunset Street and along portions of Riverside Drive contribute to congestion, delay, and accidents. As development continues west of Mormon Trek Boulevard and along Highway 1, the demands on the arterial street system will increase.

Commercial Development

The Southwest District contains extensive commercial development along Highway 1 and on Riverside Drive. Much of this development is in the form of commercial strips. Larger businesses line the Highway 1 corridor and provide goods and services to the greater Iowa City area.

South Riverside Drive is composed of smaller commercial lots with many individual access drives off of the roadway, making it seem busier and more congested. The Riverside Drive commercial area has a long history and is in many ways the very model of post-World War II commercial strip development. The area was annexed in the 1920s and remained mostly residential for the next couple of decades. Following the war, households began moving out and businesses began moving in, finally outnumbering homes by 1959 and reaching saturation around 1970. Contributing to this was Riverside's changing transportation role over the years. It served as the converged route of State Highway 1 and U.S. Highways 6 and 218 and as the southern entryway into Iowa City. This made it an attractive place to locate filling stations and other auto-service uses and auto-oriented uses, such as fast-food restaurants. The growth of residential neighborhoods in areas to the west, the expansion of commercial uses along Highway 1 West and Highway 6 East, and the reorientation of Highway 218 far to the west in the 1980s effectively displaced Riverside Drive from its former entryway role.





Walden Square

The Southwest District also contains a smaller neighborhood commercial area called Walden Square. This compact shopping center is located on Mormon Trek Boulevard near its intersection with Benton Street. Walden Square includes a neighborhood grocery store, several retail shops and restaurants, and a credit union. Unlike commercial development along Highway 1 and Riverside Drive, which relies primarily on attracting drive-by customers from the entire Iowa City area, the primary focus at Walden Square is to provide for the everyday shopping needs of

the surrounding neighborhoods. While parking spaces are prevalent at Walden Square, neighborhood residents can also ride their bikes or walk to these shops via the Willow Creek Trail, which runs adjacent to this development.

Parks and Open Space

The Southwest District contains a number of regional and neighborhood parks. Willow Creek Park and Kiwanis Park together provide a large regional park facility that not only serves the surrounding neighborhoods on the west side of the City, but also attracts users from other parts of town. The Iowa River Corridor Trail skirts the eastern boundary of the district. The newly developed Ned Ashton Park, located at the corner of Benton Street and Riverside Drive, provides a neighborhood access

point and resting area for the Iowa River Corridor Trail. Brookland Park, at the intersection of Greenwood Drive and the Iowa Interstate Railway, provides both active and passive recreational opportunities for the surrounding Melrose and Miller-Orchard neighborhoods. The City has recently acquired property along Benton Street across from Roosevelt Elementary to develop into a small park. Discussions continue as to how this park might best be developed to serve the surrounding residents. Tower Court Park is a small pocket park that is enjoyed by residents living along Tower Court and Oakcrest Street.



Iowa River Corridor Trail

Villa Park, located west of University Heights, contains both active and passive areas and also doubles as a stormwater detention facility. Hunters Run Park serves the westernmost neighborhoods of the district. It is located west of Highway 218 along Duck Creek Drive. While this park consists largely of natural areas with trails, improvements have recently been made to provide more active park space.

Planning for the Future

- ◆ Planning Principles
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Public Services and Facilities
- ◆ Southwest District Subareas
 - Roosevelt Subarea
 - Willow Creek Subarea
 - Weber Subarea
 - Rohret South Subarea



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

During the planning process, citizens discussed what was most valued in the Southwest District and those aspects that could use improvement. They also discussed principles that should be followed as new neighborhoods are developed in the future. Many of the specific ideas, concepts, and goals generated at the citizen planning workshops are included in the remaining sections of the plan. The following citizen-generated principles provide the underlying framework for the plan:

- Citizens stressed the importance of **providing a diversity of housing** in the District, including homes for first time buyers, mid-sized homes, estate-style homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments. The appropriate design and mix of housing types is important to the creation of livable neighborhoods.
- Citizens emphasized the importance of **preserving and stabilizing close-in, diverse neighborhoods**. Citizens expressed a desire for better enforcement of existing zoning and nuisance laws and a re-examination of existing zoning patterns in the older parts of the District. There is also concern about the encroachment of university uses into the neighborhoods south of Melrose Avenue.
- **Design issues are important to citizens**. There was a desire expressed to establish design standards for higher density uses so that these uses would be well integrated into existing and future neighborhoods. Variety in building design is a desirable goal. Monotonous repetition of the same building along a street frontage or in a neighborhood should be discouraged. Citizens emphasized that buildings should be designed to be sensitive to the environment, the topography, and the surrounding development.
- Citizens feel it is important to **design new neighborhoods around a focal point** such as a neighborhood commercial district, community center or park. The Carson Lake concept plan was developed with this principle in mind.
- Citizens want to **prevent sprawl and preserve the rural character** of the far western and southern portions of the district. Although these areas are not likely to remain permanently in farm use, the plan encourages orderly growth. Urban densities should not occur until public facilities are in place and until areas adjacent to existing urban development are built out.
- **A safe, efficient network of streets** is important to neighborhood residents. Emphasis should be placed on designing street networks that prevent cut-through traffic on local streets and provide safe travel routes for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Citizens emphasized the **importance of providing good access to public transit**. Expansion of transit service should be considered in areas where higher densities develop.
- **Trails, wide sidewalks, and bicycle lanes** are viewed as important transportation links to neighborhood destinations.
- With regard to parks, open space and trails, there is overwhelming support for **creating an interconnected system of neighborhood and regional parks** throughout the district.
- Citizens expressed support for **attractive, well-designed commercial areas that serve the daily needs of the surrounding residents**. Design, accessibility, and types of commercial uses were important topics discussed at the workshops.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation system in the Southwest District includes arterial streets, trails and wide sidewalks, and public transit. More detailed information about neighborhood transportation issues is included in the subarea sections below.

Arterial Streets

The only new arterial street corridor planned for within the Southwest District is the future extension of Highway 965 from Highway 6 to Melrose Avenue, and eventually to Highway 1. North of Melrose Avenue, the Highway 965 corridor will be located along the Hurt Road alignment and along the east side of the Iowa City Landfill south of Melrose Avenue. Highway 965 will not only provide an additional north-south link between Iowa City and Coralville, it will create an additional link in the regional arterial street system by connecting Highway 1 in Iowa City to Highway 6 in Coralville and beyond to North Liberty. The extension of Highway 965 through the district is identified as a long-range project, 20 to 25 years in the future.

Other planned arterial street extensions that will affect traffic patterns in the Southwest District include the extension of Mormon Trek Boulevard from Highway 1 through the South Central Planning District to Riverside Drive, and Camp Cardinal Road from Melrose Avenue north to Highway 6 in Coralville. The extension of Mormon Trek Boulevard to Riverside Drive will create an additional east-west arterial street link, and traffic forecasts have shown it will likely result in a reduction in traffic on Benton Street. The extension of Camp Cardinal Road between Melrose Avenue and Highway 6 will create an additional north-south link between Iowa City and Coralville and will help reduce dependence on Mormon Trek Boulevard and Highway 218 for north-south traffic.



Sidewalk gaps along Riverside Drive

For existing arterial streets, segments of Benton Street and Riverside Drive have been identified as needing improvement. Sidewalk gaps and inadequate bicycle facilities make the area less safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, poor access control contributes to the higher-than-average collision rates along these streets. As opportunities arise through redevelopment projects, a concerted effort should be made to fill in the sidewalk gaps, consolidate driveways and/or shift the location of driveways to safer locations. While the addition of travel lanes is not currently being contemplated, both Benton Street and Riverside Drive will periodically be evaluated for improved turning lanes and traffic control. Traffic control devices, such as traffic signals or signs, may be warranted if they improve safety

and/or traffic flow without having a negative impact on other neighborhood streets. Because traffic control devices have the potential to increase the collision rate and/or increase traffic on surrounding streets, a traffic engineering study needs to be completed before additional traffic control is added to an intersection.

Public Transit

The Southwest District is served by a number of Iowa City transit routes, including the Oakcrest, Westwinds, Plaen View, Westport, and West Side Loop routes. The University of Iowa's CAMBUS provides service to the Hawkeye Park commuter lot. The Westport Route focuses on the commercial/employment corridors along Riverside Drive and Highway 1 West. The other routes provide general coverage to the predominately residential areas of the Southwest District, including the commercial nodes along Mormon Trek Boulevard and the University of Iowa's Health Sciences Campus. Each of these routes terminates at the Downtown Transit Interchange in Iowa City, and transfers between routes can be made wherever routes overlap.

Most of the transit routes operate on a standard schedule, with buses every half hour during the three-hour morning and afternoon peak periods, and every hour the remainder of the day. The Westside Loop route is unique in that it operates only when public schools are open, and provides service to West High School and downtown Iowa City with one route in the morning and one route in the afternoon to serve high school students. Currently there are no plans to alter any of these routes, as they are designed to give general coverage to the area where there is sufficient existing demand for transit service. The extension of transit service will be evaluated as the population increases west of Highway 218.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

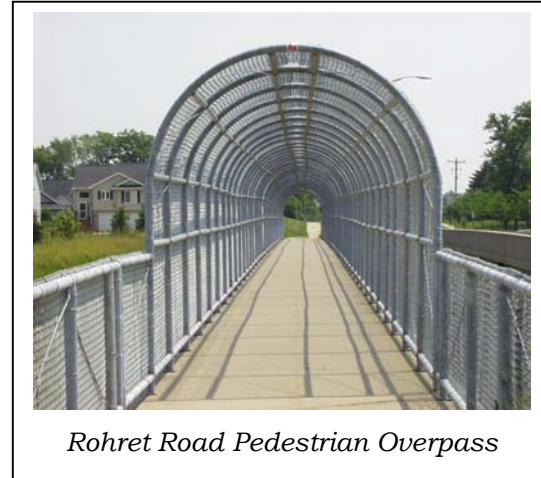


Pedestrian trails within the city are used both for recreation and as transportation routes. The two regional trails in the Southwest District include the Iowa River Corridor (IRC) Trail and the Willow Creek Trail. The IRC Trail, Iowa City's longest at six miles, currently extends to Benton Street on the west side of the Iowa River, where it crosses to the east side and continues south to Napoleon Park. Future plans include extending the IRC Trail along the west side of the river from Benton Street to Sturgis Ferry Park.

The Willow Creek Trail currently provides access to West High School, Walden Square commercial area, Willow Creek Park and Kiwanis Park, and the neighborhoods west of Sunset Street. Future plans include extending the Willow

Creek Trail under Highway 218 to Hunters Run Park and the County Poor Farm property, and eventually to Melrose Avenue. To the south, the Willow Creek Trail is planned to cross under Highway 1 or at a signalized intersection to connect to the commercial properties on the south side of Highway 1. Ultimately, the Willow Creek Trail is planned to generally follow Willow Creek to the Iowa River where it will connect to the IRC Trail in the vicinity of Napoleon Park.

Wide sidewalks within arterial street corridors enhance the pedestrian/bicycle network and are used to help connect neighborhoods to the trail system. An important objective of the plan is to fill in the existing gaps in the sidewalk network in the district. As arterial streets in southwest Iowa City are reconstructed, it will be important to add features such as wide sidewalks, bike lanes or wide travel lanes for bicyclists, and pedestrian-friendly bridges and underpasses. Priorities should be given to the following pedestrian facility improvements:



Rohret Road Pedestrian Overpass

- Fill in the gaps and improve the sidewalks along Riverside Drive;
- Fill in the gaps in the sidewalk network along Benton Street;
- Widen the sidewalks on one side of Benton Street where possible;
- As the district continues to develop, evaluate the need for new or improved pedestrian crossings;
- Construct wide sidewalks or trails along Highway 1 in order to create pedestrian/bicycle access to the Highway 1 commercial properties.
- As pedestrian facilities are added to the Highway 1 corridor, pedestrian crossings will need to be established. Opportunities for pedestrian crossings exist at the signalized intersections. A pedestrian underpass of Highway 1 can potentially be constructed using a culvert originally built for overflow from Willow Creek.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Fire Protection

The Iowa City Fire Department provides fire protection to the Southwest District. Fire Station No. 2, located at 301 Emerald Street, provides primary response to the District. Secondary response is provided by Fire Station No. 1, located downtown at the Iowa City Civic Center. First response times for the developed properties in the District average between four and eight minutes. However, response times for properties located on the periphery of the Southwest District can exceed eight minutes. As the Southwest District continues to develop westward, it is likely that response times will increase. To help keep response times low, it may be necessary to secure land to relocate Fire Station No. 2 farther southwest so that it is nearer to the geographic center of the west side of the city. Arterial street continuity and secondary access are important to ensure adequate fire and emergency protection. A location on Rohret Road would be appropriate.



Sanitary Sewer Service

Sanitary sewer is essential for development within Iowa City. Without public sewer service, development is limited to one house per acre. In such situations a private septic system is required and is controlled by the Johnson County Health Department. Because it greatly increases the allowable intensity of development, the construction of a sewer line can have as much influence on development as zoning laws.

Sanitary sewer service in the Southwest District is provided by a series of major interceptor/trunk sewer lines and the lateral sewer lines which feed into them. Interceptor and trunk sewers are large pipes that provide service to an entire drainage basin and are usually constructed by the City. The City has a standing policy of recouping the cost of trunkline construction by collecting “tap-on” fees from developments that later hook into the sewer. In the Southwest District, the primary sewers are the Westside Trunk, Willow Creek Interceptor, and Southwest Trunk. Lateral sewer lines are smaller sewers that feed into trunk and interceptor sewers. Individual houses and buildings have service lines that hook into the lateral sewer lines.

All of the city’s sewer lines flow to one of the City’s two wastewater treatment plants. The North Wastewater Treatment Plant is located adjacent to the Iowa River north of Highway 6. The South Wastewater Treatment Plant is located to the north of Napoleon Street on the far south side of the city. These two plants treat raw sewage

according to Federal and State requirements so that the treated wastewater can be released into the Iowa River.

All of the existing developments in the Southwest District are adequately served by the existing sanitary sewer system. There are properties in the southern portion of the Country Club Estates area that cannot be further developed until the Abbey Lane Trunk Sewer is extended or a lift station is built to pump sewage to the Westside Trunk. Until these improvements are made, there will be no further expansion in this part of the subdivision. Development in the area west of Slothower Road can utilize the landfill lift station to pump sewage to the Westside Trunk as a temporary measure until additional trunk lines, a lift station and the Abbey Lane Trunk sewer are constructed to serve the larger growth area south of Rohret Road.

The provision of sewer service to the area south of Rohret Road and west of Highway 218 will require the Abbey Lane Trunk Sewer to be extended under Highway 218 and, for the far westerly portions of the growth area, the construction of a lift station. Due to the high cost of this project, it is not likely to occur in the near future. As the other areas of the Southwest District become more fully developed, the cost of this sewer project may be justified to open additional land for urban growth. Until that time, agricultural uses will continue to predominate in this area.

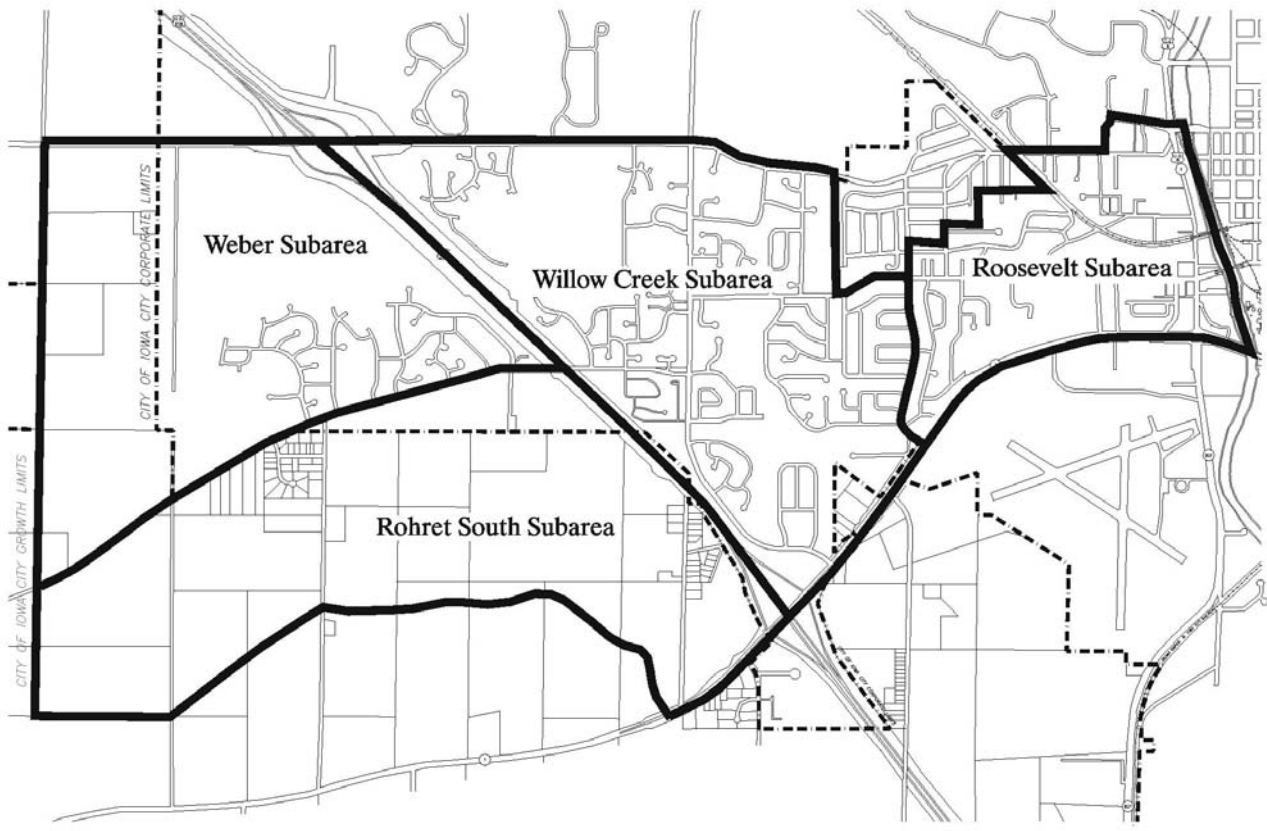
Water Service

As development occurs, water lines are extended from adjacent subdivisions to serve areas of new growth. Individual developers are responsible for installing water mains within their subdivisions. Developers are also charged a water main extension fee that is applied to their share of the cost of building the city-wide distribution system. The City recently constructed a water storage tank in the Slothower Road vicinity to improve water pressure on the far west side of the city. For the same reason, it will be necessary in the near future to loop the existing dead-end mains located along Rohret Road and Melrose Avenue.

Solid Waste

The Iowa City Landfill abuts the western boundary of the Southwest District and is directly west of the proposed future alignment of Highway 965. The landfill has been in use since 1972, serving all of Johnson County and the communities of Riverside and Kalona in Washington County. The landfill has an estimated site life of 30 to 35 years. The 200-acre site has about 100 acres buried in refuse mainly on the eastern portion of the property. These 100 acres have been capped and grass has been planted to stabilize the banks. The landfill owns two additional 40-acre properties to the west of the site and plans are to continue purchasing land surrounding the landfill to the west, north and south in order to add capacity and to create a buffer between the landfill and any future development. Portions of the buffer area could be used for recreation and the landfill itself could be used for recreational purposes in the distant future.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT SUBAREAS



The following sections of the plan refer to the four subareas illustrated on the map above. The goals and objectives for each of these areas are highlighted in the text and illustrated on a conceptual plan maps. These plan maps are color-coded to indicate the types of land use or types of development intended for specific areas. In addition, future road extensions and possible new street configurations are illustrated using dashed lines. The red lines on the plan maps indicate existing and future trails and wide sidewalks.

ROOSEVELT SUBAREA

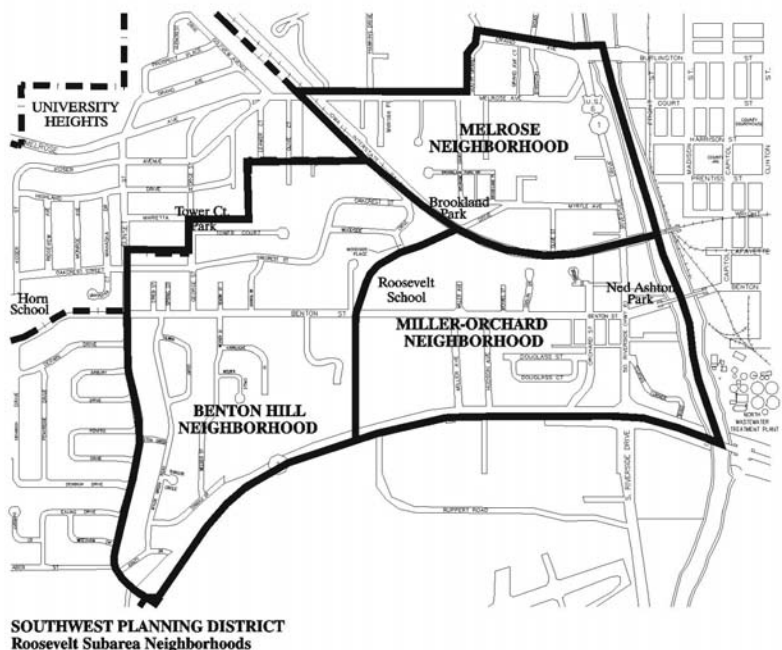
The Roosevelt Subarea extends from the Iowa River west to Sunset Street. It is bounded on the north by Melrose Avenue and on the south by Highway 1. Benton Street provides an important east-west arterial street connection through this area. The Iowa Interstate Railway bisects the subarea, which restricts the number of north-south roadway and pedestrian connections. The hilly topography and wooded ravines also limit development and make it difficult to create a truly connected street system.

Much of the subarea has already been developed, although there are a few notable undeveloped parcels along Highway 1 and Miller Avenue. The area is largely residential and contains a variety of housing types, including single-family homes, apartments, elderly housing, and assisted living facilities. Commercial development lines Riverside Drive from Myrtle Avenue to the intersection with Highway 1 and also west along Highway 1.

Housing

For purposes of identifying and describing the various housing issues facing this area of the City, the plan divides the Roosevelt subarea into three "neighborhoods:"

- Melrose Neighborhood, which includes all of the area between Melrose Avenue and the Iowa Interstate Railway;
- Miller-Orchard Neighborhood, which includes all of the residential areas between the railway and Highway 1 as far west as Greenwood Drive; and
- Benton Hill Neighborhood, which is bounded by University Heights, the railway, Greenwood Drive, Sunset Street, and Highway 1.



Melrose Neighborhood

The Melrose Neighborhood is an older single-family neighborhood located directly adjacent to the University of Iowa, which has a significant influence on development in this area. A main portion of the University's campus is located north of Melrose Avenue, including the University's large teaching hospital, its medical and nursing schools, its athletic facilities, and a number of student dormitories. In addition, the University owns a significant amount of property south of Melrose in the eastern part of this neighborhood and various lots scattered throughout.



The University has expressed a need to expand the law school facilities and find a suitable area for new dormitory space. The University is acquiring property in the area along Melrose Avenue as it comes up for sale. There is concern on the part of the residents living in the Melrose neighborhood about the University's long-term expansion plans. As property is converted to university uses, it will make this area less viable as a residential neighborhood. In addition, there is a strong community interest in Iowa City to preserve historic properties and there are a number of historically significant homes in this area.



It will be difficult to balance the needs of an expanding university with the needs of the residents over the next twenty years. The City has little regulatory power over the University since it is a state institution. However, it is an important goal of the City to preserve and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods close to the University and the downtown. Achieving this goal will help to prevent urban sprawl along the edges of the community, reduce commute times, provide a diverse residential community, preserve historic resources, and support the vitality of the City's central business district. Efforts should be made to encourage the University to work more closely with the City and the surrounding community as it develops future expansion plans. In areas such as the Melrose neighborhood, the City must take a more assertive role in the zoning and regulation of University properties if it is to achieve these important goals.

Myrtle Avenue is an important collector street in this area. It not only provides the residents of the single-family homes with direct access to Riverside Drive, it is also

the primary access point for a concentration of higher density apartments clustered behind the commercial area on Riverside. A traffic signal at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue and Riverside Drive may be warranted in the future.

Miller-Orchard Neighborhood

Miller-Orchard is an older neighborhood of modest single-family homes. The area also contains a few apartment buildings located near the rail line. The single-family housing in the neighborhood is nearly equally split between owner-occupied units and rentals. The City recently purchased a two-acre parcel of land across from Roosevelt School that will be developed into a park in the near future. The Parks and Recreation Commission will continue to work with the neighborhood on more specific plans for the new park. The area also contains approximately nine acres of undeveloped, residentially zoned land along Miller Avenue.

The Miller-Orchard neighborhood has many assets, but a number of challenges. Affordability of the housing, the proximity to the University, downtown Iowa City, Roosevelt School, and the new park, all make this area a potentially attractive location for a variety of households. However, short-term tenancy, traffic circulation patterns, an unattractive interface between the commercial and residential areas, and a lack of pedestrian links both within and between this neighborhood and surrounding destinations have all contributed to some disinvestment in the area. In April and May of 2000, the City conducted a survey to assess basic housing conditions in a number of the City's older neighborhoods. Results from this survey indicate that nearly one-third of all single-family homes in the Miller-Orchard Neighborhood are in need of major repairs.

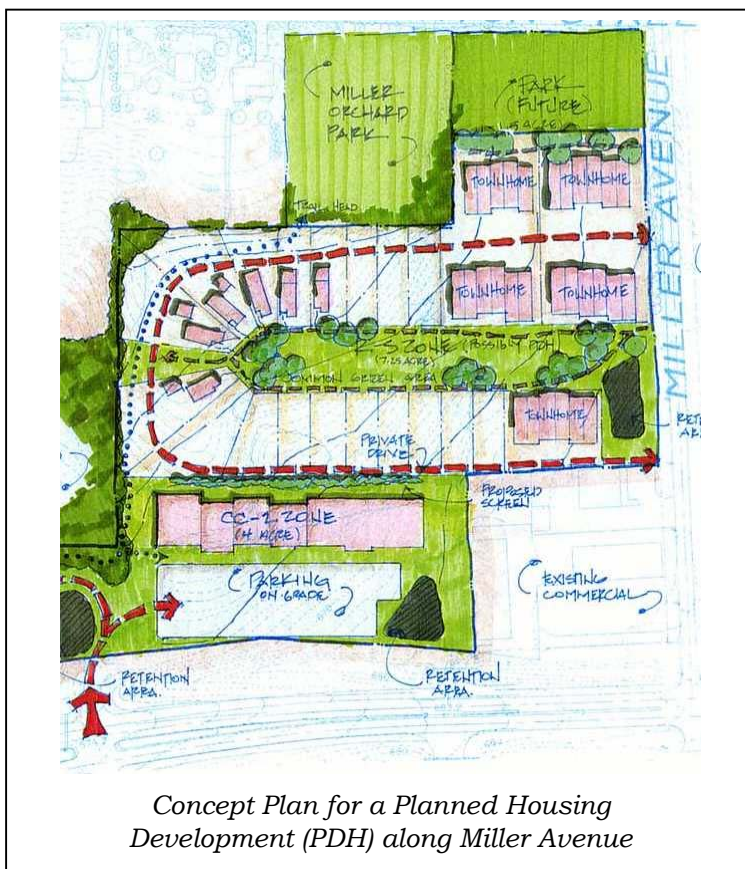


*The embankment problem on
Riverside Drive*

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the neighborhood is less than ideal. Miller Avenue, Hudson Avenue, and Orchard Street all provide direct connections between Benton Street and Highway 1. This factor invites cut-through traffic onto these local streets. As vacant parcels in the vicinity are developed, the impact on traffic along Miller and Hudson may need to be evaluated to determine if traffic-calming measures should be implemented. In addition, gaps in the sidewalk network along Benton Street, Hudson, and Miller make walking to nearby destinations, such as Roosevelt School, the University, and the Riverside Drive commercial area difficult. Most notable is the missing pedestrian link along the south side of Benton Street from the top of the hill to Miller Avenue and the sidewalk gaps along Riverside Drive. Also absent is a safe travel route for children between Roosevelt School and the

new park across Benton Street. As roadway and pedestrian improvements are made along Benton Street, it may be feasible to construct a pedestrian overpass between the school and the park to address this concern. For pedestrians wishing to travel from the neighborhood north to downtown or the university, the railroad embankment presents a frustrating barrier. A tunnel should be constructed through the embankment where it meets Riverside Drive to improve pedestrian circulation and safety.

Orchard Street is the dividing line between the single-family neighborhood on its west side and the Riverside Drive commercial area on its east. There is little connection and no transition between the businesses and the residential neighborhood. Many of the businesses provide goods and services to the larger community and therefore rely primarily on drive-by traffic from Riverside Drive and Highway 1. While these businesses provide an important function in the wider community, the nearby residents feel the effects of increased congestion and unsightly parking and work areas. To provide a more attractive transition between the commercial and residential areas, the City should encourage redevelopment along this street that might include mixed-use buildings, with commercial on the first floor and dwelling units above, and encourage site redevelopment plans that provide creative solutions for customer parking and service areas.



Future development of the vacant land along Miller Avenue should be carefully considered with regard to efforts to stabilize and revitalize the Miller-Orchard neighborhood. The concept plan to the left illustrates how this area can be developed in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.¹ A combination of single-family houses and townhouses at a density of approximately eight units per acre is possible on this parcel. In order to integrate new housing into the existing neighborhood, vehicular access to Miller Avenue is important. The concept plan shows housing units facing a central green space with garages to the rear off of a private street.

¹ See Appendix C for a more detailed description of this property and recommendations for future development.

When this parcel is developed it will be important to establish a pedestrian trail that links the Miller Orchard Park to the dedicated open space in the Benton Hill Neighborhood and to the adjacent commercial area.

To provide safer access to Miller-Orchard Park, it will be necessary to acquire additional parkland at the corner of Miller Avenue and Benton Street. This land could be dedicated as open space as a part of a subdivision or planned development (PDH) of the larger parcel or could be acquired by the City. While it would be desirable for the entire two-acre corner property to be developed as parkland, one acre would be sufficient to provide a safe and attractive entrance to the park. When the adjacent residential land is developed it will be important to provide an attractive interface between the park and the housing units. The concept plan on the previous page shows one method of achieving this goal. Housing units could be constructed to face the park with the garages to the rear off of a private street.

In order to stabilize and revitalize the Miller-Orchard neighborhood, the City should assist in and encourage private reinvestment in the area. Following are a number of objectives to achieve this goal:

- Provide financial assistance to area residents for housing maintenance and repair through the City's Targeted Area Rehabilitation Program.
- Target Community Development Block Grant funds for housing rehabilitation and public infrastructure improvements in the neighborhood.
- Provide down payment assistance to low- and moderate-income individuals and families to encourage home ownership in the area.
- Use neighborhood PIN grants to fund efforts to improve the aesthetics and livability of the neighborhood.
- Encourage mixed-use redevelopment along Orchard Street to transition between residential and commercial.
- Invest in parkland improvements and streetscape work along Benton Street.
- Improve enforcement of existing zoning and nuisance laws.

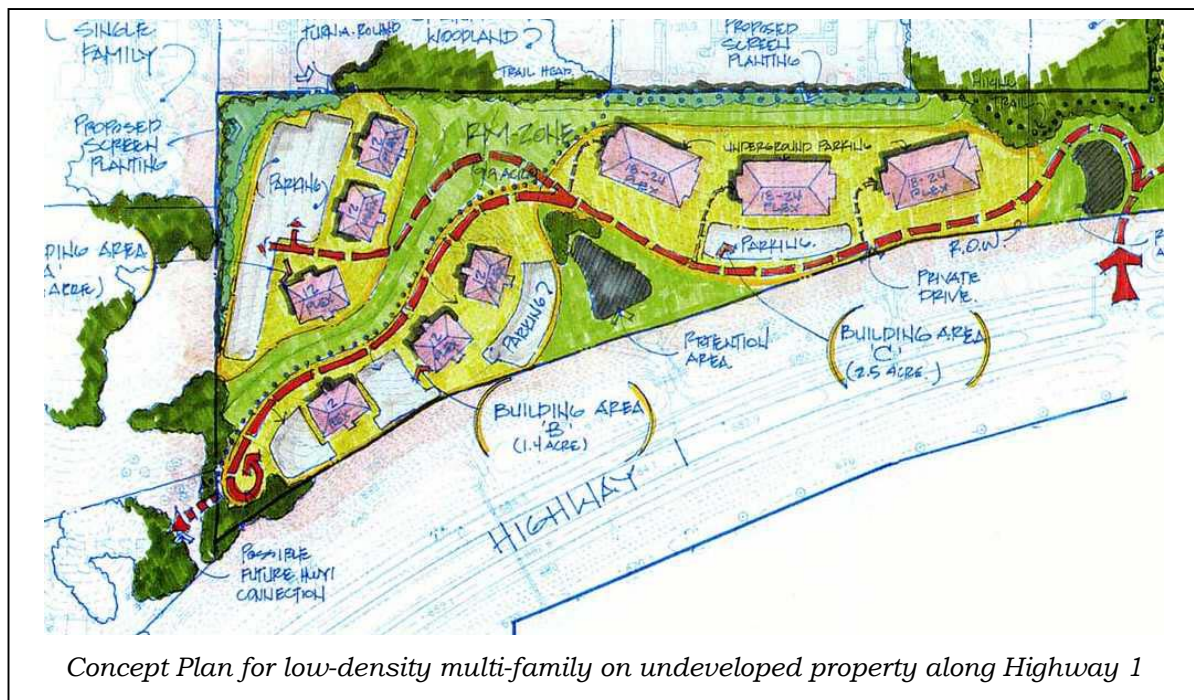
Benton Hill Neighborhood

The single-family neighborhoods in the Benton Hill area are located primarily west of Harlocke and George Streets and along Tower Court and Woodside Drive. North of Benton Street there is a large concentration of apartment buildings between Greenwood Drive and Oaknoll Drive and along Oakcrest Street. The area directly south of Benton is also zoned for and developed as high-density apartments.

While it is a policy of the City to locate multifamily housing along arterial street corridors in areas with good access to city services, the amount of land zoned high-density multifamily is excessive for this location. Steep topography and poor site

design has limited street connections that serve the multifamily areas. This is particularly problematic for the area zoned RM-44 south of Benton Street. While most of these apartment buildings have direct access to Benton Street, the apartments along Harlocke Street do not. The residents of the apartment buildings in this area must travel through the single-family neighborhood along Harlocke and Weeber Streets to get to Benton Street and destinations beyond. With the recent development of three twelve-plexes along Harlocke Street, indications are that traffic will reach or exceed the City's secondary access threshold. Any additional multifamily development in this area will be required to provide a second or alternative means of access.

The lack of transition between the low-density single-family neighborhoods and the area zoned High-Density Multifamily (RM-44) is also problematic. This zoning has resulted in large apartment buildings being located directly adjacent to single-family homes. The bulk and scale of these buildings, the large parking lots, bright lights, and noise can be nuisances to the adjacent single-family homes. The City should consider downzoning some of the property in the area south of Benton Street in order to address these problems. A designation of RNC-20 would accommodate the existing development in the area, but would not allow properties to redevelop at higher densities in the future.



A more immediate concern is the ten acres of undeveloped property between Benton Street and Highway 1 that is zoned for high-density multifamily development. Given the character of the adjacent neighborhood, the steep topography and current lack of adequate street access, the zoning designation for this property is inappropriately high. A planning study conducted by the City indicates that low-density multifamily

zoning (RM-12) is the maximum density that could be achieved without seriously compromising the slopes and natural ravines on the property, unless a substantial portion of the parking is built underneath the buildings and development is clustered away from critical slopes. As outlined in more detail in Appendix C, medium density multi-family zoning (RM-20) may be acceptable if the property owner agrees to a conditional zoning agreement that ensures that the site will be developed in a manner that is sensitive to the topography and the surrounding neighborhoods.² If this property is developed, several important issues should also be taken into account:

- The western portion of this property is directly adjacent to a low-density single-family zone. Any new multifamily development should be set back from the zoning boundary at least 50 feet and screened with a vegetative buffer.
- The Iowa Department of Transportation has approved two access points along Highway 1 that could be improved to serve new development on this property. Access to the property should be from Highway 1 rather than from Harlocke Street so that traffic from the higher-density uses will not create congestion on local streets that serve the adjacent single-family neighborhood.
- The developer will be required to dedicate a certain amount of open space to the City when this property is developed. Given that the property is currently under the same ownership as the aforementioned vacant property located in the Miller-Orchard neighborhood, priority should be given to dedication of additional open space at the corner of Miller Avenue and Benton Street. In addition, it is important to create a trail connection between the new Miller-Orchard Park and the recently dedicated open space at the end of Harlocke Street. This trail would not only create a connection between parks, it could also serve as an alternative pedestrian connection to adjacent commercial areas and to other neighborhood destinations, such as Roosevelt School and the University.

The concept plan on the previous page shows how these important design elements can be incorporated into a plan for multifamily development of the property.

There are two additional parcels of undeveloped land in the Benton Hill Neighborhood. Both of these properties are currently zoned for single-family development. The vacant property at the end of Olive Court is likely to have only limited development due to difficult access issues. Development could occur north of the ravine with access from Olive Court and Leamer Court; access south of the ravine is possible from Marietta Avenue.

There are approximately four acres of undeveloped RS-5-zoned property off of Weeber Street. While it may be possible to develop a few single-family homes on the property, the owner has indicated a desire to maintain the property as open space. Given that the neighborhood has an open space deficit, parkland would be an appropriate future use for the property.

² See Appendix C for a more detailed description of this property and the results of this study.

Commercial Areas

Commercial development in the Roosevelt Subarea is concentrated in corridors along Riverside Drive and Highway 1. The businesses in the area rely primarily on capturing business from motorists driving along these major arterial streets. While many of the businesses in the area are doing well, competition from newer commercial areas in the region may reduce the desirability of this area. Measures should be taken to improve traffic circulation, aesthetics, and connections to the surrounding neighborhoods in order to sustain or improve the economic health of these commercial areas.



Riverside Drive Commercial Area

Highway 1 Commercial Corridor

While the bulk of commercial development along Highway 1 is located on the south side of the highway in the South Central District, there are a number of businesses located on the north side of the highway in the Roosevelt Subarea. While most patrons of the businesses along Highway 1 arrive by automobile, citizens living in the adjacent neighborhoods expressed a desire to make this area more accessible to those traveling on foot or by bicycle. There is a lack of safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities along and across Highway 1. Constructing sidewalks and adding pedestrian signals at signalized intersections should be a priority. Making this commercial area more pedestrian-friendly may encourage more neighborhood-serving businesses to locate along the corridor in the future.

There is a parcel of undeveloped land along Highway 1 west of Miller Avenue that is zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). However, the configuration of the property would make the resulting commercial lots relatively shallow, which restricts the possible uses for this property. It may be desirable to rezone part of the adjacent RS-8-zoned property to CC-2 in order to encourage future commercial development of this property. The concept plan on page 23 illustrates how deeper commercial lots in this location could be developed in a manner that would be compatible with the adjacent residential property.³ A pedestrian trail connecting the adjacent multi-family and single family residential areas to the commercial property may encourage the development of more neighborhood-serving businesses.

³ A more detailed description of this property and the recommendations for rezoning are included in Appendix C.

Riverside Drive Commercial Corridor

The South Riverside Drive Commercial Corridor extends from Myrtle Avenue to the intersection of Highways 1 and 6, and from the Iowa River west to Orchard Street. It is intersected by Benton Street and contains Sturgis Corner Drive. A segment of the Iowa River Corridor Trail (IRC) passes through along the river's edge. The whole area is zoned CC-2, Community Commercial.

Cities and towns across the country have begun to rethink aging commercial strips and their role in communities as development has “moved” these former edge places to more interior positions. Attention has turned to ways of making them more attractive for both nearby residents and shoppers from around the community. District planning meetings identified the following problems that detract from South Riverside's sense of place:

- *A connectivity gap exists in the pedestrian/bicycle network:* Pedestrians and bicyclists can get to Riverside Drive but have trouble traversing the area. Missing sidewalk links and poor sidewalk maintenance create travel barriers. The Iowa River Trail does not currently extend south of Benton Street on the west side of the river. In addition, the quantity and distribution of curb cuts blurs the demarcation between pedestrian and vehicular modes of transportation, making it an unsafe environment for people who are walking or bicycling.
- *Too few retail uses connect to or serve adjacent residential neighborhoods:* Commercial development along Riverside Drive is largely auto-oriented. Pedestrian connections and amenities are absent and retail services that might otherwise draw nearby residents are substantially lacking.
- *The commercial corridor lacks aesthetic appeal:* Comments gathered from district planning meetings and an opinion survey revealed that the South Riverside Drive commercial corridor is generally regarded as being unsightly—lacking in adequate landscaping, having too many buildings in poor condition, dominated by parking lots—and pedestrian unfriendly. Notably, the businesses along South Riverside literally turn their backs on the Iowa River and wall it off from view.



The condition of the streetscape along some parts of Riverside Drive

Results of a recent study of the area indicate that a number of changes could be made to improve the function and the economic health of the Riverside Drive commercial corridor.⁴ Recommendations range from short-term aesthetic and traffic improvements to longer-term solutions that could occur as property is redeveloped over time.

⁴ The South Riverside Drive Gateway Corridor Project was conducted by John Adam and John Maxwell, graduate students in urban planning at the University of Iowa at the request of the Iowa City Department of Planning and Community Development. The full report is available for review in the Department of Planning, 410 E. Washington.



Attractive site design for auto- and truck-oriented use

To address immediate aesthetic issues, the City should partner with the business community to work out a means of encouraging improvements in landscaping and, in some cases, building facades. This can be done either through a loan or grant program, the establishment of a tax-increment financing district or a business improvement district. The City also should take the lead by providing various public amenities, some of which are outlined in the aforementioned report. The first step in providing amenities and making

other public improvements is to refine the goals through a design and engineering study, then to investigate and outline implementation strategies.

The City should also work with the community to develop a plan to address long-term redevelopment along Riverside Drive. The basic provisions of this plan could include updated standards for facade design, building orientation and landscaping, and a possible zoning overlay district. The Roosevelt Subarea plan map indicates that the Riverside Drive commercial area may be an appropriate location for a mixture of commercial and residential uses. However, the eventual mixture of uses and appropriate development standards will have to be carefully considered during future planning efforts.

Goals and Objectives for the Roosevelt Subarea

Following is a summary of the goals and objectives of the Roosevelt Subarea. These are described in more detail in the previous sections and are illustrated on the attached Roosevelt Subarea Plan Map.

Housing

It is a goal of the plan to stabilize existing single-family neighborhoods in the Roosevelt Subarea in order provide the opportunity and encourage households of all types to live close to the University and downtown Iowa City. In addition, the City should encourage the development of high-quality multifamily housing in the Roosevelt Subarea that is compatible with surrounding development to meet the housing needs of a variety of households including singles, young families, university students and elderly populations.

Following are a number of recommended actions that will help to achieve these goals:

- Identify historic properties and encourage their preservation.
- Avoid concentrations of high-density multifamily zoning directly adjacent to low-density single-family zones; facilitate downzoning multifamily property where appropriate.
- Apply the Multifamily Residential Design Standards contained in Section 14-5H-5N of the City Code to the Roosevelt Subarea.
- Review and make needed changes to the Multifamily Residential Design Standards to ensure compatibility of new multifamily development with surrounding development.
- Encourage the University of Iowa to balance expansion needs with the community's goal to preserve existing neighborhoods.
- Encourage the University to inform and coordinate with the City regarding any plans to develop dormitories and other types of student housing. Student housing should be located in areas that are suitable to meet the unique needs of university students balanced with the goal to protect existing housing that is suitable for families, singles, and older persons desiring to live close to the University and downtown Iowa City. To this end, the City should take steps to develop and enforce appropriate zoning regulation of university property.
- Encourage rehabilitation of the existing housing stock in the Roosevelt Subarea, particularly in the Miller-Orchard Neighborhood.

Commercial Areas

- Develop a long range plan to guide future redevelopment along Riverside Drive.
- Encourage development of well-designed mixed-use buildings that incorporate upper floor apartments over commercial uses.

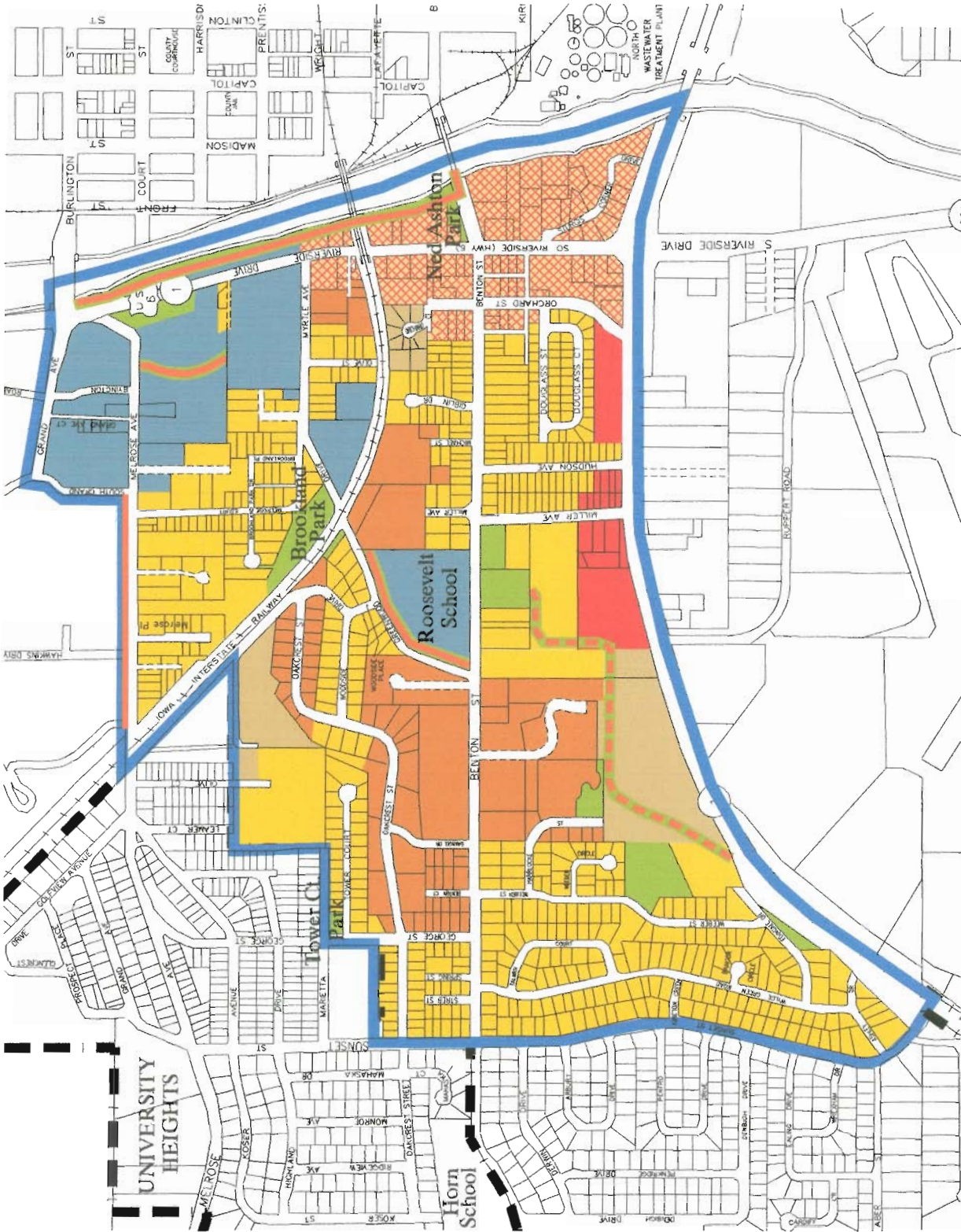
- Employ greater scrutiny whenever an applicant seeks to establish an auto- and truck-oriented use along Riverside Drive, taking into consideration such factors as aesthetics, landscaping, and parking lot location and design. Emphasis should be placed on creating a more attractive commercial corridor over time.
- Explore possibilities for encouraging a mixture of residential and low intensity commercial uses on the west side of Orchard Street to create a transition between Riverside Drive and residential neighborhoods to the west.
- Provide public amenities, such as bus shelters, decorative lamp posts, and bollards separating pedestrians from streets, drives, and parking areas.
- Pursue funds to bury the overhead utility lines.
- Establish a public/private program for facade and landscaping improvements.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Highway 1 and Riverside Drive.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space

- Develop new parkland in the Miller-Orchard neighborhood in a manner that will serve the needs of the surrounding residents.
- Acquire additional parkland at the corner of Miller Avenue and Benton Street in order to provide safe pedestrian access to the park from Miller Avenue.
- Create trail connections between important neighborhood destinations.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a pedestrian overpass between Roosevelt School and the new park on the south side of Benton Street.
- Encourage dedication of additional public open space in the Benton Hill Neighborhood.

Transportation

- Close the gaps in the sidewalk and trail network to improve and promote transportation alternatives, particularly along Benton Street, Riverside Drive and Highway 1.
- Construct a pedestrian tunnel through the Iowa Interstate Railway embankment on the west side of Riverside Drive.
- Consolidate curb cuts along Riverside Drive as properties redevelop.
- Add turning lanes and traffic signals at intersections when warranted.
- Add pedestrian signals and crosswalks at signalized intersections along Highway 1.
- Investigate options to improve pedestrian and traffic safety along Benton Street.



SOUTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT **Roosevelt Subarea**



LEGEND

- Single-Family/Duplex Residential
- Low Density Multi-Family Residential
- Medium to High Density Multi-Family
- Public/Private Open Space
- Public Services/Institutional
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Existing Trail/Wide Sidewalk
- Proposed Trail

WILLOW CREEK SUBAREA

The Willow Creek subarea consists of a collection of neighborhoods located south of Melrose Avenue, west of Sunset Street, north of Highway 1 and northeast of Highway 218. Most of the area is completely developed with a mix of single-family homes and apartments. Areas along Mormon Trek Boulevard, Westgate Street and Westside Drive contain a mixture of duplexes, townhouses and apartment buildings. Walden Square, a neighborhood shopping center, is well situated in the center of the area. Highway-oriented commercial development is located along Highway 1. West High School is a major institution in the Willow Creek Subarea, providing secondary education to approximately 1,600 students on its 80-acre site off of Melrose Avenue.



Townhouses in the Willow Creek Subarea

Housing

The neighborhoods in the Willow Creek subarea are stable and unlikely to experience major redevelopment. The only sizeable vacant area is Galway Hills, which will be completed with single-family homes. Smaller infill properties that may be developed include:

- A triangular-shaped area of approximately 4.5 acres located south of Rohret Road and northeast of Highway 218 contains a potentially historic farmhouse. If this property is further developed it may be appropriate for a cluster development that incorporates the farmhouse as a reminder of the agricultural history of the Southwest District. Residential development on this property should include a landscaped buffer along Highway 218. Alternatively, this site would be appropriate for low-intensity, nonresidential uses, such as a child care center, a small religious institution, or a fire station.
- An approximately 10-acre property located at the intersection of Melrose Avenue and MacBride Road contains one house. If this area is further developed, single-family homes would be appropriate for the southern portion of the property. Townhouses or small, well-designed apartment buildings would be an alternative to single-family homes along Melrose Avenue. The portion adjacent to Melrose Avenue would also be appropriate for low-intensity nonresidential uses.
- The two-acre property at the north end of Jensen Street is appropriate for single-family homes similar to those that already exist in the neighborhood.

- Another area that is appropriate for townhouses or small apartments is located at the northeast corner of Benton street and Westgate Street. This property is currently owned by the University Baptist Church and is appropriately zoned Low-Density Multifamily (RM-12).
- An approximately 3.7-acre property north of Walden Court will require careful design due to its topographic conditions and the unusual shape and size. It is zoned Medium-Density Single-Family (RS-8).

Commercial Development



Walden Square

Walden Square, a neighborhood shopping center, located at the intersection of Mormon Trek Boulevard and Westwinds Drive, includes a good mix of retail, service and residential uses. Citizens expressed a desire for better pedestrian crossings on Mormon Trek Boulevard and more landscaping and amenities within the center to improve access to Walden Square and enhance the pedestrian environment within it. To achieve, this the City will install pedestrian-oriented traffic improvements on Mormon Trek Boulevard and Westwinds Drive. A traffic signal may be warranted in

the future. Trees and other landscaping features along the sidewalks located in front of shops would help make the center a more attractive and more comfortable focal point for the surrounding neighborhoods. Improvements to the public streets will be the responsibility of the City. Any improvements within the center would be done by the owner and individual businesses.

A large commercial area located along Highway 1 between Highway 218 and Sunset Street contains a wide variety of uses including auto dealerships, offices, auto body repair shops, a school bus barn, a health club, a convenience store and a fast food restaurant. Due to the location of this area near the highway interchange these businesses serve a regional market rather than the surrounding neighborhoods. Because this is a major entrance to the community from the Avenue of the Saints (Highway 218), the appearance of this corridor is an important component of its economic development. Improvements to landscaping on private property and within the street and highway right-of-ways would help to visually unite the diverse land uses and make it more appealing to the adjacent neighborhoods as well as motorists traveling in this part of the city.

The only sizable vacant commercial land is the area is along Willow Creek Drive and is zoned for Intensive Commercial, CI-1. Because this area is adjacent to a residential neighborhood, landscaped buffering at the rear of the properties is required.

The triangular area northwest of Highway 1 and east of the Westside Drive area is under the jurisdiction of Johnson County. As this area is surrounded by the city and city services are available, it should be annexed.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space



Willow Creek Trail

Willow Creek Park, Kiwanis Park and Villa Park provide open spaces in the center of these neighborhoods. Additional parkland will be developed in the southern portion of Galway Hills and adjacent to Shannon Drive in the northern portion of Walden Hills. A smaller undeveloped park is located north of Walden Road, east of the Walden Woods Subdivision.

Willow Creek trail provides a pedestrian connection between many of these parks and other destinations such as the West High

School Campus and the Walden Square neighborhood shopping center. Future plans include extending the Willow Creek Trail west under Highway 218 to Hunters Run Park and south across or under Highway 1 to connect to the commercial area on the south side of the highway. A small trail in the Mormon Trek Village development provides another trail option. An enhanced sidewalk in combination with landscaping features along Spencer Road may provide a link between Villa Park and Willow Creek Park. Other than these parks and trails, no significant new open space is proposed in the Willow Creek neighborhoods, although small areas of open space and trail links may be established as infill properties develop.

Transportation

Arterial streets that serve these neighborhoods include Mormon Trek Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, Benton Street, and Highway 1. Sunset Street, a major collector street, provides some arterial street function as a connection between Melrose Avenue and Highway 1. There are no plans to develop additional arterial streets in this subarea. Turn lanes at key intersections and sidewalk improvements may be necessary on Benton Street, as discussed in the transportation section of the plan.

A north-south collector street in Galway Hills between Shannon Drive and Dublin Drive, in combination with additional local streets, will complete the vehicular network in this neighborhood. The collector street system will be designed with intersections to prevent Shannon Drive from becoming a convenient short cut through the neighborhood. A trail is planned from Galway Hills to West High on the south side of Melrose Meadows Elder Housing Development. This will provide for pedestrian access to the school campus.

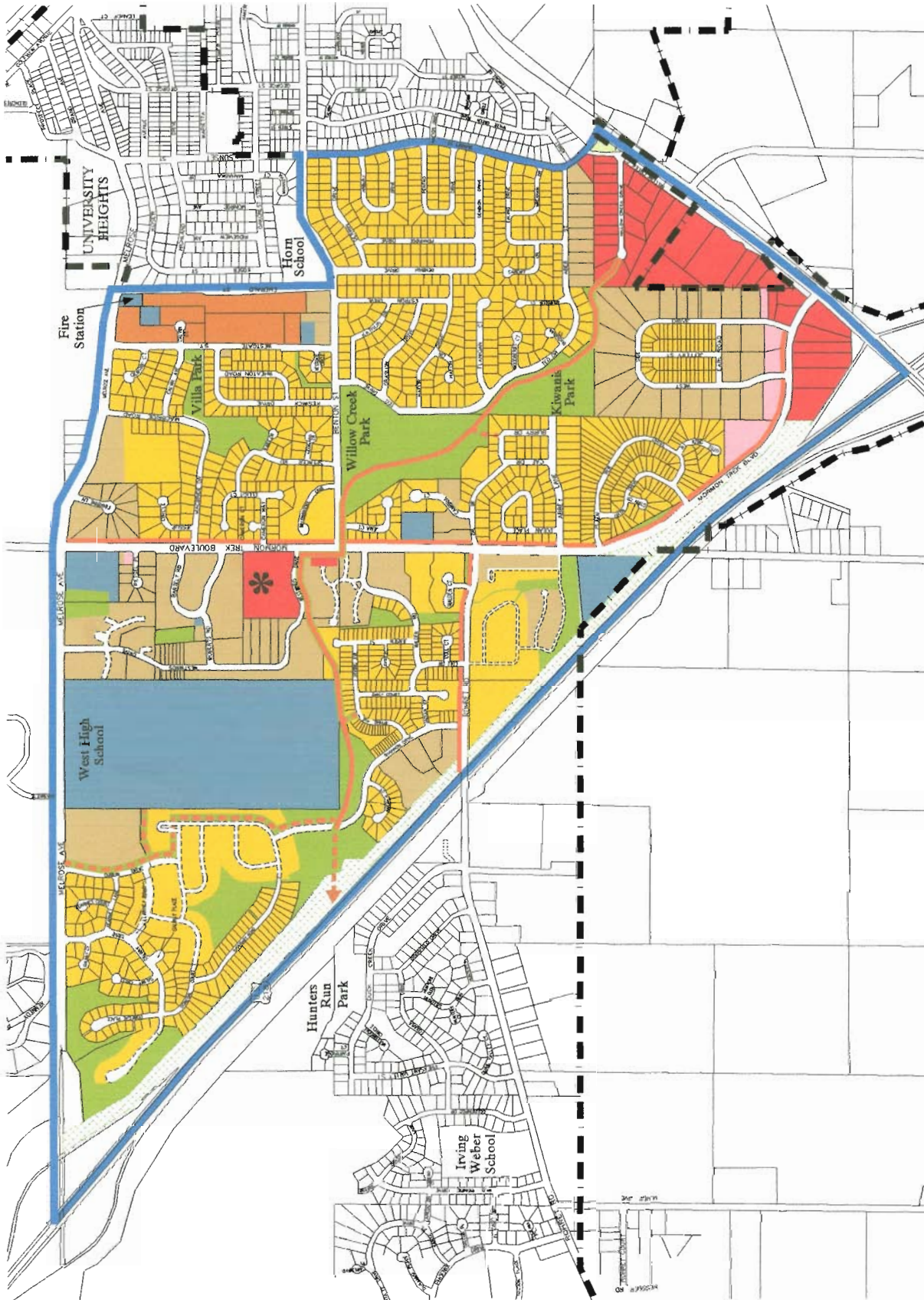
Melrose Avenue contains a landscaped median that helps to soften the appearance of this arterial street and makes it an attractive entrance to these neighborhoods. Maintenance and additional landscaping of this median will assure that Melrose Avenue continues to be an attractive feature even as traffic increases.



Sunset Street













Sunset Street is 49 feet wide—fifteen feet (44%) wider than necessary for a collector street. In the long term, or as repairs to Sunset Street become necessary, it will be appropriate to narrow the pavement or to add features such as a landscaped median or landscaped neck-downs at intersections to create shorter pedestrian crossings, to clearly demarcate parking bays, and to beautify the street.

Residents on Westwinds Drive have complained about students crossing private lawns to reach the school campus. A pedestrian trail between Westwinds Drive and the West High campus would be helpful in directing pedestrian traffic to the school. Because this area is already platted, the School District will need to obtain an easement or land from one of the vacant lots located on the west side of Westwinds Drive in order to provide access to the school in this location.



SOUTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT **Willow Creek Subarea**

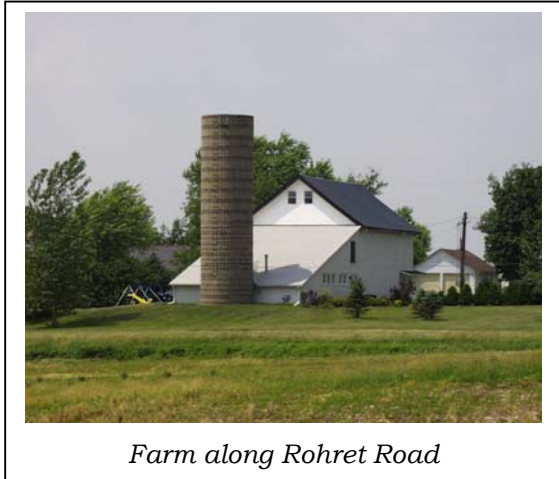
LEGEND

	Single-Family/Duplex Residential		Public Services/Institutional		Vegetative Noise and Sight Buffer
	Low Density Multi-Family Residential		Office Commercial		Existing Trail/Wide Sidewalk
	Medium to High Density Multi-Family		General Commercial		Proposed Trail
	Public/Private Open Space		Neighborhood Commercial		Proposed Street



WEBER SUBAREA

The Weber Subarea is located south of Melrose Avenue and Highway 218, north of Rohret Road, extending to the City's growth limits half a mile west of Slothower Road. Before the 1980s this area was relatively undeveloped, with a few houses fronting onto Rohret Road. Through the 1980's and 90's housing developed westward on the north side of Rohret Road and south of the County Poor Farm property. Roughly two-thirds of the land area is undeveloped. Some patches of woodland and native prairie exist, but most of it is under cultivation. The area contains three public/institutional uses: Irving B. Weber Elementary School, the Korean Methodist Church, and Chatham Oaks, a residential care facility located on the County Poor Farm property. There are no commercial uses in the subarea.



Farm along Rohret Road

Transportation

In the next 20 to twenty-five years, the City plans to extend Highway 965 southward along the current western growth limit to connect with Rohret Road via the eastern edge of the Iowa City Landfill. It will eventually reach Highway 1 and serve as a far west side arterial. As development approaches this area, the City needs to secure adequate road right-of-way and sufficient buffer width against the Iowa City Landfill. As an entryway corridor into Iowa City, Highway 965 should incorporate boulevard design standards with a well-landscaped median and generous landscaping along both sides, wide sidewalks and bicycle lanes. This could serve as additional buffer against the landfill.

In the more immediate future a north-south collector street will be required between Melrose Avenue and Rohret Road, part of it configured using the Slothower Road right-of-way. Care must be taken to keep the eventual route somewhat circuitous between Melrose and Rohret to diminish its desirability as a cut-through route for non-local traffic. In addition, access routes to the southern portion of the County Poor Farm should be incorporated into the local street layouts in future phases of both Wild Prairie Estates and Country Club Estates.

Willow Creek Trail will eventually cross Highway 218 via tunnel and connect Hunters Run Park to the wider community trail system. A trail link across the County Poor Farm property to Melrose Avenue will connect this regional trail to the arterial street system in the far western part of the Southwest District. If a regional stormwater lake is constructed in the Rohret South Subarea, it will be important to construct a trail connection between Hunters Run Park and the public open space surrounding this new lake.

As westward development creates the need, both Rohret Road and Melrose Avenue will be improved to City standards beyond the point of the current corporate limits.

Public Services and Facilities

Before the area between Slothower and the landfill can be developed, a sanitary sewer lift station will have to be constructed. Northern portions of Country Club Estates can build out without further sewer improvements, but the southern two-thirds adjacent to Rohret Road drains to the southwest. This portion cannot be developed until a temporary lift station is built that connects to the landfill's lift station or a proposed permanent lift station is built south of Rohret Road on the western edge of the Rohret South Subarea.

Land Use

Several areas of particular interest stand out in the Weber subarea with regard to land use: the build-out of Country Club Estates and Wild Prairie Estates; the development of the area west of Slothower Road; and future use of the County Poor Farm property.

Future use of the County Poor Farm property generated considerable discussion and a wide variety of suggestions during Citizen Planning workshops. The following considerations should be used as a guide to future development of this property:

- The following important elements should be preserved and protected from the encroachment of development: the historic poor farm buildings and cemetery; Chatham Oaks residential care facility; and any environmentally sensitive areas.
- Approximately 90 acres of the property are wooded, brushy, or contain prairie remnants. These areas would be suitable for use as a regional park that could be connected via the Willow Creek trail to other parks and destinations in the Southwest District.
- The southwest portion of the property contains approximately fifty acres of relatively flat ground that is currently row-cropped. This area would be suitable for residential development. Any new subdivisions in this location should be connected to the street network developed in the Southwest Estates and Wild Prairie Estates subdivisions located directly south of the County Farm property.
- If any development occurs on the county property adjacent to Highway 218, a buffer should be maintained.
- Future use of the county property located north of Melrose Avenue should be considered carefully with regard to potential impacts on the poor farm property.



Johnson County Poor Farm

Wild Prairie Estates will soon reach its northern boundary. Access to and through the Poor Farm is a desirable option in the future and for now a street stub northward up to the Willow Creek-Hunters Run Trail extension will be necessary. North of that and adjacent to Highway 218's right-of-way, a noise and sight buffer should be established between residential areas and the highway.

The Comprehensive Plan discourages the establishment of commercial uses around the Melrose Avenue-Highway 218 interchange. This policy should be maintained because there are adequate commercial services in the vicinity to serve this area. The Highway 1-Highway 218 interchange further south provides community and highway commercial services. In addition, Walden Square in the Willow Creek Subarea provides neighborhood commercial services, and a future neighborhood commercial area is proposed in the Rohret South Subarea.



A New Subdivision in the Weber Subarea

The remaining portion of the Country Club Estates property is primarily suitable for low-density single-family development. If well-designed, the portion of the property adjacent to Rohret Road may be suitable for clusters of medium-density residential uses, such as townhouses or condominiums. A transition between existing Rural Residential-zoned (RR-1) portions of Southwest Estates and future low-density single-family residential development to the west may be accomplished by platting larger RS-5-zoned lots backing onto the existing rural residential lots of Southwest Estates.

The land west of Slothower is currently used for agriculture. The Weber Subarea Plan Map designates this area as "future urban development." However, until sewer service is extended in that direction and one or more lift stations constructed, there will not be any significant urban development. Before reaching the twenty-year horizon of this plan, some residential uses may develop along the west side of Slothower Road and begin moving toward the future Highway 965 extension. However, the expectation is that development will not and should not "leapfrog" without street and trail connections bridging the gap between 965 and Slothower Road. When development becomes imminent a more detailed plan will need to be developed for this area. When development does occur, it will be important to buffer residential uses from the Iowa City Landfill and Highway 965.

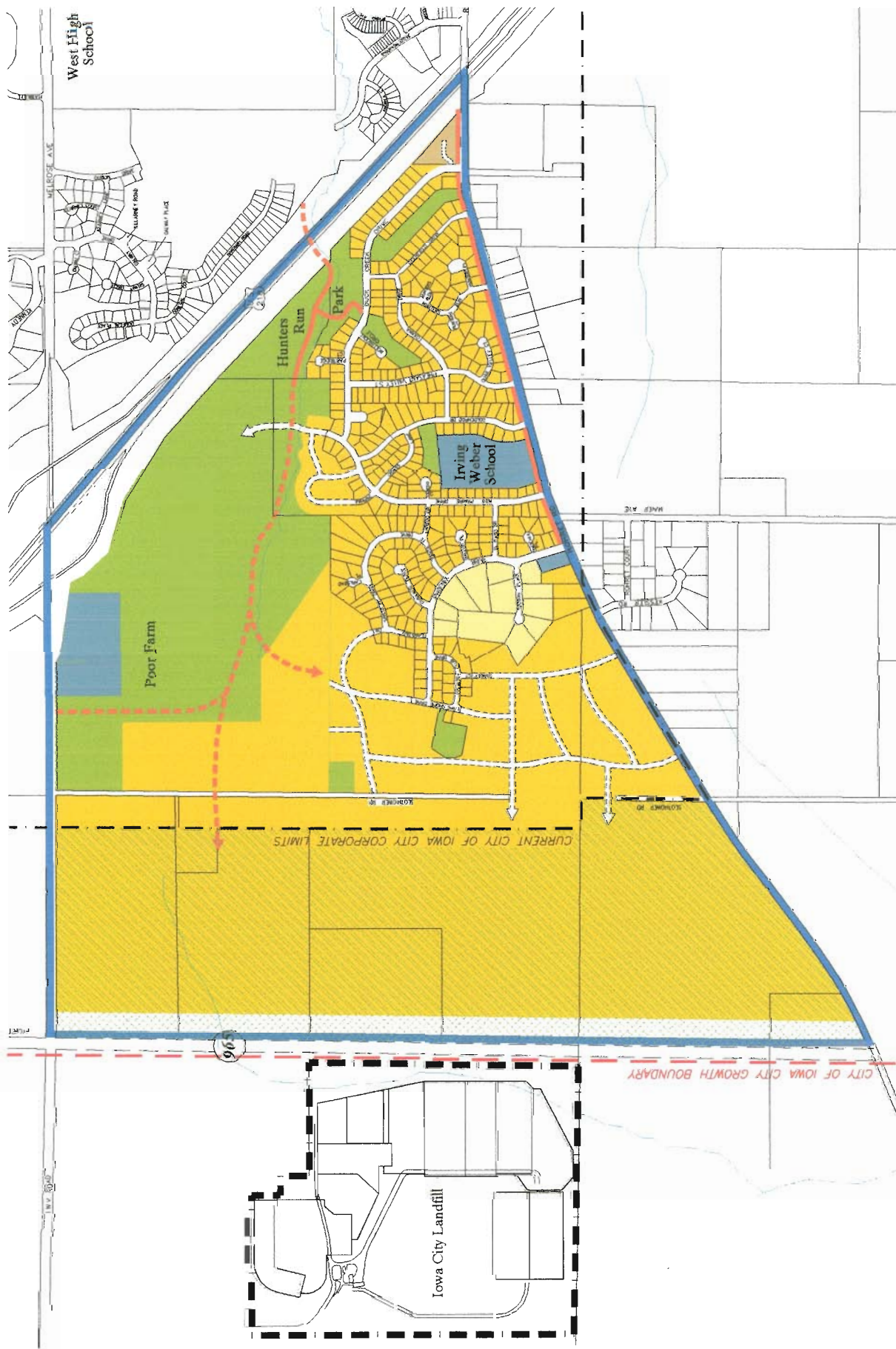
Open Space

As this subarea continues to develop additional public open space will be needed. Recent improvements to Hunters Run Park increased the amount of active park space in the area. This park may be extended to the west when the northern part of Wild Prairie Estates is subdivided. As mentioned, the County Poor Farm property contains land that is suitable for public open space and connecting trail corridors. The County should plan for public open space needs as it contemplates future uses for the property.



Hunters Run Park











The City plans to use a small parcel of land near the southwest corner of the County Poor Farm property for a water reservoir. Most of the ground will remain open and could be used for a small neighborhood park. Additional parkland could be added to this property as Country Club Estates continues to develop.



SOUTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT **Weber Subarea**



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Large Lot/ Rural Residential |  | Public/Private Open Space |  | Existing Trail |
|  | Single-Family/Duplex Residential |  | Public Services/Institutional |  | Proposed Trail |
|  | Low Density Multi Family Residential |  | Vegetative Noise and Sight Buffer |  | Proposed Street |
|  | Future Urban Development | | | | |

ROHRET SOUTH SUBAREA

The Rohret South Subarea extends west from Highway 218 and south from Rohret Road to the City's growth area limit. The vast majority of land in this subarea is currently outside Iowa City's corporate limits and is used primarily for agriculture. The non-farm uses in the area can be characterized as large-lot semi-rural homes. These homes are located primarily along the south side of Rohret Road, along Kitty Lee Road, and in the Rohret Court and Kessler Road area.

Topographically, the eastern portion of the subarea consists of rolling hills. The land drains to the east and there are two primary, semi-wooded drainageways leading to a low area directly west of Highway 218. As the land stretches to the western limits of City's growth area, the hills and drainageways are less pronounced.



The Rohret South Subarea

Public Services and Facilities

In order to develop at urban densities, city services such as sewer and water will have to be extended to the Rohret South Subarea. Once the Abbey Lane trunk sewer is extended west of Highway 218, this subarea will become suitable for urban development. It is, therefore, important to plan now for the future orderly growth of this part of the Southwest District.

Several of the most significant topographical characteristics of this area are the distinct drainageways and the low-lying area near Highway 218 on land that is currently owned by the Carson family. In 1996, the City conducted a study of this property to determine its suitability for a future regional stormwater management facility.⁵ Storm water management is required in Iowa City to offset the detrimental

⁵ *Preliminary Design Report for Carson's Lake, Regional Storm Water Management Plan for Iowa City, Iowa.* City of Iowa City, Iowa Public Works Department, October, 1996.

effects of urbanization on downstream land use. The report states that it is feasible to construct a regional storm water control facility upstream of Highway 218 on the Carson property. Such a regional facility would provide safe and efficient control of drainage from the undeveloped watershed and reduction of flood risk and damage in the downstream, developed areas. Developing a regional stormwater plan for the subarea would allow larger detention basins, which would reduce the number of smaller basins needed, provide more efficient use of land resources, lower maintenance costs, and allow for multipurpose use. Amenities such as trails and other recreation facilities could be developed around the new lake to serve surrounding residential neighborhoods.

New Neighborhoods

Given the current pattern of existing development in the Southwest District, it is likely that new neighborhoods in the Rohret South Subarea will begin developing first in the vicinity of the intersection of Rohret Road and Highway 218. This area is in closer proximity to existing services than areas further west or south. As noted above, this area has been identified as suitable for a regional stormwater detention facility. This facility and its associated amenities would further encourage new development in the northeast portion of the Rohret South Subarea.



A regional stormwater facility could provide a focal point for new neighborhoods

The attached Carson Lake Concept Plan illustrates how a regional stormwater facility can be integrated into the design of a new neighborhood. The following elements should be included to maximize the benefit of this public facility to all area residents and visitors to this part of the City:

- A park should be created around the entire lake to allow for easy public access, views and recreational enjoyment.
- A public street should define the edge of the park around at least the northern half of the lake.
- Appropriate recreational facilities should be located within the park.
- Public street and pedestrian trail access to the park should also be located on the south side of the lake.

- A bicycle/pedestrian trail should ring the entire lake and tie into the trail system that extends to other city neighborhoods.
- If a regional stormwater facility is constructed, it may be possible to use the existing culvert that runs under Highway 218 as a tunnel for a pedestrian trail connection to the neighborhoods on the east side of the highway.
- Areas for a playground, picnic table and restrooms should be provided within the park. Parking for these recreational facilities should be located on the public street or in smaller parking lots for 10-15 cars.

Given the drainage issues in this area, if a stormwater lake is not constructed, a public park with a smaller water feature and public amenities, including trails, picnic tables, playground and restrooms, should be considered in lieu of the lake. The recommended concepts for development around the lake would also apply to the park.

Care must be given to the design of new neighborhoods to preserve the natural features of the area and minimize the need for extensive grading. The City's Sensitive Areas Map shows a significant woodland zone in the subarea. The impact of development on these and other wooded areas should be minimized and significant trees preserved. It would be appropriate to use the semi-wooded ravines for trail corridors and open space. These trails could provide connections between future neighborhood parks in the Rohret South Subarea and to other neighborhoods in the Southwest District.

Housing

It is likely that a majority of the housing developed in the Rohret South Subarea will be low-density, single-family homes. However, a variety of housing types and styles should be provided for persons of various incomes and family types, including singles, couples, families and retired persons.

As illustrated in the concept plan on the following page, the area north of the proposed lake and south of Rohret Road is most appropriate for a mix of medium- to high-density single-family housing, including condominiums and townhouses, and for low-density multifamily housing. Allowing greater housing densities in specific areas around the lake will provide a greater number of residents easy access to this significant public amenity. In addition, the higher density housing should be located near arterial streets, such as Rohret Road, and with good access to a neighborhood commercial area. Given the character of the topography, lower density single-family homes may be more appropriate on the south side of the lake.

When sewer service is extended under Highway 218 it will be possible for some of the existing large lot residential properties to connect into the City sewer system. When these properties have better access to City services, the existing large lots could be further subdivided if property owners decide to do so.



CARSON LAKE CONCEPT PLAN

PREPARED BY: [illegible]

Transportation

The majority of the arterial street framework in this subarea is established. The only new major arterial street planned for is the extension of Highway 965 on the west side of the subarea, which will provide an additional north-south link for arterial traffic. As land is annexed to the City and is developed in the Rohret South Subarea, improvements to the existing arterial street system will likely be needed. For example, as residential development continues west along Rohret Road, the urban cross-section of Rohret Road, including pavement, storm sewers, and sidewalks, will be continued to the west. As traffic patterns develop, turning lanes may be needed at key intersections such as Rohret Road / Mormon Trek Boulevard and Rohret Road / Maier Avenue. A collector street should provide a connection between the proposed stormwater lake and Highway 1. A diagonal orientation that follows the topography of the area would be appropriate.

Major collector streets in the Rohret South Subarea will include a new north-south collector street west of Highway 218 to serve the planned commercial / institutional uses and recreational uses around the proposed stormwater lake. Maier Avenue is an existing north-south link between Rohret Road and Highway 1, and will continue to be an important link to allow residents of this area access to both Highway 1 and Rohret Road. As land eventually develops to urban densities in this area and Maier Avenue is paved, it will be subject to additional traffic pressure. To keep traffic moving at appropriate speeds for a residential area while allowing for traffic circulation between Rohret Road and Highway 1, a neighborhood square, off-set intersection, or median improvements should be designed into Maier Avenue. These physical changes to the roadway should emphasize controlling the speed of traffic, while still allowing for circulation between Rohret Road and Highway 1.

For local streets, traditional neighborhood design with an integrated system of narrow streets and alleys, sidewalks, and street trees should be the model for many of the new Rohret South neighborhoods. The traditional grid street pattern will discourage high traffic speeds and disperse traffic. When urban residential densities are proposed, alleys will allow utilities to be located in the rear, thereby allowing more space for the planting of right-of-way trees along residential streets. Alleys also reduce the impact of driveways and garages on the streetscape, which de-emphasizes the automobile and creates a more people-friendly neighborhood. The use of architectural features such as front porches further contributes to this goal.

Because of the rolling hills and drainageways in the vicinity of the stormwater lake, an integrated street grid may need to be modified to respond to the topography in this area. Where alleys are not feasible, the impact of driveways and garages should be minimized to the extent possible, such as by locating garages behind or to the side of the front façade of the house or by utilizing shared driveways. Where the topography is flatter, the curvilinear streets around the lake should transition to a more traditional grid system.

The southbound street from Rohret Road to the lake park will be the entry corridor to the lake neighborhood, therefore buildings along this street should be well-designed and built using high-quality materials. These structures should be architecturally designed to reflect a distinctive character for this new neighborhood. Because the topography is flatter directly south of Rohret Road, additional streets in this vicinity could be designed using a grid system.

Care should be given to ensure the accessibility to and quality of public spaces and view corridors. With any new subdivision request, it will be important to ensure that a highly visible and substantive means of public access to the lake is provided. Single-loaded streets along the lakefront are strongly encouraged. Because of the rolling hills in this area, care should also be given to the design of the buildings that can be seen from across the lake or other public spaces.

Commercial Development

A new commercial center to serve the surrounding neighborhoods would be appropriately located along the entry corridor to the neighborhood, located on the south side of Rohret Road (as illustrated on the concept plan). This new commercial area should be developed using a “main street” model in which buildings are constructed at the front lot line and parking is provided on the street. Additional parking could be located in areas behind the buildings.



Mainstreet Commercial Design

The commercial buildings should be at least two stories high in order to give definition to the street space. Public amenities such as benches, garbage receptacles, a bus stop, and bicycle parking should be provided. Because the viability of commercial development depends in part on the residential density of the immediate area, apartments or offices should be encouraged in the upper levels of the commercial buildings. Furthermore, low-density, multifamily housing would be appropriate in areas adjacent to the “main street” commercial area. The City's Neighborhood Commercial (CN-1) zoning designation would facilitate the type of commercial development described and illustrated in the plan.



Storefronts close to the sidewalk invite pedestrians

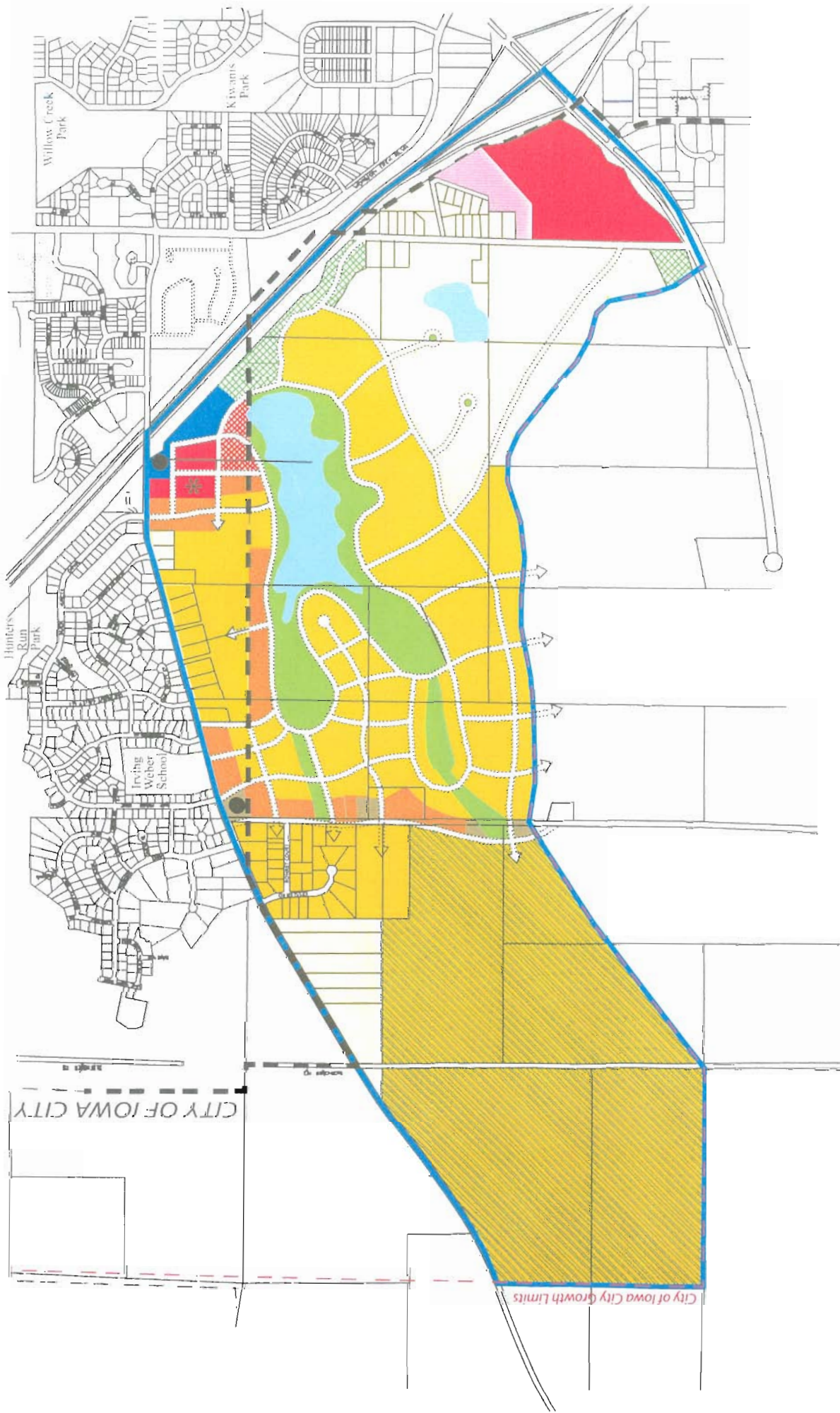
Civic facilities such as a church, fire station, or recreational center would also be appropriate adjacent to or integrated into the commercial area and could be used to provide a buffer between Highway 218 and the new neighborhood. Additional civic facilities could also be located across from Weber Elementary on Rohret Road. If a fire station is sited at a prominent location adjacent to a neighborhood commercial area, the City has the opportunity to establish a positive and influential civic presence through quality design and the inclusion of such simple public amenities as a clock tower.

Future Development West of Maier Avenue

The far western portion of the Rohret South Subarea is not likely to develop in the short term due to the lack of public services and facilities. This area is designated "future urban development" on the plan map on the following page. Development should not proceed into this area until properties adjacent to existing urban development are built out. When development at urban densities becomes possible and appropriate more detailed plans should be developed for this area.

Goals for the Rohret South Subarea

- Encourage housing diversity in new neighborhoods.
- Preserve natural features and topography.
- Build streets that enhance neighborhood quality.
- Encourage commercial development that serves local residents.
- Reserve space for neighborhood parks and trails that connect to other areas of the City.
- Provide adequate street and pedestrian access to recreational facilities and other public amenities.
- Establish a public focal point for new neighborhoods, such as a lake or park.

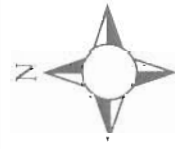


Legend

- Large Lot Rural Residential
- Single-Family Duplex Residential
- Narrow Lot Townhouse Residential
- Low Density Multi-Family Residential

- Open Space
- Public Services/Institutional
- Potential Fire Station Location
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Future Urban Development
- Vegetative Noise and Sight Buffer
- Office Commercial
- Commercial

SOUTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT Roblet South Subarea



Southwest District Plan Map Designations

Large Lot/Rural Residential

Suitable for large lot single family development in areas not suited for more intensive development due to natural limitations, i.e. soil, slope, unavailability of sewer and water utilities.

Development Density: approximately 1 dwelling unit/acre

Single-Family/Duplex Residential

Intended primarily for single family and duplex residential development. Lower density zoning designations are suitable for areas with sensitive environmental features, topographical constraints, or limited street access. Higher densities are more appropriate for areas with good access to all city services and facilities.

Development Density: 2-12 dwelling units/acre

Narrow Lot/Townhouse Residential

Suitable for medium to high density single family residential development, including zero lot line development, duplexes, townhouses, and narrow lot detached single family housing.

Development Density: 6-12 dwelling units/acre

Low-Density Multi-Family Residential

Intended for low-density multi-family housing. Suitable for areas with good access to all city services and facilities. Higher density zoning designations may not be suitable for areas with topographical constraints or limited street access.

Development Density: 8 -15 dwelling units/acre

Medium- to High-Density Multi-Family Residential

Intended for medium- to high-density multi-family housing. Suitable for areas with good access to all city services and facilities. Higher density zoning designations may not be suitable for areas with topographical constraints or limited street access.

Development Density: 16-44 dwelling units/acre

Future Urban Development

Areas within the growth limit that are not yet served by City services and may not experience substantial development within the lifetime of this district plan. As development becomes imminent in these areas, the City will develop more detailed land use and street layout concepts to supplement the current plan.

Public/Private Open Space

Indicates existing open space that is important for the protection of sensitive natural features and/or to provide for recreational opportunities and protect the aesthetic values of the community. An open space designation on private land may indicate that an area is largely unsuitable for development due to environmental or topographical constraints. While these areas are best reserved or acquired for private or public open space,

development may occur on privately held land if a proposal meets the underlying zoning requirements and the requirements of the Iowa City Sensitive Areas Ordinance.

Vegetative Noise and Sight Buffer

Useful public facilities, such as limited-access highways or landfills, can produce undesirable side-effects. In these areas a substantial vegetative buffer should be maintained or established to separate residential development from these uses. Alternatively, where appropriate, nonresidential uses can be used to buffer residential areas from highways, landfills, and other such uses.

Public Services/Institutional

Areas intended for civic, cultural, or historical institutions; public schools; and places of assembly or worship. Iowa City does not have a zone that designates institutional uses as the primary, preferred land use. However, there are a number of zones where these uses are permitted or provisional uses. Development proposals are subject to the requirements of the underlying zoning designation. Land that is owned by a public entity is typically zoned Public (P).

Neighborhood Commercial

Areas intended for retail sales and personal service uses that meet the day-to-day needs of a fully developed residential neighborhood. A grocery store or grocery store/drug store combination is preferred as the primary tenant in a Neighborhood Commercial (CN-1) zone. Specific site development standards will apply in these areas to ensure that commercial development is pedestrian-friendly and compatible with surrounding residential development.

Office Commercial

Areas intended for office uses and compatible businesses. In some cases these areas may serve as a buffer between residential areas and more intensive commercial or industrial uses.

General Commercial

Areas intended to provide the opportunity for a large variety of commercial uses that serve a major segment of the community.

Mixed Use

Areas intended for development that combines commercial and residential uses. An area may be primarily commercial in nature or may be primarily residential depending on the location and the surrounding neighborhood. Commercial uses will typically be located on the ground floor with housing above. Development is intended to be pedestrian-oriented with buildings close to and oriented to the sidewalk.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CITIZEN PARTICIPANTS

Marva Abel	Mary Hurt	David & Aletia Redlawsk
Marcia Allen	Glenn Jacobsen	Dale & Mary Reiman
Eugene Anderson	Jeff & Claudia Jansenius	Jim Ruebush
Ruth Baker	Larry Jewell	Edward Ruppenkamp
Charles & Eileen Barfknecht	Bev Johlin	Charles & Marie Ruppert
Meg Bayless	Carrie Jones	Paul Ruppert
Michaela Bell	Sue Kann	Paul & Kathy Ruppert
Anne Bendixen	Theresa Kann	Chester & Gloria Schulte
Tom Bender	Judith & William Klink	Robynn & Tim Shrader
Kevin Boyd	William & Judith Knabe	Glenn Siders
Jim Brenneman	Jim & Pat Knebel	Don & Sandy Slothower
Joe Buffington	Marva Abel & Richard Knoedel	Dan Smith
Anna Buss	Mary Knudson	Jill Smith
William & Barbara Buss	Jeff Koenig	Dan Smith
Mark Cannon	Ann Kohl	Samantha Solimeo
Ellen Caplan	Nanci Kohl	Michele Sorrell
Steve Carson	Elizabeth Koppes	Rich & Rhonda Tack
Bruce & Sue Clark	Bruce Kout	Mitchael Thomas
Vicki Concha	John Lanaghan	James & Hari Turner
Grace & Ken Cooper	Bill & Donna Launsbach	Betty Vornbrock
Ernest Cox	Ron Logsden	Jerry Walker
Graham Dameron	Dorothy Lynn	Mr & Mrs Waller
George Dane	John Maxwell	Lambert White
Kathy & Paul Davis	Sadie May	Michaelanne Widness
Werner & Helen Dietrich	Charles Meardon	Les & Jolene Wieland
Linda Donelson	Cindy Miller Chander	Margaret Wieting
Terri Fanning	Deanne Mirr	Larry Wilson
Jeannette Fitzpatrick	Jody Murph	Lois Elaine Wingate
Cathy Gehris	Steve & June Nasby	Kristen Wingate & Bob Porter
Tim & Deana Gholson	John & Darlyne Neff	Eric & Fang Zirbes
Pat & Roger Gingrich	John & Terri Navazio	
Bill & Nancy Graf	Olympia Niederecker	
Pat Gragg	Carl & Barbara Orgren	
Jerry Hansen	Esther Otto	
Dale & Linda Hawley	Catherine Pope	
Mary Hitchcock	Bob Porter	
Jamal Hoballah	Preston Rath	
Don Hurt	Sharon Rebouche	

MORATORIUM AREA CONCEPT PLAN

The high density (RM-44) zoning south of Benton Street has been the subject of discussion and dissension over the last twenty years. The rugged topography, difficult access issues, and lack of transition between high density and low density zoning have prompted several down-zoning efforts. The most recent downzoning attempt was initiated by the City in 1993. However, negotiations between the property owners and the surrounding neighborhood residents reached a stalemate. The City Council was reluctant to take action without a consensus between these groups, and therefore tabled the request. A rezoning effort in 1984 resulted in a similar stalemate.

Prompted by recent development and redevelopment of multi-family properties south of Benton Street, a number of residents in the area requested that the City re-examine the zoning pattern once again. As a consequence, the City Council placed a development moratorium on property in the area, so that the zoning issues could be carefully examined through the Southwest District planning process. As a part of this planning effort, a group of citizens, which included neighborhood residents and property owners, agreed to work with City staff to work to resolve contentious zoning issues in this area. Based on input from this group and from the larger Southwest District planning workshops, staff developed the a conceptual plan for the undeveloped properties within the moratorium area. The important elements of this plan are illustrated on the attached map, which was developed by Steven Ford, a landscape architect with Shoemaker & Haaland Professional Engineers.

The properties examined during this process are owned by the Ruppert family. These properties are a part of their original family farm. They have never been developed for urban uses. Approximately four acres at the corner of Highway 1 and Miller Avenue have been zoned for commercial uses since the 1960's and is currently zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). The portion of the property along Miller Avenue is currently zoned Medium Density Single Family (RS-8). The approximately 9-acre parcel, located at the end of Harlocke Street and south of the Benton Manor apartments and the recently developed Southgate property, has been zoned High Density Multi-Family (RM-44) since the City completed a comprehensive rezoning in 1983. Prior to that time, the property was zoned R1A, which was a single family zone allowing approximately 4 dwelling units per acre, similar to the City's current RS-5 zone. Each of these parcels of land are analyzed separately below.

Land zoned High Density Multi-Family (RM-44)

Existing Zoning: The RM-44 zone allows one dwelling unit for every 1,000 square feet of lot area, or about 44 units per acre. In general, high density multi-family development should have direct access to an arterial street, have good access to public transit and/or be within walking distance of major destination points and not be located in areas that will have negative environmental impacts. Results of this study indicate that RM-44 zoning is unrealistic and inappropriately high for this property. The property contains steep and critical slopes and two wooded ravines, which will make development difficult. Access to the property is also problematic at this time due to the steep grade from Highway 1 and the existing traffic concerns along Harlocke Street. The property is also directly adjacent to a single family zone and concerns have been expressed about a lack of transition between high density uses permitted in the RM-44 zone and the low density

Appendix C

uses intended for the RS-5 zone. Each of these issues is described in more detail below.

Topography - The property consists of a south-facing hillside with some steep and critical slopes. The elevation of this hillside is such that it offers unobstructed views of the Iowa River valley to the south. A wooded ravine separates the RM-44-zoned area approximately in the middle. The property is adjacent to the Highway 1 right-of-way, which slopes steeply from the edge of the Ruppert property down to Highway 1. Any development proposal will have to subtract out areas for streets, pedestrian facilities, and storm water management facilities and as well as areas that are too steep or environmentally sensitive to develop, which leaves only about half of the property for buildings and parking. Due to the steep and rugged topography, it would be extremely difficult to develop this property at RM-44 densities without substantial disturbance of the slopes and wooded ravines. Development at this density would require large, level building pads and large amount of space for the required parking, unless that parking were built underneath the buildings. Covering this steep hillside with a large amount of impervious surface would also likely result in problems controlling stormwater run-off.

Access - The property currently has no approved access from an arterial street. Harlocke, a local street, dead ends at the property's northern border. There are a number of problems associated with using Harlocke Street as access to the Ruppert property. Harlocke Street is a local street that serves as primary access to a number of apartment buildings and also to single family homes. It connects to Weeber Street, which is another local street that serves the adjacent single family neighborhood. Traffic from any new multi-family development on the Ruppert property would have to flow through the single family neighborhood before reaching Benton Street, the nearest arterial street to the north. Estimates of traffic along Harlocke Street indicate that the existing development along the street generates traffic at a rate of 500 or more trips per day, the City's local street traffic threshold, beyond which a second means of access should be provided. Connecting Harlocke Street to Edingale Drive to provide a second means of access would also be problematic. Such a connection would likely result in additional northbound traffic on Harlocke and Weeber Streets as apartment residents travel to central destinations, such as downtown Iowa City and the University of Iowa, located north and east of this area.

For the reasons stated above, access to any new multi-family development on the Ruppert property should be provided from Highway 1 rather than from Harlocke Street. Currently there is no IDOT - approved access to the RM-44 zoned property from Highway 1, although it is possible to share the IDOT-approved access located on the adjacent CC-2 zoned property to the east. Alternatively, staff suggests that a portion of the commercially zoned property to the east be rezoned to multi-family residential so that the approved driveway access is located on the multi-family tract. If the density of future development on the Ruppert property is such that a second means of access is needed, the use of Harlocke Street can be avoided by providing a second connection to Highway 1 through the property currently owned by Tim Russell, located directly to the southwest of the Rupperts' property.

If this property is developed for multi-family uses, pedestrian connections should also be considered. Major destination points, including the University of Iowa campus and downtown Iowa City are all located north of the property. In addition, all of the neighborhood open space is located north and east of the property. Given that there will

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be no north-south street connections in this area, a pedestrian trail connecting this property to the neighborhood parks, adjacent public open space, and to Benton Street will be important.

Surrounding Development - The property is bounded on the north by multi-family housing developed at an average density of approximately 26 units per acre. Directly to the west is an area zoned for low density, single family development. Existing single family homes front on Harlocke Street, Weeber Street, and Weeber Circle. A lack of transition between the low density single family zone and the high density multi-family zone has been problematic. The large parking lots, bright lights, and traffic associated with high density development as well as the bulk and scale of multi-family buildings have caused concern among the single family residents along Harlocke, Weeber, and Weeber Circle. Any development on the western portion of the Ruppert property should be designed to buffer higher density uses from the lower density uses to the west. Such a buffer will be difficult to achieve if the property is developed at RM-44 densities.

To the east, the RM-44 zoned parcel is bounded by property zoned Community Commercial (CC-2). This CC-2 parcel is also undeveloped. A wooded ravine provides a logical dividing line between the commercial property and the residential property. However, the existing zone line is located approximately 150 to 200 feet to the west of the ravine. It would be logical to move the zone line east to the edge of the ravine to provide a better transition between the residential and commercial zones.

Suggested Rezoning - Given the rugged topography, access issues, and lack of a transition between higher density and lower density zoning in the area, RM-44 zoning is inappropriate for this property. To avoid extensive grading and the need for large retaining walls, the property should be down-zoned. The RM-12 Zone allows one dwelling unit per 2,725 square feet, approximately 12-15 units per acre. As illustrated on the attached maps, it may be possible to achieve this density by working with the natural topography and clustering the development in areas so that grading of steep and critical slopes is minimized. Even at this lower density it may be necessary to build a portion of the parking underneath the buildings rather than on surface lots in order to remain sensitive to the environmental features of the site. It may be possible to achieve RM-20 densities (approximately 16-24 units per acre) on this property if the site is carefully designed and parking is structured or provided underneath the buildings rather than in large surface parking lots.

It should be noted that while downzoning the property may reduce the incentive to maximize the size of the building pads by grading extensively and building large retaining walls, it will not ensure that the property is developed in a manner that is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood and the topography. Nor will it ensure that pedestrian connections are integrated into the site design so that current and future residents have a means to walk to and from major destinations, such as the University, downtown Iowa City, and nearby commercial areas. Given the uncertainty of the eventual site design, staff recommends the lower RM-12 zoning designation. If, however, the property owner agrees to a conditional zoning agreement that ensures that future development is sensitive to the natural topography and is designed with appropriate buffering, pedestrian amenities, and vehicular access, a zoning designation of RM-20 may be reasonable.

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Land zoned Community Commercial (CC-2)

Existing Zoning - From the attached map, one can see that the vacant commercially zoned property consists of a rather shallow strip along Highway 1. This parcel is zoned Community Commercial, the City's general retail commercial zone. Given that uses in this zone may generate considerable traffic, access to a major thoroughfare is important.

While this property seems well-situated for commercial development, the property owners have indicated that the configuration of the property makes the resulting commercial lots relatively shallow, which restricts the possible uses for this property. Deeper lots would provide additional space for required parking, pedestrian amenities and for attractive landscaping along this entry corridor to the City.

Topography - The portion eastern portion of the subject property is relatively flat, sloping gently from the northwest to the southeast. The western portion contains a steep, wooded ravine. It would be logical to use the ravine as a natural boundary between the multi-family zone to the west and this commercial zone. However, the zone boundary is currently about 150 to 200 feet west of the ravine.

Access - The commercially zoned property currently includes two IDOT-approved access points off of Highway 1; one at the intersection of Ruppert Road and Highway 1 and one further to the east next to Sobaski's Carpets. These driveways are currently unimproved farm access drives. They will have to be upgraded if the property is developed for commercial uses.

During the Southwest District planning workshops, citizens stressed the importance of creating pedestrian links between local commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Since there are few north-south street connections in the eastern part of the Southwest District, providing trail links should be even more of a priority.

The Rupperts' commercial property along Highway 1 is well-situated to provide commercial services to the single family neighborhoods to the north and east and to any future residents of the multi-family property to the west. Therefore, it will be important to provide the opportunity for a pedestrian trail along the western edge of this property connecting it to the surrounding residential properties.

Surrounding Development - The property directly to the north is zoned RS-8, Medium Density Single Family. If this property is developed for commercial uses, it should provide a landscaped buffer to protect the nearby residential properties.

Suggested Rezoning - Since the comprehensive plan designates this area as appropriate for commercial development, moving the zone boundary north to provide the opportunity for deeper commercial lots may be warranted. The resulting zone change will increase the depth of the property to coincide with the depth of the commercial property located at the corner of Miller Avenue and Highway 1. In addition, squaring off the zoning boundary will provide for a more even transition between the single family zone to the north and this commercial zone. Providing deeper commercial lots will also allow adequate space for a landscaped noise and sight buffer between commercial development and future residential development.

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As mentioned above, a zone boundary adjustment on this property's western edge may also be warranted. Moving the zone boundary to the east side of the ravine would provide a better transition between the multi-family zone to the west and this commercial property. This zone change would also provide the multi-family property direct access to an arterial street.

Land Zoned Medium Density Single Family (RS-8)

Existing Zoning - This property is currently zoned Medium Density Single Family (RS-8). This zone is intended to provide for the development of small lot single-family dwellings. Because this zone represents a relatively high density for single-family development, dwellings should be in close proximity to all City services and facilities, especially parks, schools and recreational facilities. Special attention should be given to landscaping and site development. Special provisions of this Zone permit dwellings with no side yard to accommodate attached single family dwellings, such as townhouses.

Topography - The land slopes moderately from northwest to southeast. There are areas of mature woodland along the northern and western edge of the property. If developed, stormwater detention will be necessary. The most likely location for a detention basin is near the southeast corner of the property.

Access - Property has frontage on Miller Avenue and Benton Street and is adjacent to the two-acre Miller-Orchard Park.

Surrounding Development - The property is surrounded on three sides by medium density single family zoning (RS-8). Miller-Orchard Park and Roosevelt Elementary School are located on Benton Street north of the Ruppert property.

Suggested Zoning - Given the surrounding zoning and development, this parcel is appropriate for medium density single family development. The property is close to City services, a commercial area, Roosevelt Elementary School and the newly acquired neighborhood parkland. The existing RS-8 zoning designation is appropriate. The property may also be suitable for a planned housing development or PDH. A rezoning to PDH-8 would provide flexibility in architectural design, placement and clustering of buildings, use of open space, traffic circulation and parking in order to encourage the best use of the existing topography and promote an attractive and safe living environment compatible with surrounding residential development. This type of zoning is particularly suitable for infill sites in older residential areas such as the Miller-Orchard neighborhood.

The attached map illustrates one example of a planned development that would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The plan shows single family and townhouse development facing a central common green space. Front doors and living space would front on the common area with garages located behind the dwellings on a u-shaped private drive with access to Miller Avenue. This new development should open out to Miller Avenue so that residents will have a connection to the existing neighborhood. An attractive single family development on this property would support the plan goal of stabilizing and revitalizing the surrounding Miller Orchard neighborhood.

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Dedication of a certain amount of open space would be required with development of this property, whether as a conventional subdivision or a PDH. Additional park space is needed at the corner of Miller Avenue and Benton Street to provide attractive and safe pedestrian access to the existing Miller-Orchard Park. Depending on the amount of open space dedicated at this corner, there may be adequate land area to develop townhouses or single family homes that face the park with vehicular access allowed from the rear as shown on the concept map for this area. To increase the green pedestrian links within this area of the city, it will be important to reserve space for a trail between Miller-Orchard Park and the adjacent commercial area and to the public open space at the end of Harlocke Street.

Concept Plan Maps

The maps on the following pages illustrate the concepts and zoning recommendations described above. These maps provide an illustration of how the important goals and objectives for this part of the Southwest District might be accomplished. It should be noted that other site designs may be equally attractive for these properties as long as the design adheres to the underlying planning principles described in the analysis above.

Moratorium Area Concept Plan

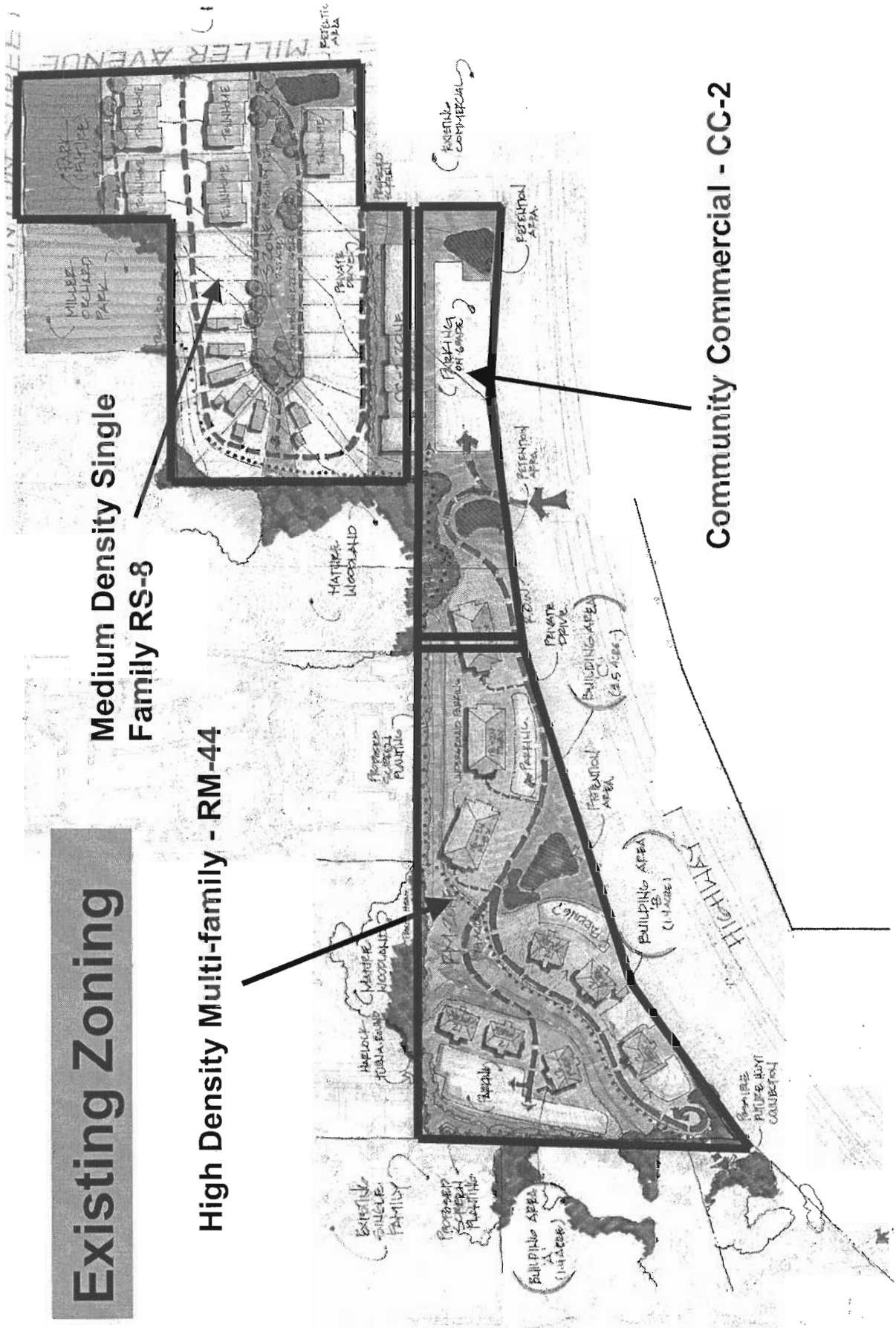


Existing Zoning

Medium Density Single
Family RS-8

High Density Multi-family - RM-44

Community Commercial - CC-2

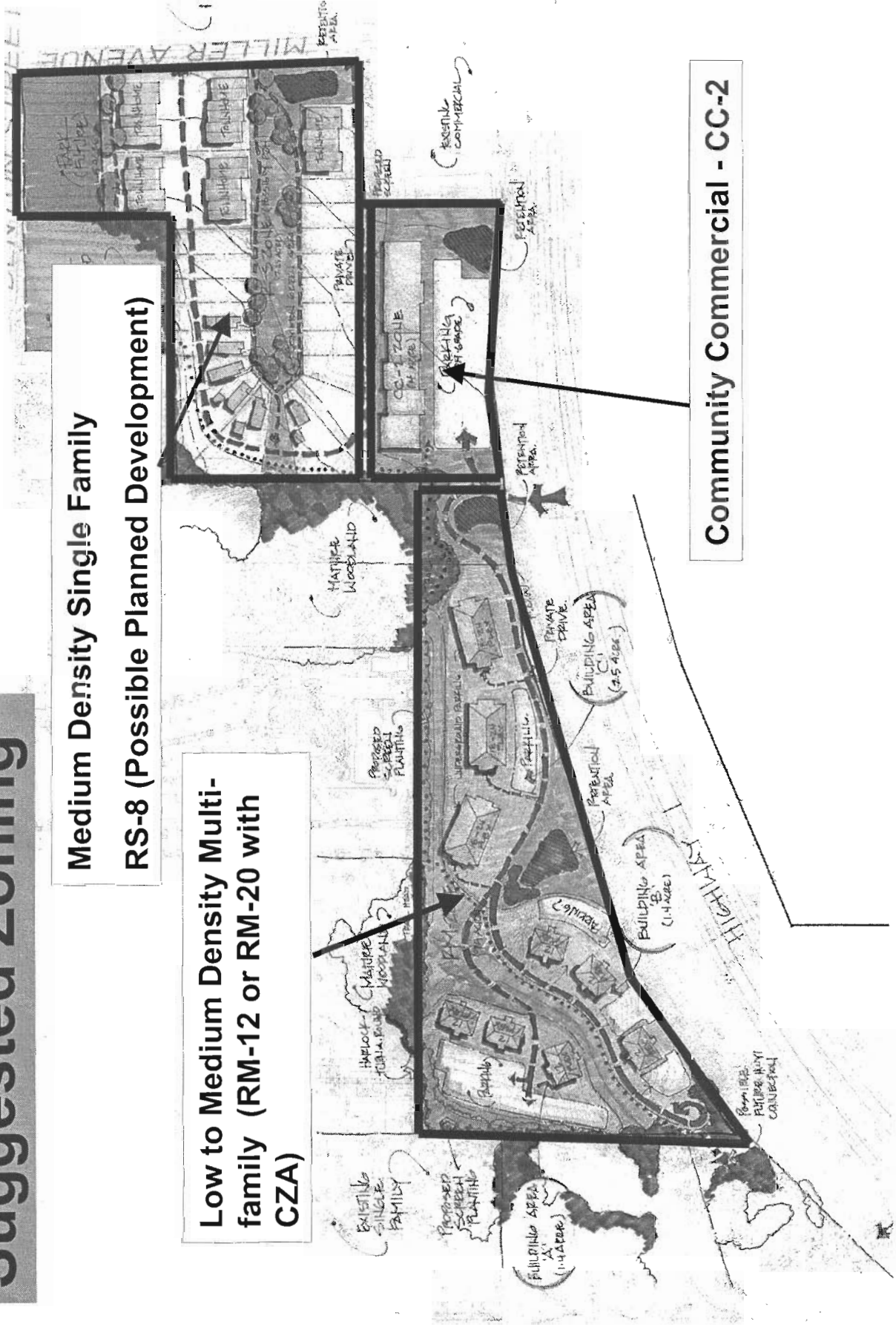


Suggested Zoning

Medium Density Single Family
RS-8 (Possible Planned Development)

Low to Medium Density Multi-
family (RM-12 or RM-20 with
CZA)

Community Commercial - CC-2



No Access from Harlocke Street

Pedestrian Trail

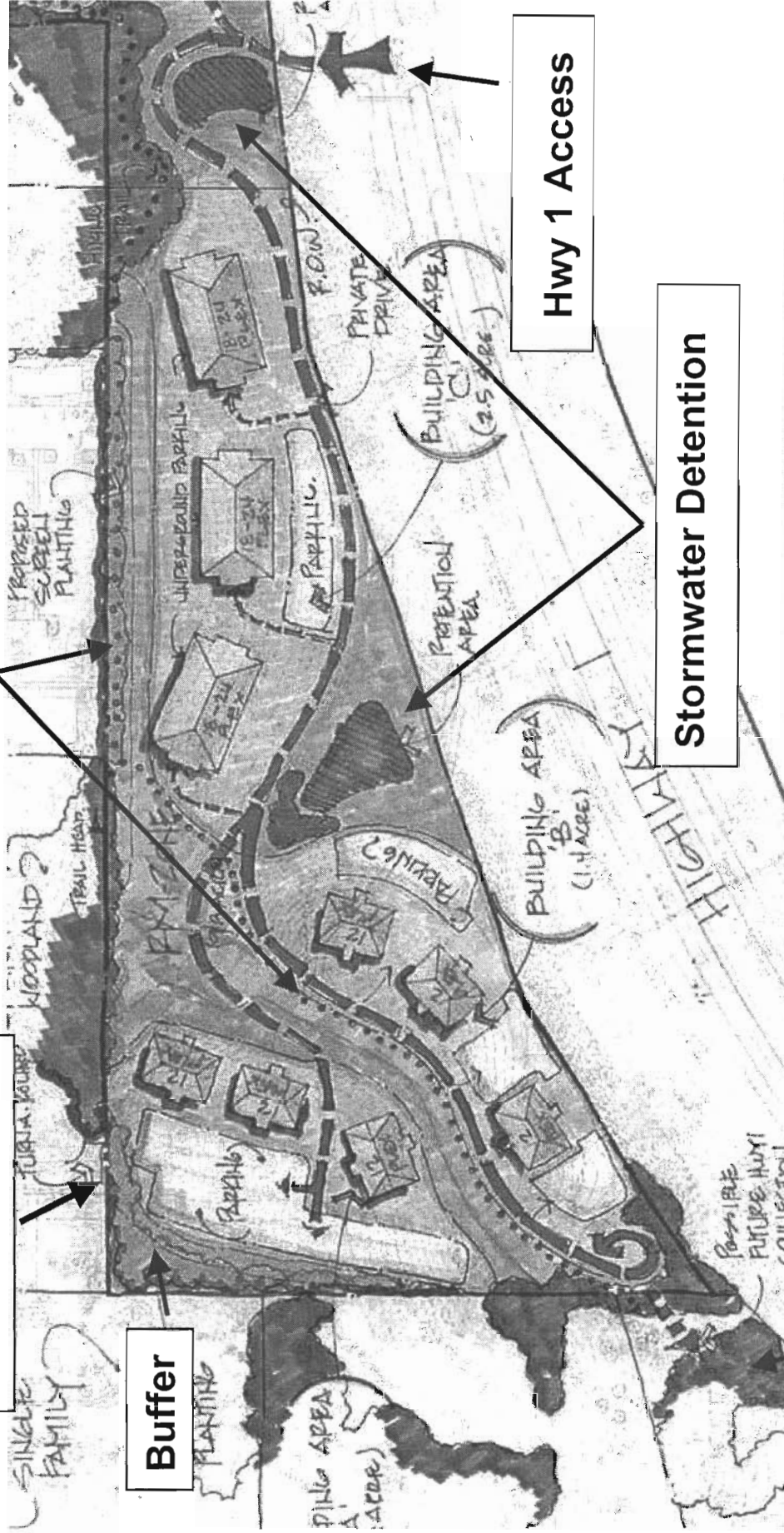
Buffer

Hwy 1 Access

Stormwater Detention

Secondary Access through Russell Property

Low to Medium Density Multi-Family



**Desired Area for
Required Open
Space Dedication
(1 to 1.5 Acres)**

**Garages
-off a
Private
Rear Lane**

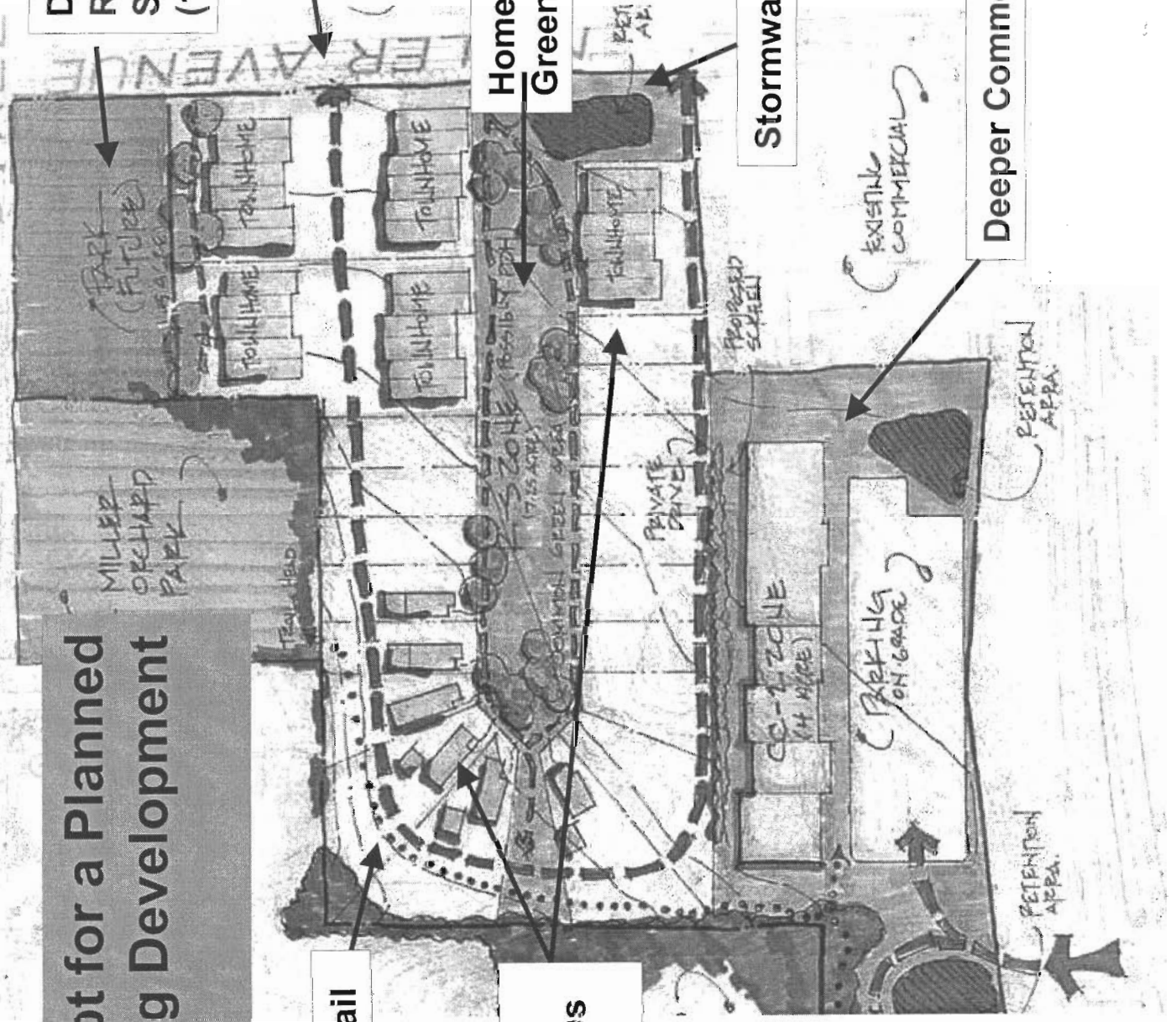
Homes Facing Interior Greenspace

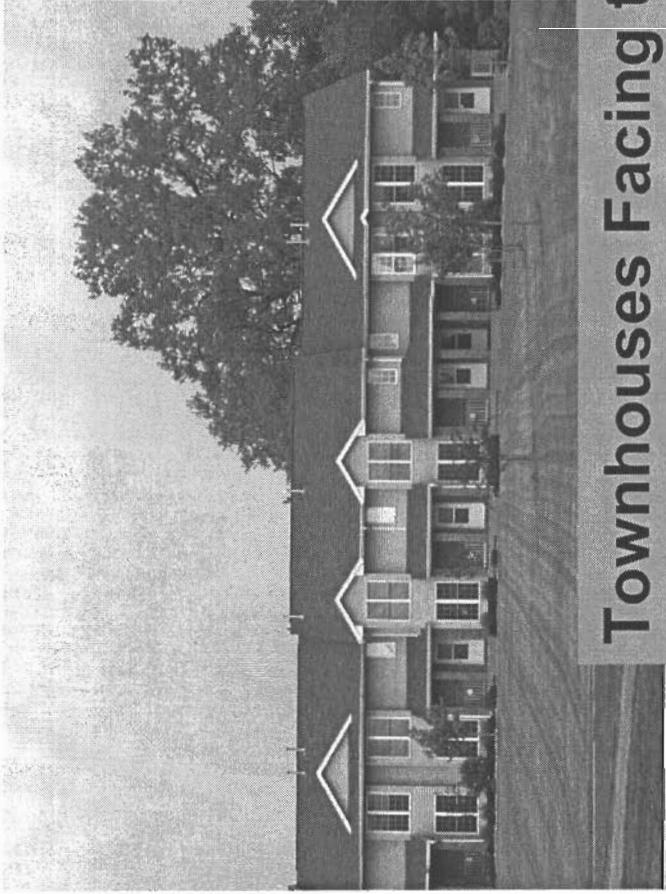
Stormwater Detention

Deeper Commercial Lots

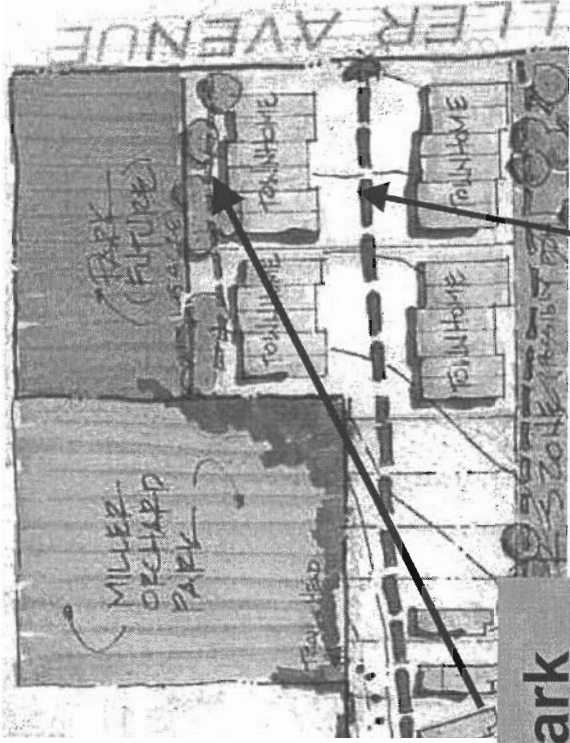
Pedestrian Trail

Variety of Housing Types Possible





Townhouses Facing the Park



Garages access from a rear lane

