

Arbor Chase board members met this week with the leadership of Milakis Custom Homes, the company behind the proposed development that would be located west of Wakefield Dr. The following is a Q&A based on both what the board learned, and how the board views this development, which will now be voted on by the Area Plan Commission in June.

What will the homes in this new neighborhood be like?

All lots that border Arbor Chase will be R1 sized lots comparable to those on Burnley and Brixford. The rest will be 67' lots, 7 feet wider than the lots in the Village section of Arbor Chase. The developer says the homes will be between 1,900 to 2,200 sq ft, valued, at \$400,000 to \$500,000. Most, if not all homes in the neighborhood are expected to be single story homes.

The distance between homes on Wakefield and the homes in the new development will be greater than 385 feet. By comparison, the distance between the homes on Farnsworth (in the Village) and Westmoreland is 265 feet.

Milakis Custom Homes will be the sole builder and the company will construct the homes custom as desired by purchasers. As a reference for the quality of his past work, the builder referred the HOA to the "[Rainybrook](#)" neighborhood in Lafayette that Milakis Custom Homes also built. The company's [Facebook page](#) also is insightful.

How about the neighborhood as a whole? What should we expect?

The builder wants to develop a neighborhood that targets "up-scale empty-nesters," similar to the Village in Arbor Chase but with slightly larger lots and homes. The neighborhood will have an HOA and likely a single lawncare provider like the Village, so we should expect the lawns to be well-maintained. It also will include two ponds.

Why is the developer seeking to change the zoning from R1?

The developer wants to target "up-scale empty-nesters." The market for that type of home desires small lawns and relatively large homes for the lot as in the Village. Originally, the developer sought to change the zoning from R1 to R1A but then withdrew that proposal and switched to R1B when he realized that R1A would have required him to reduce the planned home sizes in order to comply with the amount of lawn required by R1A standards.

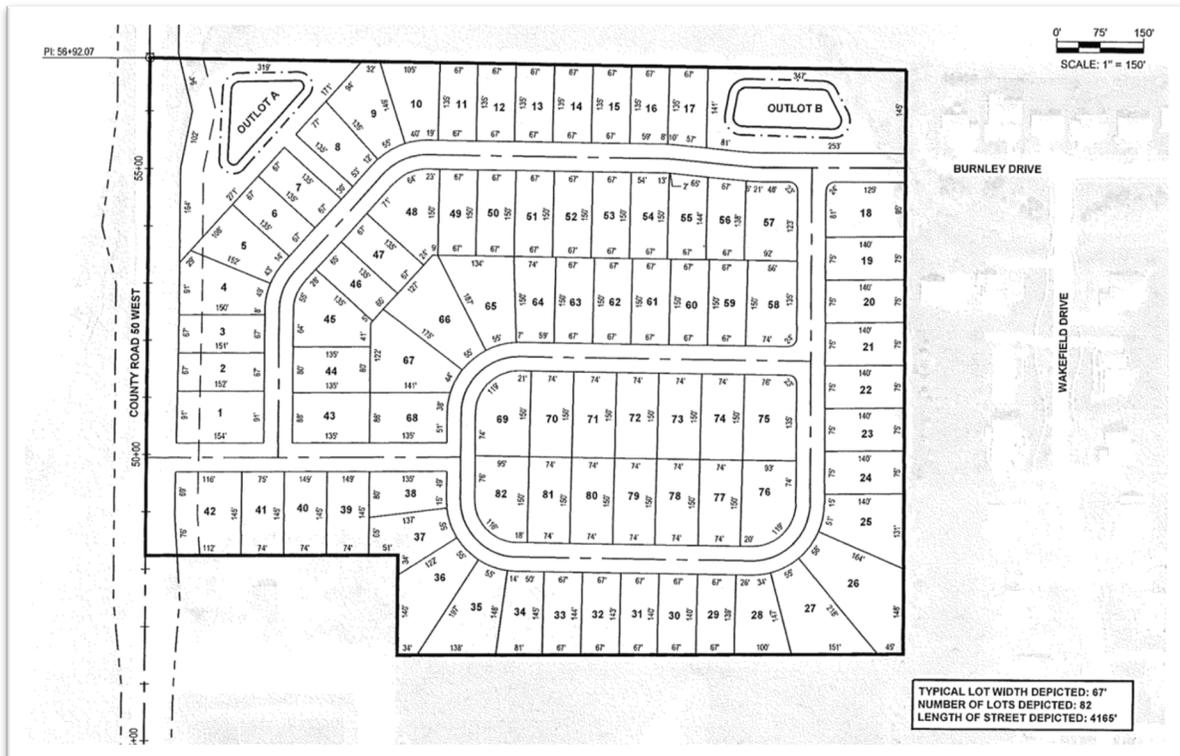
Importantly, the switch from seeking an R1A classification to an R1B classification will not add additional lots or change the previously proposed lot sizes. It is an administrative change only, intended to allow larger homes with smaller lawns as desired by the "up-scale empty-nester" homebuyer. Put another way, although R1B has a minimum lot width of 50', the builder says his commitment for 67' lots and even larger R1 lots closer to Arbor Chase, will not change. For reference, lots in the Village are 60' and that neighborhood also is zoned R1B. The table below may be helpful in understanding this point:

Neighborhood	Zoning Designation	Minimum Lot Width Allowed by Zoning	Coverage (% of land covered by plants & buildings)	Actual Lot Width in Plan
Arbor Chase Lakes	R1	75'	Buildings: 30% Max Vegetation: 40% Minimum	75-90'
Arbor Chase Estates	R1	75'	Buildings: 30% Max Vegetation: 40% Minimum	135'
Arbor Chase Village	R1B	50'	Buildings: 35% Max Vegetation: 35% Minimum	60'
Heron Bay/Milakis Development	R1B with Commitment	50' but with 67' APC Commitment	Buildings: 35% Max Vegetation: 35% Minimum	67-75'

Why does the builder plan to extend Burnley?

The original Milakis Custom Homes proposal did not connect to Arbor Chase, but local government officials informed the developer that the original plan would not be approved without connecting to Burnley. The developer and his attorney attempted to argue against this requirement from local government planners but ultimately it became clear to Milakis Custom Homes that the company would not prevail in convincing the city to allow the development without a Burnley extension.

The developer's experience is consistent with what city and APC staff have told Arbor Chase board members. In multiple conversations, these planners have made it clear that it is a city priority to create additional access points to Arbor Chase and that developers anywhere in the county should not expect to have projects approved in the future if they only plan for one access point.



Protecting our property values and keeping Arbor Chase a most desirable community.

Will the extension of Burnley increase traffic and noise in our neighborhood?

Due to the southern location of the new development's Salisbury connection, the curved nature of the development's new roads, and the isolation of Arbor Chase, the developer believes the Burnley extension will not induce anyone to use Arbor Chase roads that is not already traveling into the neighborhood, but it may actually reduce traffic on Wakefield. Obviously, he does not want unnecessary traffic coming through his development any more than Arbor Chase does, so he has an incentive to design the neighborhood in a way that discourages non-essential traffic.

Will there be a clear distinction between where Arbor Chase ends and the new neighborhood begins? Should we be worried that our playground and common areas will be overused?

At the board's encouragement, the developer has agreed to work with Arbor Chase to add attractive signage at the neighborhood border. As for the common areas, even prior to learning about the proposed new development, the board approved plans to update the neighborhood's existing signs with stronger "no trespassing" signage and stronger enforcement strategies to make it clear that those areas are for residents only.

Why can't the land remain farmland?

According to [Realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com), the greater Lafayette area is the 3rd hottest real estate market in the country. One of the reasons, as explained in the [Indianapolis Star](https://www.indianapolisstar.com) last month (when we ranked 6th), is a low inventory of homes. Given that, it's unavoidable that individuals would seek to acquire undeveloped Tippecanoe County land and eventually succeed in developing the properties that surround Arbor Chase.

What is the Board's take on all this?

We understand why some in the neighborhood are upset and we acknowledge their anxiety about this change. To all those passing out petitions and planning to attend the APC meeting in June, that is your right and we respect you for your passion and civic engagement.

As much as we would love to keep our surrounding areas open and undeveloped, in a growing community like ours and a hot housing market like today's, it's not a question of *if* these parcels will be developed, but *how* and *when*, and which strategies are most likely to protect our neighborhood.

The board believes that if Milakis Custom Homes did not pursue this project, another developer would and that next developer may not seek a neighborhood of the quality this one seeks. Worse, the land could even be used for multi-family homes, student housing or commercial real estate, all with the city mandated connection to Burnley. Moreover, the argument that the Burnley extension is not likely to increase traffic in our neighborhood but may actually spread it out more evenly seems persuasive, and the fact that the city and APC seem immovable in their desire to add an entrance to our neighborhood is highly consequential.

The recent defeat of a proposal to add student housing near a different residential neighborhood, The Orchard, is often cited as an example of what can be accomplished when a community works together. But unlike the proposed Milakis Custom Homes development, the Orchard proposal was recommended for defeat by the Area Plan Commission (APC) staff. In our



situation, it's actually the APC staff, city staff and reportedly, elected officials, who are demanding that Burnley be extended.

As our community continues to grow, so will the interest from developers in acquiring and building on the land surrounding Arbor Chase. This includes the parcels to the west and north of our neighborhood, as well as the land east of the entrance at Westmoreland.

As we learn of proposals for the development of these lands, we will not hesitate to do what is necessary to protect our property values, but we believe we will generally have much better results if we can work with developers and support their projects in exchange for reasonable concessions in our neighborhood's interests. This is especially true when the proposal enjoys strong support from city leaders, as is the case with this project. As such, when it comes to this development, the board is recommending and pursuing a strategy of collaboration and respectful dialogue to resolve problems as they arise, rather than taking an oppositional stance that is not likely to succeed.

If there are issues the board needs to work with the developer to resolve, we stand ready to hear your thoughts and to convey those concerns to Milakis Custom Homes.

Respectfully,

The Arbor Chase Board of Directors

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