



## Memorandum

**TO:** Chairman Kehr and Members of the Plan Commission

**FROM:** Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

**DATE:** April 10, 2019

**RE:** **Comprehensive Update – Phase 1 Introduction**  
***Waukegan Road/Settler's Square Business District and***  
***Surrounding Area***

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At the Council's direction, an update to the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is underway. The Plan was last re-adopted in its entirety in 1998. Since that time, several updates have been made to the Comprehensive Plan, but an overall review and integration of the various updates has not occurred. The review and update continues the City's long tradition of careful and comprehensive long term planning.

### Background

The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document for the City with respect to land use and development and looks forward 20 years or more in an effort to establish a framework for important community decisions. Land use patterns are fundamental to decisions about infrastructure, parks, public facilities, how services are delivered and which capital projects are funded. In addition, a strong and forward thinking Comprehensive Plan supports the vitality of business and office districts, provides opportunities for a mix of housing types, recognizes local institutions and not for profit entities as important components of the community's fabric, protects property values, and preserve the community's distinctive character and quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to insure that decisions are based on careful deliberation, factual data and focused on the long term interest of the overall community, rather than on short term trends, pressure from developers or special agendas.

In accordance with the City Code, the Plan Commission is charged with conducting public hearings on any updates proposed to the Comprehensive Plan and forwarding recommendations to the City Council on the proposed updates. The process authorized by the City Council for the current update calls for a phased review, essentially chapter by chapter, or area by area. The

intention is that toward the end of the process, a review will occur to integrate the various chapters and key themes throughout the Comprehensive Plan prior to finalizing the document.

The update process offers numerous opportunities for public input and involvement through workshops, small group discussions and public forums in addition to formal public hearings before the Plan Commission. At the Council's direction, adhoc Working Groups, serving as advisory to City staff, are engaged at the front end of the update process for various chapters to guide staff in the development of an initial draft update of each chapter as a starting point for the Plan Commission's review.

### **Phase 1 - Current Consideration**

A draft update to the chapter relating to the Waukegan Road/Settler's Square Business District is now presented to the Plan Commission for discussion, public review, Commission deliberation and ultimately, a recommendation to the City Council. The Working Group appointed to advise and assist City staff on this chapter has completed its work. A draft update of this chapter of the plan prepared by staff, with the advice and direction of the Working Group, is attached to this memorandum.

A copy of the current Comprehensive Plan chapter relating to this area is also attached. The full Comprehensive Plan, as currently approved, is available on the City's website at:

[https://www.cityoflakeforest.com/assets/1/28/COMPREHENSIVE\\_PLAN1.pdf](https://www.cityoflakeforest.com/assets/1/28/COMPREHENSIVE_PLAN1.pdf)

### **Staff Recommendation**

After hearing a presentation of the draft; ask for clarifications, ask preliminary questions, invite public comment, identify areas where more information may be needed, discuss further modifications as determined to be appropriate and provide direction to staff. Continue the matter for further consideration and action at a future meeting.

**Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Chapter -- Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District**  
*For Plan Commission Review 4/10/2019*

*Charge*

An adhoc Working Group was appointed by Mayor Lansing as a first step in the Comprehensive Plan update process. The charge of this first Working Group was to serve as advisory to staff in developing a preliminary draft of concepts for the Waukegan Road/Settler's Square Business District which will serve as a starting point for the Plan Commission's deliberations and public hearings on updates to a chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Working Group was charged with looking at the physical characteristics of the area, the opportunities and challenges.

*Working Group Members*

Chairman: Mike Adelman

Group members: Richard Sugar, Eileen Looby Weber, John Cortesi, Jack Frigo, Dennis Meulemans, Bob Shaw and Stephen Douglass

*Working Group Process*

- Took a walking tour of the area, reviewed data on existing uses, ownerships and densities.
- Held a community forum early in the process during which maps were available and members of the public were invited to share their ideas and concerns directly with Work Group members and in writing.
- Conducted discussion sessions including one with the City's Police and Fire Chiefs to talk through statistics related to accidents in the area and the challenges and opportunities of circulation through the area for vehicles, trains and pedestrians.
- Reviewed draft land use concepts for the area and identified short term and long term considerations and opportunities.
- Welcomed comments from members of the public.
- Developed a preliminary draft of concepts for the area to give the Plan Commission the benefit of the discussions, study and public input received to date.

*Working Group Product – Staff Draft Reflecting the Discussions*

The results of the Working Group's efforts are reflected in this draft presented by staff for Commission review: 1) an overview of the Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District, 2) fundamental concepts to promote and support vitality of the area, 3) maps identifying *opportunity areas*, 4) short term actions and 5) concepts for a longer term vision for the area.

### **Overview of the Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District**

The Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District is linear in nature, extending along both sides of Waukegan Road, a State highway, for approximately a third of a mile. The current Comprehensive Plan envisioned this business district as "providing convenience retail and commercial uses which would be sustained *by the surrounding neighborhoods.*"

Today, the area continues to be anchored by Sunset Foods, a grocery store that is well regarded in the community. Limited additional retail uses, food and beverage businesses, service businesses, professional offices, banks, a church and school, and public facilities including the City's fire station and the train station, are located in the area. The area serves as a transportation corridor and commuter hub with a heavily traveled rail line, a State highway and a local east/west arterial all extending through the area. The commercial sites within the area and the transportation corridor together result in noise, higher speed traffic and light impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

#### *Fundamental Concepts*

- ❖ Recognize that to thrive, the business district needs a customer base that extends beyond surrounding neighborhoods to the larger community and includes those traveling through the area and people in surrounding communities.
- ❖ Provide the opportunity to increase residential densities in the area through development of vacant parcels and over the longer term, as parcels redevelop, by providing the flexibility for a mix of uses including multi-family residential.
- ❖ Encourage a balance of different types of commercial uses recognizing that retail and restaurant businesses can be difficult and require support from professional offices, even banks at some level, located nearby to add to the customer base.
- ❖ Provide flexibility; the ability to incorporate various types of uses along the Waukegan Road to create synergy.
- ❖ Limit uses in the district to those that are low impact, non-industrial in nature with respect to noise, lighting levels, late night activity, odors, exhaust and mechanical equipment.
- ❖ Recognize that a major transportation corridor extends through the area north to south with a State highway and rail lines for commuter and freight trains.
- ❖ Encourage community events and consider opportunities to locate destination venues including businesses, entertainment, hospitality and recreational uses in the area to draw people into the business district.
- ❖ Strengthen links between the business district and Lake Forest High School West Campus, work to create synergies between the activities at West Campus and businesses.

- ❖ Encourage partnerships, collaboration and cooperation among businesses, institutions and professional offices located in the district such as merchants' associations or other groups.
- ❖ Work toward creating a distinct and cohesive identity for the business district through efforts including, but not limited to; entrance signs, consistent signage throughout the area, landscaping, lighting, hardscape treatments and other types of streetscape and visual enhancements.

#### *Infrastructure and Circulation – Short Term*

- ❖ Implement the modifications to the Waukegan and Everett Roads intersection as planned and reserve land for future right-of-way dedication as redevelopment occurs to meet future road improvement needs.
- ❖ Explore and work to implement ways to slow traffic on Waukegan Road as it moves through the district including, but not limited to, increased enforcement of the speed limit, discussions with IDOT about a reduction of the speed limit through the area and the possibility of a traffic signal at Conway and Waukegan Roads.
- ❖ Maximize pedestrian safe and convenient connections to and through the area.
- ❖ Enhance the safety of existing pedestrian crossings with improved signage, increased lighting levels and pavement markings.
- ❖ Maintain public sidewalks: address drainage and ponding water, trim vegetation to keep walkways clear, repair hardscape surfaces.
- ❖ Consider shelters for pedestrians and green spaces to make walking to and through the area more comfortable in all types of weather.

#### *Infrastructure and Circulation – Long Term*

- ❖ Consider elimination of the at-grade railroad crossing on Everett Road and replacement with an underpass or overpass.
- ❖ Consider structures such as a pedestrian under pass or over pass to improve safety and convenience for those crossing the railroad tracks and Waukegan Road *only* after in-depth review of the costs and benefits of such projects and consideration of impacts, positive or negative, on the business district, surrounding residents, the larger community and the overall region.
- ❖ Provide connections through the area to existing bike paths.

Please refer to accompanying maps for each Opportunity Area.

### **Opportunity Area #1 – Commercial Area**

The Commercial Opportunity Area is located on the west side of Waukegan Road and extends in a linear, triangular form, from Everett Road to Conway Road. The area has limited access for vehicles and pedestrians because it is bordered on the east by Waukegan Road, and on the west by the railroad tracks.

#### *Recommendations*

- 1.1 Identify retail and restaurants as *priorities* for this area with supporting office and service business uses as necessary, but secondary.
- 1.2 Encourage internal pedestrian connections to promote a synergy between businesses located in the area and to encourage customers to park once and visit multiple businesses.
- 1.3 Encourage shared use of parking.
- 1.4 Consider destination type uses for the area or the surrounding area. (Entertainment, institutional or other specialty uses.)
- 1.5 Encourage outdoor dining, seating and gathering areas, green space.
- 1.6 Encourage businesses and property owners in the area to develop a consistent signage theme to create a unified character and to increase the visibility of the district from Waukegan Road.

## **Opportunity Area #2 – Mixed Use Area**

The Mixed Use Opportunity Area is located primarily on the east side of Waukegan Road and extends along Waukegan Road, between Everett and Conway Roads, east along Everett Road, and includes the southwest corner of Waukegan and Conway Road. This area includes properties that are currently developed with commercial, institutional and single family uses. Looking to the long term, the use area provides flexibility for a variety of uses and supports redevelopment of any particular parcel with a mix of uses, or a single use in the event existing uses leave the area or are reconfigured.

### *Recommendations*

- 2.1 Designate area to allow for a mix of commercial, office and multi-family residential uses and buildings.
- 2.2 Encourage below grade/low structure parking as redevelopment occurs to meet parking needs. Minimize the expanse of surface parking lots to provide opportunities for increased density and intensity of use.
- 2.3 Consider pervious surfaces and innovative ways to manage stormwater runoff.
- 2.4 Encourage comprehensive planning, looking beyond property lines – shared parking, pedestrian connections, and consistent landscaping, signage and lighting.
- 2.5 Provide transition/buffer areas for adjacent residential uses. Direct the placement of delivery and trash areas away from neighboring homes.
- 2.6 Direct all exterior lighting downward and require fixtures to shield the source of light to avoid off site impacts on adjacent residential properties. Reduce lighting levels after business hours.

### **Opportunity Area #3 – Public Use/Parking/Limited Mixed Use**

The Public Use/Parking/Limited Mixed Use Area is located on the west side of the railroad tracks, east of Telegraph Road, and extends both north and south of Everett Road. Property within this area is owned by the City of Lake Forest. Public facilities, the Fire Station and the Train Station, are located in this area. Extensive surface parking lots are located in this area providing permit parking primarily for Metra commuters and offering overflow parking for employees of businesses within the district.

#### *Recommendations*

- 3.1 Priority area for meeting parking needs of commuters and employees of the business district.
- 3.2 As needed, maximize parking opportunities in this area to avoid creating additional surface parking lots on other parcels in the subarea preserving the opportunity for higher priority uses to support the business district.
- 3.3 Encourage use of train station and surface parking lots for community events and activities at times that do not conflict with commuter use.
- 3.4 Promote small scale businesses in the train station as primarily an amenity for commuters and also to meet the needs of residents in the surrounding area.
- 3.5 Clearly identify and improve pedestrian crossings and connections from this area to businesses on the east side of the railroad tracks and to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- 3.6 Long term: Consider future opportunities for structured parking, below and above grade, on the surface lots north of Everett Road alone or in combination with a mix of uses; small scale commercial and residential.
- 3.7 Long term: Reserve the area south of Everett Road for parking expansion and green space. Avoid curb cuts on to Everett Road near the at-grade railroad crossing.
- 3.8 Long term: Consider recommendations in "Infrastructure and Circulation" section above which relate to this Opportunity Area.

#### **Opportunity Area #4 – Land Use Designation to be Determined**

This vacant parcel is owned by the City. The site was previously developed with a small structure that housed a mix of residential and office uses. The parcel is currently zoned for commercial use. The parcel is currently land banked as potential additional parking to support the train station. The parcel is approximately one and a half acres in size and is located adjacent to a single family neighborhood to the west and across the street from single family residential to the south.

##### *Recommendations for Consideration*

- 4.1 Locate curb cuts away from the intersection.
- 4.2 Promote walkability – identify and improve pedestrian crossings in the area.
- 4.3 Require new residential developments to provide perimeter landscaping as a buffer for existing residential properties and to enhance the streetscapes.
- 4.4 Consider innovative ways to manage storm water runoff.
- 4.5 Consider traffic impacts in determining appropriate uses.

##### *Recommendations Related to Residential Use*

- 4.6 Designate site as an opportunity for townhomes and low rise multi-family housing types as a transition from the large lot single family properties to the west and south, to the train station and business district.
- 4.7 Encourage commuter oriented housing types to attract a variety of buyers.

##### *Recommendations Related to Commercial Use or Mix Use*

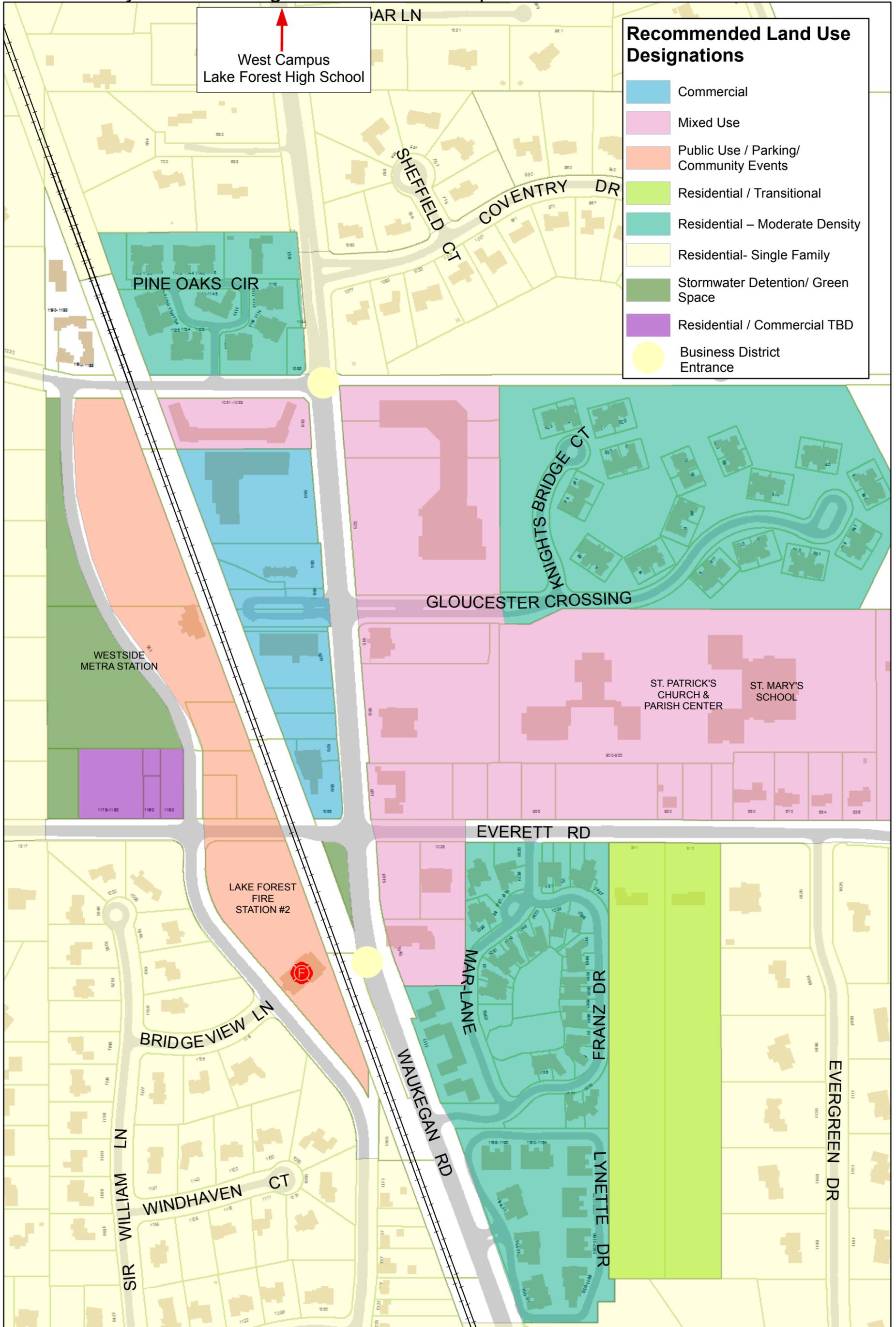
- 4.8 Designate site as an opportunity for small scale commercial or office and consider opportunities for a mix of one or more of the following components: residential, small scale commercial and office.

### **Opportunity Area #5 – Residential – Transitional**

This 10-acre vacant parcel is privately owned and to a large part, landlocked. The property is long and narrow with access only at the north end, on to Everett Road. The property abuts developed residential neighborhoods of various densities. To the east, the Evergreen Subdivision is developed at a density of one unit per one and a half acres. To the west, the parcel is bordered by the Lake Forest Chateau development at 4.5 units per acre and Colony Square at 6 units per acre. Further to the west, the Villas, fronting on Waukegan Road, is developed at 12 units per acre.

#### *Recommendations*

- 5.1 Designate the area for attached or detached housing units at a density that provides an appropriate transition between the densities to the east and west.
- 5.2 Explore opportunities for developing all, or portions of the site using the concept of expanding the existing developments located to the west, Lake Forest Chateau and Colony Square, and providing for shared access with adjacent developments while retaining access through the parcel to Everett Road.
- 5.3 Provide perimeter landscape buffering as a transition to adjacent existing residential developments and along streetscapes.
- 5.4 Encourage pedestrian connections between residential developments, to public streets and to provide safe passageways to nearby commercial uses and the train station.



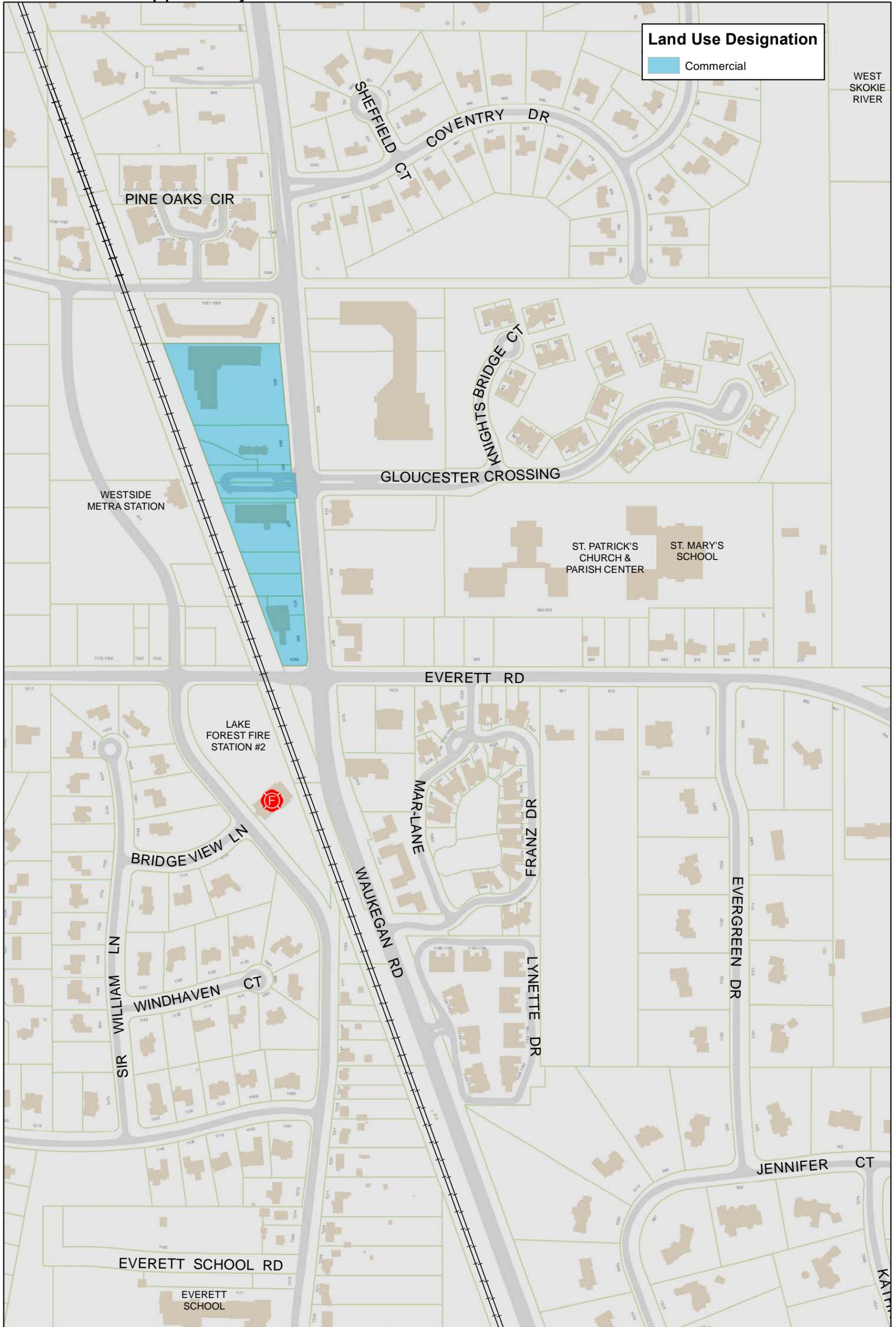
**Recommended Land Use Designations**

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Public Use / Parking / Community Events
- Residential / Transitional
- Residential - Moderate Density
- Residential- Single Family
- Stormwater Detention/ Green Space
- Residential / Commercial TBD
- Business District Entrance



**WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT**





**Land Use Designation**

- Commercial

WEST SKOKIE RIVER



### WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT







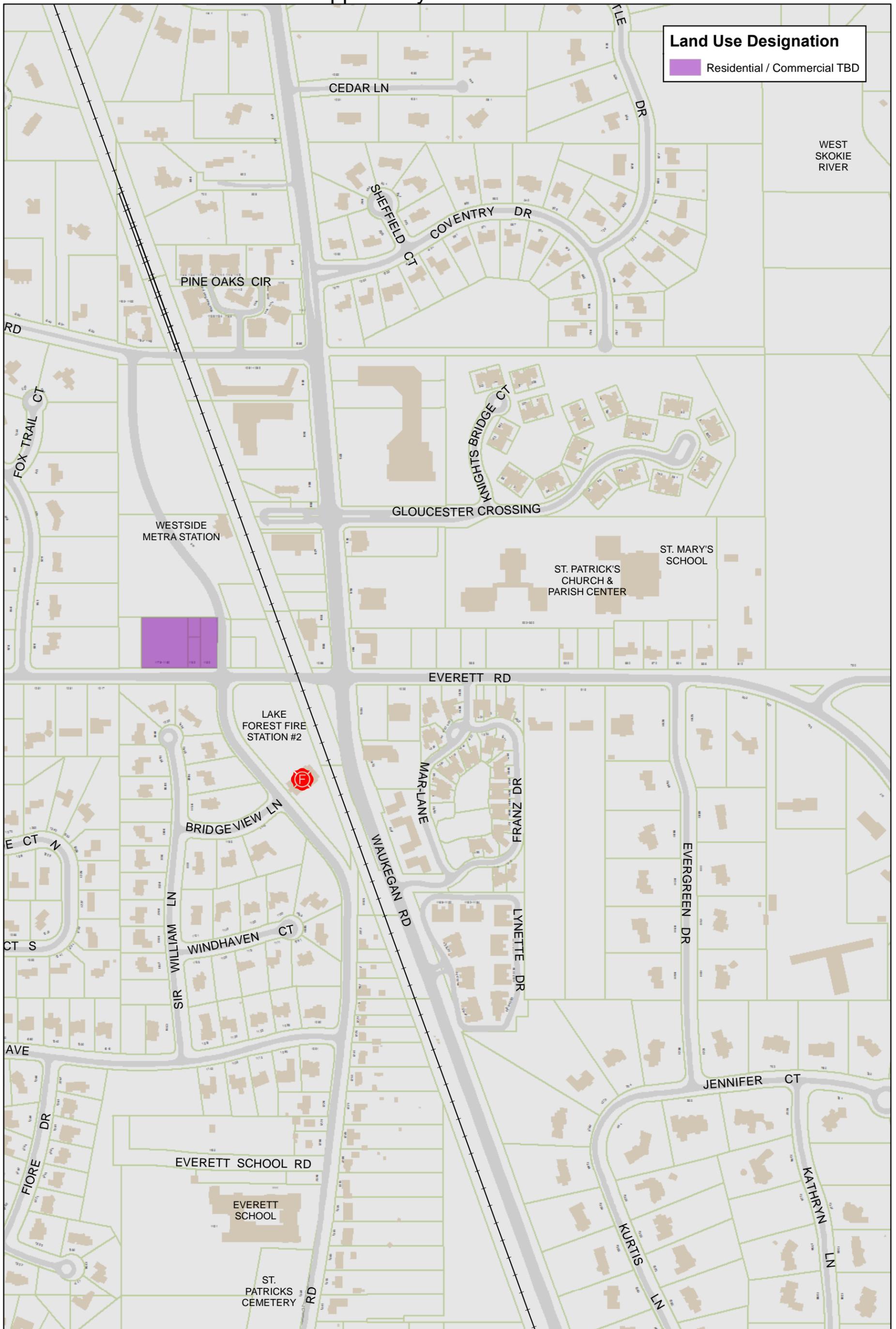
**Land Use Designation**

Public Use / Parking/ Community Events

SKOKIE RIVER

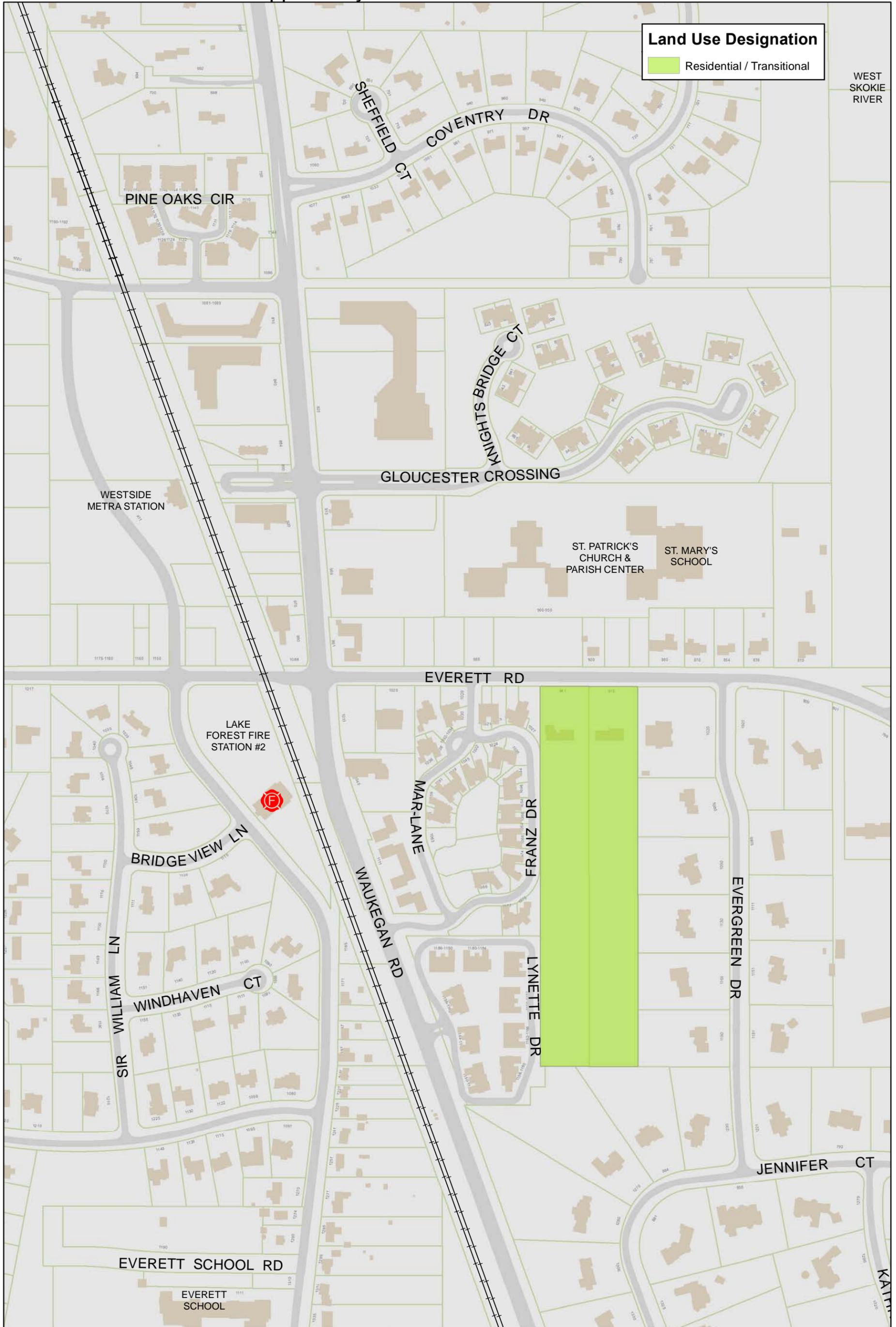
**WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT**





**WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT**





**WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT**



## 1. SETTLER'S SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT

*The Plan objective for the Settler's Square Business District is to encourage the growth of a functionally and visually unified center with high quality development which establishes a strong positive identity and a sense of place for the area. The District should provide convenience retail and commercial uses which can be sustained by the area neighborhood, and which enhance the vitality in the area.*

Settler's Square Business District also functions as a transportation center for the area, including a Metra commuter train station. The development of the Settler's Square Business District should insure an integrated transportation system that provides safe and coordinated circulation and access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists within the District. This would include an improved pedestrian crossing on Waukegan Road at the intersection of Everett Road, Gloucester Crossing and Conway Road. Please refer to the Transportation Component section for greater detail.

Consistent with these objectives, the recommendations for the re-

March 1998

*The development of Settler's Square should establish a strong positive identity and a sense of place for the area.*

*It should insure safe and coordinated circulation and access for vehicles pedestrians and bicycles within the District.*

maining underdeveloped parcels in the Settler's Square Business District is outlined below. The recommendations for the Plan have been divided into three categories, 1.1) Underdeveloped Parcels between Waukegan Road and the Railroad Tracks, 1.2) City Owned Property West of the Railroad Tracks, and 1.3) Underdeveloped Properties East of Waukegan Road. Please refer to Figure 7.1 for the land use recommendations for the Settler's Square Plan.

### **1.1 Underdeveloped Parcels between Waukegan and the Railroad Tracks**

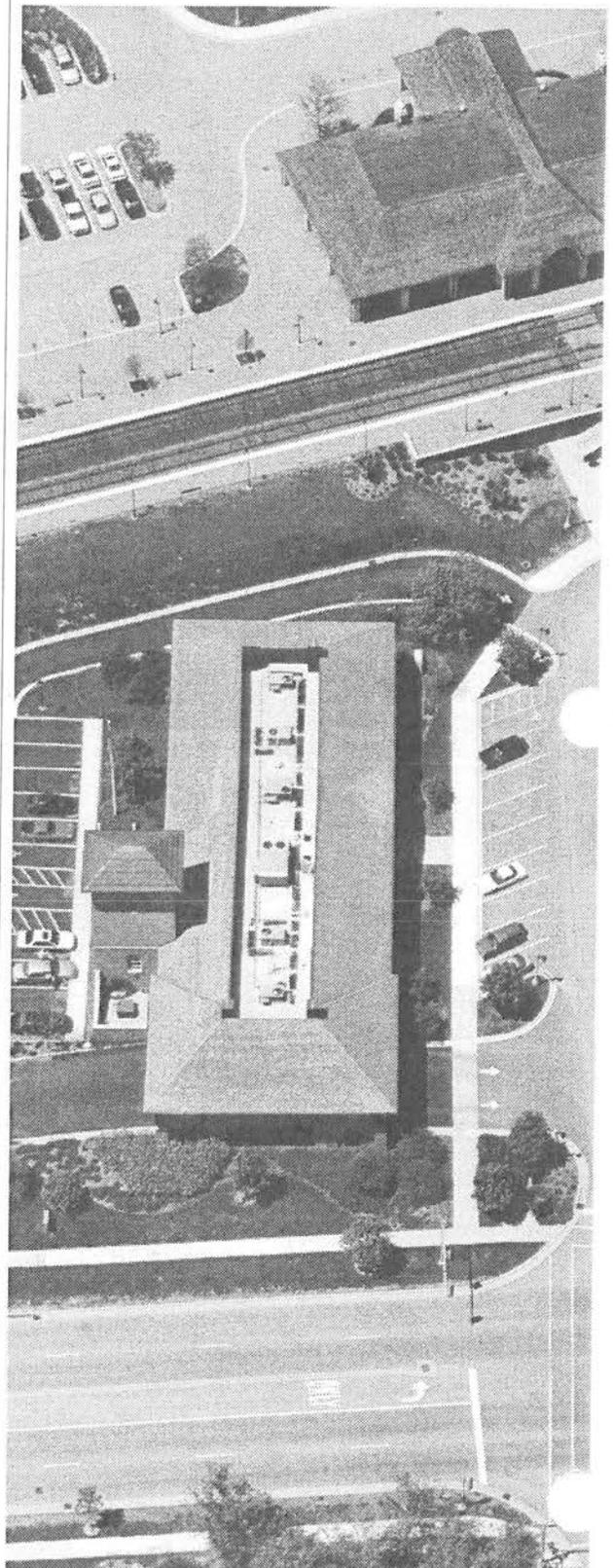
The underdeveloped parcels should be developed consistent with the permitted uses under the B1 Neighborhood Business zoning district. They should be developed by the private sector and be guided and regulated by design standards formulated by the City. The design standards have been developed to achieve the desired quality and physical image for this area, as stated in the Plan objectives, and included in the TIF Plan guidelines. The design guidelines are as follows:

**i) Encourage buildings to orient their frontage toward Waukegan Road.**

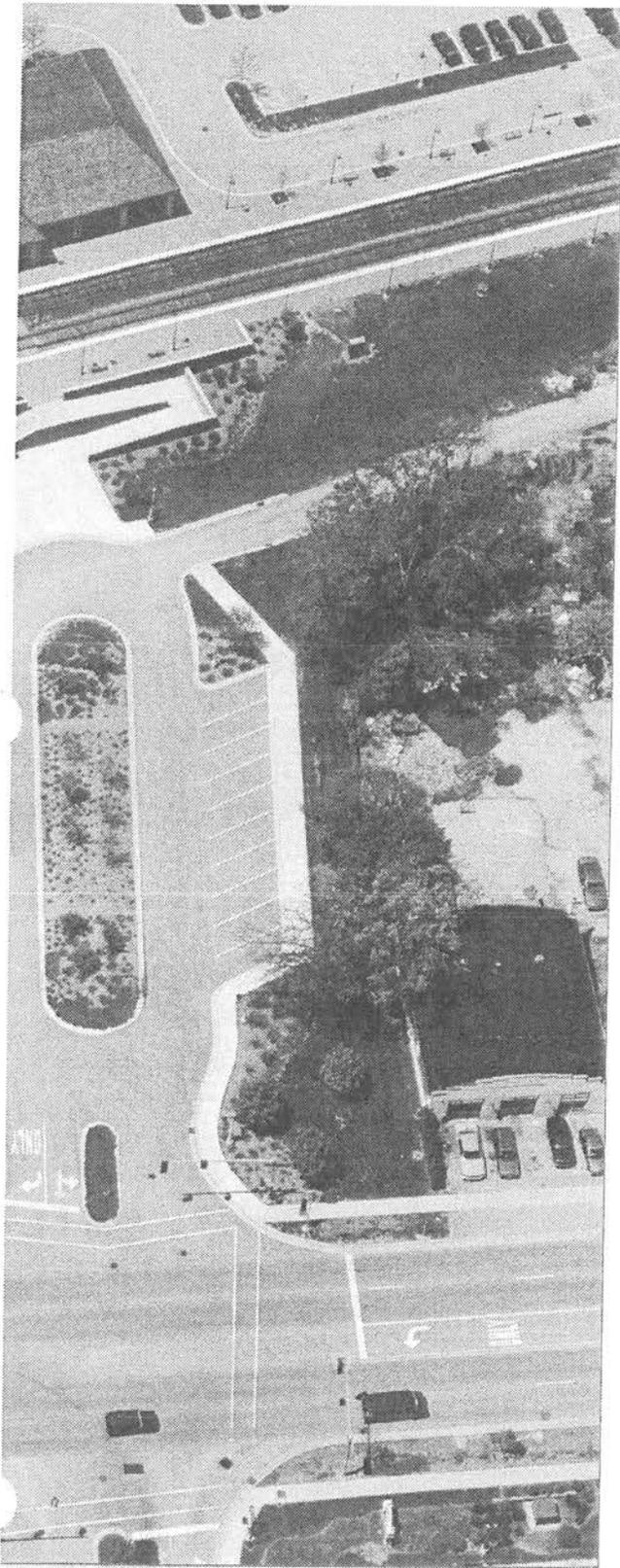
The design aim is to create a definite and continuous edge along Waukegan Road so as to define the corridor and give it visual cohesiveness and identity. The buildings should relate to the roadway with openings and entrances to the establishments, display windows, etc., facing Waukegan Road. The building design should respect and complement the quality and character of existing developments along Waukegan Road.

**ii) Encourage two story buildings.**

This would help unify the scale of existing and new structures along the Waukegan Road corridor. In so doing, a cohesive visual character along the highway could be achieved. The first floor should be reserved primarily for customer-oriented uses, either service or retail. The second story should be reserved primarily for complementary office uses. This will increase the overall activity within the area.



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**iii) Parking lots should be placed to the rear of the building envelopes.**

The parking lots should be screened and not be directly visible from Waukegan Road. The aim is to provide a sense of enclosure to the Waukegan Road corridor and to prevent visual sprawl that results from fronting parking lots onto the streets. In addition, the absence of large parking areas along Waukegan Road will create an opportunity for increased pedestrian activity on the sidewalks. The parking lots of adjacent properties should be contiguous if possible. Parking lot entrances should be creatively designed to clearly indicate the presence of lots behind the buildings.

**iv) Settlers Square Court should be further enhanced as a useable public space.**

A focus or center should be created for the Business District. This could be achieved through improved landscaping in the central area of the court, visual enhancement of the train station access, and the addition of visual design elements such as banners, flags, benches, etc. This will encourage increased activity levels in what is presently a highly underutilized space.

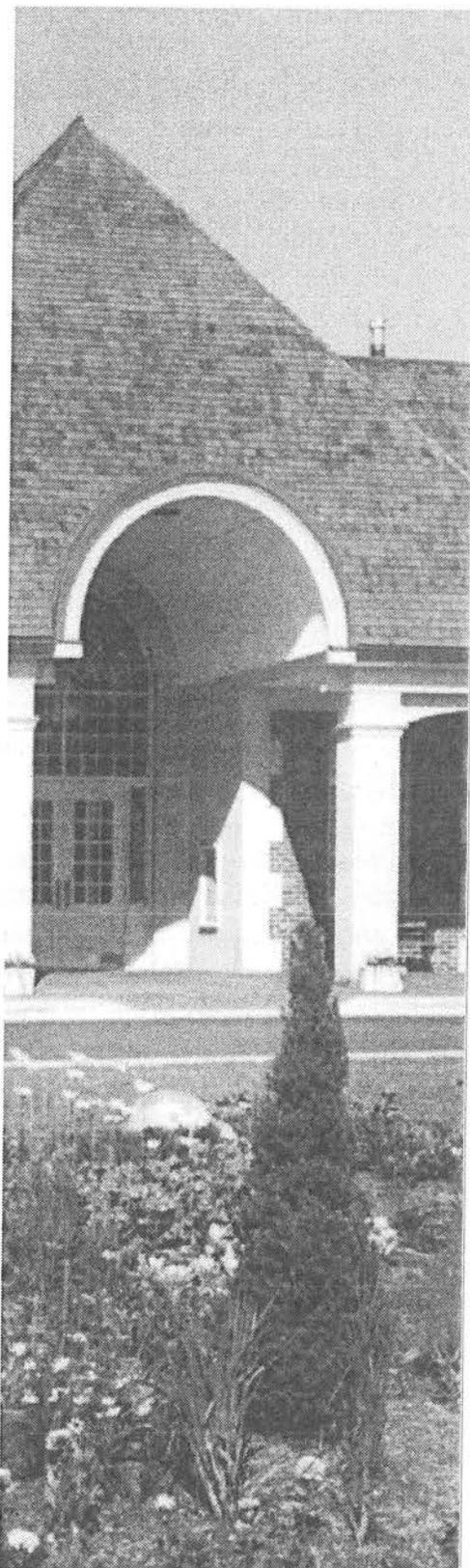
**v) Appropriate landscaping should be provided along Waukegan Road.**

Landscaping should be provided in order to buffer pedestrians from the traffic and also create a sense of enclosure for Waukegan Road.

## **1.2 City Owned Property West of the Railroad Tracks.**

### **1.2.1) Commuter Station and Parking**

The existing parking space near the train station should be sufficient to meet the future needs of Lake Forest. According to a City survey, future parking demand could be accommodated by using only 35% of the existing parking capacity, or 38% of the ca-

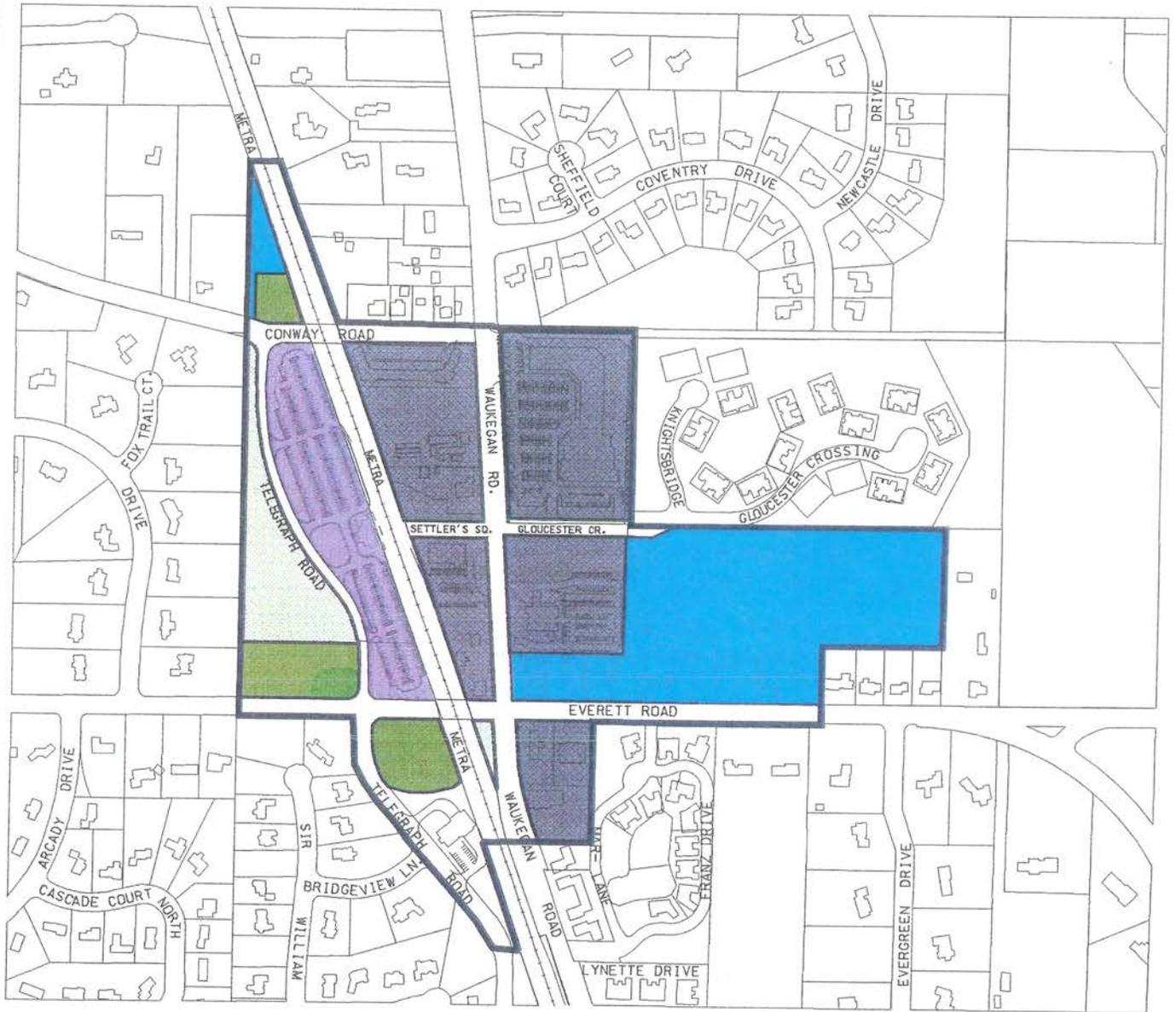


capacity, if the lot adjacent to the West Side Fire Station was removed. In addition, the nonresident use of the parking facility will stabilize, if not decline with the opening of the Lake Cook Road station which will have a larger parking facility, and the new Wisconsin Central line to the west. Given these factors and the excess parking capacity already available, a further expansion of the existing parking facilities should not be required to accommodate future demand.

### 1.2.2) Public Facilities

- i) *The property north of the West Side Fire Station, on the southwest corner of Everett and Waukegan Roads, should be preserved as open space with the option of developing it for public or quasi-public facilities should the need present itself. These facilities, if needed, should be developed to be compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood, and the site plan design should ensure that the traffic and circulation created by the new use, will not adversely impact the safety requirements of the fire station.*
- ii) *The parcel located on the northwest corner of Conway Road and the Railroad Tracks (south of Glenkirk School) should be developed as open space, which could be landscaped to create a focal point or a northern terminus to Telegraph Road. The subject parcel could also be developed with a public or quasi-public facility, which could include parking should the need present itself.*
- iii) *The parcel on the northwest corner of Everett and Telegraph Roads, should be developed as landscaped open space. The subject parcel could also be developed with a public or quasi-public facility should the need present itself. Specifically, this would exclude a parking facility as it would not be appropriate to allow this use to encroach upon the residential areas west of Telegraph Road. The public / quasi-public facilities, if needed, should be devel-*

# FIGURE 7.1 SETTLER'S SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT LANDUSE PLAN



- |   |                                      |   |                 |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | COMMUTER STATION/PARKING             |  | PUBLIC FACILITY |
|  | OFFICE/RETAIL/<br>SERVICE COMMERCIAL |  | OPEN SPACE      |
|  | PRIVATE<br>INSTITUTIONAL             |   |                 |



December, 1997  
Scale: 1"=570'

oped to be compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood, and the site plan design should ensure that the traffic and circulation created by the new use, will not adversely impact the safety requirements of the West Side Fire Station.

### 1.2.3) Open Space

The area located west of Telegraph Road, bounded on the north by Conway Road and the south by Everett Road, is currently developed with a large detention pond. This area could be further enhanced and developed as a usable public open space with improved accessibility.

## 1.3 Underdeveloped Properties East of Waukegan Road

This area includes the vacant parcel north of the Northern Trust Bank, the large property owned by St. Patrick's Church, and the Pasquesi Home and Farm Suppliers site.

- i) **The vacant parcel north of the Northern Trust Bank and the Pasquesi Home and Farm Suppliers sites** are adjacent to existing commercial development and therefore their current commercial zoning should be maintained.

In 1997, a restaurant facility was approved for the vacant parcel north of Northern Trust Bank, consistent with the commercial land use designation.

- ii) **The large property owned by St. Patrick's Church** has always been developed with private institutional uses. The institutional character of this property is well established, and should remain as such.

In 1996-97, the subject parcel was developed with a church and school facility, consistent with the above recommended land use.

