

**Comprehensive Plan**  
**Chapter -- Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District**  
*Approved by City Council 10/7/2019*

**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 Comprehensive Plan as adopted in 1998, included the following as part of the objective for the District at that time: "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." Today, it is recognized that in order to sustain a vital commercial district along Waukegan Road, the district needs to attract customers from a broader base, beyond the residents in the nearby neighborhoods.

In 2019, 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, 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 the 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 to augment the business district with multi-family residential.
- ❖ Provide for a variety of housing products in the area, at various price points.
- ❖ Encourage a balance of different types of commercial uses recognizing that retail and restaurant businesses require support from professional offices, even banks at some level, located nearby to add to the customer base.
- ❖ Review and reconsider which uses should be permitted outright, permitted conditionally or as a special use, restricted, or prohibited in the District.
- ❖ Establish clear performance standards for desired uses and streamline the approval process for uses that meet the standards.

- ❖ Provide flexibility; the ability to incorporate various types of uses along Waukegan Road to create synergy and a vital business district.
- ❖ Strive to achieve an appropriate balance of retail and non-retail uses; avoiding a preponderance of non-retail uses which limit opportunities for restaurants and businesses that meet the needs of and are attractive to residents and visitors.
- ❖ Limit uses in the district to those that are low impact non-industrial in nature with respect to noise, lighting levels, late night activity, public safety, congestion, 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, and by "telling the story" of the area and its history.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for the City alone, or in partnership with property owners or local organizations, to proactively support the business district and, to the extent possible, promote community support of existing businesses, play a role in retaining desired businesses, and attracting new businesses to the District.

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

- ❖ Improve the Waukegan and Everett Roads intersection in the short term with the addition of turn lanes and in the longer term as opportunities arise to ease congestion and promote public safety.
- ❖ Reserve land for future right-of-way dedication as redevelopment occurs along Waukegan and Everett Roads as determined to be necessary by IDOT and the City Engineer, 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 before entering and through the area and the possibility of a traffic signal at Conway and Waukegan Roads.

- ❖ Maximize safe and convenient pedestrian connections to and through the area. (Refer to Pedestrian Connections map.)
- ❖ 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 walk to 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 future, provide the opportunity for a mix of uses as redevelopment occurs in this area to augment, not displace, commercial businesses.

#### *Recommendations*

- 2.1 Designate area to allow for a mix of commercial, office and multi-family residential uses and buildings.
- 2.2 Maintain commercial businesses in first floor spaces to assure that the overall business district is not reduced in size or converted solely to residential or office uses, and to encourage an ever increasing diversity in the number and types of retail, restaurant and service businesses in the area.
- 2.3 As redevelopment occurs, consider outlots to locate some uses close to the streetscape to increase visibility and awareness of the business district.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Consider pervious surfaces and innovative ways to reduce and manage stormwater runoff.
- 2.6 Encourage comprehensive planning, looking beyond property lines – shared parking, pedestrian connections, and consistent landscaping, signage and lighting.
- 2.7 Provide transition/buffer areas for adjacent residential uses. Direct the placement of delivery and trash areas away from neighboring homes.
- 2.8 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 Identify this area as the primary location for parking to meet the 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 – Moderate Density Residential/Commercial**

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 Encourage development of this property in the near term for multi-family residential, small scale commercial or office uses, or a mix of low impact uses.
- 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.

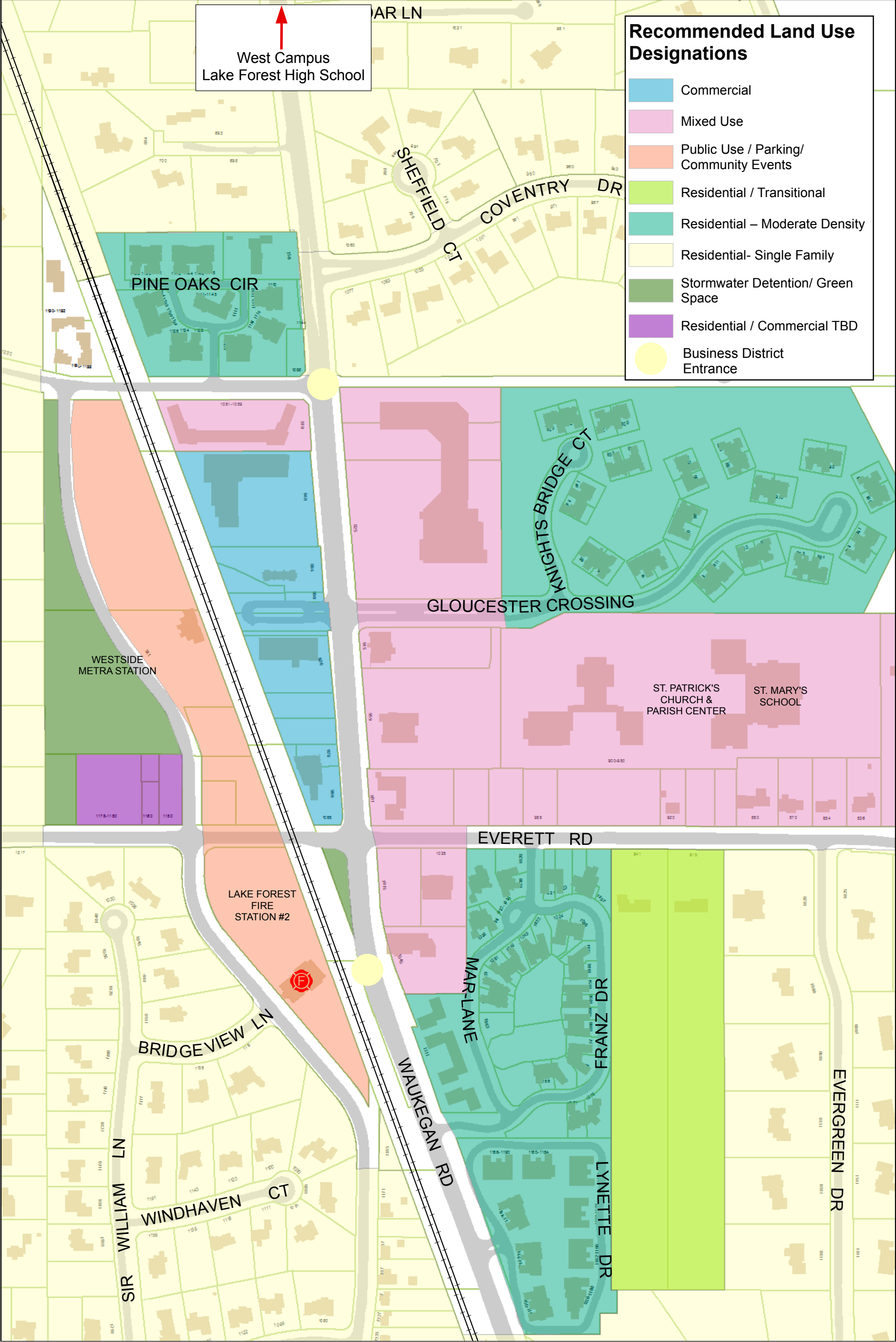
### **Opportunity Area #5 – Residential – Transitional**

This 10-acre vacant parcel is privately owned and to a large part, landlocked. The property is long and narrow with access currently, 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.

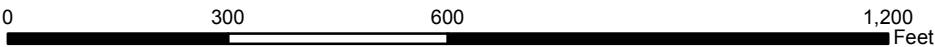
#### *Recommendations*

- 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 to integrate new development on this site with 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.

Overall Study Area- Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District



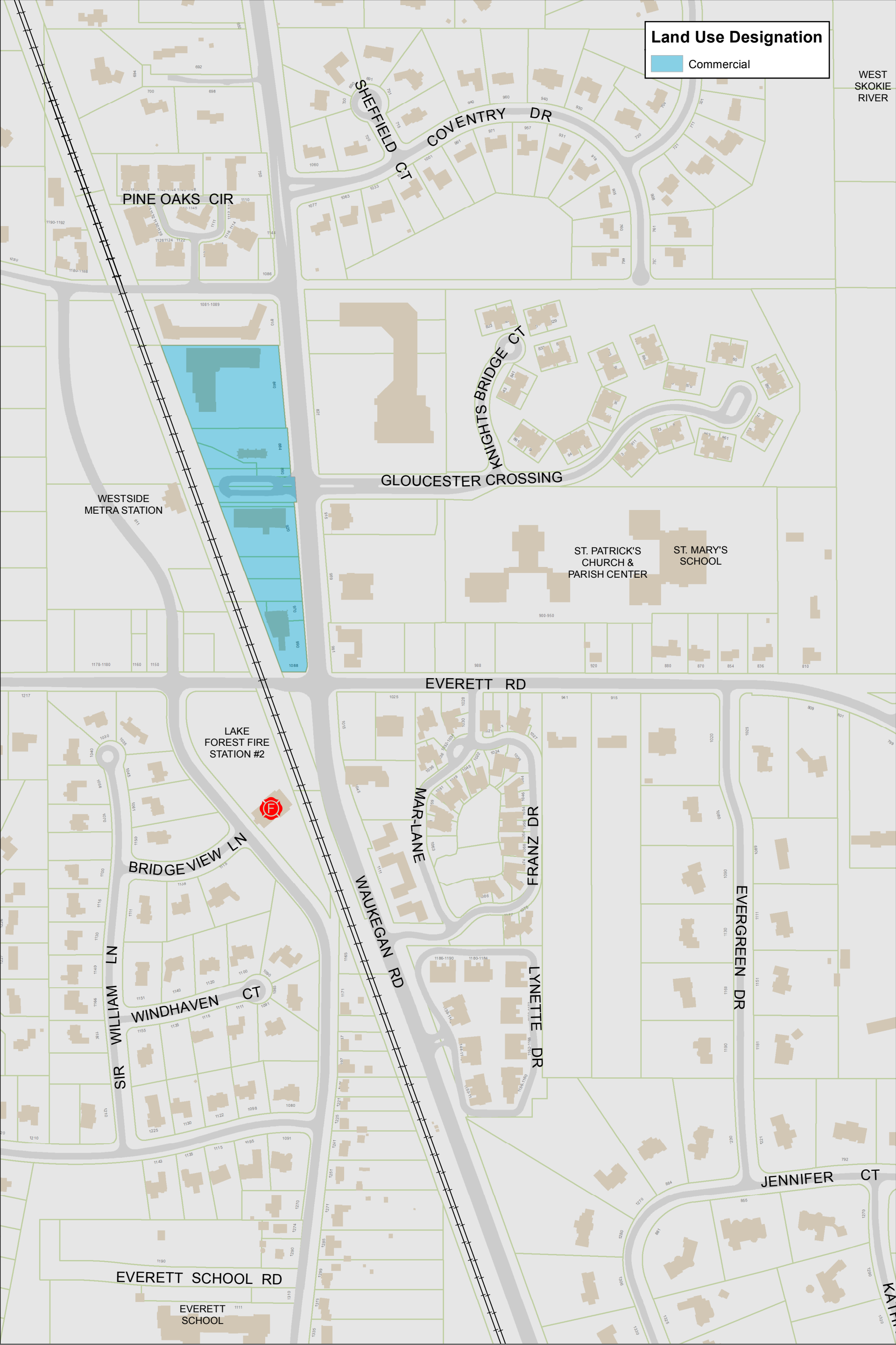
WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT



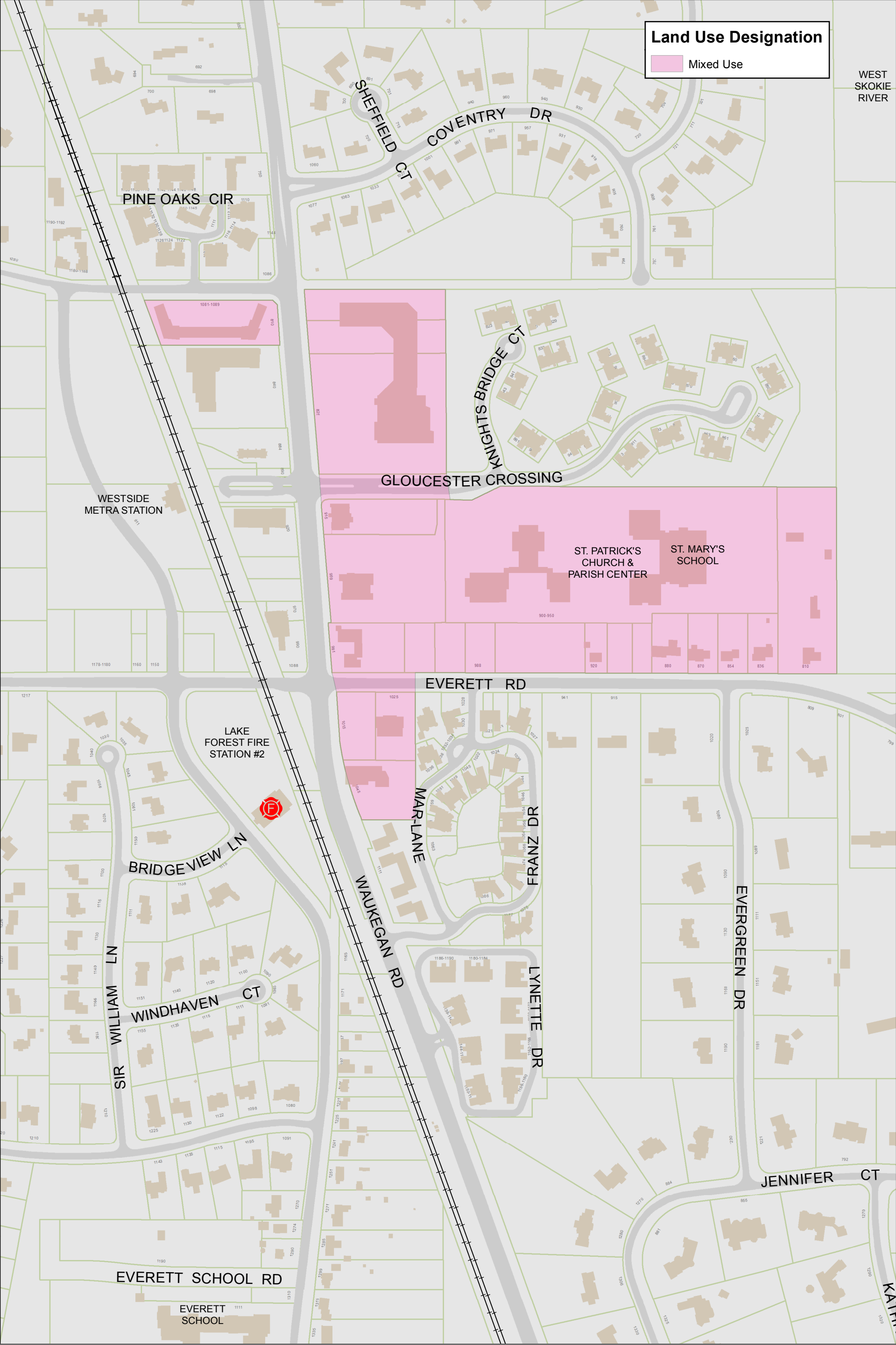
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Commercial- Opportunity Area 1



Mixed Use- Opportunity Area 2

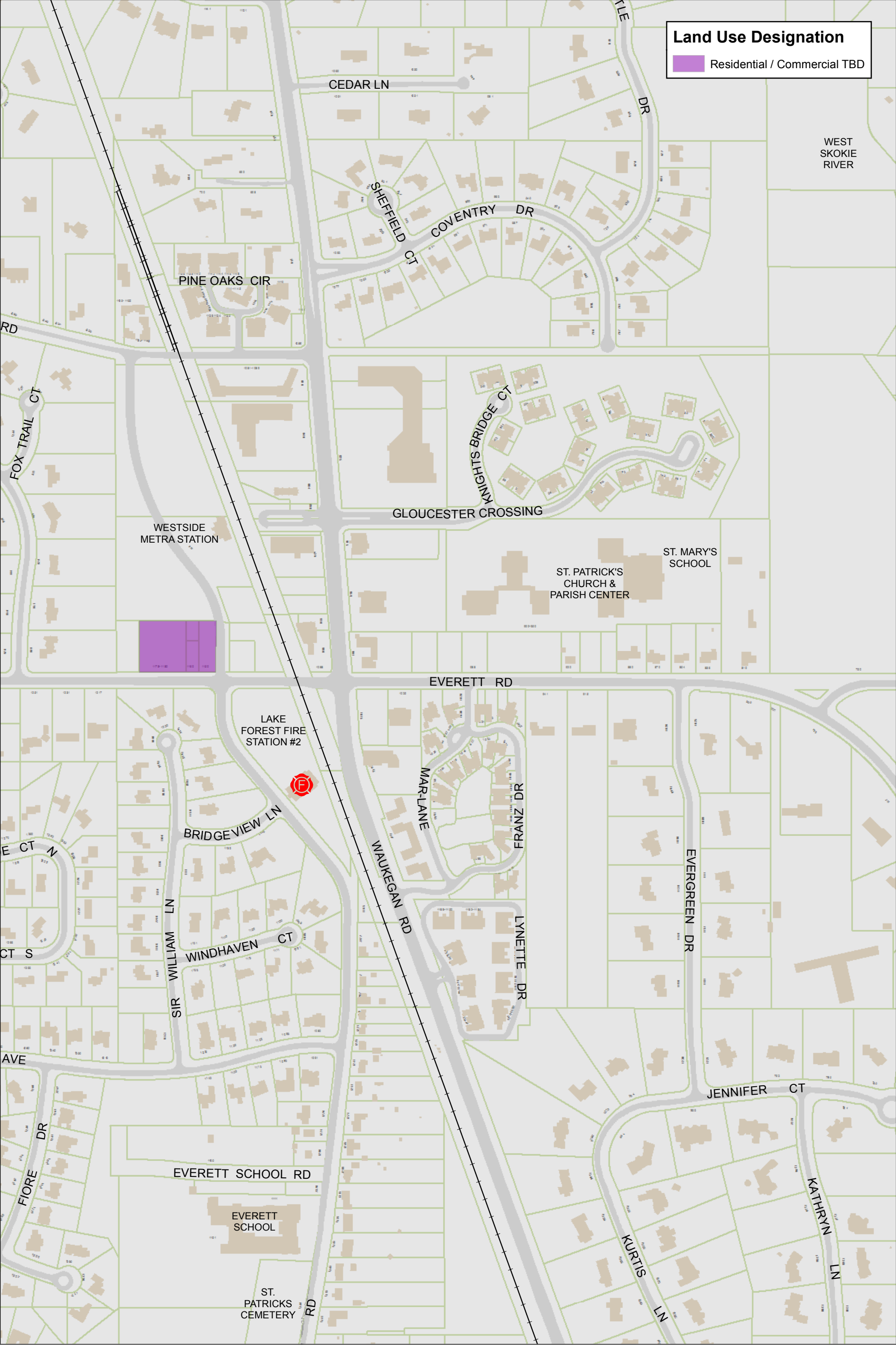


Public Use/ Parking- Opportunity Area 3





Residential / Commercial TBD- Opportunity Area 4

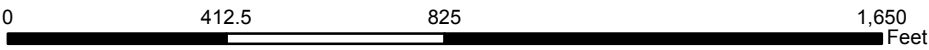


**Land Use Designation**

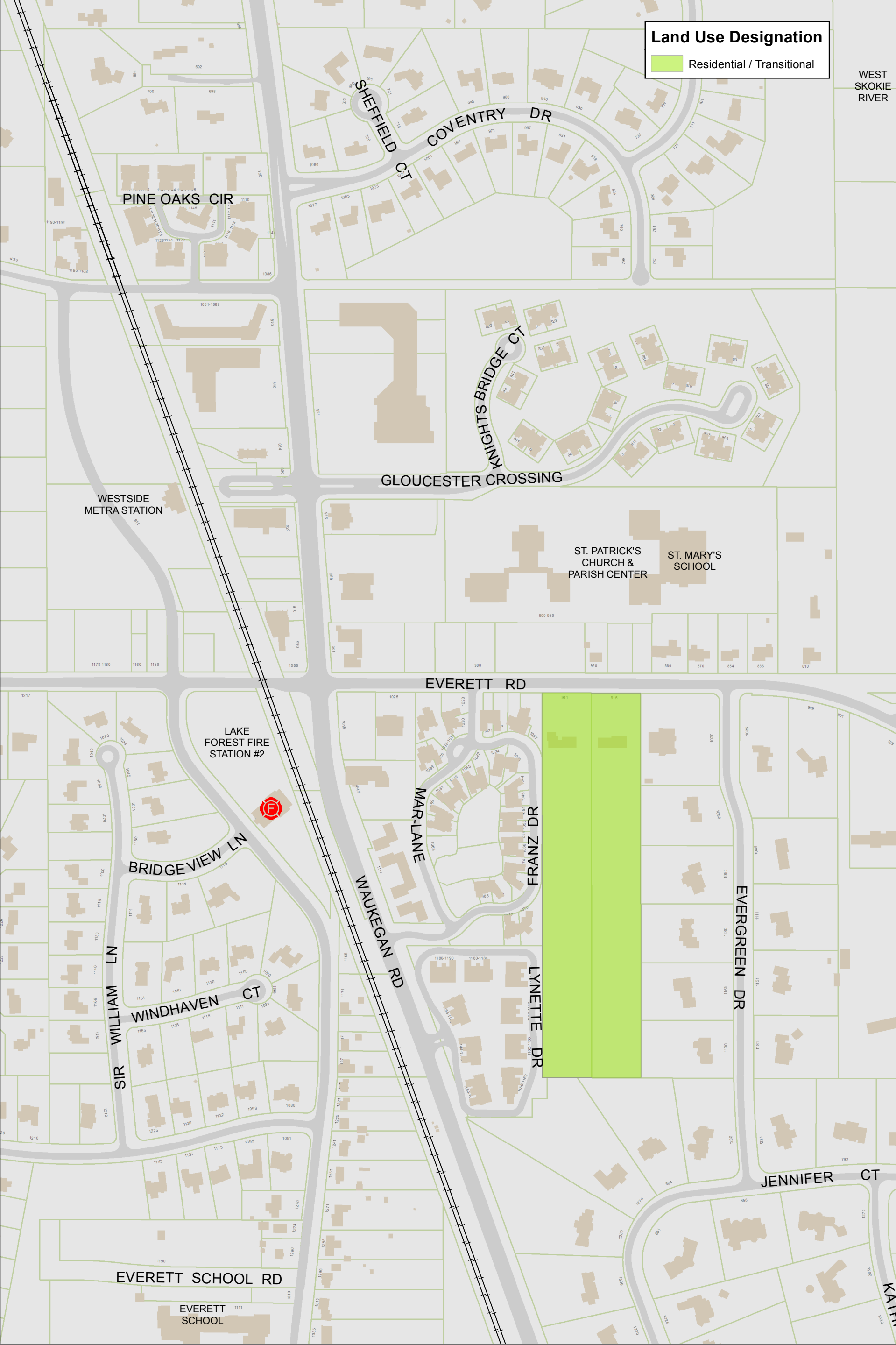
Residential / Commercial TBD



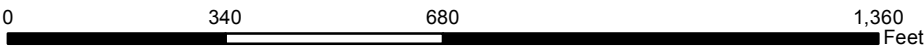
WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT



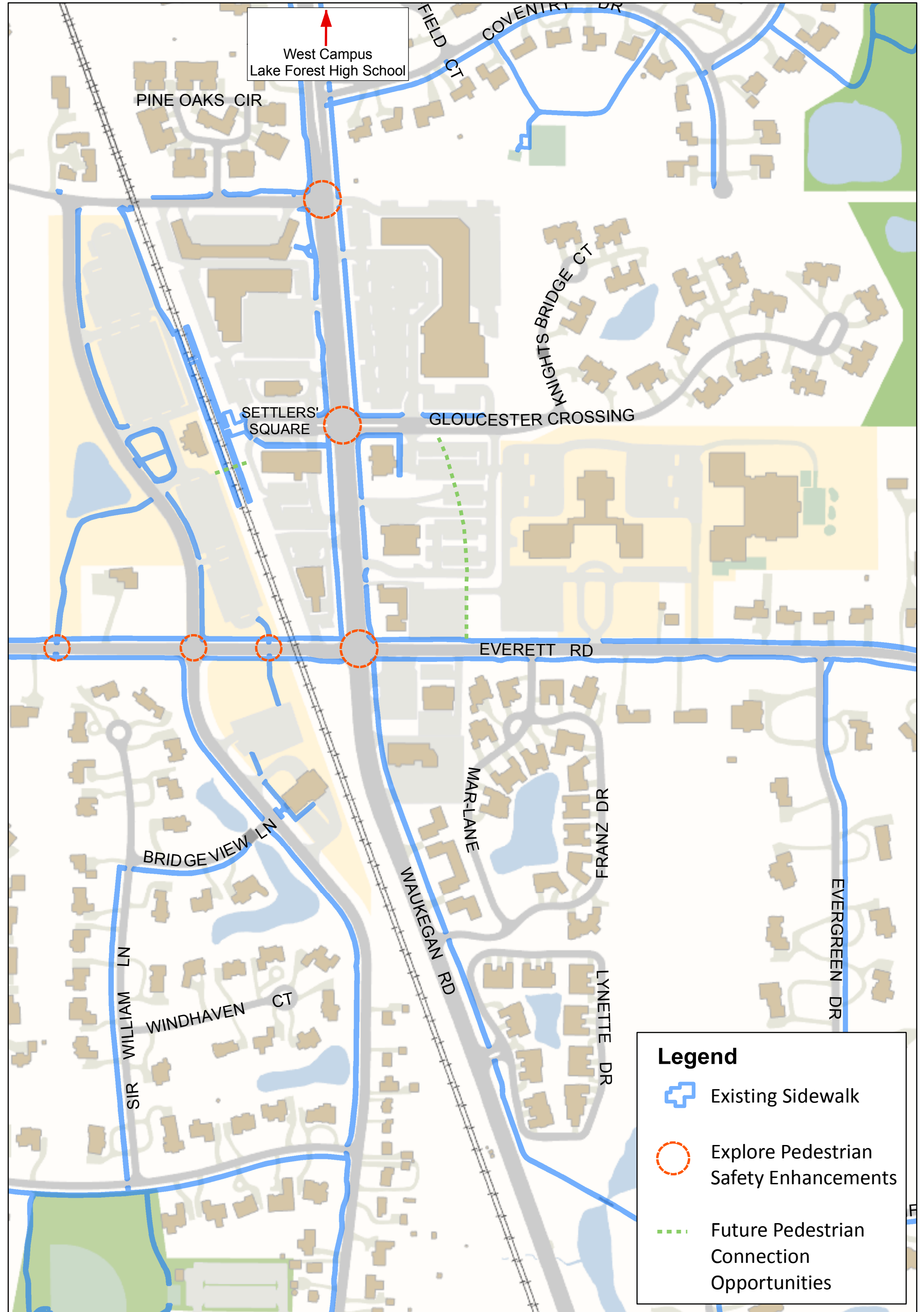
Residential/ Transitional- Opportunity Area 5



WAUKEGAN ROAD/SETTLERS' SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT










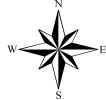
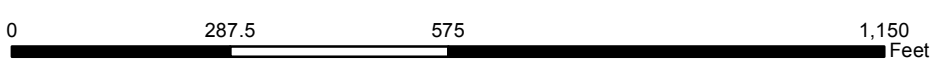
West Campus  
Lake Forest High School

**Legend**

-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Explore Pedestrian Safety Enhancements
-  Future Pedestrian Connection Opportunities



**Pedestrian Connections  
Waukegan Road/ Settlers' Square Business District**



Draft Date: 6/24/2019