

North Chicago Transit-Oriented Development Plan

Prepared for:
City of North Chicago, IL

Sponsored by:
Regional Transportation Authority



FARR ASSOCIATES
Architecture | Planning | Preservation

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Time Frame of the Plan:

This plan outlines a long-term approach to redevelopment in downtown North Chicago for the next 25-50 years. However, changes in the marketplace or property ownership within either the study area or the surrounding areas of influence may require revisiting this plan to update and revise the recommendations.

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Introduction

Site Overview

Study Area

The North Chicago Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan addresses an area of North Chicago, which is bounded on the north by 14th Street; on the south by the Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern (EJ&E) Railway and 2nd Avenue; on the west by Greenfield Avenue; and on the east by Sheridan Road, the Metra/Union Pacific North (UP-N) Line, and Foss Park Avenue.

Sheridan Road, between 14th Street and Broadway Avenue, is the backbone of the study area and North Chicago's historic downtown district. The study area includes the North Chicago Metra Station, which is located on the Metra/UP-N Line, operating between downtown Chicago and Kenosha, Wisconsin. The North Chicago Metra Station has potential to serve as a transit hub due to its proximity to downtown, Abbott Labs, and Great Lakes Training Center, and its service by Metra, Pace bus, and various shuttle services. The study area was also identified as a potential station location for a future phase of the development of the STAR Line along the EJ&E Railway.

Note that a second Metra station serves the Great Lakes Naval Training Center; the recently rebuilt Great Lakes Metra Station, which is also served by the Metra/UP-North Line, is located within walking distance from the Naval graduation drill hall.

Transit-Oriented Development: An Overview

Transit-Oriented Development is a planning concept that focuses on establishing or strengthening traditional "Main Street"-style development, which historically developed around public transit stations. A successful TOD incorporates a pedestrian-friendly environment and includes a vertical mix of commercial, residential, and civic uses that are built with higher densities adjacent to transit stations. This dense development around transit stations also must welcome users of all modes of transportation, including transit, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians, while providing walkable shopping opportunities for residents and commuters.

Purpose of the TOD Plan

The existing TOD area along Sheridan Road has elements of the traditional development pattern typical around transit stations. The TOD Plan is intended to enhance existing development and guide redevelopment efforts, particularly addressing underutilized and vacant sites. Better connections will be established between downtown North Chicago and public transit services including Metra and Pace. A key focus of this study is establishing better access to and through the site, accommodating pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists, as well as vehicles.

Further, economically feasible recommendations, an implementation strategy, and potential funding sources are included in subsequent sections of this report.

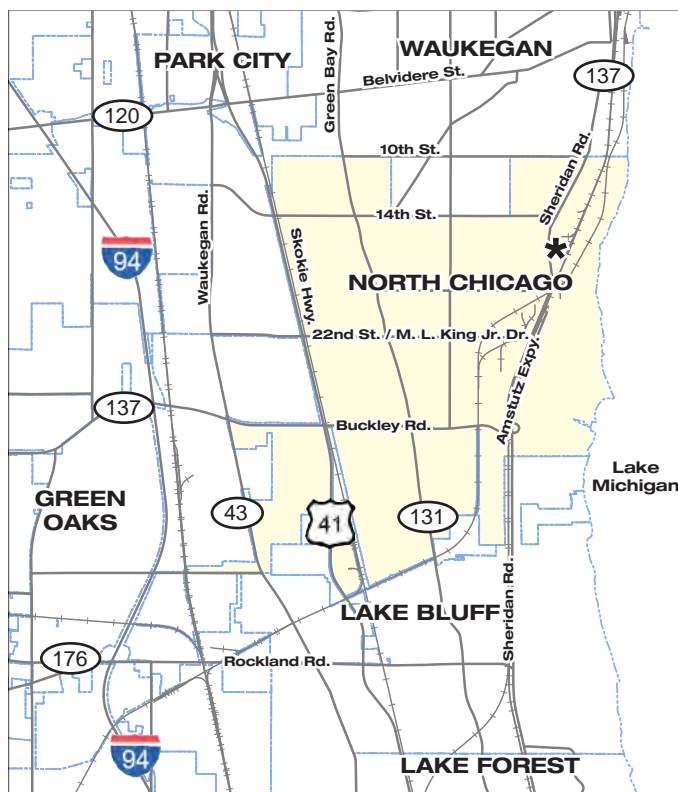
Concurrent Planning Efforts and Projects

Several other planning efforts and studies have been completed in recent years:

- City of North Chicago Downtown Transportation Study
- Suburban Transit Access Route Line (STAR Line) Land Use and Community Planning Study (Please see the detailed description on page 14)
- Sheridan Road Tax Increment Fund District
- North Chicago/Waukegan Enterprise Zone

The following applications and projects are pending or in progress:

- Application to the Illinois Main Street Program
- CMAQ-funded plan for street realignment and kiss-and-ride
- Current redevelopment efforts in downtown North Chicago, including Grant Place and other efforts of Five Points Redevelopment



Vicinity Map

* Study Area Location

Introduction

Study Area



Existing Conditions Analysis

An analysis of the existing physical and market conditions of a study area and the surrounding community is needed before initiating physical planning recommendations. This section examines current zoning, land use, access and circulation, parking, pedestrian comfort, land ownership, anticipated redevelopment areas, and planning opportunities. The results of this analysis are used to guide design schemes presented in the subsequent sections of this report.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Zoning

Current Zoning Designations for the TOD

Immediately adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station, there is a mix of zoning designations, primarily General Business (B2), Office and Research (OR), and Intensive Industrial (M3). In the station area, the B2 zoning applies only to the station itself and the associated parking lot. The designations OR and M3 are particularly inappropriate for the dense development required to support a TOD. Further, much of the land zoned OR and M3 on adjacent parcels is vacant or underutilized; compare the Zoning Map on the facing page with the Land Use Map on the following page.

The R3 Single-Family Residence District, which allows single-family homes as well as townhouses and duplexes, is appropriate for lower-density housing in the neighborhood west of Sheridan. However, higher-density zoning for residential uses is missing from Sheridan Road and/or the adjacent areas.

The Urban Redevelopment Overlay

The Sheridan Road corridor is designated with the Urban Redevelopment Overlay. This designation is the most appropriate for the TOD, since it is intended to provide design flexibility for redevelopment of historic areas.

However, the overlay effectively serves the purpose of a separate zoning classification, since it waives all minimum lot size and yard requirements for properties along the corridor. (Any lots with this designation that are located on streets other than Sheridan Road and Tenth Street may only waive the lot size requirement.) A separate zoning classification for traditional main-street-style development would be more appropriate than an overlay on top of extremely varied districts. Such a district would ideally designate *maximum* rather than minimum yards, to preserve and extend the build-to line created by the traditional mixed-use buildings along Sheridan Road.

Potential Extension of Urban Redevelopment Overlay

The Urban Redevelopment Overlay should also be extended east from Sheridan Road onto Foss Park Avenue, since the building type encouraged is ideal for development adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station. No stand-alone zoning classification is appropriate for a TOD.

The Underlying Zoning Districts: B1 vs. B2

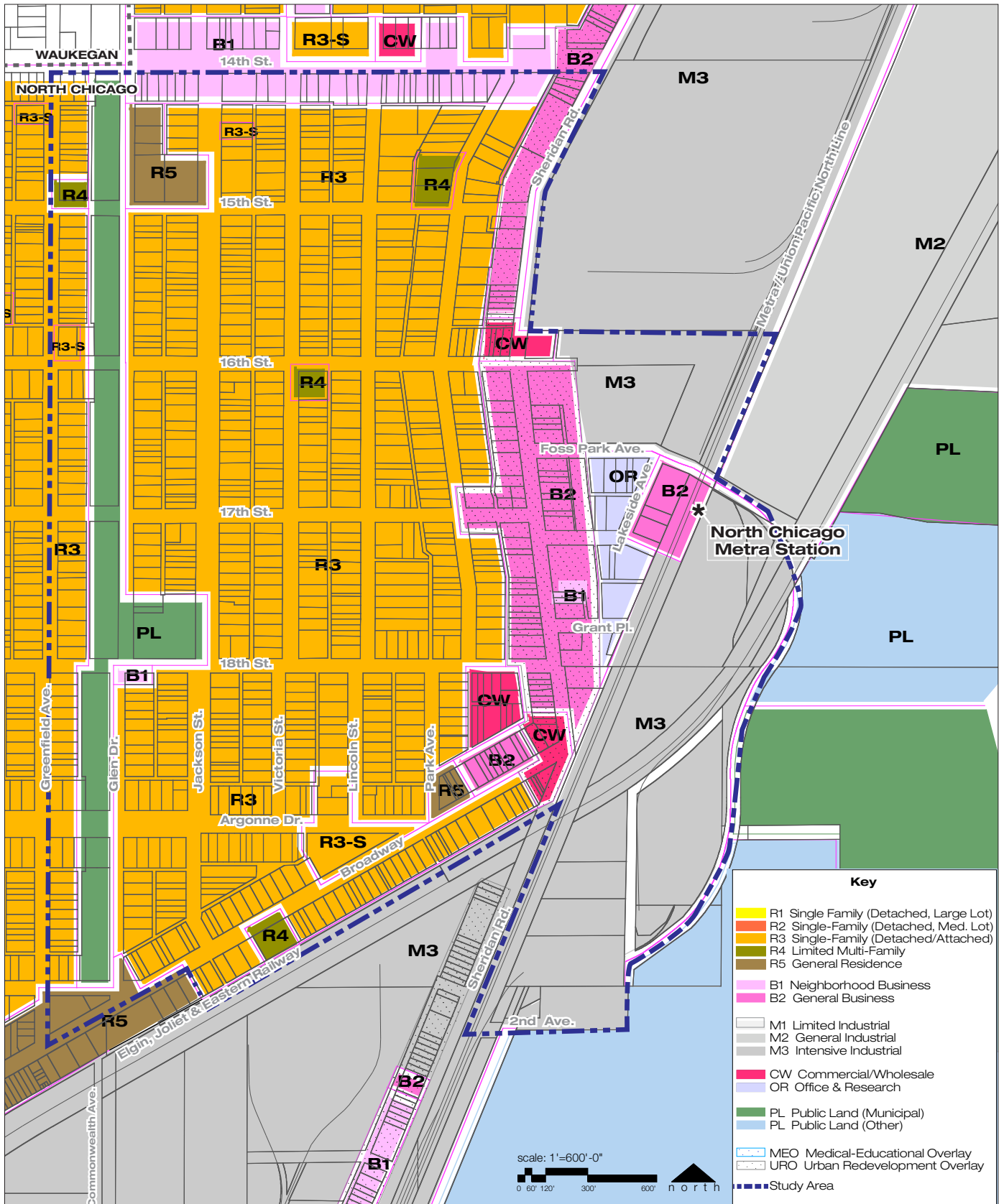
The B1 Neighborhood Business District and the B2 General District are currently designated in different locations along Sheridan Road and 14th Street. B1 is intended to provide for smaller retail shops and services, similar in form and use to the traditional “corner store,” whereas B2 is slightly more intense and requires direct access to collector streets. The most significant difference between the two is the lot size: for B1, the minimum lot width is 25 feet and the minimum area is 3,000 square feet; and for B2, the minimum lot width is 60 feet and the minimum area is 10,000.

These dimensions indicate that the B1 classification may be more applicable for Sheridan Road in the study area, since most of the lots are well under 60 feet wide (and many are only 25 feet wide). However, the maximum lot coverage and FAR in the B2 district (75% coverage and 2.2 FAR) are more applicable for Sheridan Road than B1 (65% coverage and 1.2 FAR).

The B2 classification particularly does not match the form of the existing development. Again, a separate zoning district allowing 25-foot-wide lots and specifying maximum yards or a “build-to zone” would be more appropriate for the TOD as well as for Sheridan Road, to better ensure the shallow setbacks characteristic of traditional mixed-use buildings.

Also, note that there is no separate zoning classification for large-scale business uses tailored to development such as a grocery store. Any future revisions to the zoning code should consider separate classifications for neighborhood business, the downtown shopping area, and community shopping districts to accommodate larger-scale businesses with a more regional draw.

Existing Conditions Analysis Zoning Map



Existing Conditions Analysis

Land Uses

Land Uses adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station

There is a concentration of industrial uses and vacant or underutilized parcels immediately adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station. The commercial and mixed-use structures along Sheridan Road, the historic downtown of North Chicago, create a more appropriate setting for a transit-oriented development.

Downtown North Chicago

Sheridan Road serves as the spine of downtown North Chicago, with a traditional mixed-use district concentrated on the west side of the street between 17th Street and Broadway. For many of these buildings, it is unclear whether there is an active use on the upper floors. Amidst the several vacant buildings and lots, there are signs of reinvestment in the existing structures.

Interestingly, the building types on the east side of Sheridan Road tend to be single-story or single-use buildings. Several of the associated uses include curb cuts to accommodate garage entries at the fronts of the buildings, even though there is alley access from the rear of the parcel.

Other notable land uses on the east side of Sheridan Road include the newly-constructed Grant Place development and the four-story apartment building housing seniors and persons with disabilities.

The neighborhood west of Sheridan Road consists mainly of single-family housing, with some multi-family dwellings at the south end of the neighborhood between 16th Street and Argonne Drive. There are several vacant buildings and lots interspersed on almost every block. Building conditions vary, ranging from well to poorly maintained.

Open Space and Access to the Lake

Beyond the industrial uses to the east of the North Chicago Metra Station are significant recreational assets as well as inappropriate uses for their location. Foss Park and Lake Michigan are within a half-mile of the station, but access to these amenities is limited. One road into the park permits access to the lake, but the FBI firing range and sewage treatment plant block access to the north. Great Lakes Naval Training Center, to which access is restricted, is just south of the park and abuts the lake, eliminating any future open space connections to the south. However, the inappropriate uses to the north may be a future opportunity for increasing public access to the lake front.

Parking Lots

There is a 61-space commuter lot located immediately west of the North Chicago Metra Station.



Many of the buildings along Sheridan Road are currently being renovated. This photo shows two building facades during an early stage of renovation.

There are many parking lots along Sheridan Road north of Foss Park Avenue that detract from the character of the corridor. Most of the parking is associated with Abbott Labs, but there are several parking lots designated for commercial use.

Sheridan Road: an Edge or a “Zipper”?

Sheridan Road serves as an edge, so that the two sides of the street and the land beyond have very different character and use. Successful corridors serve as a “zipper” that joins both of its sides together rather than acting as an edge or a division between the two sides, and efforts will need to be made to transition and connect the two sides of the street.

Comparison of Zoning and Land Use

Zoning designations match existing land uses fairly well in the study area. However, there are conflicts about whether the designated zoning classifications and land uses are appropriate for areas adjacent to a commuter rail station.

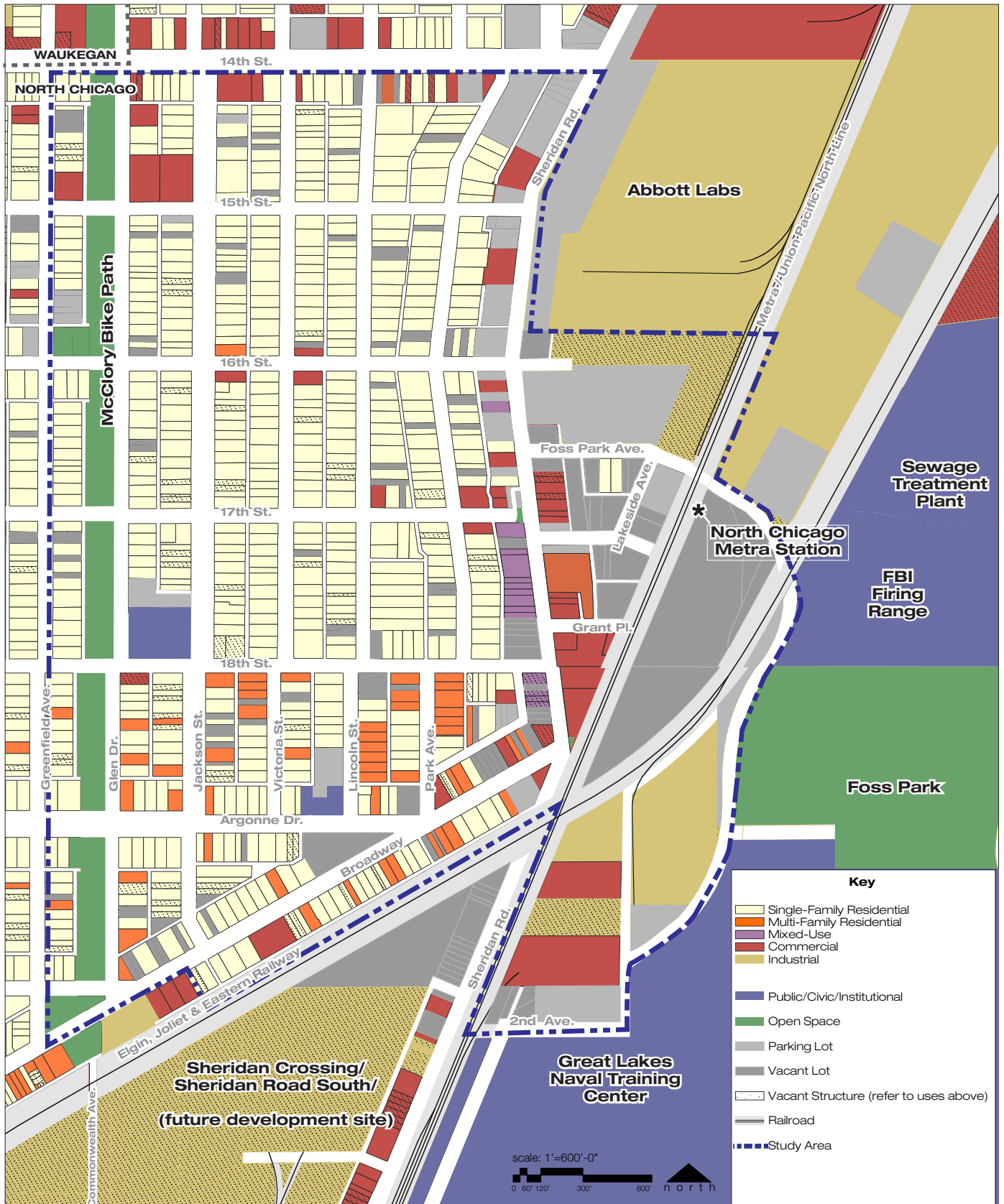
Again, transit-oriented developments thrive when they include a vertical mix of uses, including convenience retail, office, and residential uses. Although industrial uses may be accommodated, particularly because their employees are potential shoppers and residents, the significant concentration of industrial uses surrounding the site weakens the TOD.

Further the highest and best use of the land adjacent to the lake has not been realized; the industrial, public, and institutional uses should be considered for a long-term redevelopment strategy.

Priority areas for redevelopment due to inappropriate or incompatible land uses, inconsistent density, pockets of vacant lots or buildings, or deteriorated conditions are addressed in the Redevelopment Areas section of this chapter.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Land Uses



Existing Conditions Analysis

Access and Circulation

Key Access Roads

As previously mentioned, Sheridan Road is the backbone of the study area. It is an arterial and collector road with State jurisdiction. North of 14th Street, it has four lanes, although it narrows to two lanes south of 14th Street. Access to the study area via Sheridan Road is good, although congestion during peak hours is common, and illegal use of the underutilized parking lanes to facilitate passing has been observed.

Foss Park Road, a two-lane local roadway, directly accesses the North Chicago Metra Station. It carries a significant amount of industrial traffic, and it also serves as a connector to Foss Park.

Fourteenth Street, known as Pulaski Drive west of Green Bay Road, is also an important connection to the study area, although it does not extend west of Waukegan Road. It is a two-lane, collector roadway.

The attractive landscaped medians along Argonne Drive make this route a memorable and pleasant entry to the study area. However, Argonne Drive is not a key access road due to its fairly short run and since it does not connect with Sheridan Road; it begins at Broadway and terminates just west of Green Bay Road.

Vehicular Circulation in the Study Area

Traffic flows in the study area are affected by several notable features of the site.

Railroad Crossings

There are four road-rail crossings in the study area due to the presence of the EJ&E Railway and Metra/UP-North Line. Three of the crossings are grade-separated, including the UP-N and EJ&E crossings at Foss Park Avenue and the UP-N crossing at Sheridan Road. The only at-grade crossing is at Sheridan Road and Second Avenue, near the northern gate to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Additionally, the rail-rail crossing of the EJ&E Railway and Metra/UP-N Line is grade separated.



Foss Park Avenue runs beneath the Metra/UP-North Line.



Access to Sheridan Road is restricted at 17th Avenue.

One-Way Traffic

In the neighborhood west of the site, several north/south streets allow only one-way traffic. Ideally, the traffic flow would be improved through these streets by accommodating two-way traffic; however, despite this constraint, traffic circulation is not overwhelmingly affected since the east/west streets allow two-way traffic and the alley system improves circulation.

The only exception to the east/west streets is 17th Street, which has a one-way configuration for the block west of Sheridan Road, as further described below.

Confusing Roadway Alignments

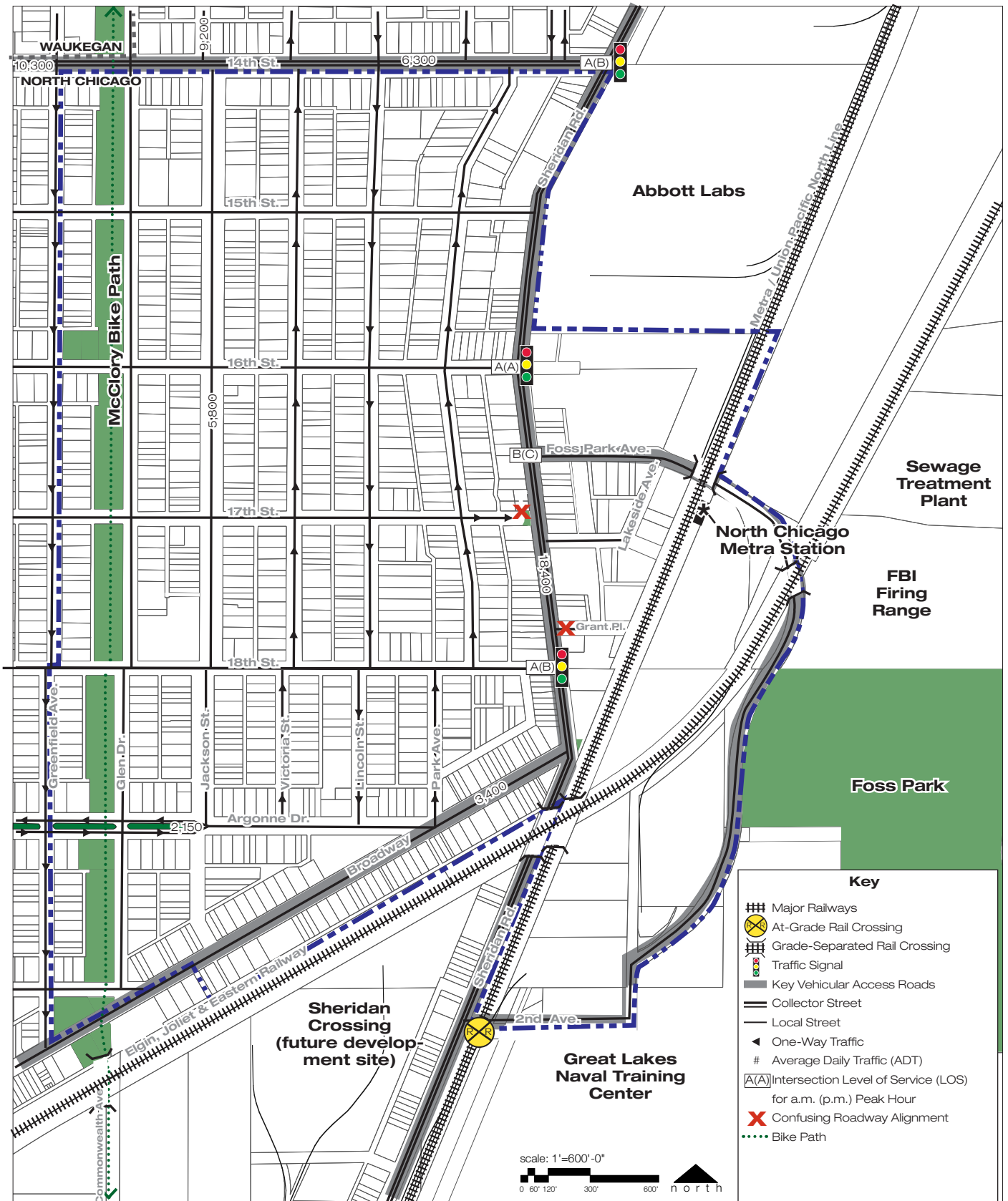
There are confusing roadway alignments along Sheridan Road, at 17th Street and at Grant Place. At 17th Street, access to Sheridan Road is restricted; 17th Street is cut off from westbound traffic off Sheridan Road, and eastbound traffic is routed through a parking lot.

Grant Place is not aligned with the numbered streets, but it is fairly close in alignment to 18th Street. There are plans to reconfigure the intersection of 18th Street and Sheridan Road, to connect 18th Street to Grant Place; extension of Lakeside Avenue south to Grant Place is also a component of this plan, which is being facilitated through CMAQ funds.

Traffic Lights and Vehicular Flow

There are traffic lights along Sheridan Road at 14th Street, 16th Street, and 18th Street, but none coincide with an access point to the east.

Existing Conditions Analysis Roadway Map



Existing Conditions Analysis

Access and Circulation

Metra Commuter Rail Service

Metra's Union Pacific North Line serves the North Chicago Metra Station with 25 inbound and 24 outbound trains on weekdays. Like all other Metra commuter rail lines, the UP-North Line is oriented toward downtown Chicago and functions primarily to move suburban workers to and from job locations in downtown Chicago, Monday through Friday. The Union Pacific North Line serves the station with 11 inbound and outbound trains on Saturdays and eight inbound and outbound trains on Sundays.

Historically, ridership has not changed much. Ridership was at its highest in 1997 with a total of 220 weekday boardings, which is about 10% higher than recent levels. In 2006, there were a total of 191 weekday boardings, of which 83 were AM boardings. The North Chicago Metra Station has a significant percentage of reverse commuters that alight outbound trains in the AM peak and board inbound trains in the PM peak (about 30% of the total weekday boardings). The large number of reverse commuters is due to the proximity of Abbott Labs to the station and the shuttle service offered between the station and Abbott Park. According to Metra's Fall 1999 boarding/alighting counts, there were a total of 91 Saturday boardings and 90 Sunday boardings.

According to Metra's Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey, two-thirds of all passengers boarding at the North Chicago Metra Station in the morning are from North Chicago. The next highest origin is Waukegan, with 20 percent of those boarding at the North Chicago station. The remaining 13% come from five other communities.

Metra's 2002 Origin-Destination Survey indicated that passengers boarding trains in the morning at the North Chicago Metra Station access the station using a variety of modes. Approximately 32% drive alone, 26% walk, 26% are dropped off, 9% carpool, 5% take taxis, and 3% ride Pace.

Transit Connections

There are two connections with Pace bus routes to the North Chicago Metra Station. Bus route #563 follows Sheridan Road to Foss Park Avenue/Second Avenue, providing access to the station. Bus route #564 provides service to Sheridan Road between 16th and 18th Streets only.

Two bus shelters are provided along the corridor, at 14th and 17th Streets. Both accommodate passengers traveling northbound. There is no bus shelter at the North Chicago Metra Station, but the station does include other transit accommodations, such as a shuttle stop to Abbott Labs and taxi stands.

Pedestrian Connections

The lack of a traffic signal at Foss Park Avenue makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Sheridan Road

and access the North Chicago Metra Station. See the PedZone and Walkshed analyses on the following pages for additional information on pedestrian accommodations.

Bicycle Connections

The McClory Bike Path provides good bicycle access to the study area itself; however, it is not connected to Sheridan Road. There are no bicycle accommodations along Sheridan Road, such as bike lanes or bike racks.



The McClory Bike Path runs through the study area.

Access to the North Chicago Metra Station

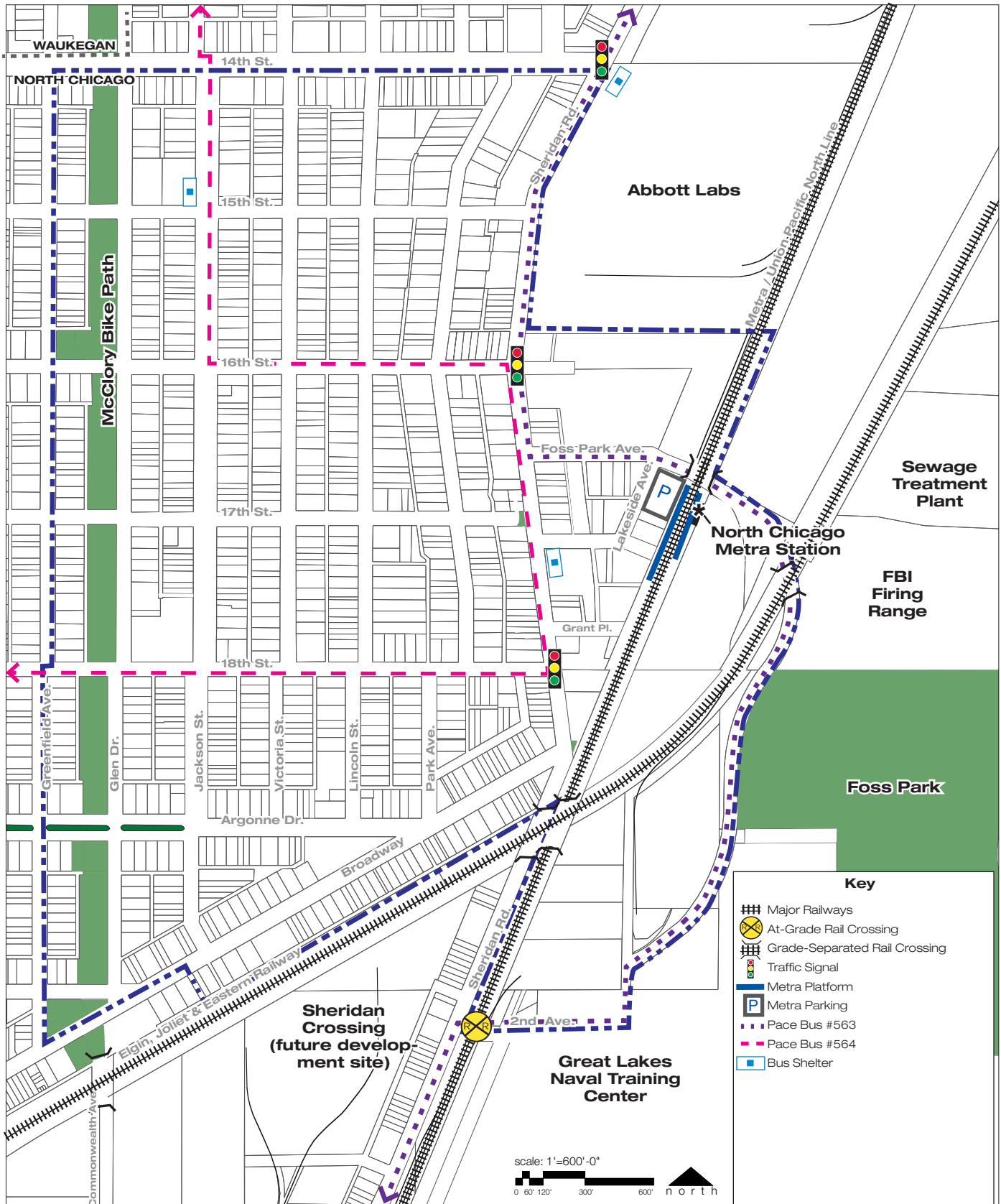
The North Chicago Metra Station is poorly linked to downtown North Chicago. The station is not visible from Sheridan Road, and its location is indicated by one small sign for traffic from each direction. Turns from northbound traffic may be difficult at peak hours, since a traffic signal is absent at the intersection of Sheridan Road and Foss Park Avenue.

Proposed Future STAR Line Rail Service

Metra is currently working on the proposed STAR Line - Phase I project through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) New Starts process in order to receive federal funding to design and construct the project. The proposed STAR Line - Phase I project would operate along the EJ&E Railway between Joliet and Hoffman Estates before traveling along the Northwest Tollway to Rosemont. Once the STAR Line - Phase I project has progressed through the New Starts process, there are several potential future phases of the STAR Line that could be studied as part of a new round of New Starts projects, including an extension along the EJ&E Railway from Hoffman Estates to Waukegan, with a potential station in North Chicago. It is important to note that the New Starts program is highly competitive with demand for funds greatly exceeding the available supply. Under the FTA process, numerous transportation alternatives would be evaluated for any of the potential future phases of the STAR Line, including different alignments and modal technologies. It is anticipated that, if the future phase of the STAR Line was constructed as commuter rail, the station would be collocated with the existing North Chicago Metra Station.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Transit Service



Existing Conditions Analysis

Pedestrian Conditions

The North Chicago Metra Station's Pedestrian Area, or Walkshed

The pedestrian area within walking distance of a transit station is distorted by significant pedestrian barriers, particularly train tracks and any areas where a street grid might be interrupted. These obstacles increase the distance from the station that pedestrians must walk, thus reducing the size of the station area that can be considered pedestrian-accessible.

The Walkshed for the North Chicago Metra Station, illustrated on the facing page, indicates a comfortable eight-minute walk (approximately four-tenths of a mile) from the station platform. It indicates that the Sheridan Road corridor and its side streets are fairly pedestrian-accessible; however, the site to the east of the North Chicago Metra Station is cut off by the rail viaduct and severely limited by the lack of through-streets aside from Foss Park Avenue.

PedShedSM Analysis

The PedZoneSM Analysis uses a three-color coding system to survey and map the comfort and walkability of a pedestrian network. Safe and rewarding routes are coded green; safe but uninteresting or unrewarding routes are coded yellow; and unsafe areas where pedestrians and cars can potentially come into conflict, including crosswalks, are coded red. Finally, missing sidewalks and intersections lacking crosswalks are coded black. As an analytical tool, the PedZoneSM offers a clear indication of the walkability of the pedestrian network and will be useful to inform recommendations on the change of land form as well as land use.



Sidewalks are in poor condition in several locations in the study area; however, this site is slated for redevelopment associated with street realignment.

Pedestrian conditions are fairly good in the 1700 and 1800 blocks of Sheridan Road as well as on most side streets and residential streets. North of 17th Street, pedestrian comfort deteriorates due to the parking lots that are adjacent to the sidewalk, as well as curb cuts accommodating driveways that interrupt the pedestrian path. Further, there are no crosswalks designated between 16th Street and 18th Street, causing frequent mid-block pedestrian crossings.

Foss Park and Lakeside Avenues both have extremely poor pedestrian conditions due to multiple curb cuts, close proximity to parking lots, and missing sidewalks. Also, the Abbott site does not incorporate pedestrian paths from the public way or parking areas to its buildings.

Sidewalk Conditions

Overall, public sidewalks and crosswalks are in fair to good condition. Along Sheridan Road and on side streets, parkway trees enhance the walkway. In the downtown area, between Foss Park Avenue and Broadway, terra cotta-colored pavement panels are interspersed with concrete pavement; although somewhat dated and uncoordinated with any theme, the terra cotta-colored panels are in good condition, as are the concrete sidewalks. There are also very recently laid sidewalks adjacent to the Grant Place development.

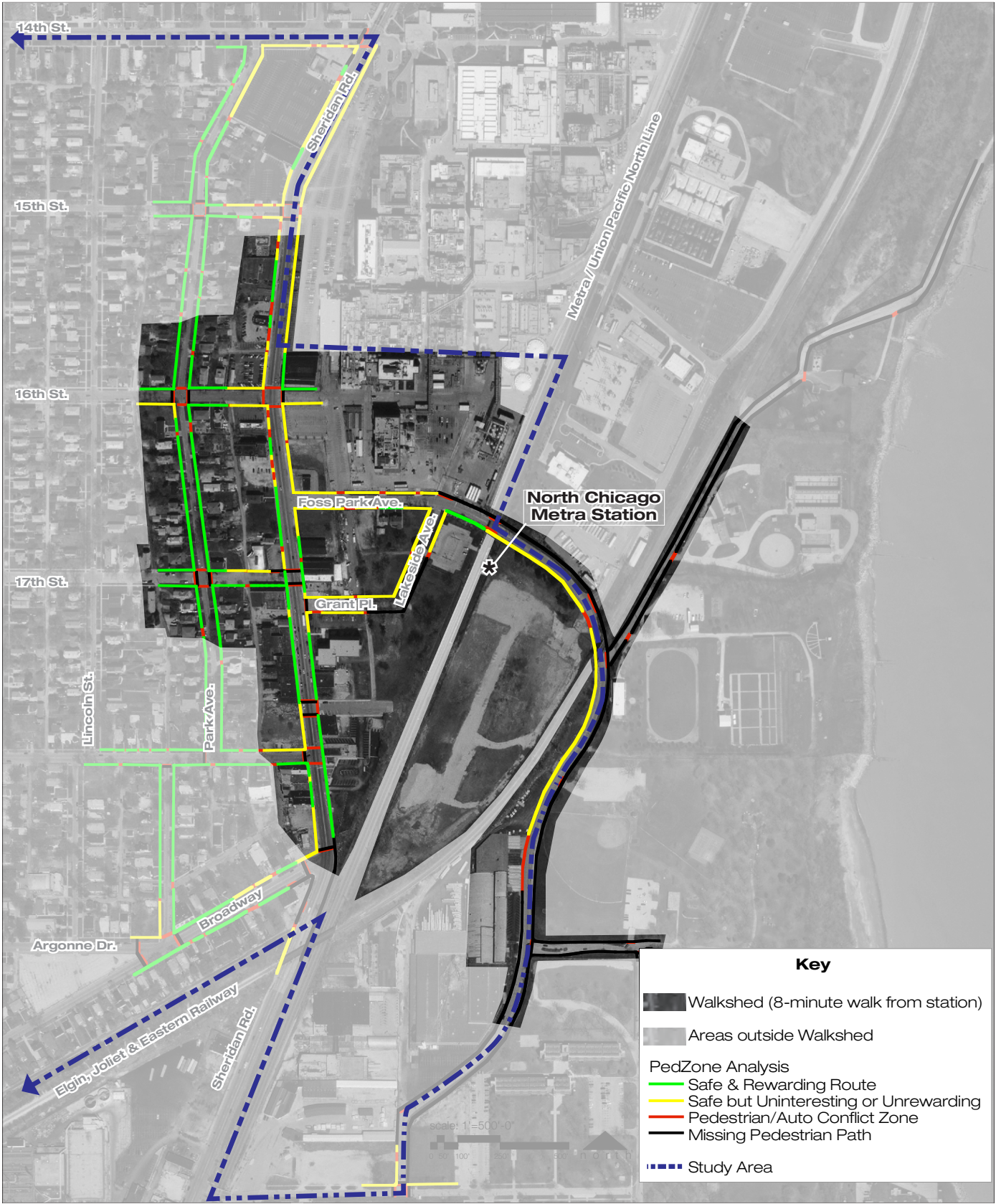
In several instances, sidewalks are significantly deteriorated. Notable areas in the downtown area with cracked, crumbling, or broken concrete are at the southwest corner of 16th Street and Sheridan Road at the driveways; the north side of Foss Park Avenue, just east of Sheridan Road; and the north side of 18th Street, west of Sheridan Road, at the vacant lot.



Pedestrians crossing Sheridan Road at 17th Street do not have the benefit of crosswalks and traffic signals.

Existing Conditions Analysis

PedZoneSM Analysis



Existing Conditions Analysis

Downtown Parking Availability

Commuter Parking

The commuter parking lot located at the corner of Foss Park Avenue and Lakeside Avenue, west of the Union Pacific North Line tracks, has a total of 61 parking spaces. There are 46 daily commuter spaces, 10 permit spaces, two handicapped spaces, one employee space, and two parking spaces for taxis. According to Metra's latest parking counts, the lot is 57% occupied.

The parking lot lacks a kiss-and-ride drop-off area, causing drop-offs and pick-ups to occur within or adjacent to the parking lot. However, the CMAQ project discussed on page 12 incorporates a kiss-and-ride area.

Private Parking Lots

Private parking lots are prominent along Sheridan Road, particularly north of 17th Street. Many parking lots are located along the right-of-way, in front of buildings, particularly on the east side of the street, where the lots are deeper than on the west side.

For the shallower lots on the west side of Sheridan Road, parking access is typically from Sheridan, via curb cuts, rather than through the alleys. For these lots, parking facilities tend to be on the sides of buildings rather than in front, although the configuration of 17th Street is an exception.

On-Street Parking Availability

Although permitted on several blocks in downtown North Chicago, on-street parking is generally limited along Sheridan Road, Foss Park Avenue, and side streets adjacent to the study area. On-street parking is concentrated in the 1700 block of Sheridan Road, on both sides of the street except for at the bus stop.

North of 17th Street, parking availability typically hinges on whether a curb cut is present. In these cases, the right-of-way and pavement width are wide enough to accommodate on-street parking, but driveway entrances limit the availability of on-street parking.

South of 18th Street, even though there are no curb cuts to restrict on-street parking, there is no on-street parking permitted. Further, no street parking is permitted on Lakeside Avenue or on Foss Park Avenue in the station area and east of the station.

Bicycle Parking

There are no bicycle parking options at the North Chicago Metra Station or along Sheridan Road.



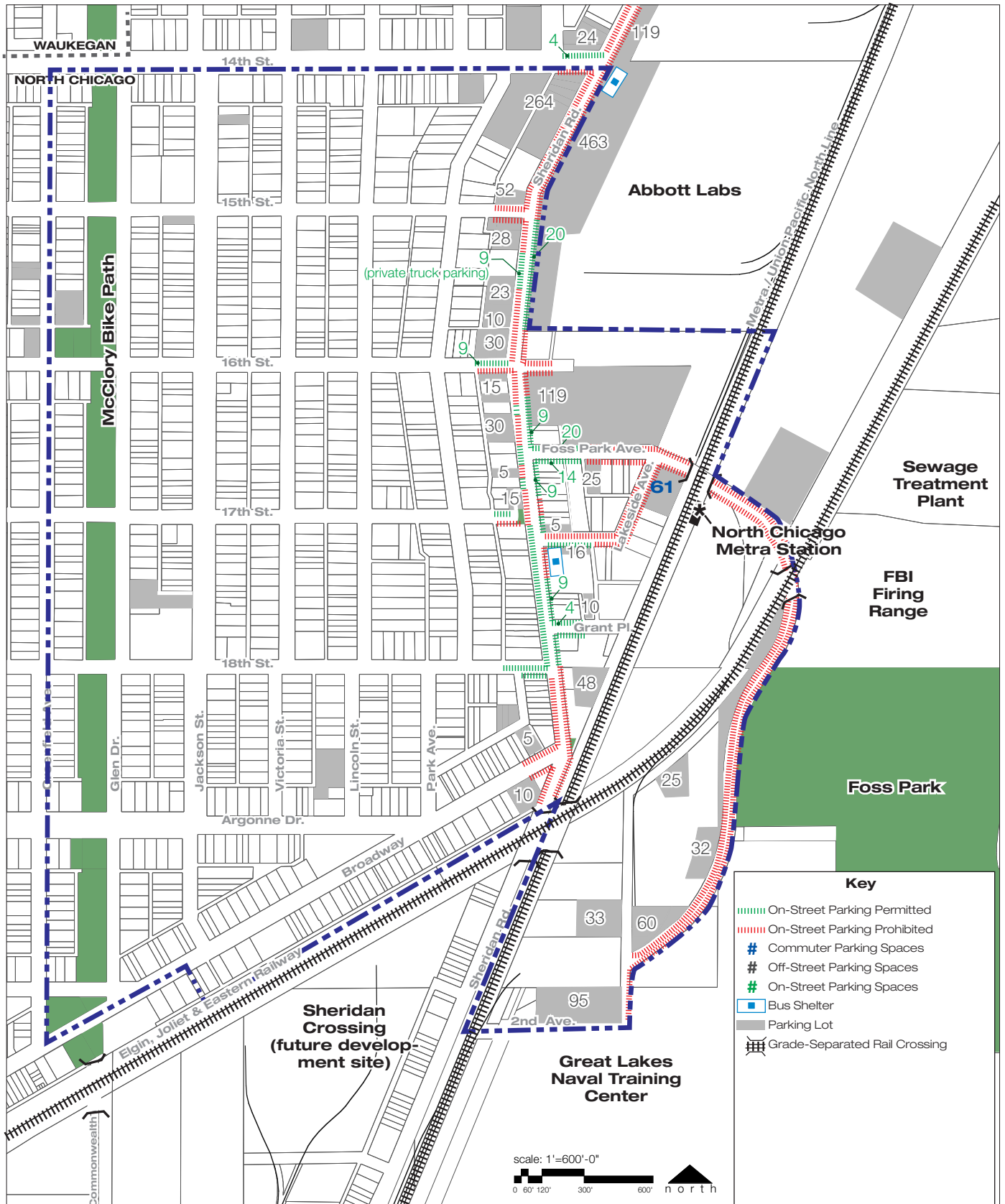
The commuter parking lot is underutilized, with many vacant parking spaces on a weekday.



Parking for Abbott Labs tends to be located adjacent to the right-of-way.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Downtown Parking Availability



Source: Downtown Transportation Master Plan

Existing Conditions Analysis

Market Assessment

Market Assessment

Goodman Williams Group conducted a market study to assess the current and future development environment in North Chicago and provide market input to the station area plan. A summary of their report is below. The full report can be found in the appendix of this report.

Methodology

As part of the market assessment, Goodman Williams Group completed the following tasks in late 2006 and early 2007:

- Interviewed key stakeholders from the City of North Chicago, Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Abbott Laboratories, and professionals familiar with the real estate industry in North Chicago and adjacent communities.
- Participated in a community meeting held in North Chicago.
- Analyzed current demographic and household characteristics to gain an understanding of future demand for various land uses.
- Visited retail, residential, and commercial developments in and around North Chicago and surrounding communities to assess the likely competitive position of development in the study area.

Summary of Findings

Sheridan Road is the main commercial spine that traverses the study area. Major initiatives are underway to redevelop what has traditionally been North Chicago's downtown. Commercial and mixed-use developments have been planned for a number of key sites and one development, Grant Place, has recently been completed. The most aggressive plan is for Sheridan Crossing, to be developed on a 40-acre site just south of the study area at the corner of Sheridan Road and Martin Luther King Drive. Redevelopment plans for this former industrial property call for one or two hotels and restaurants that would serve visitors to Great Lakes Naval Training Center. The successful redevelopment of this large site would serve as a catalyst for further development along Sheridan Road closer to the Metra station.

Commercial Opportunities in the Study Area.

North Chicago currently has limited retail offerings, and therefore the expenditure potential of households living in this community is being "leaked" to Waukegan and other nearby suburbs. Our analysis indicates potential support for approximately 20,000 square feet of retail space along Sheridan Road. The types of retailers that would be most appropriate in a transit-oriented "downtown" setting, and those that would fit with the demographics of North Chicago include small establishments in the following categories:

- Food and Beverage Stores
- Full- and Limited-Service Restaurants
- Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores
- Electronics (such as a cell phone store)
- Health and Personal Care Businesses
- Convenience Stores
- Clothing and Accessories Stores

In addition to retailers, we assume that a number of service-oriented businesses would be appropriate ground-floor tenants along Sheridan Road. Dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, as well as offices of medical, dental, and financial service firms could occupy another 8,000 square feet. In total, we find support for between 25,000 and 30,000 square feet of additional retail and other commercial space in the study area over the next 10 years.

Residential Opportunities in the Study Area.

Initial opportunities for residential development in the study area would be limited to small-scale infill projects on scattered sites. These developments could include residential units over storefronts or infill town home developments near the Metra station. Over the next ten years, the market could support approximately two dozen new residential units along Sheridan Road or on appropriate sites near the Metra station. Incomes in North Chicago suggest that new housing would need to be moderately priced. Developer or buyer subsidies would expand the pool of potential buyers and create additional opportunities.

In the neighborhood west of Sheridan Road, vacant lots and homes in need of repair are interspersed with well-maintained properties. Programs to encourage infill development and rehab activity will serve to strengthen this neighborhood and improve the opportunity for additional commercial and mixed-use development along Sheridan Road.

Long-term, residential development is envisioned on an 8.9-acre site near Foss Park that is currently owned by Abbott.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Redevelopment Areas

Overview

Several redevelopment tools are already in place in the study area; refer to the diagrams and table below for location and further information.

Enterprise Zone

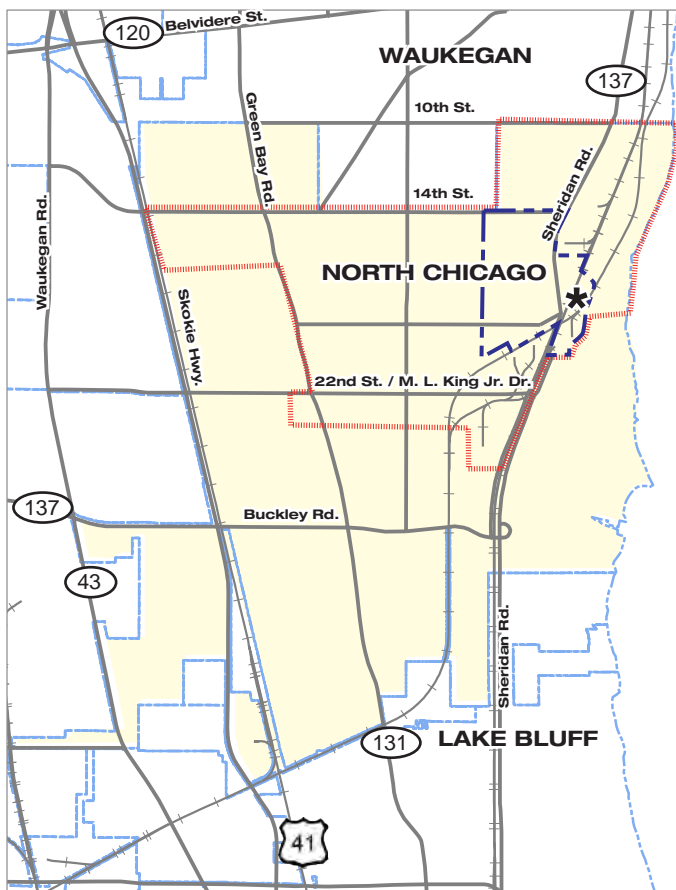
The entire study area is located in the North Chicago/Waukegan Enterprise Zone; the portion within the North Chicago city limits is shown on the map provided on this page. This Enterprise Zone was established in 2006.

According to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Enterprise Zones are intended to encourage economic growth and neighborhood revitalization through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services. Benefits include sales tax exemptions for building materials to be used in the Enterprise Zone and tax credits for job creation within the Enterprise Zone.

Recent redevelopment initiatives in downtown North Chicago



Recently renovated mixed-use building, with residential units on upper floors.



Enterprise Zone Boundaries



The Grant Place development, under construction as of late 2006.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Redevelopment Areas

Tax Increment Financing District

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District has been established along Sheridan Road in downtown North Chicago. The Sheridan Road TIF was established in 1998 and will expire in 2021.

A TIF district is a designated area within which increases in property taxes during the 23-year life of the TIF are earmarked to pay for improvements within the district. Any property taxes caused by increased value from reinvestment are allocated to the City to support redevelopment efforts.

Key Land Owners

Land assembly is often a difficult obstacle to overcome to facilitate redevelopment. Along Sheridan Road, there are several key land owners whose intent to sell or redevelop should be explored.

Abbott Labs

Abbott property ownership includes land housing current operations, several employee parking lots, and several vacant lots adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station. Future development plans for Abbott Labs is not known at this time and should be explored by the City.



Land owned by Abbott Labs includes active sites as well as several vacant lots adjacent to the North Chicago Metra Station.

Stone Container

Stone Container owns several contiguous parcels along Foss Park Road. The business is currently active and appears to take up much of their land, but their future intentions should be ascertained.

Small Individual Owners

Several property owners—Bozinis, Leonard, Manley, and Papas—control multiple contiguous lots, including vacant parcels or buildings. It is unknown whether these land owners currently operate businesses along the corridor or are banking land in anticipation of development efforts.

City of North Chicago

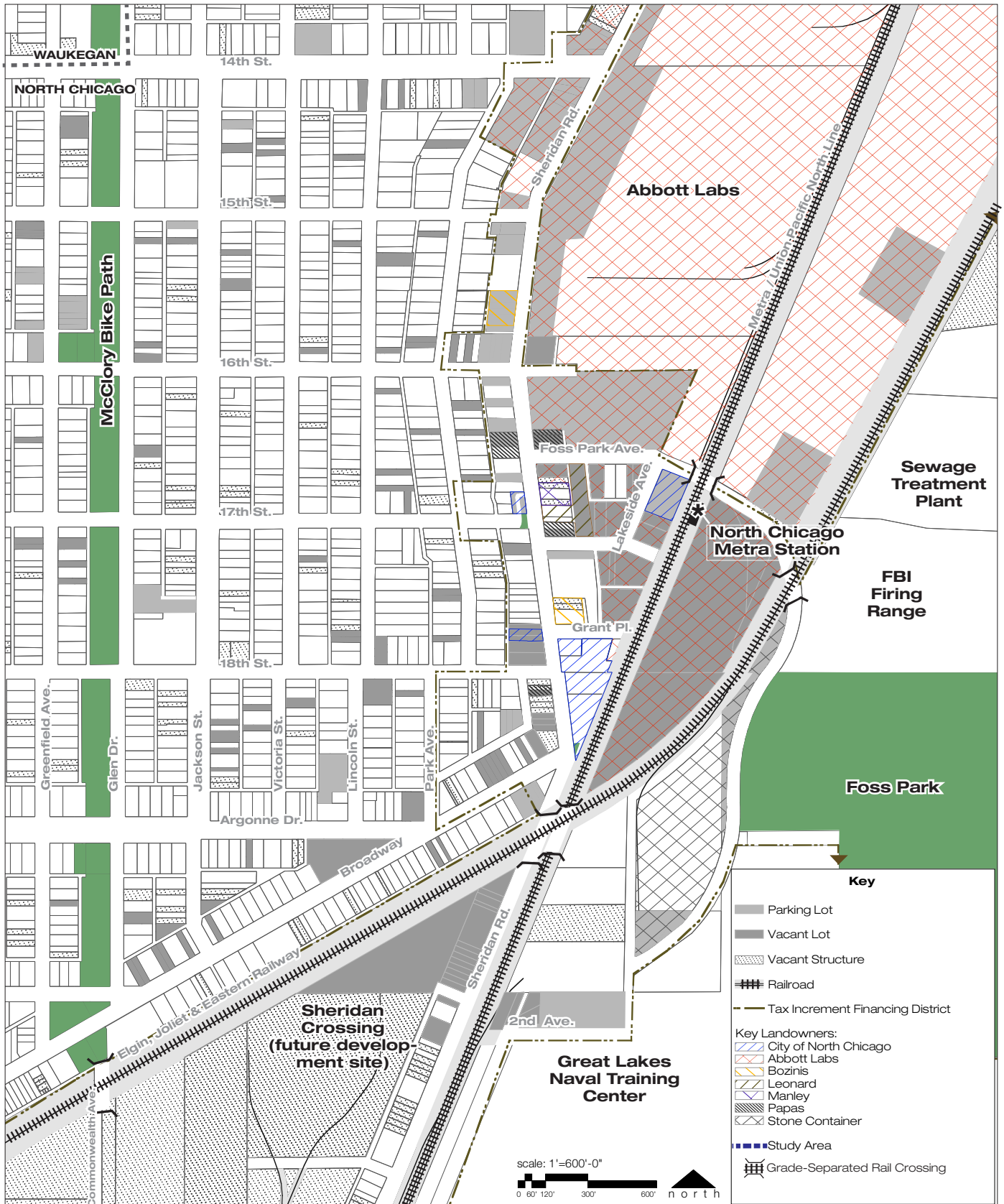
Finally, the City has already assembled several parcels in the study area, most notably the Grant Place site, as well as in other opportunity sites including Sheridan Crossing site. In addition to owning property along the corridor, it is actively leading redevelopment efforts through the Five Points Development Corporation.



Several individual property owners control multiple contiguous lots, vacant parcels, or vacant buildings along the corridor.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Property Ownership



Existing Conditions Analysis

Redevelopment Areas

Urban Redevelopment Overlay

North Chicago's Zoning Code provides for an Urban Redevelopment Overlay that waives the lot size and yard requirements of the underlying zoning designations.

Although their boundaries are roughly similar, the Urban Redevelopment Overlay and the TIF District do not align. These discrepancies and an evaluation of the Overlay criteria will be addressed later in this report.

City-Identified Development Sites

The City of North Chicago has already identified several key redevelopment sites, as summarized in the table below, which refers to the diagram on the facing page.

Construction is almost completed for the Grant Place development, and facade renovations are in progress for the 1700 block of Sheridan. The other sites are targeted as priorities for future development initiatives.

Existing Activity Centers

The existing centers of activity at the Post Office, Senior Housing, and North Chicago Metra Station are fairly weak and do not serve as a source of shoppers or visitors to downtown North Chicago. However, current development in progress at Grant Place is expected to increase activity on Sheridan Road.

Other Areas Subject to Redevelopment

Areas subject to redevelopment in addition to the highest priority sites identified by the City include pockets of vacant buildings and lots, particularly large parcels or multiple contiguous parcels owned by a single entity. High priority sites are those proximate to the North Chicago Metra Station, as well as current development activity along Sheridan Road. Secondary priority sites include commercial areas near the edges of the study area and residential areas.

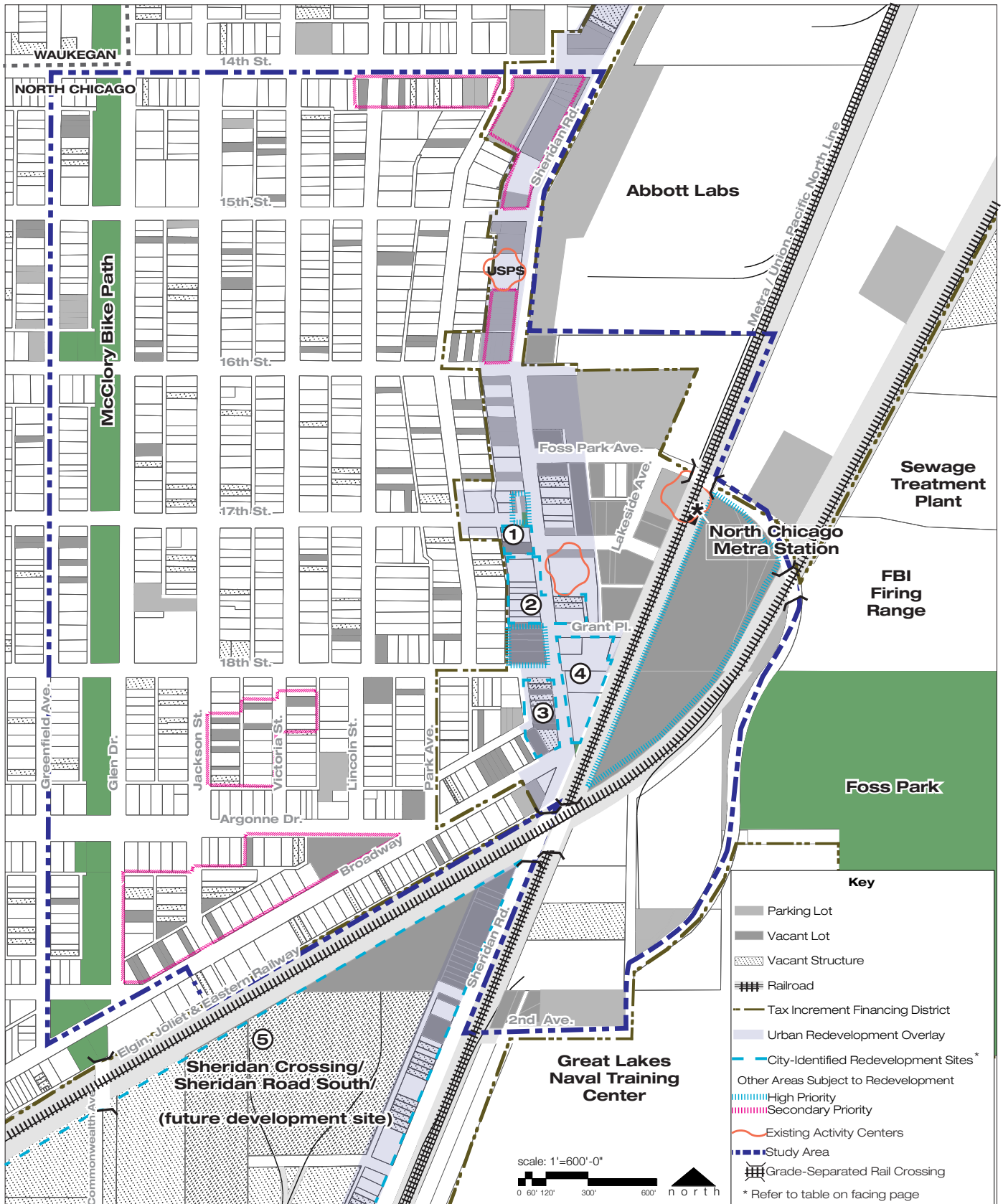
Further development opportunities will be outlined in the Implementation Strategy section of this report.

Summary of Development Sites in Downtown North Chicago				
Address	Description	Status	Total Retail SF	Residential Units
① 1702 North Sheridan Road	Mixed-use corner building with up to four divisible 1st floor retail spaces and surface parking for 18 vehicles.	Significant renovations required for this existing building.	8,380	14
② 1700 Block of Sheridan Road	Stretch of mixed-use buildings constituting the historic commercial core of downtown North Chicago.	City-sponsored façade renovation is underway for multiple storefronts. Some façades have been renovated and others are still in need of improvement.	34,030	N/A
③ 1800 Block of Sheridan Road	Four mixed-use buildings and two shared surface parking lots with spaces for 41 vehicles.	Significant renovations will be required for these existing buildings.	12,909	7
④ Grant Place and Sheridan Road	New construction retail center with shared surface parking for 58 vehicles.	Recently constructed. Leased to North Chicago Trust and a police substation. Other leases are currently pending.	20,743	0
⑤ Sheridan Crossing/Sheridan Road South	40 acre formerly industrial parcel at southwest corner of Sheridan Road and the EJ&E Railway.	Future development is envisioned as commercial and mixed-use office/retail. The City currently controls 40 acres of the property.	N/A	0
TOTAL:			76,062	21

Source: City of North Chicago and Goodman Williams Group

Existing Conditions Analysis

Redevelopment Areas



Existing Conditions Analysis

Key Planning Opportunities

Summary of Planning Opportunities

There are key planning opportunities for downtown North Chicago that deserve focus. Building off of the existing conditions diagrams in this section, particularly those addressing property ownership and redevelopment areas, the following points are highlighted.

Maximizing Visibility to the Study Area

Views to the study area from the key access routes previously identified should be explored; currently, billboards and overgrown vegetation are blocking the view to the new Veterans monument, for example. Enhancement of critical decision points and views can serve as a draw to the corridor and future TOD.

Road Realignment

Available funding for realigning the intersection of 18th Street, Sheridan Road, and Grant Place is an opportunity; again, the consultant team wishes to be part of the discussion to ensure that any proposed schemes effectively enhance the transit-oriented development.

Bicycle Linkages

Bicycle linkages between the McClory Bike Path and downtown North Chicago are addressed in the Implementation Strategy section of this report.

Open Space Opportunities

Open space opportunities and connections to existing green space are present in the study area. Pedestrian and bicycle connections to Foss Park, the lake front, and McClory Bike Path will be established. Additional open space opportunities for small-scale neighborhood parks are discussed in the Implementation Strategy section of this report.

Future Downtown Core

The future downtown core, which is a concentrated area within the Downtown, is based on redevelopment sites identified by the City, clusters of vacant lots or buildings, density and presence of mixed-use buildings, and streets expected to be configured or realigned. Existing buildings within these areas have been targeted by the City for facade improvements, and some renovations are underway.



Billboards and overgrown vegetation block the view to the site from the south.



An opportunity for road realignment exists on 17th Street; at Sheridan Road, westbound traffic is cut off and eastbound traffic is routed through a parking lot.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Key Planning Opportunities

