

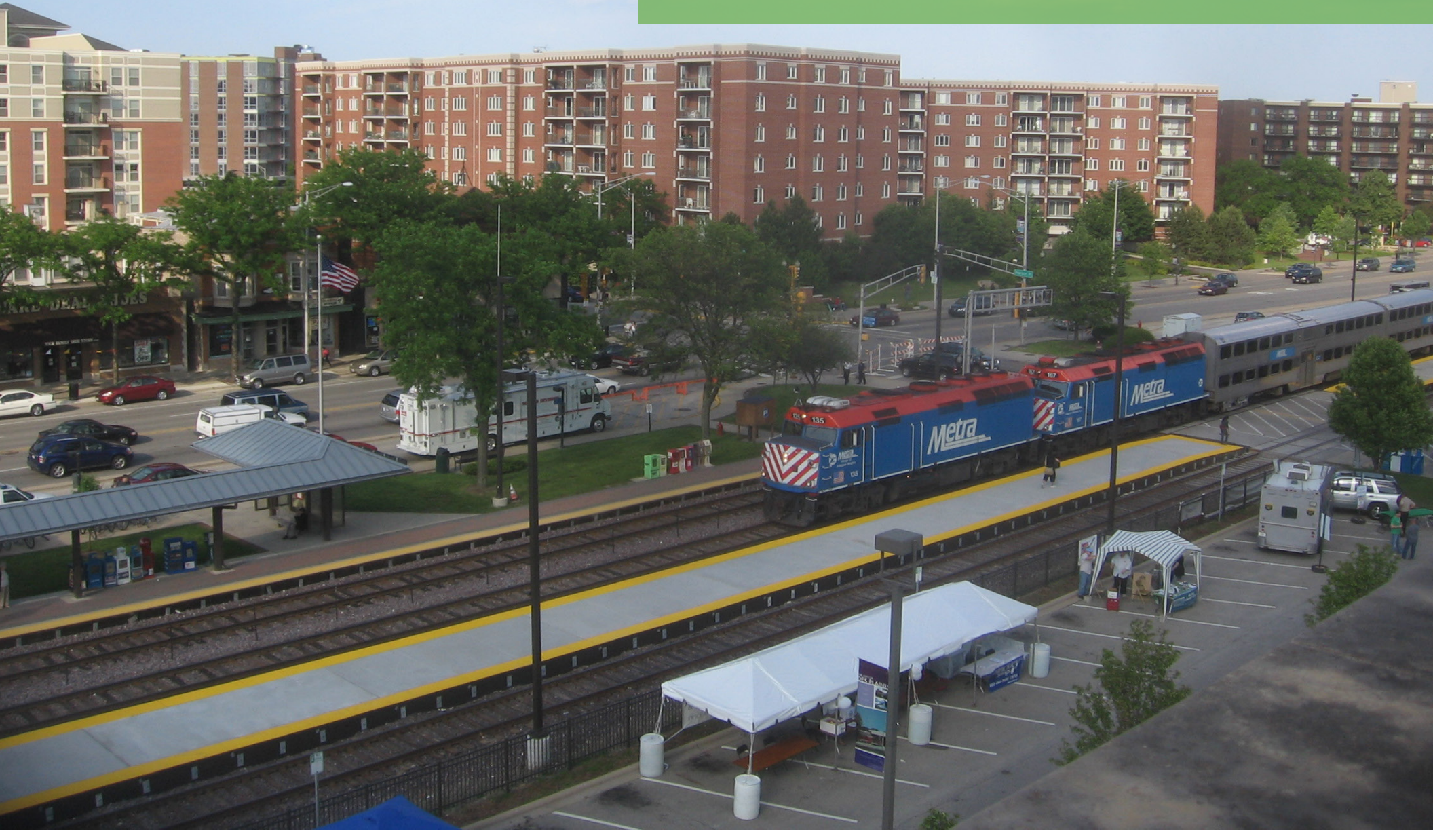


City of Des Plaines Community Profile

May 2017



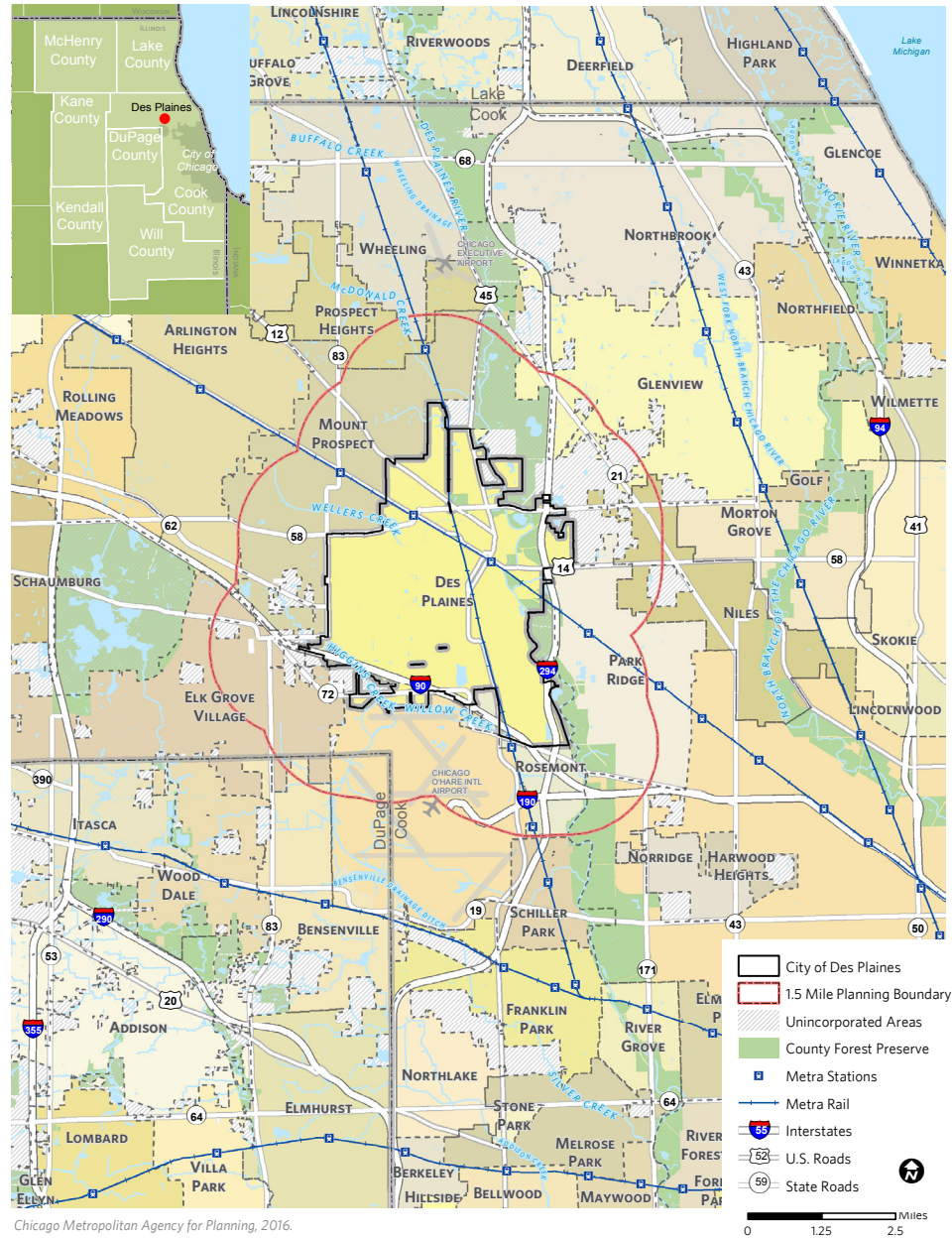
Chapter 1 COMMUNITY PROFILE



The City of Des Plaines has started a process to update its Comprehensive Plan, which will outline the vision of the community as well as the policies and strategies that will allow it to achieve that vision. The Plan will allow elected officials, municipal staff, residents, business owners, and potential investors to make informed decisions on land use, transportation, infrastructure, and capital improvements throughout the City. In addition to providing a roadmap to achieving Des Plaines' community goals, the Plan will explore changing community trends, identify emerging challenges, and promote new opportunities.

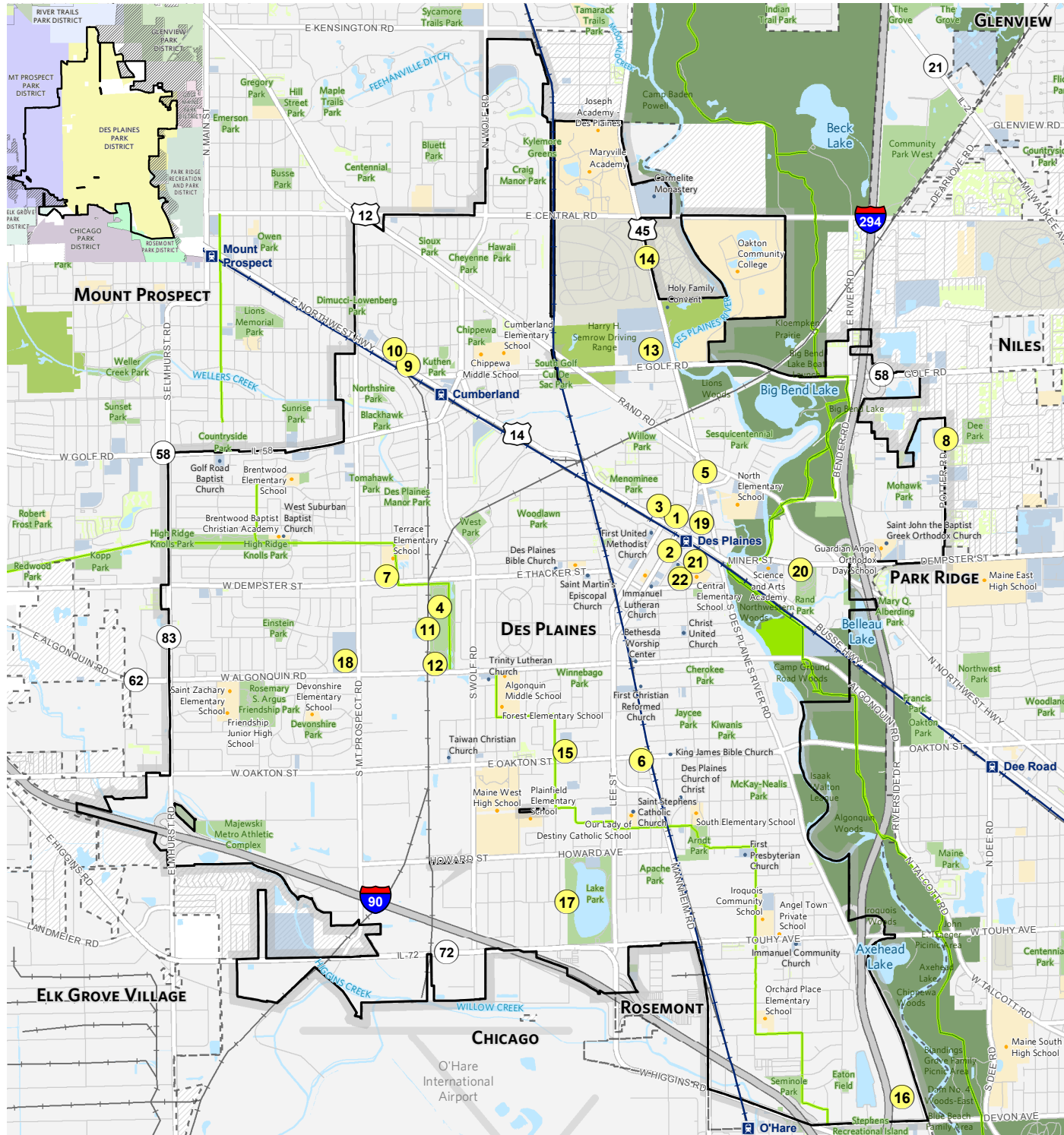
Having an accurate understanding of the existing conditions of the community is necessary to develop an effective plan. This Community Profile provides an overview of the current conditions in Des Plaines and is designed to provide an agreed upon starting point by which to move forward and create a shared vision. Crafted with assistance from City staff, the planning process will last approximately 15 months and is designed to include input from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders throughout.

Figure 1.1. Regional context.



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2016.

Figure 1.2. Amenities and destinations in Des Plaines.



Des Plaines's Amenities and Destinations

- 1 Village Hall
 - 2 Public Library
 - 3 Police Department
 - 4 Prairie Lakes Community Center and Park
 - 5 Fire Department Station 1
 - 6 Fire Department Station 2
 - 7 Fire Department Station 3
 - 8 North Maine Fire Protection District
 - 9 YMCA
 - 10 Skate Park
 - 11 Skate Park
 - 12 Mountain View Adventure Center
 - 13 Holy Family Medical Center
 - 14 All Saints Catholic Cemetery
 - 15 U.S. Post Office
 - 16 Rivers Casino
 - 17 Lake Park Golf Course
 - 18 The Salvation Army
 - 19 Metropolitan Square
 - 20 Mystic Waters Family Aquatic Center
 - 21 Farmers' Market
 - 22 History Center
- Existing Trails & Bikeways
 - Metra Rail Lines
 - Metra Stations
 - City of Des Plaines
 - Unincorporated Areas
 - County Boundary
 - Institutional
 - Educational
 - Cemeteries
 - Local Parks
 - Forest Preserve
 - Non-Public Open Space
 - Golf Course
 - Common Open Space in Residential Development
 - Water
- 0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Regional Context and Governance

Des Plaines is located in Cook County, approximately 19 miles northwest of downtown Chicago. Neighboring communities include Mount Prospect, Park Ridge, Elk Grove Village, and Chicago, as well as unincorporated lands to the northeast in Maine Township and the southwest in Elk Grove Township. The study area for the plan includes the City of Des Plaines as well as the unincorporated lands within the 1.5-mile planning boundary, see Figure 1.1 for the planning context.

Understanding the governmental structure within Des Plaines will allow plan recommendations to be crafted with City input and tailored to the appropriate partners and implementers. The City leadership structure includes a Mayor and City Council, in which the Mayor and eight Aldermen are elected separately. The City Manager implements the Council's goals and policies and works with all departments to ensure service provision. Des Plaines has also established eight separate commissions, which include an Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, Consumer Protection Commission, and a Youth Commission. The city is organized into five departments – police, fire, finance, community and economic development, and public works and engineering. The last two departments play a large role in topics related to the comprehensive plan and their functions are described in more detail below:

Community and Economic Development Department: issues building permits, provides health and sanitation inspectional services, performs property maintenance, administers the Community Development Block Grant program, and is responsible for zoning and planning functions.

Public Works and Engineering Department: responds to residential requests for service relating to publicly maintained property, including street lights, trees, fire hydrants, storm sewers, and other infrastructure. In addition to these maintenance responsibilities, the department also manages all aspects of infrastructure design and construction, including street and sidewalk reconstruction projects.

Residents in Des Plaines have access to an array of amenities, including those provided by local park and library districts, see Figure 1.2.

Park and Forest Preserve Districts: Two park districts – Des Plaines Park District and Mt. Prospect Park District (serving residents west of Mt. Prospect Road) – and the Cook County Forest Preserve maintain almost 900 acres of parks and open space in the immediate area.

Des Plaines Library District: provides an array of services, with community space and computer classes. In 2000, the library moved to a 4-story building within a downtown redevelopment project.

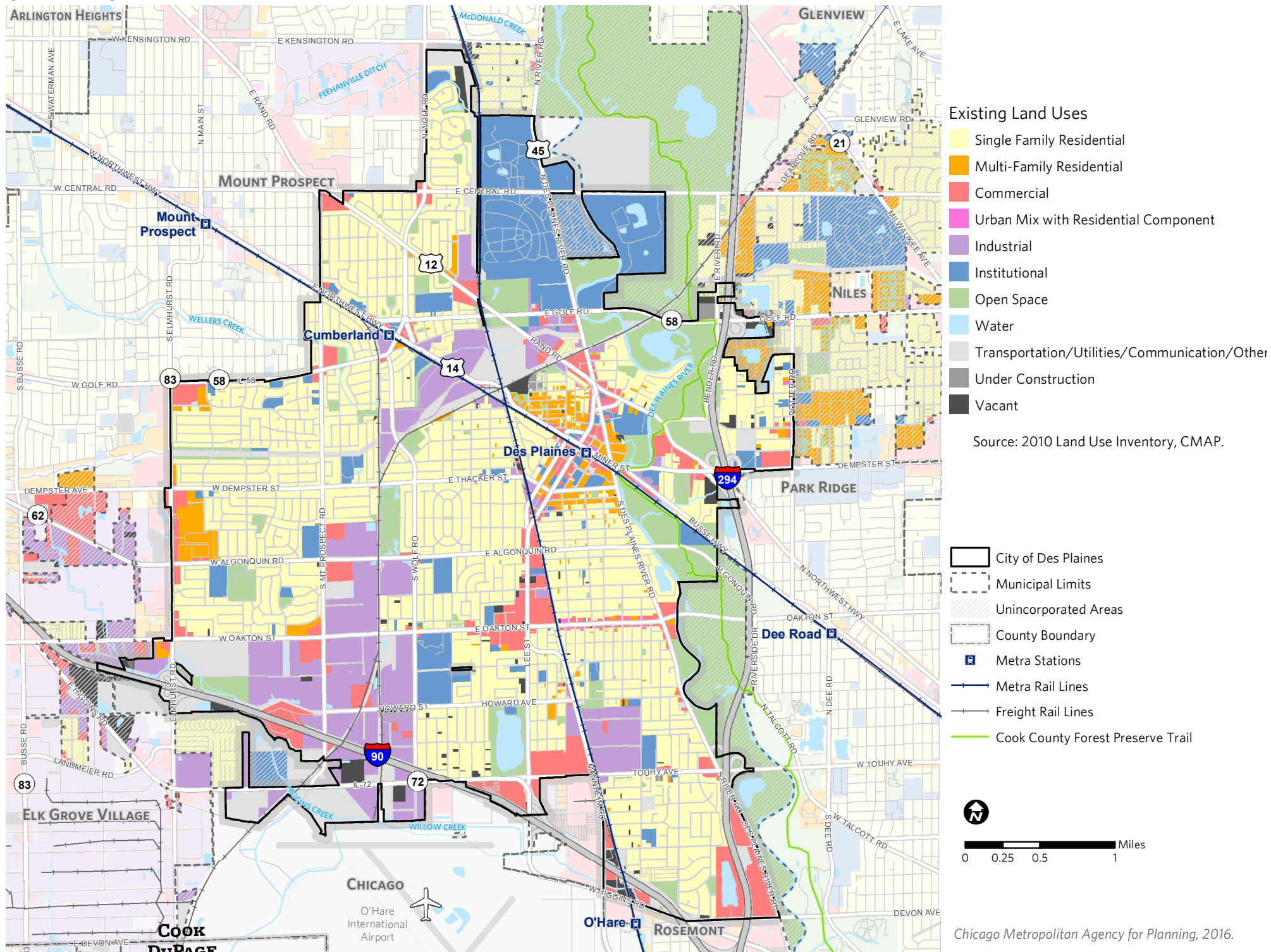
Cook County provides municipal services to the unincorporated areas that lie to the northeast and southwest of the municipal boundary. Cook County is currently investigating how to provide more efficient government services to the residents of unincorporated lands. In 2016, Cook County, with technical assistance from CMAP, began developing a subarea plan for Maine and Northfield Townships in coordination with the surrounding communities.



Des Plaines Public Library.

Photo credit: Stan Kotecki

Figure 1.3. Existing land uses in Des Plaines, 2010.



Land Use

Livable communities depend on a mix of land uses that provide the homes, businesses, civic institutions, and open space that are essential for daily living. An assessment of the existing land use pattern in Des Plaines provides a foundational understanding of the current use of land in the community and insights into how those land uses could change in the future, see Figure 1.3 and Table 1.1.

A third of the land area in Des Plaines is devoted to residential use, primarily detached single-family homes. Multi-family homes represent over 33 percent of the City’s dwelling units and are primarily located near commercial areas such as around the Des Plaines Metra Station and off of Elmhurst Road. Mixed-use residential dwellings are primarily concentrated in Downtown Des Plaines and along Oakton Street between Mannheim Road and Des Plaines River Road.

Commercial development in Des Plaines is concentrated in Downtown and along key corridors – Oakton Street, Touhy Avenue, Elmhurst Road, and Rand Road. In the downtown, many of the commercial buildings are at least two stories with minimal front setbacks and access to on-street parking or off-street parking located nearby. The eastern portion of Oakton Street, between River Road and Mannheim, follows a similar development pattern. The commercial uses on Elmhurst Road, Rand Road, Touhy Avenue, and Mannheim Road south of Walnut Avenue are on larger parcels with off-street parking. Rivers Casino is located at the edge of the community at Devon Avenue and Des Plaines River Road.

While institutional land uses are generally distributed throughout the community, Oakton Community College and several cemeteries are located in the northern section of the City along Des Plaines River Road. Existing industrial uses in Des Plaines are found in three general areas and are part of the regionally significant O’Hare manufacturing cluster. In addition to close proximity to O’Hare airport, industrial uses can take advantage of nearby I-90, I-294, and the major railroads owned by Canadian National

and the Union Pacific Railroad. Streets, highways, railroads, and utility corridors occupy over a quarter of the land area in the community.

Open space makes up 9.6 percent of Des Plaines’ total land area, mostly in the form of neighborhood parks and county forest preserves. The two park districts maintain recreational areas within and immediately adjacent to the community. The Cook County Forest Preserve District maintains over 500 acres of open space within the municipal limits. The Des Plaines River is a major asset to the community, along with several lakes and creeks. Less than two percent of Des Plaines is composed of vacant land, or land in an undeveloped state with no agricultural activities or protection as open space. In some cases, the land cover of vacant parcels includes grasslands, wetlands, woodlands, or other natural resources.

Zoning and other development regulations play an important role in the form and character of existing and future development. Updating development regulations to be consistent with a community’s land use vision is often a critical step to implementing a comprehensive plan.

Table 1.1. Existing land uses in Des Plaines, 2010.

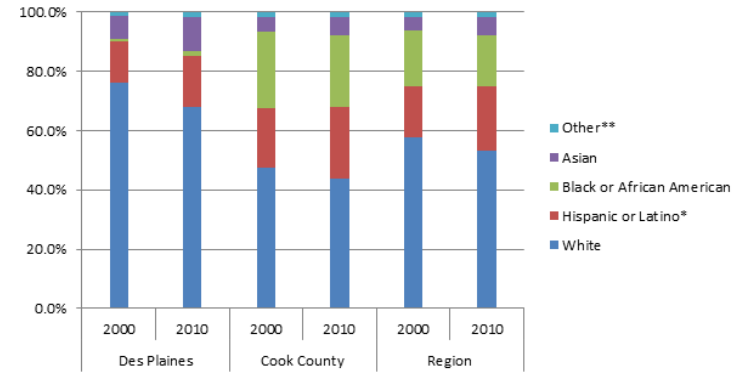
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Single-family residential	3052.8	33.0
Multi-family residential	212.9	2.3
Urban Mix with residential component	11.6	0.1
Commercial	638.4	6.9
Industrial	911.1	9.8
Institutional	895.0	9.7
Open Space	890.2	9.6
Transportation/Communication/Utility/Waste	2429.7	26.2
Under Construction	15.0	0.2
Vacant	127.6	1.4
Water	75.8	0.8
Total	9260.1	100.0

Source: CMAP 2010 Land Use Inventory.

Population and Housing

Understanding the composition of the community helps Des Plaines respond to the needs of its existing residents as well as prepare for potential changes. The demographics of the larger Chicago region are expected to shift substantially over the next three decades; similar changes are anticipated in the City of Des Plaines. The population of Des Plaines is relatively stable with over 58,000 residents and it is becoming a more diverse community with growing Asian and Latino populations (Table 1.2 and Figure 1.4). The City is already becoming older, with a median age of 42 and a sizable population older than 65 (Table 1.3). As individuals age, their homes, neighborhoods, and existing services may not address all of their new and evolving needs. The city’s median household income of \$63,528 is higher than Cook County’s (\$54,598) but lower than the region overall (\$71,031).

Figure 1.4. Change in race and ethnicity in Des Plaines and Chicago Region, 2000 - 2010.



* Includes Hispanic or Latino residents of any race

** Includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 1.2. Population and households, 2000 and 2010.

	Des Plaines	Cook County	Region
Population, 2000	58,720	5,376,741	8,146,264
Population, 2010	58,364	5,194,675	8,431,386
Change, 2000-10	-356	-182,066	285,122
Change as %, 2000-10	-0.6%	-3.4%	3.5%
Average Household Size, 2010	2.53	2.60	2.73
Average Household Size, 2000	2.58	2.72	2.78

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 1.3. Age cohorts and median age, 2010.

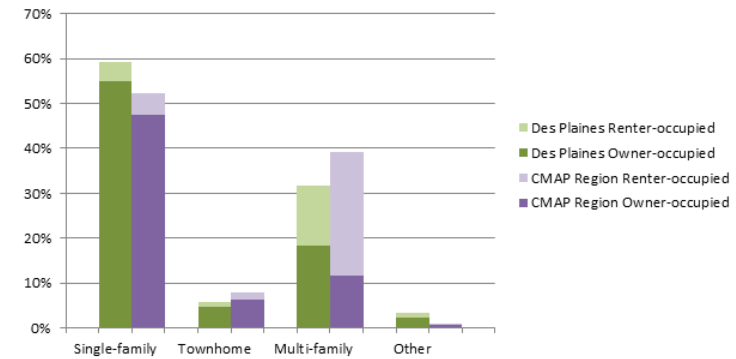
	Des Plaines		Cook County	Region
	Count	Percent	Percent	Percent
Students (under 19 years)	13,074	22.4%	26.5%	27.8%
Adults (20 to 64 years)	35,297	60.5%	61.6%	60.9%
Older Adults (65 years and over)	9,993	17.1%	11.9%	11.3%
Median Age	42.2		35.3	35.5

Source: 2010 U.S. Census.

Housing plays an integral role in the lives of residents and a balanced housing supply helps to ensure that each household has access to the assets in Des Plaines and the larger Chicago region. A mix of housing types are needed to allow residents to age in place and provide homes for teachers, nurses, and other members of the community. Understanding the current supply as well as potential future demand will help Des Plaines develop a balanced mix of housing that serve current and future populations and enhances livability.

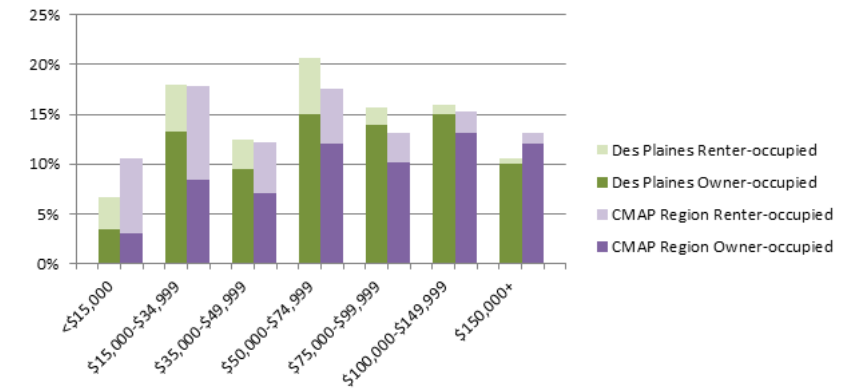
Approximately 60 percent of housing units are single-family homes, which is slightly more than the region as a whole (Figure 1.5). However, Des Plaines does have a sizeable amount of multi-family housing and more than half are owner-occupied. The median year a home was built is 1964 and the median housing value is \$269,400, slightly younger and higher than the rest of the county. Des Plaines has more households in the middle-income brackets than the rest of the region and many own their own homes (Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.5. Housing type by owner / renter in Des Plaines and the Chicago region.



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012.

Figure 1.6. Owner / Renter by Household Income in Des Plaines and the Chicago Region.



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012.



A home in Des Plaines.
Photo credit: Hathaway M.

Economic Development

In order to prosper economically and sustain a high quality of life, Des Plaines and the Chicago region need to maintain a diversity of business types, a skilled workforce, and modern infrastructure. Industrial, retail, and office development in Des Plaines are influenced by trends within the community, but also the larger sub-regional and regional markets for each sector. Understanding this larger context will help Des Plaines move forward with a plan that reflects market realities.

Employment

As of 2014, Des Plaines had a total of 38,000 private sector jobs (Table 1.4). Located near O'Hare Airport as well as several highways and rail lines, Des Plaines has attracted manufacturing and wholesale trade businesses that provide 15.8 percent and 10.4 percent of the total jobs, respectively. The community is likely benefiting from the co-location of these sectors. Employment in the health care and social assistance sector is growing in Des Plaines and now comprises 14.1 percent of employment. Oakton Community College, Honeywell, Universal Oil Products, Rivers Casino, and Abbot Laboratories are some of the top employers in the community. Despite recent declines in employment, Des Plaines has a lower unemployment rate (6.8 percent) than the rest of Cook County (10.8 percent) and the Chicago region (9.8 percent).

Industrial and Commercial Property

Most of the existing commercial real estate properties are industrial (70 percent) with a vacancy rate that is comparable to the submarket and region. Des Plaines also has a sizeable amount of office properties with a vacancy rate slightly higher than that of the submarket and region (Table 1.5). Located in the O'Hare Retail Submarket as defined by CoStar, Des Plaines' retail properties add up to nearly 2.9 million square feet. At the end of the 4th Quarter 2015, the retail vacancy rate in Des Plaines was 10.1 percent, which is almost double the O'Hare Submarket at 5.8 percent. Most retail properties are located downtown and along Lee Street, Oakton Street, Rand Road, and Elmhurst Road.



Businesses in downtown Des Plaines.
Photo credit: Allan

Table 1.4. Private Sector Employment, 2002-2014.

	Des Plaines	Cook County	Region
Employment, 2002	42,367	2,223,156	3,409,568
Employment, 2014	38,143	2,189,184	3,461,583
Change, 2002-14	-4,224	-33,972	52,015
Change as %, 2002-14	-9.7%	-1.53%	1.53%

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, U.S. Census.

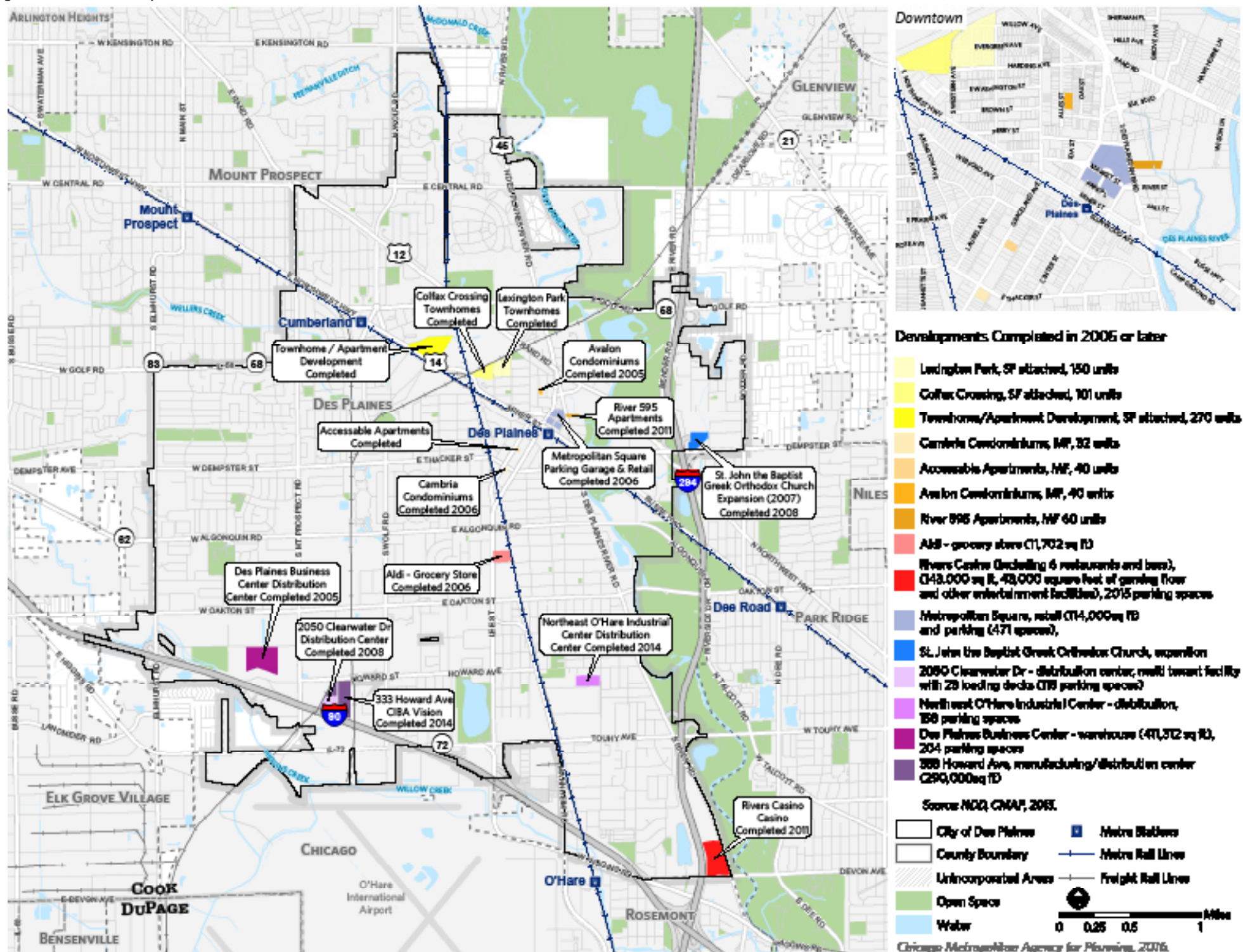
Table 1.5. Industrial and Commercial Building Area (in Square Feet) and Vacancy, End of Fourth Quarter 2015.

	Des Plaines			Sub Market*			Region		
	Rentable Building Area	Percent	Vacancy	Rentable Building Area	Percent	Vacancy	Rentable Building Area	Percent	Vacancy
Industrial**	17,486,152	70.5%	6.6%	105,670,401	78.0%	6.4%	1,073,773,213	53.9%	7.1%
Retail	2,864,947	11.6%	10.1%	11,743,992	8.7%	5.8%	472,174,141	23.7%	7.9%
Office	4,448,890	17.9%	21.4%	18,146,392	13.4%	17.1%	446,957,215	22.4%	13.0%
Total	24,799,989	100.0%	-	135,560,785	100.0%	-	1,992,904,569	100.0%	-

* Submarkets are made up of properties that are in competition based on geography and comparable marketability. In this instance, the submarket consists of the area around O'Hare Airport but the geography changes for each sector. **Includes flex properties.

Source: CMAP Analysis of CoStar data.

Figure 1.7. Recent development in Des Plaines.



Recent Developments

Over the last 10 years, Des Plaines has attracted several residential, commercial, and industrial developments (Figure 1.7). Almost 700 housing units have been added to the community and most are multi-family units located near the Cumberland or Des Plaines Metra Stations. Metropolitan Square, a mixed-use development, added significant retail space to downtown Des Plaines. In 2011, the Rivers Casino opened at Devon Avenue and Des Plaines River Road and was the tenth and last casino license awarded by the Illinois Gaming Board. Manufacturing, distribution, and warehousing centers are located near O’Hare and I-90.

Municipal Revenue and Real Estate

Ideally, local decisions should make effective use of land, generate good jobs, and trigger sustainable economic activity. To achieve this, local revenue streams must sustain public services and infrastructure investments that attract and retain both residents and businesses. When making decisions regarding the types and balance of revenue that will be used to fund public services, municipalities must also consider other issues such as quality of life, community, and economic development needs. The City of Des Plaines relies on a diversified revenue stream, with funding coming from sales, property, gaming, and other taxes with no one source providing more than a third of the total revenue. Municipalities that provide fire services, as Des Plaines does, tend to be more reliant on property tax revenues; however, the gaming taxes have likely impacted this balance. Des Plaines does have a 1.0% home rule sales tax.

Industrial properties make up 22 percent of the City’s estimated total equalized assessed value (EAV), which is twice as high as the rest of Cook County and reflects the importance of industrial businesses to the local economy (Table 1.6). The retail sales per capita of \$11,587 in Des Plaines should be compared with the surrounding submarket.

Table 1.6. Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) by Property Type, 2011.

Property Type	Des Plaines		Cook County
	Estimated EAV	Percent	Percent
Residential EAV	\$1,320,637,690	60.5%	66.5%
Commercial EAV	\$378,063,481	17.3%	22.5%
Industrial EAV	\$483,073,522	22.1%	10.9%
Railroad EAV	\$2,558,611	0.1%	0.2%
Farm EAV	n/a	n/a	0.0%
Mineral EAV	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EAV	\$2,184,333,304	100.0%	100.0%

Retail sales per capita	\$11,587	\$9,500
-------------------------	----------	---------

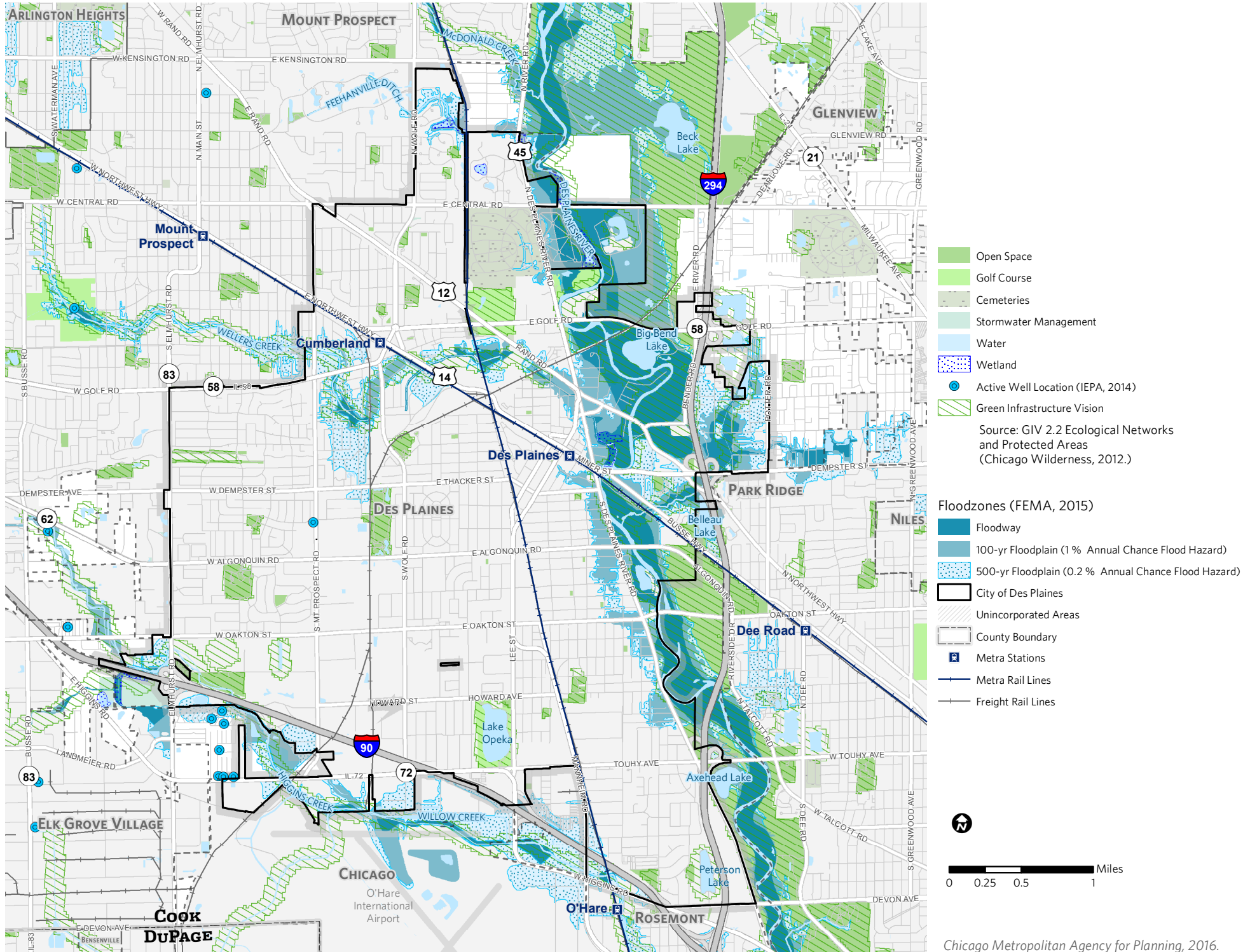
Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.



Northeast O’Hare Industrial Center.

Photo credit: RE Journals.com

Figure 1.8. Natural resources in Des Plaines.



Natural Environment

Natural resources are some of the greatest assets in Des Plaines as well as the Chicago region. Commonly referred to as green infrastructure, these resources provide a number of ecosystem services, such as clean air and water, flood control, and climate regulation, among others. In addition, the natural environment contributes to community character and enhances quality of life. Des Plaines' natural resources exist within a larger network of water and land resources and the community's plans, policies, and development decisions should work in concert with these assets to achieve a sustainable and livable future.

Green Infrastructure

The regional Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) is a large-scale, multistate vision of interconnected land and water resources and Figure 1.8 illustrates the resources identified at the regional scale for the City of Des Plaines and its extended planning area. Most of the land identified in the GIV in this area is preserved by the Forest Preserve of Cook County with their land holdings along the Des Plaines River.

Local Open Space

With the City of Des Plaines Park District, Mount Prospect Park District, and Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Des Plaines residents have access to a large amount of open space, approximately 15 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This ratio is significantly higher than the GO TO 2040 recommendations of 10 acres per 1,000 people. In addition to open space, the City has a sizable urban forest, which includes all trees that contribute to tree canopies, parkways, and all other green space. The urban forest is embedded into, for example, rights of way, yards, small wooded areas, and undeveloped lots.

Watersheds

Watersheds are areas of land that drain surface water to a specific point in the landscape, such as a stream or a lake. Des Plaines is located within

the eastern-central portion of the Lower Des Plaines River Basin. The city is divided between the Willow Creek – Des Plaines River Watershed to the north and the Willow Creek Watershed to the south. Surface water in the Willow Creek – Des Plaines River Watershed flows to Feehanville Ditch, Wellers Creek, or the Des Plaines River, while water in the Willow Creek Watershed drains to Higgins Creek or Willow Creek.

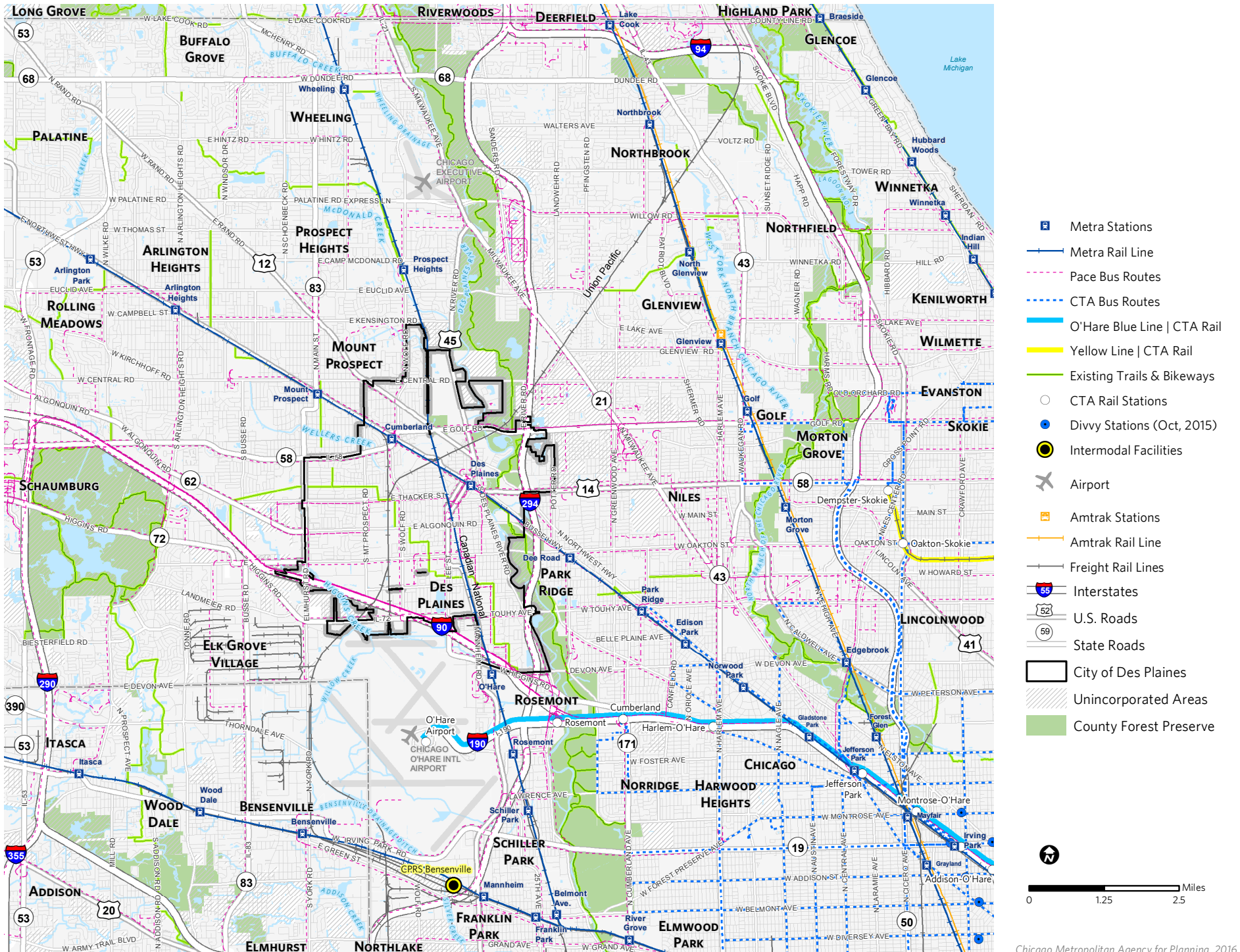
Floodplains

Floodplains are areas adjacent to waterways that are susceptible to inundation by floodwater based on different rainfall events. The regulatory floodplain, commonly known as the 100-year floodplain, is anticipated to flood when approximately 7.5 inches of rain falls within a 24-hour period. Because of the greater frequency and intensity of rainstorms due to climate change, flooding within Des Plaines' floodplains occurs more frequently. The regulatory floodplains in Des Plaines are largely within the Cook County Forest Preserve District's land holdings, though some areas of the floodplain were developed with residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

Water Source and Supply

Water availability has been a central ingredient to the region's economic prosperity and may play an even larger role in years to come. The City of Des Plaines purchases Lake Michigan water via the City of Chicago's Department of Water Management, with a water allocation of 7.969 millions of gallons per day (mgd) regulated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. In the 2013 water accounting year, Des Plaines distributed a net annual average of 6.49 mgd to residents and lost approximately 14 percent as non-revenue water. Whether water is lost through leaks in pipes or metering inaccuracies, it represents inefficient resource usage and lost revenue for the city. In addition, water conservation and minimizing water loss is a condition of the city's permit. The City of Des Plaines also sells water to the Illinois American Water Company, which services the Waycinden subdivision within the city.

Figure 1.9. Subregional transportation system.



Transportation

A modern transportation system is indispensable; residents must be able to travel quickly and easily around Des Plaines as well as the larger Chicago region to sustain our economy and quality of life. Businesses must be able to count on the timely delivery of their goods. With an aging and congested transportation system, maintenance and modernization are necessary to respond to mobility needs and trends. Des Plaines has excellent access to the regional transportation network including O’Hare Airport, highways (I-294 and I-90), freight (Canadian National and Union Pacific Railroad), 11 Pace bus routes, and commuter rail (Metra UP-NW). In addition, Metra’s North Central Service runs through the community with the O’Hare Transfer station just south of the municipal boundary, see Figure 1.9.

The downtown Des Plaines Metra Station is heavily utilized, see Table 1.7; the surrounding land use, including multi-family residential nearby, is likely why many travelers chose to walk to and from the station, see Table 1.8. Sidewalks are prevalent in the community, especially within residential neighborhoods. There are several on-street bicycle facilities, including bike lanes, marked shared lanes, and posted routes. Extending roughly 50 miles, the Des Plaines River Trail is a primarily unpaved path that runs from River Forest to the Wisconsin border and is accessible via E. Algonquin Road.

Table 1.7. Metra Boardings, Alightings, Access and Parking in Des Plaines, 2014.

Metra Station	Rail Line	Boardings	Alightings	Parking Capacity	Parking Utilization
Des Plaines	UP-NW	1,221	1,203	314	84%
Cumberland	UP-NW	431	414	257	85%

Source: RTAMS/ Metra 2014 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts: Train-by-Train Detail.

Table 1.8. Metra Mode of Access in Des Plaines, 2014.

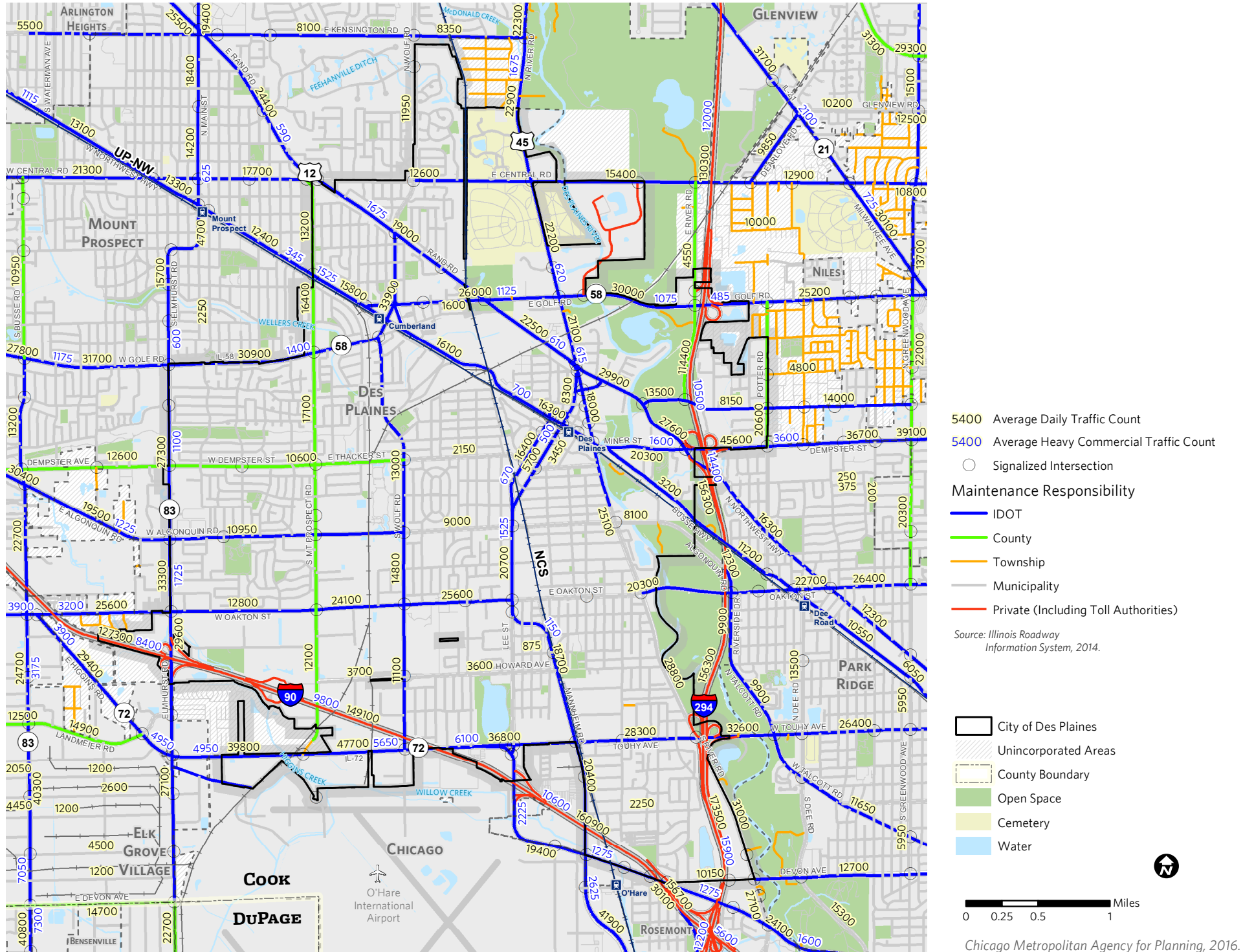
Station	Walked	Drove Alone	Dropped Off	Carpool	Bus	Bike	Other
Des Plaines	52%	28%	11%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Cumberland	20%	51%	20%	7%	0%	2%	0%

Source: Metra 2014 Origin-Destination Survey.



Des Plaines Metra Station.
Photo credit: Strannik45

Figure 1.10. Traffic volumes and jurisdiction of streets in Des Plaines.



Of the nearly 29,000 employed residents, approximately 23 percent work in the City of Chicago, 22 percent in nearby communities, and 10 percent work within Des Plaines. Many residents continue to drive alone to work (79 percent), with a majority traveling less than ten miles. Traffic counts reflect the existing level of automobile usage on a street (Figure 1.10). As anticipated, the streets carrying the highest volumes of vehicles include I-294 and I-90, as well as Touhy Avenue, Mannheim Road/Lee Street, Golf Road, and Elmhurst Road, many of which are maintained by IDOT. Significant traffic volumes are also seen on Rand Road, Golf Road, Oakton Street, and Des Plaines River Road. Truck volumes are greatest along I-294 and I-90 as well as Touhy Avenue, Mannheim Road/Lee Street, and Elmhurst Road, which are all state designated truck routes along with Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. Des Plaines has designated a number of local truck routes serving industrial land uses within the community.

In addition to local and sub-regional street improvements, there are several regionally significant transportation projects being constructed or planned for in the Des Plaines area, which are designed to improve regional mobility:

- o Elgin O'Hare Western Access project which will provide a new, limited-access facility to reduce congestion and improve access to the airport - including a new I-90 interchange at Elmhurst Road.
- o Jane Addams Tollway project which will add a lane in each direction from Rockford to I-294 as well as ITS infrastructure to support a future decision to use congestion pricing.
- o Metra UP-NW Improvements and Extension project, which will make infrastructure upgrades, extend the line to Johnsburg, and add two additional stations.
- o Pace Pulse Dempster:



Northwest Highway / Miner Street .

Photo credit: Strannik45