



IV. LAND USE

Existing land use patterns are a strong determinant of future land use in a mature and stable community such as Oak Forest. Changes in land uses over time will occur in an incremental fashion as redevelopment opportunities arise. Existing land use is depicted in this chapter for ease of reference, followed by the Future Land Use Framework. Land Use Goals and Policies are also included. Taken together, these Plan elements will provide guidance in evaluating the appropriateness of proposed changes in land use over the next ten to fifteen years, with the purpose of leveraging opportunities for improvement while mitigating potential impacts on neighboring areas.

EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use pattern within the City is graphically depicted in [Figure 2: Existing Land Use](#) on the following page. To determine the type and location of land uses present within the City of Oak Forest, land use data provided by the City was analyzed and field surveys were conducted in November 2006 and January 2007.

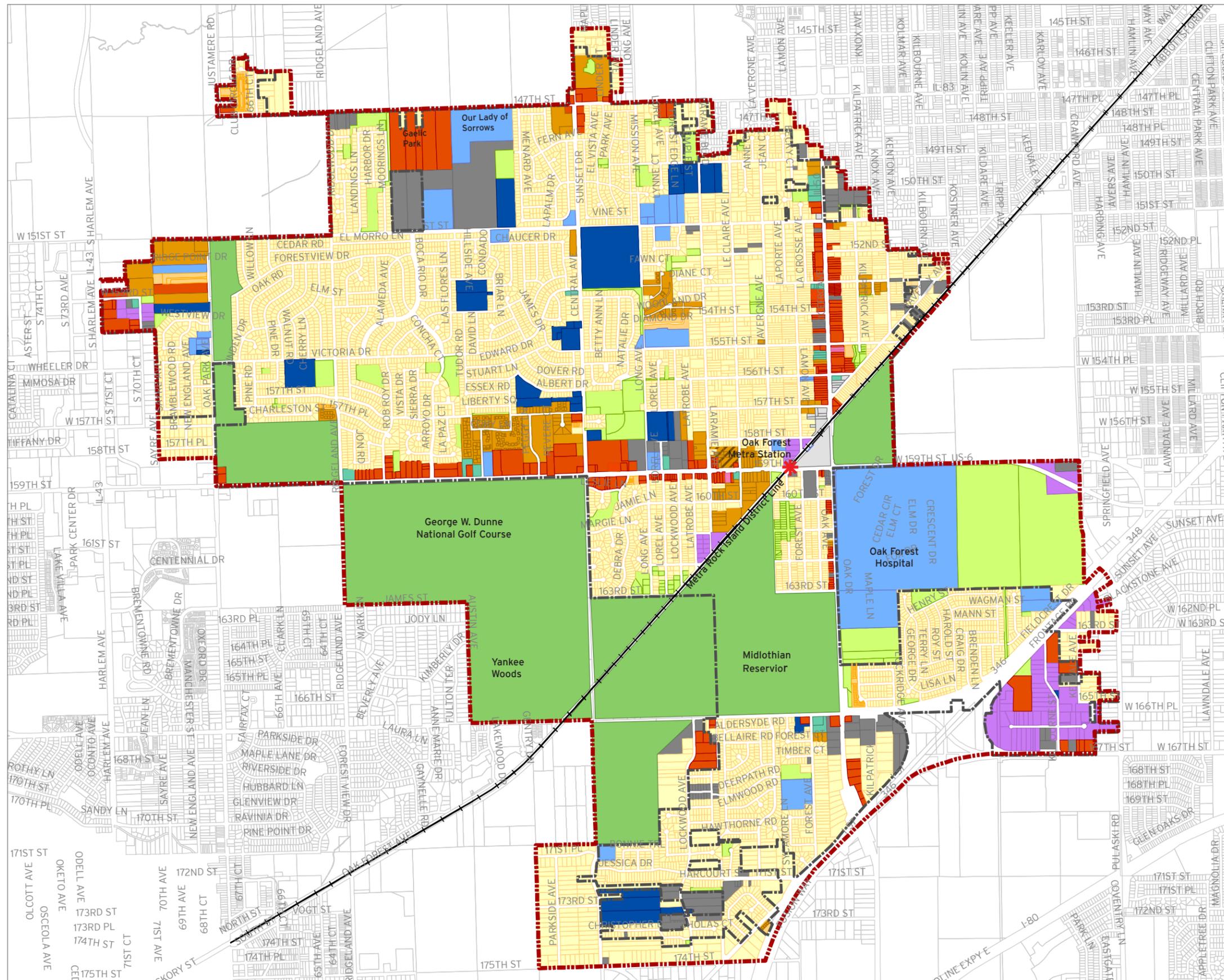
Left: An older single family residential neighborhood east of Central Avenue.

Right: A newer single family residential neighborhood west of Central Avenue.



FIGURE 2

EXISTING LAND USE



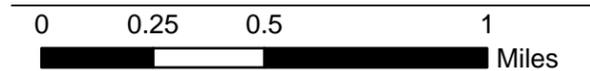
LEGEND

- City Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary

Land Uses

- Single Family Residential
- Townhouse Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Mobile Homes
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Public
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Forest Preserve
- Public Parking
- Vacant Building/Land
- Water Bodies

NOTE: Land Use survey completed in January 2007





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LAND USE CATEGORIES

The land use types depicted in the Future Land Use Framework are briefly described below. With only a few exceptions, the land use types and patterns depicted in the Future Land Use Framework closely reflect those currently found in Oak Forest.

Single Family Residential: This category includes detached single-family homes. The majority of these homes are on individual lots. The age, size and architectural style of homes within these neighborhoods varies, with the oldest neighborhoods located north of 163rd Street and east of Central Avenue (see images on page 18).

Townhouse Residential: This category includes buildings containing two or more dwelling units within a single building that are located side-by-side with individual exterior entrances. Townhouses are currently located: at the north east corner of 156th Street and Lamon Avenue, on Club Circle Drive, on Aspen Court, west of Central Avenue and south of Corey Lane, and north of 167th Street, just east of Cicero Avenue.



Multi-Family Residential: This category includes buildings that contain multiple dwelling units, whether rental units or condominiums. Existing developments are generally designed as “walk-up” buildings that either have exterior unit entrances or have common lobby and hallway areas for unit access. Most of these buildings are two to three stories in height. Multi-family residential developments that consist of buildings that exceed three stories in height are currently found at two locations: west of Oak Park Avenue and south of 151st Street, and at the southwest corner of 149th Street and Cicero Avenue.



Mixed Use: This category consists of commercial and/or office uses located in multi-story buildings, with residential dwelling units above the ground floor. Presently, mixed uses are only present at two locations: on 159th Street between Le Claire and Laramie Avenues (pictured), and on Cicero Avenue just south of 155th Street. There is also a mixed use building located at 15316 Cicero Avenue. Mixed use development is a key component of redevelopment concepts for the Metra Station area, as described in the Sub-Area Plan chapter.





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Commercial: This category includes businesses that provide consumer goods and services, and can draw patrons primarily from within the City and surrounding communities. These commercial uses are located both in small-scale single tenant buildings and in multi-tenant retail shopping centers. Most of the commercial uses in the City are located on the major corridors of 159th Street and Cicero Avenue. Some newer commercial has recently been developed on 167th Street south of I-57 (pictured). In the Future Land Use Framework, office uses (areas that accommodate professional, medical, technical or business services provided to the general public and other businesses) are included within areas defined as commercial, acknowledging their similarities in traffic patterns and the synergies that can be created by locating offices and commercial uses in proximity to one another.



Industrial: This category refers to manufacturing, processing, packaging, warehouse and distribution facilities. Within the City, there are a few concentrations of industrial uses. The largest area is a business park located south of I-57 at Kilbourn Avenue (pictured). Other industrial uses are located just north of the Oak Forest Metra Station (Wille Brothers), along Shadow Creek Drive and just east of Harlem Avenue on 70th Court.



Public: This category includes facilities owned and/or operated by the City and other governmental bodies, including the City Hall (pictured), public works, police department, fire stations, public schools, the U.S. Post Office, and the library. This category also includes Cook County Oak Forest Hospital. Several of these public facilities in Oak Forest are located along Central Avenue.



Institutional: This category includes places of worship and private schools. Land uses in this category can generate vehicular and pedestrian traffic that is similar to the facilities described in the "public" category. These facilities are dispersed throughout the City.





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Parks and Open Space: This category includes Park District properties (whether owned or leased) and privately-owned parks and open spaces that are accessible for passive or active recreational purposes, and which may also serve as storm water detention facilities. These uses are located throughout the City.



Forest Preserve: The City is largely surrounded by County-owned and maintained forest preserve lands, with some areas falling within City boundaries. They provide an important visual and recreational amenity for City residents.



Public Parking: There are several public parking lots that provide parking for commuters near the Oak Forest Metra Station. These are generally located at 159th Street and Cicero Avenue, 157th Street and Cicero Avenue, and Waverly and Cicero Avenue.

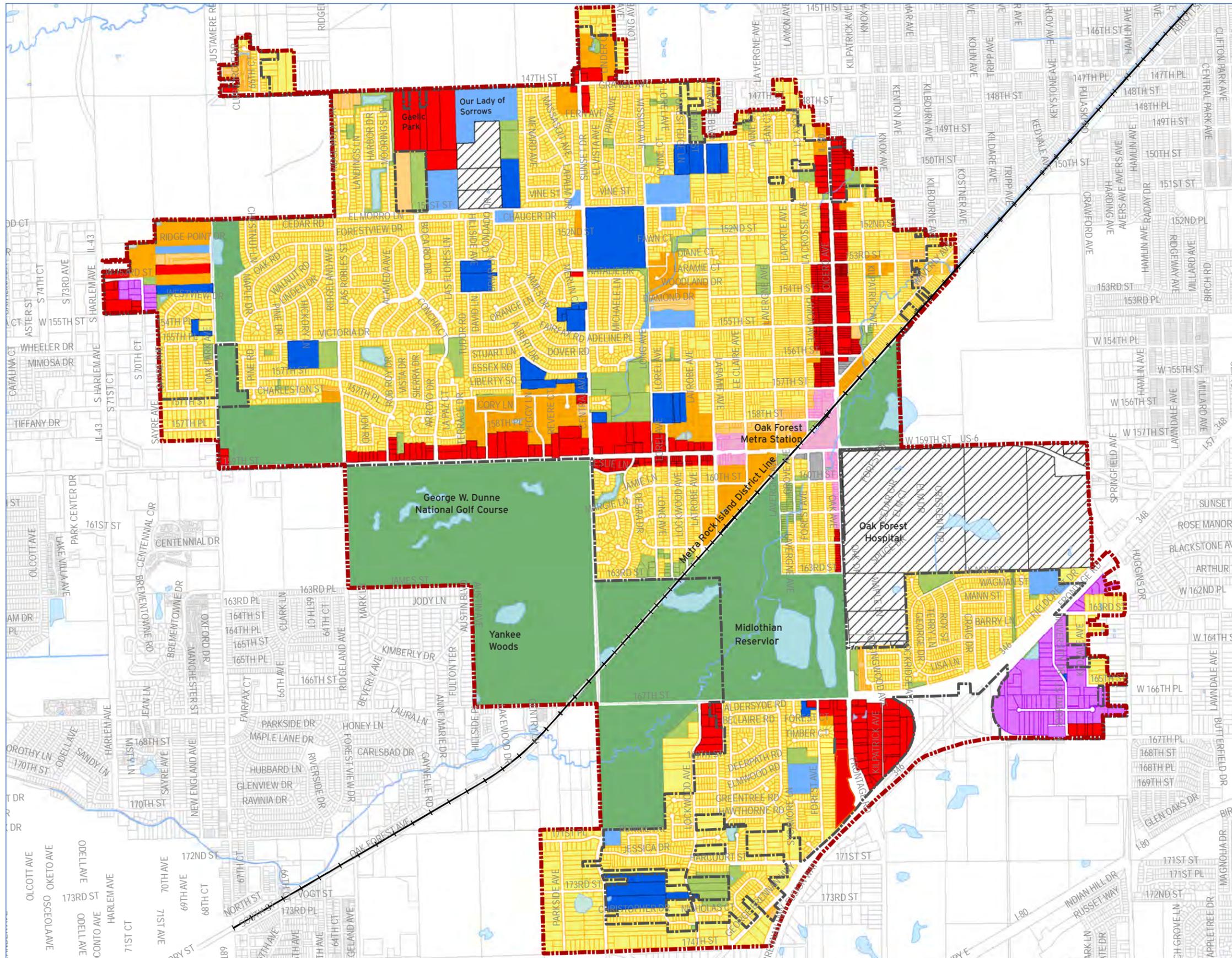
PUD: Two areas are indicated as “planned unit developments” or PUDs on the Future Land Use Framework. The planning intent of these two areas is described under Land Use Goal # 2 below.

FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The desired pattern of land use to achieve in the next ten to fifteen years in the City of Oak Forest is depicted on the following page in Figure 3: Future Land Use Framework. Table 2: Planning Area Land Use Comparison follows, providing an acreage breakdown comparing 2007 acreage to projected acreage in 2022 (fifteen years hence).



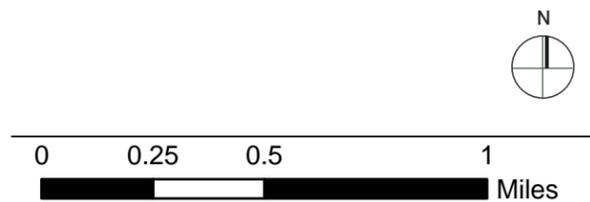
FIGURE 3
FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK



LEGEND

- City Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- Land Uses**
- Single Family Residential
- Townhouse Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Forest Preserve
- Public Parking
- PUD
- Water Bodies

NOTE: See Sub Area Plan for more detail in the vicinity of the Oak Forest Metra Station. See Land Use Goal #2 for discussion of areas designated as PUD.





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Table 2: Planning Area Land Use Comparison

Land Use Category	Existing Land Use 2007 Acres *	Existing Land Use 2007 Percentage	Future Land Use 2022 Acres *	Future Land Use 2022 Percentage	Percent Change 2007 to 2022
Single Family Residential	1,922.0	43.2%	1,872.4	42.1%	-2.6%
Townhouse Residential	13.7	0.3%	47.7	1.1%	247.9%
Multi-Family Residential	167.0	3.8%	193.0	4.3%	15.5%
Mobile Homes	4.9	0.1%	0.0	0.0%	-100.0%
Mixed Use	2.2	0.0%	28.8	0.6%	1209.5%
Commercial	199.4	4.5%	293.2	6.6%	47.0%
Office **	16.0	0.4%	0.0	0.0%	-100.0%
Industrial	85.8	1.9%	96.9	2.2%	12.9%
Public	144.0	3.2%	145.9	3.3%	1.3%
Institutional	295.9	6.6%	281.9	6.3%	-4.7%
Open Space ***	320.5	7.2%	354.0	8.0%	10.5%
Forest Preserve	1,092.6	24.6%	1,092.6	24.5%	0.0%
Public Parking	13.3	0.3%	5.5	0.1%	-58.5%
Vacant Buildings / Land	173.2	3.9%	38.7	0.9%	-77.7%
TOTAL	4,450.5	100.0%	4,450.5	100.0%	

* Land use acreages exclude public rights-of-way

** Office uses are including within Commercial category in 2022 projections

*** Open Space category includes some private detention areas

Note: Areas designated as "PUD" on the Future Land Use Framework are reflected as their existing land use in the table above.

Key points to note in interpreting the Future Land Use Framework and the Planning Area Land Use Comparison include the following:

- The Future Land Use Framework reflects an increase in overall acreage developed from approximately 65% (2,864 acres) to 67% (2,965 acres). The SketchPlan Builder™ program utilized to develop the Future Land Use Framework calculates a resulting increase in total impervious surface from approximately 34% (1,507 acres) to approximately 36% (1,596 acres).
- The Future Land Use Framework depicts reallocation of just under 135 acres of existing vacant land or buildings to other uses- primarily Commercial, Mixed Use, Multi-Family Residential and Townhouse Residential. Areas indicated in the Framework as "PUD" reflect their existing land use in the land use comparison table to follow (the approximately 39 acre vacant site south of Our Lady of Sorrows convent is therefore still indicated as such).
- The SketchPlan Builder™ program calculates the existing City population to be 28,293 based upon existing land use patterns, reflecting slight growth in the interim from the 2000 U.S. Census estimate of 28,051. The Future Land Use Framework represents a potential population increase of approximately five percent, or





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approximately 1,305 persons, for a total of 29,598 persons if all the land use changes reflected in the plan are implemented. Note that areas indicated as “PUD” in the Future Land Use Framework reflect their existing use in the population estimates. Should these areas develop as described under Land Use Goal #2, additional population growth would be generated. For comparison purposes, note that CMAP (formerly NIPC) has projected a potential Year 2030 population for the City of 33,040 (reflecting a time frame that exceeds the time horizon of the Plan).

- Due to the expectation of increased housing type diversity over time, the school age population in Oak Forest is expected to decrease by approximately one percent, or approximately 134 children (from 15,157 to 15,023 per the SketchPlan Builder™ calculations). This reflects an increase in the percentage of multi-family residential housing, primarily in the Oak Forest Metra Station area, as this type of housing tends to yield fewer school-age residents.
- Commercial and office uses are projected to see a net increase of approximately 78 acres, approximately half of which is represented by a potential major commercial development at the southeast corner of 167th Street and Cicero Avenue (office uses are combined with the commercial total for 2022). Mixed uses are reflected on an additional approximately 29 acres, primarily in the vicinity of the Oak Forest Metra Station. If all of these areas were to develop or redevelop, the potential net increase in commercial space in the City could be approximately 1,000,000 square feet.
- The potential for increased commercial lot depth is anticipated on the west side of Cicero Avenue between 153rd and 157th Streets and on the south side of 159th Street between Long and Laramie Avenues.
- Industrial uses are projected to see a net increase of approximately 11.1 acres (or 13 percent). While some scattered older industrial uses are indicated to be phased out, development of remaining vacant parcels in the City’s two business parks results in the slight net increase.
- Existing parking lots for commuters near the Oak Forest Metra Station are indicated to be replaced with Mixed Uses. The Future Land Use Framework also shows the commuter parking lot currently under construction south of 159th Street. It is anticipated that both replacement and new commuter parking will primarily be accommodated within the Mixed Use areas near





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the station rather than in dedicated surface parking lots, likely through the provision of shared structured parking. For this reason, the total acreage dedicated to Public Parking decreases.

- The Open Space category includes public parks, and also includes some areas within neighborhoods that are not developable due to environmental constraints, and/or areas utilized exclusively for storm water detention.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The Land Use Goals and Policies provide direction for maintaining and improving Oak Forest's overall development pattern, and should be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Framework to determine the appropriate response to development and redevelopment opportunities that arise over time in the City.

LAND USE GOAL # 1

Achieve a sustainable pattern of development that provides for well-designed, compatible, and economically viable commercial, employment, and industrial land use areas.

Policies:

1. Develop and redevelop sites in a manner that has long-term stability and provides for the employment, economic, cultural, social, and lifestyle needs of City residents.
2. Encourage new development and redevelopment along major commercial corridors and in industrial and unincorporated vacant areas where they will be compatible with adjoining land uses.
3. Promote new commercial and mixed use development and redevelopment, with emphasis on aging, vacant, and underutilized locations especially along major corridors.
4. Encourage coordinated commercial and mixed use development in "nodes" at major intersections and around the Metra station. Mixed uses should be coordinated and contiguous, with adequate visibility and access for ground floor commercial spaces.
5. Implement regular and active property maintenance and code enforcement in commercial and industrial areas.
6. Amend business district zoning regulations as needed to promote the City's commercial development goals and long-range land use plan.





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LAND USE GOAL # 2

Pro-actively address the remaining large development and redevelopment opportunity sites in and adjacent to the City, to ensure that they are successfully integrated into the overall land use pattern.

Policies:

1. Consider strategic annexations and boundary agreements that will create a logical City boundary, facilitate efficient use of City infrastructure and services, and ensure that development at the City's periphery occurs in a compatible, sustainable and high quality manner.
2. Should the opportunity arise, work closely with property owner(s) and potential developer(s) to create an environmentally sensitive and attractive mixed use development on some or all of the existing Cook County Oak Forest Hospital property- integrating commercial and residential uses in a manner that protects existing natural resources while benefiting from the site's high profile location and minimizing off-site impacts.
3. Should the opportunity arise, work closely with property owner(s) and potential developer(s) to create a new residential neighborhood south of the existing Our Lady of Sorrows property- integrating a variety of housing types with open space(s) and a potential neighborhood commercial element in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects existing natural resources and provides connections to adjacent land uses.

LAND USE GOAL # 3

Forge and maintain strong public and private partnerships to capitalize upon the community's resources in implementing land use plans, policies and programs.

Policies:

1. Seek meaningful and productive relationships with local and regional organizations, civic groups, institutions, and leaders in the community to implement land use and development policies.
2. Create awareness and understanding of community needs and potentials among the City's various partnerships.
3. Mobilize partnerships into action to create positive change within the community, building upon the City's established philosophy of broad participation.

