

# WAUKEGAN

City of Progress *Illinois*

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CITY OF WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

**DRAFT**  
for Review



**DRAFT**  
for Review



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# 1

## Introduction

The City of Waukegan holds a prominent position as the county seat of Lake County, and the largest city on Chicago's North Shore. This is partly thanks to the City's robust planning effort, strategic location, and a diverse community. To elevate its success and quality of life for its residents the City has embarked on a 13-month process to unlock the potential of the City. Though the City has conducted multiple planning processes in the recent past, these plans have been district-focused. The Comprehensive Plan is different and signifies a new chapter for the City because it focuses on the City of Waukegan as a whole. It will be the guiding document for multiple City departments and stakeholders and will unify various efforts and objectives into one cohesive vision to move the City forward. This report documents the City's existing conditions and provides a foundation for future recommendations for improvement.

## Why Plan? The Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a document to guide long-range planning efforts. It will be the City's official guide to land use and development. It will be the City's roadmap, which details the vision and policy agenda for critical issues, including: land use, redevelopment, housing, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, parks and recreation, natural resources, and more. The Plan also will be a culmination of a unified vision developed through the input of the City residents, businesses, staff, elected and appointed officials, and the consultant team. In the end, the City of Waukegan Comprehensive Plan should answer the question, "What should Waukegan look like in the next 10-20 years and how do we get there?"

## The Purpose of the Existing Conditions Report

The Existing Conditions Report for the City of Waukegan Comprehensive Plan is one of the first milestones in the planning process. The consultant team has conducted a series of outreach events and gathered data to understand the issues and opportunities of the City of Waukegan. This report incorporates and reflects the perspectives and opinions of Waukegan residents, stakeholders, business leaders, and City appointed and elected officials on the issues and opportunities the City faces. This input informs future policy and design recommendations for land use, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, natural resources, community facilities, and urban design.

## The Planning Process

The planning process for the City of Waukegan Comprehensive Plan Update consists of five phases. The Existing Conditions Report documents the tasks completed in Phase 1 - Evaluate.

**Phase 1: Evaluate:** The "kick-off" for the project involved a series of kick-off meetings and workshops with the City staff, department heads, elected and appoint officials, and the project's Steering Committee and the public meeting to discuss and review the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. It also defined the outreach component of the planning process. During this phase, the consultant team began collecting data from the field and a variety of data sources to evaluate the City of Waukegan's characteristics.

**Phase 2: Investigate:** In this phase, input and information will continue to be gathered from residents and stakeholders through in-person interviews. A public meeting will occur in this phase to generate the project vision and desired characteristics for the City. Data gathering from the City, agencies, service providers, and organizations continue in this phase. The data and input will be analyzed to draft the Plan's Vision, Goals, and Objectives.

**Phase 3: Enhance:** In this phase, the input gathered from the community outreach process will be reviewed and synthesized with other gathered data to prepare recommendations and policies that will address: future land use, housing and neighborhoods, transportation and infrastructure, natural resources, and economic development. The recommendations will represent the core of a draft Comprehensive Plan that will be submitted to the City for review.

**Phase 4: Empower:** This phase will involve presenting the draft Comprehensive Plan to the City and the public for review. The input received from them will be used to create the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Phase 5: Integrate:** This phase will involve a final round of revisions to create the final draft plan. The final draft plan will be presented to the City staff and the Steering Committee, then submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission, then City Council for formal adoption.

# Regional Context

The City of Waukegan is a diverse and significant community in the North Shore region of Illinois. It is the county seat of Lake County and is located half-way between Chicago and Milwaukee. Its proximity to regional transportation systems, including: Metra Union Pacific North service, Interstate 94, Skokie Highway (U.S. Highway 41), Green Bay Road (State Route 131), Sheridan Road (State Route 137), and the Waukegan National Airport, enables residents to travel north to Wisconsin and south to Chicago, Indiana, Michigan, and beyond.

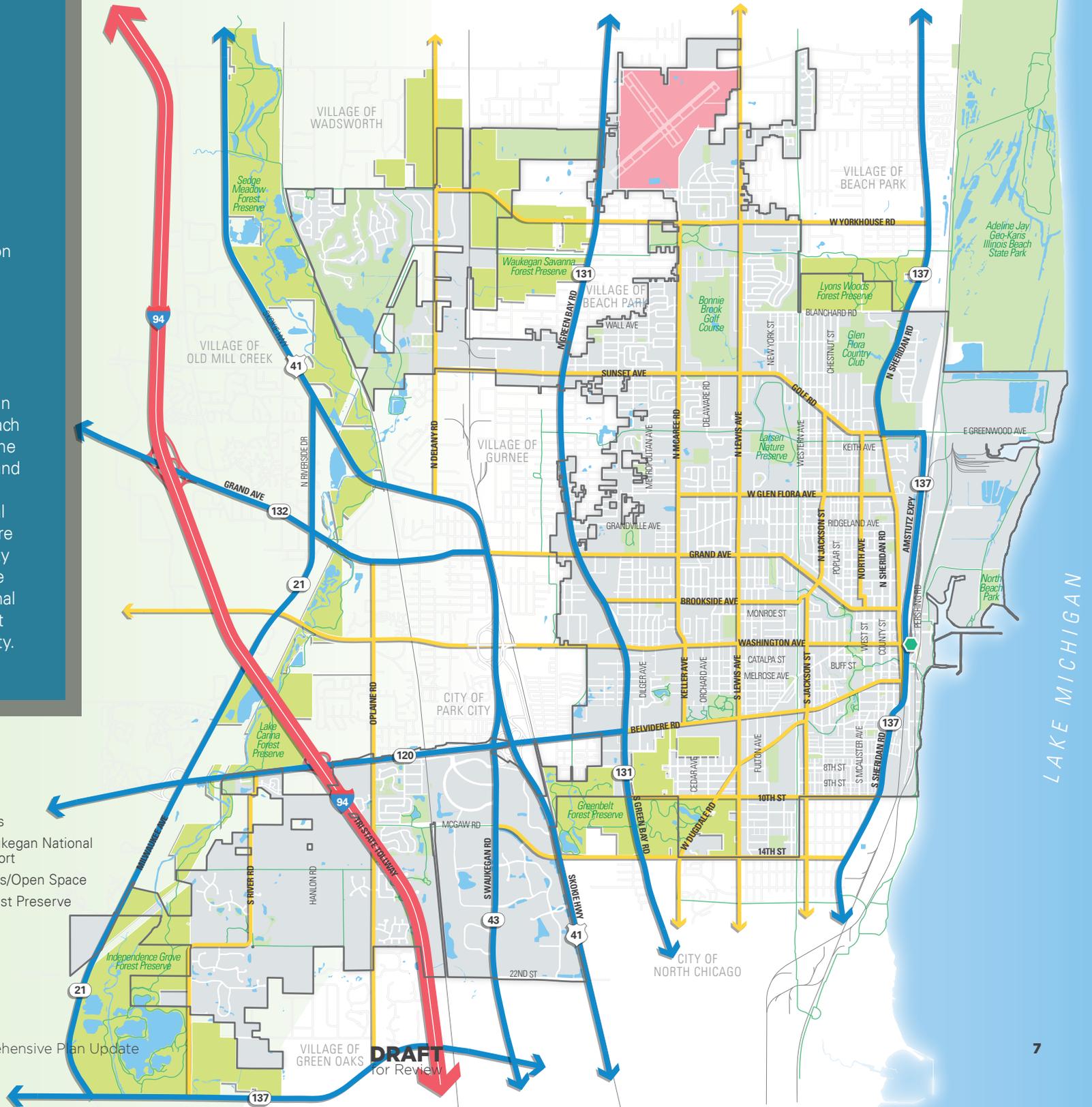
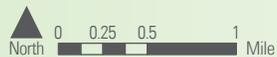


# Local Context

The City's east-west thoroughfares, such as Grand Avenue, Washington Street, and Belvidere Road, enable residents to access different parts of the City and the regional transportation network. The City of Waukegan is bordered by Lake Michigan on the east, Village of Beach Park and Wadsworth to the north, Gurnee to the west, and North Chicago and Green Oaks to the south. Natural and recreational spaces are spread throughout the City for residents' use, and the lakefront remains a regional destination and significant redevelopment opportunity.

## Legend

-  Waukegan Municipal Boundary
-  Trails
-  Waukegan National Airport
-  Parks/Open Space
-  Interstate
-  Forest Preserve
-  Highways
-  Major Roadways



# Review of Past Plans & Studies

The City of Waukegan has several adopted policies and plans that provide the framework and strategic guidance for the development and betterment of quality of life in the City. The City's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1987. Several other plans that were adopted in subsequent years are primarily district-focused. The City's policies and plans have been reviewed and assessed to understand important objectives, recommendations, and regulations that should be considered in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The following are summaries of previous plans and reports that the consultant team has reviewed.

## The 1987 Waukegan Comprehensive Plan

The 1987 Comprehensive Plan has been the City's guiding document used by the City for land use, transportation and infrastructure, regulatory, and policy decisions since its adoption in 1987. This document established an updated survey of existing land use and a new transportation plan for the City of Waukegan. However, many of the recommendations have been accomplished or superseded by a number of district-focused plans the City has adopted in subsequent years. The 1987 Comprehensive Plan will serve as a reference guide for the new Comprehensive Plan. Each element has been reviewed for its relevancy and applicability to current comprehensive planning methodology. However, it is necessary draft a new Comprehensive Plan to reflect the City's changing economics and demographics over the past thirty-two years.

## Waukegan Downtown Lakefront Master Plan (2003)

Following the ULI's recommendation, the City hired a consultant team in early 2003 to create a master plan for the City's Downtown and Lakefront area. This master plan envisions the Waukegan Lakefront to be a vibrant destination with easy access between the Downtown and the Lakefront. Key recommendations from this plan include:

- Promoting mixed use and transit-oriented developments in the City's Downtown and Lakefront area
- Creating a strong pedestrian, transit, and roadway connections between the Downtown and the Lakefront
- Protecting and enhancing the City's ravine and park system
- Restoring the Lakefront into a regional natural and recreation asset
- Encouraging land uses that complement an environmentally-focused lakefront.

This plan provided the framework for the City to adopt a series of Design Guidelines for its Downtown Lakefront revitalization area.

The City has adopted a series of studies, including the Open Space Implementation Strategy (2007) and the Lakefront Active Implementation Plan (2016), that provide more specific and concrete implementation strategies to realize the vision of the Waukegan Downtown Lakefront Master Plan.

## Related Plans

- Urban Land Institute's Advisory Services Panel Report on Waukegan (2002)
- Waukegan Lakefront Downtown Master Plan Design Guidelines (2005)
- Open Space Implementation Strategy (2007)
- Lakefront Active Implementation Plan (2016)

## CMAP Waukegan Planning Priorities Report (2012)

In 2011, the City of Waukegan submitted an application to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to request local technical assistance as a part of the agency's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program. Through this program, CMAP works with local governments to address issues relating to land use, transportation, housing, the natural environment, and economic and community development. To better understand the City's planning needs, CMAP worked with the City to understand its priorities and challenges. Over the course of the process, CMAP identified and recommended the Washington Street commercial corridor, between the Waukegan River ravines to Lewis Avenue, to be the focus of future LTA assistance. The report did not recommend the Downtown/Lakefront area, because the City had already committed resources to the improvement of the area. This report established the groundwork for the Washington Street Corridor Plan that was adopted by the City in 2014.

## CMAP Washington Street Corridor Plan (2014)

Following the recommendations from CMAP's Waukegan Planning Priorities Report in 2012, CMAP worked with the City of Waukegan to create a corridor plan for Washington Street. The planning process involved documentation of existing conditions of Washington Street. During this process, the plan identified Washington Street beginning to be perceived as a "Main Street" for the growing Latino population living nearby. Breaking down the cultural and language barriers in the planning process was critical. The goals of the corridor plan include:

- Making the Washington Street Corridor more inviting and easily accessible to all visitors and residents
- Providing a wide variety of amenities
- Providing opportunities for after school activities and career development
- Encouraging businesses to collaborate to strengthen the Corridor.

The Comprehensive Plan will examine the relevancy of these goals and objectives and adapt them as needed.

## South Sheridan Revitalization Plan (2016)

This plan used the Waukegan Downtown Lakefront Master Plan as a foundation to create opportunities in the South Sheridan corridor neighborhood. The plan is intended to create an authentic South Sheridan Road by honoring its past through careful planning, design and execution. Its intended purpose is to welcome regional and national market opportunities and create long-term prosperity for existing residents and businesses as well as those that are new to the area. The Plan introduced contemporary and well-designed, affordable, and professionally managed multi-family housing as an additional land use for the Corridor. Several development opportunities are available, including the intersection of Sheridan Road and South Avenue, City-owned land to the southeast, and the 120-unit Barwell Manor. Promoting ownership of the neighborhood's single-family homes is important to reclaim the single-family housing stock in the South Sheridan neighborhood. The Plan also proposed assisting vulnerable neighborhood residents with mortgage qualification to expand home ownership in neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor.

## River Road Corridor Plan (2017)

The City of Waukegan adopted the River Road Corridor Plan in 2017 as an amendment to the City's 1987 Comprehensive Plan. The plan is intended to guide future development in the River Road Corridor and to ensure that instead of conforming with the River Glen cluster development, future development should be compatible with the prior, existing subdivisions. Specifically, the plan recommended that the City define a holistic development strategy for the area and key planning principles, including: land and development patterns, open space and natural systems, access and connectivity relative to traffic, and safety and leisure. It is important to understand the logical areas for potential development and advance environmental objectives for a high quality of life and conservation of open space. The guidance provided by this recent plan will be adapted into the new Comprehensive Plan.

# Public Process Summary

A public engagement process was created for the Comprehensive Plan to gather input from residents, stakeholders, business leaders, City leadership and staff, and community organizations. Meeting summaries are included in the appendices.

The following is an overview of the community engagement process that has taken place to date.

## Project Kick-Off

The planning process kicked off on August 29, 2018, with a series of meetings with various stakeholders and City departments. The following are the meetings/activities that took place:

### Meeting with the City's Public Relations Team

The consultant team met with the City's Public Relations team to discuss challenges and lessons learned from previous planning processes. The City staff also shared strategies to engage stakeholders with the process. The consultant team and the City staff discussed meeting logistics, coordination, and identified groups and organizations to engage.

### Meeting with the City's Planning and Zoning Department, Building Department, and Engineering Department

The consultant team met with members of the staff from the City's Planning and Zoning Department as well as the Building and Engineering Departments. The meeting involved discussion regarding planning issues within and around the City of Waukegan.

### Meeting with Mayor and Department Heads

The consultant team facilitated a meeting with the Mayor and Department Heads. The meeting included an overview of the project's planning process and schedule, public engagement plan, and project logistics. There was a discussion about the City's past planning efforts and their effectiveness and lessons learned. The meeting also included a mapping exercise where meeting participants spatially identified issues and opportunities in the City of Waukegan.

### City Tour

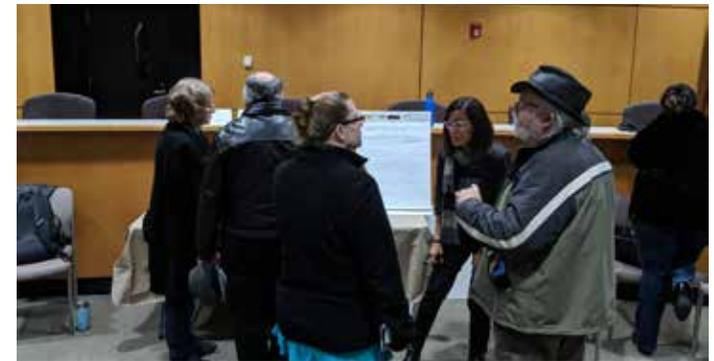
The consultant team and City staff toured the City of Waukegan to document existing conditions, assets, constraints, and opportunities.

### Meeting with the Project's Steering Committee

The format of this meeting was similar to the meeting with the Mayor and Department Heads. The project's Steering Committee members discussed the implications of the City's past planning processes and participated in the mapping exercise to identify issues and opportunities in and around the City of Waukegan.

## Public Workshop 1

On November 15, 2018, the consultant team, along with City staff, hosted a public workshop to gather input on the comprehensive planning process. The workshop was held at the Waukegan City Hall in the Council Chambers. There were about 110 participants, consisting of residents, business leaders, stakeholders, steering committee members, City staff, and leadership. There were approximately 40 additional people who participated in the workshop but did not sign in. The workshop was organized into five stations in which participants could share their vision, issues, and opportunities, personal history in relation to Waukegan, opinions of the City's past planning efforts, and experience in living and working in the City of Waukegan. Most materials in the workshop were bilingual (English and Spanish).



## Project Website

A project website was created for the project to extend the in-person public engagement and enable project stakeholders to participate in the planning process at their convenience. The website is bilingual (English and Spanish). It also provides information on upcoming and past project events, communicates the goals and objectives of the Plan, and updates visitors on progress towards completion of the Comprehensive Plan.



## Online Survey

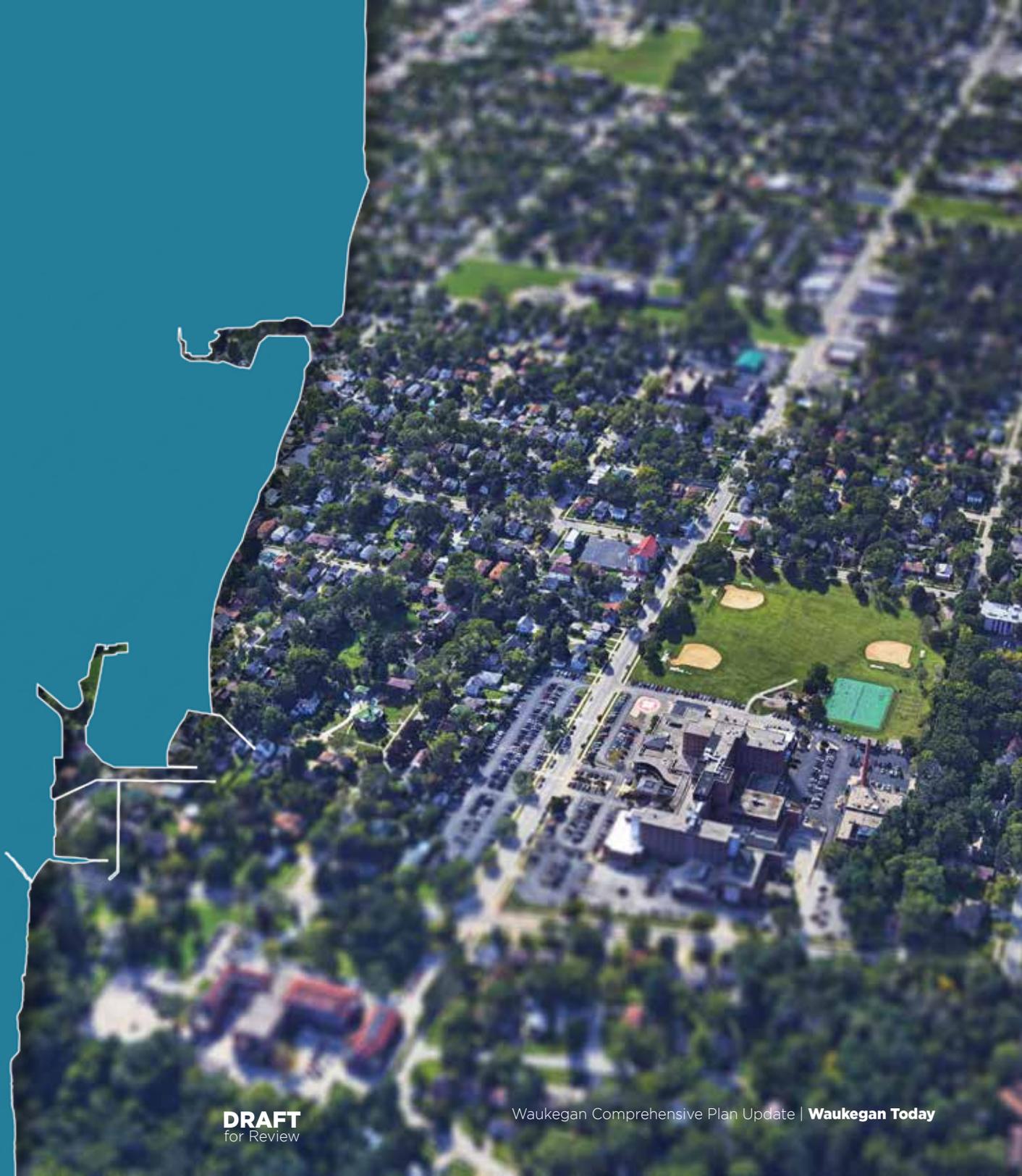
An online survey was provided for Waukegan residents and stakeholders who could not attend the first Public Workshop. The online survey asked participants similar questions to those discussed in the in-person Public Workshop.

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## Waukegan Today

The City of Waukegan is in the northern portion of the Chicago region along Lake Michigan. It is the county seat of Lake County, Illinois, which is one of the most affluent counties in the United States. Unlike much of the rest of Lake County, Waukegan has a significant manufacturing history and has had a major shipping harbor on Lake Michigan since its formation in the 1800s. In recent years, Waukegan's economy has diversified and become less manufacturing-based.

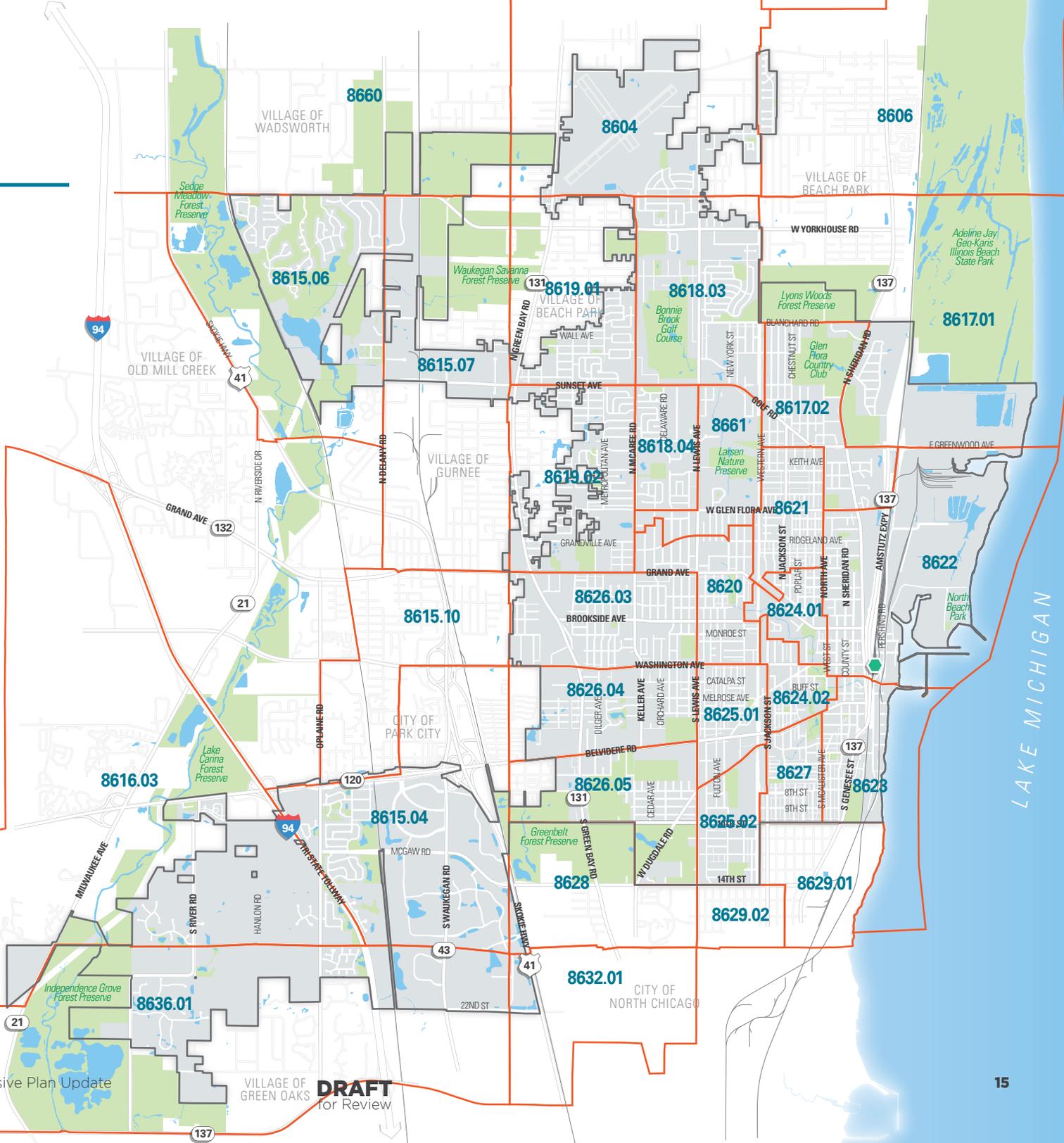


# CENSUS TRACTS

## Legend

-  Waukegan Municipal Boundary
-  Waukegan Metra Station
-  Census Tract Boundary

The following sections will explore the demographic, housing, economy, and education attainment within the City of Waukegan. Some analysis will involve comparing a specific dataset among census tracts. This map shows the Census Tracts' boundaries and numbers that are within and around the City of Waukegan.



# Population

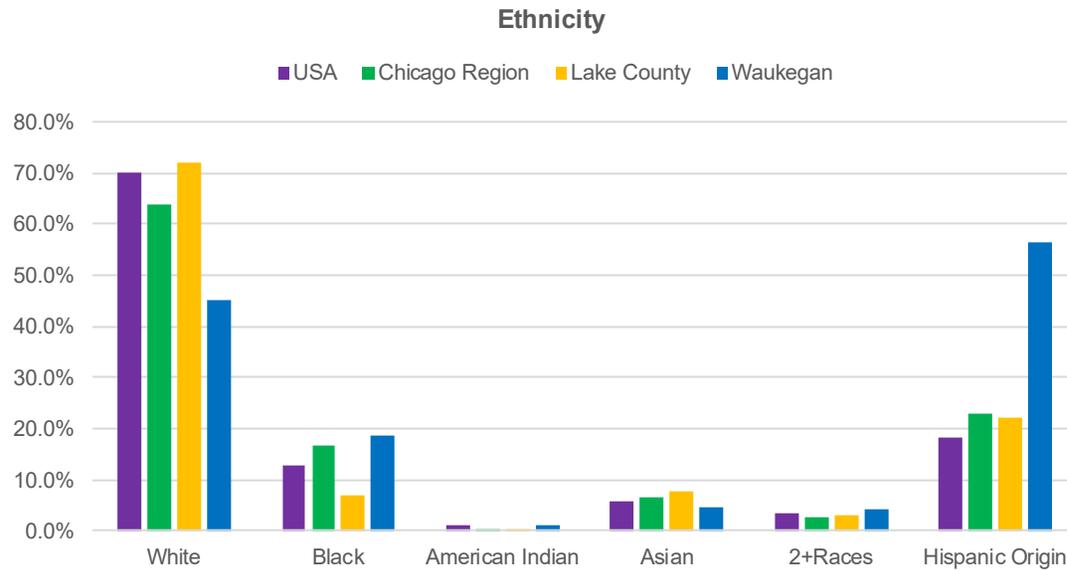
The importance of the population analysis is to understand the similarities and differences between Waukegan, Lake County, and the larger Chicago region as different population subsets that have different needs and therefore require a different service response from the public and private sectors.

## Ethnicity

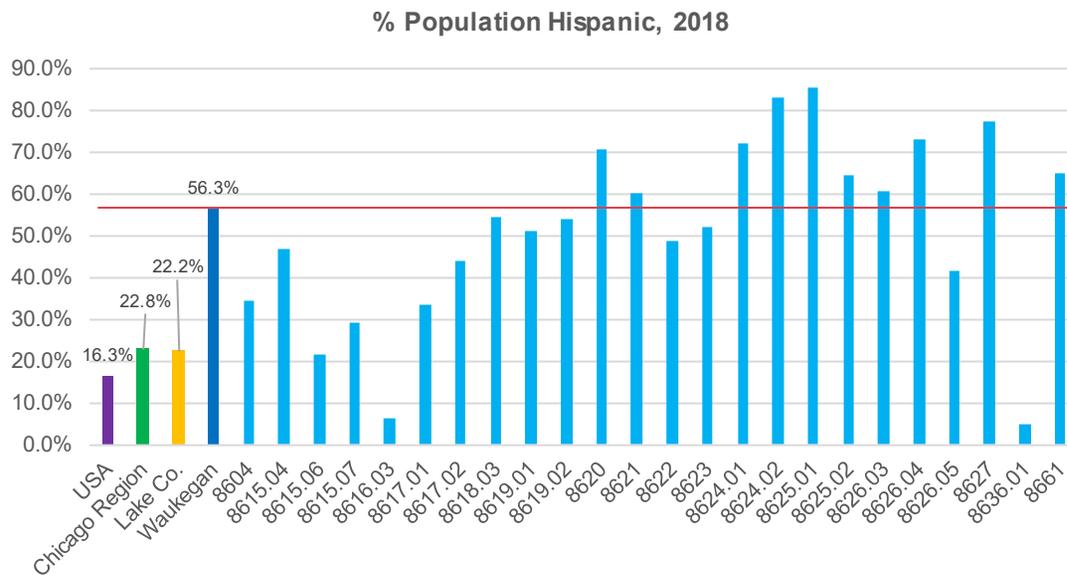
Most other municipalities in Lake County have evolved by becoming bedroom communities to Chicago and Cook County to the south. This has always led Waukegan to be socio-economically more diversified and dissimilar from most of the other communities found in Lake County. This has also led Waukegan to be more distinct in its residential income mix and ethnicity than the rest of the county. ESRI business analyst calculates diversity range with an index of 1 to 100 (100 being most diverse). Waukegan's diversity index score is 87.9 while Lake County is 65.3 and the Chicago region is 71.6.

## Hispanic/Latino Population

Waukegan has a very significant Hispanic/Latino population that makes up 56% of its population. 55% of households in Waukegan speak another language at home besides English. Waukegan's rich and vibrant culture, due to its ethnic make-up, makes Waukegan an interesting place to live, work, and recreate. The chart at the right provides the population distribution using Waukegan's census tracts for reference.



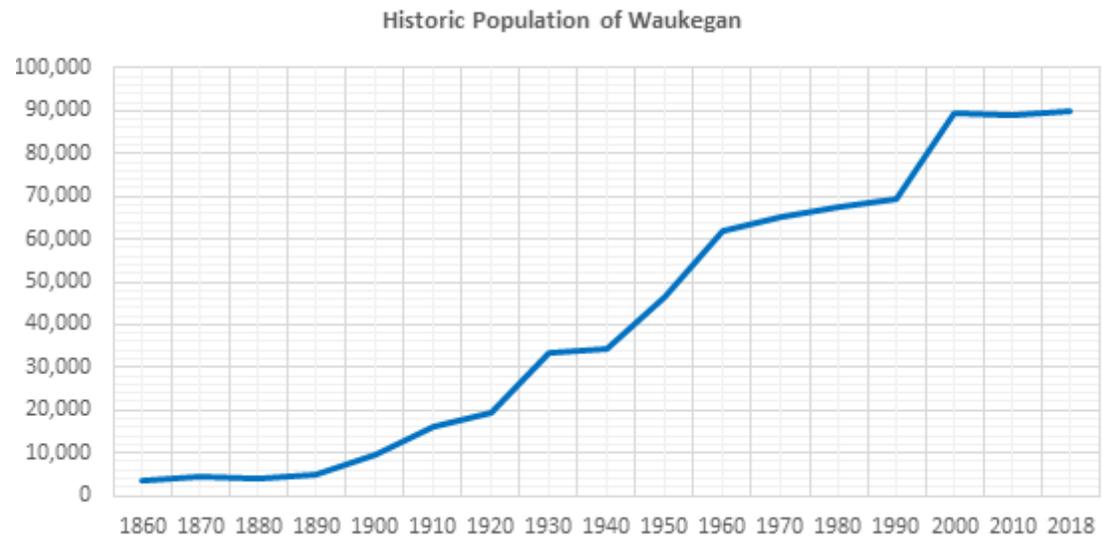
Source: ESRI Business Analyst



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Historical Population Growth Trends

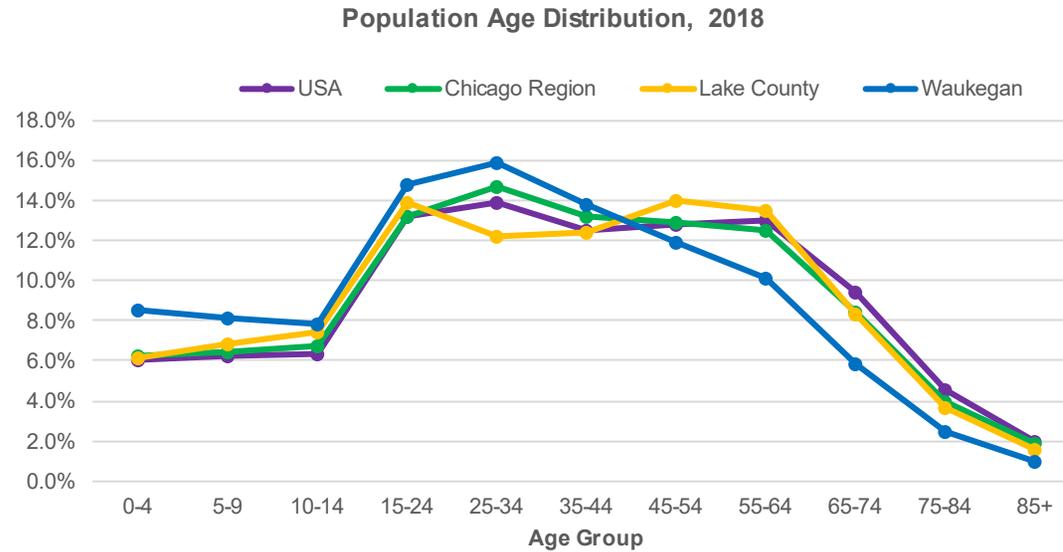
Waukegan has had several significant growth periods during its history. Most recently, the City has experienced a plateau due to the loss of manufacturing employment. It underwent significant economic losses during the 2008 recession, however, the City still exhibited some population growth from 2010 to 2018 of 862 people. This may be due to its expanding Hispanic population base. While its estimated population in 2018 is 89940, the City is expected to continue to grow slightly over the next five years to reach over 90500 persons by 2023.



Source: U.S. Census

## Population Age Distribution

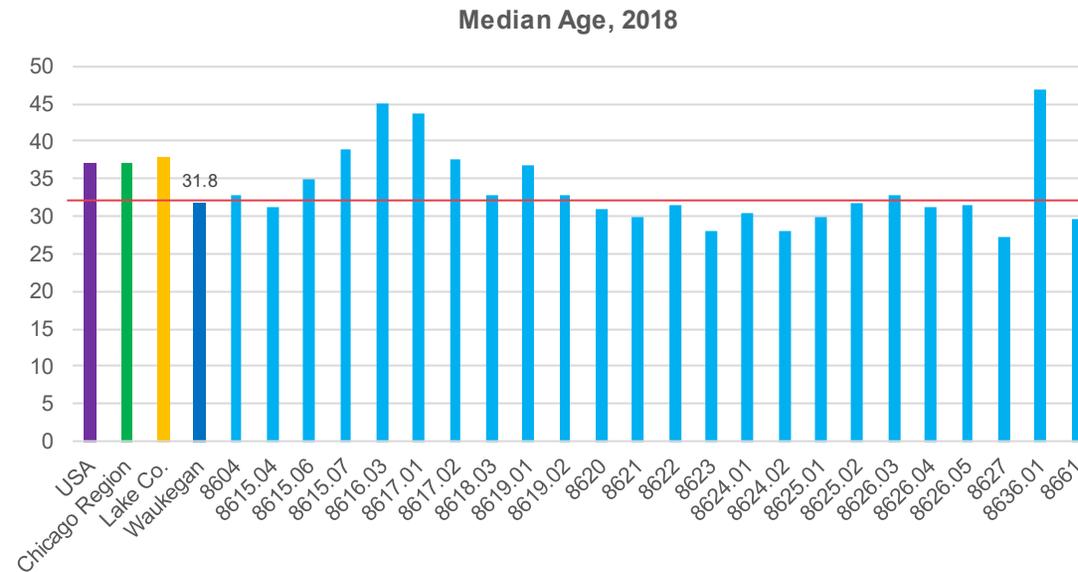
The graph at the right illustrates that the City of Waukegan has a higher population share of younger residents than Lake County or the Chicago region. This suggests that educational opportunity will be important as there is a greater need for youth education and early job training programs for those 25-34.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Median Age

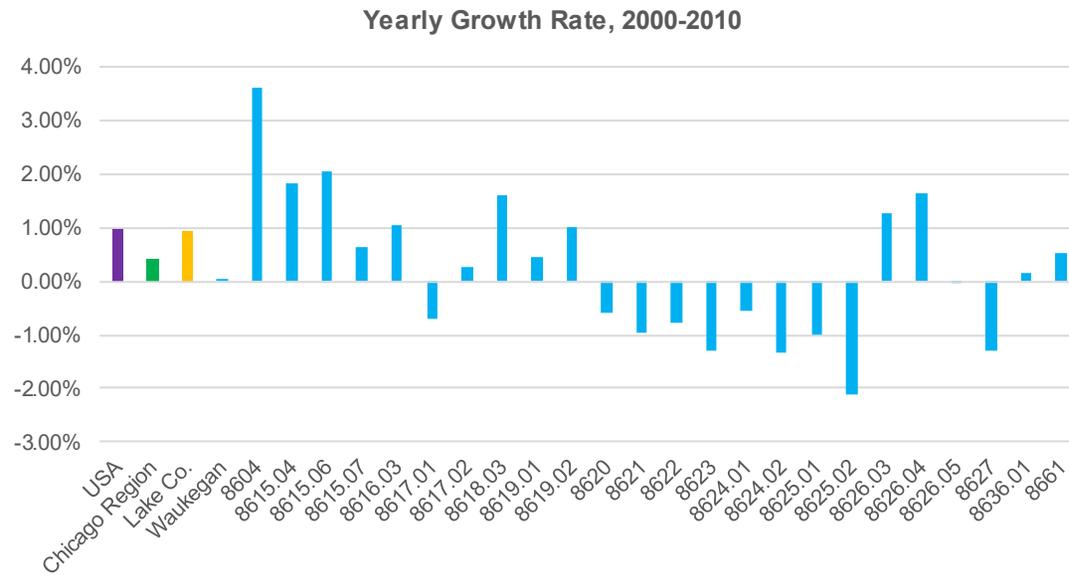
Waukegan's median age is 31.8. This is lower than the rest of Lake County and the Chicago region, which are both over 35 years of age. Several census tracts including neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown have a lower median age population, which indicates there is a higher proportion of young people in these neighborhoods. The downtown Census Tract 8623, at the southern end of Downtown and the southeast portion of the City, also has a lower median age as well.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Population Growth: 2000-2010

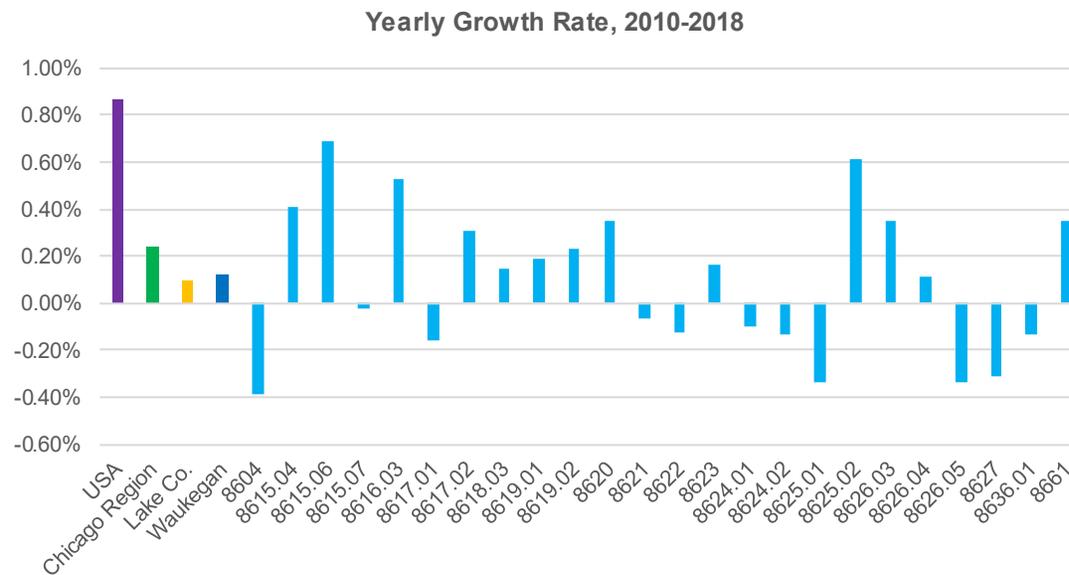
Population growth has not occurred evenly across the City. From 2000-2010, neighborhoods in and around downtown lost residents, while outlying areas had positive annual growth rates. Census tracts are used for reference on the charts to the right.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Population Growth: 2010-2018

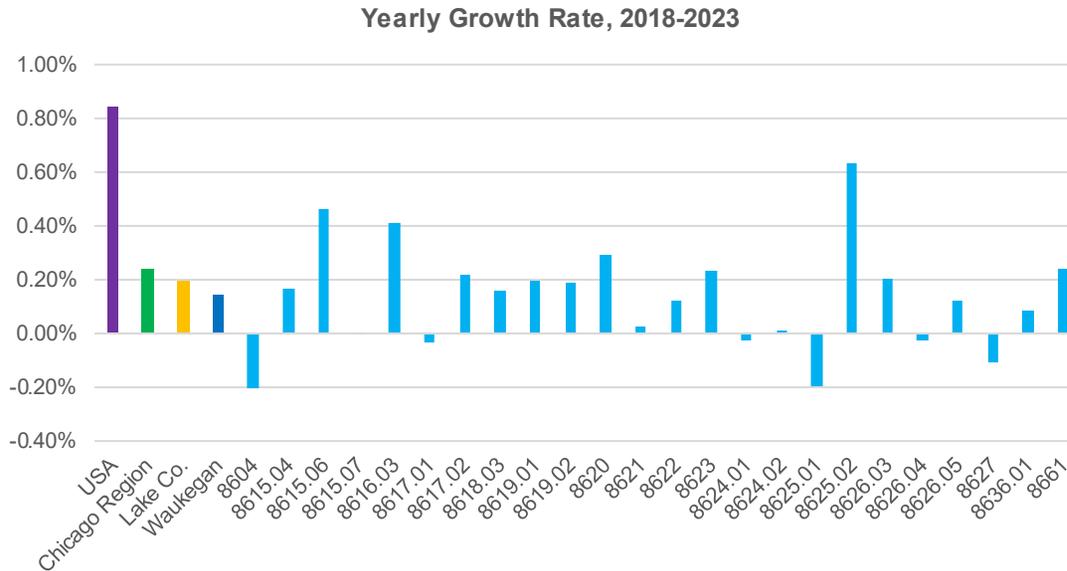
Population growth trends have changed in the current decade. Three of the six census tracts near downtown (central neighborhoods) including downtown (8623) have grown over the past eight years. Other neighborhoods such as census tract 8604 that is near the Waukegan Airport on the City's north side experienced negative growth from 2010-2018.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Projected Population Growth: 2018-2023

Waukegan is projected to continue to experience growth through 2020 with an annual growth rate of 0.15% over the next five years. Most neighborhoods near downtown are projected to continue to see growth as well. Census tract 8604 is anticipated to see continued population loss.



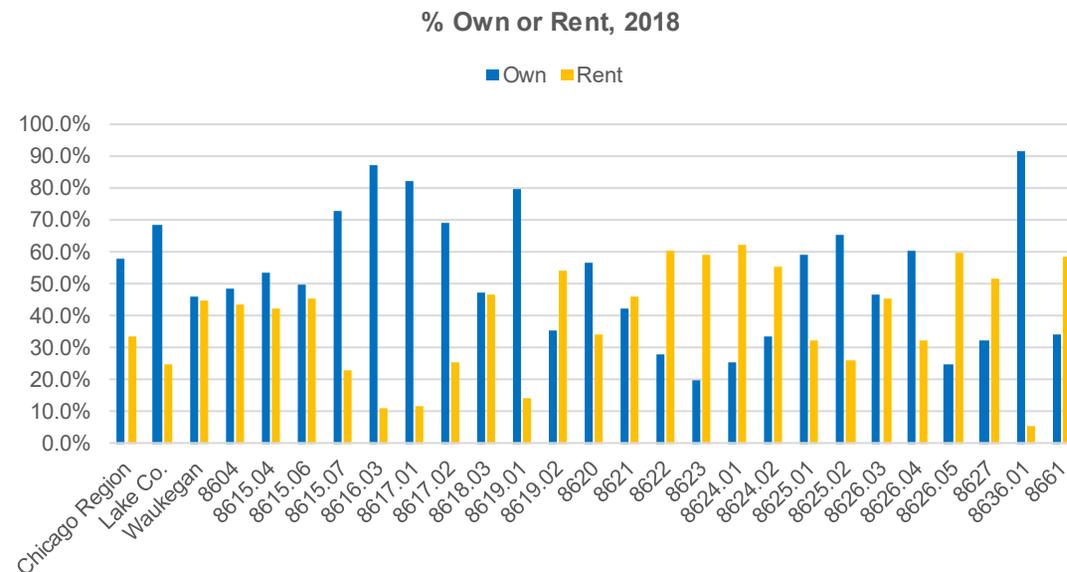
Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Housing

Housing data has been selected at the census tract or neighborhood level to better understand the housing owner and rental pattern across the City as owners and renters often have different service needs such as parks or access to transit for employment, etc.

### Owner vs. Rental

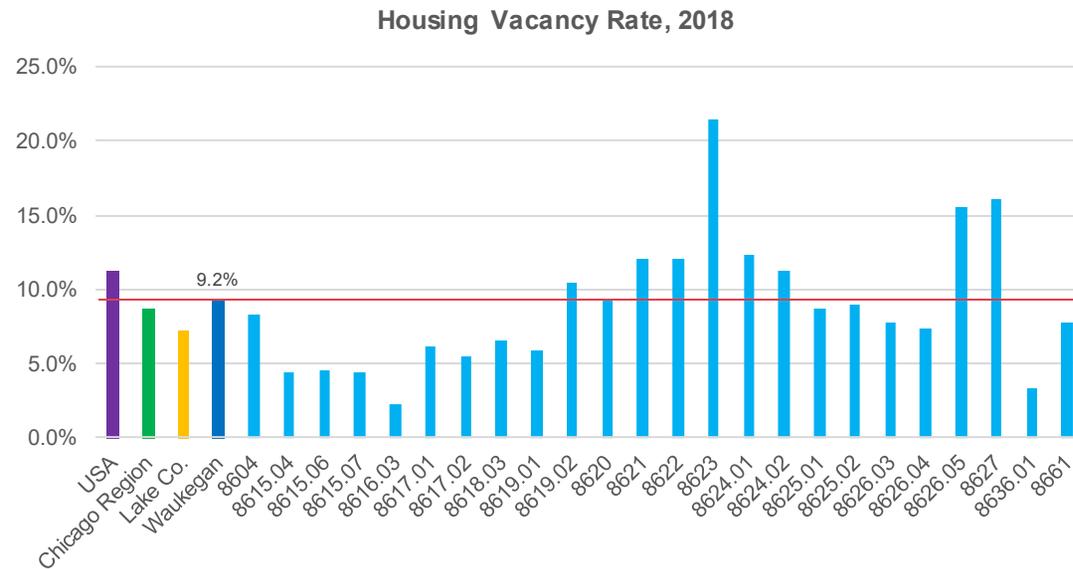
In 2018, Waukegan had a slightly higher share of owner-occupied housing units than renters (48.4% ownership, 43.3% renter). The downtown and central neighborhoods near the downtown have a much higher share of rental units than the rest of the City.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Vacancy

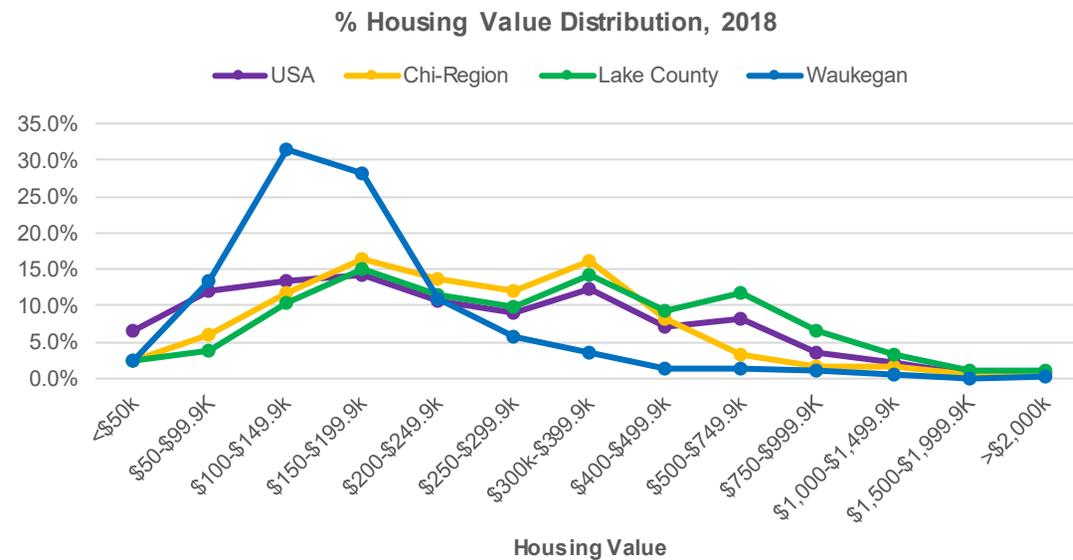
The vacancy rate in 2018 was around 9.2%, which is slightly higher than the Chicago region and Lake County. Waukegan's downtown has a high vacancy rate of 21.5%. Several near-downtown neighborhoods also have higher vacancy rates.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Housing Value

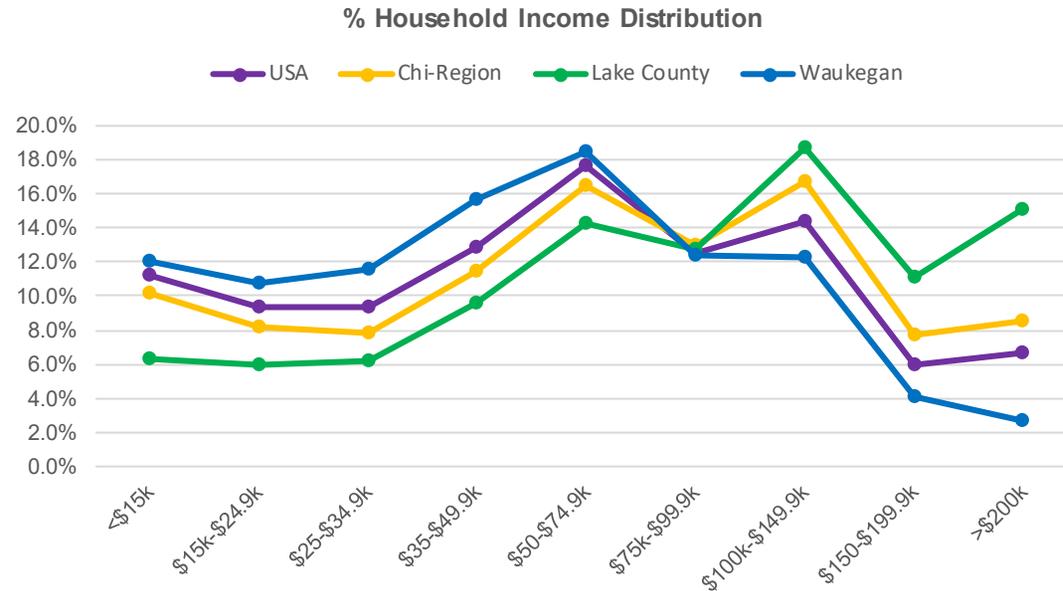
Housing values are much lower in Waukegan than most of the rest of Lake County or the Chicago region. While this may make it more difficult to finance home improvement loans and mortgages due to the lower value of the housing units; it may also present an opportunity for younger and first-time home buyers. Millennials carry more debt burden into their early adult life, yet recent Urban Land Institute surveys have discovered that they have a similar interest to buy homes. Therefore, Waukegan's more affordable housing stock may be appealing to Millennials. Waukegan presents an affordable option to the most of other Lake County residential real estate.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Household Income

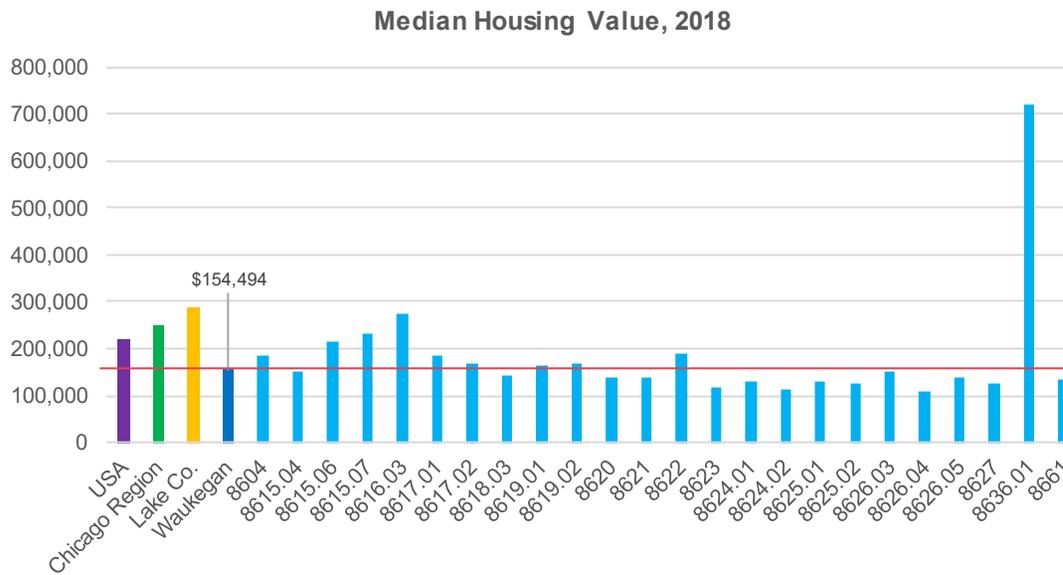
The household income for Lake County and the Chicago region represents an income divide between lower and higher income households at the \$75,000-\$99,999 income range. Waukegan illustrates a more consistent household income distribution without as severe an income gap between higher and lower income households. Waukegan has a more normal distribution with one peak income group in the \$50,000-\$74,999 range rather than two income peaks. The overall distribution indicates generally lower income households relative to Lake County and the Chicago region. Waukegan generally has lower income households relative to Lake County and the Chicago Region.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Median Housing Value

Generally, most neighborhoods central to the City have lower housing values than Waukegan overall. Census tract 8636.01 is an outlier neighborhood on the very southwest corner of Waukegan (the census tract straddles more than one municipal boundary). The census tracts do not align evenly with the City's corporate boundary, but the neighborhoods on the City's far southwest side appear-to-have significantly much higher home values than the rest of the Waukegan community.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Housing Affordability

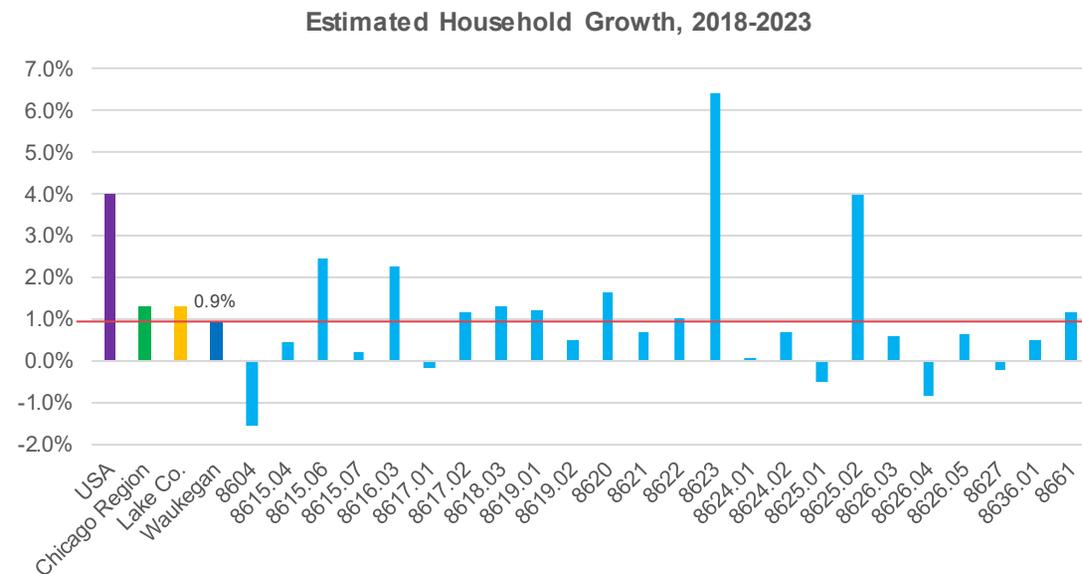
The housing affordability ratio is a measure of affordability by dividing an area's median home value by its median household income. Therefore, higher ratios indicate a less affordable housing market for existing households to purchase a home. When the housing affordability ratio is below 3.0, then it illustrates a more affordable housing market. While Waukegan's overall housing affordability ratio is 3.1, this indicates near affordability across the City. But, within the downtown neighborhoods, housing affordability is difficult for a few census tracts.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Estimated Housing Growth

Estimated household growth over the next five years through 2023, indicates that the central neighborhoods of the City may will grow over the next five years. Also, increases are projected to be 36 and 84 for these two census tracts. On the flipside other Waukegan neighborhoods are projected to lose some residents. Census Tract 8604 is near the airport.

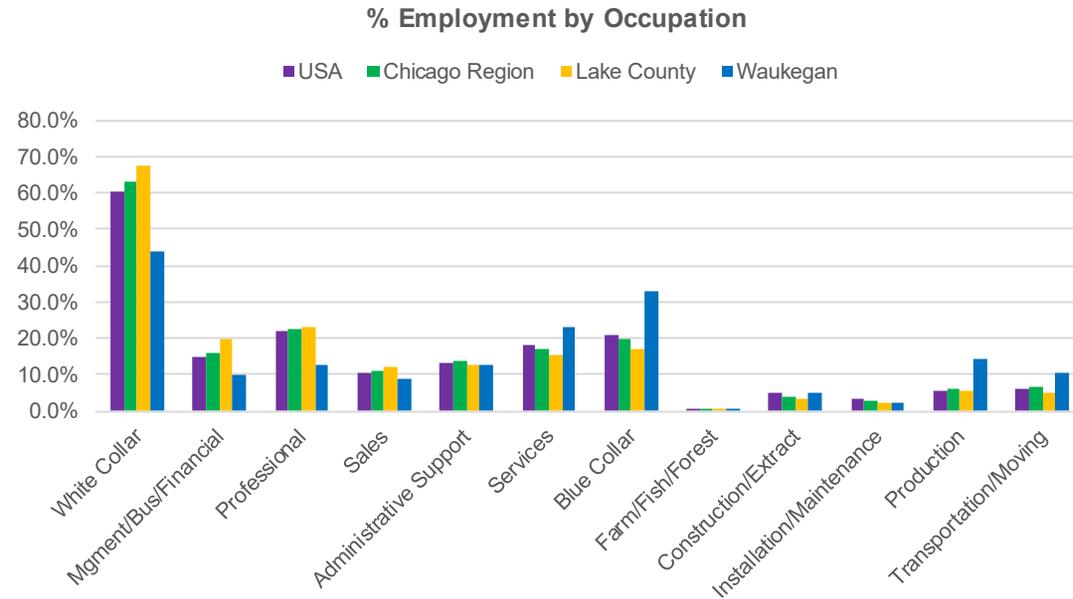


Source: ESRI Business Analyst

# Economy & Education

## Employment by Occupation

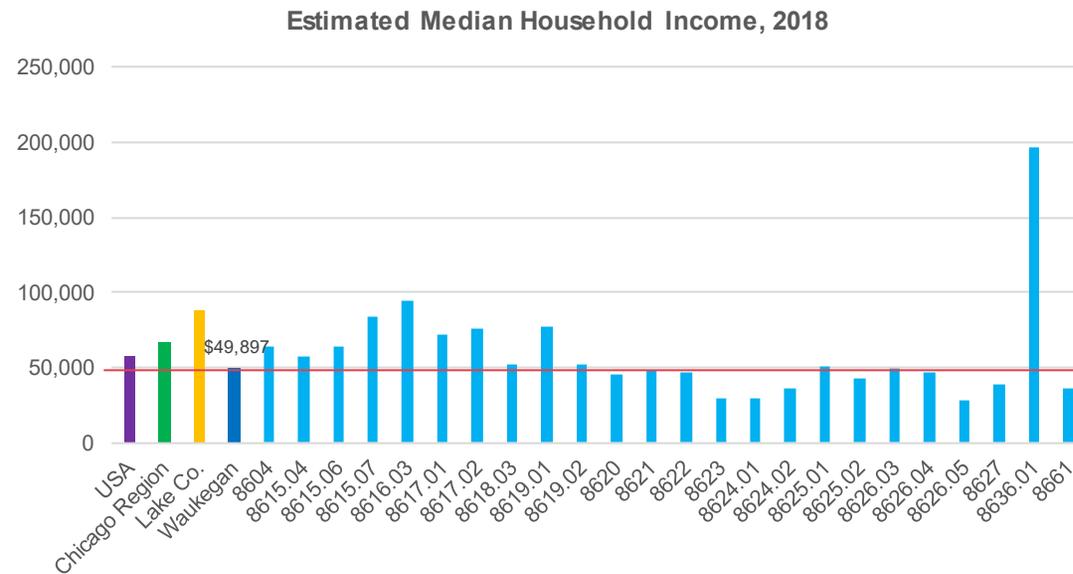
Compared to the Chicago region and Lake County, Waukegan has a smaller percentage of its residents employed in white collar occupations and a larger percentage in blue collar occupations. Most residents are employed in white collar jobs in Waukegan.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Median Household Income

Because the Chicago Region and Lake County have more persons in professional or white-collar occupations, Waukegan has an overall lower median household income. Several neighborhoods in the central area of the City have lower median household incomes.

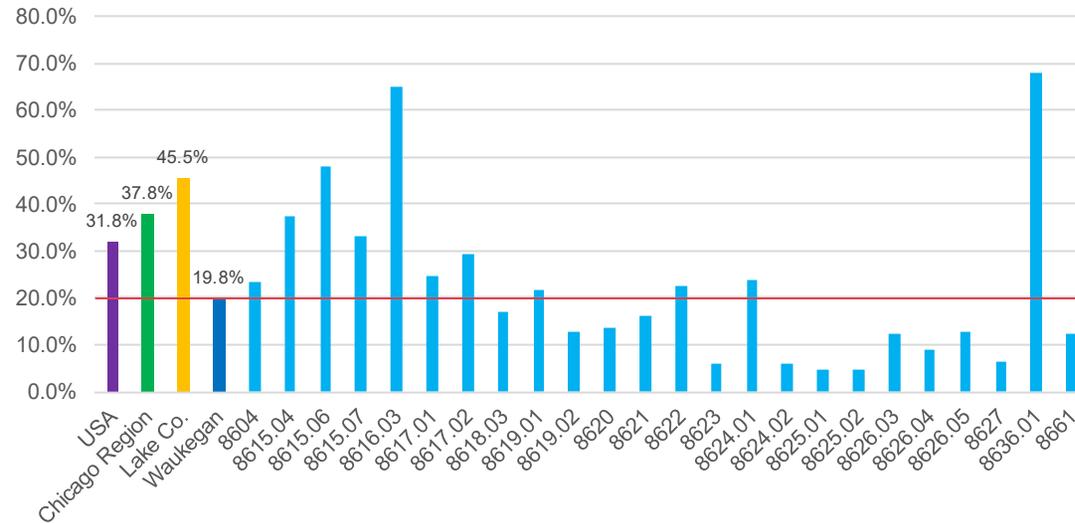


Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## College Degree

Waukegan has historically been a manufacturing and shipping center with many jobs not requiring a post-secondary education. Because much of Waukegan’s population lacks college degrees, it has been attractive to companies offering blue-collar jobs. Today, Waukegan is transitioning and diversifying its economy. In the 21st Century economy many jobs will require college degrees and significant advanced training beyond high school. Neighborhoods that lag the City are in and around central Waukegan. This may indicate that City should continue and expand its educational offerings and programs to residents in these neighborhoods.

College Degree, 2018

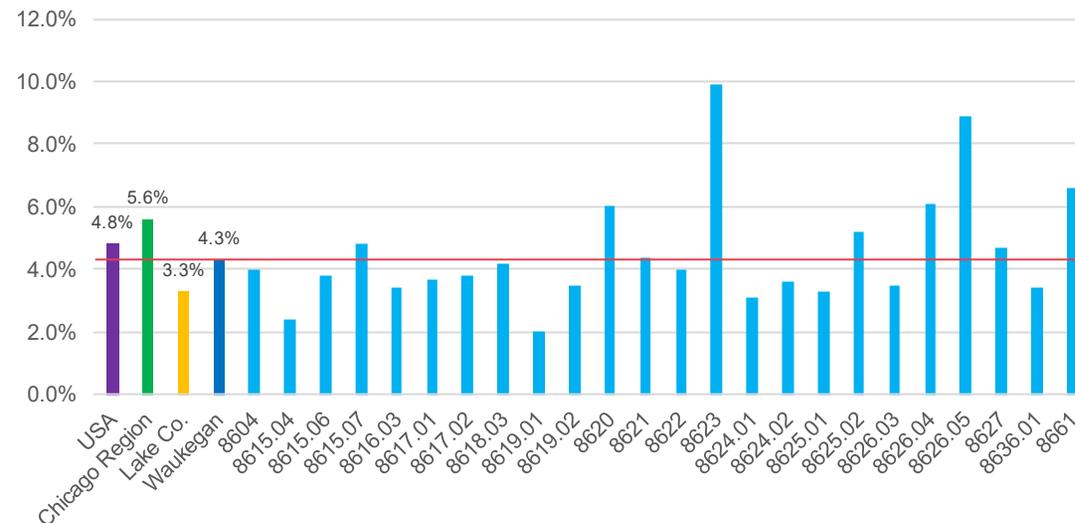


Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Unemployment

While Waukegan has a slightly higher unemployment rate than Lake County, it has a significantly lower rate than the Chicago region. Within the City, two neighborhoods stand-out for having high unemployment. One is downtown census tract 8623 and the other on the City’s near southwest side (census tract 8626.05). Both neighborhoods have significantly higher unemployment than the City. This may be an indication of structural unemployment issues such as a significant lack of skills or other socio-economic challenges. At this time, it appears Waukegan is at or near full employment for everyone who is seeking and able to be employed.

Unemployment Rate, 2018



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## Summary

Waukegan suffered significant employment and population fluctuations as manufacturing employment across the United States was being restructured and increasingly automated. Despite these challenges, the City has continued to grow its population due to a significant increase in its Hispanic population that is younger and less skilled in general. But the increased Hispanic population diversity may be Waukegan's contributor for future economic growth and vitality. The varied population brings a diverse culture and makes Waukegan a much more dynamic and interesting place to live, work, and recreate. This is especially true when compared to the other bedroom communities in Lake County that tend to be more mono-cultured and less vibrant overall.

## Population

Waukegan will continue to increase its population, but this growth will be spread unevenly throughout the City with some neighborhoods likely to lose population in the next five years. Downtown Waukegan and its surrounding neighborhoods appear to be in position to experience some population and household growth in the near term. Overall the population changes appear to be more positive than negative, and the increased Hispanic population tends to be very entrepreneurial, which is an advantage in the near and long-term for Waukegan. While there are challenges with a younger population, the economic upside for the City is substantial as this younger generation matures and ages in Waukegan.

## Housing

Waukegan housing is valued lower than the Chicago region and Lake County overall. There are challenges of affordability especially in and around neighborhoods where there are likely older homes and the housing renovation costs will be higher. With lower housing values, there is an opportunity to bring in additional younger homebuyers and first-time homebuyers that cannot afford the higher priced homes in Lake County. It would be beneficial to determine if the existing housing types are the appropriate type and form for young families and future residents.

## Economy & Education

Waukegan lags Lake County, the Chicago region, and the nation regarding college degreed adults. This tends to keep incomes lower overall. While the unemployment rate is low, at or near full employment, median household income continues to be well below the rest of Lake County and the Chicago Region. As the City is able to continue and expand its and its educational partners' efforts to "upskill" working adults with college degrees or advanced training, this will make it more likely that the City is able to attract and retain households with higher skill levels within the City.

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# 3

## Land Use & Current Zoning

Land use patterns play a significant role in shaping the physical character of Waukegan. The City is guided by its policy documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council enforce and interpret these policies. This chapter will examine the existing land use pattern and how the current Zoning Ordinance impacts land use. This summary will identify issues and opportunities, and organize them in suggested character areas that will structure the Comprehensive Plan contents.



# Existing Land Use

## Existing Land Use Patterns

Existing land uses in Waukegan were documented using the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP's) 2013 Land Use Inventory data. Spot-checks, involving comparing the data and Google Earth imagery, were conducted to update the data where needed. The accompanying map identifies existing land use for every parcel within the City of Waukegan. Every parcel has been categorized into one of the 16 land use designations that follow.

## Existing Land Use Designations

### Agriculture

Agriculture areas include larger-sized lots used primarily for raising crops and/or livestock. These properties may include residences and farm-related structures. This land use is concentrated in the City's southwestern area.

### Single-Family Detached

This consists of single-family detached homes. This is currently the predominant land use within the City of Waukegan. Lot sizes and housing characteristics vary across different neighborhoods.

### Single-Family Attached

This land use consists of townhomes and duplexes. The units are horizontally connected but have separate entrances from the public street and sidewalks. This land use is mostly concentrated at the City's western fringes and east of the Greenbelt Forest Preserve and the Larsen Nature Preserve.

### Multi-Family

Multi-family residential areas include apartment buildings where units share a common entrance or hallway. This also includes single-family detached that have been divided to house multiple households. There is a concentration of the latter in the neighborhoods in and around the South Sheridan neighborhood. This suggests these homes transitioned from owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing.

### Commercial

Commercial uses include general retail, dining, and services that are tailored to the local customer base. This land use is spread throughout the City and is concentrated along major commercial corridors/nodes. Outside of these areas lies limited neighborhood-scaled commercial uses, catering to local residents rather than the citywide customer base.

### Regional Commercial

Regional commercial uses are larger in scale than commercial uses and tend to serve a larger, regional customer base. They are typically big-box retail developments and are generally located along major transportation corridors.

### Mixed-Use

The mixed-use land use involves multiple land uses that coexist within a property. Ground-floor uses typically include retail, offices, restaurants, and services, whereas upper-floors are usually dedicated to apartments and offices. Mixed-use is mostly found in Downtown Waukegan and features traditional architectural forms.

### Office

Office uses typically include professional services, employment, offices, and medical offices. They can accommodate accessory commercial uses, such as restaurant, service, or other convenience services that are geared toward serving the office tenants. They mostly consist of stand alone office and medical office buildings.

### Industrial

The industrial land use includes smaller-scale manufacturing and warehousing operations that have a square footage of less than 100,000.

### Industrial 100K+SF

Includes industrial uses where the total building size exceeds 100,000 SF. Specific industrial uses include the NRG Waukegan Generating Station, Amazon, VisualPak, manufacturing/processing, warehousing/distribution, and establishments with a mix of office space and industrial operations.

## **Institutional**

Institutional uses include a broad range of public and semi-private facilities. These facilities are community institutions and facilities that define and contribute to Waukegan's quality of life. These institutions can include schools, government buildings/facilities, and medical facilities. Semi-private Facilities that serve specific populations include non-profits and social service agencies. These facilities can be integrated into other land use categories as they are generally small in scale and serve their surrounding neighborhoods.

## **Park/Open Space**

This land use category consists of the public parks and open space. They accommodate both active and passive recreation and, like institutional uses, contribute to Waukegan's quality of life. These spaces also include pedestrian trails, athletic fields, golf courses, playground, neighborhood parks, the beach, as well as natural areas and features, such as the Waukegan ravines, woodlands, prairies, and the Waukegan Dunes.

## **Forest Preserve**

The existing forest preserves are owned and managed by the Lake County Forest Preserves. They are larger in scale than Park District owned parks, and are considered regional destinations. The Park District's Sports Complex is also a regional (or beyond) destination. West of the City of Waukegan's boundaries lies the Des Plaines River Trail, which is a 31.4-mile all-season trail that intersects multiple communities and accommodates a variety of activities throughout the year.

## **State Park**

This land use designation only includes the 4,160-acre Adeline Jay Geo-Karis Illinois Beach State Park. This is owned and managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources through the Illinois State Parks, Great Parks Initiative. This is a regional destination and accommodates a wide variety of recreational activities and is located outside of Waukegan (though adjacent).

## **Transportation/Utilities**

This land use designation includes public transportation and utility facilities. They vary in physical scale and scale of operations, and they are necessary infrastructure components of the City of Waukegan. Examples of transportation/utility uses include the Waukegan Water Plant, Waukegan Metra Station, Waukegan National Airport, North Shore Water Reclamation District's sewage treatment plant, and power substations and lines. These uses are most likely to remain and continue to serve Waukegan's residents long-term.

## **Parking**

This land use designation accounts for existing parking facilities, including both parking garages and surface parking lots. They are mostly located within the Downtown-Lakefront area. Parking facilities belonging to an adjacent land use are integrated to that land use.

## **Vacant**

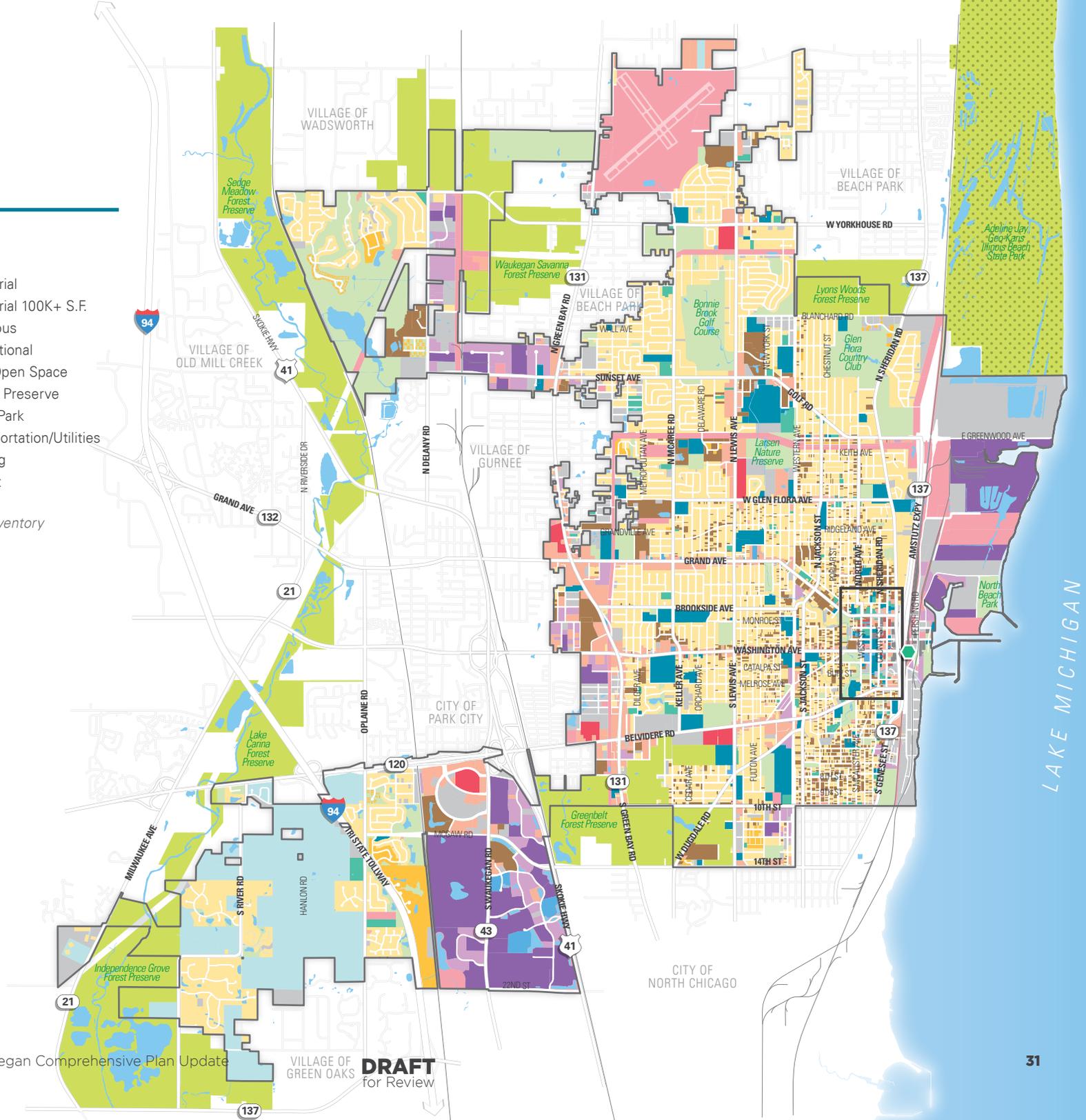
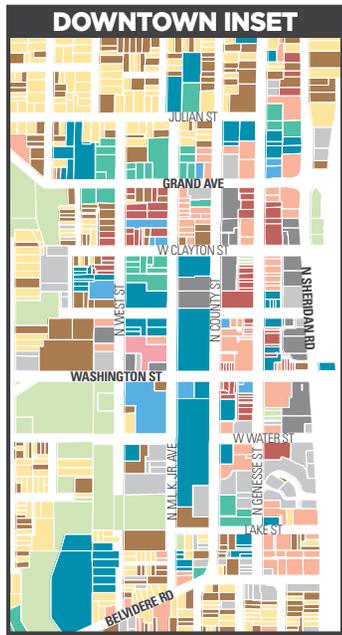
This land use designation includes currently vacant buildings and/or lots within the City of Waukegan. They present opportunities for infill development. Some of the larger-sized vacant lots along Waukegan's lakefront are designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as Superfund Sites. The City of Waukegan has been and will continue to work with various agencies at the county, state, and federal level to comply with EPA's regulation for remediating the Superfund Sites for future redevelopment, though cleanup is nearly completion on the City-owned sites.

# EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

## Legend

-  Waukegan Municipal Boundary
-  Waukegan Metra Station
-  Agriculture
-  Single-Family Detached
-  Single-Family Attached
-  Multi-Family
-  Commercial
-  Regional Commercial
-  Mixed-Use
-  Office
-  Industrial
-  Industrial 100K+ S.F.
-  Religious
-  Institutional
-  Park/Open Space
-  Forest Preserve
-  State Park
-  Transportation/Utilities
-  Parking
-  Vacant

Data Source: CMAP 2013 Land Use Inventory



## Issues & Opportunities

Issues and opportunities are identified, by districts or neighborhoods, within the City of Waukegan. They are based on field reconnaissance around the City, input gathered from the public outreach process, and examination of the City's existing land use patterns and past plans and studies. This will establish the foundation for policy recommendations, in terms of land use and development, for the Comprehensive Plan.

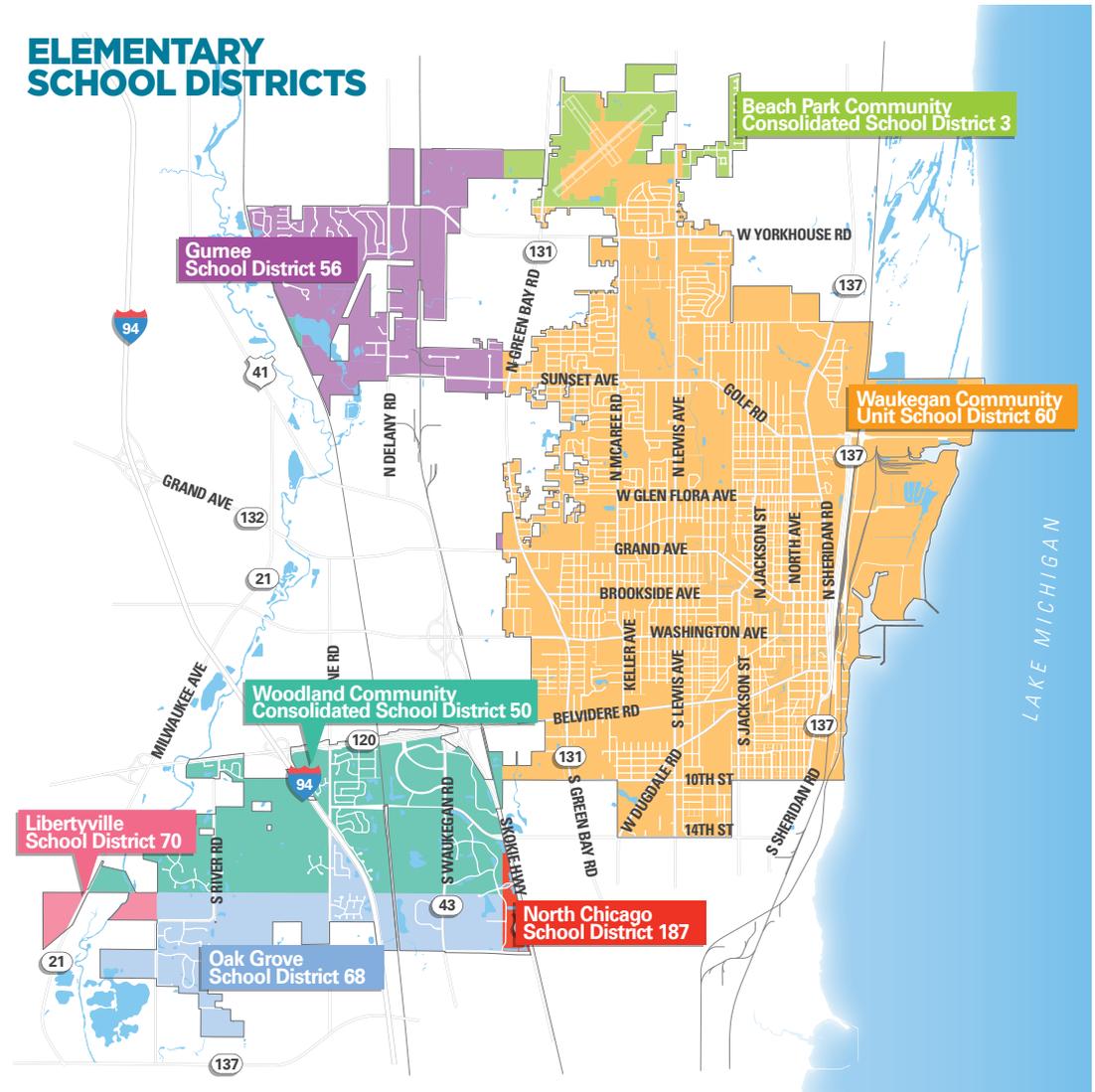
## Western Neighborhoods

Residents living in the western neighborhoods of Waukegan tend to associate themselves with adjacent communities, such as Gurnee and Libertyville. This is because they are within these school districts, and their addresses are in the post office delivery zones for the neighboring communities, carrying the associated ZIP codes. These residents, however, receive community and utility services from Waukegan.

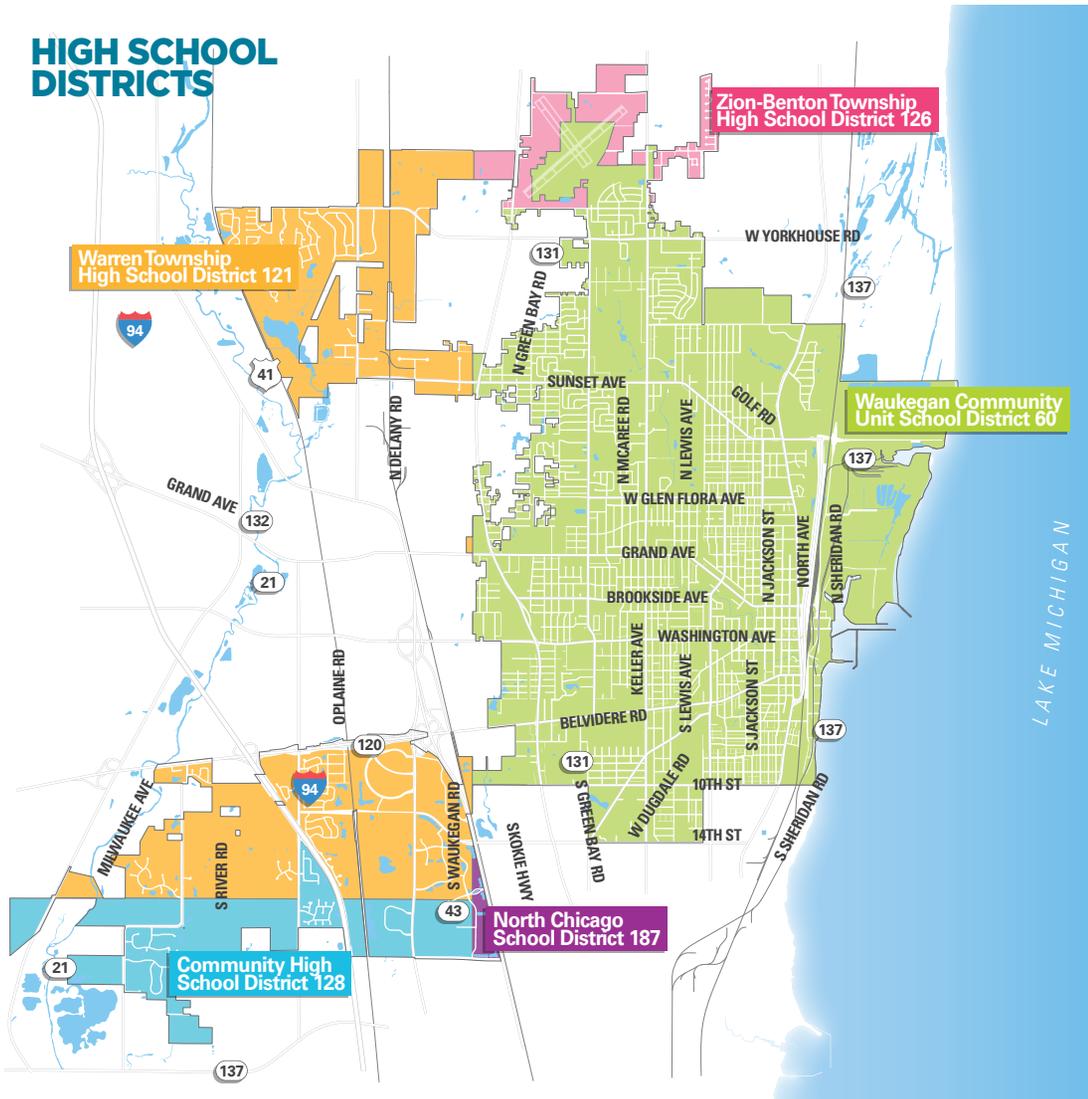
Additionally, they tend not to visit Waukegan's downtown often due to their perception that the downtown area is unsafe, and there is a lack of easy transportation access to downtown. Given that there are already convenient east-west thoroughfares established in Waukegan.

The southwestern area of Waukegan, between the Independence Grove Forest Preserve and the Fountain Square area, was annexed into Waukegan in the 1970s-80s. This area is within proximity to Interstate 94. Development in this area mostly consists of suburban subdivisions of single-family detached homes.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS



## HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS



## Downtown Waukegan

Downtown Waukegan mostly consists of low- and mid-rise commercial and mixed-use buildings, in addition to City and Lake County government offices. The City has worked with various organizations to host community-wide events, such as the monthly ArtWauk, in downtown Waukegan to encourage people to experience more time in Downtown Waukegan. Downtown Waukegan still has opportunities to promote a consistent daytime and nighttime population in the downtown area.

Vacant lots are prevalent in certain parts of Downtown Waukegan and are opportunities for infill development. Though surface parking lots are necessary development features to enable people to drive into Downtown Waukegan from other parts of the community, they present opportunities for infill developments. Given Waukegan's proximity to large scale companies, such as United Conveyor, VisualPak, Peer Bearing, AbbVie Pharmaceuticals, and Abbott Laboratories, there is potential for additional development that would attract visiting employees to stay in downtown Waukegan.

## Lakefront Area

Waukegan's lakefront area used to be home to a significant concentration of industrial and utility establishments. Over the years, the area has begun to transition from industry into a multi-use and recreational destination in the City. A constraint to this transition is the remediation of former industrial sites. The lakefront area is home to four Superfund Sites designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The City has been and will continue to partner with various agencies and stakeholders at the local, county, state, and federal level to achieve remediation goals. The process is long-term and the City-owned sites are nearing completion, better ensure the sites are safe for future development. It is important for future redevelopment to be sensitive to the impact on the viewshed towards Lake Michigan from downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

The City's Metra Station is located within the lakefront area, where Washington Street passes over the Amstutz Expressway. Though removing the all or part of Amstutz Expressway is warranted, it would require substantial investment.

Building on the recommendations from the 2000 Waukegan Intermodal Transit Facility Study, there are opportunities to work with the Regional Transportation Administration and Illinois Department of Transportation to extend Washington Street over the railroad tracks to connect to the Metra station, which would be rebuilt as an intermodal facility. This would reduce the barrier between downtown Waukegan and the lakefront and to promote easier access to the Metra Station and the harbor.

Wayfinding signage can be useful to direct travelers to the Metra Station and the Waukegan Harbor. Surface parking lots are present surrounding the Waukegan Harbor, and there is an opportunity to conduct a parking analysis to determine whether there is appropriate capacity for parking. Underutilized parking lots can accommodate temporary festival spaces with views to the lakefront and its close proximity to downtown.

## EPA SUPERFUND SITES



## East-West Corridors

The City's east-west corridors, including Belvidere Road, Washington Street, and Grand Avenue, are vital transportation thoroughfares that provide Waukegan residents and visitors access to the regional transportation network and neighborhoods in Waukegan. Though the corridors efficiently move traffic east-west through the City of Waukegan, there are opportunities to improve the corridors' aesthetics, are present. Programs to assist businesses along the corridor to improve their façades and signage would be beneficial. Past planning efforts indicate that it is useful to brand each corridor as a unique place through wayfinding, gateway signage, and façade improvement. Roadway reconfiguration, pedestrian amenities, and bicycle infrastructure may be possible ways to differentiate one corridor from another. Doing so provides a more positive experience for those who are entering Waukegan from the regional transportation network, encouraging more investment into the City.

Depending on the regional and national market trends, there may be an opportunity to concentrate commercial and office uses at specific nodes rather than along the whole corridor. This would require the City to conduct a comprehensive study of its commercial business market to see if there is an appropriate land supply for commercial and office uses.



## Fountain Square

Fountain Square is located at the southwest of the intersection of Skokie Highway (U.S. Highway 41) and Belvidere Road. This area consists of national chain retailers, including Walmart, several hotels, and numerous restaurants, as well as multi-family apartments. If a gaming license was awarded by the State of Illinois, it is expected that the casino development would be built at Fountain Square, which may have significant implications for local and regional traffic volume and economic development. Some existing buildings in Fountain Square are vacant, and they present opportunities for economic development.

## Research / Light Industrial District

To the south lies a substantial light industrial park. Various warehouses, corporate offices, and distribution centers are located here. This area is partially built out, with a small number of vacant lots that are ready for additional commercial development. The area is within proximity of multiple highways and Interstate 94 and generates a significant amount of freight traffic.

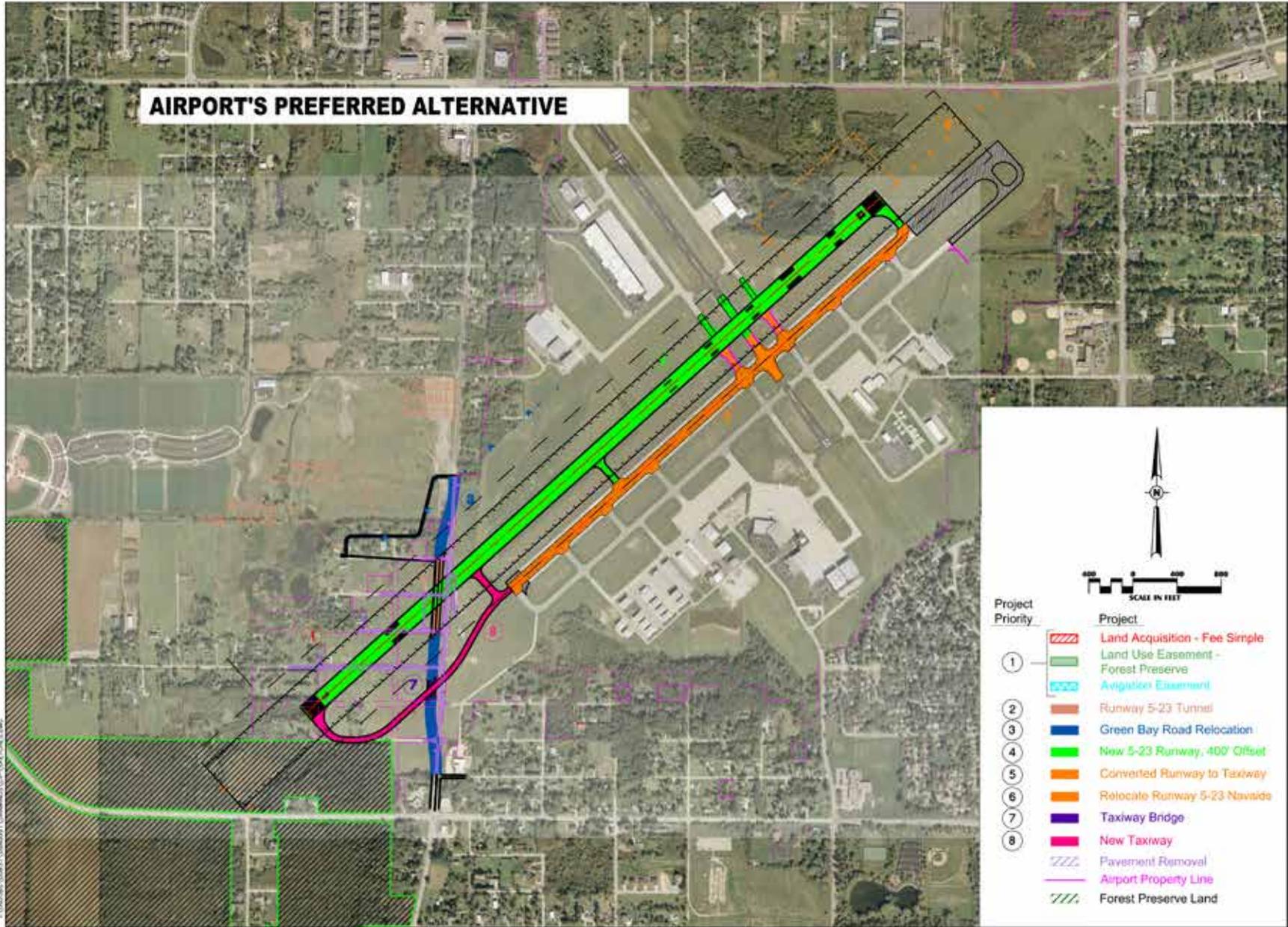
## South Sheridan Neighborhood

The South Sheridan neighborhood is located south of downtown Waukegan and is concentrated along South Sheridan Road and Genesee Street. This neighborhood has transitioned from predominately owner-occupied to mostly renter-occupied housing (about 2/3 of the neighborhood's housing stock). The Barwell Manor public housing complex is located within the South Sheridan neighborhood, and the Waukegan Housing Authority is working with the U.S. Housing and Urban Developed (USHUD) to plan and create a replacement strategy for this complex to upgrade the housing stock (refer to page 128 in the Appendices for WHA's memo regarding the Barwell Manor).

The City adopted the South Sheridan Revitalization Plan in 2016. This plan envisioned the South Sheridan neighborhood as a mixed-use community that addresses the need for affordable housing. It also plans for a connection from the neighborhood to the lakefront. The City currently owns land southeast of the intersection of South Avenue and Sheridan Road and would entertain the property to implement the plan's vision. The neighborhood, including the catalyst area as identified in the plan, contains a significant number of vacant buildings and lots. This presents opportunities to design and create a larger-scale and comprehensive infill development that would better address community needs, such as creating a greater supply of quality and affordable housing units.

## Waukegan National Airport

The Waukegan National Airport accommodates general aviation and serves as a reliever airport for O'Hare International Airport. As a hub for corporate aviation, the Waukegan National Airport has a substantial number of international arrivals. The airport is currently undergoing a master planning process under the Waukegan National Airport Master Plan to analyze the airport's capacity and needs. The process has thus far resulted a preferred alternative, of the original ten design alternatives. This alternative plans to convert and extend the existing Runway 5-23 into a parallel taxiway segment, constructing a new primary runway (7,000 feet long), and into a tunnel under Green Bay Road. This design will necessitate purchasing adjacent properties to make room for the runway expansion and relocation of Green Bay Road. The City has working with the Waukegan National Airport and other stakeholders in implementing this vision. Land use impacts are anticipated to be minimal.



<b>Waukegan Regional Airport</b> <b>Waukegan Port District</b> 3000 North McCarty Road Waukegan, Illinois 60087 Telephone: 847.244.3000 Fax: 847.244.2810	
Name: 090001 Status: 01/2013/2013 Date: 08/06/11	LAYOUT: SM 08/06/11 DRAWN: SM 08/06/11 REVIEWED: SM 08/06/11
HANSON Hanson Professional Services Inc. (a.s.) 815 Commercial Drive, Suite 200 Oak Brook, Illinois 60521	
<b>PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE</b> <b>3</b>	

A diagram showing the Preferred Alternative design in the Waukegan National Airport Master Plan documents.

# Current Zoning

Regulatory controls are municipal ordinances that dictate the use and appearance of properties within the municipal limits. The City's Zoning Ordinance represents such controls. It is intended to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of the public by reducing land use incompatibilities, reducing hazards, mitigating nuisances, protecting natural resources and features, and promoting a visually attractive environment and positive experience within the City of Waukegan. When used effectively, it can be an instrument to attract new investment and growth.

## B2 & B3 Commercial Districts

The predominant commercial zoning districts in Waukegan are B2 – Community Shopping and B3 – General Commercial. Both zoning districts are intended to foster commercial uses that serve the local and regional customer base. The difference is that the latter tends to

promote more motorist-oriented development, such as big-box retailers, than B2 does. Building scale and area guidelines for B2 and B3 remain largely the same. Similarities include:

- Dwelling units above the ground floor
- Drive-thru establishments
- 15-foot front yard setback
- Height restriction of 100 feet.

Despite their similarities, many commercial buildings were designed to have zero front yard setback. They can be found in various areas, including the Washington Street corridor. Also, B2 includes residential buildings along and near the Washington Street Corridor with some of them being converted to serve commercial or office use.

## Western Gateway Redevelopment Overlay District

This Overlay District includes the existing Fountain Square area (southwest of the intersection of State Routes 120 and 43). This area is considered as the City's western gateway, so it is vital for this area to give visitors and residents a positive experience and impression of Waukegan. Fountain Square has opportunities for infill development and economic development, and the Overlay District will be useful to ensure future developments complement the character of Fountain Square.

This Overlay District complements and supersedes the provisions of the underlying B2 District and, where specified, specific regulations of the City's Subdivision Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, and Landscape Ordinance. Doing so creates a regulatory environment that would promote comprehensive and quality redevelopment in an underutilized area. In essence, potential purchases or tenants of properties within this district can customize their project's size and dimensions without incurring delays in the redevelopment review process. The Overlay District has seen some successes with newer developments, such as restaurants and hotels, being constructed and, if a gaming license was awarded by the State of Illinois, it is expected that the casino development would be built at Fountain Square.

## Lakefront Area

The lakefront area is primarily zoned as I2 – General Industrial. This zoning district is intended to accommodate industrial uses/activities that would pose minimal nuisances to nearby residential neighborhoods and business districts. This district generally would not allow mixed-use developments, such as buildings with ground-floor retail and upper-floor apartments.

Several large parcels along the lakefront present opportunities for redevelopment. As these sites are fully remediated in the future, the City may consider rezoning these parcels into other zoning districts that would be more conducive to the community's vision of redevelopment type. Authorizing Planned Development can also be an option to enable and incentivize a developer to comprehensively redevelop a larger-sized property while addressing the community's needs and vision.

## South Sheridan

The South Sheridan neighborhood has seen some zoning changes over the years. The area east of South Sheridan Road and south of South Avenue was originally zoned as I2 - General Industrial but is gradually being rezoned as R6 - General Residential >6,000SF. The rezoning would allow multi-family development and reflects the City's efforts to implement the vision from the South Sheridan Revitalization Plan. It is likely that remaining parcels that are zoned as I2 - General Industrial in this area would be rezoned to R6 - General Residential >6,000SF. in the future.

## Other Zoning Districts

The following table is from the Existing Conditions Report of CMAP's Washington Street Corridor Plan. The table describes major zoning districts in Waukegan in terms of: purpose, examples of permitted uses, height restrictions, area regulations, and setbacks.

Table 4.3. Key characteristics of major zoning districts

Zoning classification	Purpose	Examples of permitted uses	Height restrictions	Area regulations**	Setbacks**
<b>Conservation and Residence Districts</b>					
CR Conservation/ Recreation/Agriculture	Encourage the development of land for "open-space" recreation, preservation of land for agriculture, or preservation of natural resources. A secondary purpose is restricting the use of those areas in Waukegan which are in a flood plain or serve as water retention/re-charge.	Agriculture; Botanical and zoological gardens and arboretums; Forest preserves, wildlife preservations, and ecological sanctuaries; Hiking and bicycle trails; Parks and playgrounds; and Public beaches.	No height limitation	Five (5) acres minimum area for agricultural farmsteads	50 feet minimum from any property lines
R2 Single-Family Residence	Accommodate those single-family developments with moderate-sized lots.	Single-family detached dwellings; Educational institutions; Parks and playgrounds; Religious institutions, including associated residences; Family Community Residences	45 feet maximum	Single-family detached: 7,200 s.f. minimum area, 60 ft. minimum width	Single-family detached: 25' front, 6' interior side, 20' corner side, 30' rear
R3 Single-Family Residence	Primarily designed to accommodate existing single-family neighborhoods in the core of the City, which are characterized by smaller recorded lots than required in the R1 and R2 Districts.	<b>All R2 uses</b>	45 feet maximum	Single-family detached: 6,000 s.f. minimum area, 50 ft. minimum width	Single-family detached: 20' front, 6' interior side, 15' corner side, 25' rear
R4 Two-Family Residence	Allow for limited concentrations of duplex (two-family) dwellings in a neighborhood marked by a mixture of one and two-family houses in the areas near the Waukegan central business district.	<b>All R2 and R3 uses;</b> Two-family detached dwellings	45 feet maximum	Single-family detached: 6,000 s.f. minimum area, 60 ft. minimum width Two-family detached: 7,200 s.f. minimum area, 60 ft. minimum width	Single- and two-family detached: 20' front, 6' interior side, 15' corner side, 25' rear
R6 General Residence	Protect and enhance the character and value of residential areas primarily occupied by varied dwelling types of moderate density (approximately 30 dwelling units per acre), and to accommodate areas planned for new residential development of moderate density.	<b>All R8 uses;</b> Convalescent and nursing homes; Public aquariums; Art galleries; Libraries & museums; Day Care Centers	45 feet maximum for single-family dwelling or accessory structure	Single-family detached, two-family detached, two-family attached and multi-family: 6,000 s.f. minimum area, 50 ft. minimum width	Single- and two-family detached: 25' front, 6' interior side, 20' corner side, 25' rear Two-family attached and multi-family: 25' front, 10' interior side, 20' corner side, 25' rear

Commercial Business Districts					
B1 Neighborhood Convenience	Provide convenience shopping for persons residing in adjacent residential areas, and to permit only such uses as are necessary to satisfy those basic shopping needs which occur daily or frequently and so require shopping facilities in relative proximity to places of residence	Multi-family dwellings, above the ground floor; Retail stores, galleries and studios; Drug stores; Barber shops and beauty supply; Offices, business and professional; Restaurants, not including entertainment or dancing; Medical services and health stores; Small service/ repair; Dry cleaning (off-site), tailor	45 feet maximum	20,000 s.f. minimum area for planned developments	Front Yard: 15' Corner Side Yard: 15' Side Yard: None required Rear Yard: None required
B2 Community Shopping	Serve larger population than Neighborhood Convenience District. Thus, a wider range of uses and structure sizes is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping. This district is generally located astride major commercial arterials.	<b>All B1 uses;</b> Also Automobile accessory stores; Department stores; Drive-thru establishments; Furniture and carpet stores; Garden supply; Libraries, museums; Liquor stores; Medical and dental clinics and laboratories; Schools, Non-vocational; Sporting goods; Taverns; Theatres	100 feet maximum, except by variation procedures	Four (4) acres minimum area for planned developments;	Front Yard: 15' Corner Side Yard: 15' Side Yard: None required Rear Yard: None required
B3 General Commercial	Accommodate those motorist-oriented commercial activities, which may be incompatible with the uses encouraged in other business districts; and whose service area is not confined to any one neighborhood or community. The district is generally located within commercial corridors.	<b>All B1 and B2 uses;</b> Also Larger sales showrooms and repairs; Greenhouses; Public storage; Recording and sound studios; Wholesale establishments; Vehicle sales	100 feet maximum, except by variation procedures	Four (4) acres minimum area for planned developments;	Front Yard 15' Corner Side Yard 15' Side Yard None required Rear Yard None required
Office Districts					
O/I-2 Office/Institutional	Designed primarily accommodate office buildings, civic and governmental structures, and educational and institutional buildings in a mutually compatible environment.	Cultural and civic institutions; Offices, business, professional, and governmental; Recreational and social facilities; Accessory commercial uses	No height limitation	15,000 s.f. minimum area, 100 ft. minimum width	Front Yard: 15 ft. Corner Side Yard: 15 ft. Interior Side Yard: 0 ft. Rear Yard: 0 ft.
Industrial Districts					
RI Research and Light Industrial	Provides a setting where compatible research, light industrial, business and corporate, and professional offices can be developed in a unified manner; intended for large, "park-like" tracts that are accessible to the interstate system.	Assembly and fabricating; Light manufacturing /production/finishing; hotel/motel; laundries; medical clinics and facilities; offices, business and professional; Parking lots; printing; Laboratories, research and testing; Radio and television stations; Restaurants; Trade schools; Warehousing, storage and distribution; Accessory commercial uses	60 feet maximum, except by conditional use permit procedures	40,000 s.f. minimum area	Front Yard: 30 ft. Corner Side Yard: 30 ft. Interior Side Yard: 10 ft. Rear Yard: 20 ft. Transitional Yards: See ordinance

\*\* See the zoning ordinance for setback and area requirements for transition yards, storage and garage facilities, and other non-primary, permitted uses. In almost all zoning districts, requirements for these uses differ from the primary permitted use.

# CURRENT ZONING

## Legend

-  Waukegan Municipal Boundary
-  Waukegan Metra Station
-  B1 Neighborhood Convenience
-  B2 Community Shopping
-  B3 General Commercial
-  B4 Central Business
-  B5 Central Service
-  CR Conservation / Recreation
-  ER-1 Estate Residence
-  ER-2 Estate Residence
-  I1 Restricted Industrial
-  I2 General Industrial
-  L1 South Lakefront
-  M-CR Marine-Commercial Recreation
-  O/I-1 Office / Institutional
-  O/I-2 Office / Institutional
-  R/LI Research / Light Industrial
-  R1 Single-Family Residential >10,000 SF
-  R2 Single-Family Residential >7,200 SF
-  R3 Single-Family Residential >6,000 SF
-  R4 One- and Two-Family Residential >6,000 SF
-  R5 Limited General Residential >6,000 SF
-  R6 General Residential >6,000 SF
-  R7 General Residential >6,000 SF
-  R8 General Residential >6,000 SF

