



# DES PLAINES

## OAKTON STREET METRA STATION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY • DRAFT • 09.09.2019



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Des Plaines has partnered with AECOM and The Lakota Group to prepare a feasibility study for a potential new Metra North Central Service Line (NCS) station in the area around Mannheim Road and Oakton Street. While both the Union Pacific Northwest (UP-NW) and NCS lines run through Des Plaines, only the UP-NW line has stations within the City (at Cumberland and Downtown Des Plaines). The City believes that a new commuter rail station in this area could:

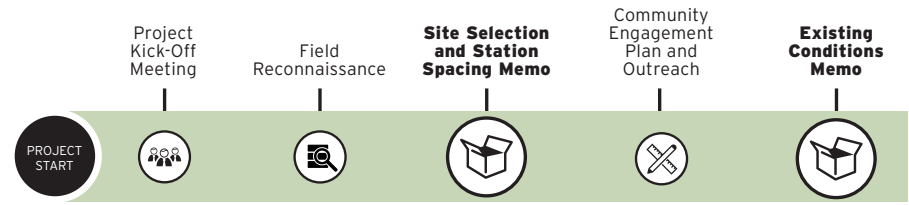
- » **Serve as a catalyst for transit-oriented development and redevelopment of vacant parcels in the area.**
- » **Add a much needed public transportation option in this area where only 2.5% of workers use public transportation and 75% of workers get to work in single-occupant vehicles.**
- » **Provide multi-modal connectivity to the new Pace PULSE Dempster Line.**
- » **Offer an alternative way to access O'Hare Airport.**

## FEASIBILITY STUDY OUTLINE

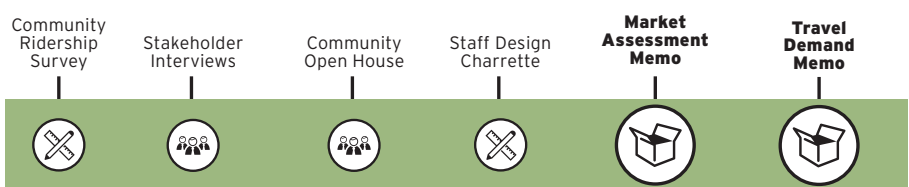
Accompanying this Executive Summary document is a formal *Des Plaines Oakton Street Station Feasibility Study Report* that provides a highly detailed technical analysis of the proposed station – including physical considerations, market conditions and ridership projections, site and operational impacts, and community input. The Study was conducted over a 12-month period, as outlined to the right.

## PROJECT TIMELINE: 2018-2019

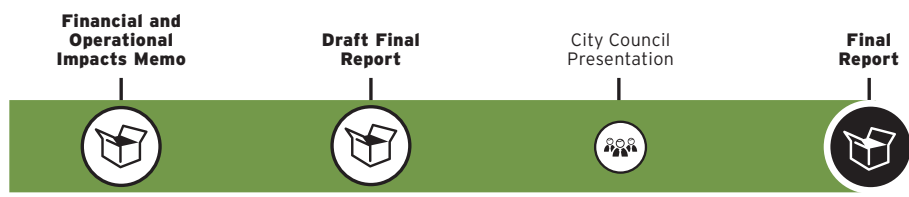
### SEPTEMBER 2018 - JANUARY 2019



### JANUARY 2019 - MARCH 2019



### MARCH 2019 - SEPTEMBER 2019

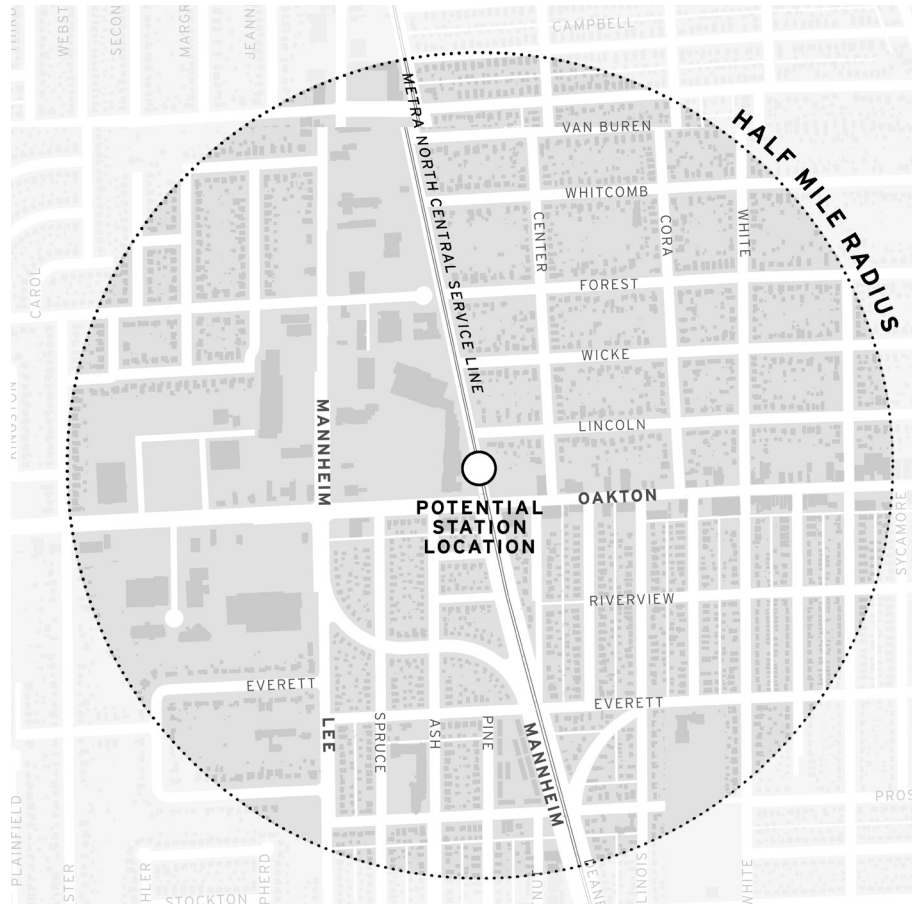


## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The NCS Line that currently runs through Des Plaines was once a part of the Wisconsin Central Railroad Line and at one point had two stations in Des Plaines. According to the Cook County Chronicle, these stations were closed in 1930 and 1965 respectively, before Metra opened the NCS line. When Metra began operations on the NCS line in 1996, it reopened many previous stations, but the Des Plaines stations were not included. The City of Des Plaines has been interested in adding a station on the NCS line for several years, and this study is the first step for Metra to determine if a station at this location is feasible. The study seeks answers to the following questions:

- » ***Can a location be identified that can physically accommodate a station, station parking, and associated amenities?***
- » ***Will the station be compatible with current railroad operations?***
- » ***Will there be a sufficient number of potential users?***
- » ***Will impacts to traffic, storm water, and other factors be manageable?***
- » ***Can the station be realistically funded?***
- » ***How would a station help to stimulate economic development within the area?***

**Potential Station Location Diagram**



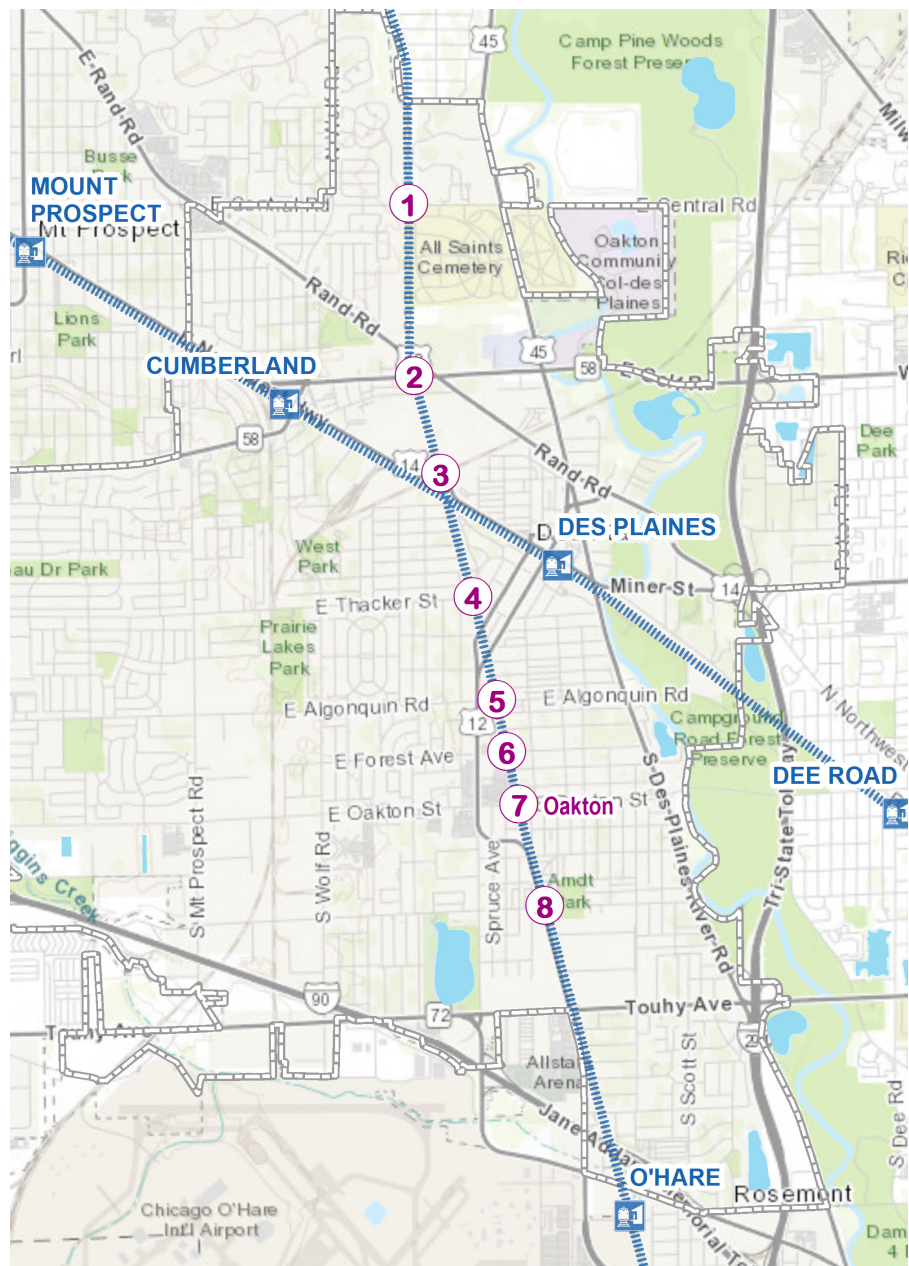
# STATION SPACING

## STATION SCREENING

To narrow the field of prospective Metra Station sites, an initial examination of alternative station locations was performed. Eight locations were initially identified, as shown in the map to the right. The table below outlines the suitability of each site using the metrics of walk score, multi-family units nearby, number of households, (re) development area, and the presence of Pace bus routes. The Oakton Street site offers several key advantages over the other highly ranked sites, and for this reason a site on the north side of Oakton Street was chosen to advance for more detailed study.

### Station Suitability Analysis

	1 CENTRAL ROAD	2 RAND/ GOLF	3 NW HIGHWAY	4 THACKER STREET	5 ALGONQUIN ROAD	6 FOREST AVENUE	7 OAKTON STREET	8 HOWARD AVENUE
Walk Score 50+	29	43	42	66	75	73	79	52
Multi-Family Units in 1/2 Mile	0	350	610	600	290	0	10	140
Households in a 1/2 Mile	2,600	1,800	4,600	6,700	4,900	4,200	4,800	5,000
(Re)Development acres	2.8	10.0	0.0	3.1	2.4	1.3	3.0	.08
Pace Bus Routes	none	Route 234	Route 208	Routes 226, 230, 250	Routes 226, 230, 250	Routes 226, 230, 250	Routes 226, 230, 250	Route 250
More than two miles from NCS Station	Serious Impact	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Serious Impact
More than one mile from UPNW Station	Suitable	Impact	Impact	Impact	Impact	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable
Double Track	Suitable	Serious Impact	Serious Impact	Serious Impact	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable
At-Grade	Suitable	Suitable	Serious Impact	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable	Suitable
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
					Green = 1	Yellow = 0	Red = -1	

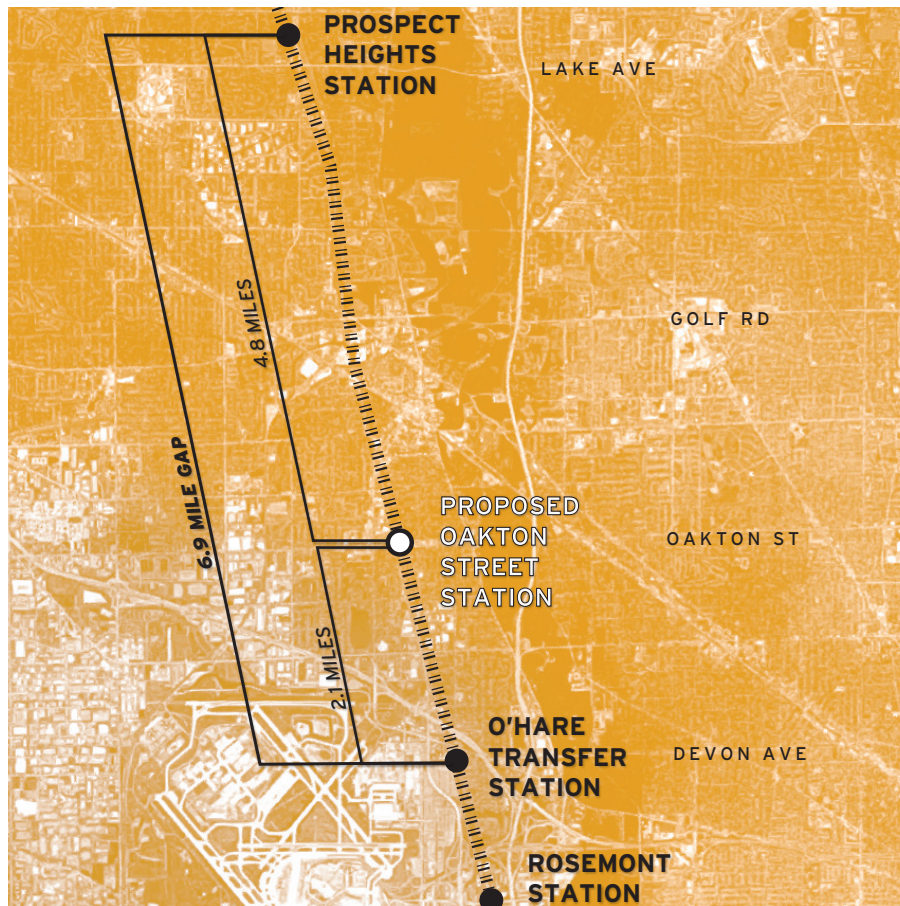


Potential Station Locations

## STATION LOCATION

The proposal is to add a new infill station between two existing stations on the NCS line— Prospect Heights and the O'Hare Transfer station. Placing a station at this location would fill the 6.9 mile gap resulting in spacing of 4.8 miles to the Prospect Heights station and 2.1 miles to the O'Hare Transfer station.

### Station Spacing & Location Diagram



## COMPARISONS ACROSS METRA

Metra's average spacing is two miles, including 83 stations within one mile of the next inbound station. Our research has found that there is not a strong correlation between station spacing and station ridership—too many other factors are at play influencing station performance. New infill stations that have been added to the Metra network have filled **gaps ranging from 2.1 to 9.8 miles**, and the distance between stations filled has not had an obvious effect on performance.

### Infill Metra Stations Added Since 1983

STATION	LINE	MILE POST	OPENING YEAR	DISTANCE TO NEXT IB STATION	DISTANCE TO NEXT OB STATION	GAP FILLED	2016 BOARDINGS
Palos Heights	SWS	19.2	2004	1.0	1.1	2.1 *	238
Rosemont	NCS	15.6	2006	0.8	1.5	2.3 *	35
Schiller Park	NCS	14.8	2006	1.8	0.8	2.6 *	36
Lake Cook Road	MD-N	23.0	1996	1.9	1.2	3.1 *	1,271
Belmont Ave./ Franklin Park	NCS	13.0	2006	1.6	1.8	3.4 *	32
Glen of North Glenview	MD-N	18.8	2001	1.4	2.3	3.7 *	1,070
Hickory Creek	RID	27.5	1993	2.4	2.1	4.5 *	999
Pingree Road	UP-NW	41.7	2005	3.1	1.5	4.6 *	751
Washington St./ Grayslake	NCS	43.9	2006	3.2	2.0	5.2 *	110
Prairie Crossing/ Libertyville	MD-N	39.2	2004	3.7	1.8	5.5 *	422
Romeoville	HC	29.2	2018	3.9	3.7	7.6	n/a
Route 59	BNSF	31.6	1989	3.1	5.9	9.0	5,781
35th St.	RID	3.1	2011	3.1	6.7	9.8	227

\* Indicates a station gap filled at a shorter distance than the proposed infill station at Oakton (6.9 mile gap).

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## RIDER ORIGIN

Based on 2016 data from Metra, 148 originating riders (“origins”) are currently located within the proposed Des Plaines NCS Oakton Street station market shed. Most currently use a UP-NW station: 66 percent board at the Des Plaines Station and 16 percent board at the Cumberland Station. A heat map of the origins for the potential Oakton Station and nearby stations is depicted to the right, indicating that many of the existing riders within the Oakton Station market shed are in the immediate proximity of the proposed site.

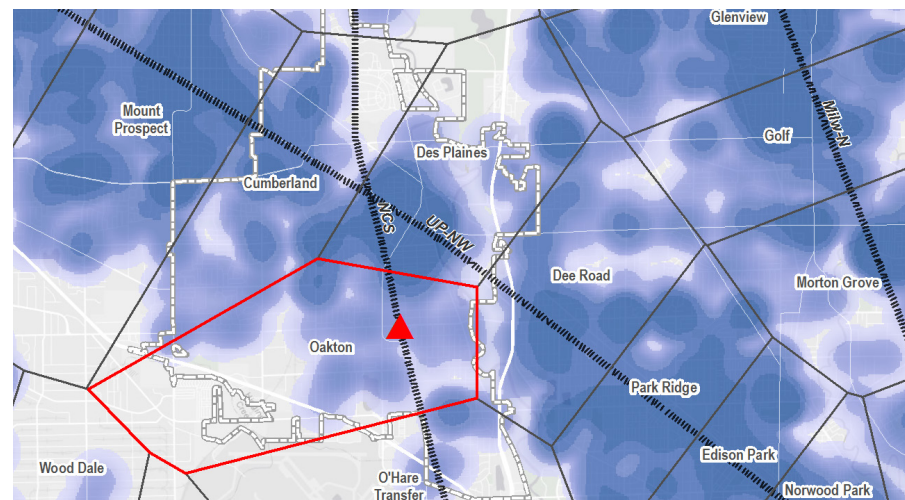
### NCS Oakton Street Market Shed Riders by Station of Use

BOARDING STATION	RAIL LINE	WEIGHTED ORIGINS	% OF TOTAL
<b>Des Plaines</b>	UP-NW	98	66%
<b>Cumberland</b>	UP-NW	24	16%
<b>O'Hare Transfer</b>	NCS	16	11%
<b>Dee Road</b>	UP-NW	4	3%
<b>Other</b>		6	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>		148	100%

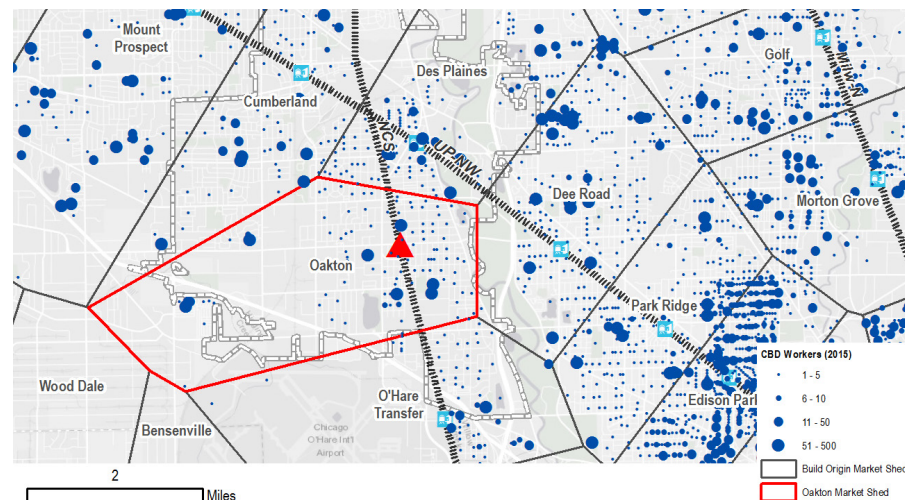
Based on analysis of 2015 Census LEHD origin-destination data, there are just over 900 Chicago central business district (CBD) workers living within the potential Oakton Station origin market shed – an important metric since the downtown work commute is Metra’s primary market. The distribution and density of these workers is shown in the map to the right.

When evaluating the commuter flows between the origin market shed and the primary destination for area commuters (i.e., downtown Chicago), it is also useful to consider the reported travel mode. According to the census data of CBD commuters living in the proposed Oakton Station origin shed, 40% commute by Metra, 45% by driving or carpooling, and 11% by CTA rail.

Density of 2016 Metra Rider Origins (0-3 riders per acre)



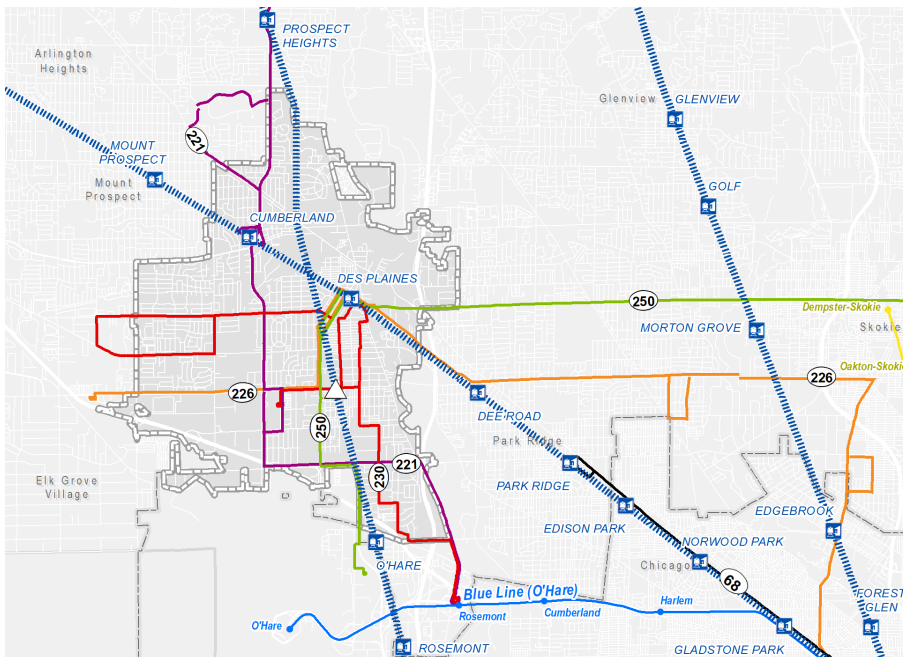
CBD Workers per Acre (2015)



## TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY

Within a short distance of the proposed station location are four Pace bus routes: 221 Wolf Road, 226 Oakton Street, 230 South Des Plaines, and 250 Dempster Street, which is planned to be a future Pulse Bus route. At a farther distance are the CTA Blue Line and Bus Route 68 Northwest Highway. The map below shows the routing of these transit services. Current Metra service is provided at nearby UP-NW and NCS stations.

### Nearby Bus Routes of Proposed NCS Des Plaines Station



## ACCESS TO JOBS

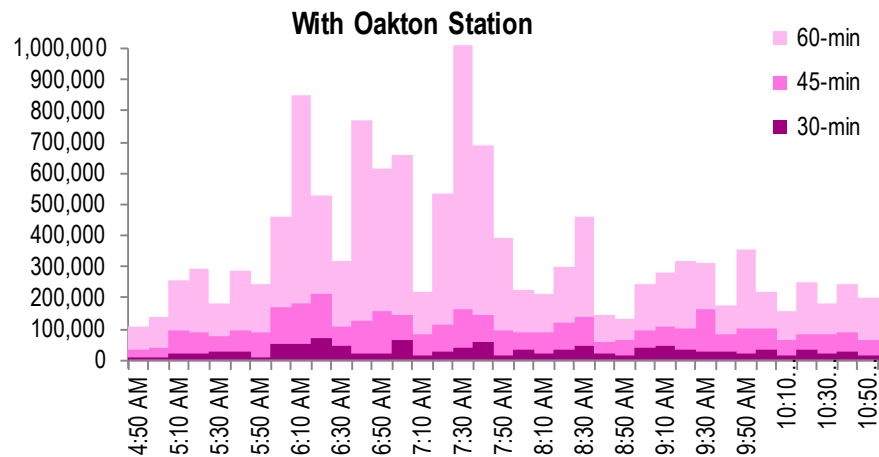
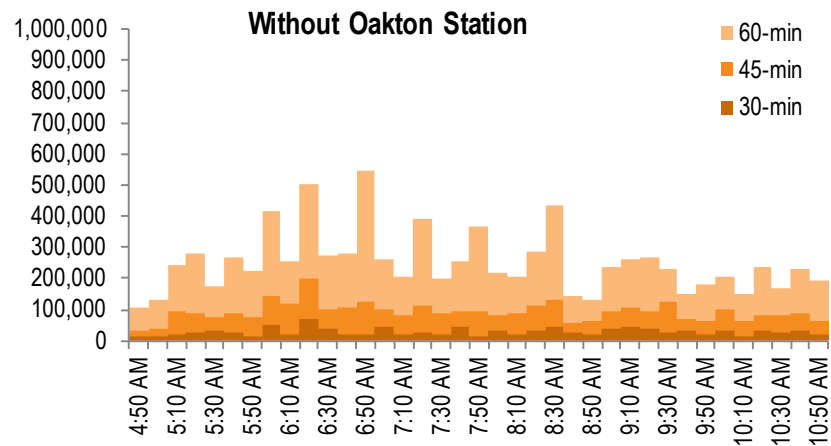
To better understand transit connectivity with Metra service to Oakton, the proposed NCS schedule with service to the Oakton station was added to the existing transit network and analyzed. This helps to understand the geographical extent (and corresponding jobs) that could be reached using walk-access transit service from the Oakton station area, including the wait times needed to transfer between routes, if applicable.

The ability to reach large portions of central Chicago within 60 minutes by transit yields much higher job accessibility. The opportunity to board a Metra train at the Oakton site, without needing to walk or take the bus to nearby UP-NW or NCS stations, dramatically increases the number of jobs accessible—from a maximum of 550,000 jobs to 940,000 jobs (see charts on following page).

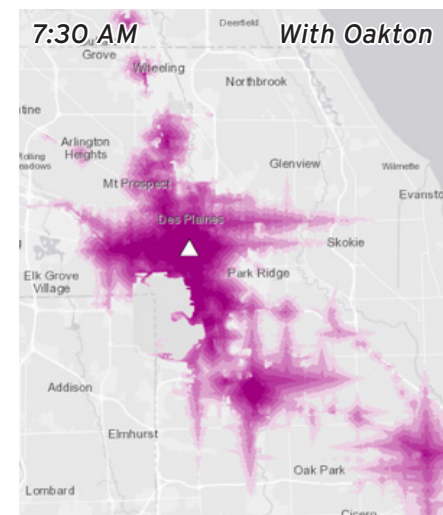
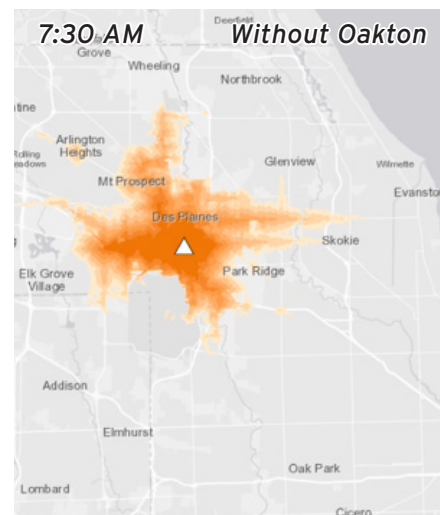
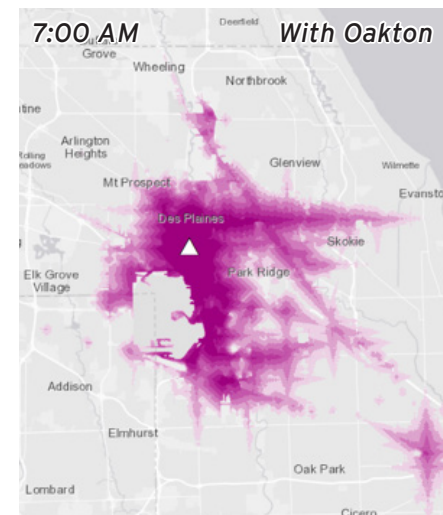
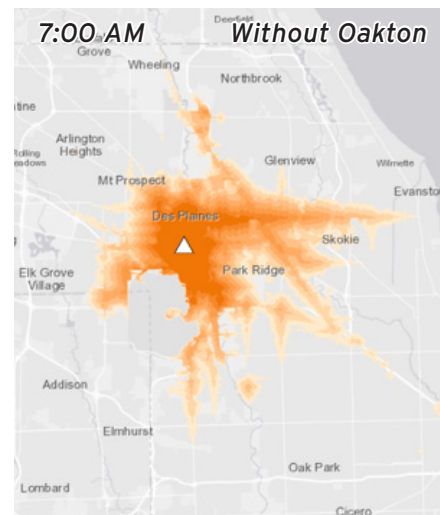
The “before-and-after” 60-minute destination service areas for two AM departure times are illustrated in the maps on the following page.



**Jobs Accessible via Walk-Access Transit from Oakton Station Site**



**60-minute Transit Service Areas from Oakton Site by Departure Time**



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORECAST

CMAP data indicates that the Oakton Street Station market shed population is expected to grow, **adding 0.8% households annually 2015 through 2050**, which translates to 2,390 new households, or a total of 9,817 households by 2050 (see table below). This is faster than the annual growth rates of nearby NCS and UP-NW origin market sheds, which are expected to have 0.5% to 0.7% more households each year.

### Origin Station Market Shed CMAP Household History and Forecast

LINE	STATION MARKET SHED	HOUSEHOLDS		HOUSEHOLD CHANGE (2015-2050)	
		2015	2050	Absolute	Annual
NCS	O'Hare Transfer	3,284	3,870	586	0.5%
NCS	Oakton	7,427	9,817	2,390	0.8%
NCS	Prospect Heights	13,524	16,671	3,146	0.6%
UP-NW	Dee Road	12,172	15,074	2,901	0.6%
UP-NW	Des Plaines	13,673	16,433	2,759	0.5%
UP-NW	Cumberland	8,866	11,437	2,571	0.7%

Similar to adjacent NCS stations O'Hare Transfer and Prospect Heights, the potential Des Plaines Oakton Street station market shed is expected to grow jobs more slowly than it grows resident population, approximately 0.4% annually (see table below). However, this is slightly faster job growth than is expected in the destination market shed of UP-NW Dee Road and Des Plaines stations. The Des Plaines Oakton station market shed is expected to have **1,313 more workers by 2050**, growing from about 8,337 to 9,651 workers.

### Destination Station Market Shed CMAP Employment History and Forecast

LINE	STATION MARKET SHED	EMPLOYMENT		EMPLOYMENT CHANGE (2015-2050)	
		2015	2050	Absolute	Annual
NCS	O'Hare Transfer	16,498	18,811	2,313	0.4%
NCS	Oakton	8,337	9,651	1,313	0.4%
NCS	Prospect Heights	3,738	4,495	756	0.5%
UP-NW	Dee Road	7,639	8,365	726	0.3%
UP-NW	Des Plaines	7,472	8,163	691	0.3%
UP-NW	Cumberland	4,645	5,405	760	0.4%

**Forecasts show growth for both the potential origin and destination markets in the Oakton Street market shed\***

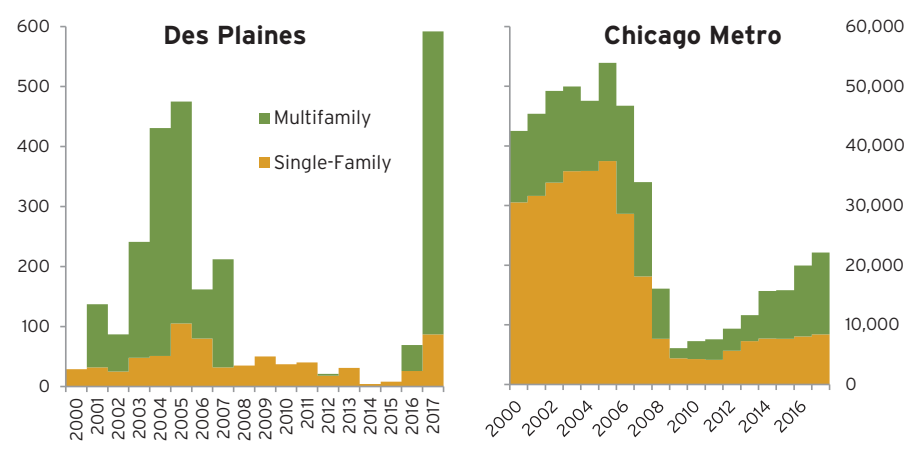
\* The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) creates population and employment forecasts for the Chicago region. Their models use a economic-demographic method that links regional population to projected employment growth. Learn more at: [datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/2050-forecast-of-population-households-and-employment](https://datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/2050-forecast-of-population-households-and-employment)

# MARKET ASSESSMENT

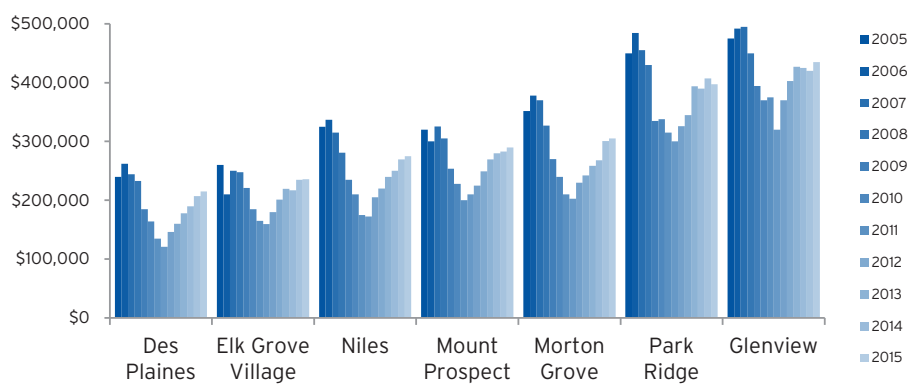
Across Metro Chicago, multi-family has outpaced single-family unit construction since 2014, and the margin is growing. Excluding the City of Chicago to focus on the suburbs, multi-family permits have reached 40% of total permitted units, up from 12% in 2009. This suggests strong sustained demand for higher-density residential even in Chicagoland suburbs.

After a long drought of multi-family development post-recession, Des Plaines construction picked up significantly in 2017 and 2018, responding to pent-up demand. Single-family construction also spiked up to almost 100 units in 2017, the highest by far since the recession and greater than any neighboring municipalities.

**Building Permits (2000-2017)**



**Residential Median Sales Price (2005-2017)**

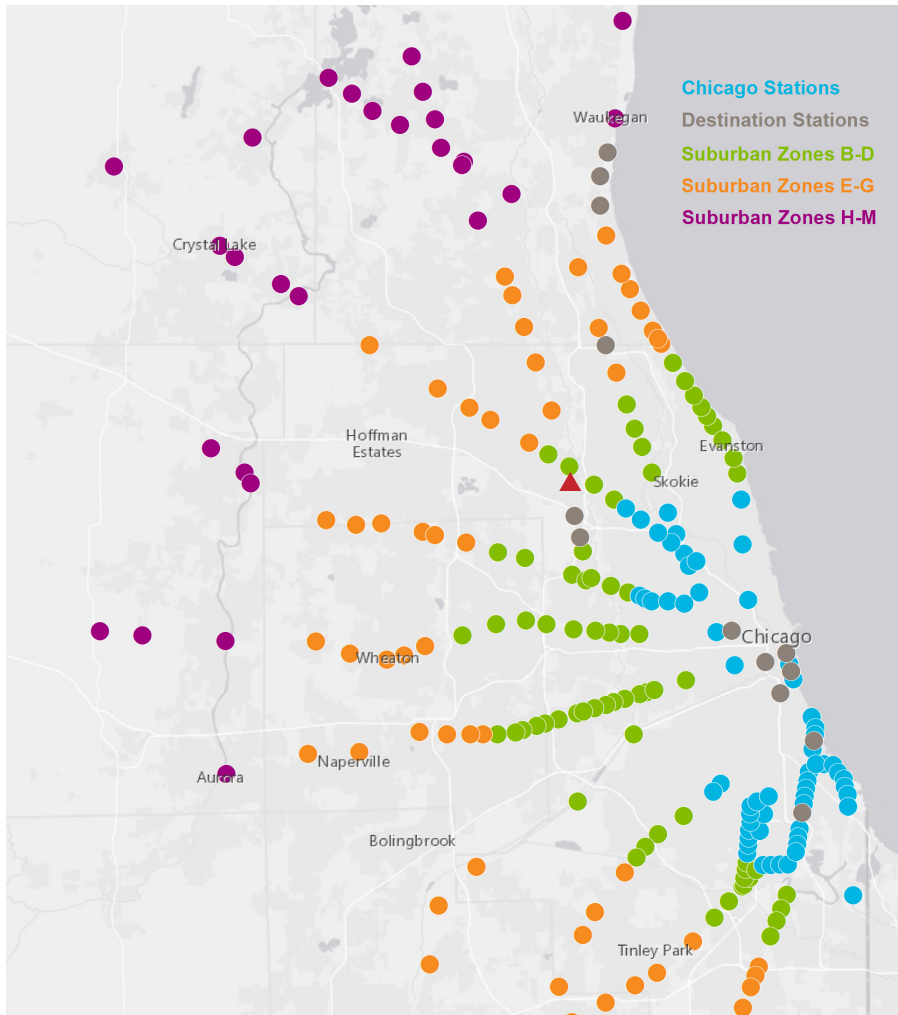


While Des Plaines' home values trend lower than many of its neighbors, the median housing price has risen steadily since 2012, with less plateauing than has been seen in many other nearby municipalities. Des Plaines lower average values have not hampered sales volumes, which have grown at a steady pace comparable to nearby municipalities, as have median home sale prices. Within the City itself, residential sales are increasingly robust in higher-income areas.

Though residential home values near the potential station were hit harder by the recession, the nearby area has nearly caught up to the city-wide average. Based on sales transactions, there is no reason to believe that the area will face insurmountable challenges in revitalizing the local market. Conversely, the area may be seen by some residents or businesses as an excellent value opportunity to invest in compared with more expensive areas nearby.

# MARKET ABSORPTION

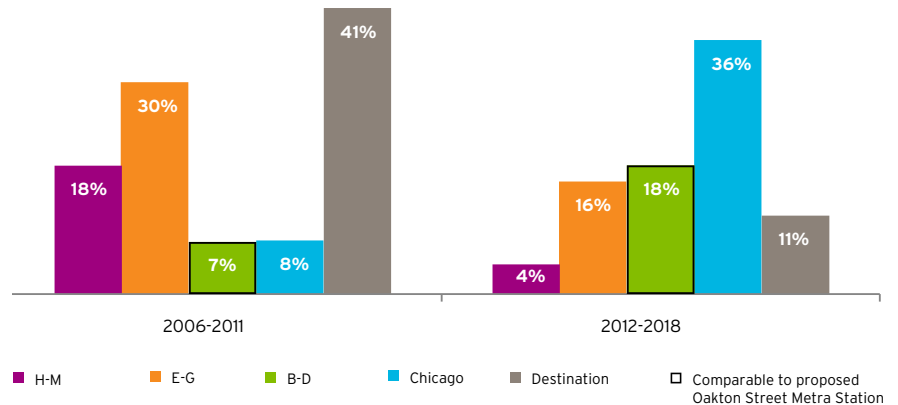
## Metra Station Locations by Category



A fundamental consideration of the potential market for a new station in Des Plaines is the ability to attract, absorb, and support new development in the station's market area. To gain better insight into this key question, the development trends in the Chicago area were analyzed from several different perspectives. The map to the left organizes all Metra Stations into five standard categories. **The proposed Oakton Street Station falls into the B-D category,** which applies to first ring suburbs.

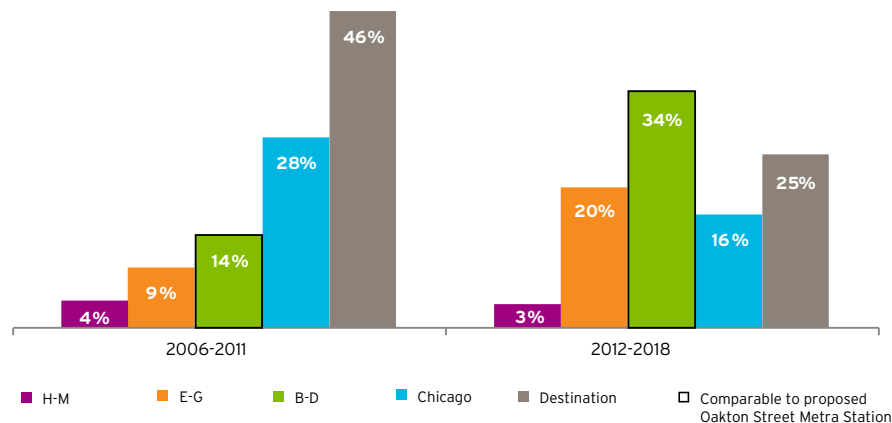
## Share of Total Office Development in Half-mile Metra Station Areas

Comparing more recent trends with earlier development patterns, we see that office development within a half mile of Metra stations in the near suburbs has more than doubled, from 7% in 2006-2012 to 18% in 2012-2018.



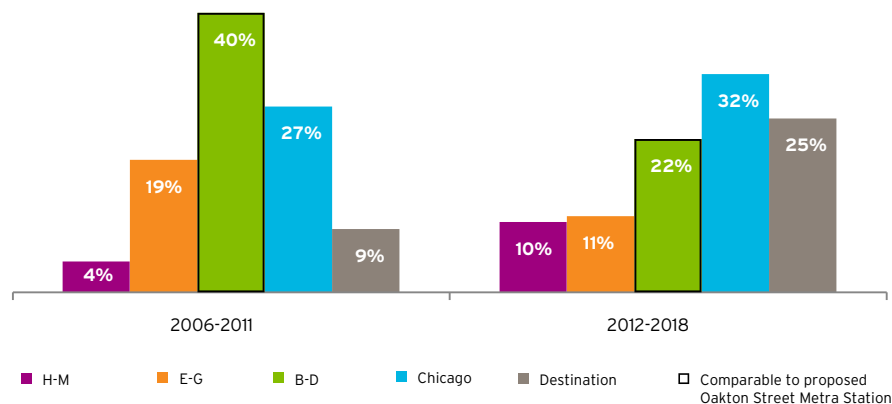
### Share of Total Multi-family Development in Half-mile Metra Station Areas

The multi-family market has also grown significantly in Suburban Zone B-D station areas, suggesting increased support for higher-density residential and transit-oriented development (TOD) in the suburbs.



### Share of Total Retail Development in Half-mile Metra Station Areas

Though retail development across U.S. markets has slowed, station areas in the near suburbs still captured about a third of development since 2006.



## SITE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

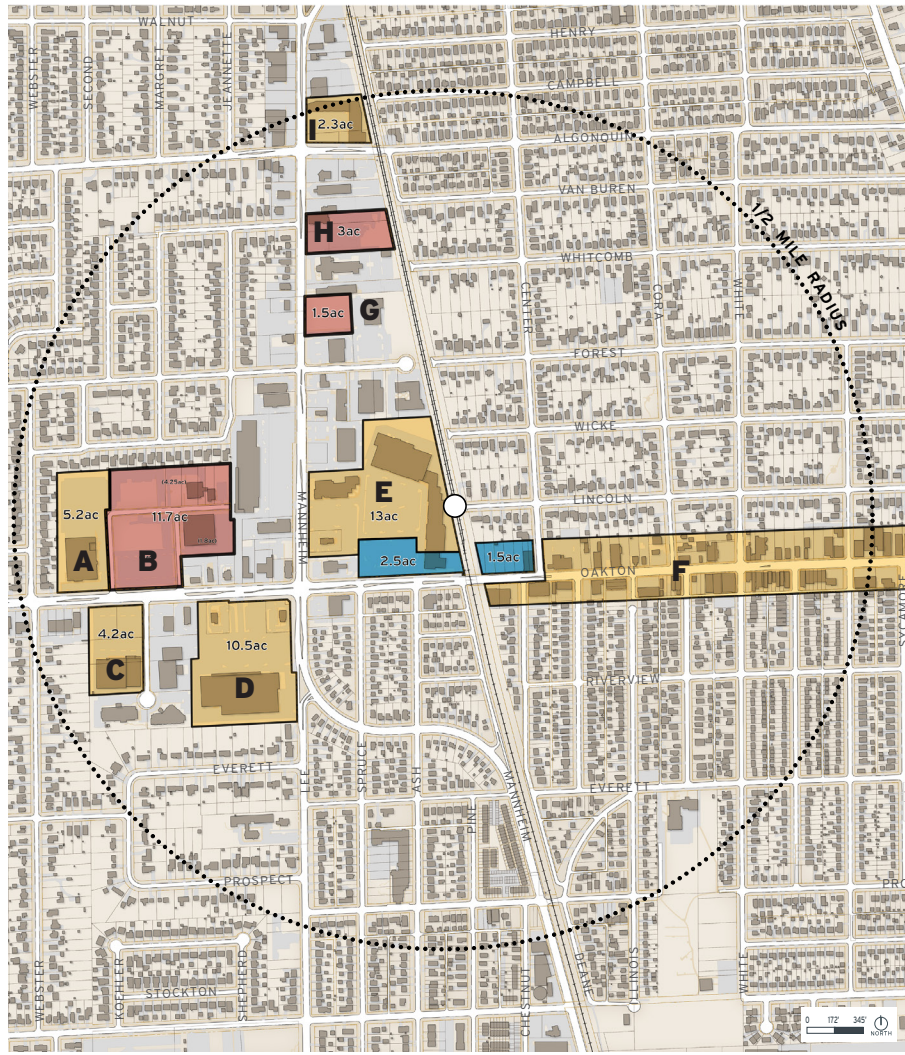
While virtually all parcels within the station area have been previously developed, there is a considerable amount of land in close proximity to the proposed station with current uses that are vacant or functionally obsolete, and could therefore be strong candidates for transit-oriented development in the future. These candidate sites have been identified and categorized based on suitability for redevelopment on the accompanying map (see following page). In total, these sites represent **roughly 54 acres of land suitable for redevelopment** within the long-term, or approximately 10% of the gross half-mile station area.

### Near-Term Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

The sites identified in red on the map represent properties that either have been cleared and are ready for development or have substantial portions of the property that are under-utilized or vacant and could be redeveloped with minimal disruption to existing business operations. In total, these properties account for just over 16 acres, as outlined below.

- **Site B** (+/- 11.7 acres) Large high-priority opportunity site with potential for a mix of apartments, townhomes, and mixed-use development.
- **Site G** (+/- 1.5 acres) Small opportunity site with potential for commercial, multi-family residential, or mixed-use development.
- **Site H** (+/- 3 acres) Moderate site with potential for redevelopment as a multi-family residential or mixed-use development.

Potential Opportunity Sites for Future Redevelopment



STATION LOCATION		BUILDINGS		NEAR-TERM TOD OPPORTUNITY SITE
STATION AREA (0.5 MILE RADIUS)		RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE		MID/LONG-TERM TOD OPPORTUNITIES
RAILROAD		PARCELS		TRANSIT SUPPORT SITE

Mid- to Long-Term Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

The remaining redevelopment opportunity sites identified within the immediate station area total roughly 40 acres. The majority of this land comprises large parcels located near the primary Oakton-Mannheim intersection with generally under-performing retail uses, including the Oaks Shopping Center (Site E) located immediately adjacent to the proposed station, and the substantial Kmart property (Site D) to the southwest. Based on the size and location of these properties, it is conceivable that portions of these sites could be infilled with residential development or completely redeveloped as TOD projects over time.

- **Site A** (+/- 5.2 acres) - Medium/large site with longer-term redevelopment opportunity as a stand-alone project or future phase component of Site B.
- **Site C** (+/- 4.2 acres) - Medium/large site with potential for future redevelopment as multi-family or mixed-use.
- **Site D** (+/- 10.5 acres) - Large, high-priority opportunity site for future mixed-use redevelopment. Site is adjacent to planned Pace Pulse Dempster Line stops on Mannheim/Lee, providing additional strength for transit-supportive use.
- **Site E** (+/- 15.5 acres) - Large, top-priority site for future transit-oriented redevelopment with multi-family residential and mixed-use. Future redevelopment of site would also include station-supportive amenities and uses. Any future changes would need to maintain or enhance existing retail use and ensure on-going commercial viability.
- **Corridor F** (redevelopment sites to be determined) - The Oakton Street/Elmhurst Road Corridor Study (Des Plaines, 2009) included ideas for future development in the planning district along Oakton east of the CN tracks (i.e., Oakton Mixed-use District).
- **Site I** (+/- 2.3 acres) - Small, lower-priority site with opportunities for infill or future mixed-use and/or multi-family development.

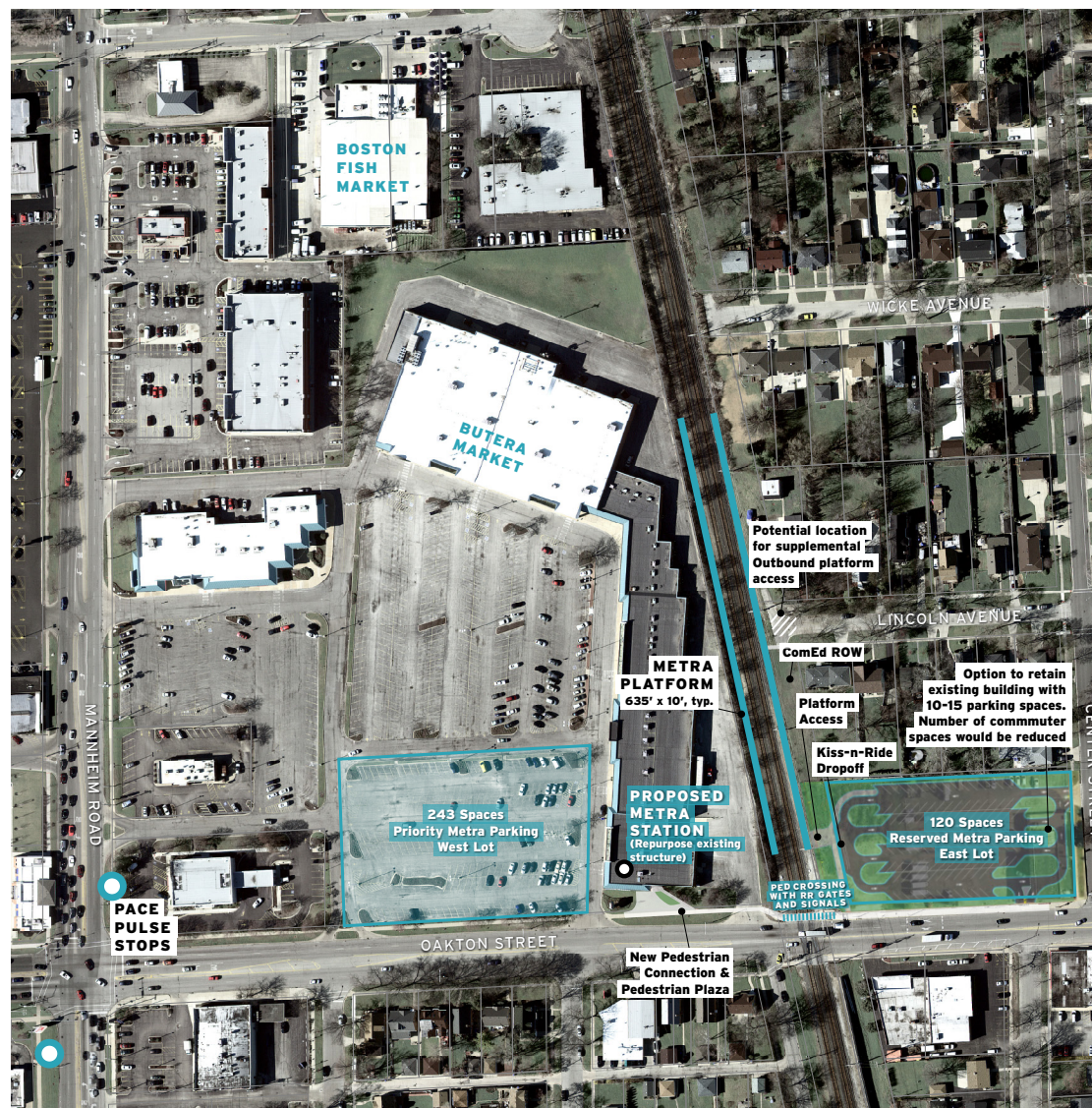
# STATION FACILITIES

Based on the recommended station location on the north side of Oakton Street, an initial station site plan was prepared that identified and located essential Metra station facilities. In addition to demonstrating overall feasibility and functionality of the proposed station, the concept plan shown to the right also serves as the basis for capital costs estimates identified later in this document and detailed in the formal report. Note that some of the assumed plan elements may change as the area develops, and the station is more fully integrated into adjoining land uses.

Key elements of the proposed station include:

- » **Station Building:** Proposed repurpose of south unit of Oaks Shopping Center for passenger waiting area.
- » **Platforms:** Two low-level side platforms.
- » **Parking:** Capacity determined by analysis of rider demand. Proposed leased parking on west side, newly constructed parking east side.
- » **Pedestrian Track Crossing:** At-grade crosswalk of the train tracks adjacent to Oakton Street.
- » **Crossing Protection Systems:** Potential need for improvements to minimize gate downtime.

**Proposed Metra Station Facilities Concept Plan**

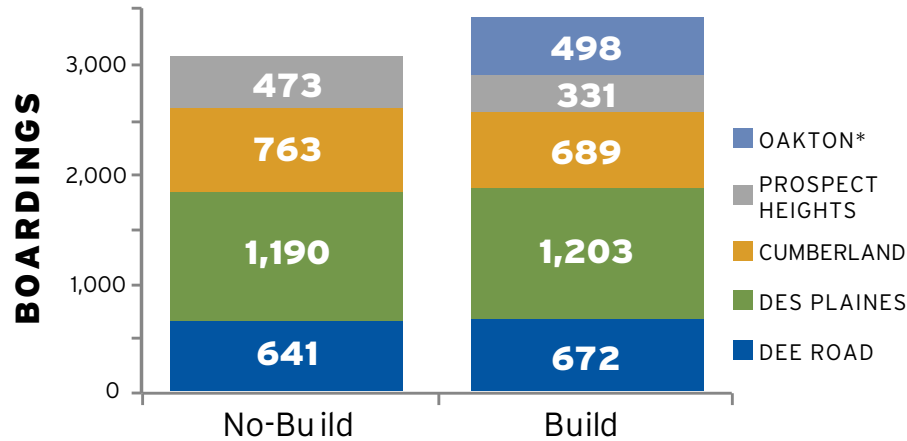


# TRAVEL DEMAND & IMPACTS

## TRAVEL DEMAND

Based on an assessment of market and ridership conditions, the project team ran a series of analyses to estimate the potential use of the proposed Oakton NCS Metra Station. Two methodologies were used to forecast station boardings: the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) STOPS model and a regression analysis. Since each approach offers comparative advantages over the other, it is recommended that the average be used as the estimated boardings for the proposed Des Plaines Oakton station. In addition, a separate analysis of the O'Hare air traveler market estimated that another 14 boardings could be attracted each weekday. Thus, the **Oakton Street station weekday boardings is anticipated to be 498 in 2050.** By comparison, the median Metra station attracted 422 weekday boardings based on a 2016 Metra passenger count. This result was somewhat surprising, since at 19 trains per day, service to the Oakton Station would be less than one-half the average number of stops at stations on Metra full-service lines. Some diversion of boardings from Prospect Heights (-30%) and Cumberland (-10%) were projected as part of these estimates.

**2050 Average Modeled Boardings by Station**  
Build versus No-Build Comparison



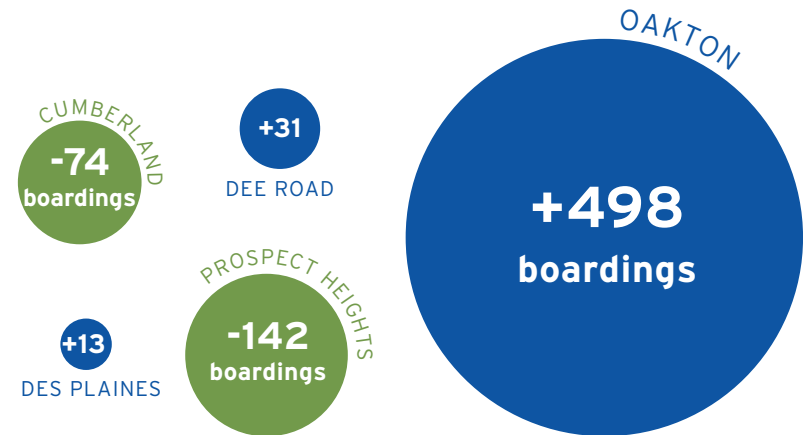
\* Includes an estimated 14 boardings of air travelers using the station; estimated off-model using a survey of air travelers

## RAILROAD OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

The analysis also looked at potential impacts of an Oakton Street Metra Station on commute times, ridership at other stations, and on Metra and freight systems as a whole. The additional time required to stop and start NCS trains at the Oakton Street Station would add approximately two minutes of travel time. This added time could cause some current NCS passengers to decide to use other Metra lines and other modes instead, although **the net change in NCS ridership and the Metra system as a whole would be positive.** There would be no discernible impacts to current freight services.

### Impact of Oakton Street Station on Area Stations Ridership

**NET INCREASE OF 326 BOARDINGS PER DAY**



**NEGLIGIBLE** impacts on Metra or Freight Service

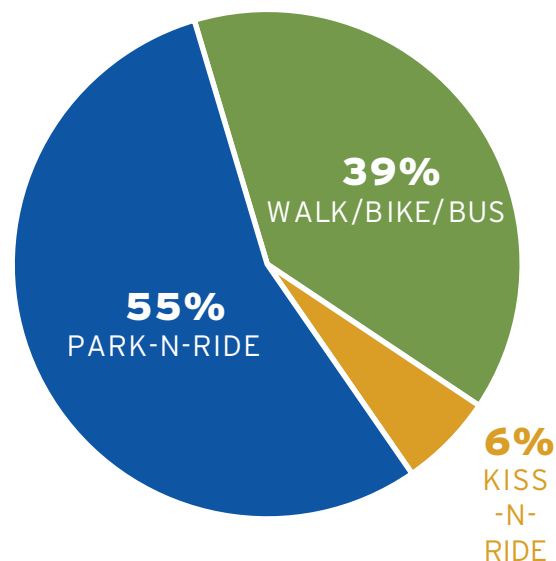


## ACCESS & SERVICE IMPACTS

A key factor in successful station performance is the provision of infrastructure and services to facilitate convenient access and egress for users. The STOPS model results can offer insight into how riders would access the station, as shown in the chart to the right. Analysis indicates that **197 out of the 498 anticipated riders in 2050 would walk, bike, or take a bus to the proposed station.** Recommendations to serve these riders include a filling gaps in the sidewalk network, providing amenities for pedestrians/bicyclists within the station area, including non-motorized enhancements in any redevelopment projects, enhanced connectivity and wayfinding between the Oakton station and the Pace Pulse Dempster Line stops, and potentially moving southbound trips on Pace Route 230 South Des Plaines from White Street to Center Street and reviewing connection times.

The following table of number of trains by weekday service period was developed with the goal of providing regular service to maximize the number of suburban riders who could use the Oakton Street station.

**Estimated 2050 Oakton Station Boardings by Access Mode**



### Proposed Schedule

#### NCS Weekday Trains by Service Period

Service Period*	INBOUND		OUTBOUND		NCS	Oakton
	NCS	Oakton	NCS	Oakton		
AM Peak	5	5	2	2	7	7
Midday	2	2	2	2	4	4
PM Peak	2	2	4	4	6	6
Evening	1	0	2	2	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>

\*SERVICE PERIODS (based on downtown terminal time):

**AM Peak** Start of service to 9:15 AM    **Midday** 9:16 AM to 3:29 PM    **PM Peak** 3:30 PM to 6:45 PM    **Evening** 6:45 PM to end of service

## TRAFFIC IMPACTS

In the course of various community engagement efforts, some community members voiced concerns about the impact the station would have on area traffic. A level of service analysis (LOS) was conducted to study how additional traffic of those going to and from the station would impact traffic on Oakton Street and Mannheim Road. The preliminary conclusions of this analysis indicated that the **proposed Oakton station would not over-burden the existing roadway system to adversely affect level of service (LOS)**. The estimated additional traffic generated by the station in comparison to current roadway traffic volumes would be minimal. The impacts on traffic due to additional railroad crossing gate downtown would also be minimal. The Oakton station is estimated to add less than 1% to the total time gates would be in the down position during the AM and PM peak hours. The tables to the right outline these key findings.

It should be noted that these numbers relate only to forecasted users of the station. The impacts associated with development that could be planned with, or occur from, the station has not factored into this analysis.

## STORMWATER IMPACTS

An initial review of stormwater impacts associated with new impervious areas identified the need for detention areas on the east side of the rail tracks.

REQUIRED  
STORMWATER  
DETENTION

---

**35,000**  
cubic feet

### **Detention Can Be Achieved Through**

- » **3,000 cubic feet depressional storage areas on proposed east side parking lot**
- » **32,000 cubic feet underground storage at proposed east side parking lot**

### Forecasted Traffic Impacts

	EXISTING		2050 WITHOUT STATION		2050 WITH STATION	
	Vehicles per Day	Level of Service	Vehicles per Day	Level of Service	Vehicles per Day	Level of Service
<b>Mannheim/Lee North of Oakton</b>	22,926	D	27,747	D	28,007	D
<b>Mannheim/Lee South of Oakton</b>	21,273	D	25,746	D	25,869	D
<b>Oakton West of Mannheim</b>	29,547	E	35,760	E	35,951	E
<b>Oakton East of Mannheim</b>	22,609	D	27,363	D	27,494	D

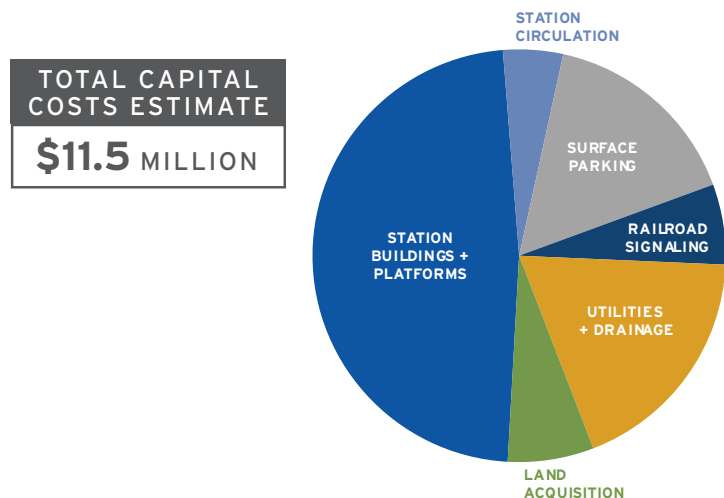
ANALYSIS SUGGESTS AN OAKTON STATION  
**WOULD ADD**  
**8 minutes of total gate downtime**  
**PER DAY**

### Estimated Gate Downtime Comparison

	INBOUND TRAINS	OUTBOUND TRAINS	TOTAL
Hours of Service per Day	11.8 hours	13.3 hours	14.9 hours
Trains per Day	9	10	19
Added Gate Downtime per Train	25 seconds	25 seconds	50 seconds
Additional Gate Downtime per Day	3.75	4.17	7.92
% added Downtime per Day	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%

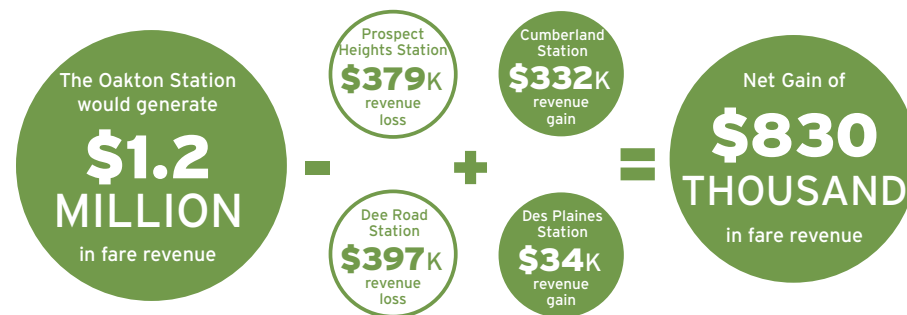
## CAPITAL COSTS

Various capital improvements associated with a new station were identified and quantified, and these quantities were used as the basis for estimating investment requirements. In 2019 dollars, the estimated capital cost to construct the station and related improvements totaled \$11.5 million. Operational and maintenance costs were estimated at \$152,000 per year, of which about 47% would be Metra's responsibility and the City of Des Plaines would be responsible for the remaining 53%.



## FARE REVENUE

The Oakton Station would generate nearly \$1.2 million in annual fare revenue based on estimated passenger use and 2018 fare levels. Assuming a decline of station boardings at nearby stations, the net result will still be a positive revenue of \$830,000 in overall annual fare revenue. Additional revenue from Metra parking and any leased retail or vending space in the station building would go to the City of Des Plaines. Other opportunities to recapture value generated from new development may also exist.



## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The Feasibility Study identified some potential funding or financing programs that could be considered to secure funding for the new station.

- » **FTA Capital Investment Grants**
- » **US DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)**
- » **CMAQ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)**
- » **CMAQ Surface Transportation Program (STP)**
- » **Cook County Invest In Cook program**
- » **Local Value Capture Opportunities**
  - » Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
  - » Benefit Assessment District
  - » Sales Transaction Tax
  - » Joint Development

# COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Extensive public and stakeholder outreach activities were conducted throughout the feasibility study using a variety of channels, including a project website, social media, an online survey, stakeholder meetings and a public open house. Stakeholders included local businesses, residents, and developers. Overall, the input received was supportive of developing an Oakton Street station, though there were concerns about potential traffic impacts and impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

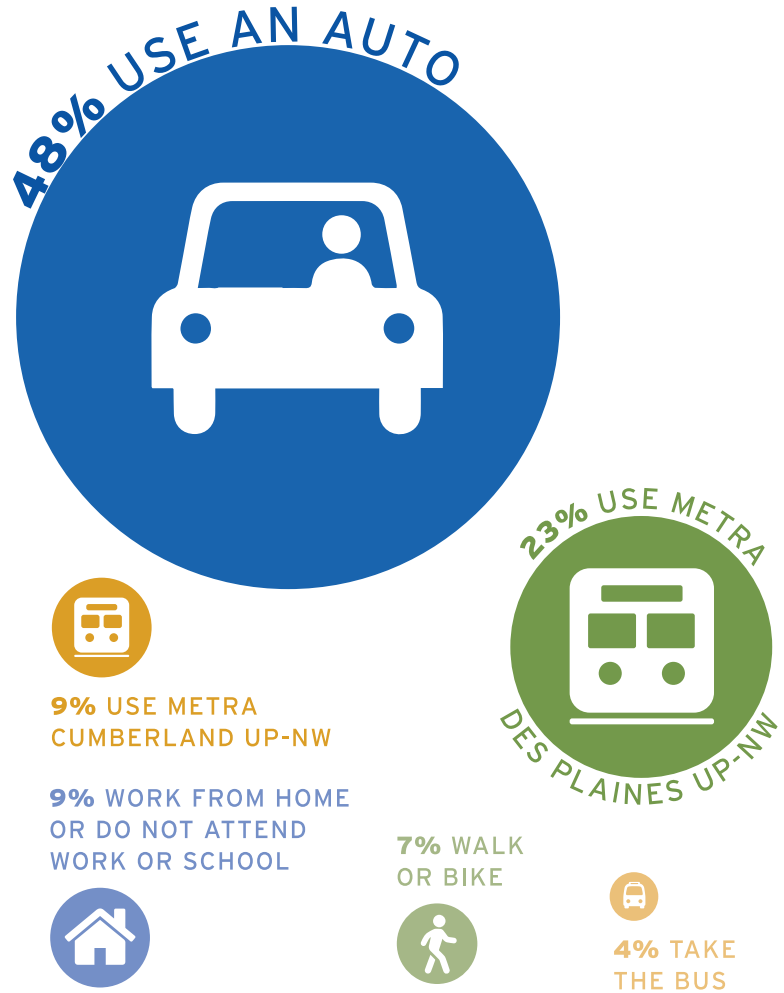
The project website ([desplainesoaktonmetrastation.com](http://desplainesoaktonmetrastation.com)) was regularly updated throughout the course of the Feasibility Study and provided access to information and opportunities for additional engagement through email and social media. Ultimately, the website had over 1,000 visits and 86 email subscriptions, while the associated Facebook page had over 100 page views and had reached well over 1,100 users.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

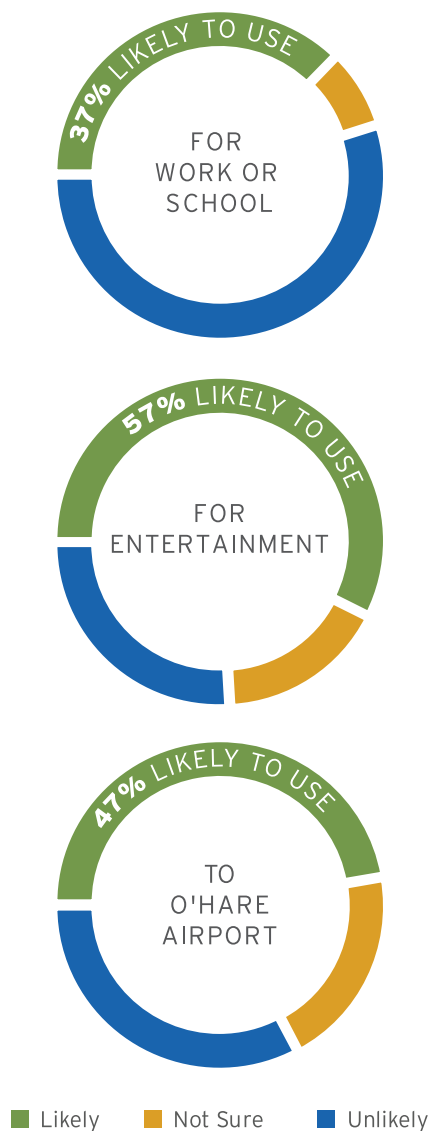
A community ridership survey was designed to gather input from potential users of the proposed Oakton Street Metra station. Questions for the survey were strategically written by The Lakota Group and AECOM to provide insight into the transportation choices made by potential station riders. The survey was shared via the project website, project Facebook page, through the City's website and newsletters, and marketed to existing Metra riders through flyers in the station area. The survey was also distributed at the Community Open House on February 6th, and available online through Survey Monkey, an online survey resource. The survey was opened to the public in January 2019 and closed in March 2019. In that time, a total of 56 responses were collected including 19 from the Community Open House. Key findings from the survey are outlined to the right and on the following pages.

## SURVEY RESULTS

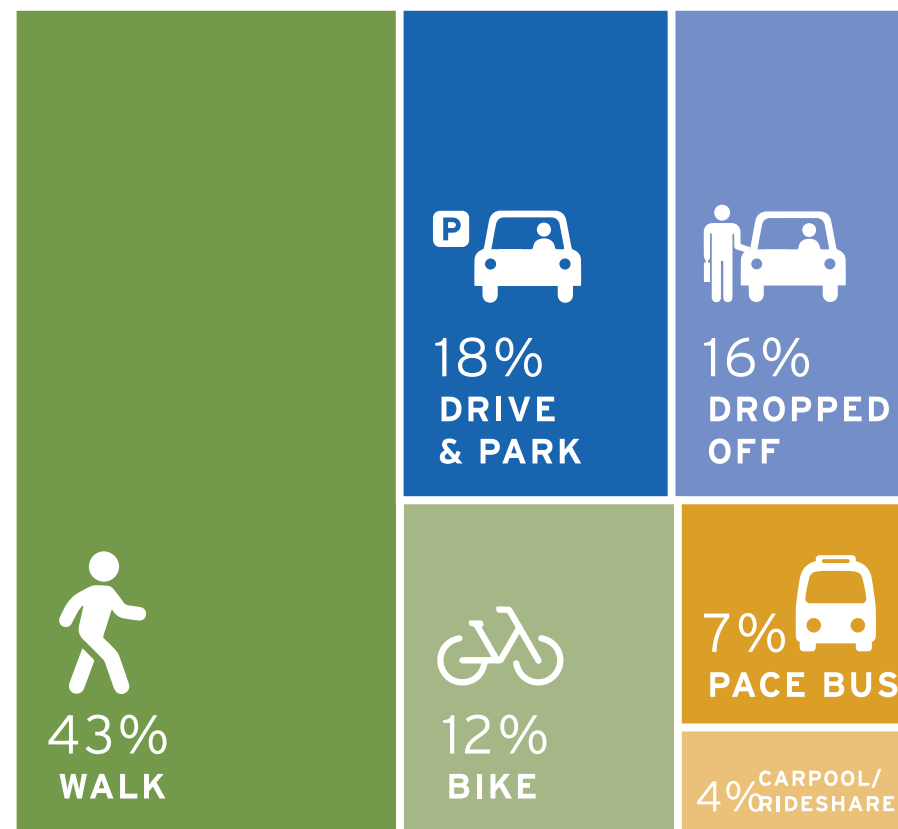
*How do you typically travel from your home to work or school?*



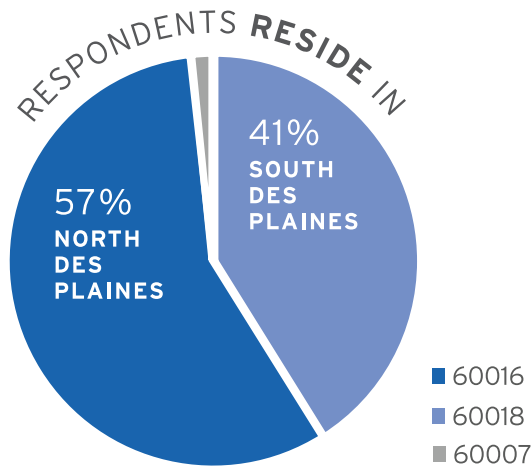
**If a new North Central Service Line (NCS) Metra train station were added on Oakton Street near Lee Street/Mannheim Road, how likely would you be to use this station?**



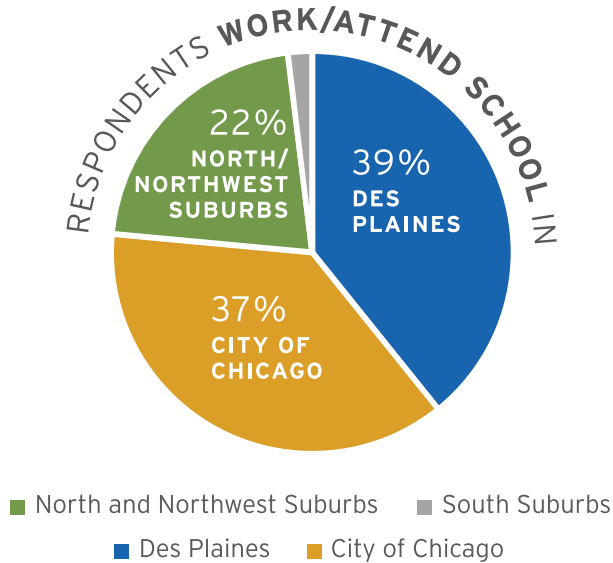
**If you were to use a train station at this location, how would you reach the station?**



**In what zip code do you reside?**



**In what zip code do you work or attend school?**



## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The team received many messages through the project website. Below is a small sampling of some of the messages received:

*“Think big! Incorporate residences and retail into the plan, do not stop at just a platform and shelter. This is a wonderful opportunity to transform an entire neighborhood.”*

*“We have too many trains in Des Plaines. Adding another one will annoy everyone even more while commuting.”*

*“I think the station is a great idea. I’m sure there will be the usual “NIMBY” complaints and complaints from people who don’t want anything to interfere with their drive. But we need more development that will get people out of their autos and relieve gridlock and help the environment. I think the station will help nearby property values and make the city a bit more walkable. I would hope that there be more focus on public-transit and walkable friendly development around the station.”*

*“How will you handle parking? How will you manage traffic? How will you keep cars out of neighborhoods?”*

*“Des Plaines needs this, please do this!”*

## STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

To best understand the needs and concerns of stakeholders in the area, the project team conducted a series of interviews with residents and business owners within a close vicinity of the station, as well as developers who might have interest in building in the station area. The following is a summary of key themes from those conversations.

### ***Impact on Oakton Street District***



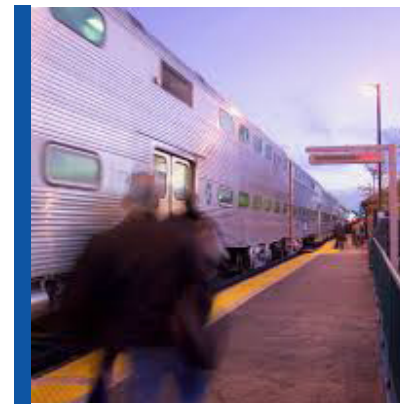
Conversations with Oakton Street business owners revealed universal support for the station. Business owners see a train station at Oakton as a catalyst for economic development in the area that could serve as a gateway to the Oakton Street business district. Traffic and safety on Oakton Street came up in many conversations. Though many businesses indicated that their clientele were local, stakeholders currently see very little foot traffic on Oakton.

### ***Development Potential***



Local developers see potential for redevelopment in the area surrounding Oakton Street and Mannheim Road, though there are hesitations from current property owners. Developers were clear that new residential and mixed-use development would likely depend on commitments from the City to improve appearance and walkability in the station area. Though the area has potential, transit-supportive developments were described as being most successful when located in areas that are enjoyable to walk around.

### ***Connectivity & Quality of Life***



Many residents and business owners expressed concern about the number of accessible crossings over NCS tracks. While some residents and business owners recognize that a new Metra station would increase property values in the surrounding area, others expressed concern that a Metra station could bring in crime from neighboring communities. The impacts on air quality were also discussed, with some residents concerned that a train stopped at the station would increase

diesel emissions, and others excited by the improvements to air quality that could come from reducing the number of cars on the road. Many residents and business owners saw the potential for an Oakton Street Metra Station to improve the quality of life in the area by providing additional transportation options for area residents and employees

# COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

## ROUTE FLEXIBILITY

Though located only a mile or so from the existing downtown Des Plaines Metra Station, the proposed Oakton Station would be located along the NCS line, which does not currently stop within the City. In accessing this additional route, local residents and workers would have access to a different set of stations and ultimately a different final destination – Chicago’s Union Station – than currently available on the UP-NW line alone.

## MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY

The Oakton Metra Station would be uniquely located to take advantage of – and contribute to – a diverse array of transportation alternatives. In addition to the existing Des Plaines UP-NW Metra station and Pace bus routes, the planned implementation of Pace’s Dempster Pulse bus rapid transit line will add another significant transit option within the immediate station area. By accessing the Metra NCS line, the new station would also enable increased connectivity to O’Hare Airport via the O’Hare Transfer Station.

The City has also identified Cora/White Street and Oakton Street, located to the east of the proposed station, as local bike routes and has policies in place to support improved conditions along these routes. These routes offer important non-vehicular alternatives within the surrounding neighborhoods, but also provide a connection to the Des Plaines River Trail, an important linkage to the Region’s bike and pedestrian trail network.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A new commuter rail station would serve as a major catalyst for new real estate development and redevelopment efforts within the station area, while also enabling a more resource-efficient pattern of use in the form of transit-oriented development. Broader economic development goals – such as reduction in the area’s retail vacancies, and ultimately, the revitalization of Oakton Street as a local commercial district – would also benefit greatly from the new station as the result of additional residential units, increased foot traffic, and an overall focus on pedestrian enhancements and walkability.

## CAPACITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing a new Metra station will inevitably require significant capital investments in the form of station and public safety infrastructure, however the Oakton Station presents a unique opportunity to establish Metra service in a manner that is relatively efficient in both time and resources. For example, potential parking capacity already exists to the immediate east and west of the proposed station location, and expanding or formalizing the commuter lots would require only modest demolition/reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, the proposed station could occupy a vacant end-unit in the adjacent Oaks Shopping Center, presenting a cost effective, short-term solution that would be mutually beneficial to both the City and property owner. This approach would also allow for potential transit-oriented infill development within nearby properties, without requiring major disruptions to commuter operations.

Additionally, the City would likely have several potential funding sources at their immediate disposal that would allow for implementation efforts to proceed while also pursuing grants, private capital investments, and other outside funding sources over the longer-term.

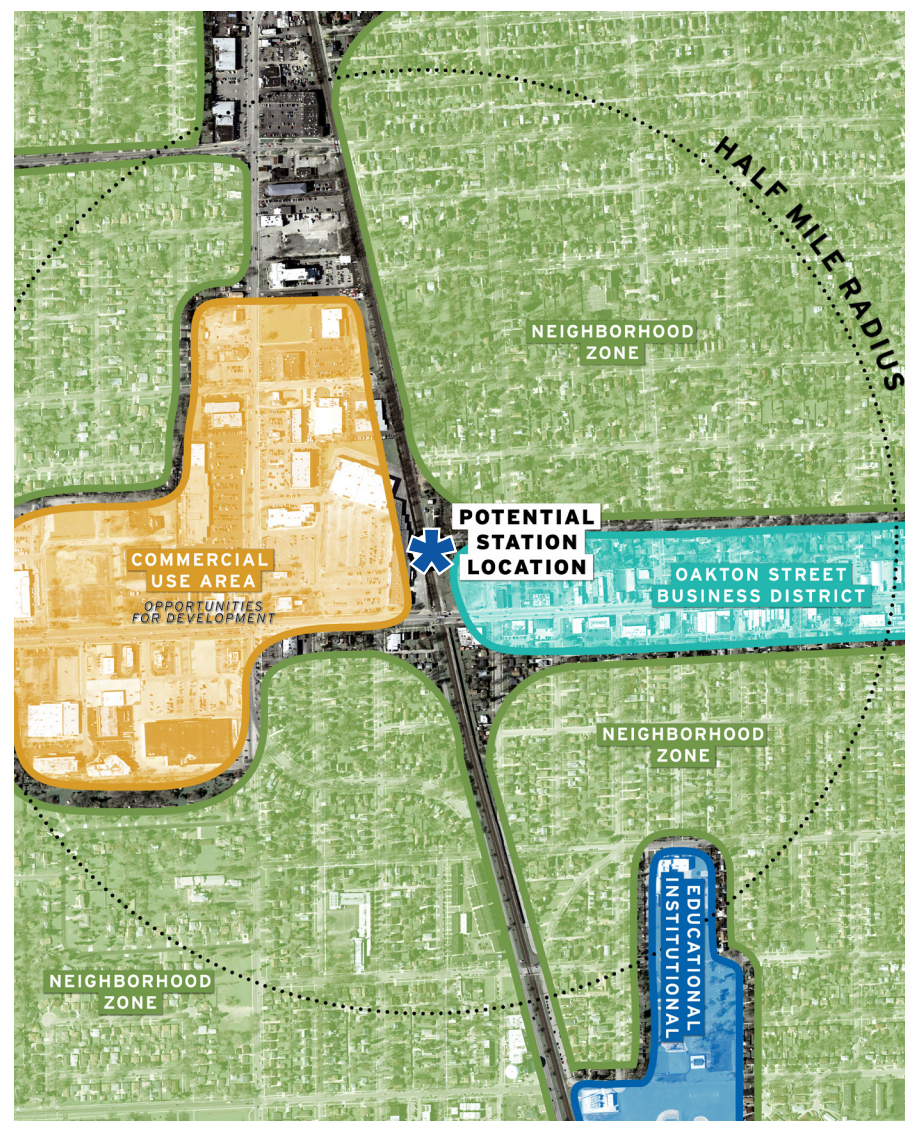


# IN CONCLUSION

The technical analyses performed indicate that a Des Plaines Oakton NCS station would be feasible and would have all of the criteria needed to be highly successful as both an important local transit connection and catalyst for future economic development. Key takeaways of the study are outlined below.

Metra will review the findings of the Feasibility Study and make a determination on whether station planning efforts can proceed, however the ultimate decision to implement the station rests with the Des Plaines City Council. This includes a commitment to Metra to secure capital funding for construction and an agreement to fund station and parking operation and maintenance costs.

- » *A new Oakton Metra NCS Station would have minor impacts on current traffic levels and Metra operations.*
- » *With an estimated 498 boardings per day by 2050, the station would exceed the median weekday boardings threshold of 422 riders, and result in a net increase of 326 daily boardings for all nearby station.*
- » *The proposed station area is well poised for new development. Transit-oriented development near the station could be compact and walkable, reducing the dependence on driving and providing a major boost to the local business district.*
- » *A new station could help to alleviate parking capacity issues at nearby stations and provide an important route alternative to the UP-NW line.*
- » *The location of the proposed station offers significant opportunities for multi-modal connectivity – including the planned Pace Dempster Pulse route.*
- » *Community survey results show a strong interest in using the proposed station for a variety of uses.*
- » *A range of funding programs could be used to finance the improvements required to implement the station, including significant value capture opportunities from new development and TIF funding.*



*The new station would improve transit opportunities for local residents and support business and economic development efforts within the area.*

