Resources:

Industrial Corridors

Chicago's 24 Industrial Corridors, comprising about 12 percent of city land, have boundaries that generally align with railroad embankments, waterways, highways, arterial streets and other manmade and natural buffers that effectively separate interior industrial uses from adjacent residential and commercial activity. Ranging in size from 70 to 3,500 acres, the corridors are essential parts of the region's sustainable infrastructure because they offer existing industrial land for new and expanded manufacturing development projects. Unlike suburban and rural development locations that have traditionally served the region as farmland, the corridors have been associated with industry, in some cases, for more than 150 years. It was only in the 1990s, recognizing their importance to the city's economy, that the City of Chicago designated them as "Industrial Corridors" in order to provide protection and incentives for industrial companies. Their continued use for the production of durable and nondurable goods underscores fundamental sustainability principles involving the utilization of existing resources.

Though well established, portions of many corridors are vulnerable to redevelopment and reuse for residential and retail uses. To help protect land within the corridors, zoning change proposals within their borders are reviewed by the Chicago Plan Commission, which can reject proposals that would cause conflicts with existing businesses or serve to weaken a corridor's industrial integrity. Additional land use protection is provided by Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) legislation, which specifically prohibits residential and large scale retail development within a district. Fifteen PMDs have been designated in 12 of the corridors.

In addition to stable work environments, each of the corridors possesses numerous transportation assets. Most offer direct connections to the interstate highway system and provide access for 80,000-pound trucks roughly every mile. Additionally, four corridors are used by local companies to ship and receive goods by rail and 13 others have potential for increased rail use. Five corridors also offer regional or inter-modal water access to either the Chicago or Calumet River.

However, as part of the first phase of CSI analyses, it is clear that manufacturers find areas outside the industrial corridors suitable as well. The three maps in the previous section on the manufacturing sub-sectors show fabricated metal, food and primary metal manufacturing facilities all over the city.

Recent studies and ongoing work by city agencies will help CSI to assess the continued viability of various types of industrial uses. A land use inventory and analysis completed in 2010 by the Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development (HED) was conducted for the first phase of the CSI initiative. Presented on the following pages, the data and associated ratings are collectively intended to provide a broad analysis of the comparative strengths of each corridor.

While the analysis of any given site within each corridor should entail additional components, the rationale behind the economic, transportation and boundary ratings for each corridor are as follows:

Economic Strength

Ratings are based on corridor specialization, vacancies, employment and employment density. Specialization involves the clustering of certain types of businesses within a corridor, which provides critical mass benefits for their collective viability. Vacancies are assessed for redevelopment potential that may involve environmental remediation and adaptability for one or more modern industrial uses. With certain exceptions, multi-floor properties are generally not considered conducive for modern manufacturing needs but may be adaptable for other employment generating uses. See maps for sales and employee totals for each corridor.

Transportation Access

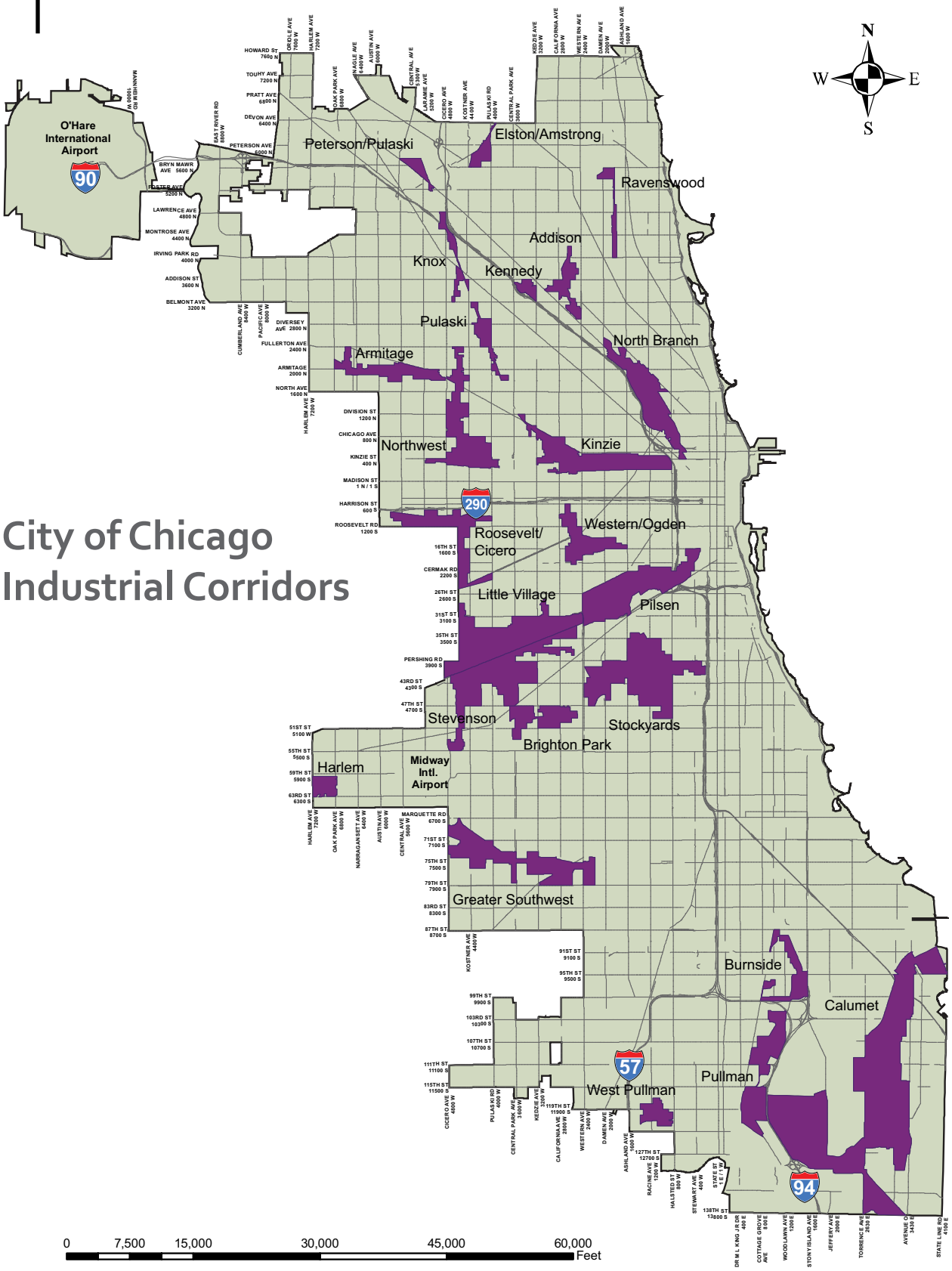
Ratings are based on road, water and rail linkages within each corridor. With highway access being the most desirable component, specific access issues involve highway entry points, viaduct heights and truck routes, in that order. Access is also an important criteria involving workers' ability to commute to and from an employment location. However, corridors that do not rate well on the above criteria may still be valuable to companies due to their proximity to customers. How these factors are ultimately weighed depend on a specific company's needs and the availability of appropriate sites within a given corridor.

Zoning and Boundary Integrity

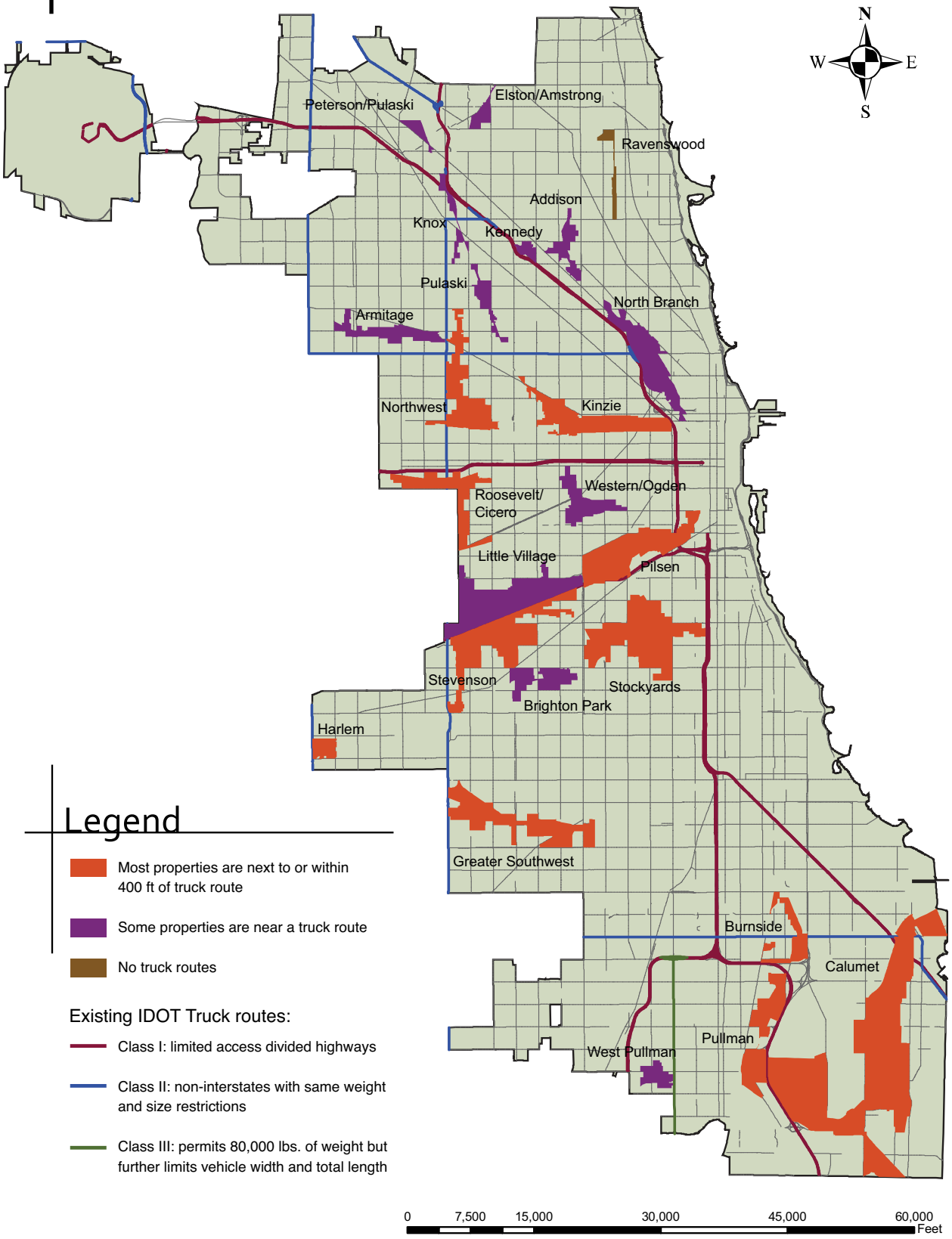
Ratings are based on the effectiveness of corridor boundaries at mitigating the spread of noise, fumes and traffic to areas outside the corridor. Wide boundaries, like expressways and rivers, and elevated boundaries, such as railroad embankments, are highly effective. Retail strip centers, large-format retail stores and other non-residential uses can also function as buffers with nearby residential areas, though, ideally such business are not located within an industrial corridor. Rezonings in support of retail and residential operations reduce the amount of land available for new and expanding industries.

Citywide Maps:

City of Chicago Industrial Corridors



Truck Route Access:



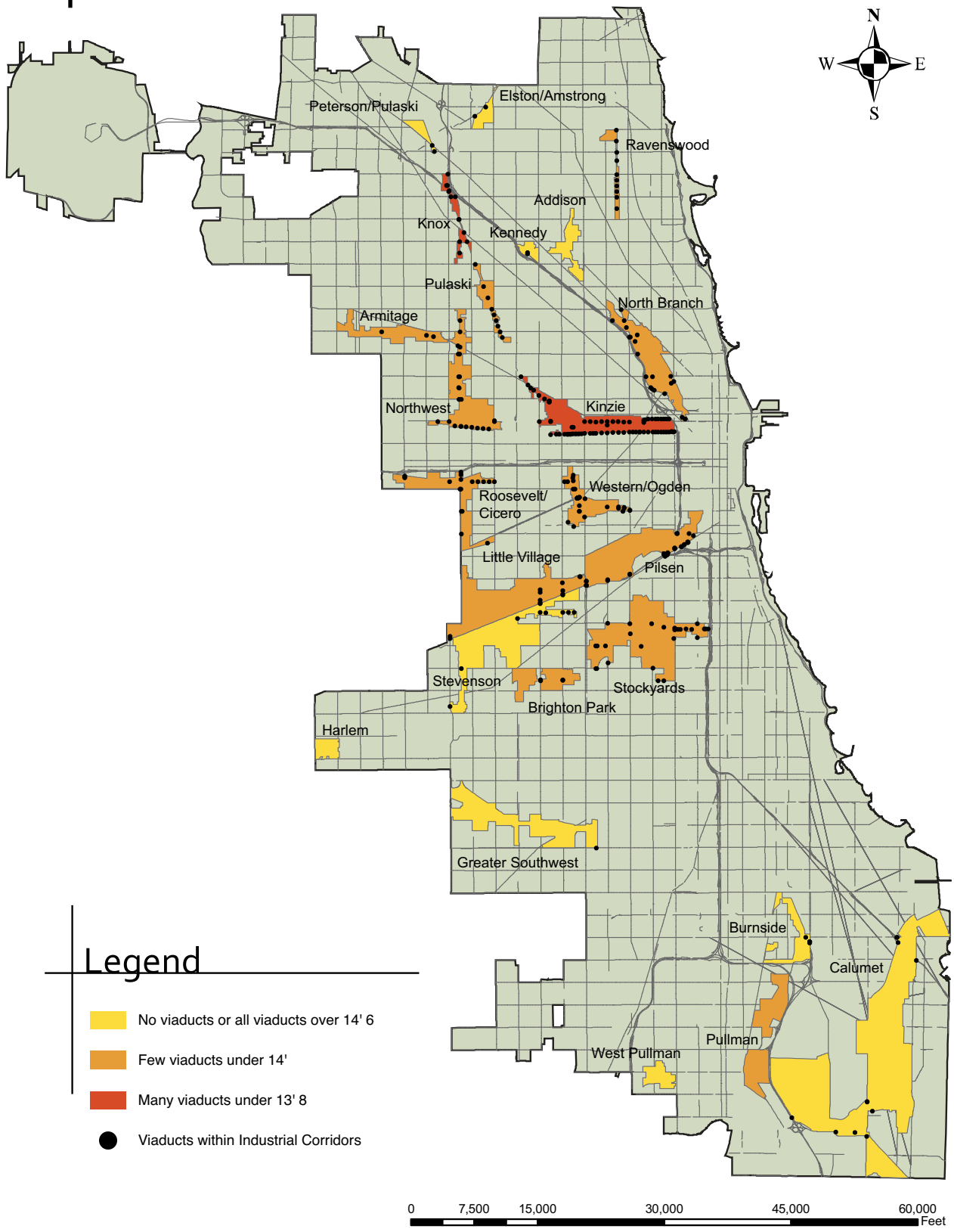
Legend

- Most properties are next to or within 400 ft of truck route
- Some properties are near a truck route
- No truck routes

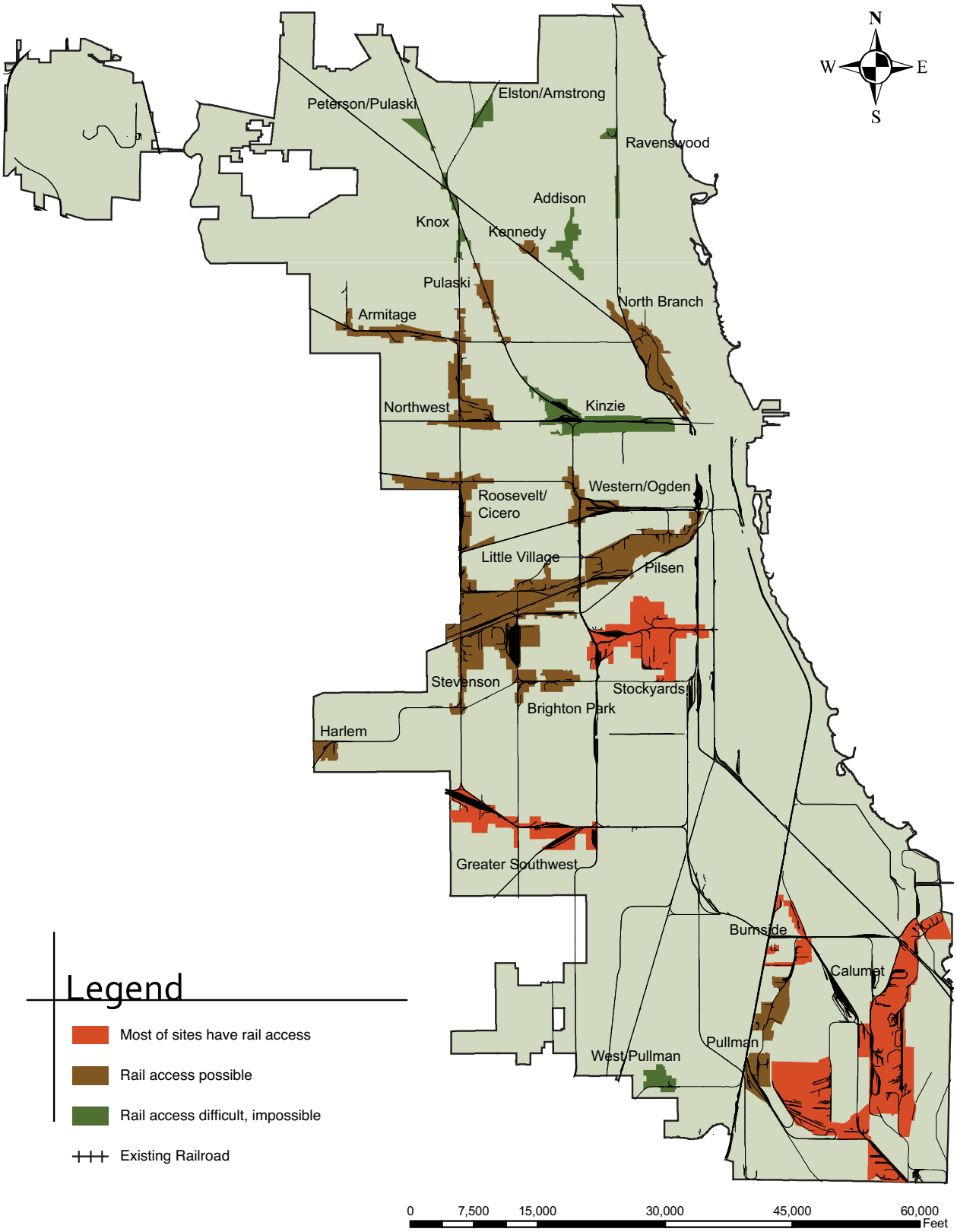
Existing IDOT Truck routes:

- Class I: limited access divided highways
- Class II: non-interstates with same weight and size restrictions
- Class III: permits 80,000 lbs. of weight but further limits vehicle width and total length

Viaduct Clearance Issues:



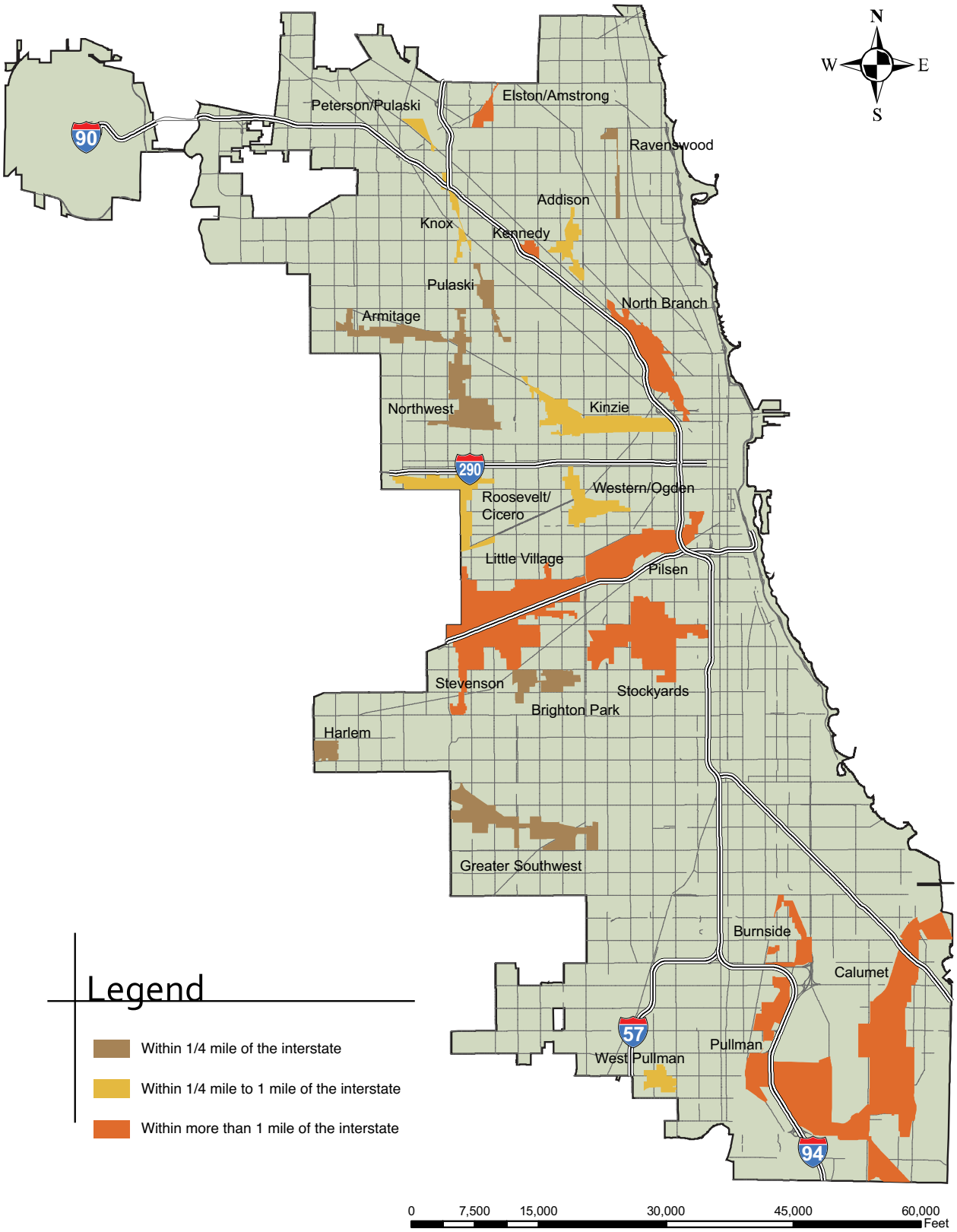
Railroad Access:



Legend

- Most of sites have rail access
- Rail access possible
- Rail access difficult, impossible
- Existing Railroad

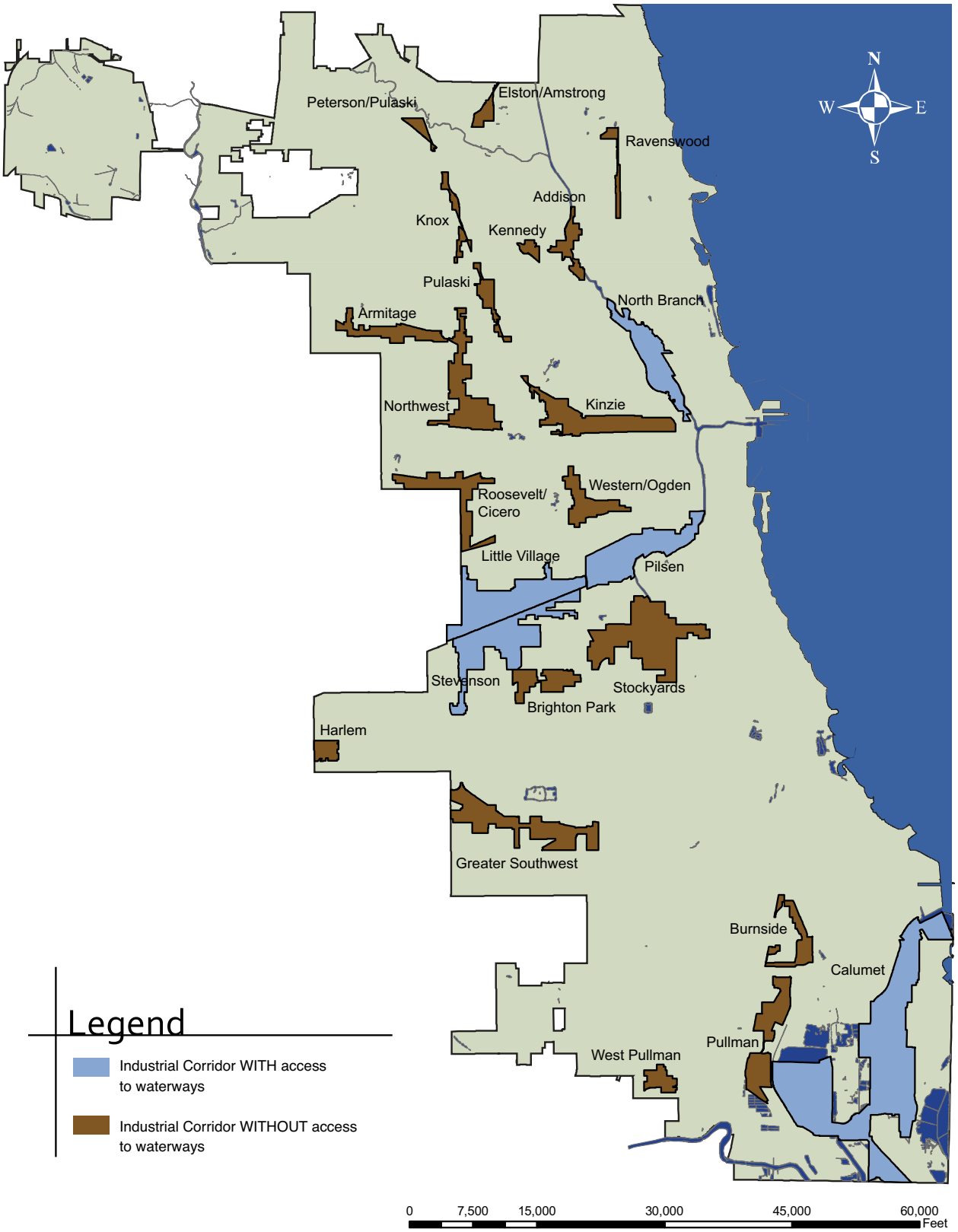
Interstate Access:



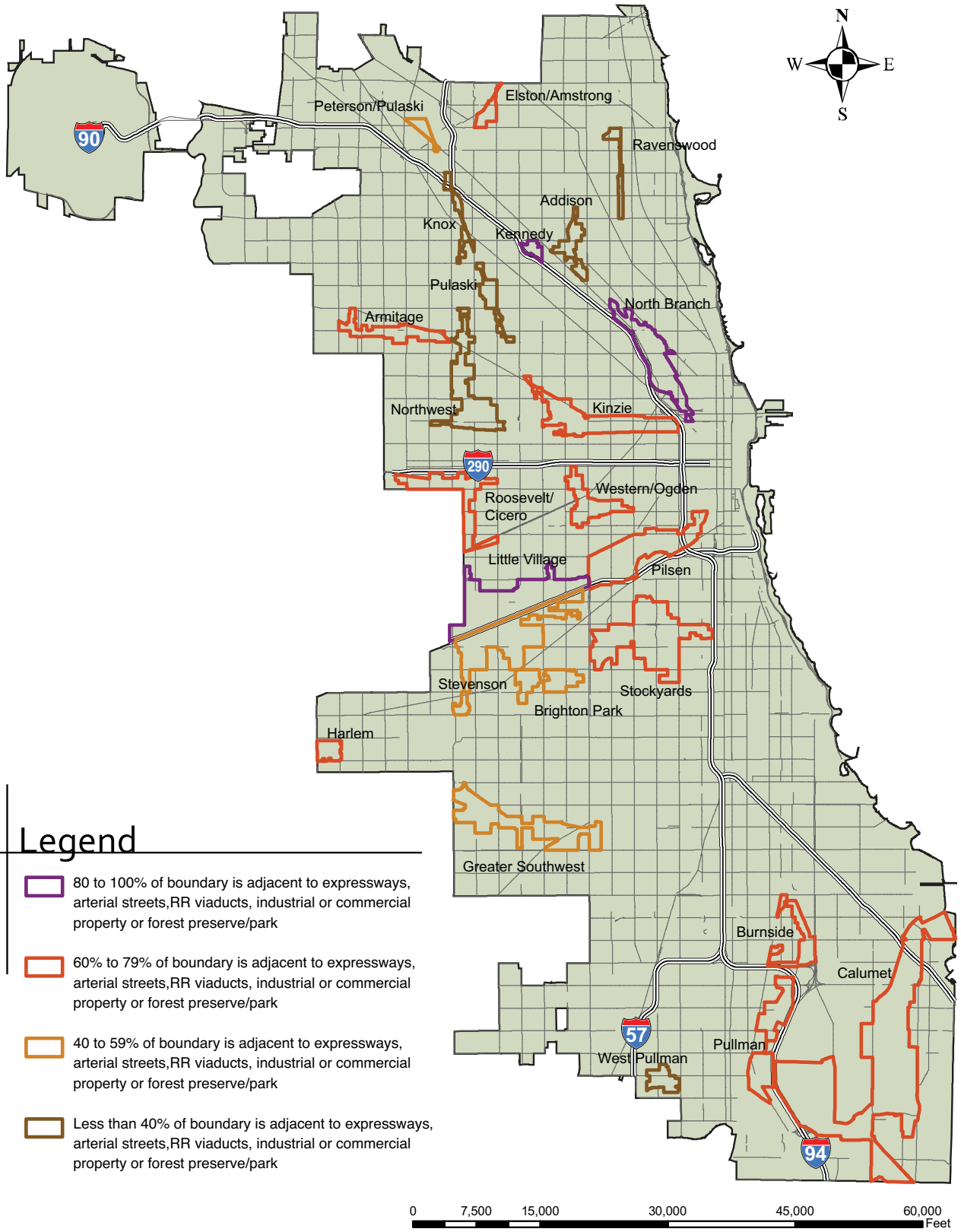
Legend

- Within 1/4 mile of the interstate
- Within 1/4 mile to 1 mile of the interstate
- Within more than 1 mile of the interstate

Waterways Access:



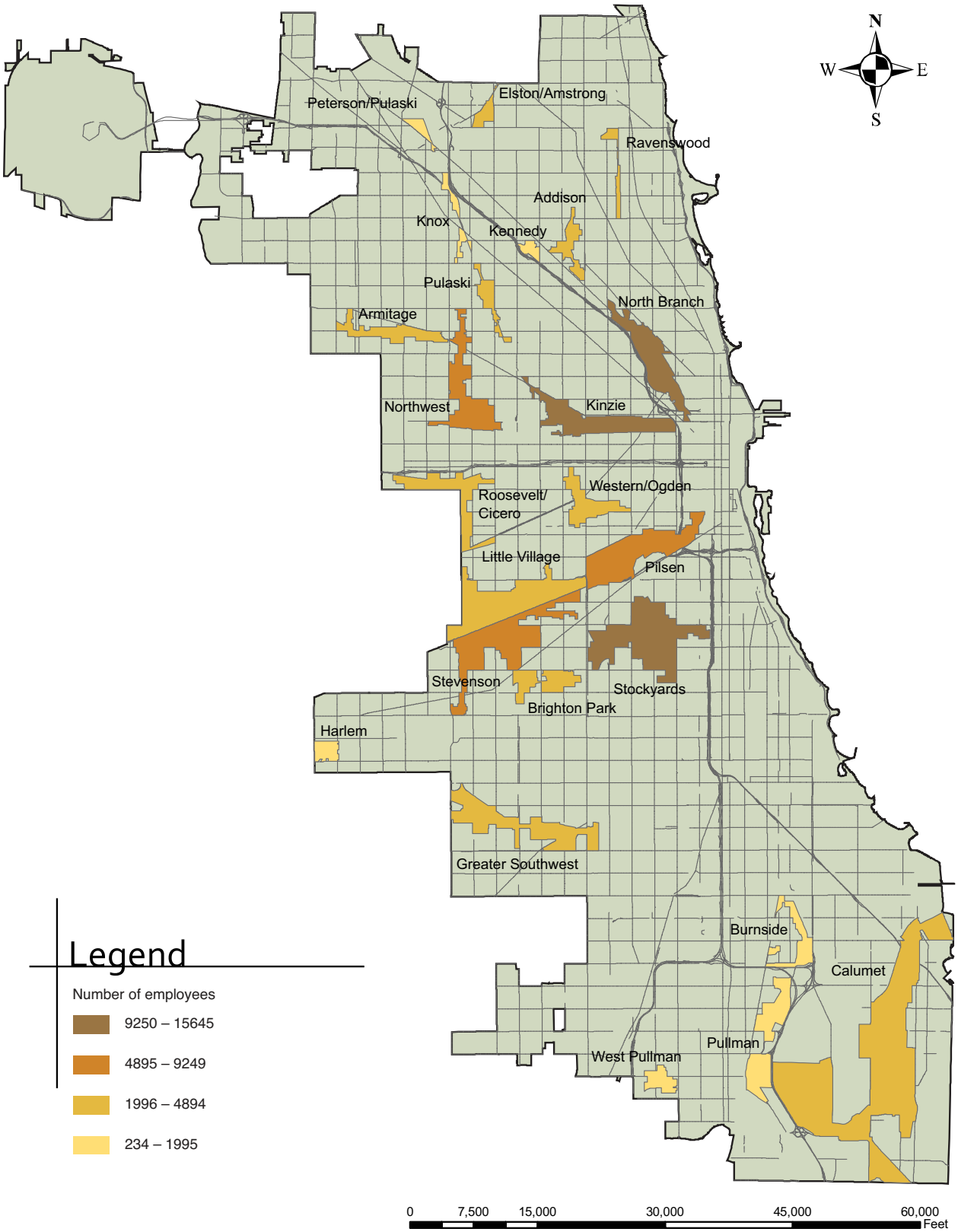
Boundary Integrity:



Legend

- 80 to 100% of boundary is adjacent to expressways, arterial streets,RR viaducts, industrial or commercial property or forest preserve/park
- 60% to 79% of boundary is adjacent to expressways, arterial streets,RR viaducts, industrial or commercial property or forest preserve/park
- 40 to 59% of boundary is adjacent to expressways, arterial streets,RR viaducts, industrial or commercial property or forest preserve/park
- Less than 40% of boundary is adjacent to expressways, arterial streets,RR viaducts, industrial or commercial property or forest preserve/park

Employment:



Legend

Number of employees

- 9250 – 15645
- 4895 – 9249
- 1996 – 4894
- 234 – 1995

Zoning Code Matrix

District Name	Max FAR	Max Height	Min Front Yard	Min Rear Yard*	Side Yards*	Typical Uses
RS1	0.50	30	20	50	5	Single Family Detached
RS2	0.65	30	20	50	4	Single Family Detached
RS3	0.90	30	20	50	2	SFD+ Two Flats
RT3.5	1.05	35	15	50	2	SFD+ 2/3 Flats + TownHomes
RT4	1.20	38	15	50	2	Flats + Townhomes + Multifamily
RT4A	1.50	42	15	50	2	Flats + Townhomes + Multifamily
RM4.5	1.70	47	15	50	2	Townhomes + Multifamily
RM5	2.00	47	15	50	2	Townhomes + Multifamily
RM5.5	2.50	60	15	50	2	Multifamily
RM6	4.40	none	15	50	none	Multifamily
RM6.5	6.60	none	15	50	none	Multifamily
B1-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	Storefront style shopping, upper story residential/office
B1-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	Storefront style shopping, upper story residential/office
B1-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	Storefront style shopping, upper story residential/office
B1-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	Storefront style shopping, upper story residential/office
B1-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	Storefront style shopping, upper story residential/office
B2-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	As B1 but ground floor residential allowed
B2-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	As B1 but ground floor residential allowed
B2-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	As B1 but ground floor residential allowed
B2-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	As B1 but ground floor residential allowed
B2-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	As B1 but ground floor residential allowed
B3-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	Auto oriented retail, upper story residential/office
B3-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	Auto oriented retail, upper story residential/office
B3-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	Auto oriented retail, upper story residential/office
B3-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	Auto oriented retail, upper story residential/office
B3-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	Auto oriented retail, upper story residential/office
C1-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	B1+ auto-oriented uses and bars allowed by right
C1-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	B1+ auto-oriented uses and bars allowed by right
C1-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	B1+ auto-oriented uses and bars allowed by right
C1-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	B1+ auto-oriented uses and bars allowed by right
C1-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	B1+ auto-oriented uses and bars allowed by right
C2-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	Motor vehicle related commercial district
C2-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	Motor vehicle related commercial district
C2-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	Motor vehicle related commercial district
C2-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	Motor vehicle related commercial district
C2-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	Motor vehicle related commercial district
C3-1	1.20	38	0	0	0	Commercial, manufacturing uses, no residential
C3-1.5	1.50	38	0	0	0	Commercial, manufacturing uses, no residential
C3-2	2.20	50	0	0	0	Commercial, manufacturing uses, no residential
C3-3	3.00	65	0	0	0	Commercial, manufacturing uses, no residential
C3-5	5.00	80	0	0	0	Commercial, manufacturing uses, no residential
M1-1	1.20	none	0	0	0	Low impact manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing
M1-2	2.20	none	0	0	0	Low impact manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing
M1-3	3.00	none	0	0	0	Low impact manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing
M2-1	1.20	none	0	0	0	Moderate Impact manufactuing, wholesaling and warehousing
M2-2	2.20	none	0	0	0	Moderate Impact manufactuing, wholesaling and warehousing
M2-3	3.00	none	0	0	0	Moderate Impact manufactuing, wholesaling and warehousing
M3-1	1.20	none	0	0	0	High impact manufacturing + waste related uses
M3-2	2.20	none	0	0	0	High impact manufacturing + waste related uses
M3-3	3.00	none	0	0	0	High impact manufacturing + waste related uses