

# Section 1: Introduction



### Planning Mission

In late 2006, the City of Evanston initiated a planning process to create a Master Plan and Streetscape Design for Central Street, a major east-west arterial roadway in the northern part of the community. The City's planning mission was to evaluate the corridor's land use and physical conditions and make recommendations for enhancing the street as a mixed-use pedestrian-oriented corridor serving adjacent neighborhoods and the overall city. City officials consider this planning assignment an important opportunity to:

- Meet the goals and objectives of the 2000 Evanston Comprehensive General Plan by evaluating “growth patterns and land use changes” along one of Evanston’s major streets that has the potential for increased residential and mixed-use development.
- Attract development that is more compatible with City and community goals and the area’s land-use setting and physical conditions, especially related to adjacent single-family neighborhoods.
- “Rethink” and reorient zoning requirements to better guide and shape future development along the street.
- Assess opportunities for new development and redevelopment.
- Strengthen the economic vitality of the corridor.
- Set a design direction for unified streetscape enhancements that addresses neighborhood links, street edges, street furniture, sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, parking areas for cars and bikes, and special features.
- Enhance physical conditions and the overall pedestrian environment of Central Street.
- Improve parking for employees, visitors, shoppers, and restaurant patrons.
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular access/circulation.
- Strengthen residential areas and identify opportunities for additional housing options.
- Evaluate and plan for the area’s infrastructure needs.
- Bring innovative, creative, and feasible ideas to the corridor.
- Create a clear, documented vision for Central Street’s future.

Upon completion, the Central Street Master Plan and Streetscape Design will be used to guide future public and private improvement and development initiatives.

## Planning Process

To conduct the planning process, the City engaged The Lakota Group (planners and designers), Gewalt Hamilton Associates (transportation and civil engineers) and Infrastructure Engineering Inc. (civil engineers). The process included the following phases:

- **State of the Corridor:** The first phase of the planning process involved an inventory of existing conditions, a review of relevant studies and recent development proposals, and an analysis of land use, streetscape conditions, traffic, parking, and infrastructure. It included fieldwork, meetings with City staff, Northwestern representatives and Illinois Department of Transportation officials; stakeholder interviews; and two community workshops. Additional input came in the form of emails, letters and comments from residents.
- **Community Visioning:** The second phase involved generating a range of strategies and concepts for improving Central Street and enhancing its land-use mix, physical conditions, traffic and pedestrian circulation, parking, and streetscape. This phase included site-planning studies of development/redevelopment opportunity sites and conceptual streetscape designs. A community workshop was held to review the State of the Corridor analysis, development strategies and concepts, and streetscape designs. Concepts and draft reports were posted in the North Branch Public Library and the City's website.
- **Master Plan and Streetscape Design:** The third phase involved crafting a Preliminary Master Plan and Preferred Streetscape Design, which was reviewed at another community workshop. The outcome is presented in this final Master Plan report and in a separate Streetscape Design booklet.

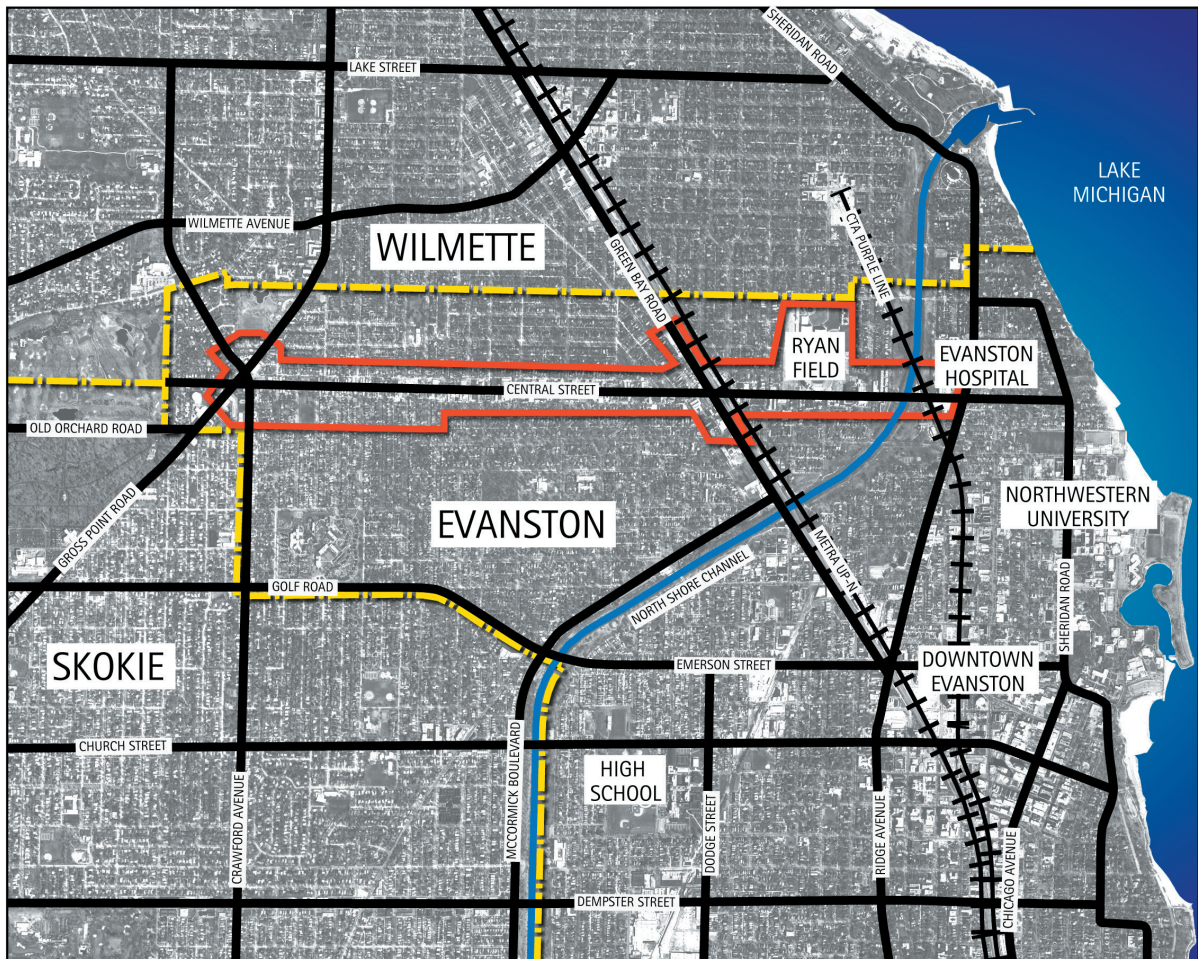
# Central Street: Master Plan

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The planning process provided a comprehensive assessment of Central Street and generated a range of development ideas and design concepts. The Central Street Master Plan and the Streetscape Design Study will be used by elected and appointed officials, community leaders, property owners, and developers as a guide for planning and development decisions over the next 5 to 10 years. The Plan should be revisited and updated every 5 years to ensure that strategies and recommendations continue to meet area needs.

## Study Area

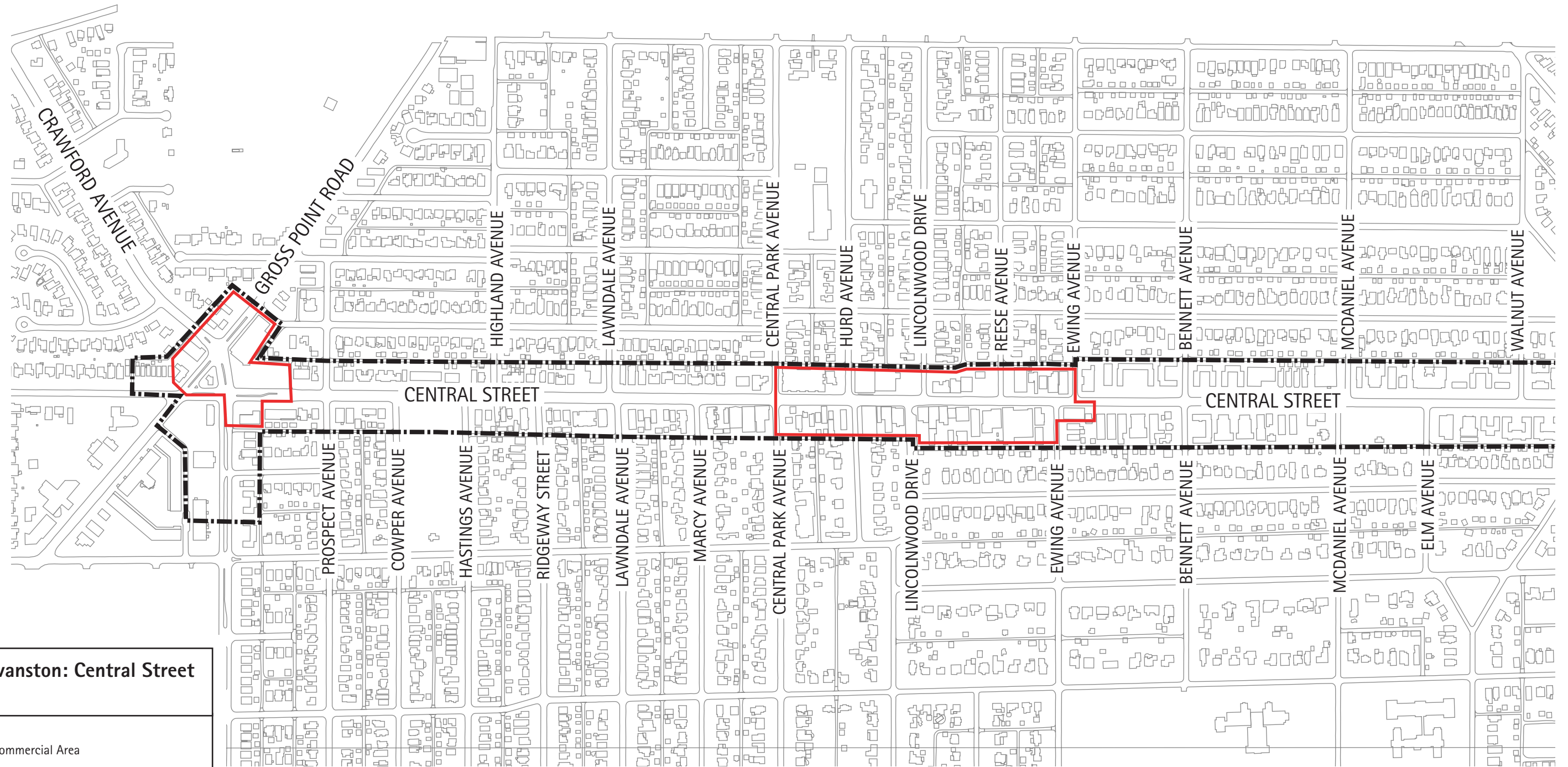
Central Street is the primary east-west travel route in northern Evanston. Extending the full width of the City from Lake Michigan to its boundary with the Village of Skokie, Central Street is a 2.6-mile long corridor.



The Study Area addresses a 2.2-mile stretch of the corridor approximately 2 blocks north and south of Central Street from Gross Point Road/Crawford Avenue on the west to Ridge Avenue on the east, as well as Green Bay Road between Jenks and Lincoln Streets (See Figure 1.1: Study Area - West and Figure 1.1: Study Area - East).

Central Street is dominated by multi-family residential and neighborhood-oriented commercial uses. Other major uses include auto-oriented commercial (at Gross Point Road and along Green Bay Road), large institutional uses (Evanston Hospital [ENH] and Northwestern University's athletic facilities, including Ryan Field), neighborhood-oriented parkland and open space along the North Shore Channel, and other institutional uses.

As the major east-west thoroughfare in north Evanston, Central Street serves a variety of users, including residents, commuters, emergency vehicles, institutions, public transit riders, commercial deliveries, and visitors.



**City of Evanston: Central Street**  
Study Area

- Commercial Area
- Study Area Boundary

# Central Street: Master Plan

City of Evanston, Illinois

Figure 1.1: Study Area - West



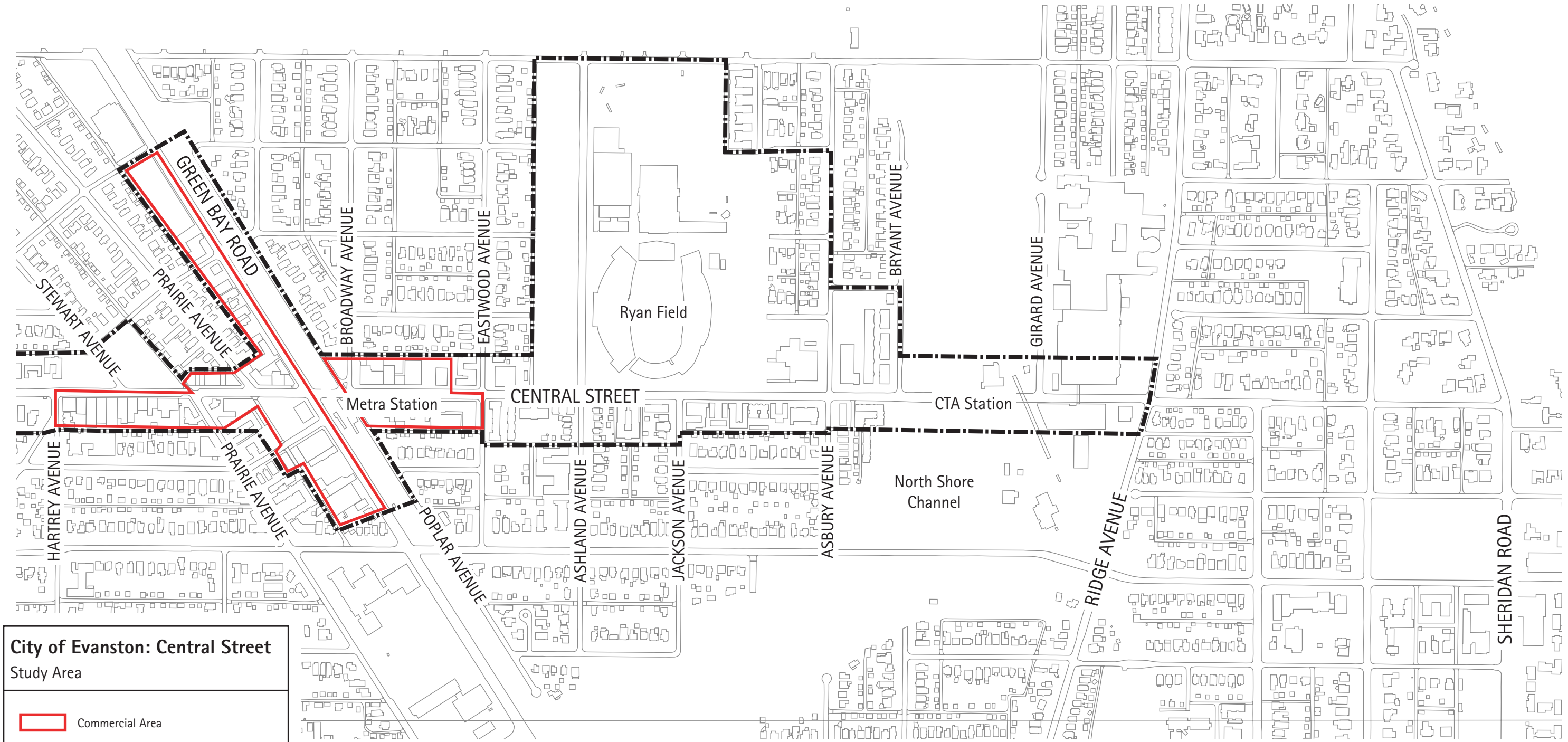
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**City of Evanston: Central Street**  
Study Area

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**Central Street: Master Plan** City of Evanston, Illinois

Figure 1.2: Study Area - East



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