

EVANSTON THRIVES RETAIL ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

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BUSINESS SUPPORTS				ACTION TYPE		LEAD (*City Leadership Champion)	
Recommendation 1: Improve data collection tools and processes.							
	ACTION	Complete the City's records of businesses, types, and location.					
		EARLY ACTION	Follow up with any ground floor business identified by the Evanston Thrives analysis as not represented in the City's business license database	Internal			ED
			Retool Business Licensing questionnaire; expand questions related to existing space dimensions, access, interior systems and equipment, and park-				
			Work with Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish more consistent or consolidated intake questionnaire for Business License and Food Establishment permits	Internal			ED / HHS
PRIORITY	ACTION	Systematize data management and presentation using new internal systems or a third party tool acquisition.					
			Explore a third-party tool or internal process to establish a combined database for business information collected for Business License and Food Establishment permitting.	Internal			ED / HHS
			Identify/Procure preferred Calendar management method/service. (refer to Marketing Recommendations for Calendar access & functionality guidance)	Internal			ED / City Comms
		LONG TERM	Consider creating a dashboard of local metrics posted on the ED website with information that may benefit retailers or brokers.	Ongoing Funding Allocation (New Tool)	\$5,000	\$20,000	ED
Recommendation 2: Rethink and streamline internal processes and policies to better support Evanston business owners							
	ACTION	Pursue policy / permitting changes to benefit local business & commerce					
		EARLY ACTION	Take stock of existing programs. Identify intended focus, eligibility guidelines, funding, and restrictions.	Internal			ED
		EARLY ACTION	Review Evanston Thrives Survey responses and respond to specific or unique permitting or process requests from businesses.	Internal			ED
			Enact policy changes	Internal			ED
PRIORITY	ACTION	Refine ED management and response strategy for business communication around issues and requests					
			Establish "Office Hours" for in-person and calls. Identify unique times for Event/Programming questions distinct from Business issues and/or requests	Internal			ED
			Establish / Manage a chat line for quicker questions or redirection to other City departments or partners.	Procedural / Policy			ED
			Create and advertise a means to submit questions or requests via the ED website; Consider collaboration with Evanston 311.	Internal			ED / Evanston 311
	ACTION	Better market available resources for local businesses.					
		EARLY ACTION	Reformat the Economic Development newsletter to include more communications targeted toward businesses (Incl. info on City, State or Federal)	Internal			ED
		EARLY ACTION	Retool ED website and presentation of City grants available to businesses.	Internal			ED / City Communication
			Promote resources available to businesses on a regular basis at SSA district meetings and business alliance meetings.	Internal / Public Touchpoint			ED / SSA Managers
			Highlight businesses who use City programs through City communication, local news, and social media	Internal / Public Touchpoint			City Communication / SSAs
			Create "cheat sheets" for how to open a business and navigate the permitting process or other quick start guides	Internal / Graphic Design Support	\$500	\$2,500	ED
Recommendation 3: Rebalance and more equitably distribute City resources to better support business needs.							
PRIORITY	ACTION	Create a grant program uniquely available to non-formula businesses and Evanston-based businesses. Offer priority to business-owners of color, women-owned businesses, and veterans and LGBT owners.					
			Explore revision to existing programs to give overt preference to local, non-formula or Evanston-based, and prioritizing business-owners of color, women-, veterans, or LGBT- owners	Internal / Policy Change			ED / Legacy Business / City Leadership
			Retool the Entrepreneurship Grant Program to be a flexible general improvements tool giving priority to businesses located within a Retail Districts or at nodes with co-located retail businesses to encourage retail clustering.	Internal / Policy Change			ED
			Adopt a Formula Business definition for Evanston	Internal / Policy Change			ED / City Leadership
		EARLY ACTION	Ensure Business Registration tools collect sufficient information to establish funding priority businesses each year funds are allocated.	Internal / Data Management			ED
	ACTION	Refocus the Storefront Modernization Program					
		EARLY ACTION	Review program intent and limitations ; revise to prioritize appropriate businesses by owners, location, or legacy status.	Internal			ED / City Leadership** / Business working group (?)
		EARLY ACTION	Add "Next Steps" explanation to the end of the SMP Request web form.	Internal			ED
			Review publicly available program information for clarity of intent and limitations.	Internal			ED / Business working group (?)
			Advocate for increased budget allocation for interior buildout assistance aspect of the Storefront Modernization Program to be used in areas without a TIF.	Ongoing Funding Allocation			City Leadership / Procurement / ED

		LONG TERM	Decouple interior buildout funding/support from SMP once budget allocation for interior build-out grant/program is established.	Internal			City Leadership / ED
		LONG TERM	Restructure Storefront Modernization Program such that some portion could be advance funding rather than rebate if city-approved contractors are contracted to complete the work.	Internal / Legal			City Leadership** / Procurement / ED
		LONG TERM	Identify City-approved contractors to complete work requested through any program using City resources.	Internal / Legal			City Leadership** / Procurement / ED
PRIORITY	ACTION		Allocate funds for retail district improvements. (previous: Advocate for Retail District Improvements in CIP & new revenue opportunities)				
			Allocate funds for maintenance, snow removal, and landscaping of streets and sidewalks within non-SSA Retail District areas.	Ongoing Funding Allocation	\$80,000		City Leadership** / ED
			Allocate funds in CIP for placemaking and public space enhancements in areas identified by the Retail Action Plan or future plans including Evanston's Retail Districts and Downtown.	Ongoing Funding Allocation			City Leadership** / ED
			Institutionalize a priority for infrastructure enhancements in defined Retail District areas.	Internal			City Leadership** / ED
	ACTION		Support/Grow the reach of the Legacy Business Program				
			Allocate Legacy Business Program annual funding that can be used for marketing the program and participant businesses.	Internal			City Leadership** / LBP / ED
			Prioritize Legacy Businesses in funding allocation for all physical improvements administered by Economic Development.	Internal			LBP / ED
	ACTION		Promote the Sustain Evanston program				
			Clarify how/if funding for physical improvements is available through the Sustain Evanston program.	Internal			ED
Recommendation 4: Strengthen partnerships with Northwestern University and other institutions that can help achieve entrepreneurship goals.							
PRIORITY	ACTION		Establish regular communication and shared goals with Northwestern University				
		EARLY ACTION	Establish priority investments to strengthen information and wayfinding between NU student residential campus and downtown amenities.	Partnership - Northwestern			City Leadership** / ED / Northwestern
			Identify public-private partnership opportunities and begin working toward shared goals or ideas.	Partnership - Northwestern			City Leadership** / ED / Northwestern
	ACTION		Raise the profile of Evanston among the tech and NU entrepreneurship community.				
		EARLY ACTION	Initiate City-sponsored networking events like coffee, meetups, and resume Evanston Edge Startup Showcase.	Internal			ED
			Create coordination and referral mechanisms in partnership with NU to focus on Stage 2 firms exiting the University to retain them in Evanston.	Partnership - Northwestern			City Leadership** / ED / Northwestern
			Maintain relationships with office brokers and maintain office space database to accommodate Stage 2 firms.	Internal			ED
PRIORITY	ACTION		Coordinate efforts with Chamber, key partners & business affinity groups				
		EARLY ACTION	Convene members of Evanston business development ecosystem to better coordinate resources, referral systems, and management infrastructure for programs.	Internal / Partnership			ED
			Coordinate Business Education opportunities w/ local partners, Library, and NU	Internal / Partnership			ED
			Establish reasonable schedule of coordination meetings and dedicated staff person to manage each relationship.	Internal			ED
Recommendation 5: Pursue strategic opportunities in property redevelopment							
	ACTION		Position City-owned properties for redevelopment.				
			Explore status of city-owned properties identified as priority parcels by the Retail Action Plan District Placemaking Action Plans; Prioritize redevelopment goals for next 1-5-10 years.	Internal			ED
			Identify priority parcel for repositioning/RFP	Internal			ED
			Work with Councilpeople and SSA Managers to outline priority acquisitions for the next 10 years in each District. Prioritize potential acquisitions against broader Economic Development goals.	Internal			ED / City Leadership
			Identify priority parcel for potential acquisition	Internal			ED
	ACTION						
			Consider initiative to develop a Comprehensive Plan Update and future land use plans (articulating expectations of density),	Internal / Consultant			City Leadership / Comm Dev
			Consider initiative to develop Commercial and Mixed Use Design Guidelines for Evanston's Retail Districts.	Internal / Consultant			Comm Dev / ED
			Consider Zoning Overlay for Retail Districts in alignment with C&MU Design Guidelines	Internal / Consultant			Comm Dev / ED

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING				ACTION TYPE	COST		LEAD (*City Leadership Champion)
PRIORITY	ACTION						
Recommendation 1: [City of Evanston] Commit to support for high-quality events, particularly in Downtown							
			Adopt Downtown Evanston event as signature City happening or bring major event to heart of Downtown				
			<i>Invest in City staff or additional Downtown Organization Staff position to coordinate events and manage event logistics.</i>	Staff Position 01 "Special Events"	\$50,000	\$75,000	Annual salary for position, not including benefits
			<i>Establish a funding allocation intended to support signature event in Downtown.</i>	Ongoing Funding Allocation	\$40,000	\$60,000	ED / City Leadership
		Early Action	<i>Conduct a public poll for input on the priority event for City funding/support in 2023.</i>	Internal / Public Touchpoint	\$1,000		ED / City Communications
			<i>If successful, formalize program.</i>	Internal			Internal
			Evolve / Expand regular Downtown events and marketing to better support brick-and-mortar businesses				
		Early Action	<i>Take stock of City equipment / resources available to expand the impact of events (screen, chairs, speakers, lights, etc.)</i>	Internal			ED
		Early Action	<i>Initiate series of meetings with Downtown org to determine/plan for expanded downtown event or series</i>	Internal			ED / Downtown
			<i>Invest in temporary infrastructure for more impactful events in Fountain Square and Retail Districts.</i>	Ongoing Funding Allocation	\$50,000		ED
			<i>Acquire safety barricades to reduce police barricade for street closures.</i>	Internal / Procurement			
			<i>Ensure City event-related equipment is available for use for Retail District public events by SSA Managers, Chamber, and other event partners</i>	Internal			
			<i>Expand promotion and impact of Evanston Restaurant Month</i>	Partnership - CVB			CVB / Districts / ED
			Draw sponsorship and partners to Evanston				
		Early Action	<i>Better define sponsorship strategy for the City of Evanston; Define investments needed to make Evanston events more enticing for sponsors</i>	Internal / Consultant		\$15,000	ED / CVB / External Consultant
			<i>Set aside ED time for prospect research and cold calls with potential sponsors</i>	Internal			City Leadership**
			<i>Define an individual responsible for recruitment and partnership management</i>	Staff Position (?) / Internal			ED / City Leadership**
			<i>Create informational memo with City assets to draw sponsorships. Include information on available spaces, equipment, branding opportunities and media reach.</i>	Internal			ED / Downtown Evanston
Recommendation 2: Encourage more events, programming, and entertainment in Evanston.							
			Invest in an improved user experience for the City's Events calendar.				
		Early Action	<i>Explore suggested improvement to the City's Events Calendar. Evaluate the potential to improve the existing tool.</i>	Internal			ED / City Comms / Parks
			<i>Explore 3rd party tools which provide enhanced features for front-end and back-end calendar management and interactivity.</i>	Internal			ED / City Comms / Parks
			<i>Stand-up a new and improved City Events Calendar</i>	Internal	staff time	\$30-\$100/month	ED / City Comms / Parks
		Long term	<i>Maintain up-to-date information from across Evanston's districts and organizations on a combined calendar (Dedicated staff time: ~3 hours per week)</i>	Internal / Staff position			ED / City Comms / Parks
			Rewrite information related to event permitting review and approval process.				
			<i>Remove January deadline for event permit submission</i>	Internal			Parks, Rec, & Comm / City Leadership**
			<i>Commit to scheduled response period for events on a rolling basis.</i>	Internal			Parks, Rec, & Comm / City Leadership**
			<i>Market event permit process and timeline. Ensure information is easy to find online.</i>	Internal / Public Touchpoint			Parks, Rec, & Comm / ED or City Comms (marketing)
			Simplify the process to permit events in pre-approved locations				
		Early Action	<i>Draw-up a street closure strategy for Fountain Square (1- street, 2, and all surrounds) that minimizes the need for security and/or traffic management staff</i>	Internal / Traffic Study	\$7,500	\$15,000	Public Works, Parks/ City Leadership**
			<i>Remove public review / feedback period for events held in proven locations without major logistics changes</i>	Internal			Parks, Rec, & Comm / City Leadership
			<i>Identify a central gathering space(s) in each of the Retail Districts and outline event planning requirements for each to make activation easier for all. (See: PLACEMAKING Chapter)</i>	Internal			Parks, Rec, & Comm / City Leadership
			Re-evaluate local policies that present real and perceived burdens to entertainment businesses and community event sponsors/hosts				
			<i>Re-evaluate the structure of Evanston's Amusement Tax and impacts on local businesses.</i>	Internal / Policy Change			ED / City Leadership
			<i>Pilot a Community Events Fund to support the local Community to initiate more events in public spaces.</i>	Pilot Funding Allocation	\$10,000	\$30,000	Parks, Rec, & Comm / ED

Recommendation 2: Activate Evanston's most unique public spaces more often.							
	ACTION	Coordinate programming among districts to activate Evanston all year long					
		<i>Early Action</i>	Continue regular event coordination among SSA leaders to reduce event overlap/similarity.	Internal / Coordination			ED / SSAs
			Work to activate each month and schedule events in advance for optimal promotion	Internal / Coordination			ED / SSAs
			Engage NU in event sponsorship, planning, and promotion of major event	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			City Leadership** / ED / Northwestern
PRIORITY	ACTION						
		<i>Early Action</i>	Explore seasonal installations that activate Fountain Square for longer periods of time with interactive seasonal activities	Funding Allocation	\$50,000	\$100,000	ED / Downtown Evanston / Parks
		<i>Early Action</i>	Identify a strategy to manage equipment storage and public restrooms for events at Fountain Square.	Internal			ED / Downtown Evanston / Parks
		<i>Early Action</i>	Relocate Veteran's Memorial to feature location a Raymond Park or Lakefront	Internal / Coordination			ED / Downtown Evanston / Parks
			Increase use of Lakefront for signature Parks event or programming.	Internal			Parks, Rec, & Comm / ED / City Leadership
			Pilot use of Arrington Lagoon building for food-based vendor limited to packaged goods for limited period.	Policy Change / Procurement			Parks, Rec, & Comm / ED / City Leadership
			Build-out restaurants pop-up space for rotating vendor at either Arrington Lagoon building or Church Street Beach entrance structure.	Capital Improvement			Parks, Rec, & Comm / ED / City Leadership
			Increase cost of Lakefront event use for private events, but expand the types of events and support for use of Lakefront location for events.	Policy Change / Public Touchpoint			
PRIORITY	ACTION	Prepare for and pilot Evanston Farmers Market in Fountain Square					
			Engage Farmers Market coordination team in discussion about the future of the Market	Partnership - Farmer's Market			City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston / Farmer's Market
		<i>Early Action</i>	Pilot weekly closure of Sherman for play street coinciding with Farmers Market every week. Rotate activities such as Pickleball courts or other physical activation	Funding Allocation	\$25,000	\$75,000	City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
			Pilot two-way conversion of Church Street (Ridge to Chicago) in coordination with major closure of Fountain Square surrounds to improve access to Evanston Farmer's Market at Fountain Square and circulation around event and parking.	Internal / Traffic Study			City Leadership / Downtown Evanston
Recommendation 3: Engage Northwestern University in Event Planning and Promotion of Downtown & events							
PRIORITY	ACTION						
		<i>Early Action</i>	Work with NU Community Liaison and Student Affairs office to identify potential event partnership or promotional opportunities to draw more student interest in Downtown events.	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			Northwestern / City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
		<i>Early Action</i>	Conduct annual student engagement to explore new ideas for partnership or participation in Downtown events (focus group, Res-Life guest speaker, etc)	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			Northwestern / City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
			Pilot Evanston+Northwestern event in Downtown	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			Northwestern / City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
	ACTION						
			Work with Downtown business owners to emphasize Game-day promotions; assist with NU student-facing promotion in partnership with NU.	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			Northwestern / City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
		<i>Early Action</i>	Audit and update all student, parent, and employee-facing information about Evanston and Downtwon (maps, general information, etc) in partnership with NU	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			Northwestern / City Leadership** / Downtown Evanston
			Pursue media attention highlighting Northwestern location and proximity to Downtown as an asset.	Partnership Initiative - Northwestern			City Leadership** / City Comms
			Pursue inclusion of Evanston restaurant and retail destinations in student meal plans or Wildcard.				

TENANTING & ATTRACTION				ACTION TYPE	COST		LEAD
							(**=City Leadership Champion)
Recommendation 1: Market Evanston to the retail development, leasing and tenant community							
PRIORITY	ACTION	(Re)introduce and sell Evanston as a retail location to retail brokerage community					
	<i>Early Action</i>	Design and produce a print / digital brochure for property owners and leasing professionals can use to pitch Evanston and its individual districts	Internal / Consultant	\$500	\$2,500	ED / SSAs	
		Distribute print / digital brochure to area leasing professionals and property owners for broader distribution	Internal / Consultant	\$500	\$2,500	ED / SSAs	
		Hold meetings with regional retail brokerages or virtual sessions to share stats about Evanston's market and assets	Internal / Partnership			ED	
		Attend regional (but not national) trade shows (e.g. ICSC Dealmaking); providing the brochure as a takeaway	Internal			ED / City Leadership	
	ACTION	Generate positive news coverage about Evanston & the business community					
		Submit articles and push for earned media in prominent mainstream and business publications in the region.	Internal / <i>Public Touchpoint</i>			City Comms / ED	
		Leverage any contacts with mainstream media to generate positive coverage.	Internal / <i>Partnership - CVB</i>			City Comms / CVB / ED	
	ACTION	Create a central clearinghouse for information that is valuable to the retail development, leasing, and tenaning community					
	<i>Early Action</i>	Engage local commercial brokers and SSA Managers in discussion about useful/valuable metrics to display on Available Commercial Space Inventory	Internal Worksession			ED	
	<i>Early Action</i>	Solicit for Business Registry / Commercial Space data management software or service to understand value add by 3rd party	Procurement	?	?	ED	
		Create regularly-maintained and searchable inventory of available retail spaces, complete with contact info (items that are difficult for industry professionals to access on their own)	Funding Allocation	?	?	ED	
		Consider a Vacant property registry system to feed into available commercial space database	Data Management			ED	
	ACTION	Offer a "Retail Tenaning 101" training course with SSA's, non-SSA organizations working on behalf of businesses, property owners, retail districts and Downtown.					
	<i>Early Action</i>	Create a Retail Training course/presentation that familiarizes participants with the basics of how retailers think, how retail revitalization (or repositioning) "happens" and what roles they can play in the process.	Internal / Consultant	\$2,500	\$5,000	ED / SSAs / Chamber	
Recommendation 2: Promote street-level vitality by tapping Evanston's entrepreneurial and creative energies							
PRIORITY	ACTION	Initiate a window treatment art program for vacant storefronts.					
	<i>Early Action</i>	Expand Public Art Funding program offered by City and non-profit partners to include artistic storefront installations, if requested.	Internal			ED / Nonprofit & Arts partners	
		Identify a local partner outside the City to help build and market this new program.	<i>Partnership - Arts Orgs</i>			ED / Nonprofit & Arts partners	
		Create a public social media campaign to identify storefronts in need of activation;	Internal / <i>Public Touchpoint</i>			Partners	
		Pilot funding for a short-term activation to the "winner" of the social media campaign. Pursue exterior window treatment options for vacant storefronts where pop-up retail or art installation is not possible based on interest of the building owner.	<i>One-time Funding allocation</i>	\$1,000?		ED / Partners	
		If successful, formalize storefront activation for vacant retail spaces as part of the Storefront Modernization Program.	<i>Ongoing Funding Allocation</i>	\$1,000?		ED / Partners	
PRIORITY	ACTION	Create a pop-up leasing program that provides short term retail leases in empty storefronts.					
	<i>Early Action</i>	"Pop-up" space leasing is likely to require regulatory adjustments on city licensing and fees. Pursue regulatory adjustment, if necessary.	Internal / Policy Change			ED	
		Explore liability insurance options.	Internal			ED	
		Identify spaces that could accommodate food-based pop-ups where key equipment is still in place in a (recently) vacant space.	Internal / Research			ED	
	ACTION	Develop and operate entrepreneurial platforms for micro/start-up businesses on or in underutilized, publicly-owned properties in or adjoining existing districts.					
	<i>Early Action</i>	Explore other such projects in the Chicagoland region; Conduct interviews to identify opportunities to replicate/model. (Food truck plaza, fashion-truck pod, shipping-container village, etc.)	Internal			ED / Comm Dev	
		Identify which of Evanston's city-owned properties meet requirements based on size, access, and location.	Internal / Research			ED / Comm Dev	
	ACTION	Promote non-traditional tenaning strategies to get spaces filled.					
		Economic Development staff can serve as an intermediary for connecting tenants willing to co-locate with one another and with landlords open to such cotenancing arrangements	Internal			ED	
	<i>Early Action</i>	Revisit ground floor zoning and associated codes to update as appropriate to support hybrid business models (e.g. maker spaces, co-location) as well as non-retail uses where indicated.	Internal / Policy Change			ED / Comm Dev	
		Provide technical support to owners interested in exploring co-tenancing, including a model sub-lease agreement	Internal / Legal			ED / Comm Dev	

PLACEMAKING

ACTION TYPE

COST

Low | High

LEAD

(**=City Leadership Champion)

ACTION Invest to achieve three primary placemaking goals in each District and Downtown: [Refer to placemaking plans]

- 1 Maintain superior standards for the upkeep, and maintenance of public spaces**
- 2 Create a mix of permanent and temporary central gathering spaces for events or seasonal activations**
- 3 Invest in new, cohesive equipment and infrastructure for retail districts and Downtown**

ACTION Upgrade infrastructure into improve the visitor experience.

Remove/Reduce redundant wayfinding signage in key gateways and around central gathering spaces	Internal / Consultant / CIP	Public Works/ ED
Prioritize streetscape enhancements along critical pathways (from transit, parking, or a nearby destination)	CIP	Public Works / ED
Establish clear gateways and at the entrances of each district		
Implement larger, more consistent and visible public parking signage and wayfinding		

ACTION Invest in connections with Northwestern University.

Establish priority investments to improve wayfinding and physical connections between NU student residential campus and downtown amenities.
Strengthen information and wayfinding between NU student residential campus and downtown amenities.

ACTION Encourage Parklets & Sidewalk Cafes

Explore engineering alternatives for jersey barriers and/or purchase new jersey barriers or alternatives for use in public ROW.
Create/Complete a Parklet Design Guide (continue effort that began in 2019)
Create a design competition to paint parklet jersey barriers / safety barriers.
Establish a budget line for the City to cover the cost of public parking spaces used on behalf of adjacent businesses installing parklets in parking

ACTION Create clear expectations for Business Signage

Create signage design templates which align with preferred scale, material, and position for business owners to simplify permit/review of signage
Distribute/Promote "preferred" signage design, scale, and positioning through the City's permitting information.
Conduct a sign guidance training and create a promotional campaign for local architects who participate to design the signs for businesses.
Create design guidelines (short, targeted)

PRIORITY ACTION Redesign the food truck policy

<i>Early Action</i>	<i>Remove food truck restrictions in Retail Districts. Establish at least one permanent food truck stall or space to be made available to any permitted truck in the City of Evanston. (Location recommendations included in District Placemaking Plans)</i>	Internal	Comm Dev / ED
<i>Early Action</i>	<i>Expand the period of time that food trucks may remain in one location in alignment with neighboring municipalities.</i>	Internal	Comm Dev / ED
<i>Early Action</i>	<i>Expand the time of day to include early morning (coffee service) and late night.</i>	Internal	Comm Dev / ED
	<i>Consider specific permit locations for late-night food truck operation supporting area event centers, entertainment businesses, and sporting event venues.</i>	Internal	Comm Dev / ED
	<i>Review distance limitations around schools and parks. Consider an amendment to allow operation during sporting events or other limited operating opportunities, by right.</i>	Internal	Comm Dev / ED

Recommendation 3: Redraw the District Maps to better reflect goals to achieve more equitable resource distribution and build identity.

PRIORITY ACTION Redraw the district maps to focus on the most identifiable/legible blocks and nodes and consider the following changes to City-sponsored placemaking initiatives:

<i>Early Action</i>	Enact Retail District boundary changes to strengthen retail district placemaking impact; Continue allocation of Great Merchant Grant (GMGP)place-based funds to each of the defined district areas based on the revised map.	Ongoing Funding Allocation	ED
<i>Early Action</i>	Enact budgetary changes such that City of Evanston assumes cost and contract responsibility for enhanced landscaping, seasonal planters, and snow removal within the non-SSA retail Districts. GMGP should no longer be used for these purposes.	Ongoing Funding Allocation	City LEadership** / ED
	Revise GMGP funding policy to correlate directly with physical, visible placemaking investments to benefit/reinforce the district identity	Internal / Policy	ED

MARKETING

ACTION TYPE

LEAD

Recommendation 1: Create an identity and narrative for the collective of Evanston's business districts and programs.

PRIORITY ACTION Implement Enjoy Evanston brand in the **DIGITAL** realm.

Early Action WEBSITE: Rename the Economic Development subpage to Enjoy Evanston and update to incorporate new brand and story.	Internal / Web Support	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
WEBSITE: Include high-quality photography and a link to each district's own website/webpage (where applicable), along with the sub brands and stories.	Photography	\$2,500	\$15,000	ED / Communications
WEBSITE: Include a graphic map of all districts that a visitor can click on to learn more about each.	Internal / Web Support	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Early Action SOCIAL: Shift Economic Development social accounts to Enjoy Evanston branding.	Internal / Communications	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Early Action NEWSLETTER: Promote the page via e-newsletter and other platforms (consider: SSAs, NSCVB, and Chamber to cross promote)	Internal / Communications	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications

PRIORITY ACTION Implement the Enjoy Evanston brand in the **PHYSICAL** realm.

Cement Decals: During the roll-out phase, install sidewalk decals that promote Enjoy Evanston with a QR code to social media pages.	Internal / Consultant Support	\$3,000	\$10,000	ED / Public Works
Early Action District Maps: Install a custom map of Evanston and its districts at prime locations throughout the city. The map could live in existing or new kiosks, or be printed as brochures, posters, or tote bags.	Internal / Consultant Support	\$1,500	\$10,000	ED / Public Works
Info Centers: Create standard "Enjoy Evanston" bulletin boards at key businesses/locations in each district to reinforce the brand and highlight upcoming events and programs throughout all districts.	Internal / Consultant Support	\$8,000	\$15,000	ED / Public Works
Trash Bins: Within business districts, incorporate branded trash receptacles	Internal	\$800/new bin, or \$200 per branded collar for existing bin	\$1,000/new bin, or \$350 per branded collar for existing bin	ED / Public Works

ACTION Implement district brands at the district level. (See district brands in more detail in the district branding section.)

Storytelling: Utilize the brand personalities and brand stories as tools to communicate and promote Evanston's business districts.	Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Early Action Existing Sub Brands: Build on existing sub-brands (Downtown, Howard, Central Street, and Main Dempster Mile) to bring them under the Evanston umbrella. Where needed, shift colors and fonts to align with the overarching brand.	Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
New Sub Brands: Shift names of certain districts to more clearly align them with their physical locations. For instance, CEBA > Church & Dodge, and Hill Arts > Ashland Arts.	Internal	n/a	n/a	ED
Banners: Install updated banners in all districts to display the updated branding and reinforce a sense of place. Where street pole banners are not feasible, such as Noyes, utilize street pole wraps.	Internal / Consultant Support	\$40,000 for ~600 banners	\$50,000 for ~620 banners	ED / Public Works
Murals: Work with local artists to create murals that play off of each district's brand and unique character, with a nod to the overarching Enjoy Evanston brand.	Internal / Muralists	\$120,000 (\$15k per district)	\$200,000 (\$25k per district)	ED / Public Works
Public Art: Partner with the Legacy Business Program to ensure public art for this initiative aligns with district branding.	Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / CD

Recommendation 2: Design all of Evanston Business District marketing and communications to engage with the targeted audiences

[Actions presented in District Profile and Placemaking Plans]

Recommendation 3: Redesign the City and Economic Development websites and newsletters to better support marketing and business development assets.

PRIORITY ACTION Enhance navigation on the City Website.

Early Action Content Audit: Conduct a content strategy audit of existing pages, and remove pages that are no longer relevant.	Consultant	\$5,000	\$30,000	ED / Communications
Organization: Reorganize sections and pages so there is a clear hierarchy to make it easier to navigate. Create bigger umbrella categories within each section (Example). New categories could include...	Consultant	\$0	\$7,500	ED / Communications
Integrate Marketing & Events: Ensure navigation to the City's Events Calendar is obvious and irresistible from other areas of the City's website (see: EVENTS Chapter for full recommendations related to City Events Calendar)	Internal / Consultant Support	\$500 yearly calendar widget sub-	\$10,000 (calendar redesign + monthly	ED / Communications

PRIORITY ACTION Update City of Evanston Social Media Accounts

Early Action Audit: Conduct a content audit of About/Bio sections on various pages to remove outdated links and non-functional pages (i.e. Evanston Edge pages and sites, duplicate Howard Street pages, remove links to Twitter accounts that are not in use).

Cross Promote: Use City of Evanston social channels as a place to cross-promote content from Enjoy Evanston and other business districts.

Photography: Continue to utilize high-quality photography to promote the city and its districts.

Early Action Links: Utilize Linktree to host many links in bio. Update regularly.

ACTION Refocus City Newsletter and Economic Development Newsletter.

City Newsletter:

Once Enjoy Evanston webpage and social channels are updated, create a consistent Enjoy Evanston section within the City newsletter to promote business districts. Link directly to specific SSA socials or websites.

Share links to each newsletter on social channels along with links to subscribe.

Economic Development Newsletter:

Early Action Refocus content to align with business owners and developers as the primary audience.

Shift to bi-weekly distribution, focused on recent news, business spotlights, and upcoming events.

Create a monthly newsletter to capture bigger picture data trends.

Early Action Share links to each newsletter on social channels along with link to subscribe.

Internal / Consultant Support	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED

Recommendation 4: Improve the organization and promotion of non-SSA business districts.

PRIORITY ACTION Build on existing efforts to bring together groups of business owners to create assigned roles.

Early Action Coordination: Economic Development to establish and lead monthly meetings for merchants of non-SSA districts. Create roles among merchants, including a Marketing Lead and an Events Lead.

Early Action Inventory: Work with merchants to create an accurate inventory of all businesses within the district with contact information. Create a Google My Map, with all businesses listed, which can be embedded within Enjoy Evanston district sub-pages.

Internal	n/a	n/a	ED
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED

ACTION Establish low-maintenance social media accounts for all districts.

Early Action Create: Economic Development to create social media landing pages on Facebook and Instagram for those that do not have them (West End, Ashland Arts, and Noyes). Utilize the brand story, primary colors, and brand marks provided.

Cross Promote: Incorporate posts that promote non-SSA districts as a part of Enjoy Evanston's content calendar and tag accounts.

Maintain: Set a realistic goal for posting on these accounts—1-2 times a week for West End, Noyes, and Ashland Arts, and 2-3 times a week for Church & Dodge.

Elevate: Use social media to lift up the stories of businesses and business owners within these districts.

Simplify: Create simple branded templates on Canva for each district to use to highlight events and promotions. This allows for consistency as well as allows a social media lead to create simple branded graphics.

Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal	n/a	n/a	ED / Communications
Internal / Consultant	\$4,000	\$10,000	ED / Communications

ACTION Invest in and showcase photography of all districts.

Seasonal: Hire photographers to capture scenes of each district and its streetscape during different times of the year (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer).

Businesses: Hire photographers to visit local businesses and capture images of the business and its offerings, as well as the business owner. Continue quarterly until all businesses within the districts are reached.

Photographer	\$4,000 yearly	\$6,000 yearly	ED / Communications
Photographer	\$4,000 yearly	\$6,000 yearly	ED / Communications