LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 26, 2024 | 7:00 P.M.
James C. Lytle City Council Chambers, Second Floor
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue

AGENDA

Those wishing to make public comments at the Land Use Commission meeting may submit written comments in advance or sign up to provide public comment in-person during the meeting by calling/texting 847-448-4311 or completing the Land Use Commission meeting online comment form available by clicking here, or visiting the Land Use Commission webpage, https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/land-use-commission, clicking on How You Can Participate, then clicking on Public Comment Form. Community members may watch the Land Use Commission meeting online at www.cityofevanston.org/channel16 or on Cable Channel 16.

I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: March 27, 2024

III. DISCUSSION

A. Envision Evanston 2045 Update
Staff will provide a presentation regarding Envision Evanston 2045, including a summary of phase 1 community engagement and the preliminary findings report.

IV. COMMUNICATION

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting of the Evanston Land Use Commission will be held **on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 7:00 pm,** in the James C. Lytle Council Chambers in the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.

Order & Agenda Items are subject to change. Information about the Land Use Commission is available at: https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/land-use-commission. Questions can be directed to Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner, at mmjones@cityofevanston.org or 847-448-4311. The City of Evanston is committed to making all public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. Any citizen needing mobility or communications access assistance should contact 847-866-2919 (Voice) or 847-866-5095 (TYY). Requests for access assistance must be made 48 hours (two working days) in advance. Requests received with less than 48 hours (two working days) advance notice will be attempted using best efforts, but cannot be guaranteed.

La ciudad de Evanston está obligada a hacer accesibles todas las reuniones públicas a las personas minusválidas o las quines no hablan inglés. Si usted necesita ayuda, favor de ponerse en contacto con la Oficina de Administración del Centro a 847/866-2916 (voz) o 847/448-8052 (TDD).

MEETING MINUTES

LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 27th, 2024
7:00 PM
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle City Council Chambers

Members Present: Matt Rodgers, Max Puchtel, Brian Johnson , Kiril Mirintchev, Kristine Westerberg, John Hewko, Myrna Arevalo, George Halik

Members Absent: Jeanne Lindwall

Staff Present: Neighborhood Land Use Planner Meagan Jones and Zoning Administrator Melissa Klotz

Presiding Member: Matt Rodgers

I. Call to Order

Chair Rodgers opened the meeting at 7:02 PM. A roll call was then done and a quorum was determined to be present.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Rogers noted that the meeting minutes were not available for approval at this time. This item was deferred.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing: Special Use | 530 Kedzie Street | 24ZMJV-0007
David Libert & Steven Libert, lessees, submit for a Special Use for a Tattoo & Body Art Establishment, Sweetheart Ink Co., in the C1a Commercial Mixed Use District (Section 6-10-3-3). The Land Use Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the determining body for this case in accordance with Section 6-3-5 of the Evanston Zoning Code. PINs: 11-19-407-001-0000, 11-19-407-002-0000

Steve Libert introduced himself and provided an overview of the proposed establishment. The location at 530 Kedzie Street is within a mixed-use building. The tattoo studio will operate on the ground floor, while the residential portion of the space will be on the mezzanine level. The business will focus solely on tattooing, with strict compliance to health and safety regulations. Proposed hours are 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM, seven days a week. Most clients will be seen by appointment, with some walk-ins accommodated.

David Libert explained his background and expertise in tattooing, emphasizing safety and professional standards. He discussed his formal training, ongoing education, and commitment to providing a positive and safe tattooing experience.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioners questioned the applicants about the operational details, compliance with health regulations, and potential impacts on the neighborhood. David Libert assured the commission that all artists would be certified and that the studio would adhere to all safety guidelines.

Commissioner Halik asked where the applicant practiced previously. D. Libert responded that he received training and practiced in Rolling Meadows and Bensenville.

Commissioner Hewko asked what the exterior signage would look like. S. Libert explained that the signage would match what is currently on the building and follow what the City and AMLI building allow. Ms. Klotz clarified that there is a unified sign plan that the business must follow.

Chair Rodgers inquired about employees and D. Libert responded that he will be working in the shop and will be vetting possible employees for the other two stations in the shop.

Commissioner Halik asked for clarification on previous tattoo parlors. Ms Klotz responde that one was approved several years ago that did cosmetic tattooing but it has since closed.

Commissioner Miriintchev asked the applicant if they felt the use may conflict with the residential character of the building specifically as it relates to waste. D. Libert explained that there is not much waste and there are specific procedures for disposal of waste that will be followed.

Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification on Sweetheart Inc.'s address and if the Special Use would run with the property or the business owner. D. Libert clarified his business operations and Ms. Klotz confirmed that the Special Use runs with the property, that specific unit.

Commissioner Arevalo voiced concerns about tattooing privacy and staffing. D. Libert stated that other tattoo artists in the space will be self-employed and S. Sibert explained that there are movable privacy screens that will be used in the space and that he does not expect many people to be in the space at the same time. At the absolute max there may be 24 people per day but typically a much lower number.

Public Comment
None

Deliberations

Standards for Approval
The proposed Special Use must follow the Standards for a Special Use (Section 6-3-5-10) For the Land Use Commission to recommend that the City Council grant a special use, the LUC must find that each proposed special use:

1. It is one of the special uses specifically listed in the zoning ordinance; Chair Rodgers stated this is a newer use listed as a Special Use for this zoning district so this standard is met.
2. It is in keeping with purposes and policies of the adopted comprehensive general plan and the zoning ordinance as amended from time to time; building is designed for live-work and keeps retail businesses in place for a busy area, filling a vacant commercial space so this standard is met.
3. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect, when its effect is considered in conjunction with the cumulative effect of various special uses of all types on the immediate neighborhood and the effect of the proposed type of special use upon the City as a whole; There are no other tattoo parlors in the City and max number of stations is 3 and at max there will be 8 clients per day per station so this standard is met.
4. It does not interfere with or diminish the value of property in the neighborhood; most immediate neighbors are part of the AMLI family and the building would not support a business they would not want,
5. It can be adequately served by public facilities and services; this is an existing building specifically built with these types of businesses in mind so this standard is met.
6. It does not cause undue traffic congestion; Based on the expected number of clients and nearby transit access, congestion is not anticipated so this standard is met.
7. It preserves significant historical and architectural resources; this is a fairly new building and no major changes are proposed to the space so this standard is met.
8. It preserves significant natural and environmental features; no major exterior changes are proposed, just the addition of signage so this standard is met.
9. It complies with all other applicable regulations of the district in which it is located and other applicable ordinances, except to the extent such regulations have been modified through the planned development process or the grant of a variation. Applicant intends to stay up to date on required certifications and will meet local requirements so this standard is met.

Commissioner Puchtel motioned to recommend approval of the special use permit with conditions as outlined in the staff memo. Seconded by Commissioner Westerberg. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried, 8-0.

Ayes: Rodgers, Puchtel, Johnson, Mirintchev, Westerberg, Hewko, Arevalo, Halik

Nays:

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Envision Evanston 2045 Update

Staff will provide an update on progress of the Envision Evanston 2045 process, followed by discussion.

Ms. Jones provided an update on the Envision Evanston 2045 process, which is intended to update the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Mrs. Jones went through a presentation that covered Project Phases, Community Engagement, Data Collection, Future Steps, and Commissioner Involvement.

Ms. Jones then reviewed the core questions from the Meeting in a Box, which include identifying daily challenges, favorite aspects of Evanston, specific areas needing improvement, envisioning Evanston in 2045, and any additional feedback.

Commissioner Questions

Discussion occurred around having a sense of a good response rate for the surveys and where in the community the responses are coming from. Ms. Jones clarified that there are some demographic questions asked that assist with getting a sense of where responses and participation is coming from and that Ward meetings have occurred and will be scheduled that include this as part of the agenda.

Commissioners asked for clarification about how specific technical and legal drafting will be approached. Ms. Jones responded that previous plans are being reviewed as part of the process and that staff has done a preliminary audit of the code which was provided to the consultant. A sub consultant also completed an earlier equity audit of the code so there is a baseline for that review and creation of an updated plan and code.

Questions were asked about incorporating existing economic development plans and handling potential overlaps in the process.

Public Comment

None

V. COMMUNICATION

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Westerberg motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Puchtel seconded, and the motion carried, 8-0.

Adjourned 8:06 PM.

The next meeting of the Evanston Land Use Commission is to be held on **Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in the James C. Lytle Council Chambers in the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.**

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Bock, Administrative Lead

Reviewed by,
Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner

Memorandum

To:	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:	Elizabeth Williams, Planning Manager
CC:	Sarah Flax, Community Development Director, Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Subject:	Envision Evanston 2045 Update
Date:	June 24, 2024

Recommended Action:
Staff will provide an update on Phase 1 engagement and the Preliminary Findings Report for Envision Evanston 2045.

Council Action:
For Discussion

Summary:
Envision Evanston 2045 is approximately halfway through a year-long process to develop a new Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Phase 1 of the process began in February and focused on understanding what community members love about Evanston, the challenges they experience in their daily lives, and their vision for the future. There were several opportunities to share perspectives, including,

- a launch event held at the Civic Center;
- an online survey offered in English and Spanish;
- 6 in-person sessions that included Spanish interpretation and child care;
- 1 virtual session that included Spanish interpretation;
- 5 Ward meetings that represented all 9 Wards;
- 42 meeting-in-a-box sessions facilitated by community members;
- in-person or virtual office hours with staff;
- "big ideas" shared via an online form and
- a visioning session that resulted in a preliminary vision statement for the plan.

A total of 2,874 individuals participated throughout Phase 1. This exceeds the national participation rate for comprehensive planning processes, which, according to the American Planning Association, typically ranges from 1 to 2% of the population. It also exceeds engagement for recent local planning initiatives such as Evanston Thrives. This would not have been possible without the time and dedication of community members who facilitated

meeting-in-a-box sessions, attended events, responded to the survey, and the City's partnership with Evanston Cradle to Career, which alone increased participation by approximately 35%. There are still more people to reach, but lessons learned and feedback from Phase 1 will be used to adapt and improve as the project advances to the next phase.

Based on Phase 1 engagement, the following themes have emerged:

- High Cost of Housing: Housing is expensive, and there's a lack of diverse and affordable options.
- Need for Transportation Improvements: The city needs more protected bike lanes and sidewalk enhancements. Parking is a challenge and causes residents to shop elsewhere.
- Preserve Community Vibrancy: New buildings should complement existing community design. Evanston's tree canopy, lakefront, and historic neighborhoods are important assets.
- Enhance Public Spaces and Activities: The City should provide more parks and outdoor spaces and hold more street activities. Continue to celebrate the community's culture. Youth and people with disabilities are underserved.
- Address Public Safety: Crime, traffic safety, and homelessness are issues. The community feels less safe than it once did.
- Support Local Businesses and Downtown: Provide more resources to local businesses. Downtown should have more shops, restaurants, and entertainment options.

In addition to Phase 1 engagement, an analysis of existing conditions and past and recent planning and policy documents was compiled into a Preliminary Findings Report. The report includes the following initial key takeaways,

- Evanston grew steadily in the early 2000s but experienced population decline in the wake of the Great Recession, consistent with regional trends. Evanston's population recovered in the early 2020s, and the community is positioned for future growth due to its established employment center and potential for infill development.
- New housing hasn't kept pace with population growth, contributing to increased housing costs. Median-income households (making $87,412) fall short of qualifying for a mortgage on a median-priced home ($470,551).
- Evanston is home to more than 3,000 businesses, which collectively employ approximately 39,000 employees. The city acts as a regional employment center, bringing in more workers than it exports to other locations.
- Evanston remains a walkable and transit-connected community, although there are gaps in bike and other facilities. 29% of Evanstonians commute to work via public transportation, walking, or biking.
- Historic discriminatory practices continue to have pervasive effects on homeownership rates and incomes. In the historically redlined 5th Ward, median household income is $39,393 compared with $87,412 city-wide, and 45% of homes are owner-occupied compared with 56% city-wide.
- Nearly 100% of Evanston residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. However, residents of West Evanston, which closely corresponds to Census Tract 8092 in the 5th Ward, have a life expectancy of 75.5 years compared to 88.8 years for residents of

Census Tract 8088 in Northeast Evanston, revealing inequities in other environmental health factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Establishing a vision to guide Evanston's development over the next 20 years is an important component of this process. Several community members attended a visioning session on May 18, 2024, and worked together to create the preliminary vision statement outlined below:

> *In 2045, Evanston is a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming community for all. We celebrate diversity through our arts, culture, history, businesses, and neighborhoods. Steady growth in our local circular economy cultivates opportunities close to home while achieving ambitious climate action. Our abundant access to parks and open space promotes well-being, and extensive housing options make living in Evanston safe and attainable. Our neighborhoods are connected through a robust network of transit, bike, and pedestrian options. We achieve this vision through proactive planning, community collaboration, and bold action.*

Community members are encouraged to provide feedback on the statement over the coming month so that it can be refined before the draft Comprehensive Plan is released later this year.

Next Steps

Phase 2 will aim to refine the preliminary findings, validate community engagement, and solidify a vision for the future. The community will also have an opportunity to dive deeper into the emerging themes to develop goals and strategies for how the community will achieve them over the next 20 years. This second round of feedback will also refine the Preliminary Findings Report and build upon the current understanding of lived experiences in Evanston. Those who have already participated are encouraged to continue. Those who have not participated or are currently underrepresented will be sought out to join the conversation. More information about upcoming engagement opportunities will be available at envisionevanston2045.org. There are many options to get involved with this process.

- Right Now - attend office hours and share your thoughts or ask questions about the process, provide feedback on the Preliminary Findings Report and initial draft vision statement, and share a big idea for the future.
- Late - July to early August - online survey, in-person at various pop-up locations, focus area discussions, alternative scenario workshop.

Beyond engagement, staff will seek direction from the City Council and present a menu of legislative updates that could be further explored as part of this process based on the emerging themes.

Attachments:

Envision Evanston 2045 - Phase 1 Preliminary Findings Report

Envision Evanston 2045 - Phase 1 Engagement Summary

ENVISION EVANSTON 2045

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

City of Evanston

HDR

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Evanston grew steadily in the early 2000s but experienced population decline in the wake of the Great Recession, consistent with regional trends. Evanston's population recovered in the early 2020s, and the community is positioned for future growth due to its established employment center and potential for infill development. [1] [2] [3]

2. New housing hasn't kept pace with population growth, contributing to increased housing costs. Median-income households (making $87,412) fall short of qualifying for a mortgage on a median-priced home ($470,551).[2]

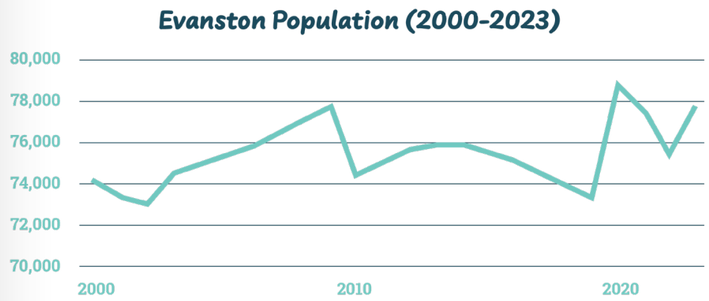
3. Evanston hosts more than 3,000 businesses, which collectively employ approximately 39,000 employees. The city acts as a regional employment center, bringing in more workers than it exports to other locations.[4] [5]

4. Evanston remains a walkable and transit-connected community, although there is a gap in bike facilities. 29% of Evanstonians commute to work via public transportation, walking, or biking.[4]

5. Historic discriminatory lending practices continue to have pervasive effects on home ownership rates and incomes. In the historically redlined 5th Ward, median household income is $39,393 compared with $87,412 city-wide, and 45% of homes are owner-occupied compared with 56% city-wide.[2]

6. Nearly 100% of Evanston residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. However, residents of West Evanston, which closely corresponds to Census Tract 8092 in the 5th Ward, have a life expectancy of 75.5 years compared to 88.8 years for residents of Census Tract 8088 in Northeast Evanston, revealing inequities in other environmental health factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.[6] [7]

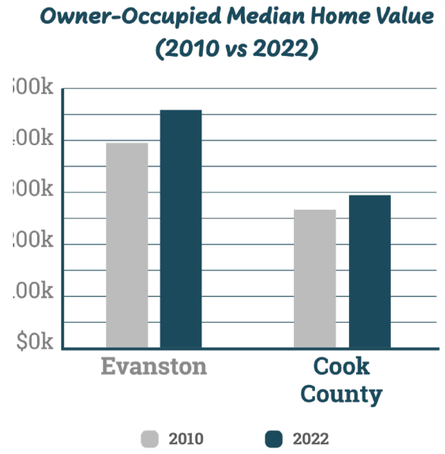
1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (Various), data.census.gov.
2 ESRI, 2023 US Demographics.
3 CMAP. On To 2050 Plan Update: Socioeconomic Forecast Appendix (2022).
4 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022, data.census.gov.
5 US Census Bureau, 2021 LEHD OnTheMap, onthemap.ces.census.gov.
6 City of Evanston, 2022 EPLAN: Evanston Process for the Local Assessment of Needs.
7 NYU Langone Health Department of Population Health, U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP): Life Expectancy Estimates File, National Center for Health Statistics, 2010-2015 6 Year Modeled Estimates, City Health Dashboard: Life Expectancy in 2015, cityhealthdashboard.com

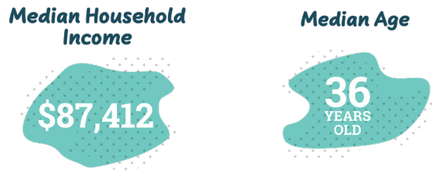


Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (Various); ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

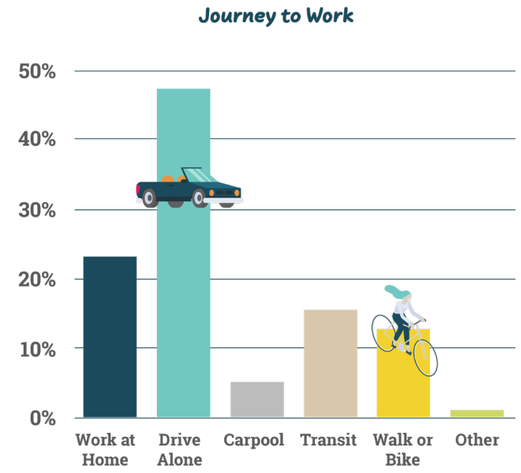
Source: ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

Source: ESRI, 2023 US Demographics





Source: ESRI, 2023 US Demographics



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 1917, when Daniel Burnham and his colleagues developed the first Plan of Evanston, they wrote, "For a full half century Evanston has had a character. People have thought of it as a place distinct, somehow, from the other suburbs of Chicago…"

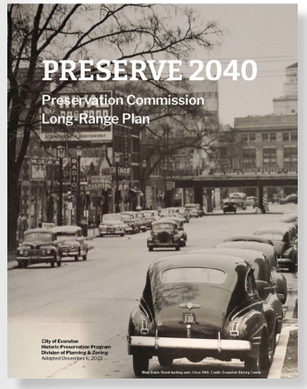
This mindset has continued to define the community. As Evanston has evolved, it has maintained its distinct atmosphere that sets it apart from other Chicago metro communities. Today, Evanston is a dominant education and employment hub that welcomes students from across the globe and a daily inflow of workers.

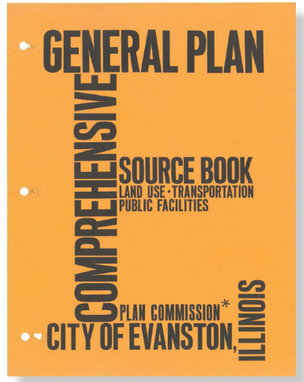
HOW ENVISION EVANSTON 2045 FITS IN

Since its founding, the City of Evanston has taken an active role in shaping the community's physical environment through intentional planning efforts. Famed architect and urbanist Daniel Burnham authored the 1917 Plan of Evanston, which would become the first of many official planning activities the City would undertake. This Envision Evanston 2024 Plan represents the community's fourth comprehensive plan. This plan will supplement and complement the City's other planning tools, including policy-level documents such as its Climate Action and Resilience Plan, and the City's zoning code and design guidelines. This Plan recommends revisions to other documents to align policies and tools, thereby ensuring alignment between documents and desirable outcomes for the community. Figure 01 illustrates the connection between various planning activities.

FIGURE 01

- 2022 EPLAN
- CENTRAL STREET MASTER PLAN
- CHICAGO AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY
- CITY OF EVANSTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2000)
- CLIMATE ACTION & RESILIENCE PLAN (CARP)
- DOWNTOWN EVANSTON PLAN
- EVANSTON MAIN STREET STATION TOD PLAN & STUDY
- EVANSTON THRIVES
- LAKEFRONT MASTER PLAN
- ONE HOWARD STREET ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN
- PRESERVE 2040
- WEST EVANSTON MASTER PLAN





THE ENVISION EVANSTON 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BRINGS IT ALL TOGETHER

- Builds upon existing and ongoing planning activities by bringing efforts together into one major policy document
- Serves as a guide for local decision-makers when considering proposed development and infrastructure investments
- Recommends policies and actions to achieve the community's collective vision for Evanston
- Creates a framework for sustainable future growth

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

HOW WE REACHED OUT

The planning team launched community engagement efforts for the Envision Evanston 2045 Plan in February 2024. Nearly 2,500 community members participated in the survey, which was offered in both English and Spanish and in online and paper formats. The survey, which was open from February through May, collected input on a range of topics including housing, transportation, downtown vibrancy, and parks and recreation, among others. The survey also included an open response field that allowed respondents to share any other input that wasn't specifically solicited in the survey.

The planning team also held a series of meetings across the community during the same time frame. In addition to seven 'Perspectives' community-wide meetings in various physical locations and online formats, the team provided materials for meetings-in-a-box that could be hosted by volunteers, with or without the assistance of a facilitator. Ward-specific meetings took place in Wards 1, 3, and 9, in addition to a combined meeting for Wards 6 and 7 and for Wards 2, 5, and 8. A total of more than 2,800 community members participated in engagement activities between the survey, community meetings, and Board meetings.

2,874 total participants

5,690 website visits

Survey Participation

English — **2,296** Responses

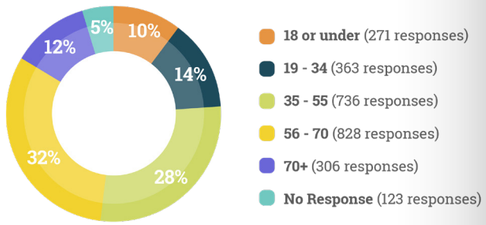
Spanish — **199** Responses

Evanston Population ~ 75,000
Response Rate +/- 3%

42
Meetings-in-a-box held

184
Meeting-in-a-box participants

Age of Participants (Total)



Participants at the March 23, 2024 meeting held at the Evanston Public Library

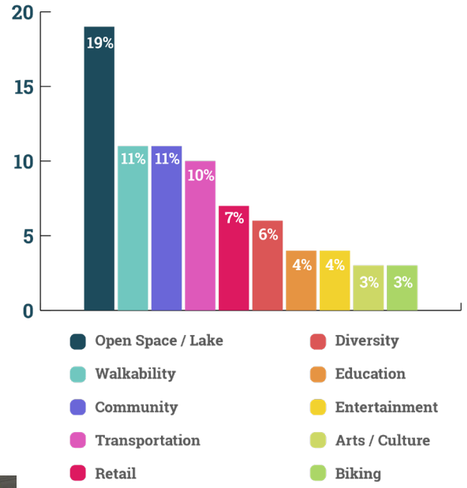
WHAT WE HEARD

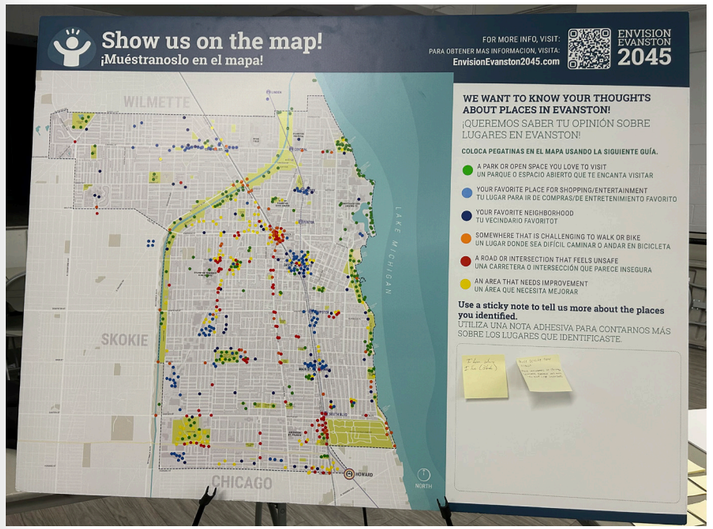
The following themes emerged from the survey and community meetings:

1. **High Cost of Housing:** Housing is expensive, and there's a lack of affordable options for younger families and diverse demographics.
2. **Need for Transportation Improvements:** The city needs more protected bike lanes and sidewalk enhancements. Parking is a challenge and causes residents to shop elsewhere.
3. **Preserve Community Character:** New buildings should complement existing community design. Evanston's tree canopy, lakefront, and historic neighborhoods are important assets.
4. **Enhance Public Spaces and Activities:** The City should provide more parks and outdoor spaces and hold more street activities. Continue to celebrate the community's culture. Youth and people with disabilities are underserved.
5. **Address Public Safety:** Crime, traffic safety, and homelessness are issues. The community feels less safe than it once did.
6. **Support Local Businesses and Downtown Vibrancy:** Provide more resources to local businesses. Downtown should have more shops, restaurants, and entertainment options.

How do you envision Evanston in the future?

What do you love about living in Evanston?





"One challenge in Evanston is that people move to other cities in order to buy houses they can afford. Landlords can't provide affordable rent prices because they have to pay high taxes."

This activity, from the March 26, 2024 meeting at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center, mapped participants' favorite places and places where they desire improvements. The board provides an example of the type of input collected across community meetings.

A HISTORY OF EVANSTON

EARLY HISTORY AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Before its arrival and colonization by European settlers, the land that would become Evanston was inhabited by the Potawatomi, Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwe Tribes. These tribes were part of an alliance of Anishinaabeg peoples, a group of culturally related Indigenous peoples present in the Great Lakes region, known as the Niswi-mishkodewinan (Council of Three Fires). The indigenous peoples living in this region utilized the land and its resources for sustenance and cultural practices, and the area played a significant role in their migratory routes and seasonal settlements.

The Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, established in 1977, plays an essential role in preserving the history, culture, and arts of these indigenous peoples. The museum offers a comprehensive look at the Native American heritage of these region with several collections ranging from the Paleo-Indian period through the present day.[1]

The City of Evanston acknowledges and honors the original peoples of this land, as well as the indigenous people that still call this area home. There are deep historical and cultural connections that Native American tribes have to this land, and the City of Evanston will continue to work to honor these contributions to the community.

FOUNDING AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Evanston's modern history began in the mid-19th century when settlers from the East Coast arrived. The city's development was significantly influenced by the founding of Northwestern University, which began in 1851 when a group of Methodist business leaders and educators from Chicago sought to create an institution of higher learning in the Northwest Territory. One of the founders of Northwestern University, named John Evans, submitted plans for a city to the county judge shortly thereafter. In 1857, the town of Evanston was named and it developed in concert with the university.

The arrival of the Chicago and North Western Railway during this time spurred Evanston's growth, making it an attractive location for those looking to escape the bustling city life while still enjoying the amenities of the area. The town was officially incorporated in 1863, and by the late 19th century Evanston had developed a reputation as a cultural and educational hub. Following the Civil War, where the town fought on the side of the abolitionists, Evanston saw a major economic and population boom. Its population quadrupled between 1860 and 1870, and it continued to grow and develop independent of Chicago through the 19th century.

ARTS AND CULTURE

As Evanston developed, the city became known for its unique architecture and vibrant cultural scene. Evanston is filled with historic homes and landmarks that serve as a testament to the city's rich history and cultural diversity. From the grand Victorian homes of the 19th century to innovative modernist designs of the 20th century, Evanston's architectural landscape enables the past and present to coexist.

1 Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, "Land Acknowledgment," mitchellmuseum.org.

Evanston also became home to numerous art galleries, theaters, and music venues, making it a cultural hotspot for residents and visitors. The Evanston Art Center, established in 1929, has been a cornerstone of the local arts community for nearly a century. The center promotes artistic expression and appreciation, offering an impressive collection of fine art books, regular events, exhibitions, classes, and workshops.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Evanston's demographic landscape began to change significantly during the Great Migration, a period in the early 20th century when millions of African Americans moved from the rural South to the urban North in search of better economic opportunities and escaping Jim Crow laws. Evanston became a destination for many African American families seeking a new life.

When the Great Migration began, Evanston was already home to a well-established African American Community. As the Black population grew, they were often systematically segregated into the less desirable areas to live through a practice that effectively took the form of racial zoning. African Americans in the community were often refused mortgage loans and affected by redlining, leading to systemic and lasting impacts that are still significant today.[2]

Despite facing racial segregation and discrimination, the African American community in Evanston established its own institutions including churches, schools, and social organizations, contributing to the city's rich cultural mosaic. Notable figures, such as civil rights activist Bennett Johnson, have roots in Evanston, highlighting the city's role in the broader narrative of African American history.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Evanston has a strong commitment to preserving its historical heritage. The city boasts several historic districts that protect its architectural and cultural history. One of the key focus areas for historic preservation in Evanston is its residential architecture. The city is home to numerous homes designed by renowned architects, such as Daniel Burnham, Frank Lloyd Wright, and George Washington Maher. These historic homes, often featuring distinctive styles like Queen Anne, Prairie School, and Colonial Revival, are preserved and celebrated for their architectural significance.

Evanston's commitment to historic preservation ensures that its architectural heritage is celebrated and protected for future generations. Preservation efforts are supported by organizations like the Evanston Preservation Commission, which works to identify and protect significant buildings and landmarks. The commission's efforts, along with those of local historical societies and community groups, help maintain the character and charm of Evanston's neighborhoods. The Evanston History Society, housed in the Charles Gates Dawes House, a National Historic Landmark, also plays a pivotal role in preserving and interpreting the city's history.

2 Loyola University Chicago Institute for Racial Justice, "Evanston," research.luc.edu.

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

The Chicago metro area has experienced slowing growth and periods of population decline since the early 2000s. Evanston grew steadily in the early 2000s, but the city's population declined in the wake of the Great Recession, consistent with regional trends. Evanston's population recovered in the early 2020s, and the community is positioned for future growth due to its established employment center and potential for infill development.[1] [2] [3]

Evanston's transit stations provide a unique opportunity to accommodate denser residential development, helping to meet the community's housing needs while also increasing efficiencies in the regional transportation system. Property values and housing costs in Evanston are elevated relative to the surrounding region, suggesting robust demand for the area. The schools, lakefront access, green space, diversity, walkability, and public transportation continue to make it a desirable location for residents.

1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (Various), data.census.gov.

2 ESRI, 2023 US Demographics.

3 CMAP. On To 2050 Plan Update: Socioeconomic Forecast Appendix (2022).

Evanston Population (2000-2023)

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (Various); ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

Median Age

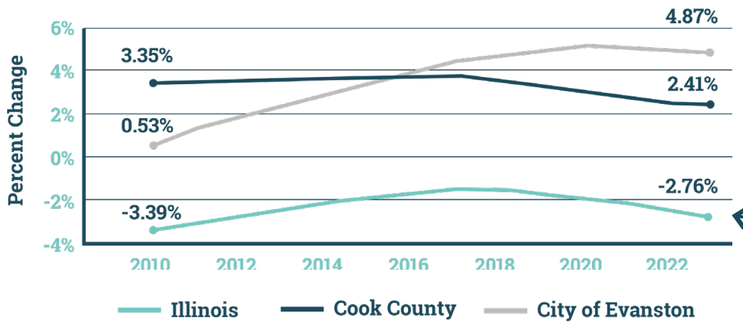
36 YEARS OLD

Population

77,884

Source: ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

Percent Change in Population Relative to 2000



Evanston's 2023 population is nearly 5% larger than it was in 2000.

In contrast, the State of Illinois overall has lost nearly 3% of its population during the same time frame.

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (Various); ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

AGE DISTRIBUTION

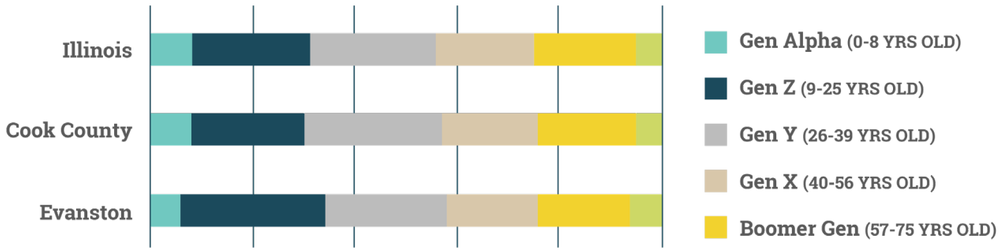
Evanston's population consists of a larger-than-typical portion of youth and young adults, driven in part by the presence of the university. The community also hosts a robust population of adults 65 and older, suggesting that residents may view Evanston as a desirable location to retire.[4] The community offers many attractive features to existing and prospective residents, including a thriving downtown, abundant shops and restaurants, and proximity to Northwestern University activities such as sporting events and theater productions.

In contrast, population data suggests that relatively few young families with children call Evanston home. This could be the result of several factors, including lifestyle preferences and high housing prices relative to the surrounding region. Evanston/Skokie School District 65, which includes pre-K through 8th grade public schools, projects that total school enrollment will decrease more than 7 percent from 2023 to 2029. The extent of enrollment decline varies between grades, with the larger declines skewed toward younger grades. This trend indicates a coming demographic shift and a future with fewer young families and children.[5]

4 ESRI, 2023 US Demographics.

5 Evanston/Skokie School District 65. 2023, Nov 13. Annual Students Assignment Process; 5-Year Enrollment Projections (2023-24 to 2028-29). district65.net

Age & Generational Breakdown



Source: ESRI, 2023 US Demographics

RACE

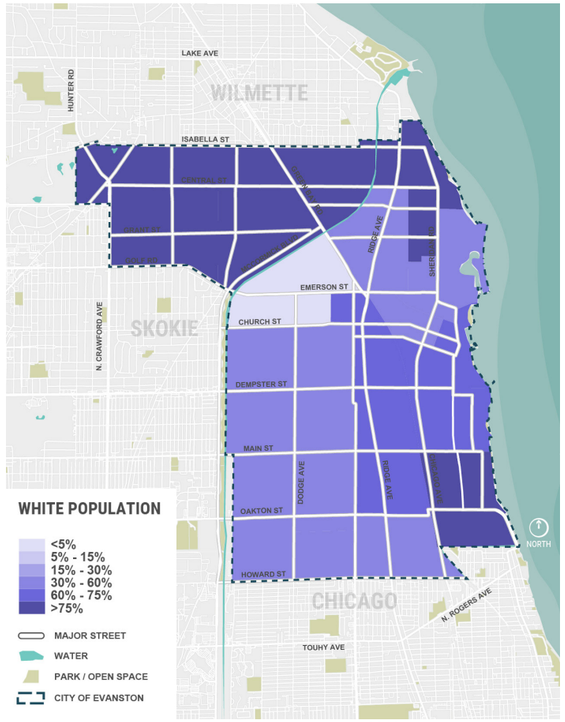
Evanston's population is less diverse than the county but has a higher percentage of Black, Asian, and Mixed-Race residents when compared to Illinois and national averages. Despite its diversity, the city is geographically segregated. Neighborhoods exhibit clear differences in racial makeup. In Northwest Evanston, more than 80% of residents are white. In West Evanston, however, that number drops to just 11%. The maps below exhibit that Black-white segregation is most prominent, whereas Asian and Hispanic/Latino populations tend to be more integrated. However, a greater percent of Hispanic/Latino individuals reside in southwest Evanston than other portions of the city. Black residents are much more likely to call southwest or West Evanston home than other areas of the community.[1]

Racial geographic distribution can be traced back to historic redlining. This topic is discussed further within the 'Housing' section.

1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2017-2021, data.census.gov.

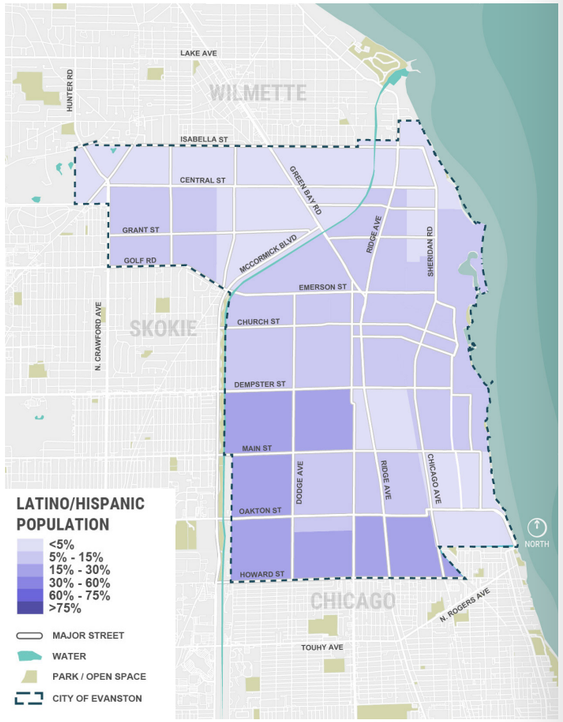
"Classes and programming is not easily accessible to Hispanic families due to program guide not being in Spanish. Barely any Spanish speakers available to assist with registrations."

PERCENT OF POPULATION - NON-HISPANIC WHITE



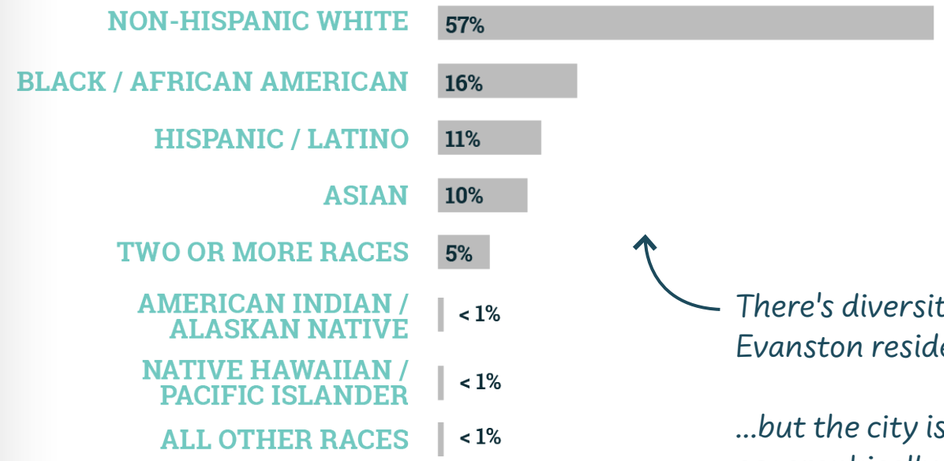
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

PERCENT OF POPULATION - HISPANIC/LATINO



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

Race & Ethnicity

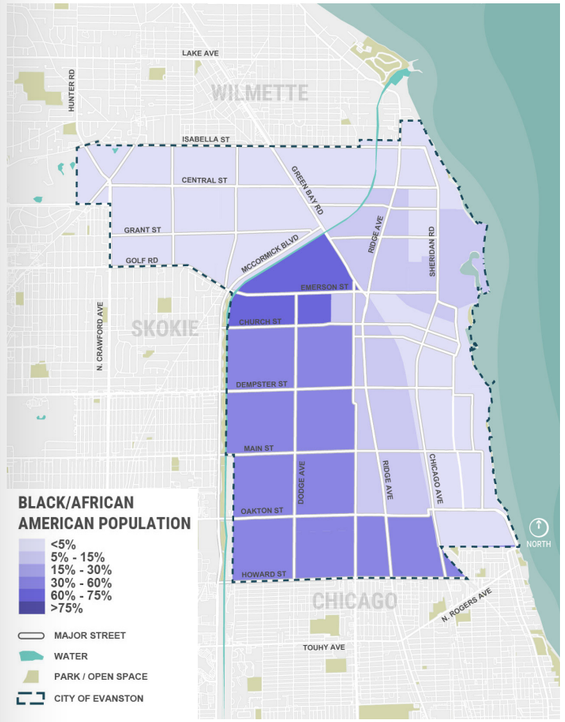


Source: 2022 EPLAN

There's diversity among Evanston residents...

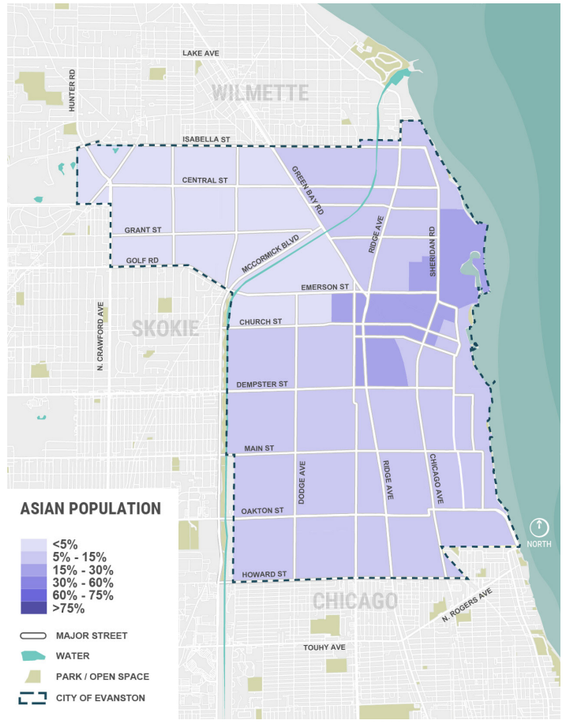
...but the city is geographically segregated.

PERCENT OF POPULATION - BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

PERCENT OF POPULATION - ASIAN



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

LAND USE

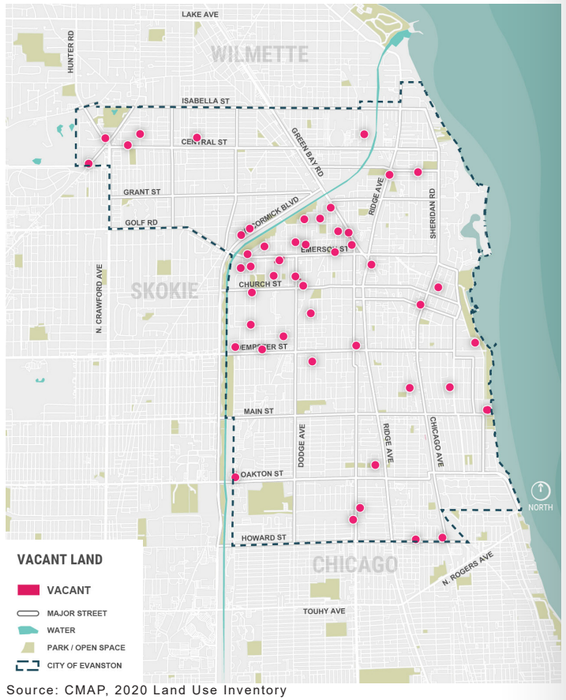
The dynamics of land use and zoning within Evanston are important to consider when forecasting areas of potential growth and types of development that can be supported. The city's urban makeup consists of a mix of residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.

Land use in Evanston is diverse, with single-family and multi-family residential areas making up the largest percentage, followed by roads and transportation, institutional, and public spaces. Residential areas constitute more than 40% of the city's land use, or nearly 2,200 acres.

The city's industrial land is concentrated in the west and southwest portions of the community and provides locations for manufacturing businesses Meanwhile, 14 acres of Evanston's land are currently vacant.[1] This vacant land provides opportunities for sustainable future growth that aligns with the community's vision.

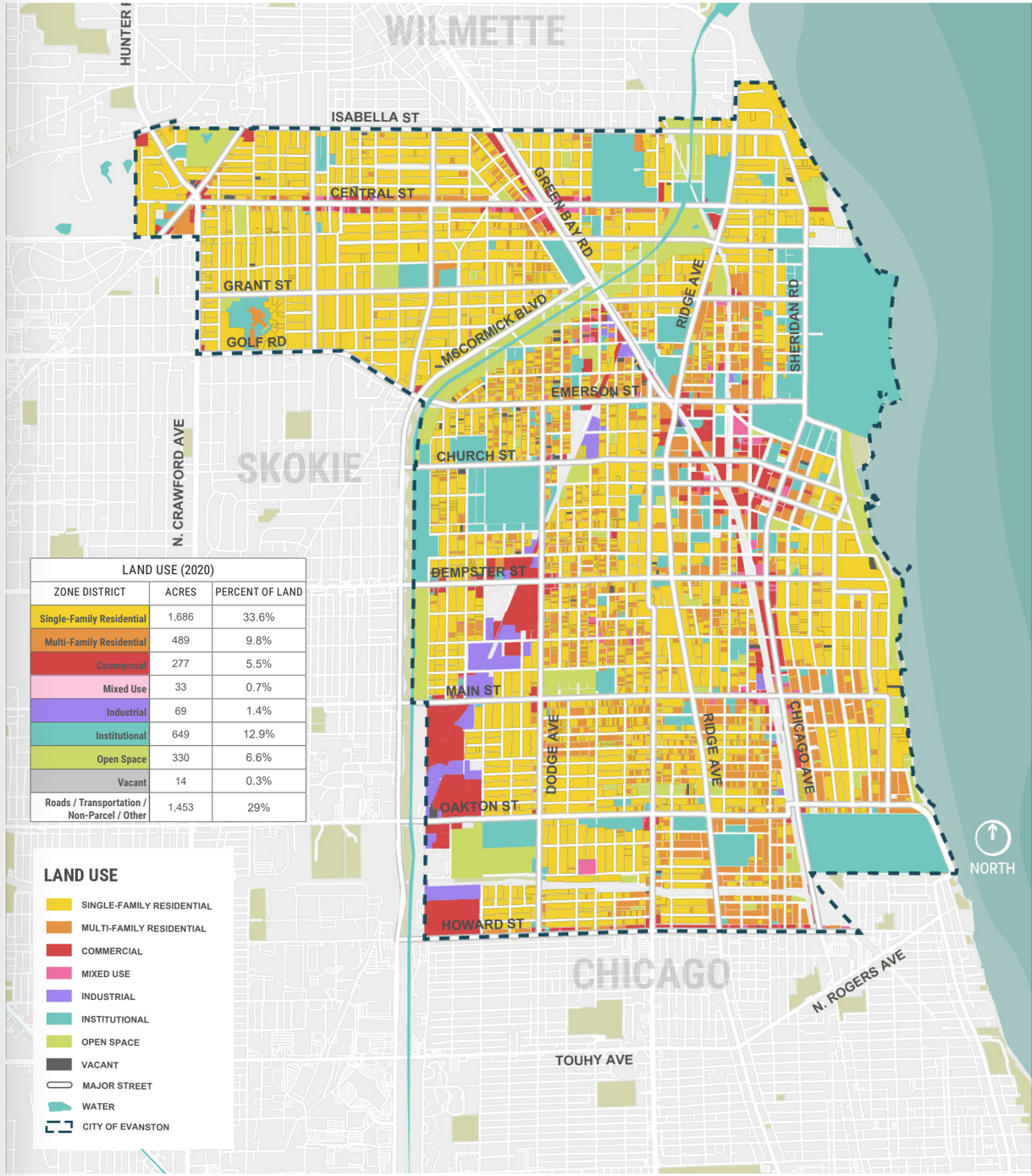
1 CMAP, 2020 Land Use Inventory, cmap.illinois.gov.

VACANT LAND



Source: CMAP, 2020 Land Use Inventory

LAND USE (2020)



LAND USE (2020)

ZONE DISTRICT	ACRES	PERCENT OF LAND
Single-Family Residential	1,686	33.6%
Multi-Family Residential	489	9.8%
Commercial	277	5.5%
Mixed Use	33	0.7%
Industrial	69	1.4%
Institutional	649	12.9%
Open Space	330	6.6%
Vacant	14	0.3%
Roads / Transportation / Non-Parcel / Other	1,453	29%

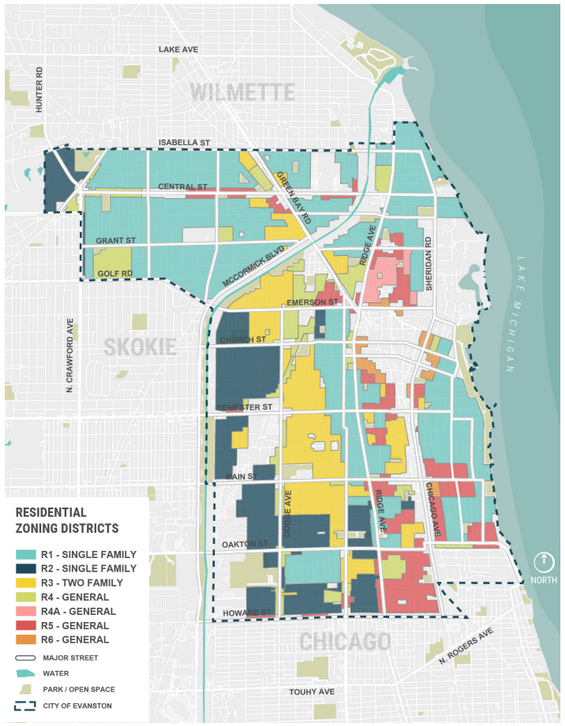
Source: CMAP, 2020 Land Use Inventory

ZONING

Zoning is the power of a city to control the use and development of land inside city limits. The city is divided into zoning districts that determine how the land can be developed, where certain types of businesses can operate, how tall building can be, and other types of land use activities. The City's zoning code outlines the zoning regulations for each zoning district, and these regulations help ensure development is aligned with the City's goals. Before a new development is granted a license or issuance of any building permit, the proposed development must first be approved as meeting the intended zoning designation for that area.

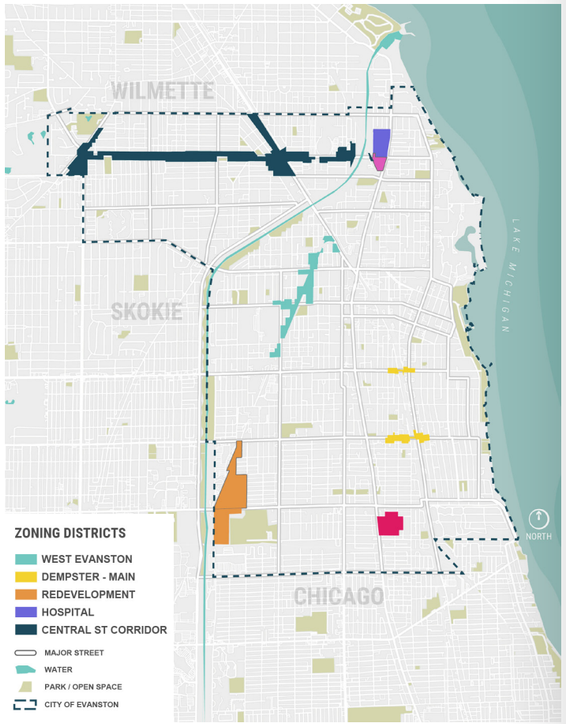
Evanston's zoning code was last overhauled in 1993, which has caused land use to fall out of alignment with zoning policies and community needs. While the zoning code has been amended over time, its outdated framework has struggled to keep up with new business and housing demands. The current code limits much of the developable land in Evanston to single-family homes, restricting opportunities for housing that can support a larger number of people at a more affordable price point.

RESIDENTIAL ZONING



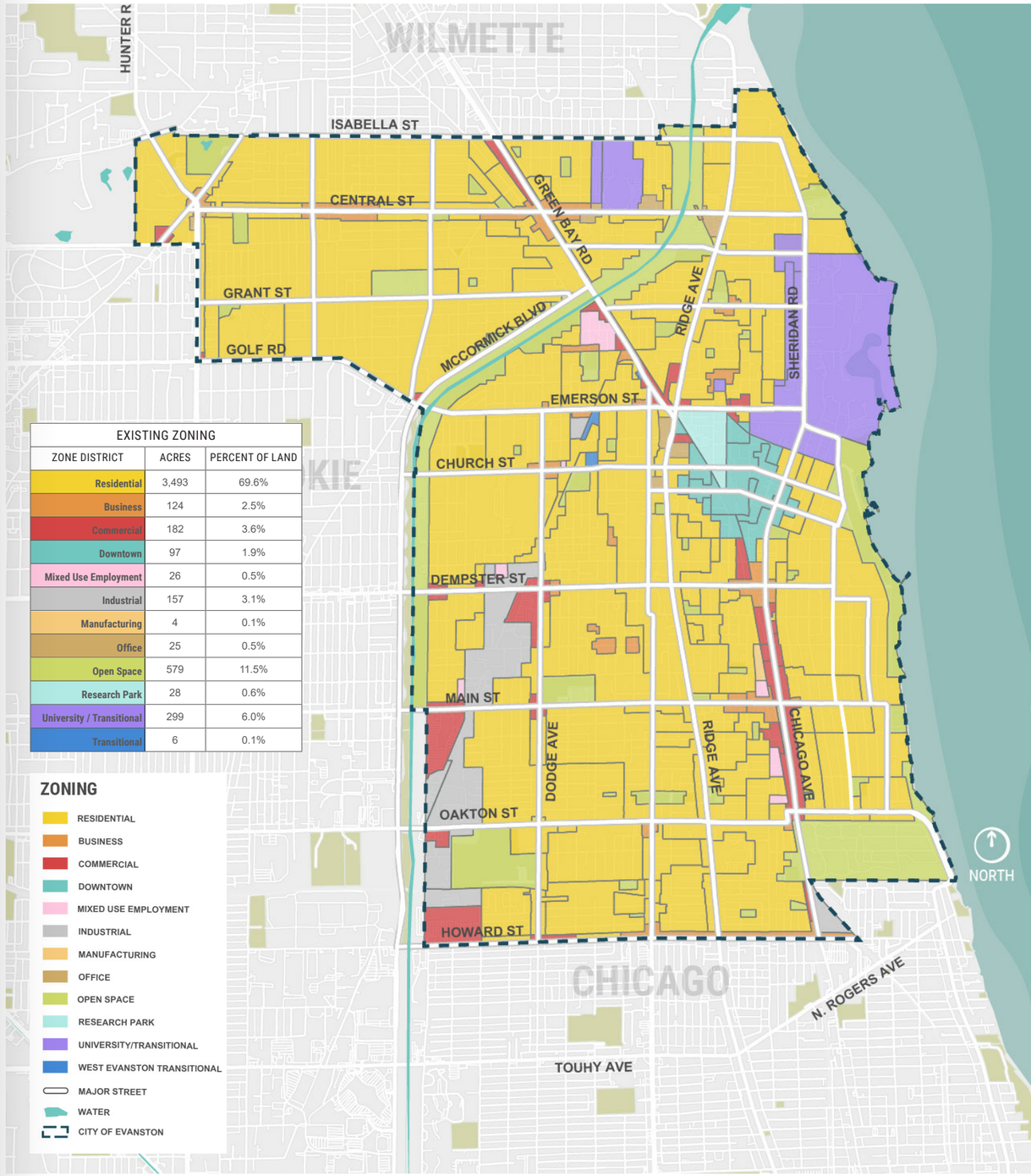
Source: City of Evanston

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS



Source: City of Evanston

EXISTING ZONING MAP

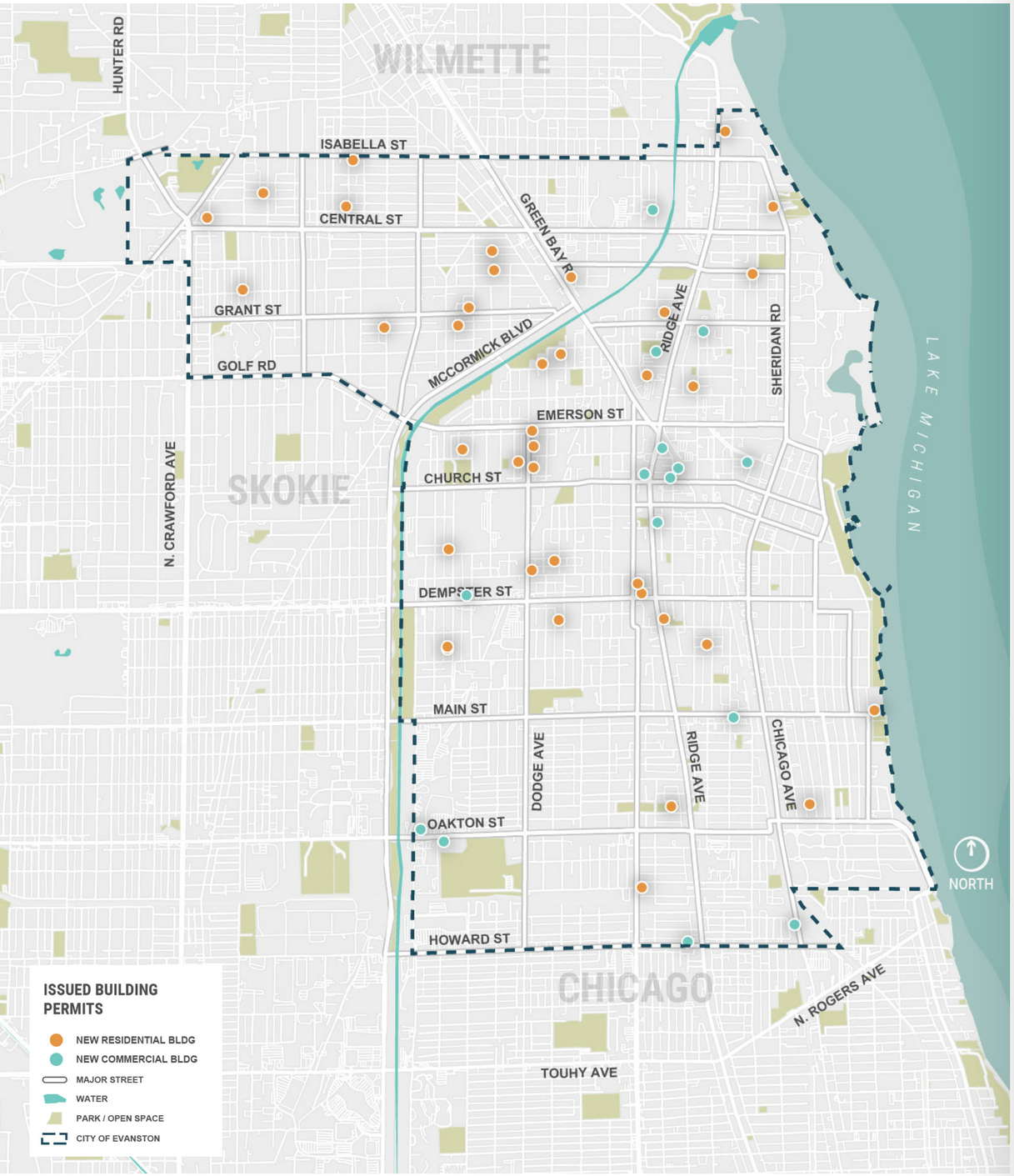


EXISTING ZONING

ZONE DISTRICT	ACRES	PERCENT OF LAND
Residential	3,493	69.6%
Business	124	2.5%
Commercial	182	3.6%
Downtown	97	1.9%
Mixed Use Employment	26	0.5%
Industrial	157	3.1%
Manufacturing	4	0.1%
Office	25	0.5%
Open Space	579	11.5%
Research Park	28	0.6%
University / Transitional	299	6.0%
Transitional	6	0.1%

Source: City of Evanston

BUILDINGS PERMITS WITHIN LAST 5 YEARS



Source: City of Evanston

MARKET CONDITIONS

Evanston has issued building permits for both commercial and residential development at a steady rate over the past few decades. The City supports economic growth through various initiatives, such as five Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts designed to leverage private sector growth to support workforce development and infrastructure improvements, and other enterprise zones which aim to stimulate revitalization of the community.

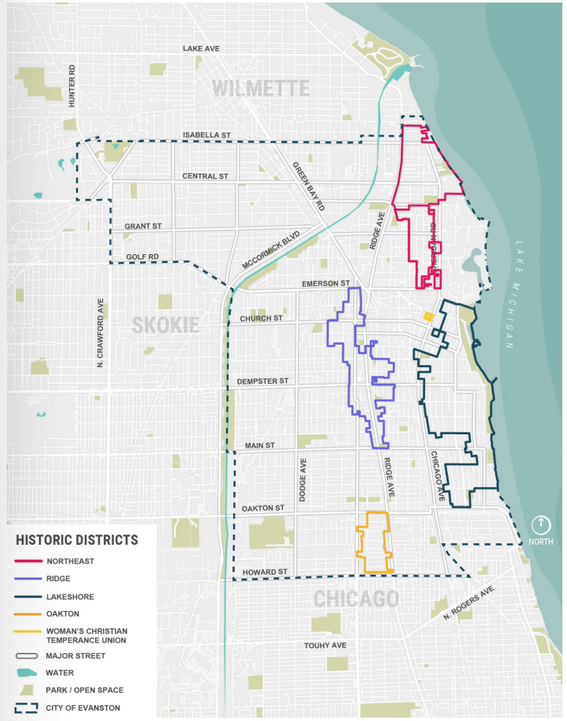
The office, retail, and commercial sectors in Evanston continue to recover from pandemic-related impacts, but the market shows promising signs of stabilization and economic vibrancy. Evanston's downtown core continues to recover toward pre-pandemic activity, with significantly lower office and retail vacancy rates compared to Chicago. As of March 2024, citywide vacancy rates were 9.7% for offices, which is within the 10% threshold for a healthy commercial district by industry standards. The retail vacancy rate also dropped to just 3.6%, indicating a very strong retail business environment in the city. Office vacancy rates peaked in December 2021 at 15.4%, and current vacancy rates are significantly lower than Chicago's approximately 30% vacancy rate.[1]

However, downtown Evanston has struggled to maintain the same resilience. Downtown vacancy rates for offices and retail hovered around 18% to 19% in the first quarter of 2024. This is a significant increase in office and retail vacancies compared to the previous quarter, which stood at 12.5% and 9.6%, respectively. Most downtowns across the country are struggling within similar economic challenges in their post-pandemic recoveries, but there are opportunities to address these issues and drive business activity that include converting vacant spaces for alternative purposes, promoting more affordable housing, or creating new incentives for business activity.

Many residents expressed concerns for the future of downtown during the community engagement process.

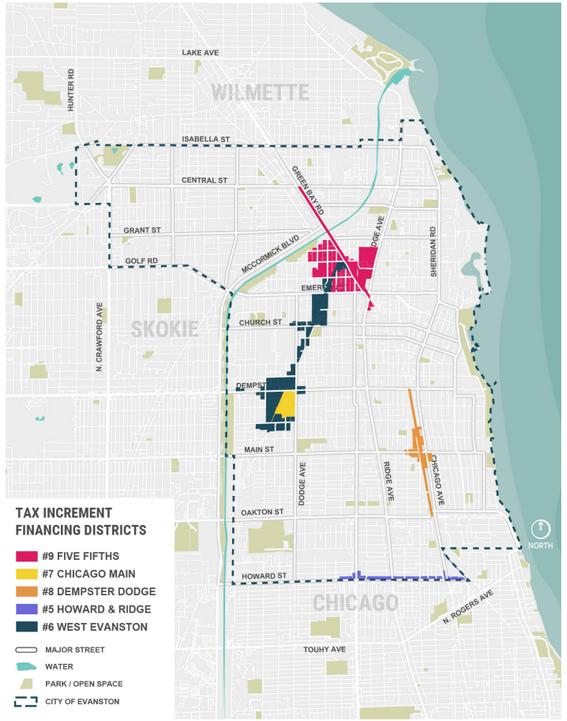
1 Stone Real Estate, Chicago Loop Retail Analysis 2023.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS



Source: City of Evanston

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS



Source: City of Evanston

EXISTING AMENITIES

Set on the shores of Lake Michigan, Evanston is rich with existing amenities that enhance the overall attractiveness and livability of the city. Evanston is home to numerous parks, green spaces, and six public beaches along the lake that serve as major recreational assets. The city's commitment to sustainability is evident in its green spaces and urban planning initiatives that integrate nature with urban living. This commitment ensures that even as the city develops, it maintains green areas that are vital for environmental health and public well-being.

The built environment reflects the city's unique history and culture, which is protected through the Preserve 2040 plan. Its heritage is represented across numerous distinct neighborhoods and business districts. From Main-Dempster Mile, Central Street, or West Village, these walkable and accessible neighborhoods feature world-class arts and entertainment. The landscape for education and healthcare is also impressive, anchored by Northwestern University and NorthShore University HealthSystem, which contribute significantly to the local culture and economy. Evanston offers a range of public and private educational options that are well regarded for their high standards.

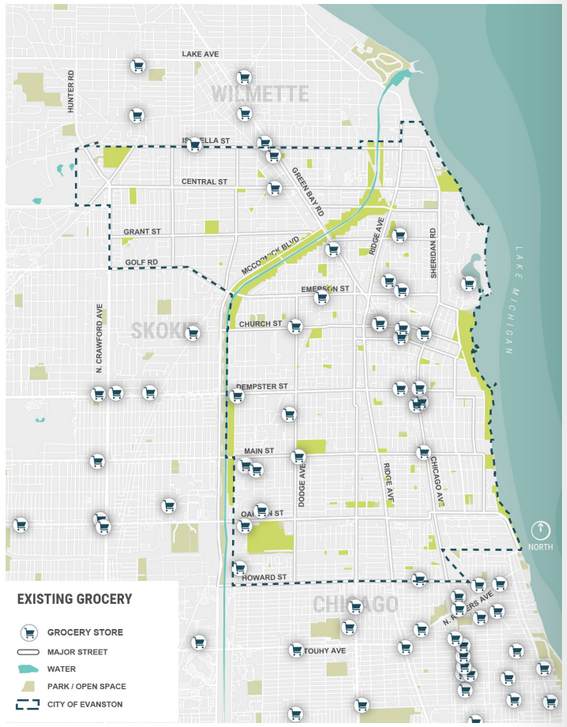
Although Evanston contains many grocery store options, their geographic distribution leaves some residents without nearby access to fresh foods. In particular, Northwest Evanston lacks a grocery store, as do central and southern portions of the community. Some residents and Northwestern University students noted the lack of nearby affordable groceries during the community engagement process.

"Everything is close by, very walkable."

"The importance of services, support, intervention for the unhoused and mentally ill individuals who hang out downtown and at the library."

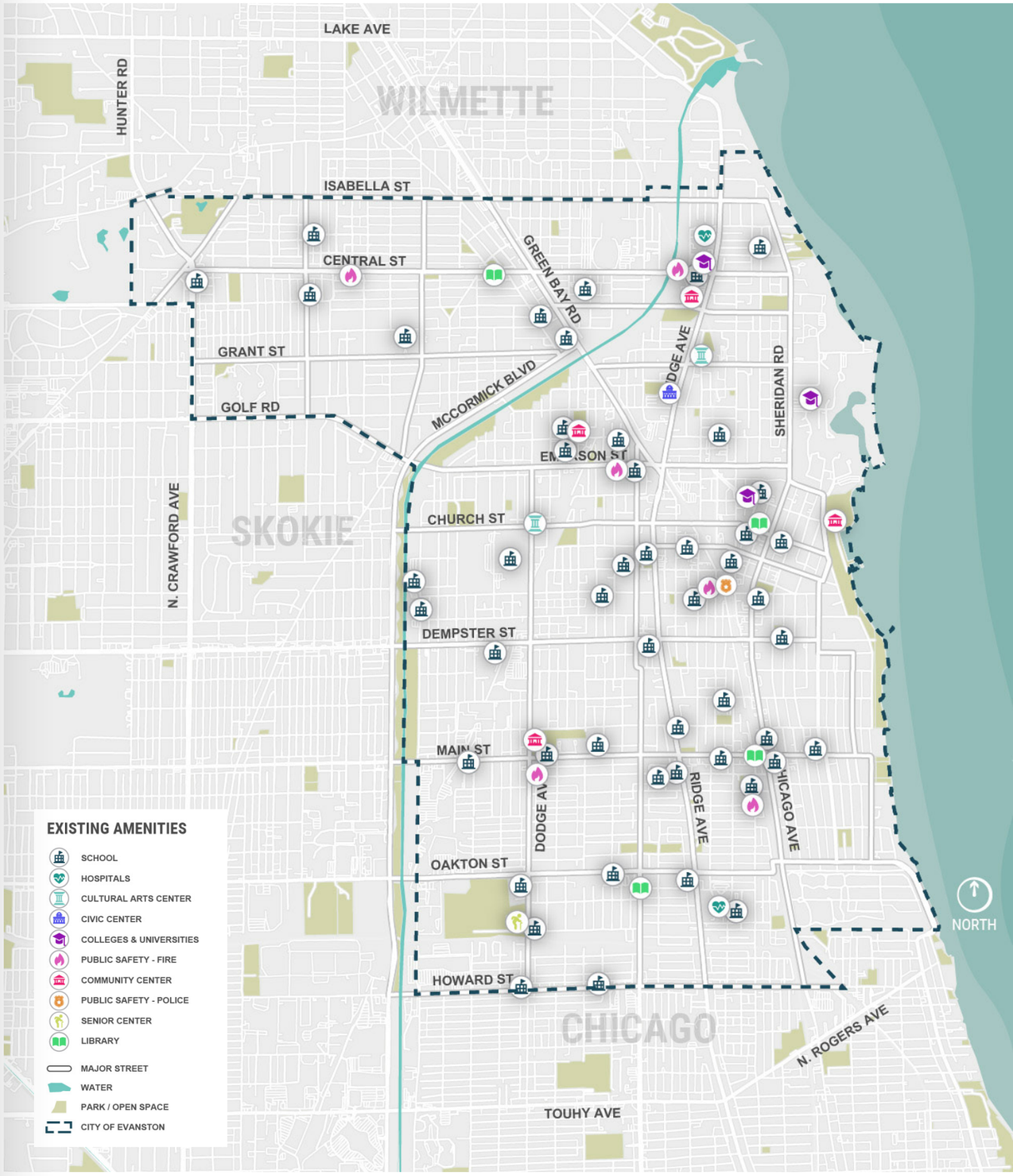
More bars, shopping, affordable restaurants for college students.

EXISTING GROCERY STORES



Source: SafeGraph Places for ArcGIS (2020)

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES & EXISTING AMENITIES



Source: SafeGraph Places for ArcGIS (2020)

HOUSING

Despite the large number of high-income households, home ownership is out of reach for many Evanstonians. Median-income households (making $87,412) fall short of being able to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home ($470,551). Home values and rents in Evanston are elevated relative to the broader metro area.[1] The community has long been known as a location for nice homes, parks, and a high quality of life, which is driven by and contributes to these higher home prices.

Evanston contains nearly 34,000 housing units that are well-distributed among different housing types. Citywide, 32% of homes are single-family detached residences.[2] A mix of housing types generally helps promote affordability by offering options to residents at various income levels. In the absence of this healthy mix of housing types, it is likely that Evanston's affordability challenges would be more severe.

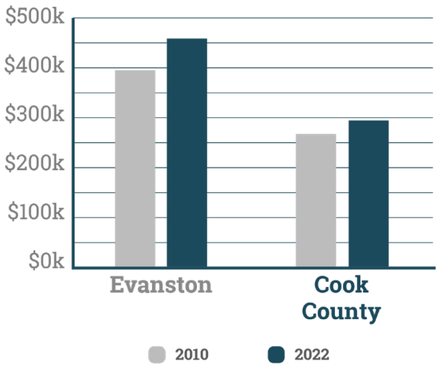
1 ESRI, 2023 US Demographics.

2 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022, data.census.gov.

"I am deeply concerned about the lack of housing affordable for young families wanting to put down roots and buy a home here."

Evanston's median home value increased 15% to $454,600 between 2010 and 2022, compared to a smaller increase of 10% across Cook County.

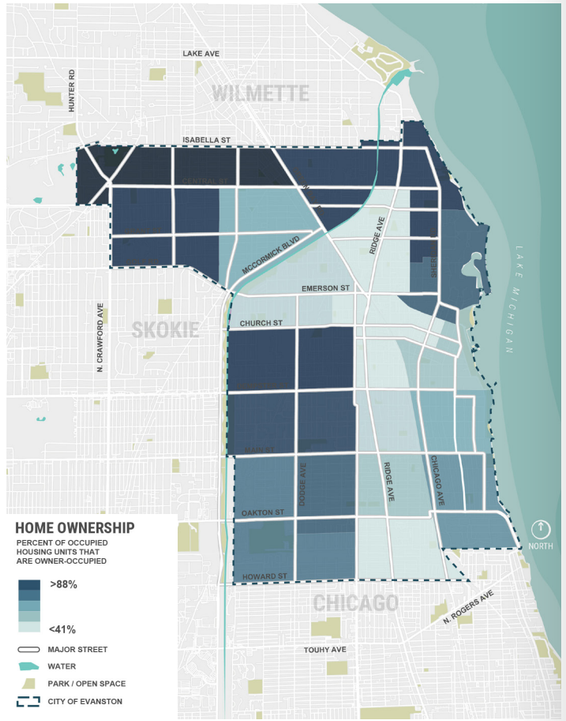
Owner-Occupied Median Home Value (2010 vs 2022)



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2006-2010, 2018-2022

West Evanston and downtown have lower rates of homeownership than the rest of the city.

PERCENT OF HOUSING UNITS THAT ARE OWNER OCCUPIED



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

New housing units haven't kept pace with Evanston's population growth in recent years. Evanston's population has grown more than 4% since 2010, and the number of total housing units grew less than 2% during that same time period. The result is that housing in Evanston is increasingly unaffordable for existing and prospective residents. In 2021, roughly one-quarter of households spent 50% or more of their income on rent.[2] [3]

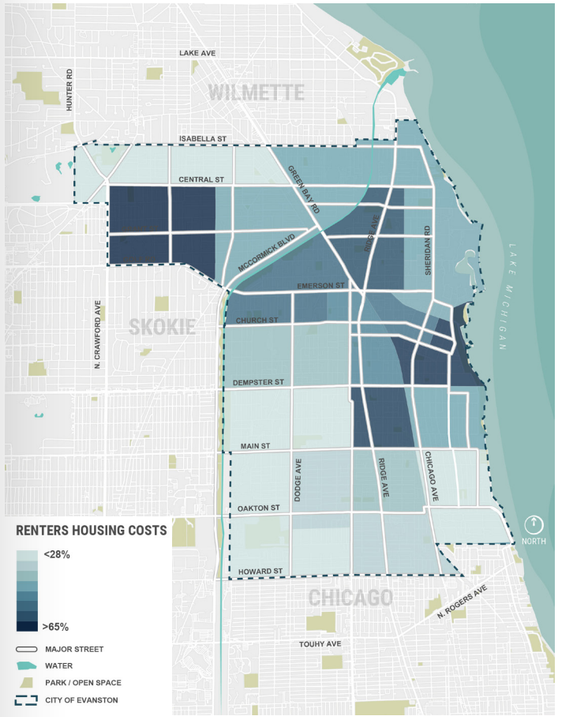
Evanston has a large portion of renters, with 42% of the housing units occupied by renters compared to a 32% state average and a 35% national average.[2] While a large population of university students and substantial number of high-density apartments are likely contributing factors, relatively low rates of homeownership can also indicate challenges entering the housing market. In Evanston, homeownership rates are geographically variable, and there is a link between areas of the city with low ownership rates and those with low median household incomes.

Geographic differences in home ownership are also consistent with historic lending practices. In the first half of the twentieth century, the Federal Housing Agency (FHA) elected whether to back home loans in a discriminatory fashion that favored white suburban areas at the expense of predominantly Black communities.[4] An area closely corresponding to the boundary of the modern-day 5th Ward was assigned a 'D (Hazardous)' grade by the Home Owners Loan Corporation, shown in red on the map below. Today, the neighborhood exhibits lower rates of home ownership, indicating the generational harm that such policies inflicted. In the 5th Ward, just 45% of homes are owner-occupied, compared with 56% city-wide, and median household income is $39,393 versus $87,412 city-wide.[1]

3 US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, data.census.gov.

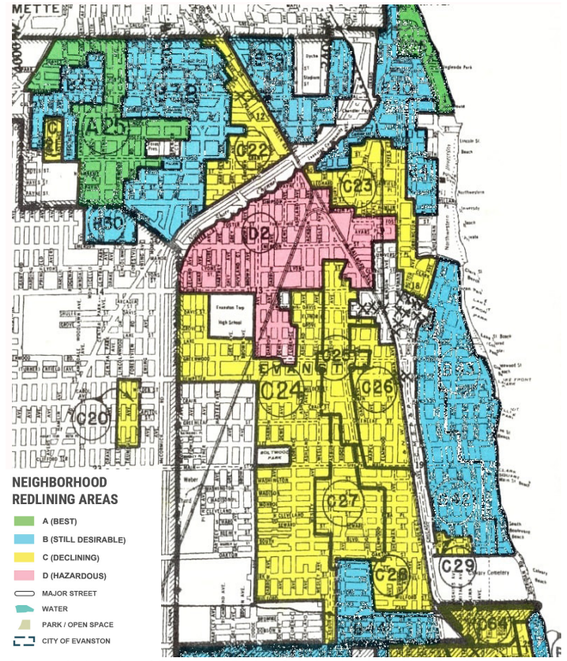
4 Loyola University Chicago Institute for Racial Justice, "Evanston," research.luc.edu.

PERCENT OF RENTER HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE GROSS RENT IS 30% OR MORE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

HISTORICALLY REDLINED AREAS



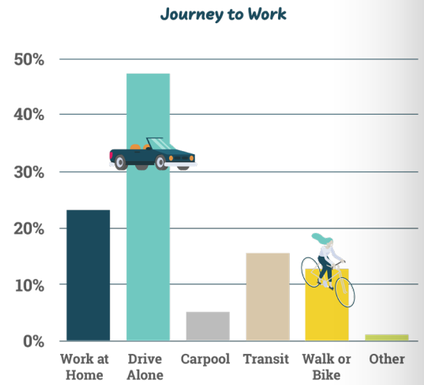
Source: University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab, Mapping Inequality

MOBILITY

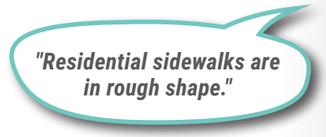
Trips to work are a major contributor to vehicle miles traveled, or car trips, in Evanston. While 29% of Evanstonians commute to work via public transportation, walking, or biking, 47% drive alone. Meanwhile, 23% of residents work from home on any given day, a post-pandemic phenomenon that has reduced commuting trips overall. Evanston is already doing many things well to encourage multimodal transportation, especially walking and transit use.[1] However, the City's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) calls for further reduction in car trips in order to meet climate goals.

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates a regional rail network (commonly referred to as the "L") that offers service within Chicago and surrounding cities including Evanston. Additionally, Metra operates a commuter rail service within the Chicago metropolitan area. Evanston is served by seven CTA rail stops along the Purple Line as well as three Metra stations. The CTA bus and Pace bus offer local and regional service and supplement east-west system gaps left by rail operations.[2]

While Evanston is served by a number of bus lines, several have limited service throughout the day and do not run on Sundays. A number of Evanston's rail stations are not ADA accessible or do not have elevators.



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022



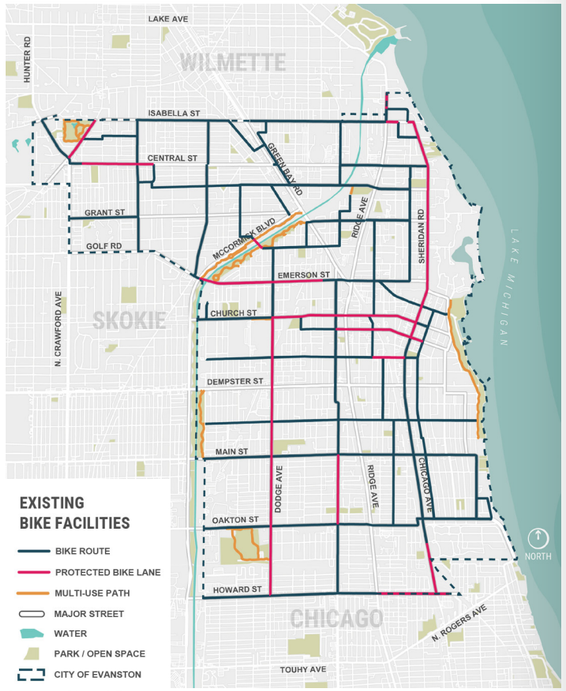
1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2017-2021, data.census.gov.

2 Chicago Transit Authority, transitchicago.com.

ROADWAY VOLUMES

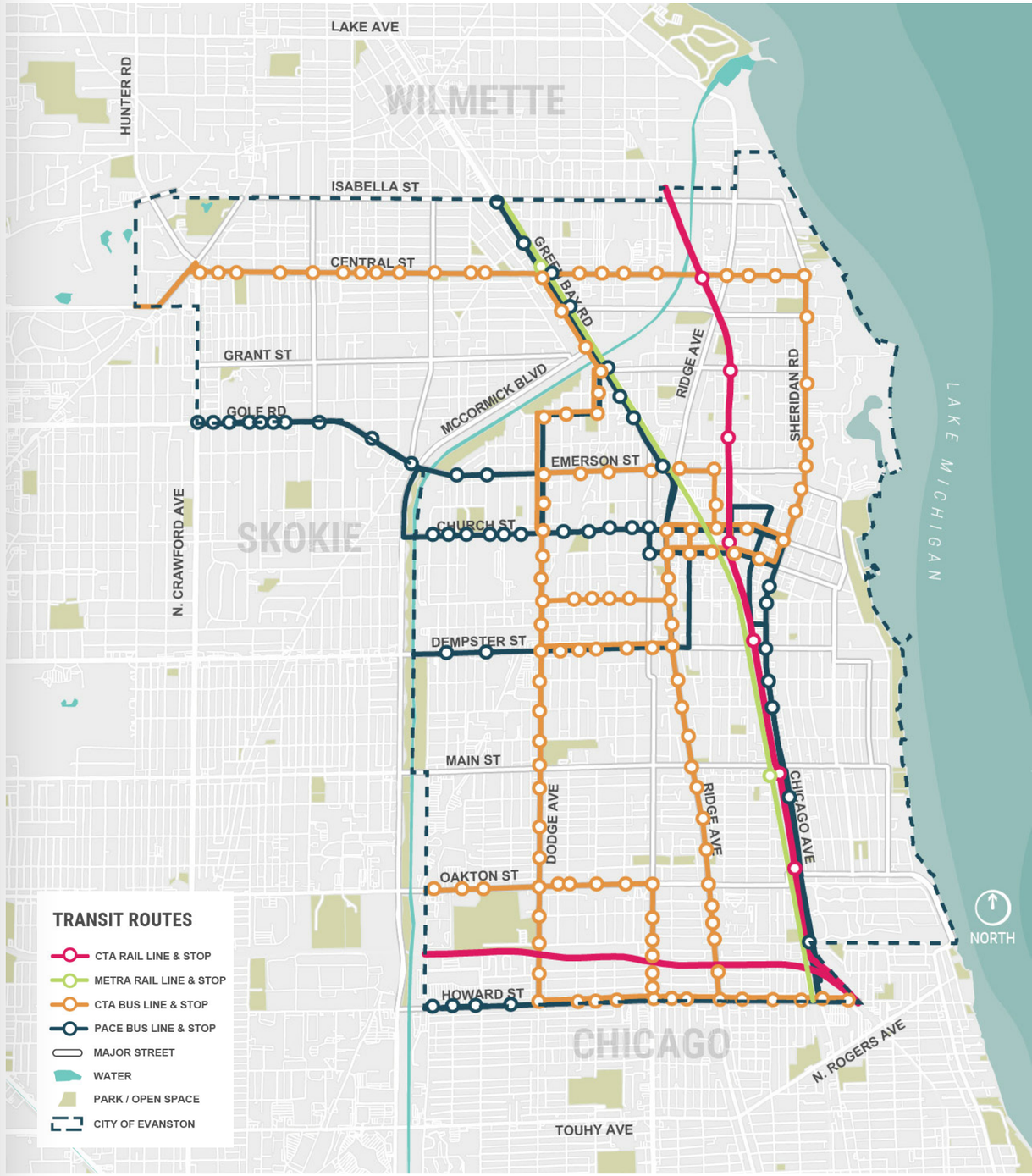
Source: Replica, AADT

EXISTING BIKE FACILITIES



Source: City of Evanston

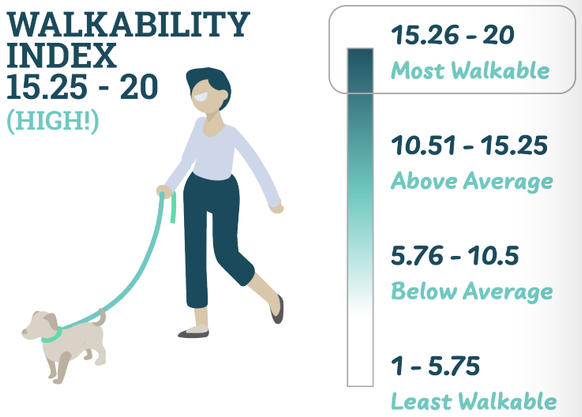
TRANSIT ROUTES



Source: City of Evanston

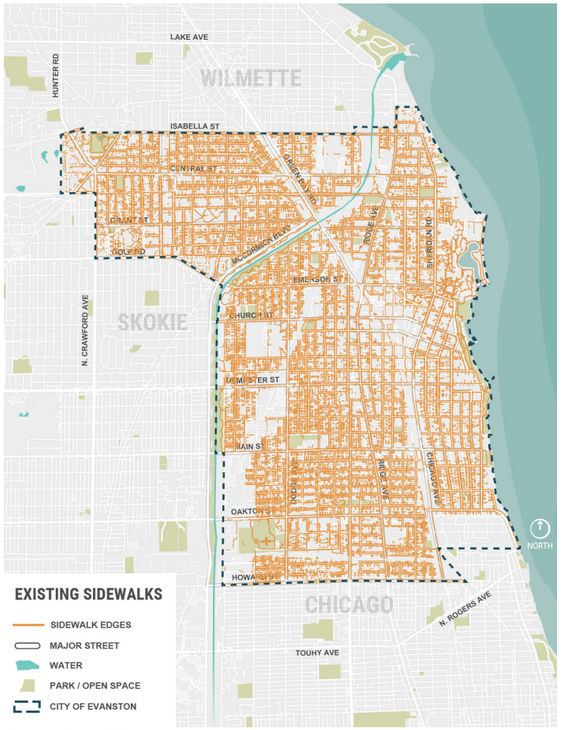
Evanston's street network is a well-connected grid, which allows for distributed vehicular traffic and enhanced pedestrian mobility. While block sizes are not consistent across the city, the grid is broken only occasionally by dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs. The majority of homes contain rear-facing garages that load from a back alley. Alleys are also used for trash service. Neighborhood connectivity suffers in areas bisected by Metra and CTA tracks, major roads, and the North Shore Channel.

Sidewalks in Evanston are generally widespread and in good condition throughout the community, with most neighborhoods featuring 5.5' detached sidewalks buffered from the street by a tree lawn. However, gaps in the sidewalk network exist in portions of the city, including northwest Evanston. Some areas only have sidewalks on one side of the street or may feature only a narrow, attached vehicle step-out that is insufficient for walking and wheelchair use.



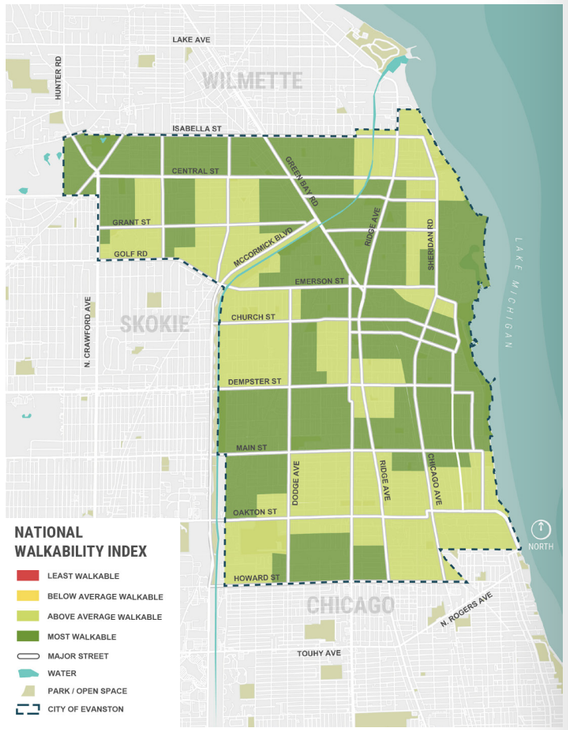
Source: US EPA, National Walkability Index (2021)

EXISTING SIDEWALKS



Source: City of Evanston

NATIONAL WALKABILITY INDEX



Source: US EPA, National Walkability Index (2021)

City-wide walkability is better than many communities, as all neighborhoods in Evanston are rated either "Most Walkable" or "Above Average" on the National Walkability Index. This, along with other transportation infrastructure, allows residents to choose to not own a vehicle or share vehicles within the household In other contexts, rates of car ownership may be used as an equity measure to determine where households lack transportation. In communities with higher levels of walkability, bikeability, and transit service, such as Evanston, lower rates of car use and ownership can also be an indicator that residents have access to quality non-car transportation options. Nearly 30% of renter households in Evanston do not own a car.

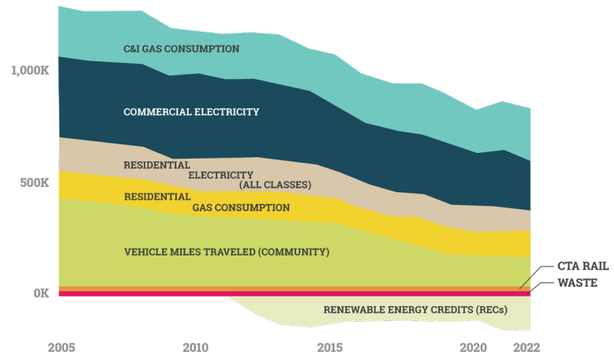
Evanston's bike network is less robust and less connected than its sidewalk network. Only a handful of stretches of roads currently have bike lanes, while a smaller portion of those roads offer a bike lane that is separated from car traffic by a physical barrier Overall, bicycle connectivity is lacking, and few off-street paths exist. The majority of Evanston's bike network is composed of "bike routes," which are streets designated for cycling.

While a significant number of Evanston households who rent do not own a car, over 90% of owned-households do own at least one car. Perhaps more telling is that only 35% of Evanston households have two or more vehicles, much lower than state (54%) and national (59%) figures.[1] This means that while owning a vehicle remains popular for some types of trips and travel, households are able to make do with fewer vehicles than most other US communities due to the availability of other transportation options in Evanston.

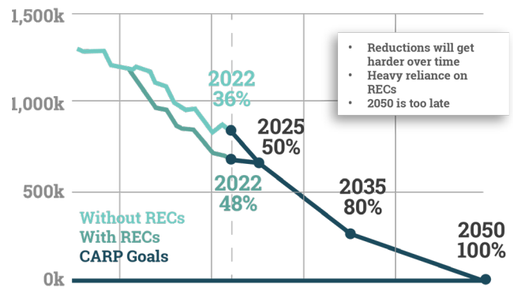
1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2017-2021, data.census.gov.

Reducing vehicle trips is an important piece of Evanston's climate action goals, as expressed in the city's CARP plan. Since 2005, the community has made significant progress in reducing vehicle trips, which are at an all time low. Overall energy usage has also declined, setting the community on the right track toward mitigating its climate impacts. However, there is substantial progress that still needs to be made in all areas of energy and transportation use in order to achieve CARP goals, which prescribe city-wide carbon neutrality by 2050 alongside other objectives.

2022 Emissions by Sector



2005 - 2022 Emissions Reductions



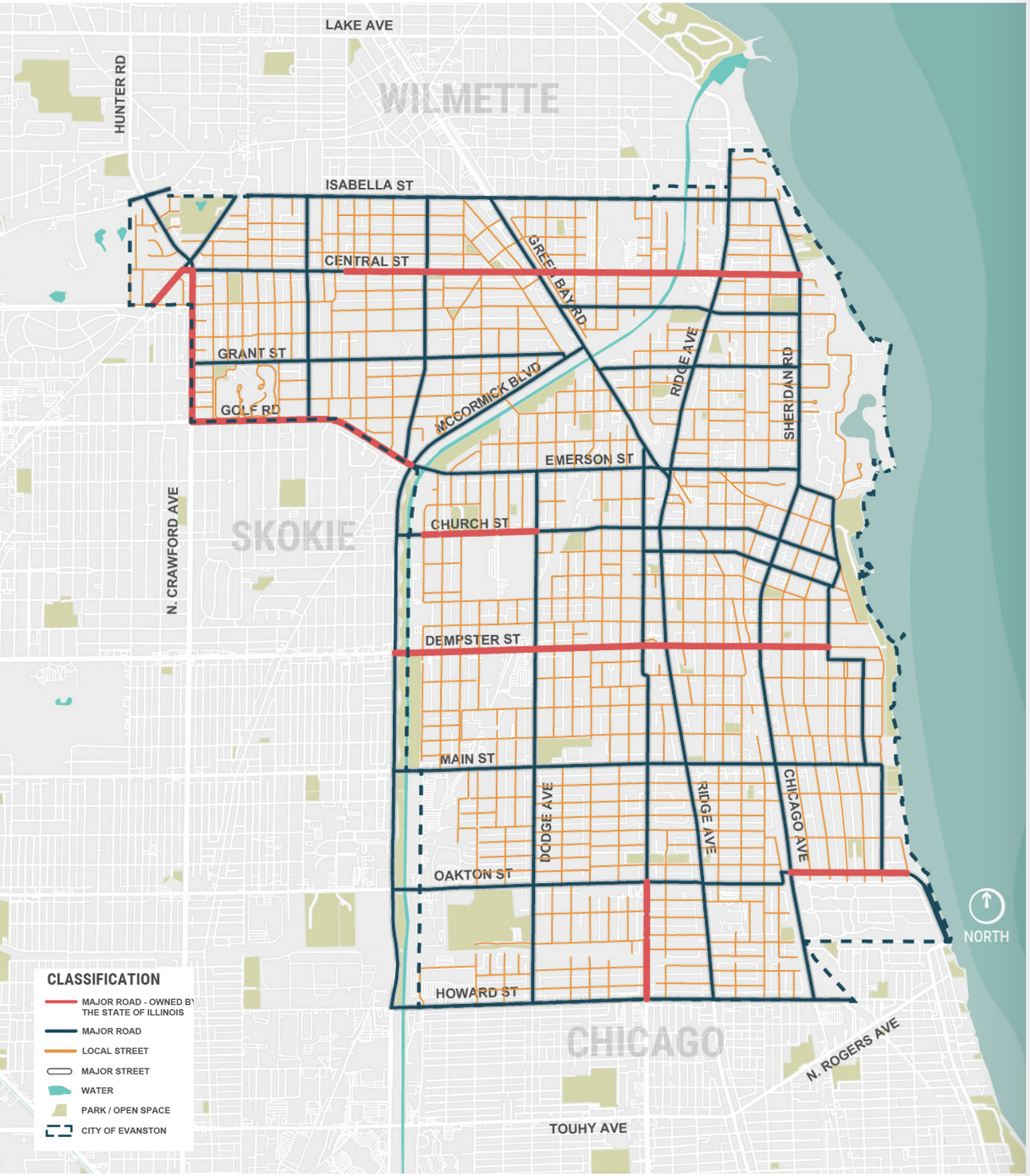
Source: City of Evanston

OWNER HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLES
6%

RENTER HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLES
30%

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2017-2021

ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION



Source: City of Evanston

Evanston's street network consists of a grid classified as major roads or local streets. In general, major roads are situated approximately every half-mile. Some major roads are state-owned, including Central Street east of Central Park Avenue, Dempster Street, Golf Road, and portions of Church Street and Asbury Avenue. The remainder of the city's streets are classified as local streets.

Several intersections of major roads are hotspots for vehicle crashes. Ridge Avenue at the intersections of Church Street and Davis Street exhibits one of the highest crash rates in the city. Other hotspots include the intersection of Dempster Street and Dodge Avenue and where Central Street, North Crawford Avenue, and Gross Point Road convene.

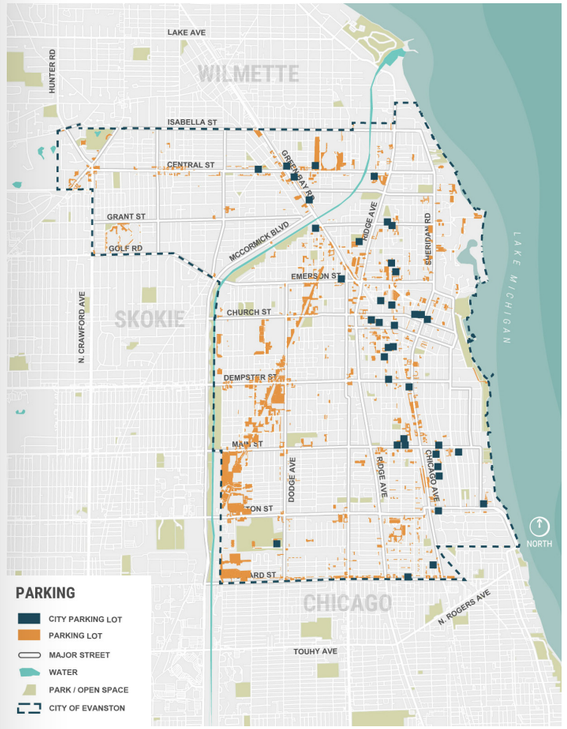
The City owns three public parking garages downtown in addition to 37 surface lots throughout the city. The garages and many of the surface lots offer both hourly and monthly parking options and generally require payment Monday through Saturday, except holidays. Parking is an often-cited concern in community engagement results. Many community members note that parking is limited, and paid parking makes shopping or dining outside of downtown or in nearby communities more attractive.

"Separate areas of Evanston are easy to get around, but from one neighborhood to the other, it can be hard."

"There should be more traffic control to avoid accidents."

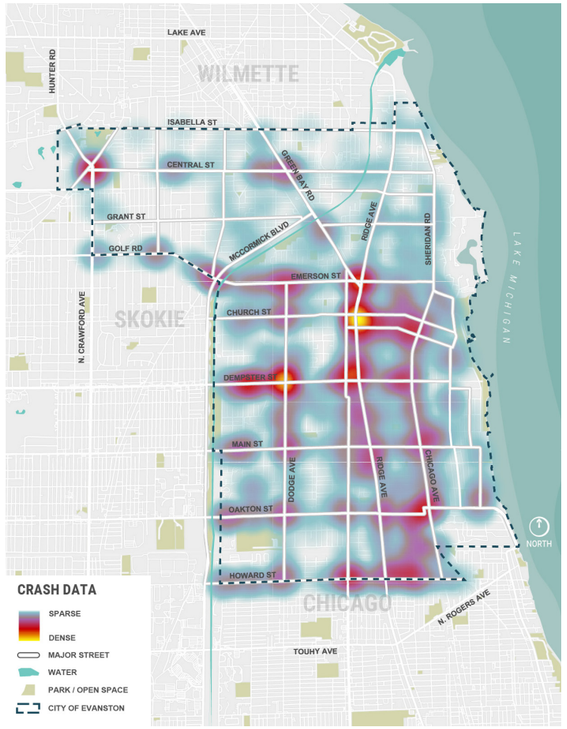
"Difficulty to access retail due to cost of parking."

PARKING AREAS



Source: City of Evanston

VEHICLE CRASH DATA



Source: IDOT, Crashes (2020)

EMPLOYMENT

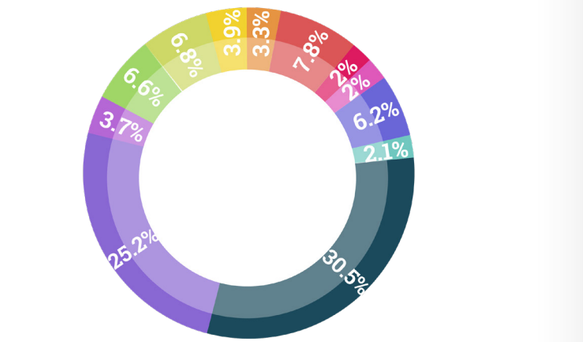
Evanston's downtown functions as a regional employment center, drawing workers from nearby communities. Evanston hosts more than 3,000 businesses, which collectively employ approximately 39,000 employees.[1] Despite its proximity to Chicago, more workers commute into Evanston than the number of Evanston residents who commute out to work in other locations. Only 12% of Evanston's workers also live in the city.

Evanston's employers span a wide range of industries. Top industries based on number of employees include:

- Educational Services (31%), including schools and universities
- Health Care and Social Assistance (25%), including hospitals, health practices, assisted living facilities, and child care
- Public Administration (7%), comprising federal, state, and local government institutions
- Accommodation and Food Services (7%), including lodging and food establishments
- Professional Services and Management (6%), including engineering, financial services, research, and other technical firms [2 3]

Evanston hosts more employers in the education and health care sectors compared to the national average. The city's largest employers are Evanston Health, Northwestern University, Ascension Saint Francis Hospital, and Rotary International.[4]

Top Industries by Number of Employees

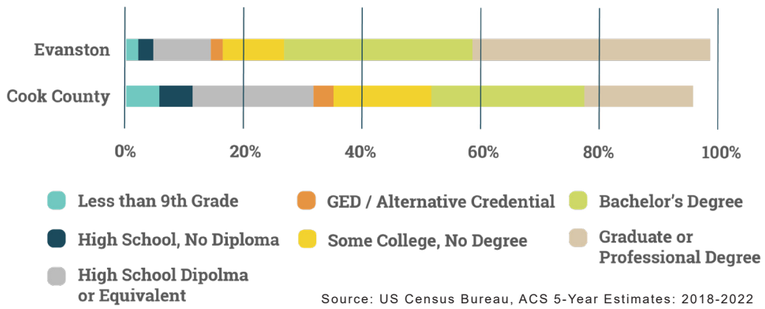


Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

Educational attainment varies widely across the city. A total of 70% of Evanstonians have a Bachelor's degree or higher; however, in West Evanston that number is only 42%.[1]

1 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022,data.census.gov.
2 US Census Bureau, 2021 LEHD OnTheMap, onthemap.ces.census.gov.
3 United States, 2022, North American Industry Classification System, census.gov/naics.
4 Data Axle, data-axle.com

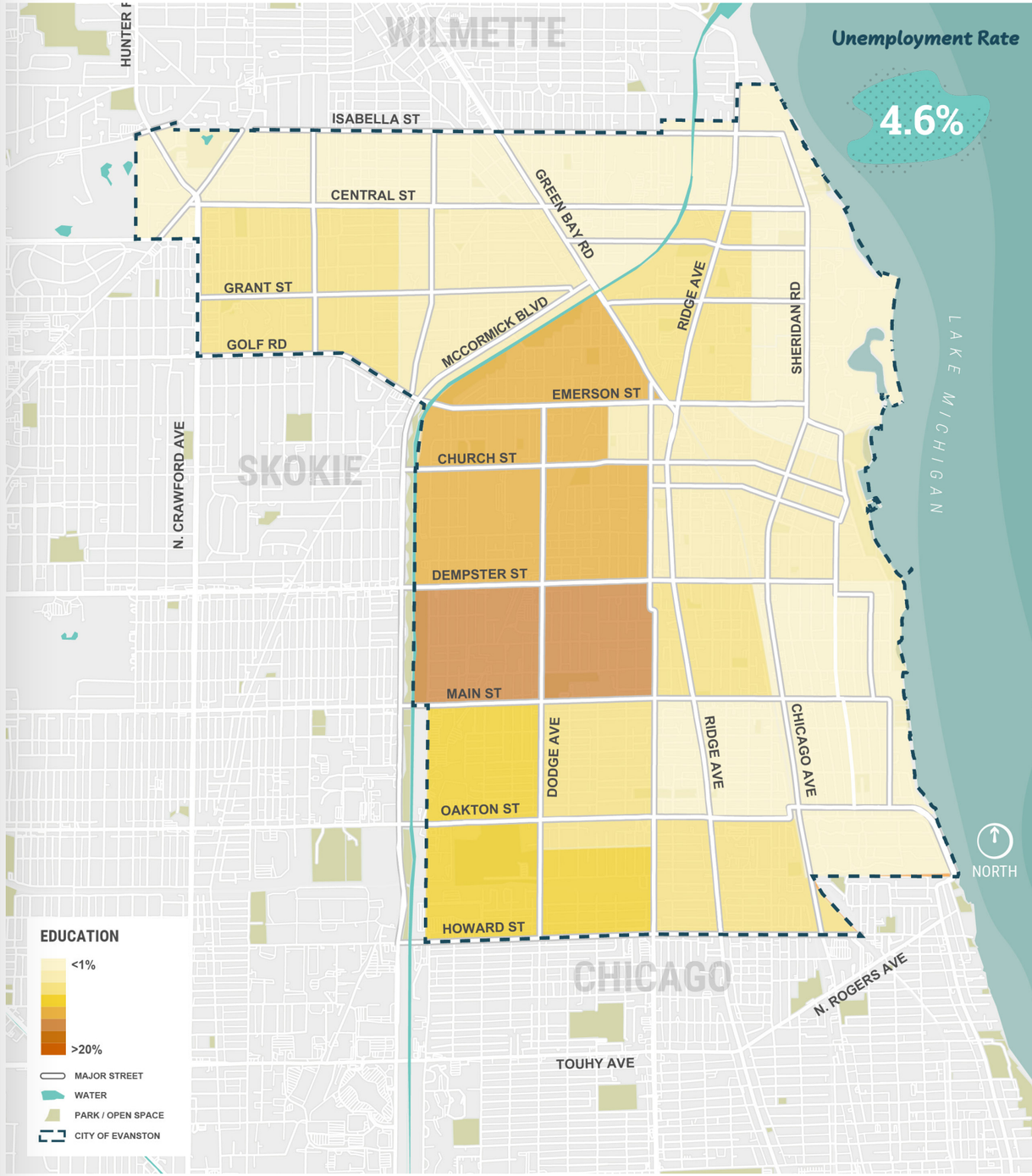
Education Attainment (25 years and older)



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

70% of Evanstonians have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

PERCENT OF POPULATION >25 YEARS WHOSE HIGHEST EDUCATION IS LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL



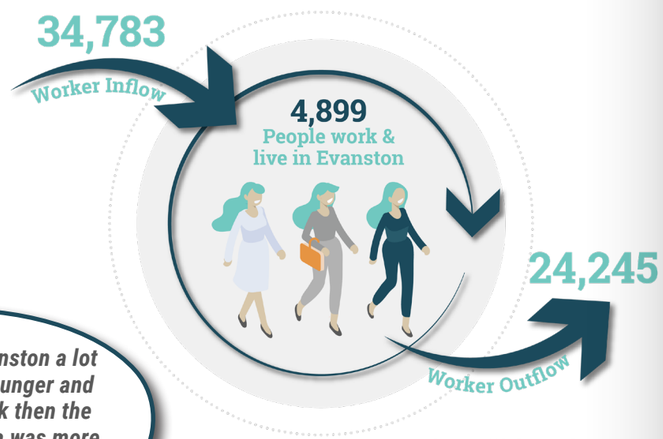
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022; ESRI, 2023 US Demographics (Unemployment Rate)

Evanston's downtown has demonstrated greater economic resilience than the nation overall in its recovery from the pandemic. Today, 12.5% of Evanston's downtown office space is vacant, down from a peak of 15.4% in December 2021. In comparison, the national office vacancy rate remains near 18%. Evanston's unemployment rate also remains lower than metro Chicago, indicating a healthy job market.

Although downtown Evanston has the bones of a thriving business hub, some residents have expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of downtown. Concerns include the lack of destination-worthy activities and the presence of crime and panhandling. Residents would like to see additional entertainment options and unique local businesses.

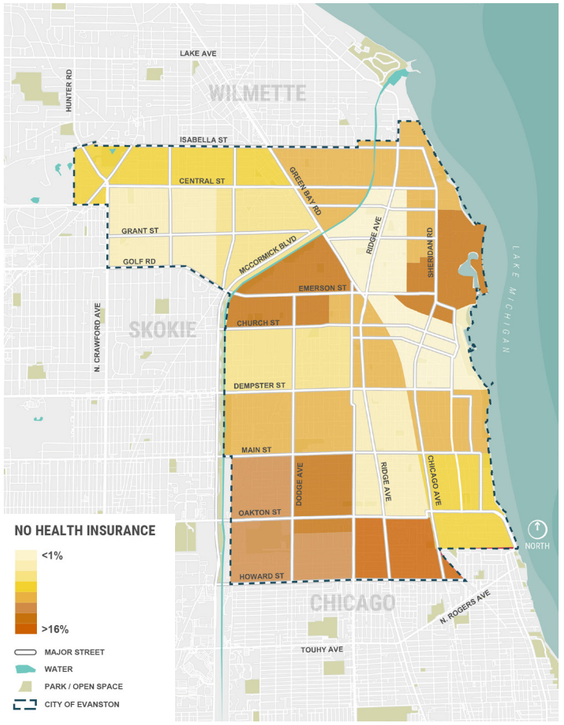
> *"I came to Evanston a lot when I was younger and I felt that back then the downtown area was more vibrant and had more shops to explore with friends."*

Worker Inflow & Outflow



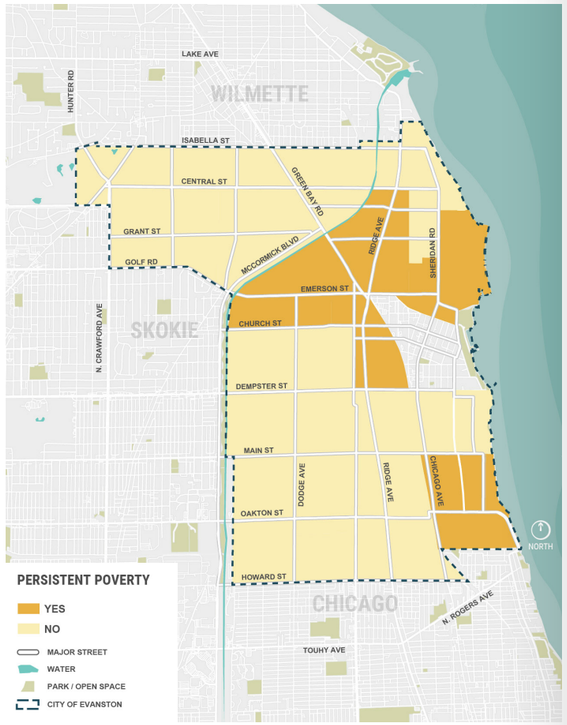
Source: US Census Bureau, LEHD OnTheMap

PERCENT OF POPULATION WITH NO INSURANCE



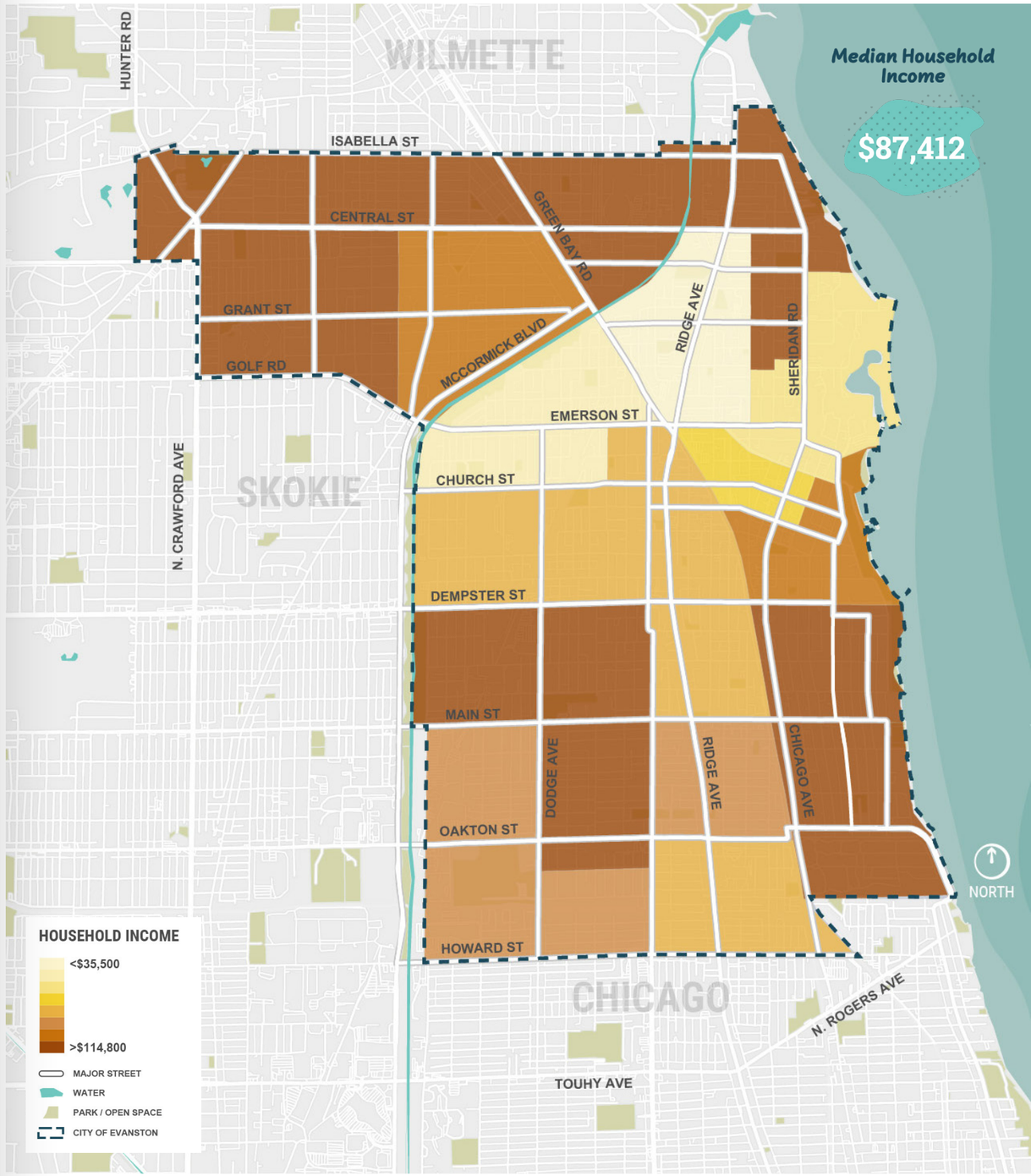
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022

AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY



Source: US DOT, Areas of Persistent Poverty; US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2014-2018

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN PAST 12 MONTHS



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates: 2018-2022; ESRI, 2023 US Demographics (Household Income)

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

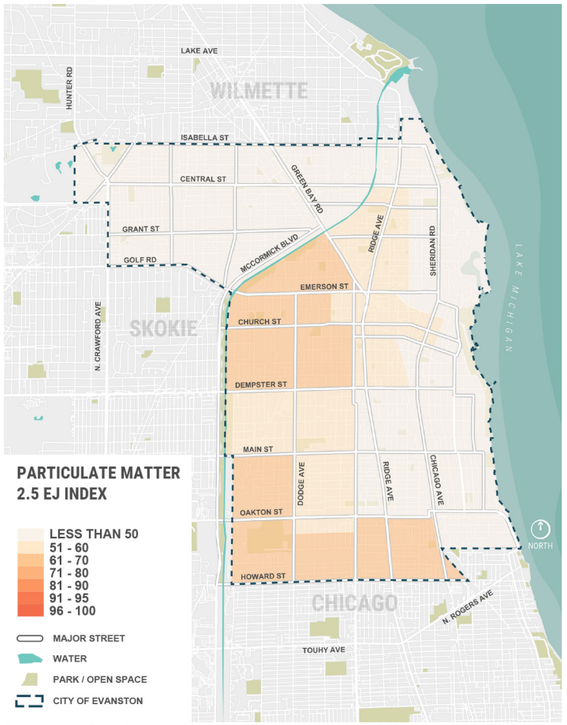
"I'd love to see more native plants in parks."

The majority of land area in Evanston is densely developed, however the city does offer a variety of natural resources. The City's green infrastructure initiatives serve as both functional and educational tools for promoting environmental stewardship. These include stormwater management practices that reduce runoff from water treatment plants and the implementation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Environmental data from sources such as the IDOT Equity Analysis indicate areas where Evanston may face challenges such as significant air and noise pollution, and the urban heat island effect, which are more pronounced in densely built-up areas. Due to the presence of industrial uses, West Evanston residents are disproportionately exposed to higher rates of toxic release and ozone than other areas of the city.

The presence of sensitive wildlife and potential ecological hazards are important considerations during city planning and development. The city recognizes environmentally sensitive areas, particularly along the North Shore Channel and the lake shore, that are potentially vulnerable to flooding events. FEMA also identifies these locations as Flood Hazard Areas that are vulnerable to a 1% annual chance of flood hazards. These areas are crucial to maintain local biodiversity and ecological balance.

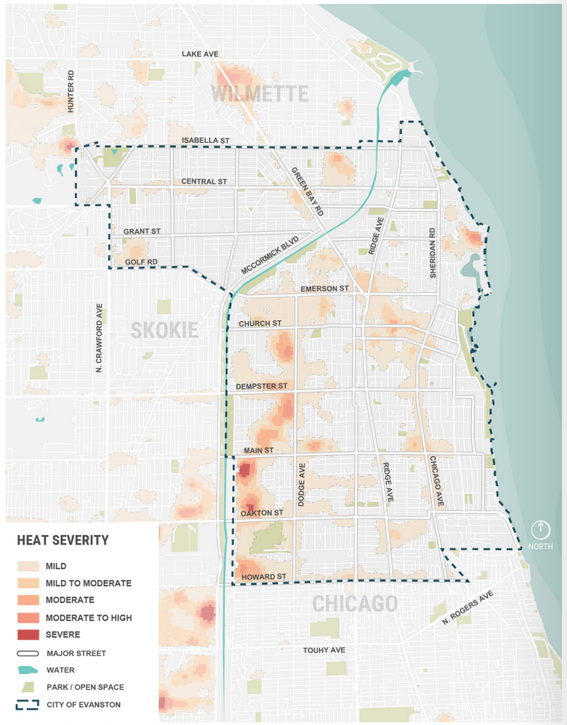
The city has a variety of natural amenities such as parks, green spaces, and the lake shore that are accessible within a short walking distance for most residents. This accessibility is supported by well-maintained trail systems that offer both recreational and transportation benefits, effectively connecting neighborhoods with natural and urban spaces. Existing planning regulations and development guidelines emphasize the preservation of green spaces and the incorporation of landscape elements into new developments, which helps maintain ecological corridors throughout the city.

PARTICULATE MATTER 2.5



Source: US EPA, Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (2023)

HEAT SEVERITY



Source: Trust for Public Land, Urban Heat Island Severity for US Cities (2021)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Nearly all of Evanston's residents are located within a 10-minute walk of a park. However, community engagement results indicate that parks only somewhat meet the programming needs of users.

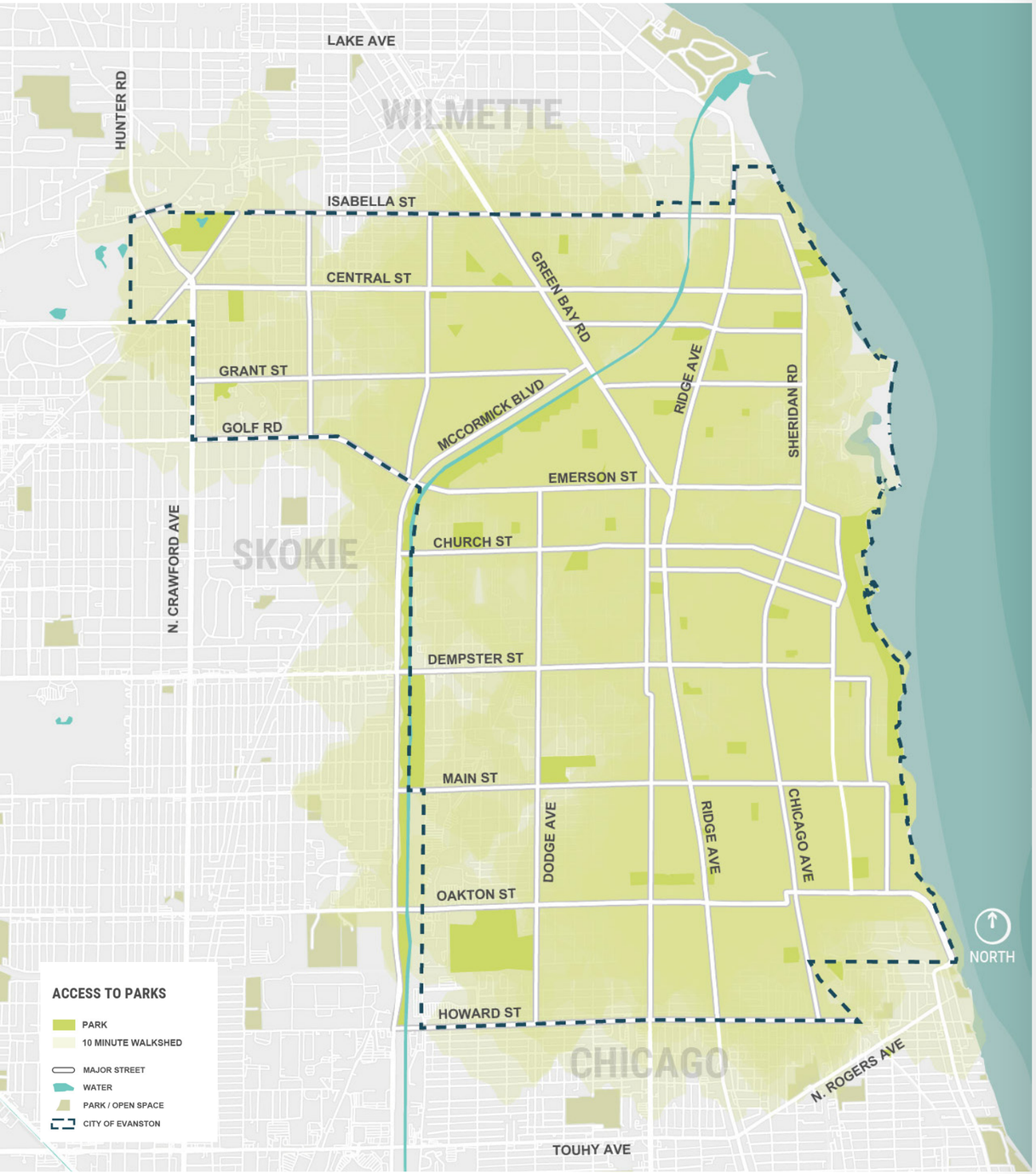
Other environmental health indicators suggest geographic inequities. West and Southwest Evanston demonstrate higher rates of particular matter and toxic release than other portions of the community, in part due to nearby industry. Although Evanston residents have an average life expectancy of 82 years, more than three years longer than the US average, this number varies greatly across neighborhoods. The life expectancy in Northeast Evanston is 88.8 years, a full 13 years longer than the 75.5-year life expectancy in West Evanston. While some of this difference can be attributed to income levels and rates of health insurance rates, factors linked to the built environment such as particulate matter levels and tree canopy coverage likely play a contributing role.[1]

1 City of Evanston, 2022 EPLAN: Evanston Process for the Local Assessment of Needs.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Source: FEMA, Flood Hazard Areas (2022)

AREAS WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK OF A PARK



Source: City of Evanston

ECOSYSTEMS

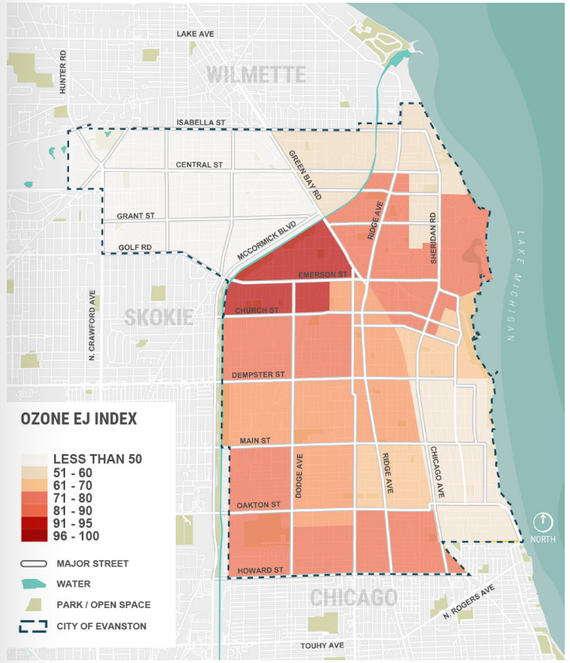
The natural ecosystem around Evanston is characterized by a mosaic of prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. Forest preserves cover nearly 70,000 acres, or 11 percent of Cook County. Many of these forest preserves follow river valleys or creeks – as seen along Evanston's North Shore Channel, which is a two-mile corridor from Lake Michigan to the city's west side. These lands have become an important migratory corridor for migratory birds and other wildlife that required a wild habitat to survive, such as the red-headed woodpeckers and blue-spotted salamanders. The integration of natural environments with urban development is a key focus for Evanston, and the city supports several initiatives to preserve these natural communities through the City's Ecology Center and other community organizations.

Evanston's urban forest supports a sizable tree population given its density of development, which is greatly influential in the community's environmental well-being. Overall, 38% of Evanston is covered by tree canopy.[1] This includes street trees, forested natural areas, and trees in residential areas. The urban forest helps improve water and air quality, reduces the potential for flooding and the urban heat island effect, and reduces energy usage by shading buildings. These trees are prone to adverse impacts from the urban environment, including invasive pests, disease, and potential hazards posed by the effects of climate change.

Notably, tree canopy is distributed unequally across the community. Although areas of downtown and North Evanston exhibit tree coverage as high as 44%, areas of West and Southwest Evanston dip to below 20% in some cases. Higher temperatures due to climate change could put these portions of the community and their residents at higher risk of ill effects including heat-related illness and increased cooling costs. The City of Evanston has taken significant steps to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and has also released several plans and initiatives to protect the natural environment, as outlined in the Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

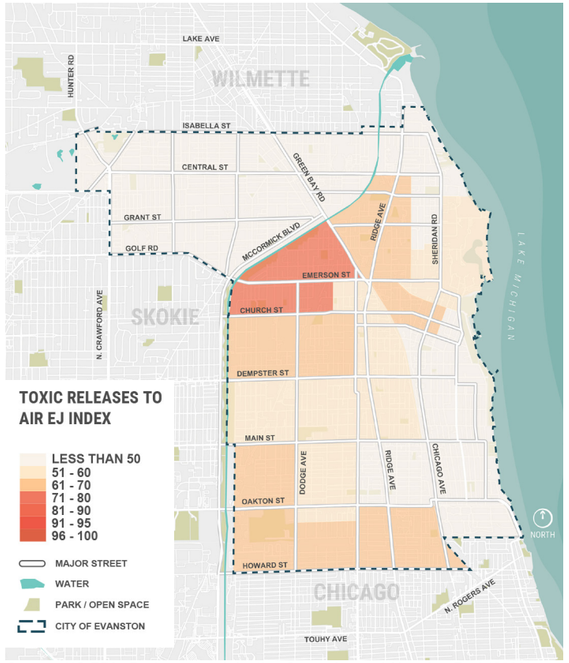
1 City of Evanston, 2022 EPLAN: Evanston Process for the Local Assessment of Needs.

OZONE



Source: US EPA, Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (2023)

TOXIC RELEASE TO AIR



Source: US EPA, Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (2023)

APPENDIX

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

PLAN NAME	SUMMARY	RELEVANCE TO EE45
2022 EPLAN	The 2022 EPLAN examines health and racial equity using a variety of metrics, such as life expectancy, healthcare access, and proximity to parks and grocery stores. The plan reveals geographic differences in health indicators across the community and proposes strategies to address these inequities.	While some advancements in health are tied to services, many are linked to the condition of the built environment considered in EE45, such as the locations of parks, trails, grocery stores, medical facilities, and community spaces. EE45 also makes programmatic recommendations to increase residents' access to a healthy lifestyle.
Central Street Master Plan (2007)	This master plan provides streetscape and development strategies for Central Street from Gross Point Road to Ridge Avenue. The plan aims to sustain and enhance Central Street as an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian- and neighborhood-oriented street with distinct character. Key strategies include diversifying commercial and housing options, improving appearance and safety, and enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation.	EE45 coordinates private land use and public investment to achieve the streetscape and development pattern envisioned in the Central Street Master Plan. Additionally, EE45 outlines strategies to enhance the multimodal transportation network to support walking and biking to and along Central Street.
Chicago Avenue Corridor Study (2000)	This study provides recommendations to revitalize Chicago Avenue in Southeast Evanston. The report recommends improvements to the pedestrian environment, redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, and advancement of a cohesive, visually appealing corridor.	EE45 establishes policies for urban design, land use, and public infrastructure, all of which are key to achieving an attractive Chicago Avenue corridor. EE45 recommends policy realignment and incentives to promote redevelopment, while also prioritizing city-wide sidewalk enhancements.
City of Evanston Comprehensive Plan (2000)	The 2000 Comprehensive Plan is Evanston's existing planning document that guides land use and transportation decision-making within the city. EE45 is an update to this plan. The plan embraces growth and aims to guide it in a manner that enhances the community's character and quality of life. Key goals include offering a range of housing choices, maintaining viable commercial areas, creating mixed-use neighborhoods, preserving and establishing green space, and offering high-quality transportation options while prioritizing pedestrians, cyclists, and transit.	EE45 builds upon the 2000 Comprehensive Plan by clarifying and advancing policies that remain relevant while augmenting them with new recommendations and priorities. While EE45 considers current trends and opportunities, the plan builds on legacy planning guidance to hone Evanston's high quality of life.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

PLAN NAME	SUMMARY	RELEVANCE TO EE45
Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) (2018)	This plan focuses on two main areas: climate mitigation and climate resilience. Key mitigation goals by 2050 include achieving city-wide carbon neutrality; transitioning half of trips to transit, walking, or bicycling; achieving zero waste; and fostering a healthy and growing tree canopy. The plan also calls for resilient green infrastructure, cooling facilities, and other preparations to enable human and natural populations to adapt to a changing climate.	EE45 addresses the built environment, which is a focus of key CARP goals. Specifically, EE45 guides the city's pattern of development and influences available transportation modes, which both of which are significant contributors to emissions. EE45 also guides natural preservation, green infrastructure, and critical community facilities to ensure climate preparation.
Downtown Evanston Plan (2009)	This plan establishes guidelines for downtown planning and development. Key recommendations include protecting downtown's walkable, mixed-use, and transit-oriented character while elevating design quality, sustainability, and predictability.	EE45 contains land use policies to guide the desired form for downtown as expressed in the Downtown Evanston Plan. Additionally, EE45 establishes guidance for public improvements to reinforce and improve the existing pedestrian, cycling, and public transportation networks in line with Downtown Evanston Plan goals.
Evanston Main Street Station TOD Plan and Study (2014)	This plan provides a vision for improvements to Main Street Station and the immediate surrounding area. The plan outlines improvements to station function, streetscape design, and pedestrian and bicycle access while calling for new mixed-use development in the TOD area.	EE45 recognizes the importance of Evanston's transit stations in meeting mobility needs as well as sustainability and climate goals. EE45 coordinates transportation improvements with public and private land use to provide recommendations and implementation strategies for the Main Street Station TOD area.
Evanston Thrives (2023)	Evanston Thrives establishes a retail action plan in order to support and attract businesses. Recommendations range from sponsoring events in public spaces to installing wayfinding signage to developing branding for retail districts. The plan also recommends physical improvements to various retail areas.	EE45 plays a key role in guiding public investment and coordinating private development activities to create vibrant spaces. High-quality public spaces are a key driver of foot traffic, which supports retail as well as community connection. EE45 can also recommend prioritization and funding sources for design guidelines, business incentives, wayfinding, and other strategies to help address resident concerns about a declining retail environment.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

PLAN NAME	SUMMARY	RELEVANCE TO EE45
Lakefront Master Plan (2008)	The Lakefront Master Plan establishes a vision for the redesign of the Evanston shoreline. The plan recommends shoreline improvements, park space construction, and natural area preservation to enhance user experience and ecological function.	Lakefront redesign is a City-led effort involving various infrastructure and capital improvements. EE45 guides public investment and recommends policies and funding sources to achieve the outcomes envisioned in the Lakefront Master Plan.
One Howard Street Economic Recovery Plan (2023)	The One Howard Street plan provides an economic recovery plan for the Howard Street corridor from Western/Asbury Avenue to Sheridan Road. The plan recommends redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and placemaking efforts to improve corridor vibrancy.	EE45 aims to achieve the streetscape and development pattern envisioned in the One Howard Street plan through coordination of public investments and private development. The plan provides strategies to enhance multimodal transportation options and increase vibrancy within Evanston's corridors.
Preserve 2040 (2022)	Preserve 2040 is a preservation plan for cultural resources including buildings, sites, structures, people, stories, and objects. The plan aims to guide the Preservation Commission and its partners in their stewardship of Evanston's resources through preservation tools, adaptive reuse, education, and other means. The plan aims to be a foundational land use, economic development, and planning tool.	EE45 guides Evanston's development pattern, which influences the extent to which infill development, preservation, and maintenance of the urban fabric occur. EE45 brings together the goals of Preserve 2040 and other planning efforts to link historic preservation with community goals such as climate mitigation, affordable housing, and retail vibrancy.
West Evanston Master Plan (2007)	The West Evanston Master Plan guides redevelopment of the West Evanston TIF District, which includes primarily industrial land and a vacated railroad right-of-way. The plan, which was developed following an extensive community engagement process, provides recommendations for the future development pattern and proposes streetscape and greenway enhancements. The plan culminated in a zoning overlay district adopted in 2009.	EE45 advances the vision set forth in the West Evanston Master Plan through policies and strategies that promote its implementation. EE45 guides public infrastructure investments and promotes redevelopment that is consistent with community goals.

ENVISION EVANSTON 2045

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

City of Evanston

HDR

MORREALE
empower • activate • transform

VIEWPRO | ZONECO | MULTILINGUAL | MCADAMS

GOALS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Understand collective needs, opinions, and vision of all stakeholders of Evanston

OBJECTIVES

1. Inform the stakeholders and public-at-large of the project scope, timeline and opportunities to participate.
2. Gather data related to public attitudes, priorities and values from a representative sample of stakeholders and area residents.
3. Build a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' opinions related to assets & challenges of the Evanston area.
4. Identify populations with larger barriers to engagement & create target goals for inclusion and participation.

DESIRED OUTCOME

- Establish a future vision based on common ground between various stakeholders.

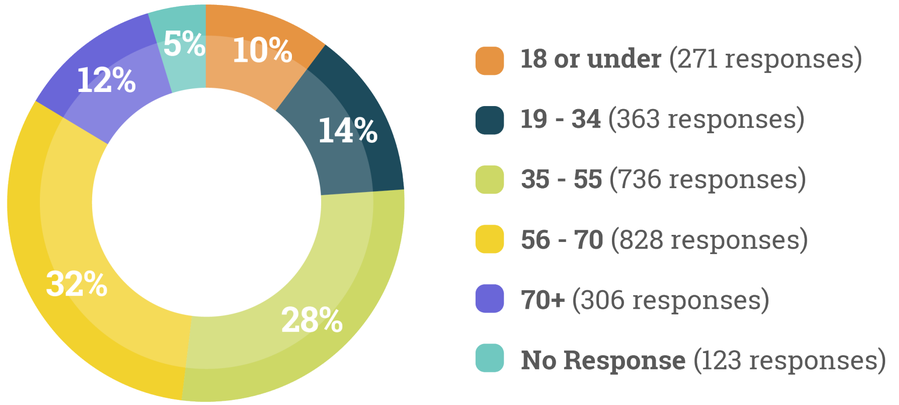
PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

EVENTS

1. Community and ward meetings
2. Organizational meetings
3. Meetings-in-a-box
4. Survey
5. Visioning Workshop
6. Office Hours

OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Age of Participants (Total)

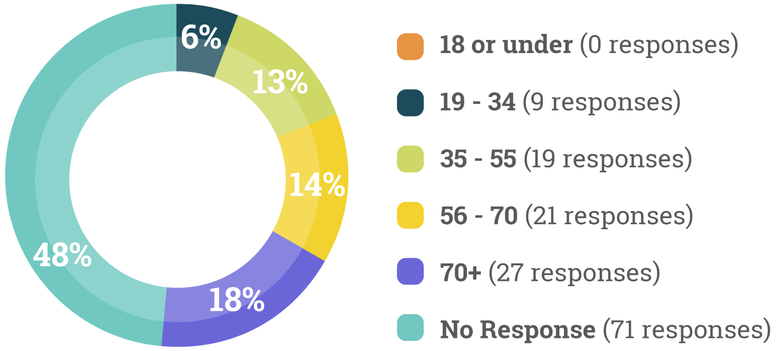


2,874
total participants

5,690
website visits

COMMUNITY AND WARD MEETINGS

Age of Participants (Community Meeting)

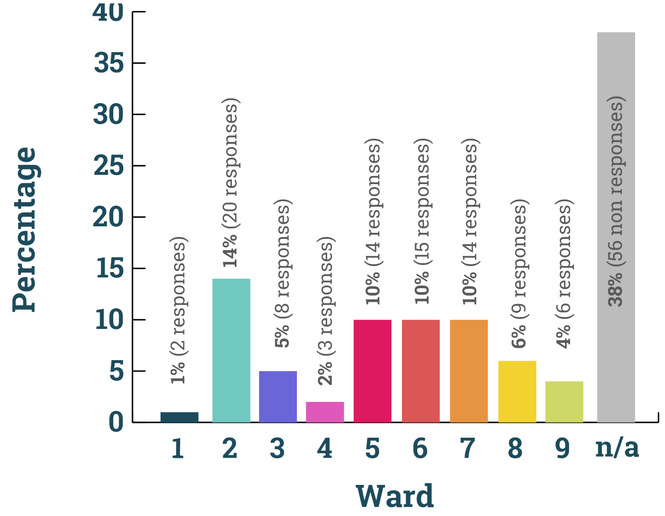


- **18 or under** (0 responses)
- **19 - 34** (9 responses)
- **35 - 55** (19 responses)
- **56 - 70** (21 responses)
- **70+** (27 responses)
- **No Response** (71 responses)

Race & Ethnicity Participation

WHITE ALONE	**39%** (58 responses)
HISPANIC LATINO	**16%** (24 responses)
AFRICAN AMERICAN	**4%** (6 responses)
OTHER RACE	**1%** (2 responses)
ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER	**0%** (0 responses)
ASIAN (INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT)	**0%** (0 responses)
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE	**0%** (0 responses)
NO RESPONSE	**39%** (57 responses)

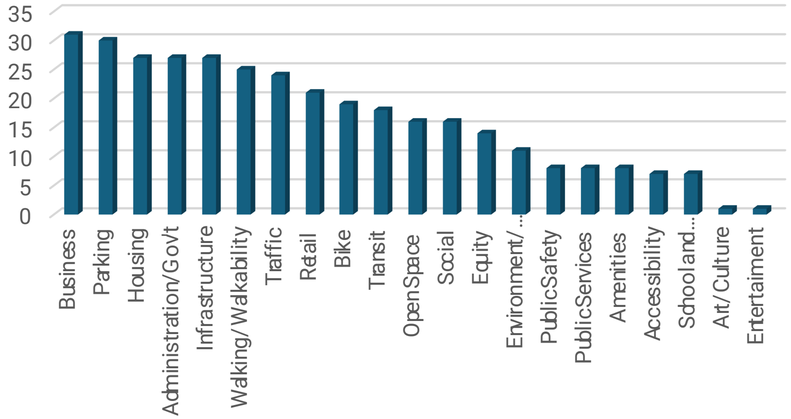
Community Meeting Participants by Ward



What we heard

What challenges do you face on a daily basis living in Evanston?

Challenges Identified



Thinking about the challenges you discussed, share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

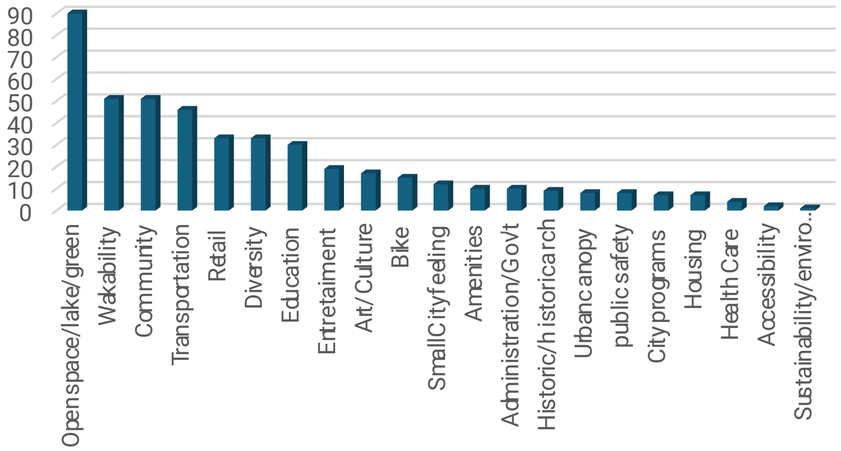
- THE EMPTY STORE FRONTS AND THE UNHOUSED PEOPLE ARE VERY UPSETTING AND DEPRESSING
- CTA PURPLE LINE, NO EXPRESS TRAINS DURING THE WEEKEND TO LOOP HOWARD STATION - OFTEN FEELS DANGEROUS. NO EXPRESS TRAINS IN MIDDLE OF DAY. VERY DANGEROUS TRAVELING ON THE REDLINE, PURPLE LINE OFTEN LATE
- WALKING ON SIDEWALKS OFTEN DANGEROUS, ELECTRIC SCOOTERS, BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS. I HAVE NEARLY BEEN KNOCKED DOWN ON A COUPLE OCCASIONS
- DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SOUTH EVANSTON ON WEEKENDS
- BIKERS GETTING INTO CAR ACCIDENTS
- BIG BOX STORES HAVE MORE BENEFITS (TAX BREAKS ETC.) THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO SMALL BUSINESSES.
- PEOPLE MOVE TO OTHER CITIES IN ORDER TO BUY HOUSES THEY CAN AFFORD. LANDLORDS CAN'T PROVIDE AFFORDABLE RENT PRICES BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO PAY HIGH TAXES
- REGULARLY HAVING TO COMPETE WITH CARS WHEN YOU WANT TO BIKE
- RAT INFESTATION ON SHERMAN - GARDEN BOXES FULL OF RATS
- TRIPPING ON UNEVEN SIDEWALKS PROPELLING ME INTO A TREE
- AFTER KNEE SURGERY I HAD TO WALK 1/2 MILE TO DAVIS TO GET TO/FROM THE TRAIN, STOPPED ME FROM GOING TO PLACES
- MAKE SURE OUR SCHOOLS ARE TOP NOTCH-THIS WILL KEEP THE CITY THRIVING AND A DESIRABLE PLACE FOR FAMILIES - WITHOUT THIS WE WILL SUFFER
- HARD TO COMPETE AGAINST BIG BOX, CANNOT LOWER PRICES AND STILL PAY STAFF A LIVABLE WAGE ALONG WITH COSTS TO RUN BUSINESS.. COMMUNITY GROUPS STILL CHOOSE TO SHOP WITH BIG BOX..
- EMERSON AND GREEN BAY ARE DANGEROUS FOR BIKES AND PEOPLE THAT WANT TO CROSS THE STREETS
- SOME TREES ARE NOT PROPERLY MAINTAINED AND COVER THE STREET LIGHTING
- LIVING IN EVANSTON IN EARLY 20S THERE ARE NO PEOPLE THE SAME AGE TO INTERACT WITH. MOST PEOPLE IN THAT AGE GROUP FIND EVANSTON TOO EXPENSIVE
- HAD TO MOVE MY BUSINESS BECAUSE OF DRASTIC RENT INCREASE. PERSONALLY KNOW A LOT OF BUSINESS OWNERS THAT HAVE GIVEN UP ON EVANSTON
- SIDEWALK BECOME UNSAFE WHEN BIKES AND SCOOTERS SPEED AROUND PEOPLE
- ACCOMMODATE AS SUCH AS POSSIBLE NON-MOTORIZED VEHICLES
- DOWNTOWN IS NOT STRUCTURED FOR PEDESTRIANS
- AFFECTS OUR LIVES BECAUSE OF MY SON'S HEALTH AND RESPIRATORY ISSUES
- DECISIONS ARE MADE AND YOUR VOICE DOES NOT MATTER
- PURCHASING A HOME BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE
- TOO MANY PARKED CARS ON STREET NEIGHBORHOODS
- DIFFICULTY TO ACCESS RETAIL DUE TO COST OF PARKING
- PEOPLE WAIT IN OPEN BUS STATIONS DURING EXTREME WEATHER
- I'VE BEEN WALKING TO THE TRAIN AND ALMOST BEEN ATTACKED. PERSONAL SAFETY HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE.
- I'VE BEEN APPROACHED AT MY CAR WINDOW. WHEN I HAVE KIDS IN MY CAR AND HAVE JUST PARKED.
- I'M NOT SURE IF THEY ARE FROM THE COMMUNITY OR MAKING USE OF THE RESOURCES THAT ARE HERE FOR THEM.
- ALONG RIDGE ST THERE IS NO SIGN TO TELL BIKERS THE END OF THE BIKING LANE
- DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SOUTH EVANSTON ON WEEKENDS
- THE IS NO CENTRAL GROCERY STORE IN 5TH WARD
- PEOPLE AVOID THE CITY BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH THE PARKING SYSTEM
- PEOPLE WANT TO SHOP DOWNTOWN BUT THERE ARE NO STORES THAT ATTRACT THEM
- PEOPLE HAVE TO PARKS BLOCKS AWAY AND WALK
- THERE ARE NO NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS AND KIDS HAVE TO GO FAR TO GO TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY

COMMUNITY AND WARD MEETINGS (CONT.)

What we heard

What do you love about living in Evanston?

Strengths Identified



Thinking about the qualities you identified as loving about Evanston, tell us about a time this had a major impact on you.

- *I HAVE HAD SO MANY WONDERFUL EXPERIENCES AT THE THEATER, ART EXHIBITS AND RESTAURANTS. I MOVED HERE IN 1974 AND I HAVE SEEN THE GROWTH AND CHANGE. IT IS STILL A GREAT PLACE TO BE INSPITE OF THE CHANGES*
- *WE GOT MARRIED AT ELIOT PARK, WONDERFUL ATMOSPHERE AND SPACE*
- *PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS HOW I COMMUTE*
- *FAMILIES ENJOY THE PARKS*
- *DOWNTOWN PROVIDE FUN/LOCAL RESTAURANTS*
- *TAKING MY KIDS TO THE BEACH AND PARK THE LAKE HAS GREAT SPACES FOR MEDITATION*
- *CREATIVE COMMUNITY. STRONG ART COMMUNITY*
- *LOTS OF OPTIONS*
- *ABLE TO WALK FROM EAST TO WEST EVANSTON MOSTLY BY FOOT*
- *DURING 2020 THERE WAS STILL THE POSSIBILITY TO WALK AROUND THE CITY*
- *BIKE LANES PROVIDE A HEALTHY LIVESTYLE*
- *TAKING MY DOG TO THE DOG BEACH*
- *I HAVE A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES AND WE HAVE A REALLY HARD TIME SOMETIMES WITH ALL THE NOISE IN OUR COMMUNITY. THE LAKEFRONT IS SPECIAL BECAUSE MY CHILD CAN HEAR AND SEE THE WAVES, AND THAT'S VERY SOOTHING FOR BOTH OF US.*
- *STREETS RELIEVE WHEN I WALK ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD*
- *RESIDENTS HEAR POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM OUTSIDE OF EVANSTON*
- *BUSINESS OWNERS REALLY CARE ABOUT THEIR CUSTOMERS*
- *GETTING TO PLAY SOCCER WITH PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE WORLD.*
- *PEOPLE LOVE TO SPEND THE DAY WALKING AROUND EVANSTON*
- *PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO LIVE IN THE CITY WITHOUT A CAR*
- *GAVE PEOPLE A SAFE OPEN SPACE DURING COVID*
- *FAMILY FRIENDLY CITY*
- *FAMILIES ENJOY MORE TIME OUTSIDE*
- *EVERYONE IS FRIENDLY*
- *ATTRACTS MORE PARENTS TO RAISE THEIR FAMILIES IN EVANSTON*
- *PEOPLE FIND NEW FRIENDSHIPS AT THEIR LOCAL PARKS*
- *HELP FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*
- *FAMILIES ENJOY THEIR FREE TIME BY THE LAKE*
- *PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNGER RESIDENTS*
- *MY KIDS WERE WELL EDUCATED*
- *PEOPLE WORK DOWNTOWN AND TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT*
- *WALKING BY THE LAKE ON A SUMMER DAY*
- *WALKING EVERYDAY TO PLACES LIKE THE GROCERY STORE, LAKE, LIBRARY, PARK*
- *SWIMMING, PICNIC*
- *MUSICAL THEATER AND MUSIC EVENTS*
- *PEOPLE HAVE TO PARKS BLOCKS AWAY AND WALK*
- *EVERYTHING IS NEARBY AND WE CAN GO BIKING AROUND TOWN*

On the map - Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change/improve

Places Identified

- Sheridan rd in front of Calvary cemetery needs improvement
- East Dodge needs improvement
- Downtown is sorely lacking park space close to the businesses. Fountain Square is not big enough.
- Channel Trail ends at Green Bay Rd
- More signalization on Ridge
- Maintain waterfront
- Asbury is a N-S bypass of light at Dempster +Ridge
- Ameliorate ambulance traffic at St Francis
- Mid-lane pedestrian sign on Oakton + Hartrey
- Preserve lakefront
- Add more services (food trucks, activities) along the lakefront
- Allow bars to open later
- More mix-used development like main st
- Preserve family friendly neighborhoods
- Keep community feeling
- Keep central street the same
- Keep single family neighborhoods
- Add a public path to Lincoln beach
- Intersection at Central Street, Crawford, and Gross Point is very dangerous
- Make crossing of Green Bay intersection safer
- More bike routes
- Showcase Evanston's history
- Concentration of luxury apartments should include more affordable options

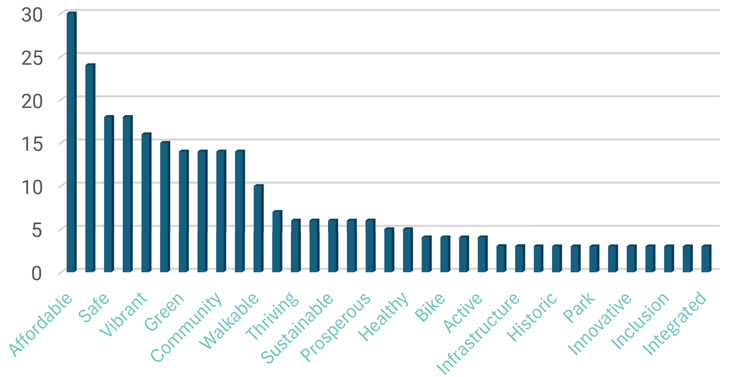
Everyone think about your favorite place in Evanston. This can be a park, a store, a street, specific neighborhood, anything you like.

Places Identified

- Penny Park
- Northwestern lake trail
- Main Dempster Mile
- James Park
- Walking Central Street (though worried about how Ryan Field changes might affect this)
- Noyes Street is a great resource
- Payne Park
- Fountain Square
- Lee Street park
- AMC/Skyzone
- Independent park
- Lighthouse beach park
- EvanstonSPACE
- Main Dempster Mile
- Stumble &Relish
- Central Street
- Lighthouse
- Perkins woods
- Shakespeare garden
- Local Oakton historic district
- Jumping Zone
- Kid's Empire
- Robert Crown center
- Civic center bird habitat
- Animal shelter
- Dance center & Evanston dance ensemble
- West Village Arts districts
- NiceLena&Friends
- Sketchbook brewery

Imagine it's 2045 and the plan has accomplished all you hoped for, choose three words that describe the Evanston you've found at the end of this plan.

Themes Identified



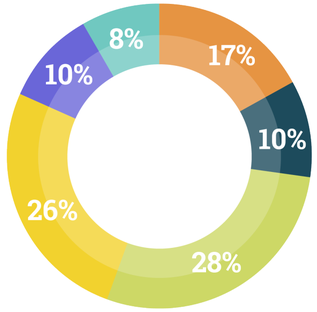
MEETINGS-IN-A-BOX

Participation (Meeting -in -a -box)

42
Meetings-in-a-box held

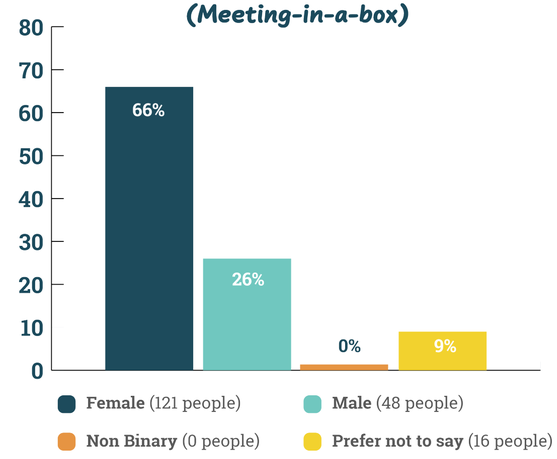
184
Meeting-in-a-box participants

Age of Participants (Meeting-in-a-box)



- **18 or under** (32 responses)
- **19 - 34** (19 responses)
- **35 - 55** (52 responses)
- **56 - 70** (48 responses)
- **70+** (19 responses)
- **No Response** (14 responses)

Total Gender (Meeting-in-a-box)



What we heard

What challenges do you face on a daily basis living in Evanston?

- Overall theft, worried about getting my bike stolen. Multiple bikes been stolen in peoples backyards
- Public transportation is not well kept, especially for District 65
- Access to groceries/shopping for food and stores with interesting products are far away.
- The big intersections can deter walking and can be dangerous as well.
- Separate areas of Evanston are easy to get around, but from one neighborhood to the other, it can be hard.
- We need more sidewalks instead of empty streets.
- Inaccessibility in terms of walking distance to school is frustrating.
- Difficulty with bike lanes, more bike access, cars parking in the bike lane

What do you love about living in Evanston?

- Right next to the city, easy to take advantage of what Chicago has to offer without it being as busy
- Don't have to drive very far, easy to work
- Things are cheaper in comparison to some places
- Right next the lake, beach access is amazing
- Everything is close by, very walkable
- Lots of scenery, public art makes a big deal, murals , lots of color etc.
- Plant life is great, lots of greenery, relatively clean city
- We like the variety of businesses.
- The parks are nice to play at and are all over Evanston, which creates a safe atmosphere.
- Also, the trees and plants incorporated throughout the city makes for a nice vibe.

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement.

- Near the river/canal are very trashy, people do not pick up after themselves
- Some neighborhoods are "sketchy". The abrupt change between streets, some streets are very nice and then you move one street over and things are
- No sidewalks, forced to walk over people's property, not environmentally friendly. Specifically golf and church there are no sidewalks.
- Northwestern can be too dominant occasionally
- Feel like Evanston is almost being converted into something like Chicago. Feels like authority is trying to make things busier
- Too much construction around north Evanston, as well as downtown Evanston.
- There should be more traffic control to avoid accidents.
- Also, many products sold by businesses in Evanston are too expensive.

What is your favorite place in Evanston?

- Really like the cafes
- The Evanston public library, likes access to a plethora of books
- SkyZone
- The beach
- Gigios, Benisons
- Thrift stores, target
- We like restaurants, like Ovo Frito and Supreme Burrito.
- We also like parks because they are good meeting places, like Central Park.
- Snacks must stay too!

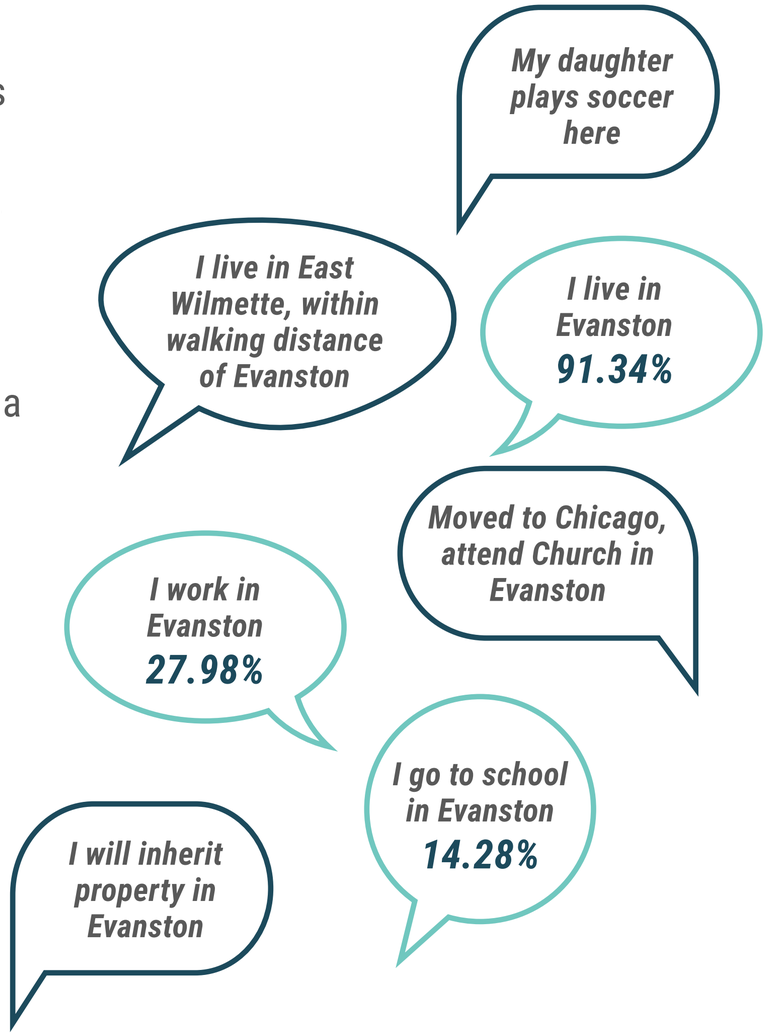
Imagine it's 2045 and the plan has accomplished all you hoped for, choose three words that describe the Evanston you've found at the end of this plan.

- organized, recyclable, structured
- Clean, efficient, welcoming,
- Safe, efficient, sustainable
- Clean, Accessible, organized
- AI incorporated, electronic-based, peaceful, tidy, efficient, clean, positive atmosphere, environmentally-friendly, busy, accessible, cheaper

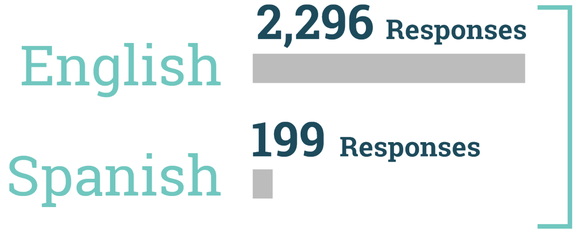
SURVEY

Roughly 2,500 people participated in the survey with the majority of individuals being between 35 - 74 years old. 67% of participants identified as White, with the second largest group, African American, participating at 15%.

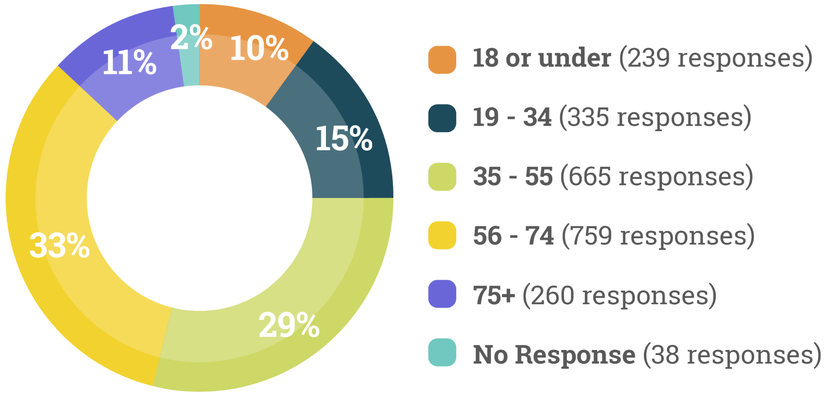
57% of participants heard about the survey from the City's website, social media or a newsletter. While 24% of people heard about the survey through a community group.



Survey Responses



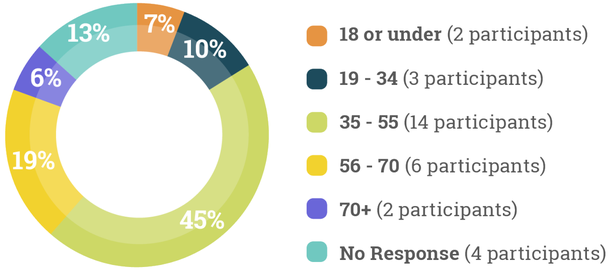
Age of Participants (Survey)



VISIONING WORKSHOP

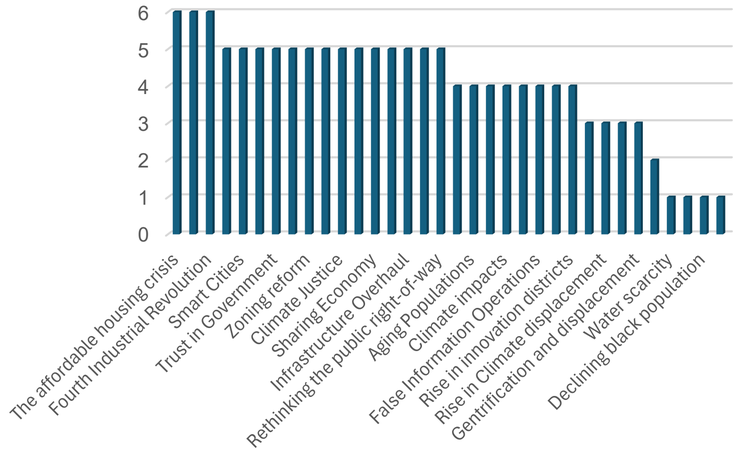
31
people attended

Age of Participants



- **18 or under** (2 participants)
- **19 - 34** (3 participants)
- **35 - 55** (14 participants)
- **56 - 70** (6 participants)
- **70+** (2 participants)
- **No Response** (4 participants)

Future Trends



Visioning Workshop participants included a mix of the following:

- Former elected officials
- High school students
- Developers
- Community leaders
- Professors
- Downtown advocates
- Property owners
- Residents

Themes identified

- Climate change
- Housing availability
- Education
- Include the arts history and culture
- Urban density
- Car ownership
- Efficiency – walkability and sustainability
- Variety of housing – room for everybody
- Prepare for the changes to come
- Maintain diversity – income, race, etc.
- Educate the youth
- Arts and culture spaces, ways to shape the built environment to welcome places where people can share
- Transparent policy that can be followed
- Shared spaces
- Nature based solutions, green spaces, parks more green
- Responsible government that can take this into account making decisions

OFFICE HOURS

6
people
participated

Below are some of the topics discussed during office hours:

- Parks
- Public transportation
- Bike infrastructure
- Downtown
- Wellness
- Increase transparency
- Affordability
- Traffic and parking
- Arts and culture
- Attracting businesses

"Public transportation in Evanston is flawed in every way imaginable."

"Evanston's brand should be one where every person can find opportunity based on their own individual merit and no one is denied based on unalterable characteristics."

"Entering a train station or crossing under a bridge in Evanston is very unpleasant."

The Church Street Metra bridge is rusted and is painted with an aesthetically unpleasant mural that doesn't represent the city of Evanston."

"Grade level parking lots should be replaced because of the terrible land use that they are."

"When it comes to bike infrastructure, Evanston is doing very well."

"Much lip service is given in Evanston to "diversity"."

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIRES AND CONCERNS

1. Nostalgia for its vibrant past and a desire for practical solutions to current issues.

2. **Desire for:** improved infrastructure, safer streets, more affordable housing and a variety of housing, vibrant pedestrian friendly public places, integration of arts and culture, better integration of Northwestern University, economic growth, prioritizing historical preservation, community support, sustainable development, and an inclusive city.

3. **Concerns about:** developments that clash with Evanston's cultural and historical character, decline of downtown, impact of parking availability on local businesses, lack of protected bike lanes, need for better public transportation, public safety, and quality of schools declining.

MAJOR THEMES THAT EMERGED IN PHASE 1

- Affordable Housing
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Preservation of Community Character
- Placemaking - Arts, Culture, and Vibrant Public Spaces
- Public Safety
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Economic Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Community Engagement and Representation

Affordable Housing

What we've heard

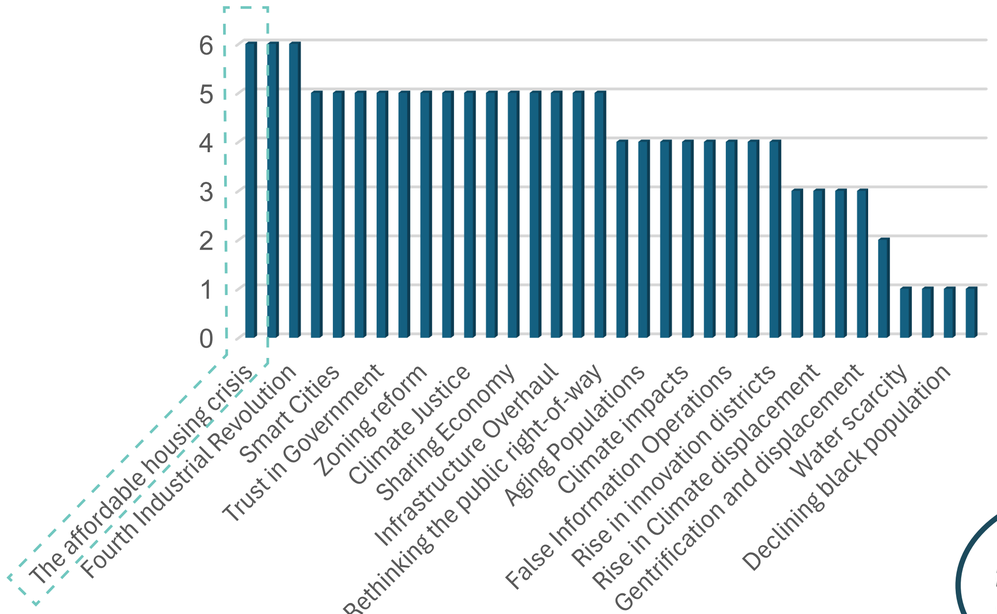
Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which areas need to change / improve.

- Concentration of luxury apartments should include more affordable options

Thinking about the challenges you face, share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

Purchasing a home becomes impossible	*People move to other cities in order to buy houses they can afford. Landlords can't provide affordable rent prices because they have to pay high taxes*

What is the primary issue that Evanston will face in the future?



"I am deeply concerned about the lack of housing affordable for young families wanting to put down roots and buy a home here."

"I don't currently live in Evanston, but I am strongly attracted to the community and would live in Evanston if I could afford to live there."

"Housing for large families (5+) in Evanston is scarce, and if homes are available they are only for sale and cost a lot for the average family to purchase."

"Evanston has become a city for the upper middle class and the rich. Evanston needs more affordable housing."

Transportation Infrastructure

What we've heard

What challenges do you face on a daily basis living in Evanston?

- Difficulty with bike lanes, more bike access, cars parking in the bike lane
- Public transportation is not well kept, especially for District 65
- Access to groceries/shopping for food and stores with interesting products are far away.
- The big intersections can deter walking and can be dangerous as well.
- Separate areas of Evanston are easy to get around, but from one neighborhood to the other, it can be hard.
- Inaccessibility in terms of walking distance to school is frustrating.

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement.

- No sidewalks, forced to walk over people's property, not environmentally friendly. Specifically golf and church there are no sidewalks.
- There should be more traffic control to avoid accidents.

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change / improve

- Intersection at Central Street, Crawford, and Gross Point is very dangerous
- Make crossing of Green Bay intersection safer
- More bike routes
- More signalization on Ridge

Thinking about the challenges you face, share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

Tripping on uneven sidewalks propelling me into a tree

After knee surgery I had to walk 1/2 mile to Davis to get to/from the train, stopped me from going to places

Downtown is not structured for pedestrians

Too many parked cars on street neighborhoods

CTA purple line, no express trains during the weekend to loop. Howard station - often feels dangerous. No express trains in middle of day. Very dangerous traveling on the red line, purple line often late

Walking on sidewalks often dangerous, electric scooters, bicycles/skateboards. I have nearly been knocked down on a couple occasions

Sidewalk become unsafe when bikes and scooters speed around people

Bikers getting into car accidents

People wait in open bus stations during extreme weather

Difficulty to access retail due to cost of parking

Regularly having to compete with cars when you want to bike

Along Ridge st there is no sign to tell bikers the end of the biking lane

Difficulty getting to south Evanston on weekends

People avoid the city because they don't want to deal with the parking system

Emerson and Green Bay are dangerous for bikes and people that want to cross the streets

People have to parks blocks away and walk

Accommodate as such as possible non-motorized vehicles

Preservation of Community Character

What we've heard

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement.

- Near the river/canal are very trashy, people do not pick up after themselves
- Some neighborhoods are "sketchy". The abrupt change between streets, some streets are very nice and then you move one street over and things are
- Northwestern can be too dominant occasionally
- Feel like Evanston is almost being converted into something like Chicago. Feels like authority is trying to make things busier

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change / improve

- Preserve lakefront
- Preserve family friendly neighborhoods
- Keep community feeling
- Keep central street the same
- Keep single family neighborhoods
- Showcase Evanston's history
- Concentration of luxury apartments should include more affordable options

Thinking about the challenges you face, share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

The empty store fronts and the unhoused people are very upsetting and depressing

"Please stop making houses in the "modern" blocky style. They don't look good, and look soulless compared to houses built earlier."

"More residential density outside of downtown, transit-oriented development, lower required parking ratios, stop extending TIF districts."

"Urban design should be the top priority for the city. It is the apex on the urban policy map that everything should fall under."

"Preserve the natural beauty of the lakefront."

Placemaking -Arts, Culture, and Vibrant Public Spaces

What we've heard

What challenges do you face on a daily basis living in Evanston?

- We need more sidewalks instead of empty streets
- Ease of using public space/ shut down streets, easier to execute placemaking

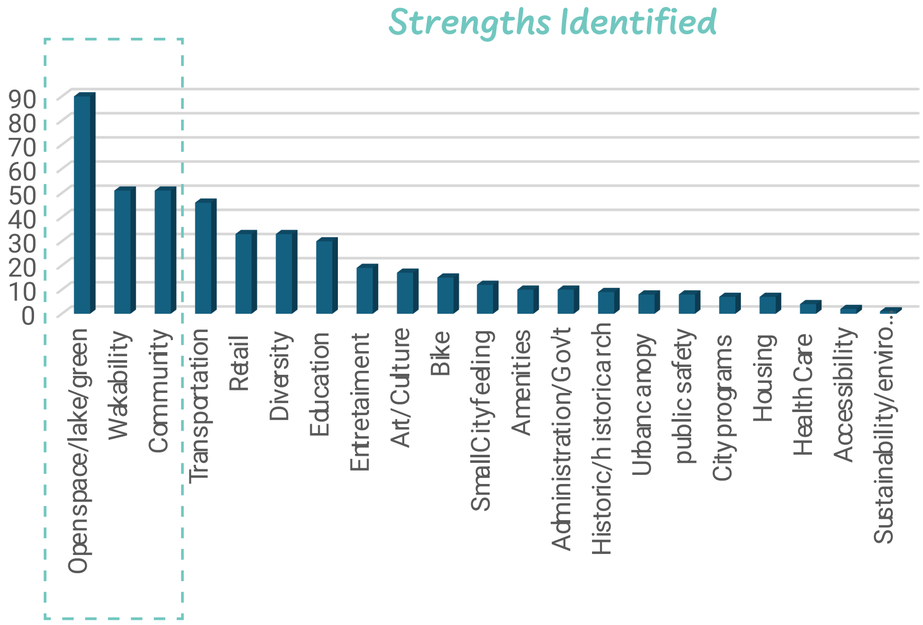
What do you love about living in Evanston?

- The Evanston public library, likes access to a plethora of books
- The beach
- We like parks because they are good meeting places, like Central Park

What is your favorite place in Evanston?

- Right next to the city, easy to take advantage of what Chicago has to offer without it being as busy
- Right next the lake, beach access is amazing
- Everything is close by, very walkable
- Lots of scenery, public art makes a big deal, murals , lots of color etc.
- Plant life is great, lots of greenery, relatively clean city
- The parks are nice to play at and are all over Evanston, which creates a safe atmosphere
- The trees and plants incorporated throughout the city makes for a nice vibe

What do you love about living in Evanston?



Public Safety

What we've heard

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement.

- Overall theft, worried about getting my bike stolen. Multiple bikes been stolen in peoples backyards.

Thinking about the challenges you face, share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

I've been walking to the train and almost been attacked. Personal safety has been a challenge.

I've been approached at my car window. When I have kids in my car and have just parked.

"It is an incredibly safe and fun town!"

"The importance of services, support, intervention for the unhoused and mentally ill individuals who hang out downtown and at the library."

"Strongly concerned about crime."

"Crime is also a concern of mine. We're starting to have car break-ins overnight in my neighborhood."

"Evanston needs to concentrate on crime and attracting (and SUPPORTING!) businesses today."

Infrastructure Maintenance

What we've heard

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement

- Too much construction around north Evanston, as well as downtown Evanston.
- Add a public path to Lincoln Beach

Imagine it's 2045 and the plan has accomplished all you hoped for, choose three words that describe the Evanston you've found at the end of this plan.

- Vibrant, healthy local economy, improved infrastructure
- Focus on preservation of assets
- Solar lit roads, cycling tracks
- Wants to see Evanston focus on maintenance, infrastructure, and public safety

"Roads and alleys in my ward need a review."

"We need to address the need to update and modernize our physical infrastructure."

"Sidewalks are uneven and need to be ground down."

"Residential sidewalks are in rough shape."

Economic Development

What we've heard

What do you love about living in Evanston?

- Don't have to drive very far, easy to work
- Things are cheaper in comparison to some places
- We like the variety of businesses

What is your favorite place in Evanston?

- Really like the cafes
- SkyZone
- Gigios and Benisons
- Thrift stores and Target
- We like restaurants, like Ovo Frito and Supreme Burrito.

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs improvement.

- Many products sold by businesses in Evanston are too expensive.

Share a story about a time that one of these challenges had a major impact on you.

Make sure our schools are top notch-This will keep the city thriving and a desirable place for families - without this we will suffer

There are no neighborhood schools and kids have to go far to go to school everyday

People want to shop downtown but there are no stores that attract them

Difficulty to access retail due to cost of parking

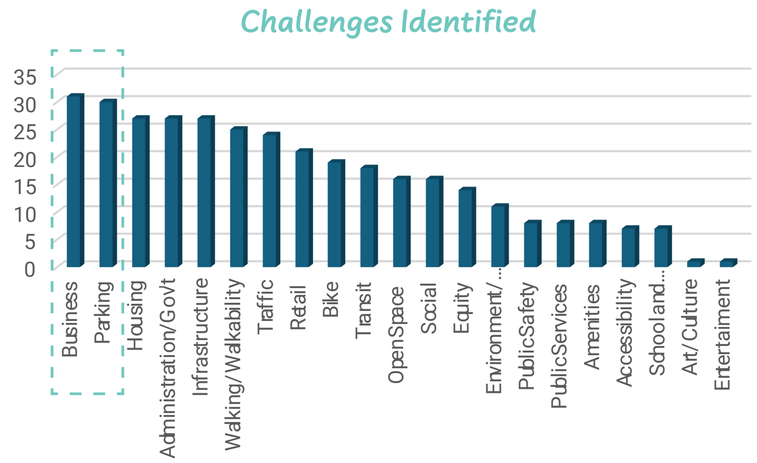
Big box stores have more benefits (Tax breaks etc.) that are not available to small businesses.

Had to move my business because of drastic rent increase. Personally know a lot of business owners that have given up on Evanston

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change / improve

- Downtown is sorely lacking park space close to the businesses. Fountain Square is not big enough.
- Add more services (food trucks, activities) along the lakefront
- Allow bars to open later
- More mix-used development like Main St

What challenges do you face on a daily basis living in Evanston?



Environmental Sustainability

What we've heard

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change / improve.

- Channel Trail ends at Green Bay Rd
- Maintain waterfront
- Preserve lakefront
- Add a public path to Lincoln beach

Imagine it's 2045 and the plan has accomplished all you hoped for, choose three words that describe the Evanston you've found at the end of this plan.

- Car-less and safe
- Streets full of trees, native plants, pollinator garden
- Less cars, net zero, healthy and equitable
- Net zero, more public transportation, equitable
- More nature, inclusive and vibrant

"I'd love to see more native plants in parks."

"Preserve and increase natural spaces. Protect birds. Reduce misdirected and excess lighting and excess noise (eg, trains)."

"Turf grass should be more limited with more land given to perennial, native, and/ or edible plants."

"I see no evidence that Evanston is making progress to addressing climate change issues, particularly those things which the city can control, such as eliminating idling, eliminating electric leaf blowers, prohibiting mosquito fogging, replacing lawns in parks and street ways where not needed."

"Urban development should consider wildlife corridors for movement and bird friendly buildings."

Community Engagement and Representation

What we've heard

Tell us about an area in the city that you think needs preservation and which area needs to change / improve

Decisions are made and your voice does not matter

Imagine it's 2045 and the plan has accomplished all you hoped for, choose three words that describe the Evanston you've found at the end of this plan.

- New mix-income housing, integrated community
- Inclusive, safe, walkable
- Welcoming, diverse, engaged
- Retaining the diversity and history
- Integrated, well-considered, connected
- Engaged citizens

"Have more programs for people w/ disabilities."

"Unity and investing in schools' programs and focus on the youth in Evanston."

"More resources for our underserved communities."

"Classes and programming is not easily accessible to Hispanic families due to program guide not being in Spanish. Barely any Spanish speakers available to assist with registrations."

"Make a commitment to economic diversity in our community"