

Preservation Commissions Applicability

Purpose Statements

- A. Identifying, preserving, protecting, enhancing and encouraging the continued utilization and the rehabilitation of resources having a special historical, community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value to the City and its citizens
- B. Safeguarding the City's historic and cultural heritage
- C. Fostering civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past...
- D. Supporting and promoting preservation-based economic development...
- E. Fostering and encouraging preservation, restoration and rehabilitation and preventing neighborhood deterioration
- F. Fostering the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of Evanston...
- G. Encouraging orderly and efficient development...
- H. Continuing surveys and studies of Evanston's historical and architectural resources
- I. Encouraging public participation in identifying and preserving historic and architectural resources.

Review should be conducted through these purpose statements and be focused on:

1. the plans various preservation components
2. the appropriateness of these documents for the protection and continued use of existing and eligible landmarks and properties, structures, sites, or objects within historic districts
3. their potential to influence, either positively or negatively, other historically, culturally, architecturally, or archaeologically significant areas, sites, structures, and objects throughout the City.

What is the goal for this review?

- Develop a list of items or recommendations there was consensus on based on the discussion prompts.
- Ask Commissioners to prioritize these recommendations over the break
- Develop a comment letter with the top recommendations emphasized and additional comments for consideration by both the Land Use Commission and City Council
- It may be necessary to schedule a second meeting sometime after the New Year

A Vision of Evanston in 2045 (goal or value statements)

A comprehensive plan is meant to represent the community's consensus and vision for the future.

- It serves as a guidebook that assists local planners, government officials, and community members to determine and understand the appropriate types of development that should be permitted and encouraged in the City – realizing that each new development creates a lasting impact on the City's design character and urban form.
- It also helps serve as the road map for undertaking new initiatives and in coordinating the efforts and activities of other key partners and influencing policy decisions in a broad range of areas.
- Change will always occur — a Comprehensive Plan that responds to local conditions effectively can help address the challenges that change always presents and ensure change works toward a shared vision for the future.

The plan is a vision to create a more vibrant, prosperous, equitable, diverse, and climate resilient Evanston. In order to achieve these goals, the plan looks to:

- preserve and celebrate aspects of our current and past identities as a the built environments foundation,
- enhance opportunities for arts and culture,
- increase housing choice and reduce housing cost burdens,
- increase density to support economic development activity and expand the tax base to support capital improvement and infrastructure needs,
- reduce barriers to development and investment in the community,
- enhance sustainable development practices that create a more climate resilient community,
- reduce displacement pressures, and ensure the ability to continue and expand community services for vulnerable populations.

There are seven overarching goals or value statements meant to guide the plans contents. The zoning code is the primary, but not exclusive, form of implementation for these goals. The comprehensive plan directs the zoning code. Zoning can be a powerful companion tool for historic preservation as zoning restricts development potential and can direct predictive and compatible outcomes.

The major goals and value statements include:

Identified Themes and Common Recommendations (red is language that was seen as preservation related)

- **Foster a Healthy Community (page 8)**
 - “Reimagining our city through human-scale design”
 - This is seen as important to the purposes of preservation and retention of community character. Human-scale design should be defined, use historic development patterns and forms as inspiration, and include appropriate strategies, examples, modeling, and visualizations to communicate ideas and expected outcomes.
 - “Enhancing the aesthetics of the built environment through thoughtful urban design”,
 - Seen as equally important, and thoughtful urban design should incorporate and reference Evanston's existing and historical development patterns and design vocabularies as inspiration.
 - Defining what constitutes thoughtful urban design could be included and the plan could identify and incorporate strategies for how that will be achieved and what built outcomes and quality Evanston’s citizens expect.
 - More predictive design outcomes can be achieved through design guidelines, modeling, and visual aids as examples for preferred treatment approaches. Historic design vocabularies and built environments should be points of inspiration.
- **Strengthen the Local Economy (page 8)**
 - “Celebrating and retaining Evanston's unique identity and sense of place...”
 - A highly important goal related to preservation that needs to be expanded further in the Plan beyond the preservation chapter and Evanston's diverse and geographically specific senses of place should be identified and used to guide decision making.
- **Prioritize Environmental Sustainability**
- **Invest in Transportation Options**
- **Increase Housing Diversity**
- **Create Equitable Opportunities for All**
- **Celebrate Arts and Culture**

Preservation

This chapter focuses on maintaining the cultural, architectural, and historical resources that establish a sense of place and define our community. Preservation is planned to be used as a foundational land-use tool to successfully balance and implement long-term economic development, density, housing, sustainability, and cultural goals.

Identified Themes and Common Recommendations

- How can the preservation chapter better intersect with the rest of the plan and should there be cross references within the plan, ie: “relates to, or implement in tandem with, preservation initiative xx.x”.
 - Could this be addressed in an implementation chapter, which is currently not part of the plan? Should the plan include an implementation chapter?
- The preservation chapter is ambitious, in its expansion of the program. This demonstrates the importance of preservation to balance and also achieve the shared vision and goals within the plan. This balance is critically important.
 - Specifically, the preservation chapter and its goals around survey, documentation, supporting nominations of eligible resources, overlaying federal designations with local protections, and most ambitiously neighborhood conservation districts and neighborhood planning tools are important as a form of mitigation for portions of the plan that may be seen as having the potential to change the character of the community.
 - Does the Commission feel there is an adequate framework for adding capacity and acknowledgement of funding for future planning efforts to ensure meaningful facilitation of these important efforts? Are there other approaches that can add capacity through companion efforts?
- Are the general values as well as specific initiatives within the Preserve 2040 Plan adequately integrated into this chapter? Should there be a stronger connection between the two documents or are there specific aspects of the Preserve 2040 Plan that you’d like to see integrated?
- Should the chapter include a broader framework for utilizing Neighborhood Conservation Districts beyond a tool to retain affordability and explicitly define what NCD’s are and how they are envisioned to be implemented and managed?
- Does the chapter adequately address other types of equity and their complex intersections with historic preservation such as the ability to age in place and accommodate people with disabilities and other accessibility needs?
- Should this chapter more explicitly recognize the role of women in the development of Evanston’s built environment and contribution to our cultural heritage?
- Should eligible districts, eligible landmarks, african american heritage sites, and individual landmarks be shown on the preservation map to help inform future decision making and provide a holistic view of the City’s historic resources?
- Reinternment and repatriation of ancestral remains and cultural objects has come up at multiple Commission meetings. Should the Preservation Chapter call more explicitly for identification of a location to accommodate this?

Land Use

The land use strategy prioritizes a centers and corridors framework which focuses on reducing development restrictions and developing densely populated centers connected by corridors with efficient public transportation and active transportation infrastructure.

Discussion Prompts

- Should this chapter further acknowledge that the land's history reaches past the 1850s and also include more context of the City's historic pattern of development which resulted in distinct areas of the City as portions were annexed and developed through varying periods and economic influences, consumer preferences, waves of immigration and population growth, etc.
- Should the Land Use Chapter include additional data sources, metrics, and analysis to support decision making – especially how Evanston and its environment compares to neighboring communities and regional and national development trends?
- Does the proposed reduction in complexity of land use categories and subsequent zoning districts represent the rich uniqueness of neighborhoods and places that make Evanston desirable and unique in the region?
 - Should the Plan identify and expand on the rich diversity, complexity, and uniqueness in identity of various geographic areas of the City, and should that translate into a more granular land use and zoning approach than what is proposed?
- “*Preserve Evanston's sense of place*” was included as a major engagement theme that also includes reference to ensuring compatible design for new buildings. Does the Commission believe this is adequately addressed in the Land Use Chapter or within the Zoning Ordinance?
 - If not, should policies that identify and address compatible design strategies for new development such as implementing design guidelines, including design principles, exploring additional preferred treatment approaches and visualizations/modeling within the zoning code, or empowering a design commission be included in this Chapter?
- As part of the commitment and framework proposed for revitalizing the downtown, should there be more recognition of the downtown's historic development pattern, its past identities, and its eligible and already landmarked resources? Should these resources and environments act as a foundation for the downtown's revitalization?

Transportation

This section of the plan focuses on creating a holistic, multimodal transportation system by expanding access to diverse transportation options.

Discussion Prompts

- Should the historic associations and architectural significance of the City's train stations (Central El, South Boulevard El, Davis, Main, and Central Metra) be prioritized and balanced with development goals for these resources that increase accessibility and function?
- Should mention of the El and Metra and their importance to Evanston's soundscape, particularly the rumble of the El through neighborhoods be included?
- Should the commitment to walking and other forms of slower transportation include reference to the City's historic and human scaled environments being best appreciated on foot and bike?

Parks and Open Space

This section seeks to improve community health and fitness, elevate quality of life, foster a sense of community, connect people to the natural world, and help preserve natural areas.

Discussion Prompts

- How can the historic nature of the parks and open spaces and how they contribute to the City's cultural heritage be brought out more in this Chapter?
- Should this chapter include policy statements ensuring that the historic associations and cultural significance of parks and open spaces, especially those within historic districts, inform future planning, use, and design decisions?

Environment

This chapter examines key aspects of Evanston's natural resources, ecosystems, green infrastructure, and urban tree canopy.

Discussion Prompts

- Should trees and landscapes be further discussed in terms of not only their environment but historic and cultural associations? Many individual trees are part of the historic and cultural landscape fabric of the community. Should sustainability and protection of setting and landscape features be identified as a significant issue to retaining Evanston's sense of place and community character?
- Should additional reference be made to stewardship of cultural landscapes outside of City programming? Should policies that support partner organizations and volunteers that provide these services be included?
- Should this chapter include additional and more explicit references to preservation's role in achieving climate resilience and sustainability as well as the importance of embodied carbon, stewardship, and maintenance of significant built and landscape resources?

Economic Development

This section goes beyond simply creating jobs but also prioritizes sustaining and creating places that people can and want to live, work, and play in order to nurture a more dynamic and resilient economy.

Discussion Prompts

- This section includes reference to preservation-based economic development strategies and heritage tourism as well as preserving traditional and human-scaled spaces.
 - Should the associated policies and actions be more explicit about what that means and draw a connection between that goal and associated statements in the preservation chapter?
- This Chapter includes reference to the legacy business program – an important form of living heritage important to Evanston’s sense of place and uniqueness of neighborhoods. Are there other forms of living heritage, interpretation, or place-based economic development to be further incorporated as cultural and place-based strategies for this Chapter?
- Should more traditional and human-scaled business districts such as Central, Main/Dempster, and Noyes, have associated economic development goals that prioritize stabilization of their existing vibrant economic and community environments as a way of taking pressure off historic preservation as the only stabilization tool? How can zoning be a companion in these stabilization efforts to restrict development potential and encourage stewardship, rehabilitation, and adaptive use?
- Should special incentives and funding sources be included for storefront and facade improvements specifically for historic structures that may have higher associated costs for compatible improvements?

Housing

This section prioritizes a framework for increasing housing choice and supply while also maintaining existing housing stock, preventing displacement, and preserving the racial and economic diversity of Evanston.

Discussion Prompts

- Should this chapter include additional reference to the City's existing diversity of housing types, choice, and architectural forms and styles throughout the City?
- Should the relationship between existing and needed urban, missing middle, and single-family housing be supported by additional metrics, data, analysis, and housing mix goals that support and guide decision making?
 - As an example, how does Evanston's diversity of housing stock and housing typologies compare to Wilmette, to Skokie, and to Chicago? How does it relate to regional and national consumer preferences in housing choice and our ability to compete with other municipalities as a residential community of choice in the region? How does the City's historic building stock contribute to this?
- Does the Commission believe that single family neighborhoods are important aspects of Evanston's community character and pattern of historical development? Many older neighborhoods contain a rich diversity of housing choice and density, including the Lakeshore and Northeast historic districts.
- Does the Commission believe there are portions of this chapter and its associated zoning recommendations that may inadvertently increase displacement pressures and potential for neighborhood deterioration by inserting a profit motive for demolition of smaller-scale, more vernacular and attainable housing types that already exist across the City?
- Does the Commission believe the preservation chapters mitigating strategies such as neighborhood conservation districts, and designating new historic districts and landmarks are sufficient to address neighborhood stabilization concerns as a way of balancing housing production needs with historic preservation? Should connections be made in this chapter to proactive utilization of those tools?
- Are there other strategies that could be incorporated?

Placemaking + Arts and Culture

This chapter summarizes existing conditions, identifies challenges and opportunities, and suggests policies and actions to achieve the goal of celebrating arts and culture and nurturing a sense of place and Evanston's many unique identities.

Discussion Prompts

- Should the placemaking chapter include more reference to what Evanston's unique identity is as well as the connections between those and Historic Preservation? For example, a subsection under 'policies and actions' in this chapter could explicitly identify historic buildings, cultural landscapes, and other historic sites as loci for placemaking, storytelling, and interpretation.
- Should integration of arts and culture in City decision making include additional direction for how to actually institutionalize arts and culture into decision-making?

Zoning Amendments

Discussion Prompts

- The zoning ordinance is more publicly facing than the preservation ordinance, and something more homeowners, developers, designers, and architects know to review prior to design development. Should the proposed zoning ordinance include reference in each of the district standards that properties designated as a landmark or located within a historic district are ultimately subject to and controlled by the requirements of the preservation ordinance, and not the zoning ordinance, with links provided.
 - Similar to the above consideration, should language associated with subdivisions, zoning variations, special uses, and planned developments include language that properties that are landmarks or located in a historic district require review and recommendation by the Commission in compliance with the preservation ordinance and its associated standards and provide links to those standards?
 - The existing zoning ordinance currently includes standards for review of variations and planned developments as they relate to historic properties. The proposed ordinance does not. Should these be included, or be an amendment to the preservation ordinance to guide decision making by the Commission.
 - Should the code explore demolition delay or demolition review procedures that allow assessing a property's existing contribution to the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan as well as its historic or cultural significance?
 - Should the code include standards for planned developments and major variations that ensure proposals do not result in the loss of significant architectural, or historical resources?
- Should the district descriptions for the low impact residential and low impact mixed-use districts include similar language about those zones including historic resources and traditional development patterns? Similar to what is included in the D1 description?
- Many older and historic buildings are particularly susceptible to flooding because of brick and stone foundations. Does allowing an increase in the amount of impervious area makes sense? The new R-4 has no impervious requirement. The current R-6 (most dense) has a limit of 65% of the lot. Increasing allowable lot coverage, which happens for all districts, will also result in less impervious surface.
 - R1, the predominant zoning for historic districts and landmarks, has the same impervious as existing standards, but lot coverage is increased by 5%. The exemption for garages also increases lot coverage beyond what is perceived in the zoning codes language by an additional 7% for a 6500 square foot lot since the lot coverage is no longer spread between a garage and a principle structure. Is this an appropriate standard? Could it have the most adverse impact on individual landmarks outside of a district and general compatibility of bulk?
- Does increasing the allowable number of units in the least dense residential zoning districts encourage demolition to build larger, rather than incentivizing adaptation of existing structures, especially in less affluent areas? Could this result in a significant reduction of older, and eligible historic building stock?

- Would allowing two-flats and ADU's in R-1 districts have the effect of tripling the amount of dwellings compared to what was allowed in 2019 and be a compromise approach that minimizes the incentive to reshape older, but not designated neighborhoods – balancing housing goals and preservation concerns.
- In Single family residential districts, the adoption of the ADU ordinance which allows 2 dwellings per lot already allows an increase in residential density without changing the historic character and scale of Evanston's residential streets. How can that policy be further incentivized to discourage demolition and also contribute to affordability?
- Should the zoning code provide visual examples and models of preferred treatment approaches, built forms, and existing compatible housing types of varying densities across Evanston, many of which are within historic districts to ensure compatibility with surrounding design vocabularies in currently zoned R1-R3 neighborhoods and lower impact downtown and mixed-use districts? Are there other suggestions or recommendations to balance more housing production and development with compatibility of existing neighborhood characteristics and design vocabularies?
- The proposed zoning framework for the downtown restricts development potential in the proposed D1 areas due to them being rich with, eligible, traditional and human scaled fabric. Are there other areas of downtown this zoning designation should apply to?
- Should additional height plane transitions or a reduction in height be considered for D2 and MX-3 zoning designations that abut the Lakeshore Historic District?
- Are the D3 zonings height and bulk controls as-of-right appropriate for future development in the downtown core, or can downtown's revitalization and density goals be achieved through more human-scaled interventions that may be more sympathetic to our historic development patterns and scale of the surrounding downtown neighborhoods?
 - How could those types of developments be incentivized as of right while larger buildings may require special consideration?