



Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council and City Staff
From: Members of the Evanston Arts Council
CC: Richard Candida Smith, Chair of the Arts Council
Subject: Evanston Arts Council Feedback on Draft Comprehensive Plan:
Envision Evanston 2045
Date: January 15, 2025

Recommended Action:

The Evanston Arts Council proposes the attached additions and alterations to the Arts and Culture section of the Envision Evanston plan. Our suggestions are drawn from the EAC's Mission Statement, the language and ideas of which we believe should be incorporated more directly into this section of the plan in order to assure that "Envision Evanston 2045" is consistent with current City of Evanston's policies governing arts and culture. Three principal ideas underlie the changes to the draft plan we propose:

- 1)The "community building" aspects of art should have prominence equal to "placemaking."
- 2)Arts activities are found in all wards and are to be supported on a citywide basis.
- 3)Increased investment in arts activities coming out of government, business, and arts institutions partnerships is necessary for Evanston to maintain its reputation as a regional arts center and to expand the city's status as a cultural destination serving a diverse range of cultural interests.

Summary:

To assist you in reviewing our suggestions, additions, and changes are highlighted in boldface type.

1. Title of Arts and Culture section

We prefer the following title for this section, which puts more stress on art as an essential element in the formation and maintenance of any community:

ARTS AND CULTURE: COMMUNITY BUILDING, PLACEMAKING, CONNECTION MAKING

To the INTRODUCTION, add the following paragraph before PLACEMAKING:

COMMUNITY BUILDING

With the formation of the Evanston Arts Council in 1975, the city set out to encourage the involvement of citizens in the arts and to aid the coordination of private and public cultural activities. Evanston supports a wide range of art and cultural activities that nourish and build an inclusive community. Evanston seeks to empower and amplify artists and arts organizations as community builders and change makers. Evanston envisions the arts as central to an equitable, sustainable city where authentic and diverse creative voices are accessible to all; and where artists are supported, thriving, and recognized as fundamental to a healthy and engaged society.

Artistic expressions such as painting, music, dance, literature, and theater convey ideas, emotions, and experiences that often transcend language barriers and connect people through provocative consideration of how what they share connects to what divides them. Arts and culture are essential to community building. Art can be both rooted in history and a catalyst for change. Art plays a crucial role in expressing the diverse beliefs, traditions, and experiences found in every community. Since the core of successful cultural work is human to human contact, the arts have a central role in critical community building.

In the second paragraph of ARTS AND CULTURE, change second sentence to read:

Evanston is **exceptionally well** positioned to capitalize on community building and **placemaking strategies through the arts since** it is home to ten times more artists and community members employed in arts-related work than the national average.
[question: national average for cities Evanston's size, for all cities, or for ???]

Add new paragraph between 2nd and final paragraphs:

Recently Evanston has enjoyed the emergence of pop-up galleries, street fairs, and other short-term cultural activities. The city can expand on the entrepreneurial spirit present in the city's arts community to promote more "pop-up galleries," "storefront theaters," "cafés & bookstores," while easing accommodations for street performances through reviewing permit processes and promoting partnerships between arts, community, and business organization. Assuring a regular schedule of performances and exhibits will develop expectations in Evanston and neighboring communities that a variety of interesting programming are to be happening all the time. To develop audiences for Evanston's arts activities, the public needs to know what is happening when and where.

On p. 97, amend the policy and policy statement grid:

Policy 2: Encourage more **ground-up arts and entertainment-based community building and placemaking initiatives in all city wards.**

Policy 5: Enhance cultural arts activities **in all city wards to** increase participation in local arts and culture and engage all ages and abilities.

Policy 8: Expand the use of public space **in all city wards** for creative and cultural activities.

Add Policy 9: Promote more “pop-up galleries,” “storefront theaters,” “cafés & bookstores,” and ease accommodations for street performances.

Add Policy 10: Promote partnerships between arts, community, and business organizations that will contribute to the practical and financial sustainability of arts events in Evanston.

On p. 98: Under EXISTING CONDITIONS, replace PLACEMAKING with **PUBLIC ART** change first sentence in this paragraph to read:

The City of Evanston understands the importance of **public art for** creating quality public spaces in which residents and visitors can relax, socialize, and engage in activities.

Under ARTS AND CULTURE, change first sentence in paragraph to read:

Public art, whether it be permanent sculptures and murals, **music and dramatic performances, or happenings, installations, and other types of temporary activation, challenges people to connect emotionally and socially with each other, with their immediate environment, and with their history.**

On p. 100, under KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES, change blurb for second paragraph to

Prioritizing increased investment in a broader range of arts and cultural activities.

On p. 102, under 2. Encourage ..., change PAC 2.1 to

Explore allocation of funding for community-**building and** placemaking projects **building upon but expanding** beyond public art funding.

for PAC 2.2,

Encourage public-private partnerships via technical assistance, financial support, **and other types of community partnerships to implement more energetic arts programming related to community building and placemaking.**

On p. 103, under 6. Integrate ..., for PAC 6.1

Implement marketing and **financial sustainability strategies for community building and placemaking activities** outlined in the Evanston Thrives Plan.

change PAC 6.2,

The City of Evanston mandates that new construction projects dedicate a percentage of the budget for art in public spaces. Active city participation in the planning and allocation process will assure new public art projects enhance Evanston as a cultural destination serving a diverse public with a broad range of arts interests.

change PAC 7.3,

Engage with the community to create events and activities that give more visibility to Evanston's diverse cultural heritages.

change PAC 8.3,

Regularly review and update policies that regulate the use of public spaces and streets, such as sidewalk cafes, sales and on-street dining, pop-up galleries, and temporary performance spaces, to create a more vibrant walking experience while maintaining the needed sidewalk capacity and ADA compliance for equal access and mobility on city streets.

Date: January 15, 2024

To: Matt Rodgers, Chair of the Evanston Land Use Commission and LUC Commissioners

From: Matt Cotter, Michelle Redfield, co-chairs of the Evanston Environment Board; Katarina Topalov, chair of the CARP Implementation Task Force

Subject: Recommended environmental and sustainability objectives for the Envision Evanston 2045 Comprehensive General Plan

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the Evanston Environment Board's review and recommendations for the 2045 Comprehensive General Plan (CGP)*. We appreciate the effort to integrate elements of sustainability and climate action in sections of the Draft CGP. Our goal in submitting these comments is to clarify our previous comments to strengthen the CGP as it is finalized. Previous comments can be found in letters we submitted dated July 15th, November 19th and in notes from our January 9th Board Meeting.

Apply the lens of climate action, resilience, and environmental equity across the board. The foundational framework for the CGP should be the 2018 Climate Action and Resilience Plan ([CARP](#)) and any subsequent climate action and resilience plans or updates. The final draft of the CGP must include achievement of CARP goals including community-wide carbon neutrality, along with related climate justice, environmental health and resilience measures.

Cross reference and utilize existing and developing planning tools. In order to stand as a comprehensive document, the CGP should cross-reference the specific actions already described in existing planning tools and ordinances, with up-to-date information related to environmental sustainability, public health and environmental justice, including:

- Evanston's 2018 [Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#)
- CMAP **On to 2050** projections ([ON TO 2050 Comprehensive Regional Plan](#))
- [NOAA State Climate Summary for Illinois](#)
- [Illinois Stretch Energy Code](#) to achieve greater energy efficiency in buildings
- Recommendations of the [2019 Stormwater Management Guide](#)
- Evanston's 2020 [Environmental Justice Resolution](#)

- Evanston’s 2022 [EPLAN Report](#), which addresses disparities in public health, life expectancy and quality of life within the City of Evanston
- Evanston’s 2022 [Climate Emergency Resolution](#)
- Recommendations of the 2023 [Stormwater Master Plan](#) to inform land use planning in meeting specific stormwater management goals, especially for green infrastructure to increase permeable surfaces and reduce runoff.

At a minimum, the above documents should be included in Appendix A as additional roadmaps for planning.

Provide for ongoing integration of upcoming ordinances, including:

- Healthy Buildings Ordinance
- Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan
- Natural Areas Ordinance
- Municipal Zero Emissions Strategy
- Circularity Roadmap
- Environmental Equity Investigation

After examining each chapter of the CGP we propose these changes:

Goals that need to be clarified and expanded on:

- A Vision of Evanston in 2045: The Prioritize Environmental Sustainability section should reiterate our net zero goal by including: “Achieving community-wide carbon neutrality by 2050.”
- Housing:
 - Promote rooftop and community solar, energy benchmarking, and building performance standards and provide incentives for electrification and decarbonization of all housing; expand the [Green Homes Pilot](#) to increase access to energy efficiency improvements for low-income residents; provide technical and financial planning assistance to residential buildings well in advance of any future building performance standards interim milestones.
 - This chapter should also explicitly address the threat of gentrification and displacement of low-income residents disproportionately impacted by rising water, waste, recycling rates, and composting fees; rising energy costs; property taxes; and other municipal fees that make staying in Evanston unaffordable now and in the future.

- Climate Migration: several scientific forecasts have predicted a migration of residents from the South and West to the Great Lakes area due to extreme climate. The Envision Evanston 2045 CGP needs to take this into account in terms of housing, public health, infrastructure and resilience. (See: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11676-022-01523-z> and <https://www.330300rule.com/implementation/>), specifically around action H 1.2 “Complete a housing needs assessment to determine the types and qualities of housing needed for Evanston’s population.”
- Land Use
 - Business, commercial and industrial areas: Develop and enforce energy audits, benchmarking and building performance standards, incentives for zero waste, decarbonization, beneficial electrification, renewable energy, reduction of toxic emissions, embodied carbon, and incentives for local procurement of goods and services to build a circular economy and reduce transportation impacts and waste. Support buildings covered under building performance standards with technical and financial planning assistance well in advance of interim milestones, to promote affordability.
 - Central Business District: Promote energy efficiency and clean energy conversions among businesses, e.g. through incentives like [Sustain Evanston](#).
 - Institutions: Develop incentives and accountability systems to assure that large institutions play a role in the clean energy transition commensurate with their role in the local economy and their contribution to Evanston’s community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, including Northwestern University, the hospitals, school districts and faith communities, as well as other large employers.
 - Walkability: The Land Use chapter must have an explicit goal of making some essential services available in every neighborhood (ex: neighborhood grocer, restaurant/cafe, healthcare, childcare, etc) and adding more mixed use zones distributed throughout Evanston. Proximity is vital for walkability.
- Transportation:
 - Fix the table at the chapter Introduction to match the Policies and Actions section (currently they do not align)

- While stated as a priority, improved ways are needed to measure Vehicle Miles Traveled, assess impacts of EV charging infrastructure and increase incentives for walking, biking and transit. Explicit data collection goals should be added for these under T.13 “Promote alternative transportation options to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled within the community”
- Ensure all City buildings are fully accessible via public transit.

Incorporation of additional elements (or addition of new chapters):

- Public Health: We support LUC’s proposal for a new chapter on public health. It should:
 - Address health equity by neighborhood in the Existing Conditions section (see [EPLAN](#) report) related to resilience to climate impacts, exposure to air and water pollution, access to green space and green infrastructure.
 - The concerns about health disparities and environmental equity, overall health, impacts of extreme heat and extreme weather events, impacts of climate change on both indoor and outdoor air, water pollution as well as exacerbation of chronic illnesses and mental health.
- Nature-Based Solutions to climate mitigation and resilience, highlighting the crucial importance and distinct functions of trees and green spaces in land use planning for a human-scale, pedestrian-friendly, livable community with improved stormwater management and infiltration, enhanced air quality, biodiversity and mental health benefits and with specific references to growing and preserving critical Evanston assets including along the lakefront, the North Shore Channel and many others.

The CGP should:

- Describe the comprehensive value of our urban forests and greenspace, including protection of the lakefront, in land use planning throughout Evanston.
- Include expanding tree canopies, important in a heating climate to provide cooling shade and reduce energy use, especially in areas impacted by environmental inequities. See [Title 7, Chapter 10, Sec.9](#) of the City Code: “Natural areas are public lands that are managed to provide habitat for diverse, regionally native plant and animal

communities and associated benefits for humans.” A prime example is the half of the Ladd Arboretum north of Bridge Street.

- Acknowledge trees as a critical feature of urban infrastructure. City trees should be everywhere in the built environment — part of “nature-based solutions” for climate mitigation and adaptation, not just “landscaping.” See, for example, [Stormwater to Street Trees: Engineering Urban Forests for Stormwater Management](#) (EPA 2013): “While trees have long been recognized for their ability to help clean the air, reduce energy needs, raise property values, and mitigate heat island effects, their innate ability to absorb and divert rainfall has been underutilized. . . To effectively use trees for the management of stormwater runoff, the site must be designed properly. . . Urban trees require space, proper soil, drainage, and irrigation.” See also [Urban forests for healthier cities: zoning \(Cities4Forests\)](#): “Cities may use zoning to create, expand, or maintain urban forests. For example, zoning may provide a mechanism to:
 - Mandate the amount of open space in a city, leaving room for trees to grow
 - Designate protected or sensitive areas such as riparian buffer strips or steep slopes
 - Regulate patterns of development in a way that leaves room for urban forests
 - Provide tree planting requirements for new projects.”
- Enable planning for Evanston that is human-scale and pedestrian-friendly, including the downtown core. Shade trees and green spaces encourage walking and gathering and are strongly associated with feelings of safety and increased retail activity. See University of Washington resource on [Green Cities/Good Health](#).
- Climate Adaptation and Resilience to address resilience planning and add measurable results to track progress, especially through the lens of environmental equity, and drawing from lessons learned during the COVID pandemic. Examples include: addressing health impacts of extreme heat, especially for vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, city employees who work outside, and the unhoused; identifying additional flood mitigation measures and increasing flood response; addressing

drought impacts on green space, preparing for stresses on existing green and gray infrastructure.

- Circular Economy, to identify and plan for increased material reuse, deconstruction, recycling, waste minimization and encourage collaborative and synergistic business and manufacturing relationships to minimize waste. The Circularity Roadmap, called for in the CARP as the zero waste strategy, should be a high priority along with urgent attention to community engagement and involvement from Evanston businesses and manufacturers.
- Environmental Equity, an overview of CGP recommendations and resulting ordinances, policies and practices to ensure that benefits and burdens are shared equitably with vulnerable populations. Where environmental inequities, cost burdens and disproportionate impacts are already experienced, the EE45 Plan should affirmatively address implementation approaches to mitigate those disparities and achieve environmental and public health equity. The CGP should provide Evanston's historical context for mitigating specific environmental inequities and injustices. For example, there is currently no reference to the Church Street Waste Transfer Station, its proximity to residential areas and related poor air quality, odors, and excessive truck traffic. This chapter should establish a process to constructively address problematic, non-conforming land uses such as the Church Street Waste Transfer Station. Instead of re-labelling the area as an Innovation Zone (formerly Industrial), evaluate options for relocation.

In summary, by 2045, the City of Evanston should be a model city for sustainability, climate mitigation and resilience, and environmental equity to enhance the quality of life for all Evanston residents. The final Comprehensive General Plan should serve as a roadmap to achieve this vision.



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Fwd: Envision Evanston Comments

1 message

Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 2:34 PM

To: Alison Leipsiger <aleipsiger@cityofevanston.org>, Uri Pachter <upachter@cityofevanston.org>, Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Feedback from Angela Pennisi, MWEBE liaison on EDC

Katie Boden
Economic Development Coordinator

City Manager's Office

Morton Civic Center

City of Evanston

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2100 Ridge Ave. | Evanston, IL 60201 | 847-448-8132

kboden@cityofevanston.org | cityofevanston.org | evanstonedge.com


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 From: **Angela Pennisi** <angelawpennisi@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 5, 2024 at 3:35 PM

Subject: Envision Evanston Comments

 To: kboden@cityofevanston.org <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Hi, Katie,

Here are my comments from my personal email:

I applaud Evanston's commitment to leading on many fronts and for many of us, contributes to why we choose to make Evanston our home.

We must balance the aspirational with the practical as we proceed, be agile and maintain the ability to adapt and change as we go. Monitoring and measuring for both the desired and unanticipated / undesired consequences in an agnostic and transparent way can help Evanston achieve its vision, adjust as needed, and pivot if necessary.

This plan would be more transparent to the public if it highlighted the ways in which it is different than the existing plan, but the general trend appears to be towards an increase in density. Some studies suggest that the increased cost to the community of a new resident, including police, fire, schools is not offset by the new taxes that they pay, with the increased burden being borne by existing residents. Additionally, increased density is not necessarily associated with increased affordability. On Main Street (my neighborhood) we have increased density with decreased road and parking capacity with new traffic calming measures, but the effects of these changes on local businesses are divorced from the discussions we have on Economic Development Committee.

For example, Main Street now has a bike lane down the middle of the street, inviting cyclists to the middle of the lane, with vehicular traffic stuck behind them. Are we studying the traffic / road usage / foot traffic / side street traffic pre and post these changes? The new plan for Church street also calls for removing car lanes and adding bike lanes. Evanston businesses rely not just on cycling Evanston residents as customers but need people from outside Evanston to travel into and Enjoy Evanston; these customers need to feel invited with easy access and parking.

What might be additional unintended consequences? What if the increased travel times caused by traffic calming disproportionately reduce the earning potential of our more vulnerable workers, such as delivery drivers, who might be utilized even more as residents decide it is more convenient to have items delivered than to go shop themselves?

The benefits of Evanston's aspirational vision must be shown as well as told. We can't be afraid to examine something that might give us answers we don't wish to see, and we may need to consider intermediary and half measures to remain competitive with neighboring communities while our culture catches up. Winning hearts and minds along the way is as important to achieving a visionary future as the planning of the visionary future.

Thank you,
Angela Pennisi
[825 Sherman Avenue](#)
[Evanston, IL 60202](#)



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Fwd: Economic Development feedback on Draft Comp Plan and Zoning Code

3 messages

Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 2:30 PM

To: Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Alison Leipsiger <aleipsiger@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

feedback from Katherine Gotsick (ED of MDM)

Katie Boden

Economic Development Coordinator

City Manager's Office

Morton Civic Center

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From: **Katherine Gotsick** <katherine@maindempstermile.com>

Date: Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 5:04 PM

Subject: Re: Economic Development feedback on Draft Comp Plan and Zoning Code

To: Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Hey Katie -- I read the whole Economic Development Section and I have one big thought that isn't addressed here: Affordability for small businesses and retail merchants, especially as the neighborhood business districts grow and get developed. New, often Class A buildings are leasing at rates that small and independently owned businesses can't afford, which results in a lease to a chain or non-active use, or for an empty storefront for years on end.

Some thoughts on this:

How do we specifically maintain the character of a business district full of small businesses as it gets developed?

- Incentives for landlords who lease to small, local and independently-owned businesses
- Incentives for developers who also live in the neighborhood where they're leasing and live / experience / value the vibe
- City-owned or leased spaces that are incubators for retail entrepreneurs in these districts
- Add an overlay district (or enforce the current one) in business districts with majority small, local and independently-owned businesses that requires all non-active uses to:
 - go through a community engagement process before they are approved?
 - Provide public benefits (placemaking installations, public art?)
 - Mandatory sponsorship of SSA events by the business in addition to the property owner?

How do we keep lease rates affordable and accessible specifically for small and independently owned businesses?

- Incentives for landlords who are willing to divide retail space into micro (500-1000sf) shops?
- Incentives for landlords whose retail space costs between \$20-\$30 all in (including with triple net)
- Penalties for landlords whose storefront spaces are empty for more than 2 years - make it impossible for them not to get some revenue coming in, even at entrepreneur prices.

I hope these are meaningful thoughts.

Best,
kg

On Thu, Dec 5, 2024 at 3:08 PM Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org> wrote:

Good afternoon EDC members,

As I mentioned last night, please provide any feedback you have on the draft comprehensive plan and zoning code chapters related to economic development to me before January 15, 2025. I will compile all and share with the planning team so they can review and incorporate your feedback.

The draft plan and zoning code can be found here: <https://www.envisionevanston2045.com>

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Katie

Katie Boden

Economic Development Coordinator

City Manager's Office
Morton Civic Center
City of Evanston
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kboden@cityofevanston.org | cityofevanston.org | evanstonedge.com

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--
Best,
Katherine Gotsick (she/her)
Main-Dempster Mile
Mobile: 847-448-0748
Personal: 773-960-8490

Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 2:31 PM

To: Alison Leipsiger <aleipsiger@cityofevanston.org>, Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

More from Katherine..

Katie Boden

Economic Development Coordinator

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From: **Katherine Gotsick** <katherine@maindempstermile.com>

Date: Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 5:17 PM

Subject: Re: Economic Development feedback on Draft Comp Plan and Zoning Code

To: Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Also -- this language is included at the end of the Chapter 3 Zoning Districts doc:

Standards for outdoor gathering spaces/green spaces for development, parking, loading, mobility, fences, signs, and landscaping can be found in Chapter 5 of this Zoning Code.

But I can't find the Chapter 5 that they're referring to. This would be important to understand, I think. If I missed it, I'm happy to cry user error, but please know I really tried to find it :)

Best,
kg

[Quoted text hidden]

Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 2:32 PM

To: Alison Leipsiger <aleipsiger@cityofevanston.org>, Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>, Uri Pachter <upachter@cityofevanston.org>

Feedback from Andy Vick (ED of Downtown)

Katie Boden

Economic Development Coordinator

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From: **Andy Vick** <avick@downtownevanston.org>

Date: Wed, Dec 18, 2024 at 3:12 PM

Subject: Re: Economic Development feedback on Draft Comp Plan and Zoning Code

To: Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: Paul Zalmezak <pzalmezak@cityofevanston.org>

Hi Katie,

I am supportive of the draft Economic Development "Policies and Actions" that have been proposed in the new Comp Plan. I am also supportive of the reduction in the number of City-wide zoning classifications down to 17, including the 3 zoning classifications in the Downtown business district.

Suggested additions to the Comp Plan:

1. ECON 6.4 Create strategies and financial incentives to encourage short-term "pop-up" shops in vacant ground floor commercial spaces.
2. ECON 6.5 Continue support and invest in engaging programming and placemaking initiatives that attract residents and visitors to the City's business districts.
3. ECON 6.6 Cultivate closer a working relationship with Northwestern University to encourage students, faculty and staff to increase patronage of Evanston restaurants and retail businesses.
4. ECON 7.3 Coordinate and collaborate with Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, the city's four designated Special Service Areas, and six additional business districts to leverage their existing networks of communication and promotion.

Thanks for the opportunity for input!

-Andy

Andy Vick

Executive Director

Downtown Evanston

avick@DowntownEvanston.org

847-866-6319



From: Katie Boden <kboden@cityofevanston.org>

Sent: Thursday, December 5, 2024 3:08 PM

To: Clare Kelly <ckelly@cityofevanston.org>; Kristian Harris <kharris@cityofevanston.org>; Angela Pennisi <angelawpennisi@physiopartners.com>; Bobby Burns <bburns@cityofevanston.org>; Devon Reid <dreid@cityofevanston.org>; Lisa Dziekan <lisa@dziekanconsulting.com>; Cheryl Judice Powell <cheryl@heckys.com>; Jonathan Nieuwsma <jnieuwsma@cityofevanston.org>; Katherine Gotsick <katherine@maindempstermile.com>; Angela Shaffer <angela@centralstreet-evanston.com>; Melissa Wynne <mwynne@cityofevanston.org>; Andy Vick <avick@downtownevanston.org>

Cc: Paul Zalmezak <pzalmezak@cityofevanston.org>

Subject: Economic Development feedback on Draft Comp Plan and Zoning Code

[Quoted text hidden]



Outlook-gfpbbpvh.png
4K



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Preservation Commission Comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan

1 message

Jack Weiss <jw@jackweissassociates.com>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 5:13 PM

To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: Cade Sterling <csterling@cityofevanston.org>, Dave Galloway <Dagalloway72@gmail.com>, "Laura A. Saviano" <las@r-bar.com>

Meagan

Please forward this communication to all members of the Land Use Commission before Wednesday's meeting.

Thank You!

Members of the Land Use Commission:

Attached is the Preservation Commission document containing their comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Please note Item 3 under Land Use, particularly the last bullet point recommending the formation of an Urban Design Commission.

I and other Design Evanston members spent most of 2023 working along with Cade Sterling and Council Member Clare Kelly on a proposed ordinance to create such a Commission. We felt that with DAPR and SPARC no longer active, an Urban Commission would provide the design expertise now missing in our city government.

As I said when the proposed draft ordinance was presented during the June 26, 2023 meeting of the Planning & Development Committee, "The Urban Design Commission you see proposed tonight puts DESIGN in the hands of professionals—architects, designers, and others—who understand the important role design plays in nearly every aspect of the daily life of our community".

P&D refused to move forward with the proposed ordinance trusting that it would be a key concept to emerge from the soon-to-be new Comprehensive Plan. Alas, as of today, that concept is missing from the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Over the past few years we at Design Evanston have seen the Land Use Commission struggle when dealing with specific design issues. Two cases come to mind: 1. Access to the repurposed Masonic Temple, and 2. Proposed signage for UL Research on the Chase Bank Building. The services provided by an Urban Design Commission would be design-specific and would not conflict with the mission of the Land Use Commission.

Please take time to review Item 3 and comment on it, thereby bringing focus back to the important function that an Urban Design Commission could provide to the City of Evanston.

Jack Weiss, Director Emeritus

Design Evanston

www.designevanston.org

3 attachments

**DELogo72.jpg**
27K



PresCom Comments re Comp Plan.pdf

233K



CDC Plan.pdf

424K



Memorandum

To: Members of the Planning and Development Committee
From: Cade Sterling, Planner
CC: Sarah Flax, Community Development Director; Elizabeth Williams, Planning Manager
Subject: Discussion regarding a Community Design Commission
Date: June 26, 2023

Recommended Action:

Staff requests the Planning and Development Committee to review, discuss, and provide direction on the next steps related to a Community Design Commission.

CARP:

N/A

Committee Action:

For Discussion

Summary:

On January 15, 2023, Councilmember Kelly submitted a referral to develop a Community Design Commission, which was co-sponsored by Councilmember Suffredin and Geracaris. The Community Design Commission is proposed to replace aspects of the City's code that previously referenced the Design and Project Review Committee, Title 4, Chapter 14, which was stricken in its entirety on April 24, 2023, under Ordinance 41-O-23. Pursuant to this request, staff has prepared a draft framework for the proposed Commission and asks the Planning and Development Committee to review, discuss, and provide direction on the next steps and the specific questions outlined within this memorandum.

The proposed framework is based on a comparative analysis of nearly two-dozen design related municipal boards, committees, and commissions and strikes a balance between the diverse goals of each sponsor of the referral. Foremost, the Commission is envisioned as an advisory body. The Commission's power therein rests in its ability to work with developers and design professionals to discover mutually agreeable and feasible recommendations that leverage more positive built outcomes and expeditious entitlement for projects. Additionally, the Commission is envisioned as a working body that has the capacity to implement initiatives within the new Comprehensive General Plan as well as produce other design-related documents and resources which advance the City's land-use goals and objectives.

The emphasis of the Commission is on the quality of design and is not a substitute for interdepartmental project review and pre-application conference between staff and potential developers—critical steps to ensure clarity in code requirements and the availability of current City infrastructure to support the proposed development. Although the quality of design cannot be guaranteed by any review process or body, it is more likely to occur when community members, property owners, developers, and designers know it is being sought and encouraged early on, when its value can be demonstrated, when processes and expectations are transparent, and when significant resources, by way of Evanston's quality of resident experts in the field of design, planning, and development, are appropriately leveraged and mutually invested in a project's success as a partner and not an adversary.

The staff has identified the following significant concerns and requests the Planning and Development Committee review, discuss, and provide direction to staff for the next steps related to establishing a Community Design Commission.

1. Coordination with the Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The City is undertaking two highly significant land-use and planning projects, including the development of a new Comprehensive General Plan and its primary implementation tool, a new zoning ordinance. An established Community Design Commission could be a valuable resource in the development of these documents and help integrate the goals and objectives of the proposed Commission's framework into policy statements and initiatives for consideration as well as ensure the new zoning ordinance facilitates the type of built environment and design decisions that are desired. Alternatively, the consultants hired to prepare the Comprehensive General Plan and zoning ordinance could further envision and refine the framework for this Commission, assess its need and viability, and review its role in the future entitlement process—ensuring conflicts don't exist between the Commission's enabling legislation and the goals of these planning processes.

Should further development of the framework for this Commission wait until after the Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are adopted?

2. Composition and Residency

The majority of Evanston's Boards, Committees, and Commissions require members to be Evanston residents. Understanding limitations to volunteer capital and competition for similar expertise on the Preservation and Land Use Commissions, should membership on the proposed Commission be expanded to include both residents and those who work in Evanston? This could provide diverse perspectives and expand the pool of available volunteers and capitalize on the significant expertise and experience of the many design-related professionals who work but do not live in Evanston.

Additionally, it is envisioned that associate members, or volunteers, could serve on the Commission. Associate members would be appointed by the Commission, be non-voting members, not be required to attend regularly scheduled meetings, and serve at the Commission's discretion. Associate membership is intended to create additional volunteer capital and capacity on interest-specific subcommittees and working groups devoted to the advancement of design-related initiatives of the Comprehensive General Plan as well as the production of additional studies, reports, and plans as requested.

3. Applicability

The purview of the Commission is advisory only, with types of projects that fall under compulsory review, those that may request review and technical assistance, and those that are excluded from the review.

- a. **Compulsory Advisory Review:** Planned Developments; City initiated projects; projects which request the use of city financing; and projects referred to the Commission by the Director of Community Development.
- b. **Advisory Review by Request:** Projects adjacent to special designations, including Landmarks and Historic Districts, and exterior alterations to, additions to, or new construction of commercial, mixed-use, multi-family, or institutional uses that fall outside of the Planned Development thresholds.
- c. **Exclusions:** Single-family and two-family residential uses; Landmarks and properties in Historic Districts; and projects which are primarily affordable as defined in the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

Evanston has very low Planned Development thresholds, and many communities surveyed further define applicable projects by Zoning District, a specific increase in floor area, new construction of a specific size, or by use of Overlay Districts. Should the applicability be adjusted to be more specific and limit or expand the types of projects that fall under compulsory advisory review?

4. Application Framework

To avoid undue, costly, and unintended delays and frustration amongst applicants and members of the public, reviews are envisioned to occur early when development proposals are either being conceptualized or otherwise remain flexible and mutually beneficial recommendations can be implemented. This diverges from the majority of communities surveyed, as well as the former Design and Project Review Committee, which often broadly influenced a project, identifying deficiencies and imposing conditions late in the development process when changes were either infeasible or cost prohibitive.

Three types of reviews are offered:

- a. **Initial Assessment:** Not mandated even for projects which fall under compulsory advisory review. Conducted via remote meeting by a subcommittee or working group not requiring public notice. Focus on broad design and site planning concepts and identification of opportunities for proposed development or re-development to align with the City's sustainability and land-use goals and objectives. This is not a substitute for interdepartmental project review or pre-application conferences between a developer and staff which can ensure the identification of code requirements and the feasibility of existing or required City infrastructure to support a proposed development.
- b. **Design Development:** Mandated for projects which fall under compulsory review. Require public notice but scheduled as discussion items only. Focus on schematic design, site planning elements, and overall form, bulk, and massing.
- c. **Design Implementation:** Mandated for projects which fall under compulsory review. Require public notice and schedule as actionable items. Focus on

detailed aspects of the design of a project, including materials, textures, sustainability, architectural expression, landscape and amenity zone treatments, and human scale qualities.

Good design, development, and re-development represent significant opportunities to leverage positive change and create a more sustainable and human-centered built environment—environments people are attracted to and comfortable in. To create transparency in how a project does or does not contribute to these goals, every final action of the Commission shall be accompanied by written findings of fact and recommendations for use by subsequent determining bodies. Findings shall specify the reason or reasons for the recommendation, including the goals and objectives of the Commission and the project's relationship to the following criteria:

1. A project's form, materials, design, detailing, and composition
2. A project's orientation, siting, landscape design, and spatial relationships
3. Climate resilience, sustainability, and environmental best practices
4. Human-centered design and street activation
5. Transportation best practices, including parking, circulation, and support of multi-modal, alternative, and mass modes of transportation
6. The design and location of signage, graphics, and public art
7. Mitigation of adverse impacts and overall public benefits provided
8. A project's relationship to applicable plans, studies, and reports adopted by the Commission and City Council from time to time
9. A project's relationship to design standards, design guidelines, and design-related goals, as applicable and as adopted and amended from time to time

Should the types of reviews offered to be adjusted or simplified, and are their design-related criteria either missing or should not be considered as part of the Commission's purview?

5. Powers and Duties

The Commission has seven enumerated powers and duties. Are there powers or duties envisioned by the Planning and Development Committee which are not included in the draft framework? Are powers and duties included, which should be excluded from consideration?

Legislative History:

On April 24, 2023, Ordinance 41-O-23 was adopted, amending Title 4 - Building Regulations of the City Code, by striking Chapter 14, Design and Project Review (DAPR) in its entirety. During a discussion at the Planning and Development Committee, it was noted that the removal of DAPR from the City Code was the first phase of a referral made by Councilmember Kelly, and by the end of the second quarter, the establishment of a Community Design Commission would be brought to the Committee for discussion in order to provide staff with additional direction on next steps.

Attachments:

[DRAFT Community Design Commission June 2023](#)

DRAFT Community Design Commission

1. Statement of Purpose

Maintaining a high quality built environment positively impacts the health, well-being, and general welfare of the public, contributes toward the City's unique character and identity, strengthens the local economy, and enhances the vibrancy and resiliency of Evanston's business and downtown districts. In order to advance these goals, an Community Design Commission is hereby established to provide technical assistance and expert advice and opinion on development and redevelopment proposals in both the public and private realm; advocate for human-centered design solutions for projects which have the potential to impact the experiential quality of the built environment; promote the highest quality of design in order to ensure built interventions create and retain economic, environmental, social, and cultural value; and, advance aspects of the Comprehensive General Plan and other plan documents, which relate to the purpose and objectives of this Ordinance.

The Community Design Commission reports to the Planning & Development Committee.

2. Objectives

- a. To advocate for and prioritize human-centered, creative, and authentic design solutions that foster civic pride in the beauty of the City's built environment and assure a functional, vibrant, and visually attractive City for the future.**
 - i. Evanston's built environment should be people-oriented, and be alive with activity. New design should be friendly and comfortable. Places should attract people and encourage spontaneous interactions because people like being there. Human scale and proportion, color and texture, shade, sense of enclosure, groupings of native plant material, street trees and under-story trees, comfortable places to sit with surrounding visual interest — the environments of Evanston should be made friendly, enduring, and appealing for people in as many ways as possible.
- b. To encourage new development and redevelopment that recognize and integrate with the City's existing physical identity through excellence in design, authenticity, and creativity.**
 - i. The diversity and quality of different building types, styles, and uses throughout the City is part of the richness and complexity of Evanston's urban fabric. New interventions should authentically build upon and contribute toward this existing fabric rather than fracture it or perpetuate inefficient, non-human centered, and isolating land use patterns.
- c. To promote high quality design and improve the general appearance of buildings, structures, and landscapes so as to maintain and improve the economic vitality and vibrancy of environments within the City.**
 - i. Good design is good for business. Priority in the review of new projects should emphasize their overall impact in making neighborhoods and commercial areas better places to live for both current and future residents — they should strengthen the pedestrian-oriented character and cohesion of the City's built fabric, promote activation of public spaces, and provide opportunities for socialization and creativity in individual treatment decisions that remain harmonious with their surrounding design vocabularies. Create a unique sense of place that is attractive to people and business.

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- d. **Emphasize sustainable development and low-impact development practices.**
 - i. A sustainable built environment is more than the collection of individual building's green materials and systems. Sustainable built interventions are those that meet Green Building requirements but are also permanent, adaptable, loved for their use and beauty, and which become part of the City's identity and collective memory. Sustainable buildings and landscapes are those our City desires to preserve for generations – not those which capitalize on and contribute to short-lived trends and commodification of the built environment. Existing high-quality building stock within the City should be used as inspiration for new sustainable land-use patterns to identify and promote a spirit of place.
- e. **To create transparency and efficiency in the development and entitlement processes through early consultation and technical assistance; to create clarity in design expectation, processes, public benefits, and code requirements; and provide direction and predictability in the interpretation and implementation of the City's planning objectives.**
 - i. The emphasis of the Commission should be on quality of design. Quality cannot be guaranteed by any design review process or body, but it is more likely to occur when community members, property owners, developers, and designers know it is being sought and encouraged early on, when its value can be demonstrated, when processes and expectations are transparent, and when significant resources, by way of Evanston's quality of resident experts in the field of design and development, are appropriately leveraged and mutually invested in a project's success as a partner and not an adversary.

3. Composition and Terms

- a. Membership

The Commission is hereby established and shall consist of up to eleven (11) members appointed by the Mayor with advice and consent by the City Council. Each member shall either reside or work in the City and shall have a demonstrated ability, experience, or expertise in one or more of the following: Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Historic Preservation; Real-Estate; Law; Urban Design; Civil or Structural Engineering; Planning, or Art. Each Commissioner shall have one vote.
- b. Associate Members

In addition to the members appointed by the Mayor with advice and consent by the City Council, the Community Design Commission may utilize the assistance of other individuals (including former members), whose expertise shall be deemed necessary or desirable in the performance of the Commission's responsibilities. Associate members shall be appointed in accordance with the Commission's adopted Rules and Procedures. Associate members shall be nonvoting and serve at the discretion of the Commission.
- c. Appointment, Terms, and Vacancies

Commissioners shall be appointed for terms of up to three (3) years. Initial appointments shall be staggered so that the terms of not more than four Commissioners shall expire in any calendar year. A Commissioner may be reappointed but shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.

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- i. When a vacancy is created under unforeseen circumstances prior to the expiration of a members term, the member appointed to fill the vacancy shall be appointed to serve a full three (3) year term.
- d. **Officers**

Officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary elected by the Commissioners at the regularly scheduled January meeting. Each officer shall serve a one-year term and be eligible for reelection. The duties of the Secretary shall be delegated to the City Manager or his/her designee or as otherwise directed by the Commission's Rules and Procedures.

 - i. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall act as chair and assume all powers and responsibilities afforded to the position. If the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent, the Commission shall appoint a member as acting Chair by majority vote of those present.
 - ii. If an officer's term expires prior to the January election, the Commission shall elect a new officer to serve until the annual election of officers.
 - iii. All powers and responsibilities of the officers shall be enumerated in the Commission's Rules and Procedures as amended from time to time.

4. Procedure, Hearings, and Recommendations

- a. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission shall be held no less frequently than monthly, unless prevented by lack of quorum or lack of projects for review. Special meetings may be called for by any three (3) Commissioners or as outlined in the Commission's Rules and Procedures. All meetings, hearings, and deliberations of the full Commission shall be open to the public except as provided for by State Law.
- b. The Commission shall adopt its own procedural rules for the conduct of its business not inconsistent with State Law, City Council Rules, or this Ordinance. Such rules shall be reviewed and filed with the City Clerk annually.
- c. The Commission, by its adopted Rules and Procedures, may create a subcommittee structure to further its business and the goals of this Ordinance.
- d. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the members appointed and a motion shall carry by a simple majority of the quorum present.
- e. Every final action of the Commission shall be accompanied by written findings of fact and recommendations. Findings shall specify the reason or reasons for the recommendation or action including the goals and objectives of this Ordinance and the projects relationship to the following:
 - i. A projects form, materials, design, detailing, and composition
 - ii. A projects orientation, siting, landscape design, and spatial relationships
 - iii. Climate resilience and environmental best practices
 - iv. Human-centered design and street activation
 - v. Transportation best practices including parking, circulation, and support of multi-modal, alternative, and mass modes of transportation
 - vi. The design and location of signage, graphics, and public art
 - vii. Mitigation of adverse impacts and overall public benefit provided
 - viii. A projects relationship to applicable plans, studies, and reports adopted by the Commission and City Council from time to time
 - ix. A project's relationship to design standards, design guidelines, and design goals, as applicable and as adopted and amended from time to time.

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5. Application Framework

Applicants may request a meeting with the Commission at any time. Applicants are encouraged to request meetings with the Commission or appropriate Subcommittee multiple times as a proposal is conceptualized prior to design development. Types of reviews offered include:

a. Initial Assessment*

The initial assessment phase includes general planning and design consultation with a focus on: development potential; assessment and interpretation of existing significance and character defining features; block and neighborhood character; analysis of existing adjacencies and discussion of broad design and site planning concepts which are contextual, harmonious, creative, and innovative.

b. Design Development**

The design development phase includes schematic design development with a focus on: access, circulation, and parking; drainage and infrastructure; viewsheds; directional expression of facades; walls of continuity; rhythm and spacing of structures on a street; form, massing, and height; and, conceptual landscape and amenity zone treatments.

c. Design Implementation***

The design implementation phase includes: articulation of features, forms, and detailing; composition and relationship of materials including texture, variety, human and small scale elements; architectural expression; colors and finishes; the proportion and relationship of openings; the rhythm of fenestration; relationships of solids to voids in facades; site amenities and furniture; lighting; roof forms; the rhythm of recesses and projections; detailed landscape design; and, proposed public benefit or mitigation of adverse impacts as applicable.

**The initial assessment phase shall be undertaken by a subcommittee populated by a rotating membership of the whole via a remote meeting not requiring public notice. Initial assessments may occur over multiple meetings and shall be accompanied by an initial assessment report to accompany the formal application for review by the full Commission. Triggered by request prior to a Zoning Analysis application.*

***Applications for Design Development shall be conducted in accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures as well as the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Scheduled at the time of initial Zoning Analysis Application or following completion of an initial assessment review and report (as applicable). Design Development reviews shall be conducted as discussion items with no vote taken.*

****Applications for Design Implementation review shall be conducted in accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures as well as the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Design Development Review follows a Design Development review as an actionable item under new business after the applicant has had time to refine their design and design concepts. Typically occurs just prior or following formal application for Planned Development or Building Permit.*

6. Applicability

The Commission's purview is advisory. The Commission may, at the voluntary request of the applicant or property owner, or at the discretion of the Director of Community Development, review and provide technical assistance as well as written recommendation and findings of fact to the applicant and/or appropriate body, department, or agency for projects in the following areas or for the types of work outlined below.

- a. Projects adjacent to special designations including Landmarks and Historic Districts
- b. Exterior alterations to, additions to, or new construction of, commercial, mixed-use, multi-family, or institutional uses that fall outside of the Planned Development thresholds.

The Commission shall review and provide technical assistance as well as written recommendation and findings of fact to the applicant and/or appropriate body, department, or agency only for projects in the following areas or for the types of work outlined below.

- c. Planned Developments
- d. City initiated projects, plans, and studies
- e. Projects by entities which propose use of City financing.

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7. Exceptions

- a. Properties in Historic Districts and Registered Landmarks
- b. Single and Two-Family Residential Uses
- c. Projects which are primarily affordable as defined by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

8. Review Procedure

- a. Upon receipt of an application for Zoning Analysis, a demolition or building permit, or Planned Development application, the Community Development Department shall advise the applicant of available or required advisory review by the Commission within five (5) days, and if advisory review is requested or required, forward a copy of such application together with plans pertaining thereto to the Commission in accordance with all applicable State and Local laws.
- b. Plans shall be reviewed by the Community Design Commission prior to hearings at the Land Use Commission, as applicable, or the issuance of any building permits therefore.
- c. The Commission, or its duly authorized subcommittee, shall only consider the extent to which the proposed action may be consistent or inconsistent with the goals, objectives, and purposes of this Ordinance.
- d. The Commission shall determine its findings, and transmit them, in writing, to the applicant, and attempt to work with the applicant to find a mutually satisfactory solution consistent with this Ordinance. The review shall be completed within 70 days of receipt by the Commission of the application, unless otherwise agreed to with the applicant, after which time the Community Development Department shall grant, deny, or forward the application, as originally submitted, or as amended, on its merits. Department recommendations shall take into account the findings of the Commission. A final report shall be transmitted to the applicant, the Land Use Commission, and to any legislative or administrative body before which the application must be considered.
- e. Any delay by the applicant in complying with this Ordinance shall be added to the time allowed for advisory review by the Commission.

9. Powers and Duties

- a. Implement aspects of the Comprehensive General Plan and other adopted plan documents which relate to the purpose and objectives of this Ordinance.
- b. Initiate and prepare studies, reports, plans, design guidelines, design standards, and recommendations for review and adoption by the City Council, City Manager, or officials of other Departments or Agencies on matters concerning the present or future development or redevelopment of the City.
- c. Study, review and comment on plans and proposals of other Boards, Commissions, and Committees, or departments of the City which relate to the future development or redevelopment of the City.
- d. Hear and make advisory recommendations on applications for applicable projects and types of work identified in this Ordinance and prepare, issue, and forward written findings of fact to the appropriate body, department, or agency.
- e. Periodically review the City's Building Code and Zoning Ordinance and make referrals and recommendations to the City Manager and/or City Council concerning amendments appropriate to advancement of the purposes of this Ordinance.
- f. To call upon members of City Staff as well as other experts to provide testimony before the Commission and assist in offering technical assistance to applicants.
- g. To adopt their own rules and procedures.

DRAFT Community Design Commission**Commission Comparison Matrix**

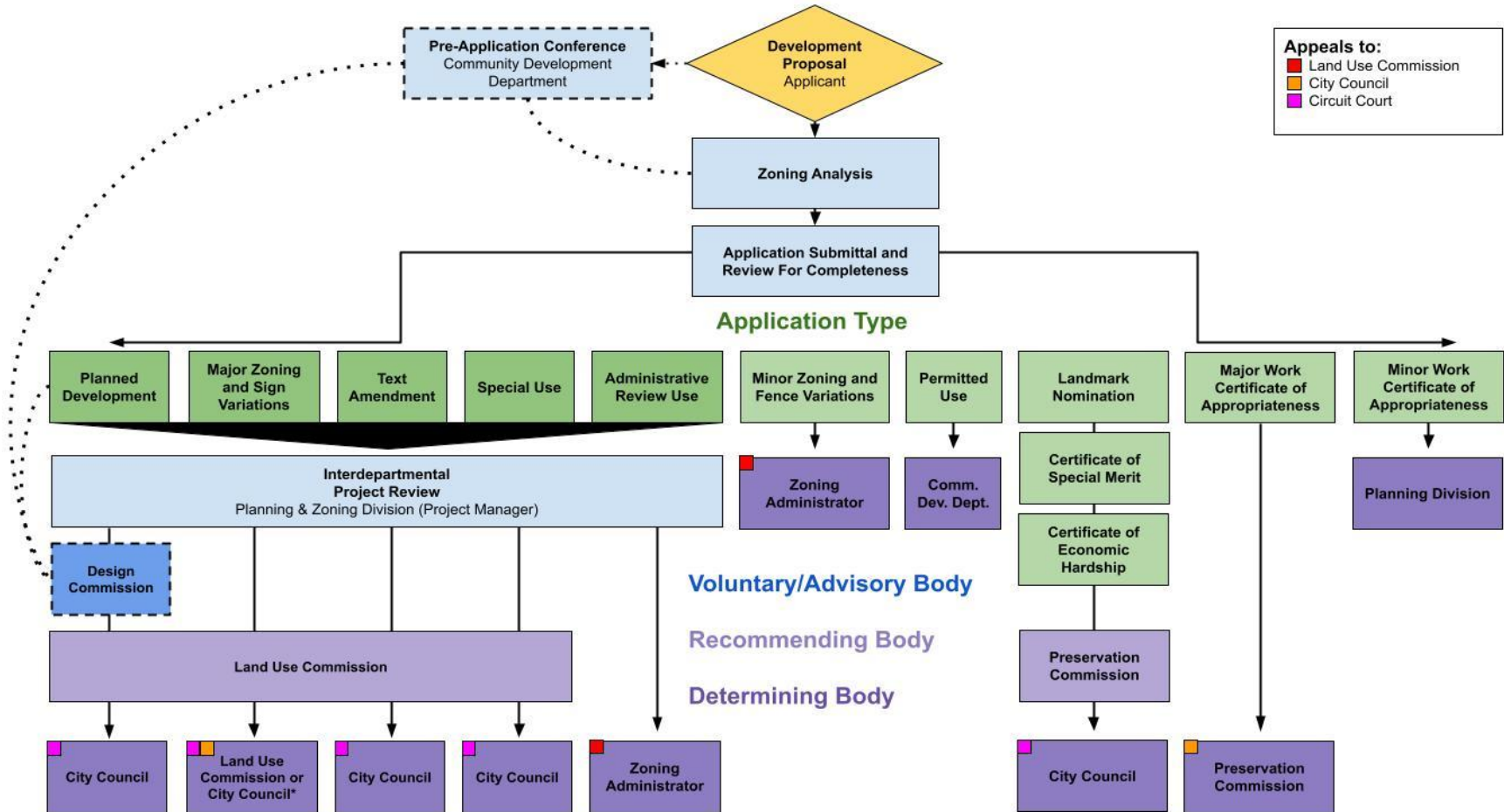
	Community Design	Land Use	Preservation
Membership	11 members	9 members	11 members
Composition	Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Historic Preservation; Real-Estate; Law; Urban Design; Civil or Structural Engineering; Planning, or Art.	Non-Specific	Architectural restoration, rehabilitation or neighborhood conservation or revitalization
Terms	3 years	4 Years	3 Years
Ex-Officio Members	No	No	Yes
Associate Members	Yes	No	Yes
Subcommittees	Yes	Largely Inactive	Yes
Phase of development in which projects are reviewed	Early	Late	Late
Type (principally)	Advisory; Voluntary	Regulatory; Compulsory	Regulatory; Compulsory
Production of educational materials, reports, studies, and other resources	Yes	No	Yes
Provides Technical Assistance	Yes	No	Yes
Voluntary/Advisory Body for:			
Planned Developments	X (Focus on design beyond codified zoning controls; broad flexibility in recommendation and areas subject to consideration)	X (Focus on zoning controls including height, bulk, and scale as related to the Special Use and Planned Development Standards)	X (Focus on design beyond codified zoning controls as related to Certificate of Appropriateness Standards for Landmarks and Historic Districts)
Major Variations		X (parking for non single-family uses)	X (Landmarks and Historic Districts)

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	Community Design	Land Use	Preservation
Voluntary/Advisory Body for:			
Minor Variations		Sign Variations	
Special Use		X	X (Landmarks and Historic Districts when Exterior Alterations are Proposed)
Map Amendments		X	
Text Amendments		X	
City Initiated Projects	X		X Landmarks and Historic Districts
Projects receiving public financing	X (Mandatory Review)		
Projects adjacent to Special designations such as Landmarks and Historic Districts	X		X (empowered but not practiced and limited to the impact on the designated resource)
Historic District Nominations			X
Landmark Nominations			X
Determining Body for:			
Major Variations		X (other than parking variations for non single-family uses)	
Minor Variations		Appeals and Some Sign Variations	
Projects in Historic Districts or for properties identified as Landmarks			X

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Proposed Entitlement Process Diagram



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Community Comparison Matrix

When researching best practices related to a design review committee, commission, or board, staff surveyed nearly two dozen municipalities and their enabling legislation. The following communities were selected for more in depth consideration due to either similarity to Evanston's land-use patterns, objectives, and development pressures, or overall innovation and diversity in approach.

	Evanston Illinois (Proposed)	Chicago Illinois	Urbana Illinois	Madison Wisconsin	Atlanta Georgia	Palo Alto California	Ann Arbor Michigan
Population	78k 10k/sq.mi.	2.7mil 12k/sq.mi	40k 3k/sq.mi.	270k 3.5k/sq.mi.	500k 3.5k/sq.mi	69k 3k/sq/mi.	120k 4.4k/sq.mi.
Name of BCC	Urban (or Community) Design Commission	Committee on Design	Design.Review Board	Urban Design Commission	Urban Design Commission	Architecture Review Board	Design Review Board
Web Link		Link	Link	Link	Link	Link	Link
# of members	11	24	9	9	11	5	7
Terms	3 years 2 terms	2 years 3 terms	3 years 2 terms	3 years 2 terms	3 years 2 terms	2 years 3 terms	3 years 2 terms
Composition	Residents and those who work in Evanston Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Historic Preservation; Real-Estate; Law; Urban Design; Civil or Structural Engineering; Planning, or Art.	Residents Only Affordable housing, architecture, art, community development, public engagement, landscape architecture and historic preservation	Residents Only Member of Plan Commission; Member of Historic Preservation Commission; one architect; one local developer; five individuals within 250' of an Overlay District or a small business owner	Residents Only (1) Alderperson, (2) residents members, (1) landscape architect, (3) architects, (2) design professionals (1) alternate member appointed by the Mayor	Residents Only (2) registered architects, one (1) registered landscape architect, one (1) planner, one (1) neighborhood representative, one (1) real estate professional, one (1) land developer, one (1) lawyer, one (1) historian, one (1) artist, and one (1)preservationist	Residents Only (3) whom shall be architects, landscape architects, or other design professionals	Voter requirement unless waived by 7 members of council (2) Landscape architects; (2) architects; (1) urban planner; (1) developer; (1) construction contractor

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	Evanston Illinois (Proposed)	Chicago Illinois	Urbana Illinois	Madison Wisc.	Atlanta Georgia	Palo Alto California	Ann Arbor Mich
Types of projects	PD's; projects adjacent to special designations; city initiated projects or projects utilizing public financing; alteration to, addition to, or construction of new commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family structures outside of PD thresholds	Large PD's; PD's adjacent to special designations; City led plans and improvements; Projects that use City funds; other unique circumstances and cultural resources	Projects located in applicable overlay/design districts with the following considerations: construction of new principle structure; increase building footprint or FAR by 15%; new or enlarged parking; other aesthetic changes deemed substantial by the Zoning Administrator	Recommendations on matters sent to the Plan Commission; advice and recommendation on matters as requested by any City department, agency, or commission; Planned Developments; Multi-Family Uses; Public Projects including State, Local, and University projects; Projects in Urban Design Districts; large retail developments; signage plans	Any city initiated project; project by public entities which levy taxes in Atlanta or projects utilizing City financing; projects on city property; administration of the City's preservation program including issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness for Landmarks and properties in historic districts, and review of variances related to historic properties	New construction or addition 5k sq.ft. or more; multi-family three units or more; construction of 3 or more adjacent single-family homes or duplexes; signage; alteration to commercial, multi-family, and industrial properties; other projects as deferred to the Board by the Community Development director; excludes single-family and two-family uses and streamlined affordable housing projects	To review certain projects in the downtown (in a D1 or D2 Zoning District, is a planned development, increased floor area, changes to approved planned developments, or a plan that requires approval by the Plan Commission or City Council ; to provide comments and technical assistance on a projects relationship to the Downtown Design Guidelines;
Review timing	Early; flexible; multi-faceted	Early; after initial zoning review	Late; after application for permit	Late; after application for permit	Late; after application for permit	Early; flexible (preliminary and advisory review offered)	Late
Review criteria	Form, materials, design, and composition; Orientation, siting, landscape design and spatial relationships; Climate resilience and environmental best practices; Human-centered design and street activation; Transportation best practices; The design and location of signage, and public art; Relationship to plans, studies, reports, or design guidelines	Broad	Surrounding neighborhood character; Parking and access; Screening and landscaping; Site details; Design guidelines as applicable	Specific design guidelines and standards for certain application types or within certain Urban Design Districts	Broad (other than specific standards for review of Certificates of Appropriateness)	Consistency with other plans, studies, and codes; Creation of an internal sense of order and desirable environment; Preservation of natural and historic features; Scale, mass and character to adjacent land uses; Aesthetic qualities; Transportation best practices; Sustainability best practices	Relationship to specific Design Guidelines as amended from time to time

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	Evanston Illinois (Proposed)	Chicago Illinois	Urbana Illinois	Madison Wisc.	Atlanta Georgia	Palo Alto California	Ann Arbor Mich
Enforces Design Overlay Districts	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Conservation Districts)	No	Yes (Downtown District)
Binding Design Review	No; advisory only	No; advisory only	Yes	Yes	Yes (COA only)	No; advisory to Community Development Department (appeals to council)	No; advisory only
Working BCC (produces studies, reports, plans, guidelines etc.)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes; reports annually to Council on the quality of development in the downtown, effectiveness of the design review process, and makes annual recommendations for amendments to the downtown district design guidelines



Preservation Commission

City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201
(847) 448-8231
csterling@cityofevanston.org

Members of the Land Use Commission,

On December 12, 2024, the Preservation Commission met to [discuss and comment](#) on preservation-related components of the Envision Evanston 2045 draft comprehensive plan and zoning code. Our discussion was rooted in Evanston's [Preservation Ordinance](#) and our mandate to promote the City's cultural, educational, economic, and general welfare.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our comments on the draft comprehensive plan with you now. Since you are deliberating the draft zoning code in separate meetings, our comments on that part of the project will be forwarded to you as a separate letter at that time.

The City of Evanston Preservation Commission recommends the following revisions to the Envision Evanston 2045 draft comprehensive plan. Explanations and details for each of these recommendations can be found on subsequent pages of this letter (page numbers in parenthesis).

1. Develop an implementation chapter. (p. 2)
2. Develop a community systems chapter. (p. 2)
3. Develop an urban design and community character section or chapter and modify the plan's land use strategy. (p. 2-3)
4. Include a policy statement to support new organizational structures and approaches that increase the capacity to implement the values, policies, and initiatives within the Preservation Commission's long-range plan, *Preserve 2040*. (p. 3)
5. Expand the use of Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) in addition to affordability as a more broadly applicable neighborhood planning and stabilization tool. (p. 3-4)
6. Collaborate with tribal representatives to identify and designate a reinterment site for the inadvertent discovery of Native American and Indigenous ancestral remains. (p. 4)
7. Support implementation of demolition delay procedures. (p. 4)
8. Revise the historic resources map to reflect current conditions. (p. 4)
9. Support advisory review for certain types of projects adjacent to landmarks outside of historic districts and within the National Register districts that lack local protection. (p. 4)
10. Include additional metrics, data, and analysis to support and guide decision-making. (p. 4)
11. Modify the proposal to allow four-units in all residential zones to reduce the potential for inadvertently increasing displacement pressures and destabilizing neighborhoods. (p. 4-5)
12. Directly address the treatment of parks and open spaces within historic districts. (p. 5)
13. Directly address the historic and cultural significance of trees and landscapes. (p. 5)
14. Include a statement that supports volunteer landscape stewards. (p. 5)
15. Support implementation of a deconstruction ordinance. (p. 5)
16. Directly address the historic significance of the City's Metra and CTA train stations to the growth and development of the city. (p. 5)
17. Clarify support for the connections between historic preservation and the community's identity and placemaking opportunities. (p. 5)

Introduction

The Preservation Commission believes a comprehensive plan is meant to represent the community's consensus and vision for the future. Importantly, it serves as a guidebook to determine and understand the appropriate types of development that should be encouraged across the City – realizing that each new development creates a lasting impact on the City's identity, history, design, character, and urban form.

Moreover, a well-developed comprehensive plan identifies and examines the complex intersections of our shared goals and community values. It serves as a data-driven and goal-oriented road map for the City, partner organizations, non-profit institutions, and our schools to coordinate, build capacity, formulate key policy positions, and undertake mutually inclusive actions towards a common vision.

The Preservation Commission believes change is a healthy indicator of our built environment and understands that change will always occur. However, in order to mitigate and minimize the challenges that change presents, the Commission believes a balanced comprehensive plan must first identify, analyze, and respond to local conditions and acknowledge the rich diversity and history of our built environment and cultural heritage. In this way, we ensure that change respects, nurtures, and strategically builds upon our past toward a more vibrant future.

The following additions are intended to expand and enrich the draft comprehensive plan for the benefit of the community and future generations of Evanstonians.

New Chapters:

1. **Develop an implementation chapter.** This chapter should prioritize the plan's actions, seek to build capacity, identify preferred organizational structures and collaborative approaches, detail an implementation timeline and matrix, explore potential funding sources, and examine how and where various actions intersect with one another across chapters to discover needs for collaboration and communication. Without an implementation chapter, the comprehensive plan risks being reactive and ultimately ineffective.
2. **Develop a community systems chapter.** A community systems chapter should identify current levels of service, service gaps, and overlaps across public and private partner organizations and facilities, including School Districts 65 and 202. Further, this chapter should identify strategies for collaboration and partnership; create efficiencies and enhancements; and create guiding policies for the maintenance, use, programming, and management of the City's existing facilities over the next 20 years. These considerations include the potential for school closures (many of which have historic significance or are landmarked) and the future use of the Noyes Cultural Arts Center (landmarked), the Police and Fire Headquarters (eligible for landmark designation), and the Civic Center (listed on the NRHP and eligible for landmark designation). These resources are tangible links to Evanston's current and past identities, and their futures are significant issues to address.

Land Use:

3. **Develop an urban design and community character section or chapter and modify the plan's land use strategy.** Many of the draft comprehensive plan's initial foundational goals are not elaborated in any corresponding chapter. This includes goals related to reimagining the City through human-centered design, enhancing the aesthetics of the built environment through thoughtful urban design, and preserving Evanston's sense of place by encouraging new buildings that compliment existing design patterns and vocabularies. Without further

narrative and supporting policies and actions, these important themes risk being performative without the ability for meaningful integration and implementation.

An urban design and community character section should catalyze the foundation for a more complex land use and zoning strategy that more appropriately respects contextual design vocabularies and existing built forms. In this way, the land use strategy would reflect Evanston's unique character and history across its many diverse geographic areas. Specifically, this section should:

- Identify, analyze, and celebrate the historic development patterns of various neighborhoods, business districts, the downtown, and other unique cultural landscapes across the City. These areas provide tangible links to Evanston's spirit, the community's collective memory of place, and our diverse identities.
- Define human-centered design and thoughtful urban design. Use historic design vocabularies and existing vibrant built environments as points of inspiration for new built outcomes that are compatible, scaled appropriately, and contextual.
- Include design strategies, guidelines, visualizations, and modeling to communicate preferred treatment approaches and to indicate how these approaches vary based on the diversity of Evanston's built environment. This will help create more predictive outcomes for the community and future developers alike.
- Build capacity and facilitate implementation of the section's recommendations through creation of an Urban Design Commission.

Preservation:

4. **Include a policy statement to support new organizational structures and approaches that increase the capacity to implement the values, policies, and initiatives within the Preservation Commission's long-range plan, [Preserve 2040](#).** More acknowledgement and emphasis should be placed on the City's preservation plan, *Preserve 2040* (December 2022, see attached) as well as strategic changes the Commission has made to improve the efficiency of the program for residents. *Preserve 2040* was made by Evanston for Evanston. It is a complex and complete narrative for the actions needed to evolve, advance, and expand the preservation program over the next two decades. The Commission believes that an effective 21st Century preservation program lives at the intersection of affordability, economic vitality, sustainability, and celebration of our diverse places, people, and stories.

The preservation program requires a logical, transparent, and efficient framework that keeps pace with residents' evolving needs. Over the past five years (evident in the [2022](#) and [2023](#) annual reports) the Commission has worked to reduce burdens on homeowners and the Commission's volunteer capital. Despite this, additional education and outreach is needed to overcome entrenched misperceptions of the program. The Commission will continue to assess the effectiveness of these strategic changes and work to increase flexibility for routine types of work as well as the use of innovative materials and technologies. The Commission believes Evanston has an opportunity to not just follow historic preservation best practices, but to lead in their discovery and implementation, and *Preserve 2040 in conjunction with newly available volunteer capital* on the Commission provides this roadmap.

5. **Expand the use of Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) in addition to affordability as a more broadly applicable neighborhood planning and stabilization tool.** Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) support community-led preservation approaches to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. This tool is especially effective in areas vulnerable to displacement pressures and where neighborhood stakeholders have expressed

interest in stabilizing neighborhood identity, and celebrating unique character and cultural heritage. The Commission believes the expanded use of NCDs has the potential to be a transformative land use tool and a viable alternative to traditional historic districts in areas that contain a cohesive land pattern and identifiable physical characteristics.

6. **Collaborate with tribal representatives to identify and designate a reinterment site for the inadvertent discovery of Native American and Indigenous ancestral remains.** The reinterment of ancestral remains near the sites where they were disturbed is an act of reverence and recognition that is essential for fostering healing, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting environmental stewardship.
7. **Support implementation of demolition delay procedures.** Demolition delay is an effective mitigation tool that allows for the assessment of a structure's historical, cultural, or architectural significance. Delay windows allow the Commission to work with developers to make persuasive arguments, find alternative uses or buyers, and otherwise identify alternatives to demolition that prioritize affordable and adaptive uses, stated goals of the comprehensive plan. Demolition delays also allow the Commission to initiate or otherwise support landmark proceedings to prevent the loss of structures eligible for landmark designation that already meet the comprehensive plan's goals around preservation, land use, economic development, and human-scale design.
8. **Revise the historic resources map to reflect current conditions.** The existing map should be supplemented to contain not only existing federal and local historic districts, but eligible historic districts, individual landmarks within and outside of historic districts, eligible resources identified by the Commission within their ongoing Study List of Eligible Resources, legacy businesses, and Shorefront Legacy Center's African American Heritage Sites.
9. **Support advisory review for certain types of projects adjacent to landmarks outside of historic districts and within the National Register districts that lack local protection.** Evanston has over 400 individual landmarks outside of a local historic district. These resources are particularly vulnerable to changes in their integrity of setting through adjacent new construction that may be out of scale and incompatible with surrounding character and design vocabularies. Many Chicago communities, including Oak Park, have statutory obligations to review these types of proposals in an effort to provide developers and architects with technical assistance, to create persuasive arguments, and to facilitate mutually agreeable solutions which better protect the integrity of landmark resources outside of a local historic district.

Housing:

10. **Include additional metrics, data, and analysis to support and guide decision-making.** This chapter should catalog the diversity of Evanston's existing housing stock and housing typologies, compare that information to neighboring communities, and relate it to regional and national consumer preferences in housing choice. Additionally, the housing chapter should examine how the city's existing housing stock, including our historic housing, allows Evanston to compete with other similar and neighboring municipalities as a residential community of choice in the Chicago region.
11. **Modify the proposal to allow four-units in all residential zones to reduce the potential for inadvertently increasing displacement pressures and destabilizing neighborhoods.** We

believe Action H2.1 may insert a significant profit motive for the redevelopment and demolition of smaller-scale, more vernacular, and currently attainable housing types. This action is counter to the comprehensive plan's goals for adaptive use, sustainability, preservation, and the centers and corridors land use strategy. As an alternative, the Commission recommends using clearly defined and quantifiable housing, density, and population goals as the driving force to determine what changes are necessary for the City's existing low-density residential neighborhoods, if any. The Commission further recommends supporting the development of double houses as an alternative approach since they are already an existing building type in low-density residential neighborhoods. Double houses can offer modest and incremental density increases that are to scale and compatible with surrounding design vocabularies and neighborhood character. This alternative has the potential to minimize the proposed profit motive which catalyzes a widespread rearrangement of space that may not be necessary or effective.

Parks and Open Space:

- 12. Directly address the treatment of parks and open spaces within historic districts.** Many parks and open spaces, including the majority of the City's lakefront, are located within a historic district. The historic associations and cultural significance of these resources should be the foundation for informing future planning, use, and design decisions.

Environment:

- 13. Directly address the historic and cultural significance of trees and landscapes.** Many individual trees are part of the historic and cultural landscape of the community. Preservation of setting, which includes significant landscape features and heritage trees, is essential to retaining Evanston's sense of place and community character.
- 14. Include a statement that supports volunteer landscape stewards.** Many of the City's cultural landscapes and native habitats are maintained by volunteer stewards. Expanding capacity, partnerships, recognition, and resources afforded to these organizations intersects with climate resilience, historic preservation, job training, and economic development. This results in positive community and environmental outcomes that support Evanston's unique sense of place and the broader history of the land.
- 15. Support implementation of a deconstruction ordinance.** The draft comprehensive plan only tangentially references the importance of embodied energy and carbon and the benefits of deconstruction. We believe the issue should be more explicitly addressed so that it can be meaningfully advanced through the implementation of a deconstruction ordinance.

Transportation:

- 16. Directly address the historic significance of the City's Metra and CTA train stations to the growth and development of the city.** The historic associations and architectural significance of the City's train stations should be prioritized and balanced with re-development goals that increase their accessibility and function. Both the Metra and L are important aspects of Evanston's soundscape and identity within the region.

Placemaking:

- 17. Clarify support for the connections between historic preservation and the community's identity and placemaking opportunities.** A subsection under 'policies and actions' in this chapter should explicitly identify historic buildings, cultural landscapes, and other historic sites as prime loci for placemaking, storytelling, and interpretation.

Finally, as noted on the first page of this letter, the Preservation Commission will continue to review the proposed zoning code, and looks forward to presenting its findings to you at a later date. The Commission believes developing a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance more or less simultaneously, minimizes procedural effectiveness. The zoning ordinance is meant to be the primary tool to effectuate the plans goals, and should therefore be developed and discussed in earnest only once the comprehensive plans land use strategy and goals have been agreed upon.

We are hopeful that many of our concerns with the proposed zoning code might be preemptively addressed through downstream changes afforded by the recommendation for a more complex and context sensitive land use strategy and inclusion of a community character and urban design section.

We wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to assisting you further in any way deemed appropriate or necessary.

Respectfully submitted by the members of the 2024 Preservation Commission,

Sarah M. Dreller, PhD - Chair

Beth Bodan, Vice-Chair

Carl Klein, Secretary

Stuart Cohen, FAIA

John R. Jacobs

Thomas Ahleman

Lesa Rizzolo

Charles Smith

Amanda Ziehm

Matthew H. Johnson, PhD

Joshua Bowes-Carlson



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Issues for further study to inform the Comprehensive Plan

1 message

Shirley Dugdale <shirley@dugdalestrategy.com>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 11:23 AM

To: Megan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Please submit these comments to the Land Use Commissioners for tomorrow's hearing, as the issues raised suggest areas for further consideration and study to refine the Comprehensive Plan.

(I also shared them with the City Council yesterday before the discussion on whether to extend the EE45 schedule.)

Thank you,

Shirley Dugdale

Shirley Dugdale, AIA

Dugdale Strategy LLC

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shirley@dugdalestrategy.com

www.dugdalestrategy.com

A few of the many issues that need more time for the planning process:

1. To better address the western and southern sectors of the city. The Land Use Strategy in general is not clear where "centers" are intended (other than along the rail line, which has been Evanston's development strategy for years), but especially for these areas of the city. For example, to:

- **Indicate where development can encourage neighborhood clusters** with local scale grocery/retail and basic health support, and can reflect neighborhood identity and diversity. If a major goal is developing a walkable city, then residents in whole sectors of the city (especially those historically underserved) should not have to depend on car use to grocery shop, get to work, or lack convenient walkable access to essentials. (The "Neighborhood Pockets" type is not evident on the Land Use map.)
- **Review the impact of displacing the major grocery stores available to this sector of the city.** The reclassification of the large blocks of former industrial land along the southwestern edge into an "Innovation and Creativity Zone" does not seem to indicate a plan for where this type of large footprint uses could relocate.
- **Strengthen east-west corridor connections.** On the transit map there is not even a suggestion of a future bus along Main Street to serve the heart of this sector.
- **Pursue the obvious opportunity to add a stop (or two) on the Skokie rail line over the next decade** – which would provide thousands more walkable access to the mass transit network and support growth of local retail along active pedestrian paths leading into the residential neighborhoods.
- **Recognize the importance of schools which are so core to family life with small children, as are parks.** Walking radiuses to elementary and middle schools have been important to walkable community planning for years. Schools should be more visible on maps and walking radiuses overlaid.

2. To use the 3D database to model typical situations and test the proposed changes. The taxpayers paid for the consultant team to create this powerful visualization tool – let's use it to generate images and inform these discussions! The subconsultants demonstrated the tool's capacity to do 3D modeling to visualize changes back in July but it has not been used to reveal what is being proposed.

3. To make visible problematic conditions and mitigate unintended consequences. The process needs more time for due diligence to study potential impacts, analyze data and gather more information on the experiences of other cities. Several professionals testified that typically comprehensive plans can take several years. The zoning revision process especially needs time to assess concerns like:

- potential to accelerate displacement or reduce affordability
- impacts of increase in as-of-right development opportunities
- solar access rights legal implications

- estimated erosion of the tree canopy with various scenarios
- calculations of extra long-term runoff from additional impermeable surfaces and roof areas
- estimated costs to the city of increased infrastructure burdens with denser development.

4. To plan a series of workshop charrettes on neighborhood design involving local professional planning expertise, community representation and city staff – to collaborate on refinement and build consensus beyond limited formal hearings. Despite figures of how many people participated in the EE45 process, most happened before any physical plan material had been released.

5. To integrate more climate-related resiliency strategies to serve residents. To mention a few:

- A plan for distributed cooling centers and shaded spaces to provide respite during heat emergencies for those without adequate air conditioning
- Strategies to tap distributed solar and battery power during power outages, protect or bury power lines along alleys with new construction to mitigate wind/tornado damage
- Incentives for more passive design strategies (e.g. considering solar orientation in new building design with exterior shading techniques to reduce solar heat gain into apartments)
- Promotion of more energy efficient housing models, like row housing, that minimize exterior exposure (compared with freestanding mini-suburban models like “microhomes” or 4-unit apartment blocks with narrow gaps between them -- which expose additional surfaces to extreme temperatures).

Additional considerations

If the Comprehensive Plan is approved first, then the approval needs to allow for modification of the Land Use Map, because it will not be final until subsequent zoning regulations and locations of zones are approved. (The proposed Land Use Map appears in both Chapters 1 & 2 as the intent was to coordinate land use and zoning districts.)

A longer duration project need not trigger additional services fees for the consultant team, especially as many have expressed disappointment with the work. (Just the use of stock images in the draft suggests how little time the team spent here learning about Evanston’s unique urban conditions.) Please give our diligent staff the time to manage a proper inclusive review process and integrate revisions into a plan that reflects all of Evanston’s vision for the future.

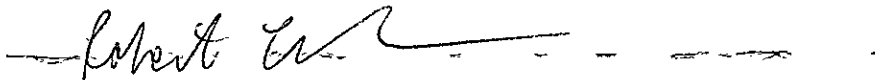
Thank you for all your efforts on this important initiative.

Shirley Dugdale, AIA
(Evanston resident since 1996)

Dear Commissioner Rodgers:

I am a resident of Ward 3 in Evanston, and I write because I have concerns with the zoning implications of the proposed *Envision Evanston 2045* plan. As such, I ask that--at the least--the City Council not vote on the Plan until after the April elections. I ask this in part so that newly elected Council members--including my own--have an opportunity to re-assess the wisdom of the Plan.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Cunningham", followed by a long horizontal line.

Robert Cunningham

Comments on Envision 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Over the past month, there have been a great many comments on Evanston's Comprehensive General Plan and proposed changes to the Zoning Code. Understanding that the LUC will be considering specific zoning issues at later meetings, I wanted to respond with my general concerns about the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

While the Plan has much to like and agree with, it is a surprisingly general plan, lacking in Evanston-specific considerations. For example, many local references are missing that could have helped clarify statements, and many local conditions are ignored. There are few citations to support some of the assertions made, few graphics to illustrate proposed zoning changes or over-all goals, and few helpful definitions for planning terminology. In short, the document is far from being ready for a vote either in favor or against acceptance.

So how to help residents understand the implications and impacts of what the Plan proposes?

1. **The Plan needs to be much more consistent and specific about managing growth and density.** For example, the Plan cites a goal of "enhancing the environment through thoughtful urban design" and "re-imagining our City on a human scale." How do these statements square with the assertion that "there should be a lot of tall buildings in the central downtown area"? How does the City intend to ensure "thoughtful urban design"? How many new buildings can the center of Evanston absorb and still help City reach other goals of livability? What's the percentage of height/density increase that the City foresees for these buildings and how does it establish limits? Similarly, the Plan mentions that attracting young families is important, and that "fewer families with young children can call Evanston home, due in part to rising housing costs." How will increasing the number of mid-rises along specific travel corridors attract young families? What's the actual mix of new residents that the City can realistically attract?
2. **The Plan needs to acknowledge the presence and influence of Northwestern University,** which is almost ignored. The University is a major factor in the City's economic success and livability, yet little is written about housing conflicts within key residential areas, or how the downtown retail area depends on students. Where's the research on other cities with major universities who have managed growth successfully? What solutions could be adapted for Evanston?
3. **The Plan needs to acknowledge where there will be conflicts to work through.** The Plan states that "The City has become home to distinct neighborhoods and business districts that showcase a development pattern that celebrates its rich social, political, and architectural heritage." How does "removing barriers to medium density" also respect existing neighborhoods? What guiding principles will the City use to solve these issues?
4. **The Plan needs to include more data with better explanation for residents.** For example, it mentions focusing on "development in mixed-use centers and corridors," and cites a city-wide analysis of land with community development potential. Where's the data and what's currently happening in these areas?

5. **The Plan needs better back-up and discussion on several assertions that provide the basis for future planning.** For example, the statement that “We expect less reliance on cars as more transit options become available and these areas (urban mixed-use) become more walkable” is problematic. What is this based on? Is data pertinent to suburbs? What are residents to do with cars and parking while these areas are being re-developed? The Plan acknowledges that driving is currently the most common mode of transportation. What evidence is there that this will change? Can the City afford to permit developments based on this assumption, and pay the price when the outcome is different?

While I hope the additional time allowed to complete the Comprehensive Plan will help, there remains a lot of work to be done. Understanding that the Zoning Code Chapters are currently a work in progress, **it would still benefit the community to see illustrations and massing studies of the proposed adjustments.** Describing the complicated mix of districts, regulations, and changes doesn't give residents a very good picture of what their community could look like in 2045 – and that, after all, is the point of this effort.

Kristine Westerberg

525 Grove, Evanston



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Fwd: Initial thoughts and questions regarding Envision Evanston

1 message

Cade Sterling <csterling@cityofevanston.org>
 To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 3:27 PM

Hi Meagan,

Can you include this in the public record for Wednesdays meeting. I received it this afternoon. These are primarily zoning related concerns.

Cade W. Sterling
Planner

Community Development Department
 Planning & Zoning Division
 City of Evanston

2100 Ridge Ave. | Evanston, IL 60201 | 847-448-8231

csterling@cityofevanston.org | cityofevanston.org

The City of Evanston is committed to promoting a Citywide culture of accessibility and inclusivity. To request an accommodation for a program, service, or activity, please call 847-866-2919 to make an ADA service request or fill out a [request form online](#).

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pat Mulhern** <spartanpatrick@gmail.com>
 Date: Tue, Jan 14, 2025 at 11:27 AM
 Subject: Re: Initial thoughts and questions regarding Envision Evanston
 To: <csterling@cityofevanston.org>
 Cc: Kathy Shaw <kashawis@mac.com>

Cade--

This morning I sent a note to the Land Use for their meeting tomorrow. (pasted below)
 Would you be willing to pass along/forward that note to Matt? I do not have his email.
 Also, attaching our petition and signatures from 3 blocks of Hinman collected in the last week!!!

For the record, our call with you, and then hearing Matt last night inspire confidence that the city can get it right if they listen to you all, the residents, and give it all the right amount of time.
 Pat

Thanks for filling out [Public Comment Sign-up Form](#)
[Evanston Land Use Commission](#)

Here's what was received.

Nearly all residents (70 plus and growing) of 3 blocks of Hinman Ave. have signed a petition that we would like on the record. We are asking the Land Use commission to do the work necessary to address the unvetted Envision Evanston zoning changes affecting Chicago Avenue and Hinman Avenue from Dempster to Lee. We do not believe the infrastructure is sufficient for adding up to 3000 new residents in high density housing units. As the most dense area of Evanston today, this will further stress/tax our infrastructure. Traffic

and new traffic patterns, pedestrian friendliness and safety, parking, water runoff and sewer, alley use and maintenance, emergency access, sunlight, tree removal, and snow removal to list a few. We also ask that prior to your recommendations, the Preservation committee recommendations, be part of the record. Last, the homeowners here have not yet been heard. Our neighbors, like all in Evanston, are expert in their neighborhoods, and their homes for most are their nest eggs. We appreciate the Land Use commission and believe that you are the body best suited to enhance our city and that you should be informing the staff as we grow forward, not consultants. The data, the answers to residents' questions, documentation and a proper timeline to get this done form a more complete plan that we all can rally toward. Thank you for your leadership and please do not let this council and mayor proceed without your commission having the time, data and information necessary to do great work for the community. Through Alderman Wynne, we will request a meeting for our 3 blocks today, as we have some of the most radical proposed zoning changes in the city. Thanks again for your service and work. You are trusted and doing the important work for the future of this terrific city.

Pat Mulhern
847-868-4222
Spartanpatrick@gmail.com



Petition signers Hinman.pdf
37K

Hinman Avenue

1012	1100	1203
1014	1108	1206
1015	1109	1209
1022	1111	1216
1025	1112	1217
1027	1114	1221
1028	1115	1224
1032	1119	1225
1040	1120	1228
1049	1121	1229
	1122	1231
	1126	1235
	1130	1236
	1133	1240
	1134	1241
423 + 433	1135	
Greenleaf	1142	

Voters - Homeowners - Taxpayers of Hinman Ave

Gilit Abraham	Chantal Healy	Tricia Russo
Chi Brady	John Horstman	Saralyn Sacks
Katie Brady	Ashley Humphreys	Dave Sage
Josh Chernoff	Dave Kames	Aneesha Sahu
Julie Chernoff	Julie Kames	Anirban Sahu
Carol Clements	Amanda Karciglu	Jenna Scheftel
Michael Davis	Zeynal Karciglu	Chris Schmidt
Joel Drouillard	Lissa Karron	Erin Schmidt
Maggie Drouillard	John Kennedy	Jake Schtevie
Shirley Dugdale	Lucy Knisely	Katie Schtevie
Jeff Epstein	Ben Kurtz	Kathy Shaw
Jeff Filippi	Royce Kurtz	Barney Straus
Patrick Formann	Andrea Lang	Nancy Straus
David Foster	Paul Lang	Eric Swan
Meg Foster	Peter Laundry	Minna Swan
Irene Freeman	Bob McDonald	Craig Taylor
Jeff Glover	Lisa Meyerowitz	Michelle Taylor
Anu Goel	Kimberley Michaelson	Carol Test
Mita Goal	Pat Mulhern	Steve Test
Robert George	Jim Myers	Rick Tulsy
Daniel Greene	Shawna Myers	Karen Weiland
John Greene	Sara O'Mara	Rick Weiland
Anna Guillemin	Jim Orrico	Becca Weiss
Isaac Hacker	Mike Osborne	Judy Weiss
Adam Haliwell	Valeria Piaggia	Jeff Wootton
Carol Hammerman	Brenda Repsold	Regina Wootton
Brad Harvey	Jim Repsold	Melissa Wynne

To: Members of the Evanston City Council
From: Jeff Smith, 2724 Harrison
Date: 1/13/2025

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan, the first draft of which was released only 75 days ago, cannot be responsibly finished in the next 75 days. The City should of course hold off on the zoning until after the Plan. In order to give any new Council members sworn in after April 1 time to get up to speed, and to allow for the great amount of study and planning that to date has not occurred, Councilmember Kelly's suggestion of a fall completion for the Plan and zoning work to occur thereafter is sound.

At least a dozen good reasons compel this, but they boil down to this: the Plan so far has enormous failings, is woefully lacking compared to *any other planning we've done* that I've ever participated in or reviewed, and doesn't have near what was contemplated and promised for this effort. The failings are so gross that they almost compel a complete re-set. To salvage the work already done, I and many other community members are willing to collaborate on further work, but what's done so far is nowhere near possibly being ready by April 1.

The responses to **three FOIA requests** I made illustrate just a few of the problems.

1. Complete failure to consider costs and benefits, pros and cons of density growth

On Nov. 27, 2024, I requested "Any studies by (or undertaken for) City of Evanston staff or consultants in the past 10 years (including any study undertaken as part of the Envision Evanston 2045 comprehensive plan and rezoning work) on costs or adverse impacts of additional density or population growth in Evanston." I broadly defined "study" to include most any kind of work on the subject. There are well-known effects of density, e.g., congestion, commute time, traffic, parking, air quality incl. ozone, stormwater runoff, water infrastructure, sewer infrastructure, civic participation and trust, crime, retail sales, taxes, plus demand on city services (such as police, fire, inspections, permitting, 911 and/or 311 systems, or other staff), schools, mental health, cost of living, resident satisfaction. Numerous studies suggest housing cost increase and gentrification. There may also be conflict with other City goals or plans. See FOIA Request 24-3670.

The response I received on Dec. 5, 2024:

No Responsive Documents

The public records requested do not exist.

We have never worked on the type of study you are requesting.

Since population density growth is *the* major driving thrust of the Plan and associated zoning rolled out to date, not to have studied the costs and benefits is a stunning and fatal omission. Note the draft Plan in fact has no such discussion whatsoever.

2. Complete lack of baseline data on the supposed #1 issue, housing.

Also on Nov. 27, 2024, I requested a simple report or table, if one exists (or whatever City records or reports from which I could assemble such a table — the object is not to make staff do work), showing, from 1999 to the present, the following basic stats on Evanston housing, by housing type, since this data doesn't appear in the draft Plan:

- a. total residential housing units within the City of Evanston
- b. new housing units completed in the City of Evanston
- c. existing housing units demolished or destroyed in the City of Evanston
- d. (if known) housing units vacant in the City of Evanston

Housing is critical to our economy, planning, taxation, and budgeting. The Assessor keeps detailed records of property, which the City could access, and the City had its own coterminous Township Assessor for most years since 1999. Since no units are built or demolished without permit (or record of loss, as in a fire), and certificate of occupancy, and because we have long had staff for building, housing, and economic development, I assumed this data has been heavily studied and readily available. I was expecting either a simple table like this, or a number of reports from which I could assemble one:

Year	Total Units	New Units Completed (single-family)	New Units Completed (multi-family)	Units Lost	Vacant units
2001					
2002					
2003					
2004					

The response I received on Dec. 5, 2024:

No Responsive Documents

The public records requested do not exist.

This record would need to be created

The response seems to defy FOIA, since I didn't ask for any record to be created, but to give me the data from which I could create simple tables and graphs. However, it is again, ***shocking*** that there is no existing tabulation. There isn't an annual report of this to the City Manager and to Council? Or at least internal records kept? *How can we possibly evaluate and plan for housing without good data on what we have, what is being added, and what is being lost* on an annual basis, and tracking the trends against which we can also correlate other data?

3. Survey data that does not support findings and direction of Plan and draft zoning.

On Nov. 22, 2024, I requested “the resident input referred to in multiple Envision Evanston 2045 presentations as ‘what we heard from the community,’ but which backup data has not been released.” Specifically, I requested records of the input referred to in the Preliminary Findings Report, including the maps on which “sticky dots” were placed, any tabulation or spreadsheet of the above images, images of the Post-It notes filled out by attendees, all response forms and sign-in sheets filled out by participants, and the 2,296 survey responses. See FOIA Request 24-3586.

I believe I received (on Dec. 10, 2024) all the documents requested.

Several things jump out from initial review. First, there was no tabulation provided of the Post-Its and sticky dots, so presumably none was made. Which raises the question of why was the exercise even done?

Second, there was no tabulation of the survey nor any of the more text-based data such as the meetings-in-a-box. So the Council, the Land Use Commission, and the public and press have been deprived of the benefit of the data.

Third, review of the data takes some time. The fact that so little time transpired between the end of data-gathering and the lurch into the next “Phase” of the Plan practically guarantees that the type of analysis needed to gauge “what the community wants” did not actually occur.

Fourth, the survey data shows signs of non-neutral data-gathering. Evidence ranges from the speed with which some surveys were filled out, to out-of-state IPs, to the significant number of responses by non-residents and non-adults (which are not broken out), to serial responses from the same computer, to rote entry of “priority” ranking. There is at least anecdotal data of people being paid to take the survey.

But fifth, and most important, even with all the questionable aspects, the raw data does not support the findings. There is nothing that emerges from the survey data evidencing a broad popular desire for rezoning at all, or a public feeling that Evanston is underpopulated, let alone a broad call for upzoning. For instance, of the small number of respondents that even mentioned density, at least as many are opposed to more density as favor it. A review of the nearly two thousand open-ended responses shows that an enormous number of concerns are not reflected in any subsequent Plan documents. This amounts to neglect and/or misinformation and reinforces the concern voiced from the start of this process as to its integrity.

The three examples above are, alone, enough to say that we need far more time; it's not just that I can't analyze the backup data on housing, it's that the LUC and Council can't either, nor can the public. But examples like this pervade nearly every section of the Draft Plan. There is very little factual support for many of the assertions made, and very little analysis of the solutions proposed. There are few end states or targets. There are few to zero metrics of what would be measured or assessed to see if goals are being met or if policy is sound.

Other major concerns warranting taking appropriate time are as follows:

- Every report I hear — and there are people actually going door to door — is that the average resident of Evanston is still grossly unaware that this effort is even ongoing, let alone its ramifications
- Transparency in data collected was actually a contractual requirement unless I am mistaken
- The plan has been devoid of illustrations, renderings, and in many cases even key definitions, such that what is being proposed is systemically non-transparent
- The plan is disproportionately the work of people who don't know Evanston
- The plan gives unbelievably short shrift to history and past planning, except to honor one and only one narrative on zoning which is largely negative, and which is again, dismissive by omission of the entire contrary narrative from the prior century of planning
- The plan has multiple Trojan horses of concepts that did not come from the community, such as trashing the Central Street Master Plan. See, e.g., centralstreetneighbors.com/node/1629
- The plan has nowhere near consensus as to sound scientific, economic, or social science basis

Some of these are more provocative than others, but the bottom line is that the Plan is nowhere near ready for prime time. Whipping it to conclusion in the next 75 days is not only arbitrary and capricious, it does a disservice to the community and smacks of trying to rush something before the public knows what's going on, as well as treating some groups unequally. That is very much not what we want to be, not at all what we were promised, no way to plan for the next 20 years, and a dangerous practice when it comes to something that affects billions of dollars of residents' real estate investment.

— JPS

FROM THE DESK OF

JEFFREY P. SMITH

Jan. 15, 2025

Land Use Commission
2100 Ridge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201

Re: Public Hearing | Comprehensive Plan - Envision Evanston 2045

Commissioners:

The Envision Evanston 2045 draft comprehensive plan released Nov. 2024 is an attractive document with a breezy, modern look and a stream of progressive buzz-phrases. That glosses over a content that on the one hand is surprisingly lacking in normal planning and substance, and is laden with debatable assertions and serious omissions, but on the other hand leaps to unrequested and unsupported implementation tools. It also has the look and feel of something between cut-and-paste and ChatGPT generation.

Because the Plan was released only 75 days ago and did not include facts and tables and projections necessary to analyze it, and because those intervening 75 days have included (a) a national election, (b) distracting and confusing dispute and deliberations in two separate bodies over the rushed and changing timeline, (c) major holidays, and (d) nominating process for municipal and school board candidates, full awareness let alone review by the community is still incomplete. Doing the research on even one unsupported sentence on one page of the Plan can take a day because of the lack of backup and references. My own markup to date indicates that corrections will be nearly as long as the Plan itself.

However, I have assembled a list of 20 top flaws in the draft Plan. These boil down (color-coded by type) to **Context** flaws (missing or inaccurate context); **Premise** flaws (unsupported or plainly inaccurate premises); **Process** flaws (fairness, meaningful input, arbitrariness); and **Analysis** flaws (data or analysis itself missing or erroneous). The list is far from complete, but it is enough to warrant a very stark change of course, which this Commission has the power to do. Such a change of course is necessary to gain consensus and earn the public's trust. Past plans had broad community consensus; it should not be a source of division and strife.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Smith

20 Major Problems with the Comprehensive Plan

1. Lack of baseline housing data over time, or analysis.

The draft Plan lacks the bounty of baseline facts typical to an Evanston plan, and nowhere is this more salient than with respect to the top issues of housing and land use. The City response denying my FOIA for housing data, saying they don't have any records, and the statement in the Plan that a future step will be to "create a housing database," is terrifying for a Plan that both makes sweeping assertions about housing shortage and solutions and also proposes drastic overhaul. Those are totally ungrounded. The six-year-old Plan figures from 2019 (on p. 85) are misleading and out of date. Other key facts and analysis omitted but relating to housing, seen in plans going back to Daniel Burnham et al. in 1917, are why people move to Evanston, who the buyer markets are and how they have changed and might change, what other municipalities are doing and how that relates and compares, and dramatic workforce changes. **CONTEXT**

2. Misrepresentation that Evanston suffers from lack of density.

This is a fundamental premise of the Plan, but as data previously submitted to this Commission shows, Evanston is already very dense; it doesn't get much denser in the whole US, and even less so for cities this size. Glaring by its omission is discussion of why, if density leads to affordability, Evanston is allegedly so unaffordable. **CONTEXT PREMISES**

3. Misrepresentation of actual state of housing diversity and "choice."

Here again is a lack of data both as to what is and what has been. Again, citizen data previously submitted to this Commission shows that we already have a great variety of housing diversity than most suburbs and that, if anything, we have abnormally high percentages of units in multi-unit buildings. Making Evanston even more multi-unit-intensive does not increase housing diversity, it reduces it. That's just math. **CONTEXT PREMISES**

4. Inaccurate premise of growth.

The Plan relies on a CMAP figure which is the high end of any reasonable estimate. As data shown to the Commission previously demonstrates, most fits to the growth curve would conclude that Evanston's growth is flat or even declining. There is no analysis of the census data, nor any explain of the source of this supposed growth (again, this was something done even a century ago; folks like Harvey B. Hurd and Daniel Burnham were quite keen on why people moved to Evanston). It's obvious that without building thousands of additional units, an additional 8,400 people will not be added to Evanston's population. However, it is possible to build and then not fill the units built, as China is finding out, and as the U.S. collectively found out in 2007-09. Thus the premise of future growth that must be "accommodated" — which is key — is flawed. **PREMISES**

5. Unsupported/inaccurate diagnosis of causes of high Evanston housing costs

The half page of premises and analysis p. 89 as to housing lack of supply is at best superficial. It lacks any factual basis (see ##1 and 2 above). The entire Plan does not mention supply chain or construction costs, or interest rates as independent variable. There is no mention or analysis of submarkets — no nuance whatsoever. This key assumption of the Plan comes near to being pulled from thin air. **PREMISES**

6. Unsupported thesis that a more crowded Evanston will be more affordable and livable

Again, this is not dwelt beyond an assumption of a simplistic principle from Week 1 of a freshman economics class, and land, especially land in a highly developed, already-dense, mature and above-average affluent yet unequal university-impacted inner-ring suburb, is a complex matter. Evanston's existing density is why its zoning is complex. There are plenty of local examples like the Lakeview neighborhood in Chicago, as well as national examples from Raleigh NC to Somerville MA, that illustrate how densifying what is already dense and/or desirable

results in higher prices, at least in many neighborhoods. The implicit Plan assumption that the private sector will not attempt to maximize profit is fantasy. **PREMISES**

7. Failure to analyze pros, cons, costs, benefits of increased population density.

This also relates to an unanswered FOIA, but is apparent from the Plan. A series of declarative statements is not planning, it is marketing. Density is controversial because many people have lived experience with greater density, the impact of adjacent use is immediately felt, and a long body of work documents its negative effects. To not honestly discuss this does a disservice to Evanston and reduces trust. **ANALYSIS**

8. Misrepresentation that clamor for density is the public opinion

This assertion appears not so much in the Plan, which simply leaps to the advocacy for greater density, as in presentations of the Plan where it's been said that this is what the community indicated they wanted. Preliminary analysis of the survey data indicates this is flatly untrue, and that, in fact, only a small number of persons, albeit highly organized and vocal, are advocating for this. I would happily wager on the outcome of a referendum on either "no more high-rises" or the effective elimination of single-family and two-family zoning. **CONTEXT; PROCESS**

9. No accounting for lifecycle greenhouse gas impact of new construction.

The greenest building is the one already built. A major flaw in all previous Evanston planning is to consider the impact of the materials and labor and energy that goes into demolition and construction, mainly the latter. Patting ourselves on the back about some theoretical reduction in VMT makes no sense if we are building structures whose impact won't be recaptured over the entire tenure of the residents even if all of them have no vehicles. And larger buildings are the bigger culprits. A complete void in the Plan. **ANALYSIS**

10. Grossly insufficient discussion of displacement/gentrification

At least as likely, given regional experience as well as that of other college towns, is that increased structure and population density will have a gentrifying effect. The Plan has no analysis of this. An objective evaluation would be that it does not care, and that words about "displacement" are lip service nodding to the residents who, when they expressed concern about affordability, were not talking about future newcomers but about their own ability to live and age in place. The Plan has many strategies for densification, but when it comes to displacement, it only says "we will study this" and assures, without evidence, that "housing choices" is a magic wand. What is needed is real analysis of the causes of gentrification and displacement, what type of development does or does not accelerate that, and what mitigation factors, if any, work. A counter—thesis to the Plan's upzoning-affordability assumption is that careful downzoning keeps rents lower by throwing cold water on speculation. **ANALYSIS**

11. Elimination of parking requirements not based in reality

The assumptions in this are unsupported and unrealistic. Data to date indicates multi-unit construction isn't getting folks out of cars, and after building thousands of additional units, the most common way Evanston get to work is to drive, alone. **PREMISES; ANALYSIS**

12. Disrespect/destruction of existing planning for no reason

It doesn't appear that any residents urged throwing the carefully crafted, award-winning Central Street Master Plan under the bus, nor was there a widespread public clamor for undoing the Downtown or West Side plans, none of which are ancient history. Did anyone really say they want the whole Twiggs Park area turned into dense multi-use mid-rise? Again, Evanston is a delicate ecology of many different neighborhoods that developed separately at different times and for different reasons. **PROCESS; ANALYSIS**

13. Stealth elimination of R1/R2.

The land use map is deceptive when there is a thrust within the Plan to effectively convert R1 and R2 into what is now R3 or R4, and R3 into what is R4 or greater. To even call the resultant R1 “low impact” is inaccurate. In the 1980s I lived in Somerville, MA, which was even then one of the densest small cities in America — despite almost all of that density being in structures of three stories or less. It was a sea of three-flats, with ADUs on a large proportion of lots, and a town of 12,000 people per square mile. Similar can be seen in many areas of Rogers Park. By no stretch could it be called low-impact, it is a highly urban form when the nearest parking spot is 1/4 mile away from your residence. **PROCESS**

14. Seniors ignored

This is similar to gentrification. Almost no discussion. Senior aren’t depicted on the cover, and the rollout of the Plan, and the rhetoric of its proponents, underscores that it is more like generational warfare than any real compassion for our elders. **ANALYSIS**

15. Distorted and selective narrative history of zoning

Evanston was a pioneer in zoning. The Zoning Analysis that accompanies the Plan appears to have stock criticism of a zoning-overhaul shop that ignores the deep history in Evanston, the work of Daniel Burnham, and the myriad and complex reasons for how zoning developed here. To attribute so much of it to sinister motivation defies the weight of the historical record and relies on cherry-picking. Evanston became much more attractive to persons of all backgrounds once it adopted its zoning, because of the benign and benevolent goals and the certainty it created for those wanting to build or put down roots.

A related issue is that dismissing the entire existing Code because of the date of the total re-write is a logical fallacy, given that the Code is constantly revised and tweaked. The “800 pages” are not that hard to understand because usually only a fraction of those pages apply to a specific property or issue. Probably there are few instances in the last 30 years of the ZBA complaining that the Code was too long or too hard to understand. **CONTEXT**

16. Distorted and selective narrative history of Evanston

Typically plans, particularly in Evanston, which has some history of a sense of exceptionalism, have an in-depth discussion of what shaped the municipality and why, and the ramifications for both desirability and feasibility of change. Thus such plans usually give deep respect and deference to history and to the residents who have experienced it. Such discussion is conspicuous by omission here. The Plan lacks the sensitivity and empathy of past Plans and reads more like a party platform plank or prescription plan written by strangers. **CONTEXT**

17. Mass transit assertions not based in reality

This is similar to the parking requirements issue. Virtually no data at all, let alone the historical data on boardings and disembarkments, and who is using what transit lines for what, needed to inform real decisionmaking that has reduction in personal vehicle use as a key element.

Especially considering the current dire straits of mass transit in Chicago, the likely lack of support from the federal government, and a state government with its own fiscal problems, this is rash.

PREMISES; ANALYSIS

18. No tabulation of data, responses

The failure to include real tabulation of raw data from resident session — the sticky notes, the sticky dot map, the surveys, the meetings in a box — is understandable, because it is a lot of data; however, the consultants were paid a lot of money. If there was no time, it demonstrates (a) why the release of the Plan was grossly premature and (b) that the data didn’t really matter.

PROCESS; ANALYSIS

19. No accounting for Evanston fiscal situation or scenarios.

The flow of free money from the Biden Administration is over. The federal government may be hostile to a sanctuary city in a blue state. Evanston has announced that it has a structural deficit. The rosy pictures of the Plan all need to be squared against fiscal reality. At least possible different scenarios need to be discussed. **PREMISES; ANALYSIS**

20. Process problems

The Plan is vulnerable to charges that the process, besides the flaws above, is wrong on a deeper level. The merger of the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals into the LUC only weeks before the RFP for planning was to be issued is curious. Then the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Steering Committee approved by this body never met. Nonetheless, an RFP went out for the Comprehensive Plan (not the zoning). In mid-2022, the LUC heard that the RFP was in the second round of interviews. Suddenly, however, planning director Nyden was gone and it was announced, apparently without Council direction or approval, that there would be a change and that a new RFP would go out for both planning and zoning. Influential in this decision may have been contact with an outside party while the process that had been bid on was ongoing. Moreover, if one consultant or sub-consultant selected had already done work for an interested party, there is also a vulnerability on conflict of interest and/or bias. In any event the City ended up with a process that also suffers from lack of knowledge of the community, which lack was not remedied by the vague, broad interactions with the public — that were never properly aggregated, tabulated and reported on.

An additional high-level issue is that the statutorily prescribed process for a comprehensive plan, mirrored in Evanston ordinance including the LUC code provisions grafted from that, contemplates the Commission developing a plan, with the support of staff and whatever other expertise the LUC might commission, and then either the Council or the Commission holding hearings after the forwarding of the Plan to the Council. An alternative under the law is for the Council to forward a plan or part thereof to the Commission for review and recommendation, but that did not occur here.

There is no proscription against additional process for a first draft, and if that is not the final set of hearings, there is no harm in that, and arguable benefit, because it's better to flag problems or objections earlier rather than later. However, it means that another round would be required once something closer to ready-for-presentation is produced after the initial round of commentary.

PROCESS

Conclusion: These are only the first 20 of a much larger number of problems with the draft Plan. The City after the switch in the middle of the bidding process ended up paying a lot of money for product that apparently required enormous unexpected work under pressure by staff, and the template from which they were working was an insufficient chassis on which to construct something that can move forward as is.

Recommendation: This Commission could terminate the process entirely, issuing a complete list of reasons why it recommends the Plan not be adopted. So as to leverage monies spent, a better use might be to take under advisement all the commentary received. In either case, the LUC should take charge of the planning process and use its statutory and ordinance power to fix the process.

To aid in its development, the LUC should both convene the committees it contemplated in early 2022, and commission a resident advisory committee directed to hold public sessions and work on the plan in collaboration with staff and with periodic report to the LUC. That would free staff to collect the data to which staff has far better access than residents. The zoning subconsultant should be terminated. Within the community is sufficient expertise to develop a reviewable Plan draft, working off the structure though not necessarily the content, by early summer, for revision as directed by the LUC and then forwarding to the Council. It is probably not feasible to meet an August deadline for Zoning Code revision, but since no particular Code sections have even been identified as deficient, simply a blanket assertion that it's "too hard to understand," an entire rewrite is likely unwarranted.

Name (first and last)	Address of residence or property owned	Meeting date	Agenda Item (Property address or description of agenda item)	Position on Agenda Item (as applicable)	How would you like to make your public comment?		Are you representing yourself as an individual or speaking on behalf of a group?	Please name the group of people for whom you are the designated speaker.
Camilla Fabbri	2111 Ewing Ave E	1/22/2025	Map Amendment	Opposed	Written comment	Evanston seems to be more concerned about profits than the wellbeing of its residents. All you need to do is look at the monstrosity at 1918 Noyes St ; shipping containers dropped down and shabbily made into "homes" - despite strong protest from residents. If this kind of development continues we will obliterate the historical charm of our beautiful lake front town.		
						I am a constituent of Ald. Revelle's in the 7th Ward. My family of 4 lives near McCullough Park and has been here since 2015. I have a 3rd grader at Kingsley and a 6th grader at Haven. I am writing to express my reservations about the city's comprehensive plan and my strong opposition to the proposed rewrite of the city's zoning code, in particular the repeal of all R1 zoning designations. I am opposed to this radical and unnecessary idea, which will absolutely alter the fabric of my incredible neighborhood and passionate community, many of whom have been here for decades. Further, I believe the proposed zoning rewrite is misguided and will not result in the stated objectives of the plan, which is (in large part) to create housing affordability. In fact, I believe it will have the opposite effect. I am equally concerned about the pace at which the proposed rezoning, alongside the adoption of a new comprehensive plan, has progressed and seemingly without enough feedback from those stakeholders that live in lower density neighborhoods such as the 7th ward. Regarding the plan itself and the idea that the repeal of the R1 in favor of R4 will add more affordable housing to our city...this is misguided and not grounded in any real world evidence. I have been selling commercial real estate for 20 years, primarily in Chicago, though I have also sold numerous significant commercial properties in Evanston. Urban infill development land happens to be one of the things that I sell the most of, and I have vast experience working with developers and municipalities, specifically on entitling property to build denser multifamily developments. The ONLY thing that has worked in Chicago to help deliver affordable units, is the city's ARO program, which requires 20% of new units built (over 10 units) to be affordable. The key here is that only those projects that require a rezoning/entitlement from the city are subject to this ordinance. In other words, if more density is allowed as of right, no affordable units are required. I strongly believe that if the city proactively allows for more density by virtue of changing the zoning code, it will actually result in FEWER affordable units being built, NOT MORE. If Evanston wants more affordable housing, make it easier for developers to build density in the downtown core areas, and when they ask the city for said density, require them to include affordable units. If they don't need to ask the city's permission to build it, they won't include affordable housing units because it will eat away at their profit. While I am confident in my opinion and consider myself an authority on this topic having been close to this issue for 20 years, I am able to take a step back and acknowledge that intelligent people can debate this issue and may disagree on what is the best course of action to take. But there should be MUCH MORE debate than what has occurred to date. As this issue impacts literally every resident and property owner in Evanston, great pains should be taken to make sure the majority of people understand what is on the table and have ample opportunity to provide input and feedback. I understand that this is anecdotal, but every single person that I have spoken with in my neighborhood and in parent circles at each of my kids' schools, is either blissfully unaware of what is being proposed or is against the idea of repealing the R1 zoning designation. To me, this anecdotal evidence is more than sufficient to confidently state that nowhere near enough people are aware of this matter for there to be a vote held on it any time soon. I have come to learn that the creation and adoption of a new comprehensive plan and a rewrite of the entire zoning code of the city running in parallel at the same time is unprecedented on the schedule that is being pushed. If this were to be voted on before the next election, it would effectively amount to a timeline of four or five months from the time that people were notified that the rewrite of the entire zoning code would be voted on (i.e. November's official notice date in the mail, which is when the vast majority of our community learned about this...right before the holidays). This is moving way too quickly and has created an aura of mistrust in our representation. I am pleading with each of you to commit to slowing down this process and to decouple the zoning plan from the comprehensive plan to allow proper time and feedback to debate both. We all want the best for Evanston. While it is prudent to think about and plan for what our city might look like far into the future, such a drastic undertaking needs to be done carefully and correctly. Not quickly.		
Ari Topper	1909 Livingston St	1/15/2025	Envision Evans	Opposed	Written comment			
Maria Topper	1909 Livingston St	1/13/2025	Envision Evans	Opposed	Written comment	I object to fast pace process of the re zoning outlined in Envision Evanston 2045. I ask that you stop this rushed upzoning agenda.		
David Cook	2683 Prairie Ave	1/13/2025	Evanston 2045	Opposed	Written comment	I am opposed to the Evanston 2045 report as written. It is full of facts and figures of a national or regional manner and not directly pertaining to Evanston. For Example: It projects that Evanston will grow by over 10,000 residents in the next few years when in fact Evanston has declined by over 1,000 recently. How does the report extrapolate a negative 1,000% change in the residential trend? This is not justified, yet the report uses this to justify rezoning the entire city. This rezoning is not justified, not well thought out and simply a donation to housing developers. This report should be rejected.		
Michelle Chlebek	2207 Orrington Ave	1/15/2025	Zoning changes	Opposed	In person		Self	
Joshua Decker	901 Hinman Ave	1/15/2025	Land Use Comm	In favor	Written comment	I am in favor of the proposed zoning maps. I was inspired to comment after receiving an email from a neighbor who is against any sort of change to her neighborhood, no matter how sensible the plan may be. Evanston is in need of new blood to keep restaurants and other businesses solvent. The NIMBY-type crap espoused by my neighbor is a reason that so many businesses are struggling right now.		
Scott Roberts	320 Dempster St	1/15/2025	Zoning reform	In favor	In person		Self	
Pat Mulhern	1224 Hinman Ave	1/15/2025	1224 Hinman A	In favor	Written comment	Nearly all residents (70 plus and growing) of 3 blocks of Hinman Ave. have signed a petition that we would like on the record. We are asking the Land Use commission to do the work necessary to address the un-vetted Envision Evanston zoning changes affecting Chicago Avenue and Hinman Avenue from Dempster to Lee. We do not believe the infrastructure is sufficient for adding up to 3000 new residents in high density housing units. As the most dense area of Evanston today, this will further stress/tax our infrastructure. Traffic and new traffic patterns, pedestrian friendliness and safety, parking, water runoff and sewer's, alley use and maintainance, emergency access, sunlight, tree removal, and snow removal to list a few. We also ask that prior to your recommendations, the Preservation committee recommendations, be part of the record. Last, the homeowners here have not yet been heard. Our neighbors, like all in Evanston, are expert in their neighborhoods, and their homes for most are their nest eggs. We appreciate the Land Use commision and believe that you are the body best suited to enhance our city and that you should be informing the staff as we grow forward, not consultants. The data, the answers to residents questions, documentation and a proper timeline to get this done form a more complete plan that we all can rally toward. Thank you for your leadership and please do not let this council and mayor proceed without your commission having the time, data and information necessary to do great work for the community. Through Alderman Wynne, we will request today, a meeting for our 3 blocks, as we have some of the most radical proposed zoning changes in the city. Thanks again for your service and work. You are trusted and doing the important work for the future of this terrific city.		
Michael Davis	1109 Hinman Ave	1/22/2025	Evanston 2045	Opposed	In person		Group	Votes/Homewoners/Taxpayers of 1000, 1100 and 1200 blocks of Hinman Ave

					The packet provided to the Land Use Commissioners included only part of the comments I submitted to the Commission on 1/2/2025. Because of that omission, I am resubmitting my comments to the Commission as follows: I write these comments concerning the draft Comprehensive Plan (CP) and Zoning Ordinance (ZO) proposed for Evanston. I do not write on behalf of any other person or group. I write to express my personal views on those proposals as they relate to density in the City of Evanston and hope that these comments will be of service to the community by facilitating discussion of important aspects of the CP and ZO. After reviewing these documents, I believe that some of the proposed policies allowing greater density could materially alter the essential and distinctive character of Evanston's built environment and the quality of its different neighborhoods. Given the material nature of the changes proposed in the CP and ZO, I suggest that the City not approve the draft CP and ZO in their current forms and that the process for further review be extended to allow thorough evaluation, with input from the broad Evanston community, of the draft CP and ZO and potential alternative policies. Although the draft CP states (pages 18 and 19) that the City has made outreach to many community members regarding these proposed changes, many Evanston residents with whom I have spoken have said that they were unaware until recently of the changes proposed in the draft CP and ZO and that, given the materiality of the changes, the process for approval is being unduly rushed. I hold this same view. The goals of the proposed policy changes stated in the CP include (1) addressing issues of housing affordability, (2) increasing housing options, (3) reducing displacement of Evanston residents from their homes and (4) increasing economic and racial diversity in all residential neighborhoods. To be clear, I support these general goals. (The draft CP also states other goals concerning the environment, parks and recreation, culture and the arts, but those are beyond the scope of this letter.) The draft CP utilizes a "center and corridor framework" that would increase allowed density in the downtown area and in major transportation corridors leading to it and to major transportation facilities. The draft CP and ZO also propose to increase density in the residential and mixed use zoning districts on a blanket basis. These proposed changes would, among other things: • Reduce the existing 6 residential zoning districts to 4 residential zoning districts (R1 – R4). • Replace the existing business (B1 – B3) and commercial (C1 – C2) districts with 3 new mixed use zoning districts (M1 – M3). • Replace the 4 existing downtown zoning districts with three new downtown zoning districts (D1 – D3). • Apparently terminate the existing Overlay Districts approved by the City for the downtown area, north downtown area, West Evanston area, Central Street corridor and the Chicago Avenue corridor. • Reduce minimum lot sizes in residential zoning districts. • Allow duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes on R1 and R2 (single family) lots. • Allow, as limited uses, up to 4 microhome housing units on each R1 and R2 lot. • Eliminate parking requirements in R1 districts and reduce or eliminate parking requirements in other residential districts. • Allow 3 story structures (no more than 35 feet high) in R1 and R2 districts that now only permit 2-1/2 stories (also no more than 35 feet high). • Increase the height limitation in R3 and R4 districts to 50 feet and 65 feet, respectively, compared to the current height limitation of 35 feet or 2-1/2 stories, whichever is less. • Reduce side yard setbacks in R2, R3 and R4 districts from 5 feet to 3 feet. • Reduce rear yard setbacks in R1, R2 and R3 districts from 30 feet to 25 feet. • Reduce rear yard setbacks in R4 districts from 25 feet to 5 feet. • Substantially increase the height limitations in the M1 – M3 zoning districts over the heights permitted for commercial and business districts under the current zoning ordinance. • Substantially increase the height limitations in the D1 and D2 districts to 65 feet and 135 feet, respectively. • Eliminate all height restrictions in the D3 (central downtown) district. • Increase the percentages of lot coverage and permeable surfaces allowed for most zoning districts. The issues raised by the increased density that would be allowed in the proposed CP and ZO are complex, including the following: Traffic and Parking. The increased density proposed in the CP would most likely result in larger volumes of vehicular traffic (and congestion), much of which would occur on narrow streets and roads designed years ago to accommodate smaller volumes of traffic. The draft CP and ZO propose also to eliminate off-site parking requirements from the R1 zoning requirements and to reduce or eliminate off-site parking requirements in other residential districts. This would foreseeably result in more on-street parking. Many of Evanston's residential streets are already too narrow to accommodate two cars passing when cars are parked on the street, even if parking is allowed on only one side of the street. The increased density in the downtown and mixed use districts would also most likely generate more traffic and congestion. One would expect the CP to include an analysis of (and proposed solutions for) traffic and parking issues associated with the proposed densification, but in fact this information is largely absent. The draft ZO requires that, as a condition for approval of certain residential and mixed use developments, the developer must submit for the City's approval a Traffic Demand Management Plan (TDMP) that describes principally (i) how vehicle miles travelled will be reduced by the new development and (ii) related parking requirements. The CP's chapter on transportation (Chapter 3) describes some options to reduce vehicle miles travelled (e.g., encourage more walking and biking), but contains little, if any, information on how increased congestion from greater densification will be addressed. In fact, the draft CP indicates (pages 37, 50, 54 and 92) that the City may sell its existing surface parking lots for infill development but does not mention how the resulting reduction in parking facilities will be replaced. Loss of downtown parking capacity could amount to a disincentive for residents of Evanston or other communities to frequent Evanston's downtown. The reliance on TDMPs to address parking and traffic congestion issues may be tantamount to the City's outsourcing of traffic and congestion issues to the real estate development community. Developers notoriously chafe at restrictions on development based on traffic and parking requirements. When parking and traffic management plans are required, they frequently engage developer-friendly consultants to prepare them. The developers have no long-term interest in whether these plans are accurate since they will likely be gone after the development process is completed. I suggest that the City re-think the strategy of significantly relaxing parking requirements and relying on TDMPs to manage traffic congestion and parking issues. The City could, for example, retain stipulated parking requirements for new developments, but reserve the option to grant waivers or variances for specific developments if the circumstances warrant. Downtown Density. In addition to allowing substantial increases in the height limitations in the D1 and D2 (peripheral downtown) districts, all height limitations are completely eliminated for the D3 (central downtown) district. The CP states (page 29) as a goal that "lots" of tall buildings will be built in the D3 district. However, the CP does not address any of the potential issues that would result from "lots" of taller buildings in the downtown area, such as: • Is it in the community's best interest that Evanston's downtown become a mini-Chicago Loop? • What happens to the human scale of the downtown area with such intense densification and "lots" of tall buildings? • Are there any appropriate limitations on height or number of tall buildings to preserve the interests of existing downtown residents in light and air? • Has there been a study regarding the load impact of additional tall buildings, e.g., seismic activity and effect on current infrastructure such as sewers, roads and underground utilities? • Would "lots" of tall buildings have an adverse effect on birds and their migratory patterns? • Would lots of tall buildings be a disincentive to frequent the downtown area? • Although the CP states that the D1 and D2 districts would act as buffers to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, would those neighborhoods be susceptible to development "creep" as the downtown area becomes more and more dense, leading to pressure to develop the surrounding residential neighborhoods more intensively? These and similar questions are simply omitted from the draft CP, suggesting that important aspects of the proposed densification policy for the downtown area may not have been analyzed in any depth. Impact on Solar Power. While the draft CP states that Evanston will encourage the development of solar power, the taller buildings allowed by the CP and the ZO in residential, mixed use and downtown areas could block sunlight to surrounding properties and thereby diminish the effectiveness of solar panels on those other properties. This could also discourage the development of new solar facilities on properties that do not currently have them because of uncertainty as to the reliability of sunlight on those properties. Affordable Housing. The housing affordability problem is caused by (i) increasing costs of housing including real estate taxes and the costs of land, building materials, labor and insurance and (ii) the gap between housing costs and household incomes. This is a national problem at a time when federal and state resources to address the problem are dwindling. The CP recognizes the reduction in federal and state resources to encourage affordable housing and states that this "leaves the City of Evanston to tackle its affordable housing challenges in isolation" (page 91). It seems that one significant way in which the City will tackle this housing affordability issue is through its Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, which applies to new or renovated developments containing 5 or more residential housing units. This Ordinance requires that 10% (or 20% for certain government-assisted projects) of the housing units in such developments comply with certain affordability parameters including caps on rent (for rental properties) and sale price (for properties for sale) for households with household income not greater than specified percentages of area median income, i.e., low income, moderate income and middle income households. The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance allows developers to buy out of the obligation to provide these affordable housing units by making payments of stipulated amounts per unit to the City's affordable housing fund. Because the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance applies only to developments with 5 or more residential units, it would not apply to the proposed new R1 and R2 zoning districts, both of which would allow a maximum of 4 housing units for each residential lot, and it seems unlikely that any developer would voluntarily produce affordable housing units meeting the Ordinance's affordability parameters on R1 and R2 lots since they would in all likelihood be less profitable for the developer than market rate units. If density is increased in the		
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						There is no projection or analysis in the draft CP of the types of households that would most likely buy or rent these small housing units. Would they be empty nesters seeking to downsize from larger residences? Students? Young families? With children? Single persons? Of what anticipated income level? At a cost to them of what percentage of income at different income levels? There is no attempt in the draft CP to link the upzoning of the R1 and R2 districts with the goal in the draft CP to increase racial and economic diversity in all neighborhoods. Given the foregoing, it seems reasonable to approach this proposed increase in R1 and R2 density with the same type of balancing analysis suggested above for the net increase in affordable housing units that would be generated under the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance based on the increased density allowed for other zoning districts. On the one hand, there is the anticipated generation of additional housing units in R1 and R2 districts at (possibly) lower per unit cost, without clear understanding of how many such units would be generated or who might live in them. On the other hand, there are several potential adverse effects of the proposed increase in density in R1 and R2 districts such as the following: • The increased density in R1 and R2 districts may disrupt the Evanston residential real estate market. For example, many real estate developers are prepared to pay cash, without a mortgage contingency, for Evanston residences. If the developers tried to buy up Evanston residences with the expectation of redeveloping those sites into the denser housing that would be permitted under the proposed CP and ZO, other home buyers, particularly first-time home buyers, could be at a competitive disadvantage based on their need to obtain mortgage financing for the purchase, which very frequently requires an offer to be subject to a mortgage contingency and with a longer lead time to closing. Real estate developers that do not need a mortgage could win many of those competitive bidding situations because they could close quickly, for cash, without a mortgage contingency. • The reduced side yard and back yard requirements for R2, R3 and R4 districts will very likely detract from the interests of residents of those districts in light and air. • Many single family homeowners purchased their properties on the assumption that the neighborhood would consist of other single family residences, without knowing that potentially the neighborhood would be developed with up to 4 units on each lot. • The increased density in R1 and R2 districts may detract from the architectural and historical character of those single family neighborhoods. • Solar panels on single family homes may have their sunlight blocked by taller and larger buildings on adjacent or nearby properties, to the detriment of the homeowners who made the financial commitment to solar power. Similarly, the uncertainty as to continued sunlight may discourage homeowners from installing solar facilities on their residences in the future. The draft CP lacks any information as to whether, and to what extent, the City has considered these potential consequences from increased density in R1 and R2 districts. At the least, I suggest that this process allow full consideration of such factors under a balancing analysis that is transparent to the broad Evanston community. Displacement. One of the stated goals of the CP is to reduce displacement of Evanston households. There is no analysis in the CP of whether the policy of blanket densification will in fact reduce displacement of Evanston residents from their homes. However, it is plausible that the densification policy could drive up land and housing costs in parts of Evanston that currently have lower valuations and cost structures than those in other neighborhoods. For example, this might happen if the development prospect of more units on residential lots caused land and property values to increase, with consequent increases in real estate taxes and insurance costs. If this scenario were to occur, the effect could be not the reduction of displacement, but the increase in displacement of households currently residing in those neighborhoods. The CP does not address this issue. Preservation of Evanston's Historical and Architectural Distinction. The CP describes very effectively many of the major features of Evanston that make our community one of deep historical and architectural interest. Nonetheless, the CP would implement many changes in the existing Evanston rules and regulations that could alter dramatically the very historical and architectural features that the CP celebrates. For example, the increased height limitations proposed for the residential, mixed use and downtown zoning districts could result in the replacement of lower density buildings of architectural interest with newly built, taller, "plain vanilla" buildings. Apparent Termination of Overlay Districts. Evanston officials and the Evanston community have spent considerable time, effort and money on the development of the various Overlay Districts. Each of those Overlay Districts has been carefully analyzed and established to reflect the particular character of each separate Overlay District. It appears that the proposed CP and ZO would terminate the Overlay Districts since no mention is made of them in those documents. As such, the proposed CP and ZO would apparently discard all of the careful, neighborhood-specific planning that has gone into those Overlay Districts and replace it with a "one size fits all" approach for all of Evanston's neighborhoods. Classification of District 65 School Sites. The proposed zoning map classifies the Northwestern and ETHS campuses as university and institutional campuses, respectively. However, the District 65 campuses would, under the proposed zoning map, be classified as R1. Given the current financial and demographic issues that District 65 is facing, it is plausible that District 65 could close some of its schools and sell those school sites to private parties for redevelopment. Assuming that the developable area of a District 65 school site (after subtraction of area for public or private streets) is 8 acres, the 8 acre developable site could, under the new R1 rules, be subdivided into 56 R1 lots (each comprising 6,200 square feet, the proposed new minimum R1 lot size in the CP). On these 56 lots, a total of 224 housing units (56 lots x 4 units per lot = 224 housing units) could be constructed, as a matter of right under the proposed R1 rules. (By contrast, under existing R1 rules, only 48 housing units could be built on that 8 acre site, based on 1 housing unit for each lot with the current minimum lot size of 7,200 feet.) Assuming an average of between 2 and 4 residents for each unit, the total increase in population on that former school site under the revised R1 rules would be between 450 and 900 residents, in an area that formerly had zero residents. This level of densification would have dramatic effects on surrounding areas in terms of traffic, infrastructure and public services, but under the proposed R1 rules Evanston would have no ability to regulate or limit the number of housing units on this site. If the developer were to successfully rezone the site to R2, R3, or R4, the number of housing units and consequent effects on the surrounding community would be even greater. At the very least, the District 65 sites should be classified as institutional or educational campuses (as are ETHS and Northwestern), so that any change in use of those sites would require rezoning and the careful review of community impact that would be required by the rezoning process. Process and Schedule. In my view the draft CP and ZO should not be rushed through the approval process before the next local election in April without careful consideration and broad community acceptance. Because of the materiality and complexity of the issues related to the proposed densification of Evanston, I suggest that the process of reviewing and analyzing the proposed CP and ZO should be put on a schedule that allows the articulation and discussion in the broad community of all of the issues relating to density, and enabling the balancing of competing interests raised by the proposed densification. Very truly yours, Timothy Ramsey		
Timothy Ramsey	2421 Hartzell Str	1/15/2025	Draft Comprehe	Opposed	Written com			

						Michael Lohr, lived in Evanston Ward 1 for going on 17 years. Thank the Chair for his honesty and integrity at Monday night’s Council meeting. Sometimes felt like he was the only person in the room willing to tell it straight. What is especially disappointing to me is that Staff was not more forthcoming earlier with the Council on the challenges stemming from the consultant. A great deal of time and energy could have been saved if they had been. I am grateful for the action the Council took the other night – separating the Comprehensive Plan form the rezoning. Contrary to the critics, this is not a delay for the sake of delay. If anything, what was revealed Monday night demonstrates just how ill-advised and ill-considered this effort has become. Remarkably, there was even a suggestion that Council replace the consultant, whose flawed work is the basis for proposing to massively change the character of and zoning in the entire city. What is in fact being contemplated – literally to change the zoning of every single parcel in the city, is the greatest overreach I have ever seen by a locally elected government. It is not only immoral, to use the mayor’s terminology, it is reckless, arbitrary, and irresponsible. What is especially ironic to me, if a developer wants to build a 30-story building, there are multiple public hearings and discussions regarding that single project, and yet the mayor and some council members want to change the character and zoning of every single piece of property in Evanston in one fell swoop. And yet, why are these owners not entitled to individual zoning hearings, like the developers? I think this “land grab” borders on an unconstitutional taking of property without due process of law, and certainly denies Evanston property owners equal protection under the law. I have conducted any number of court-ordered mediations involving homeowner’s associations, and what the mayor is attempting to do with rezoning the entirety of Evanston, reminds me of some of the worst aspects of such associations, which I doubt very few Evanston homeowners thought they had ever signed up for. I applaud the effort to now look at the Comprehensive Plan, which should serve as the only basis for zoning or rezoning every parcel in our city. And I encourage the Chair to take the mayor at his word Monday night, get it right for Evanston, and if the Land Use Commission does not feel like it has got it right, keep working at it until you do.		
Michael Lohr	726 Milburn St., f	1/15/2025	Envision Evans	Undecided	Written com			
						The LUC should slow down the plan process by: -doing its own community survey of questions that were never asked - convening its own Comprehensive Plan committee that it voted to form but has never met - convening the committee of Boards and Commissions it also formed (but that also has never met) -forming a resident blue ribbon committee, with appropriate area subcommittees, to do deep and thorough work, section by section, on the draft plan (like Evanston did with the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and the first Climate Action Plan) -detail all the missing data, studies, analyses, and projections needed to move forward -facilitating a process for resident testimony on specifics of lived experience		
Brigette Peterser	2757 Ridge Ave	1/15/2025	February deadli	Opposed	Written com			
						The proposal is a major and dramatic change - and one which the majority of residents have insufficient knowledge of, let alone a feeling that they have taken part in providing public comment or expressing their opinions. Yes, there have been some opportunities for public feedback, but it is apparent that most people were not made aware by the city communications of the extent of change that is being contemplated, nor that it could get done on a very accelerated timetable and with minimal further consultation with residents. We are left feeling like we are being railroaded by elected officials motivated by who knows what agenda to make change that will have long-lasting effects on us all. If the LUC continues on its current path, it will be party to this unacceptable and undemocratic process. This is not what servants of the people, including the LUC, are appointed to do. Other than political / electoral timetables, I cannot see why this has become considered an issue that needs attention and resolution to quickly. It feels like a solution that is desired by politicians that is in search of a problem. I urge you to take more time - review assumptions and assertions (including, but not limited to, the idea that increasing the volume of housing will lead to the cost of housing being more affordable - personally, and as an investment advisor for my work, I am far from convinced that the increase in supply will put much, if any, dent in the pressure on pricing. Furthermore, if the increase in volume of housing stock is going to be so significant as to materially move the market in terms of cost then all the more reason that residents should be fully involved in the process and change should be considered and certainly not rushed. LUC has indicated an interest in some elements, presumably based on a view of appropriate due process, including convening several committees, but has not gone on to actually utilize / follow those elements. Please, take your time - follow due process. Ultimately, I feel that once any review reaches the point of having solid recommendations that they should be put to a referendum. The residents are the city - this is too major of an issue for it to be decided by elected and appointed officials. We deserve to have our voice heard through the ultimate form of democracy. Thank you James Davies		
James and Kelse	1627 Lincoln Stre	1/15/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	Written com			
Mark hays	2341 Lawndale Ave evanston,	2045 zoning pla	Opposed	Written com		City staff not qualified to make land use recommendations, no meaningful metrics provided for action items, unintended consequences will result, affordability and availability are global extremely complex issues and amateur well intended tactics probably will have the reverse affect.		

						The comprehensive plan should be a bold vision for where Evanston could go. Right now it has some of that, but not enough. Most of the engagement has not reached out to enough young people. Only 271 survey responses from people 18 and under does not reflect enough of the population that will be living in the city these changes will create. Most of the public comments at these kinds of meetings have been from older folks, who think they know the kind of city that would be best for my generation. My generation has had a decent chance of a livable future taken from us by the climate crisis. We have grown up in a time of vast changes, changes we are prepared to keep experiencing, so long as they increase the equitability of our city. I have seen so many families leave Evanston, especially families of color. We need a broader housing stock of affordable units for a wide range of people coming in. We need to prioritize staying welcoming. Also, the zoning code map has far from enough mixed use. When we sort out the functions of a city, transportation becomes more necessary and people are less likely to support their local community, choosing to go to places where parking is abundant rather than places that are nearby and walkable by a vast network of bike lanes. As climate change continues to affect every community, we need to be ready with a diverse housing stock as we become a safe haven for climate refugees, whether they're leaving wildfire destroyed lands, or they're giving the american dream a try after their developing countries were destroyed by drought.		
Jexa Edinberg	1401 lake st	1/15/2025	Envision Evanston 2045		Written comment	With the new extended timeline, we should use this opportunity to reach out to more young people and get their thoughts on the comprehensive plan, zoning code, and future of this place we call home.		
Mike Laughlin		1/22/2025	Envision Evans	Opposed	Written comment	My read of the Envision Evanston proposed zoning changes suggests potential dramatic change to the residential areas of Evanston. If that is the case, then very detailed planning and simulations must be constructed (financial, safety, etc.) in order to determine the degree to which Evanston's quality of life will be improved or degraded. Until that is completed, then the risk is very high for many unintended consequences that could damage our community for generations to come.		
						The City is in the process of preparing a Strategic Housing Plan, but a draft has not been released to the public yet. To the extent that the Comprehensive Plan makes any specific recommendations concerning the increase in density to encourage more affordable housing, the Comprehensive Plan should be based on the Strategic Housing Plan. If the Strategic Housing Plan is not finalized before the Comprehensive Plan is completed, then the Comprehensive Plan should state as a general goal that the City has a goal to increase the number of affordable housing units in the City, but the specific strategies that it will adopt will be consistent with the Strategic Housing Plan when it is finalized after public comment and approval by the City. In addition, I object to any blanket increase in density in residential, business, mixed use and downtown zoning districts. Increased density in specific locations may be considered by the City, but should be supported by backup analysis and data indicating that such increased density will benefit the City and will, after considering issues of traffic, congestion, parking, architectural and historical preservation, infrastructure, environmental and transportation issues, facilitate the achievement of the City's goals. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan and the increased density that it recommends appear to be based on the assumption that public transportation services and funding will increase in the future. I see no reasonable basis for this assumption, and none is stated in the Comprehensive Plan. This is a material deficiency. Any analysis of increased density should reflect the uncertainties of future public transportation services and funding.		
Timothy Ramsey	2421 Hartzell Str	1/15/2025	Draft Comprehe	Opposed	Written comment			
						To the honorable members of the Evanston Land Use Commission: I live in northwest Evanston (Ward 6) and I wanted to express my support for the recently proposed zoning changes. Evanston is experiencing a housing crisis like much of the country and we need additional housing units now more than any time since WWII. Other cities and towns that have made similar zoning changes have seen rent and housing prices flatten - something that would help our most vulnerable neighbors in addition to those looking for starter homes. Additionally, both our schools and businesses are in need of more students and customers so creating opportunities to meet the unprecedented housing demand while adding to the tax base at the same time makes perfect sense to me. I love living in Evanston and I am frankly concerned that my children will never be able to afford a home and raise their own families here. Home prices are skyrocketing and we simply need more housing units. Many of our R-1 neighborhoods already have 2, 3 and 4-family buildings that completely blend into the community. On recent walks through NW Evanston I couldn't help but notice several multi-family buildings in the same neighborhoods as single family homes. And these are extremely desirable and beautiful streets with very high property values. Seeing streets like that, which work just fine with a mix of building types, make me less concerned about the impacts of the proposed zoning changes. Further, because nearly all of Evanston's lots are fully built out, any changes will be gradual and will happen over years and decades, not weeks or months. Many R-1 lots don't even meet the dimensional requirements for larger buildings so while some new housing will be built, our streets will retain a lower density feel. And for those wishing to live in and maintain a single family home, they can still do that under the proposed code. The housing affordability crisis is decades in the making and will take decades to solve. Decades of building more housing. Research shows that the best ways to increase housing production and affordable housing unit counts are: relaxing zoning codes, mandatory inclusionary zoning for larger buildings and targeting funding for affordable developments. I love my neighbors and respect everyone's right to an opinion but a multi-pronged effort is the only way to solve a housing crisis and I think Evanston is on the right track with the recent proposals. Thank you for your consideration and work on this issue. Sincerely, Andrew Pierson		
Andrew Pierson	2728 Lincolnwood	1/15/2025	Envision Evans	In favor	Written comment	P.S. I work professionally in the housing field but not locally (I live in Evanston but work remotely in Rhode Island). I have no connection to, or relationship with, any local real estate developer or project.		
Jeff Smith	2724 Harrison	1/15/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	In person		Self	
Silas Smith		1/27/2025		In favor	Written comment			
cheyloe anthony	8553 S Ingleside	1/15/2025	8553 S Ingleside	In favor	Written comment	I support this!		
Emma Thomas	2323 Asbury Ave	1/27/2025	Healthy Building	In favor	Written comment	The Healthy Buildings Ordinance is extremely necessary for the future of Evanston and its path towards a greener future.		
Alexandra Hevner	2831 Harrison st	1/15/2025	Fossil free north	In favor	Written comment			

Keren Albo	1111 chruch st	1/15/2025	fossil free north	In favor	Written comment	n/a		
Lara Lazaro		1/15/2025	Fossil Fuel North	In favor	Written comment			
Izzy Franconeri	807 Davis St	1/27/2025	Healthy Building	In favor	Written comment			
Carlis B Sutton	1821q Darrow Ave	1/15/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	In person		Self	
Gene Combs	1212 Elmwood Ave	1/15/2025	zoning	In favor	Written comment	If we are ever to have fair, equitable, and accessible housing in Evanston, we need zoning reform. The general ideas in the Envisioning Evanston plan are a step in that direction. My block in the 4th ward has a small business on the corner, a small church with a predominantly black congregation in the middle of the block, several large multi-unit apartment buildings and a smaller one or two, and several nice single-family dwellings like the one I'm fortunate to own and live in. It is a comfortable safe and neighborly place, and our city needs more of this kind of mixed-use zoning if we're ever going to increase the amount of affordable housing. We need that increased housing to support businesses and to get unsheltered people sheltered. We will need more careful planning about how to create and sustain walkable, safe, useful neighborhoods throughout our city, but that's no reason to delay zoning reform, that reform is a necessary step.		
Arthur Anderson	715 Michigan Ave	1/15/2025	Land Use Commission	Opposed	In person		Self	
Susan LeBailey	2424 Eastwood Blvd	1/15/2025	Envision Evanston		Written comment	Please develop YOUR OWN timeline to review the proposed plans and develop a plan that is data driven and community engaged.		
Jennifer Packman	2744 Crawford Ave	1/15/2025	Envision Evanston	Undecided	Written comment	My apologies if this comment is misdirected. The process has been unclear. Regarding the Comprehensive Plan, it seems clear that there should be a clear statement that the city should aim to be a financially responsible, fiscally healthy city with a consistently balanced budget. I am not finding this easily in the document. Perhaps it is there. But based on the history of our city this century, it seems this is an urgent priority. Thank you for your time and effort. Not sure why this falls to you?		
John Kennedy	1119 Hinman	1/15/2025	Envision Evanston	Opposed	Written comment	I would urge the commissioners to take their time and get the Comprehensive Plan right. It is a document we will live with for decades and should serve as both a realistic view of where the City and community is now as well as provide a vision of where it could and should go. The current draft is no where near a document that we need as a guiding light for the next 20 years.		
Parielle Davis	2660 Bryant Ave	1/15/2025			In person		Self	
Jerry Brennan	942 Michigan Ave	1/15/2025	Draft Comprehensive	Opposed	Written comment	The EE45 process has left me and neighbors who I have spoken to feel three main things: confused, rushed, & bullied. I urge the LUC to take over the planning process together with a committee of residents who live in all nine wards rather than leaving the process to a consulting firm hand-picked by a very small circle of officials. Please derail Mr. Biss and his billionaire bullies from steamrolling over resident's voices. Thank you very much.		
William Miller	Monticello Place	1/22/2025	Draft zoning code	Opposed	Written comment	My wife and I have lived in Evanston for more than 37 years. During that time, we have lived in a fourplex apartment, a walk-up condo building, and two houses within a total of four Evanston neighborhoods. Each time we moved, we were greatly influenced by the character of the new neighborhood. We currently live on Monticello Place in northeast Evanston in a Northeast Historic District neighborhood zoned R1 that is characterized by older (many 100+ years) single-family houses on streets lined with very tall trees. Our neighborhood has a park-like character that is pleasant to walk through, which was a major factor for us in purchasing our home. Allowing fourplex residential buildings would adversely change the character of our neighborhood and would likely result in decreased property values. City staff members have mentioned that new construction is likely to take place gradually. However, localized impacts could be very rapid. For example, two houses on adjacent lots across the street from us are currently occupied by elderly residents. These buildings are likely to change hands in the next 5 years and could be replaced by two large fourplex buildings. Also, because of District 65 financial problems and decreasing enrollment in D-65 schools, there is a good chance that Orrington School – which occupies ~75% of a city block, was built in 1912, and needs maintenance – could be sold to a developer. Development of the Orrington School site would result in substantial loss of neighborhood greenspace and could result in a large concentration of fourplex buildings in the middle of the neighborhood. Under the proposed zoning changes, similar developments could also take place at the current Civic Center location, which could be sold to raise funds for the City of Evanston, as well as the old Roycemore School building if it is sold to a developer by Northwestern University. It is not clear to us why there is a desire to substantially increase the population of Evanston. Downtown is already congested much of the time and greater population density will make it more difficult to find on-street parking downtown and in the impacted neighborhoods. Also, I don't see how increasing density in R1 areas fits with the centers and corridors approach proposed in Envision Evanston 2045. People often move to more expensive houses as they build wealth. Eliminating single-family R1 neighborhoods would likely result in loss of higher income/wealth residents to Wilmette and other cities and towns with an adverse impact on the Evanston tax base. The fraction of single-family homes in Evanston (32-36%) is already less than 2/3 that in Skokie (60%) and less than half that in Wilmette (80%). Why would we want to have an even lower fraction? Finally, more actively promoting accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in single-family R1 residential districts could increase population density and provide lower-cost housing in residential districts without adversely impacting the neighborhood's environment. We were not aware of the new ADU policy until it was mentioned during a Zoom call with our council members and Evanston city staff that few people were taking advantage of the new policy, so it is likely that more actively promoting ADUs would increase ADU construction.		
JodiLee Mesirow	1310 Rosalie Street	1/15/2025	LUC Plan Review		Written comment	The current draft plan is not acceptable, and the process by which it was created has been flawed from the beginning. Please slow down and do it right. The LUC is supposed to be independent and in charge. Please stop being bullied by the City Council and do this the right way - convene the existing committees and form an additional citizens committee, gather good data, include all stakeholders in a meaningful and useful way, establish goals and a process up front. This taxpayer is appalled at the way our elected officials have conducted themselves in this matter. Thank you.		
Paul Breslin	1635 Hinman Ave	1/8/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	In person		Self	