

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?	If you are providing a written comment, please leave here:	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.
Edward Blumen		2/26/2025	900 Clark proposal	Opposed	Written comm	Edward Blumen		
Christopher Fedak	2nd ward		Zoning changes	In favor	Written comm	I only recently saw the January 8th meeting where Mr. Halik said of the changes to zoning that residents did or did not ask for eliminating parking minimums and an increase in multifamily units. He said "I will challenge you to give us any resident asked for this." I would like to present myself as a resident who asked for this. Although I cannot go back and look at my comment I am confident I asked for this as I had recently finished a book called Strong Towns. After reading this I was inspired by the ideas of changing zoning away from car centric rules, eliminating parking minimums, and to advocate for multi unit homes being built. While I appreciate the city taking more time and challenging consultant roles in these changes, I am hopeful that our zoning will change to no longer focus on single home car dependency that has, in my view, eroded many American towns.		
Sara Friedman	3046 Hartzell St.	2/26/2025	Comprehensive plan	In favor	In person		Self	
Scott Roberts	320 Dempster Street	2/26/2025	Comprehensive Plan	In favor	In person		Group	Say YES! to Duplexes
Julia Forgash	1580 Sherman Ave	2/26/2025	Revised Draft of Env	Undecided	In person		Self	
Michael Johnson	1321 Elmwood Ave	2/26/2025	Mixed use developm	Opposed	Written comm	I am a 51-year resident of Evanston and I am opposed to mixed use developments near my home. I currently have to pay for a parking permit to park in my neighborhood and sometimes I still have to park on the next block over. There is discussion of a 7-10 story mixed use development which proposes 9 parking spots for 67 units. This is totally mind boggling. This is going to create more density and traffic congestion in a fairly congested area already. This is going to be aesthetically uncharacteristic to the neighborhood and this seems to be the plan/trend for Chicago Ave. The reason that I still live in Evanston is because it is not overpopulated and is close to Chicago but is not Chicago. It has a diverse community which is slowly starting to become less diverse because of the inflation rate. Long time residents have to move because of rising costs. Being a long-term homeowner in Evanston, I thought my property taxes seemed to be somewhat grandfathered in because there had not been a sale on my property in over 30 years. Then in 2022 my property taxes increased 38.5 percent in one year, on my primary residence and 20 percent on a rental property that I own. I do not have my taxes in an escrow account and cannot pass this increase along to my long-term tenants. I am trying to be fair and humane human being and I am not rich. I had to come up with almost 60% more than expected immediately and my 4 kids do not understand why we have to cut back on the things that we love to do or stop supporting local neighborhood businesses. The increased density is not going to add character or integrity to the area. It is going to devalue our community. Sidewalks are already too narrow for people to walk down comfortably.		
Joshua Howes	3016 Grant Street	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston 2	In favor	In person		Self	
Karen Appleby	1720 Maple Ave, Apt 1850	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston -	Undecided	Written comm	As a downtown resident, I was previously concerned about the preference for tall buildings without any regard for the living environment of over 9000 downtown residents. This version is better. But the wording "new high rise structures with preservation of lower-density areas" still suggests that all new building will be high-rise. I don't want this to be translated into some new wild-west anything goes zoning. The plan lacks specific goals -- how much housing would we like to add downtown and what does that look like? I'm all for more people and more affordable housing -- but it's a lot easier to get on board (and not panic), if there are more specific objectives. The parking wording is better. My experience is that lack of easy, accessible parking is a major deterrent to people in neighboring communities to coming downtown. So fine to make some changes, but pretending that people around here aren't driving is not helpful.		

John Cooper	3614 Hillside Rd	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston	Undecided	<p>Some Input for Land Use Commission regarding Envision Evanston 2045 John Cooper 2/25/2025 Dear LUC: I am sure that I am missing much of the details of the discussion precisely because this is such a complex subject. Several issues are listed below that I and many others in single family and other zones have that need to be addressed. I am sure that there is more and much I am missing but want to ensure we are doing this correctly.</p> <p>1. Seems like the revised plan does not include input from several Land Use Commission meetings in December. Why is that? 2. I did not find any discussion that would protect high rent or expensive condos from being developed. 3. Concern that lack of parking requirements will cause issues - especially for people who still rely on cars (example is people I know who get an apartment and have to pay over \$100 for a parking space in some designated parking area - blocks from their homes) I have outlined each of the three issues below</p> <p>1. Revised Plan did not appear to include input from LUC meetings in December of 2024 I read some of the new Comprehensive Plan. One thing stood out to me early. On page 9 of the plan, they said that they wanted qualitative feedback about the plan after it rolled out. Apparently, they only feedback that they vetted on their website. Did they not think that the many feedback comments received by the land use commission in December, many of which were opposed to the zoning plan, were merited to be included. Looks like the plan totally ignored the dozen (s) or more comments and perspectives of those people. I am happy to be wrong but will wait to find out from the land use meeting.</p> <p>2. Density as a factor for Affordability : From Research Density alone doesn't automatically lead to affordable housing—Manhattan, for example, is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, yet it also has some of the highest housing costs. There are several reasons why increasing density doesn't always translate to affordability. Here are some key factors that can prevent developers from creating affordable housing, even in highly dense areas:</p> <p>Market-Driven Development Why it's a problem: Developers are often motivated by profit, so when they build in dense areas, they tend to focus on high-end housing where the returns are greater. In cities like Manhattan, demand for luxury housing is high, and developers cater to that demand rather than producing affordable units. If the market is not incentivizing affordable housing, density alone will not reduce prices.</p> <p>High Land Costs Why it's a problem: In dense urban areas, the cost of land is incredibly high. Even if zoning laws allow for more density, the price of the land itself often dictates the types of housing that can be built. Developers are unlikely to build affordable housing on expensive land because they need to charge higher rents or sale prices to make their investments profitable.</p> <p>Zoning and Land Use Regulations Why it's a problem: While zoning can allow for greater density, many cities have zoning regulations that restrict the types of developments that can happen. For instance, there might be restrictions on the types of affordable housing that can be built (e.g., rent controls or requirements to include certain amenities). These regulations can create barriers that prevent developers from building housing that would be affordable to lower- and middle-income residents.</p> <p>Gentrification and Displacement Why it's a problem: In dense, high-demand areas like Manhattan, increased density often leads to gentrification rather than affordability. As new, upscale developments are built, they attract wealthier residents, which drives up the cost of living and forces existing lower-income residents out. Developers may target more affluent buyers or renters, which further exacerbates the affordability crisis.</p> <p>Construction Costs Why it's a problem: Even if zoning allows for increased density, the costs of construction—materials, labor, and compliance with regulations (e.g., environmental and safety standards)—are extremely high. Developers may find that the financial feasibility of building affordable housing doesn't match the returns they can get from building market-rate units.</p> <p>Absence of Rent Controls or Affordability Requirements Why it's a problem: If there are no policies in place to ensure affordability (such as rent control, rent stabilization, or inclusionary zoning), developers may build units in dense areas that are still priced out of reach for many residents. Without these mechanisms, developers have no incentive to set aside affordable units within their new buildings.</p> <p>Financial Incentives and Tax Breaks Why it's a problem: Developers often rely on financial incentives, such as tax breaks, subsidies, or grants, to offset costs. In the absence of policies that direct these incentives toward affordable housing, developers may focus on luxury or high-end projects. For example, programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in the U. S. can incentivize affordable housing, but without such policies, private developers may prioritize market-rate construction.</p> <p>Lack of Long-Term Affordability Protections Why it's a problem: In some cases, even if developers build affordable units, these units might only remain affordable for a limited time. If there are no long-term protections in place (e.g., rent controls or affordability covenants), developers may build affordable units as part of a mixed-income development, but these units may revert to market rates after a certain period, undermining long-term affordability.</p> <p>Financial and Lending Practices Why it's a problem: Developers often rely on financing from banks or investors, and lenders tend to prefer projects that promise high returns. Affordable housing often has lower margins compared to luxury developments, so banks and investors may be hesitant to fund projects that focus on affordability, even if the zoning laws allow for density.</p> <p>Speculation and Investment Why it's a problem: In high-density areas, real estate investment and speculation can drive up land and property prices. Investors often purchase property not to build affordable housing, but to hold it as an asset, hoping the value will rise over time. This type of investment can push up prices, even if new developments increase density.</p> <p>3. Parking Availability Challenges: Negative Impacts of No Parking Requirement Increased Street Parking Competition Why it's a concern: In areas with no designated parking, residents and visitors may need to rely on street parking, which can lead to overcrowding and competition for limited space. This could be particularly problematic in neighborhoods where street parking is already limited or congested, affecting local traffic flow and the ability of residents to park conveniently.</p> <p>Displacement of Car-Dependent Residents Why it's a concern: Some residents, especially those with low incomes or families, may still rely on cars for commuting, shopping, or other daily needs. Without parking, these residents could find it challenging to live in these new units, and they might be displaced to less walkable or less accessible areas. This could disproportionately affect low-income individuals or people with disabilities who require a car for mobility.</p> <p>Hinders Housing for People Who Need Parking Why it's a concern: Not providing parking could make the housing less attractive to people who need a vehicle but are unable to afford or find parking nearby. This might limit the potential tenant pool for the building, and some families or individuals with specific needs (such as those with mobility challenges) may find these units unsuitable.</p> <p>Potential for Increased Traffic Congestion Why it's a concern: If residents don't have dedicated parking spaces and must park on the street, there could be an increase in local traffic congestion as more cars circulate looking for spaces. In areas already facing traffic issues, this can exacerbate the problem and reduce the overall livability of the neighborhood.</p> <p>Reduced Property Values for Some Buyers Why it's a concern: In some markets, the availability of parking is an important consideration for buyers or renters. Not providing parking could reduce the appeal of the property to a certain segment of the market, potentially lowering the overall demand for the units and limiting the long-term viability of the development.</p>		
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Michael Lohr	726 Milburn St., Evanston	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston 2	Opposed	Written comm	<p>Michael Lohr, Ward 1, for 17 years. Primarily focus on a few items in the chart on page 28 of the report which seems to be setting the basis for greater zoning density and housing affordability, although objective of some of the bullet items is less than clear or even seemingly relevant, appearing more like the classic "word salad." But first, a comment on the number 206 (page 12) for the so-called second survey conducted between late last year and this month. Having seen how this works I imagine the intent is to show that "we asked the community and very few responded." However, what the draft does not show are the numbers for the literally hundreds, if not thousands, of voices that have attended and spoken at Ward, Council, Commission and Committee meetings the past 6 months. And one further comment on the associated text, I have attended countless EE45 meetings, rarely have I heard a call for, and quoting, "increased housing density."</p> <p>Turning to the "Emerging Trends" chart on page 28: First, a quick comment on the data cited various places in the report, it is nationwide data, not Illinois specific and will tell you why – to mislead. For example, migration to the rust belt – perhaps, but not Illinois. A Illinois DPH study in May 2024 projects a steady decline in Illinois population through 2035 (recall, the state just lost a member of the House of Representatives). It is noteworthy that the only increase in the past 10 years was last year – primarily due to "international migration" – legal and illegal.</p> <p>Aging population – I guess the premise is that an aging population needs smaller homes. In fact, average age in Illinois is 39.5 years, in the entire US it is 39.2 years, and there at least a dozen states with much greater aged populations than Illinois.</p> <p>And the latest US Government census report contains some interesting data about Illinois households – It has 5,426,429 housing units, and 5,071,288 households – in other words, excess household housing capacity of over 350,000 units. But instead, the report cites a nationwide shortage. And of the rental units in Illinois, the median rent is \$1,238, \$1,406 in the US, much higher.</p> <p>This same census report cites the IL median income as more than \$80,000, well above the US median of \$77,000.</p> <p>Finally, the bullet on carless households, again, I suppose, arguing for greater density – the current Illinois average is 2 cars per household, and perhaps more interesting, only 11% of IL homes are carless, quoting the report, "among the lowest in the US."</p> <p>Bottom line, as with the original work by HDR, the actual facts tell a far different story than the story depicted in the draft Comp Plan, and I would argue a very misleading story in the Plan.</p>		
Michelle Chlebek	2207 Orrington Ave	2/25/2025	envision evanston	Opposed	In person		Self	
Emily Garcia	2315 Cowper Ave	2/26/2025	Zoning changes	In favor	Written comm	I am in favor of moving forward with re-zoning. I am in favor of zoning reform. We need to accept that changes are a part of life and embrace change.		
Karen Perlia	1111 Dobson st	2/26/2025	Re Zoning Evanston	Opposed	Written comm	<p>Dear Evanston,</p> <p>The re zoning of Evanston and all over this country, happens when cities are selected for 15 minutes Smart cities! Which one of the critical first steps is to remove the zoning laws! No more single family houses, would be the goal! On several occasions. In recent times, these areas coincidentally suffer from a "natural disaster" such as in Lahaina Ha.</p> <p>And more recently the devastating fires of LA. Under all the rubble are the facts that both of these areas and Chicago, are listed as a 15 minute SMART city area's, Evanston is comprised. Isn't it obvious when Mayors receive large contributions from Soros money? The rush to change the zoning laws, without being aware of the truth, is unacceptable to the majority of Evanston residents, many to which have lived here for decades. Surveillance - Monitoring-Analysis-Reporting-Technology " Smart City " No Thanks!</p>		
Joseph Harrow	1420 Grove St	2/26/2025	EE 2045	In favor	Written comm	This is just a simple statement of strong support of the proposed Envision Evanston 2045 plan, including the direction proposed on zoning to increase housing density. As an Evanston resident and homeowner, this document is exciting to me, reminds me why I moved here, and makes me hopeful about the future of our community and shared space.		
Keith	2233 Orrington Ave.	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston P	Opposed	Written comm	Preserve Evanston's character. Based on my initial review not enough has changed. We need more time and community engagement to make such a big decision that will impact Evanston's future.		
Dan DElaney	2129 Sherman Ave	2/26/25		Opposed	Written comm	I voicing my concern over the lack of responsiveness to resident concerns in the 2nd draft of the Envision Evanston Comprehensive Plan. Sufficient time is not being provided to us to review the new draft and provide feedback on it. Sufficient time is not being provided for the City Council and the LUC to discuss it and make revisions. It is insulting to be presented with a rushed timetable to finalize this plan when such significant issues are at stake.		
Rob Biesenbach	2011 Orrington Ave	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston	Opposed	Written comm	<p>I write to ask you to please slow down the process for review and approval of the revised Envision Evanston plan so that members of the community can provide thoughtful input on the latest version.</p> <p>Just as the original report was hastily assembled with fundamentally flawed assumptions, analysis and projections, this new version appears to include mostly cosmetic changes (like adding actual pictures of Evanston instead of stock photography).</p> <p>In fact, at the council meeting where it was recently considered, staff and council members widely agreed that the work of the consultants who put together the report was sloppy, error-ridden and substandard. The report needs far more than a quick facelift.</p> <p>Why is this process being rushed through? What is the extreme urgency? The speed with which it's apparently being greenlighted only raises the suspicion of many in the community that the report is a wolf in sheep's clothing — a giveaway to developers in the guise of housing reform.</p> <p>Please give the public more time to review the report and provide feedback.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		
Betsi Burns	2408 Ridgeway Ave	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston P	Opposed	Written comm	<p>I have genuine concerns about the feasibility and intentions of the Envision Evanston Plan and respectfully request the LUC Commission provide the public with additional time to review the latest draft and schedule additional meetings to allow the public to provide feedback on this draft. I would like to note my concerns of this plan as follows: (1) the lack of transparency and desire to push this plan through without community involvement (2) the true vision, plan and achievable goals for increased affordable housing in our community. There has been no attempt to address the opportunity to house individuals and families into the existing 3211 vacant housing units in our community or reimagine the storefront vacancies in downtown (3)the loss of housing diversity with the proposed re-zoning (4) the push to increase density in Evanston not with the goal of affordable housing to increase the tax base (5) the lack of protection for existing parks and greenspaces throughout our community. Green space along the lakefront has been a major priority for our community (i.e. - Lakefront Master Plan example and the desire not to commercialize the lakefront), but needs to be a priority throughout our community and not just afforded to those who can afford to live close to the lake. Ultimately, these concerns will lead to an unhealthy community and the continued downfall of this community. Please do not support this plan without further consideration and feedback from the community.</p>		
Caroline Hays	2430 Ridgeway Avenue	2/26/2025	Rezoning	Opposed	Written comm	<p>I oppose the rezoning and Envision Evanston for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of public input and a rushed timeline -Pushing this through under the guise of affordable housing, tearing down affordable single family homes to build new construction four flats will remove small affordable single family homes and does nothing for affordable housing. -Tearing down homes isn't good for the environment and yet the city is trying to passing the Healthy Buildings Ordinance at the same time which will make Evanston less affordable. The initiatives contradict each other. -If our goal is to increase the population to increase the tax base then why are we about to close at least two schools? Where will of these new children go to school? We need clarification what will happen to that land. The city and the D65 board need to communicate. Given that D65 is on the verge of bankruptcy and will have to pass a referendum our taxes are likely to increase regardless of the rezoning. -This plan doesn't protect existing green spaces -We need to utilize the existing 3200+ homes that currently exist and make those affordable and also develop the empty storefronts and make Evanston business friendly first before rezoning. -Limit the rezoning to busy streets like Central Street where multi-unit buildings already exist, don't try and change the character of our neighborhoods. - Please do not support this plan without further consideration and feedback from the community. 		

Lauren Weiss	2641 Stewart Ave	2/26/2025	Envision Evanston D	Opposed	Written comm	<p>The new 155-page document was just released on Friday, without red-lining to understand what the changes are. Residents need to have ample time to review and provide feedback on the plan revisions. There needs to be more community input on these drastic changes. It is irresponsible to rush this plan through without the proper time to review.</p> <p>The plan to create affordable housing is weak at best. The plan language about needing to provide more housing, more affordable housing, more diverse types of housing - but very little in the way of support for how much, what types and why. There has been no attempt to address the opportunity to get people into the existing 3,211 vacant housing units that already exists in Evanston. There is no concrete plan on how to make middle housing affordable which was identified in the last meeting as the priority.</p> <p>There is no firm commitment to protecting Evanston's current green space or parks. I would like to see a plan that protects existing parks and green space, as well as a firm commitment to growing green space as density grows.</p> <p>In North Evanston, we have not been able to experience the impact the new stadium, and adding concerts to the stadium, will have on traffic patterns and parking. This is also a big concern. If you have been to a NU Basketball game, you know parking and driving down Isabella / Central is a mess. We need to understand these impacts on the residents before we also green light large developments on Central Street and Green Bay.</p> <p>Envision Evanston is being rushed through due to some arbitrary dead-line and the residents are demanding we have a voice in this process. Please listen to your residents and allow the proper planing time - this will bring massive changes to our community. Residents deserve to have a voice in this process.</p>		
E Taveirne	1635 Hinma Ave #2		Envision 2025	Opposed	Written comment	<p>In short, although we are absolutely in favor of a well-conceived Plan, the single most notable issue we (Rebecca Taveirne and myself E. Taveirne) have is always about the dubious allowances for what appear to be ever-increasing "elastic zoning rules" which appear to be not rules but suggestions to be "subverted" by lawyers. The plan, as cited by so many, is filled with assertions that fail to be supported and are couched in language that gives the impression of thoughtful while substantively far more poetic than factual or based on legitimate studies. We find the E2025 version with red comments on documents are both insightful and MUST BE addressed prior to any voting.</p> <p>So much of it looks like a money grab by money grabbers who do not live in Evanston nor give a hoot about its Downtown or the larger environment of the city. Numerical "population growth" does not equate with development. And when will NU begin to underwrite the tax burden? A stadium build with massive money -- and without a roof in our climate. Rediculous. this is enough. We need leaders who can figure out how to fill existing empty rent space and stop pretending with the term "affordable housing" which is always a nice ploy of wealthy developers to schmooze Mayors and City Counsels and Boards.</p>		
Scott hays	2430 Ridgeway Avenue	2/26/2025	Envision 2045/Rezoning	Opposed	Written comment	<p>I oppose the rezoning and Envision Evanston for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I feel like the timeline is being rushed for political purposes and that the public hasn't had enough time to weigh in -Pushing this through under the guise of affordable housing, tearing down affordable single-family homes to build new construction four flats will remove small affordable single-family homes and does nothing for affordable housing (by the way, most people don't move to these neighborhoods to live in condos, they want single-family homes). Tearing down homes is terrible for the environment, yet the city is trying to pass the Healthy Buildings Ordinance at the same time, which will make Evanston less affordable. The initiatives contradict each other. -If our goal is to increase the population to increase the tax base then why are we about to close at least two schools? Where will of these new children go to school? We need clarification what will happen to that land. The city and the D65 board need to communicate. Given that D65 is on the verge of bankruptcy and will have to pass a referendum our taxes are likely to increase regardless of the rezoning. -This plan doesn't protect existing green spaces. We need to utilize the 3,200+ existing homes and make those affordable. We also need to develop the empty storefronts and make Evanston business-friendly before rezoning. Limit the rezoning to busy streets like Central Street, where multi-unit buildings already exist; don't try to change the character of our neighborhoods. -I ask our council members to not support this plan without further consideration and feedback from the community. 		



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Land Use Commission

Jack Weiss <jw@jackweissassociates.com>

Sun, Feb 23, 2025 at 2:30 PM

To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: Clare Kelly <ckelly@cityofevanston.org>, Dave Galloway <Dagalloway72@gmail.com>, Cade Sterling <csterling@cityofevanston.org>

Meagan

Please put this into the LUC packet for their Wednesday meeting if possible:

Urban Design Commission:

The Preservation Commission, in their comments to you about Envision Evanston 2045, recommended that the concept of an Urban Design Commission be incorporated into the revised draft of the Comprehensive Plan. During last Tuesday's Special Meeting of the Preservation Commission, Sarah Flax assured us that it would be in the revised document.

Clare Kelly, along with Cade Sterling and Design Evanston leaders, had, in 2023, prepared a draft ordinance that would have created such a Commission. The Planning & Development Committee, however, failed to move the draft forward to the Council, anticipating that the concept would become part of the proposed new Comprehensive Plan.

A version of the idea does appear in Chapter 3: Neighborhoods and Places chapter of the updated Plan, but it appears to lack the intended emphasis:

Chapter 5, Neighborhoods and Places

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7. ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS QUALITY DESIGN.

LU 7.1 Establish a Design Review Committee or process that provides technical assistance for new development and integrates it into a predictable review and approval process.

LU 7.2 Promote quality design and site planning early in the development process and before financial commitments to ensure design decisions align with the goals of the Plan and established guidelines.

LU 7.3 Develop guidelines for new development that align with the vision and goals of the Plan and consider the defining features of neighborhoods, sustainable materials, and energy efficiency.

Feed back of the Plan's mention of a "Design Review Committee" from one Design Evanston leader was, "Well, that still could be a wishy-washy policy administered by city staff with no design credentials." Another planner who was involved with the 2023 draft ordinance said, "No idea why this would be unnecessarily watered down. I would have preferred it to say, "establish a urban design commission comprised of resident experts to signify the City's commitment to quality design solutions and provide..."

Jack Weiss, Director Emeritus

Design Evanston

www.designevanston.org

2 attachments



DELogo72.jpg
27K



Design Commission idea on hold.pdf
357K

‘Design commission’ idea on hold

One member raises concern about creating ‘taste police’

by Bob Seidenberg July 17th, 2023

Some prominent members of Evanston’s design community calling for the city to establish a Community Design Commission to ensure projects meet good design standards likely will have to wait – perhaps as long as two years.



The Legacy Evanston design came under strong criticism in some quarters for its height and bulk. Credit: Bob Seidenberg photo

At the City Council’s July 10 Planning and Development Committee meeting, several council members argued the city shouldn’t tackle the issue until a review leading to a new comprehensive general plan is completed.

The city is just embarking on its first new comprehensive general plan, as well as a new zoning code, a combined process that could take 24 months.

Jack Weiss, a founding member and past president of Design Evanston, a group of design professionals who have played a major role promoting the importance of good design in local projects, argued that 24 months would be too long.

“Too many important things will occur long before that time and will need to be addressed by the new community design commission,” he told plan committee members.

The city has had staff-run committees, most recently the Design and Project Review (DAPR) Committee, and before that the Site Plan and Appearance Review Committee (SPARC).

These committees examined elements of projects such as parking arrangement, circulation, traffic access, landscaping, signage, storm water control, exterior building design and materials. Although design would sometimes come up in those group’s discussions, it was not as a main focus.

“The perception is that there have never been professional designers on either committee on a regular basis and that design seems to be an afterthought,” Weiss said, speaking at the June 26 plan meeting.

The community design commission proposal seeks “to put design in the hands of professionals, architects, designers and others who understand the role design plays in nearly every aspect of the daily life of our community,” he said.

‘Varied designs’ through ‘professional thoughtfulness’

Others who spoke in support of the proposal included David Galloway, vice-president of Design Evanston, and a former member of both the Plan Commission and Preservation Commission; Tom Hofmaier, treasurer of Design Evanston, and an architect with more than 40 years’ experience.

Hofmaier told committee members that he supported the development of the design commission, not with the wish “arbitrarily restricting design styles,” but rather with the hope of providing “more varied designs through some professional thoughtfulness.”

Responding to the proposal, Council Member Eleanor Revelle, 7th Ward, said she wondered what effect a design commission would have had on the Land Use Committee and Council’s decisions concerning the 15-story Legacy Evanston building on Chicago Avenue, whose height and bulk came under strong criticism from nearby residents.

“I do like the idea of having beautiful buildings,” she said, adding, “I guess I would feel at this point more comfortable having the concept of a design commission be something that was considered by the comprehensive plan process, and that it would be seen as something to be created as part of adopting the comprehensive plan.”

With council members Thomas Suffredin, 6th Ward, and Juan Geracaris, 9th Ward, as co-sponsors, Council Member Clare Kelly, 1st Ward, made the reference to develop a community design commission. The referral was proposed to replace some aspects of the city’s code that previously referenced the design and project review committee.

That committee was the only city committee where members of the public had a chance to sit in on city staff discussions of projects at an early stage of the development process. Last year, it was dissolved as public meeting community members could attend.

In a detailed memo to the plan committee, City Planner Cade Sterling noted that city staff surveyed nearly two dozen municipalities and their enabling legislation that included some design review committee.

Other cities with systems in place

The list included neighboring Chicago; Urbana, Ill.; Madison, Wisc.; Atlanta; Palo Alto, Calif., and Ann Arbor, Mich.

In Palo Alto, which has an architectural review board, staff found, consideration is given to “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; [and] sustainability best practices.”

Looking at the role an Evanston design committee might play, Sterling observed in his memo, “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,” he wrote, “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.”

In his original memo, Sterling mentioned the need to coordinate creation of a commission with the comprehensive general plan and zoning ordinance, but spoke of integrating an already functioning commission into consultants work on a comprehensive general plan, not after it was completed.

Some Evanston design advocates have lobbied since the mid-1980s for a binding appearance body that could rule out development that overwhelms or changes the look of neighborhood, a look at past coverage shows.

Staff, in fact, at one time recommended that SPARC be allowed to make binding appearance decisions and sought two architects on its panel.

The proposal, however, came under strong criticism from quarters of the business, maintaining that appeals of decisions would take too long in the world of development.

At the July 10 meeting, Kelly said she envisioned the group being advisory as DAPR was. The group would be composed of resident experts who care about the city and live there.

“It also brings focus and attention to how much we care about designing Evanston, about creating a city that is attractive and more than meshes well” with the surrounding streetscape, she told committee members.

“Some cities have competitions every year on the best designs that’s sponsored often by these design commissions,” she noted. “So I think it just really lends itself to creating a more attractive city.”

‘Ionic versus Doric’ and ‘taste police’

Council Member Jonathan Nieuwsma, 4th Ward, chairing the committee, referred to Revelle’s earlier question about whether having a design commission would have influenced the Evanston Legacy project as presented.

“To that particular case,” he said, “the developers did not take input from conversations with council members directly prior to that [their submitting the proposal.] I suspect ‘no’ would be the answer in that case.”

Nieuwsma admitted he was somewhat conflicted on the question, “because I 100% understand and support the [need] to have some kind of thoughtful approach to urban design.”

He said, though, that “when it comes to esthetics, kind of by definition that is hard to quantify — difficult, if not impossible to quantify.

“I don’t think it would be productive to have one architect arguing for Ionic columns and the other architect arguing for Doric columns,” he said. “So I’m just concerned about creating a committee that’s the taste police, as having that not be a productive part of this process.”

His answer was “yes,” meanwhile, to waiting until after the comprehensive general plan and new zoning ordinance was completed before tackling the question.

“We’re going to have a lot of public input,” he said. “And then let’s see where we’re at.”

Council Member Devon Reid said his concern was that if the city does create such a commission, there be very clear guidelines. He expressed concern about making the process more political, “and making Evanston potentially a more unfriendly place for folks to come and develop. But as long as it is created in a very thoughtful body that uses this body as DAPR was previously used, yes, then I’m fine with it,” he said.

Noting that the item was set for discussion, Kelly argued that it should be brought back at a future plan meeting in a few months, allowing more robust discussion.

“I don’t think we should wait for a comprehensive plan to be completed, which could take a couple of years. This is something that i feel many people in this city feel was needed a long time ago,” she said.

She made a motion that the issue come back to the committee, in time for plan committee meeting at the end of August.

Nieuwsma argued against the motion.

“We’d just have essentially the same discussion in a few months,” he said. “We should pause this conversation until the comprehensive plan process is played out. So I think the next step here is some offline conversation, and then when there is enough consensus to move this to the next step, whatever that might be, or when someone’s chair (chair of the committee) wants to move forward at this time.”

There was no further vote on that direction, and the meeting was adjourned.

Source: Evanston RoundTable 7.17.23



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Concerns about Envision Evanston

Megan Bess <meganbess@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 9:15 AM

Ms. Jones,

I am submitting this comment ahead of the Land Use Commission Meeting today. I am concerned that the City is moving rather quickly with the proposed plan without giving citizens time to truly understand the implications and raise concerns. I live on one of the blocks "targeted" for rezoning. I am worried about what this means and it all feels rushed. I do not believe the City has properly proven how the proposed plan will truly produce more affordable housing. Density doesn't necessarily equal affordability. And at what cost to the current citizens and charm of Evanston. I left the City of Chicago for Evanston because I did not want to live on a mixed housing block any longer. This all feels quite aspirational and like the Mayor needs it done now for political reasons. Every Evanston citizen deserves the chance to read, fully understand, and engage in meaningful dialogue about this plan. The City has not met the burden to prove this is feasible and will produce the intended results.

I ask the Commission to please slow down and give everyone a chance to catch up. The aggressive timeline raises eyebrows about who this is really intended to benefit.

Many thanks,
Megan Bess



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Comments for Land Use Commission Meeting tonight

Rob Biesenbach <rob.biesenbach@gmail.com>
To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 8:53 AM

I filled out the comment form for tonight's meeting and am cc'ing you here:

I write to ask you to please slow down the process for review and approval of the revised Envision Evanston plan so that members of the community can provide thoughtful input on the latest version.

Just as the original report was hastily assembled with fundamentally flawed assumptions, analysis and projections, this new version appears to include mostly cosmetic changes (like adding actual pictures of Evanston instead of stock photography).

In fact, at the council meeting where it was recently considered, staff and council members widely agreed that the work of the consultants who put together the report was sloppy, error-ridden and substandard. The report needs far more than a quick facelift.

Why is this process being rushed through? What is the extreme urgency? The speed with which it's apparently being greenlighted only raises the suspicion of many in the community that the report is a wolf in sheep's clothing — a giveaway to developers in the guise of housing reform.

Please give the public more time to review the report and provide feedback.

Thank you.

--

[Rob Biesenbach](#)



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Envision Evanston Plan comment

Keith Bokota <keith.bokota@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 7:34 AM

Please share this comment with the Land Use Commission:

I oppose this plan. We need to preserve Evanston's character. It is one of the main reasons my family moved to the community. I do not support re-zoning. The Envision Evanston Plan needs to be reworked and more community engagement is needed. The current plan is too rushed without appropriate feedback from our residents.

Thank you,
Keith
[2233 Orrington Ave, Evanston, IL 60201](#)



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

New Draft of EE- more time?

Michelle Chlebek <michelle.chlebek@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 6:08 AM

To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Cc: Clare Kelly <clareangelakelly@gmail.com>, Lee Greenberg <leegreenberg337@gmail.com>

Meagan-

Many of us are scrambling to review the new draft of the EE plan and provide thoughtful commentary. While this version is better than the last, I am feeling that it is not the final version. I would fully support extending the April 1 deadline to leave time for another round of tweaks.

Thank you.

Michelle

[2207 Orrington Ave, Evanston, IL 60201](https://www.cityofevanston.org/2207-Orrington-Ave)



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Major concerns about Envision Evanston

Lee Clifford <lmclifford2019@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 8:48 AM

To the LUC,

This revised plan addresses almost none of the massive shortcomings identified by the community with the Envision Evanston plan. There appears to be a very small and loud group determined to rush this faulty plan through without full community opinion and involvement. Please do not pass a plan that threatens to give our historic community over to developers.

Sincerely,
Lee Clifford



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Concern over Envision Evanston Comprehensive Plan Next Steps

Dan Delaney <ddelaney55@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 7:49 AM

We are writing to voice our concern over the lack of responsiveness to resident concerns in the 2nd draft of the Envision Evanston Comprehensive Plan. Sufficient time is not being provided to us to review the new draft and provide feedback on it. Sufficient time is not being provided for the City Council and the LUC to discuss it and make revisions. It is insulting to be presented with a rushed timetable to finalize this plan when such significant issues are at stake.

Dan & Kathy Delaney
[2129 Sherman Ave.](#)
Evanston



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Land Use Committee Meeting tonight

Brie Evans <chrisbrie70@icloud.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 7:45 AM

To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: Clare Kelly <clareangelakelly@gmail.com>

Ms. Jones -

I'm writing to express concern that the Land Use Committee is rushing through the process of re-zoning and increasing density in Evanston. The new Envision Evanston 2045 draft continues to insufficiently address the concerns of residents and still contains errors, including inaccurately identifying the borders of some of the historic districts.

Please allow for the community to review the new draft further and give more feedback prior to voting on any measure related to re-zoning and densifying our city.

Thank you,

Brie Evans
2040 Orrington Ave
Ward 1



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

I oppose the rezoning

Caroline Hays <carolinelina@yahoo.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 10:12 AM

To: "mmjones@cityofevanston.org" <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Hi Megan,

I would like to submit this comment for the Land Use Commission meeting.

I oppose the rezoning and Envision Evanston for the following reasons:

- Lack of public input and a rushed timeline
- Pushing this through under the guise of affordable housing, tearing down affordable single family homes to build new construction four flats will remove small affordable single family homes and does nothing for affordable housing.
- Tearing down homes isn't good for the environment and yet the city is trying to passing the Healthy Buildings Ordinance at the same time which will make Evanston less affordable. The initiatives contradict each other.
- If our goal is to increase the population to increase the tax base then why are we about to close at least two schools? Where will of these new children go to school? We need clarification what will happen to that land. The city and the D65 board need to communicate. Given that D65 is on the verge of bankruptcy and will have to pass a referendum our taxes are likely to increase regardless of the rezoning.
- This plan doesn't protect existing green spaces.
- We need to utilize the existing 3200+ homes that currently exist and make those affordable and also develop the empty storefronts and make Evanston business friendly first before rezoning.
- Limit the rezoning to busy streets like Central Street where multi-unit buildings already exist, don't try and change the character of our neighborhoods.
- Please do not support this plan without further consideration and feedback from the community.

Thanks,
Caroline Hays
6th Ward Resident



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Opposition to Rezoning initiative, Envision 2045

1 message

Hays, Scott <SHays@williamblair.com>

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 10:54 AM

To: "mmjones@cityofevanston.org" <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: "tomsuffredin@gmail.com" <tomsuffredin@gmail.com>

Hi Megan,

Hope this note finds you well. I wanted to voice my opposition and concern to the rezoning initiative that is being discussed as part of Mayor Biss' Envision Evanston plan, as I believe we haven't had enough public debate or received enough information on this topic. Here are they reasons why I am opposed:

- I feel like the timeline is being rushed for political purposes and that the public hasn't had enough time to weigh in;
- Pushing this through under the guise of affordable housing, tearing down affordable single-family homes to build new construction four flats will remove small affordable single-family homes and does nothing for affordable housing (by the way, most people don't move to these neighborhoods to live in condos, they want single-family homes);
- Tearing down homes is terrible for the environment, yet the city is trying to pass the Healthy Buildings Ordinance at the same time, which will make Evanston less affordable. The initiatives contradict each other.
- If our goal is to increase the population to increase the tax base then why are we about to close at least two schools? Where will of these new children go to school? We need clarification what will happen to that land. The city and the D65 board need to communicate. Given that D65 is on the verge of bankruptcy and will have to pass a referendum our taxes are likely to increase regardless of the rezoning;
- This plan doesn't protect existing green spaces;
- We need to utilize the 3,200+ existing homes and make those affordable. We also need to develop the empty storefronts and make Evanston business-friendly before rezoning;
- Limit the rezoning to busy streets like Central Street, where multi-unit buildings already exist; don't try to change the character of our neighborhoods;

I ask our council members to not support this plan without further consideration and feedback from the community.

Thank you,

Scott Hays

[2430 Ridgeway Avenue](#)

[Evanston, IL 60201](#)



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

More time to review Envision Evanston Comprehensive Plan before LUC review

Bruce Jang <bruce.jang@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 7:10 AM

Meagan,

I would like to submit a comment regarding the meeting of the land use commission today.

In short, I believe the public needs more time to review the 155 page document that was just released on Friday. It represents a meaningful reform of Evanston's current zoning laws, yet residents have not had nearly enough time to read and provide feedback. In fact, allowing just two business days for public comment before the LUC reviews the plan suggests a desire for unnecessary haste, and to hinder feedback from residents rather than invite it.

I respectfully request the LUC offer more review time to the public before considering this plan. Thank you.

Bruce Jang
2115 Sherman Ave



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Citizen Comment--Envision Evanston 2045 + Rezoning

Claudia Kovitz <crk.communications@gmail.com>
To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Tue, Feb 25, 2025 at 12:44 PM

Hi, Meagan:

Could you please forward this to the Land Use Commissioners prior to their meeting tomorrow evening? See attached PDF.

Please confirm.

Thank you,
Claudia

Dear Land Use Commissioners,

I'm attaching a document I am also sharing with the City Council.

Thank you for your consideration.

Claudia Kovitz
800 Judson Avenue, Apt 403
Evanston, IL 60202
crk.communications @ gmail. com
773-680-5739 cell

 **Envision Evanston 2045+Rezoning 2.25.25.pdf**
51K

Citizen comment on Envision Evanston 2045 and Rezoning Proposal

Put the vote on Envision Evanston 2045 on hold. The public is just becoming aware of the rezoning proposals that are at its core. Many of us are aghast. The Land Use Commissioners are concerned. We've seen no impact studies, no serious analytical processes, and no measurable effort to maintain Evanston's character--which is why many of us choose to live here.

This is backwards. Before any vote is taken, we need to see studies conducted by experts in the field across a number of criteria. For example:

Does the proposed rezoning:

1. Help meet the project's defined goal?
2. Benefit, not harm, current residents?
3. Protect the character of Evanston?
4. Have the support of the Land Use Commission and Evanston citizens?

If the resulting data show unfixable issues with the rezoning plan, the City Council should scrap the whole project and start over.

Voting on the comprehensive plan before such work is done is irresponsible and coercive. It's coercive because if the plan is approved, funds will be allocated. Then there is no going back. Rezoning of some sort will be shoehorned in, no matter how it impacts Evanston citizens.

I ask each City Councilperson to watch every minute of the last two Land Use Commission meetings, on January 22 and 29, before pushing ahead with a vote. There was a lot of expertise in that room: professionals who live right here in Evanston who, during the comment sections, were sharing their own research on the rezoning proposal. The Commissioners took great interest in what these experts shared, much of which was concerning.

We are a sophisticated city. **Let's do the right thing and hold off on this vote before making a huge decision that will affect us all for years to come.**

Sincerely,
Claudia Kovitz
800 Judson Avenue, Apt 403
Evanston, IL 60202
crk.communications@gmail.com
773-680-5739 cell

Sent to:

- Land Use Commission
- Evanston City Council



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

EE 2045 V2 comments

Pat Mulhern <spartanpatrick@gmail.com>

Sun, Feb 23, 2025 at 9:53 PM

To: sruger@cityofevanston.org, Luke Stowe <lstowe@cityofevanston.org>, Sarah Flax <sflax@cityofevanston.org>, Melissa Wynne <mwynne@cityofevanston.org>, "mmjones@cityofevanston.org" <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>, Daniel Biss <dbiss@cityofevanston.org>, Cade Sterling <csterling@cityofevanston.org>

Ladies and Gentleman:

(Megan Jones, would you kindly include in the packet for LUC this Wednesday)

I appreciate the second Draft of the proposed Envision Evanston. There is more volume, some good ads and improvements. It is still not a plan. It's a collection of ideas from consultants and a small group of city staffers. I look very much forward to helping LEAD, participate and shape the city through this process.

Personally, I have read through it quickly, and I am aware many of my neighbors again dedicated their weekends too, under the weight of an unclear process and artificial deadlines. I am just beginning to compare to V1 and searching to find out whether the written feedback we submitted to the city staff has been heard. Our feedback, on major issues, has not been incorporated. The upzoning, increased density, one size fits all approach to the entire city is still core to this plan. My comments in general follow and we will again give specifics once we digest and get engagement with authors.

1. This plan is still not For Evanston by Evanston.
2. The engagement going forward must be better than it has been.
3. In what functioning business, organization or municipality would this make it through the board room or the city hall?
4. Inadequate time to complete: Should be at least a year minimum from now
5. Process: Still not defined and with a handful of city staff and an outside communications firm (\$40,000 worth), where do we go next? I would suggest a calendar that all 75,000 residents understand and can live with.
6. Assumptions: The original premise that this is to deliver more affordable housing and the town by increasing units, height, and density is being challenged by nearly everyone. In every meeting I have been in since Thanksgiving, other than one organization and two city staffers, the overwhelming majority of comments suggest this is NOT the core of the Vision residents see for Evanston of 2045.
7. If residents of Evanston are claiming for more density and more big buildings, please support this claim.
8. Still not answering the major questions of what constitutes affordable housing, how much of it do we need (not want), where, and what are we targeting (families, demographics, seniors, locations, types of housing)? Where are the goals for what we are trying to do? Where are we right now on this? Data Please!
9. The suggested map in V2 should be removed. It is deceptive to say that Zoning maps have been removed and then have LUC in the coming months look back to the map in this as its guide to zoning. THIS IS NOT transparency. The council already voted to separate these two items.

I am still waiting for one of you to stand up and say the obvious. We don't have this right yet! How hard is that? This city deserves this from the 7 of you, your teammates at the city and the council.

More important than that, the residents of this city deserve better and forcing this plan through looks and feels like what is going on in our nation's capital.

Do you not trust the residents...We are Evanston Illinois!

Sincerely, Pat Mulhern
1224 Hinman, Evanston IL
847-868-4222

Pat Mulhern

2/26/25, 10:05 AM

CITY OF EVANSTON Mail - EE 2045 V2 comments

847-868-4222

Spartanpatrick@gmail.com



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Re: Timeline for EE2045 comprehensive plan

1 message

Kathy Shaw <kashawis@mac.com>

Sun, Feb 23, 2025 at 7:48 PM

To: Melissa Wynne <mwynne@cityofevanston.org>, Daniel Biss <dbiss@cityofevanston.org>, sruger@cityofevanston.org, Istowe@cityofevanston.org, mmjones@cityofevanston.org, csterling@cityofevanston.org, sflax@cityofevanston.org

Hello all, I am writing to follow up on the EE2045 Plan Draft version 2. After reading it twice this weekend, I would say it is an improvement on version 1. However, there remains considerable lack of supporting data for policy prescriptions. For example:

1. There are statements in the plan that feedback indicates support for upzoning and increased density, but no statements in the plan acknowledging the significant questions and concerns raised by residents in public and written comments about this approach. In all the meetings I have attended, there has been exactly two comments supporting increased upzoning and density. The other comments have been skeptical. (Key Takeaways/Housing/p. 14, P. 16, etc.) I believe an honest draft should communicate the pushback that the city has received on this approach.

2. The Future Land Use map should not be in this plan. (P. 35) It is zoning related and reflects the one size fits all/corridors approach that has received significant pushback from residents who want a more context specific approach to the new zoning code. TAKE IT OUT!

3. As a 3rd ward resident, I would note that the description of our ward (p. 39) is incomplete at best—it makes the ward sound like a leafy home for rich people. I would point out that we are the most dense ward in the city. We have a wide variety of housing, including modern apartments and condos, courtyard condos, small 2 and 3 flats, duplexes and single family homes. The 3rd ward is diverse: we closely mirror the racial/ethnic diversity that is found in the city. I think the Plan should include this information.

4. Chapter 6: Community Systems. My biggest takeaway from this section is that Evanston has not done the work to figure out what effect the proposed upzoning will have on our infrastructure, nor does it indicate who will pay for the upgrading necessary to accommodate the new residents. Personally, I favor some sort of infrastructure tax on the developer so longtime residents do not have to pay.

5. Chapter 7: Getting Around. The plan acknowledges that only 16% of Evanston residents do not have a car. Yet, there is a continued insistence on TOD, which usually means much less parking. As a 3rd Ward resident, I can tell you the proposed apartment building with 9 parking spots for 60+ apartments at Dempster and Chicago will cause the parking situation along Hinman and Dempster to significantly worsen. Where will the people coming to eat at Blind Faith, shop at our local stores and grab a gelato at Frío park? Where will the workers park? THERE IS NO PUBLIC PARKING OTHER THAN THE STREETS IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD. TOD is fine, but not without available parking. People in Evanston have cars!

6. Environment/Parks/Urban Tree Canopy. These policies are inconsistent with the upzoning and increased density, which will create more urban heat islands, kill existing canopy trees by denying them sunlight and target all vacant land for development rather than balancing the needs of development with the need for more parks. We should be honest here: take these sections out if all the city cares about is upzoning and more density.

7. Housing stock/housing costs/housing insecurity: p. 91/92. These sections are still not ready for serious policy discussions. I would note that the Plan appears to cherry pick statistics to emphasize their point. So, sometimes the plan highlights National/state/county/local data, while at other times, it focuses exclusively on Evanston data, thus denying the reader full context. The cherry picked data is super evident in this section. A quick AI search reveals that much of our 'housing crisis' closely mirrors national and statewide trends.

8. Policies and Actions. P. 95 "1. Implement a comprehensive housing strategy" in which the city acknowledges it does not have the data regarding housing needs and does not regularly collect data about these needs. Then, immediately states "2. Increase housing supply and choices". The lack of supporting data about what the needs are, where the needs, the demographics of the needs prevents this plan from taking a more thoughtful policy approach that I suspect would engender huge community buy-in. While I recognize that upzoning and density are the current policy du jour among progressive housing policy types, I think you owe it to the residents of Evanston to be more thoughtful and

avoid slapping easy looking solutions onto a problem that is very complex and city/neighborhood dependent. Again, national strategies are just that and we should have much more granularity and context in our solutions. The progressive policy landscape is filled with the next big thing that, 10 to 20 years later, policy types go "oops" after carelessly throwing money around and disrupting lives. For a refresher on this, I would point to the high school reform movement that believed that by encouraging/creating small high schools academic outcomes would magically improve. They never consulted with the teachers and parents about the actual issues that would make it better. Let's avoid taking this kind of arrogant approach and take a step back, gather the necessary data, define affordability and really examine what Evanstonians want and need.

9. Economic development. This section seems to be in contradiction with the desire to build more and more tall apartment buildings with retail on the ground floor. Where will the existing small businesses go that form the fabric of our lived environment? My own neighborhood corner of Chicago and Dempster is filled with a wide variety of stores and restaurants and forms the basis of community where we know the proprietor, the workers and many of the customers. If the upzoning happens and even half of the businesses are displaced (Pour, My Eye Doctor, Sea Ranch, the Animal hospital, Bagel Art, Modern Vibe, Secret Treasures) you are fundamentally altering the fabric of our lived experience. According to Katherine Gotsick at Main Dempster Mile, it took The Main at Chicago and Main 8 years to rent all the spaces. That's a long time and in the meantime, residents will lose those valuable assets that help create and form community. This plan does not appear to take the potential loss of our small businesses seriously.

I will stop here. I could go on, but my major point is that this plan, while an improvement, still does not serve Evanston well. I would urge you all to give the LUC adequate time to review this document, direct the city staff to conduct community outreach sessions (in conjunction with the Alderman) and gather the feedback and wisdom of the community. In the meantime, the city could spend additional time actually conducting needs assessments of our housing stock in order that the plan makes sense for our town.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I would like to include it in the LUC packet.

Kathy Shaw

Sent from my iPad

> On Jan 27, 2025, at 2:32 PM, Kathy Shaw <kashawis@mac.com> wrote:

>

> I am writing to thank you for separating the comprehensive plan from the zoning. I am also asking the city council to slow down the comprehensive plan and give citizens ample time to read, digest and respond to it, both through current mechanisms, but also through outreach engagements like workshops focused on specific areas of the plan and ensuring that the entire community is involved in providing feedback.

>

> This weekend, a number of us took the plan and read it thoroughly. What we found was an incomplete plan. Many of the underlying statements that support the direction the city wants to take have no supporting documentation. The plan itself is more of a laundry list of ideas that, when thought about as a whole, do not support each other and the plan itself is silent on the mechanism(s) the city will need to resolve these issues. Zoning maps are still in the plan, even though they should be separated out. This plan is not ready to be voted on. The citizens deserve better. Please do the right thing and space out the timeline so we can all be involved in creating a vision we are proud of.

>

> In closing, I would say that at its best, this is a bold and sweeping revision to our city that I generally support. The problem, as ever, is in the HOW to implement the vision and this is where the current plan utterly fails. It takes a one size fits all, development centric approach and tries to impose that on a city of neighborhoods. There is no context and no granularity. There are statements that have no documentation, there are maps that show parking where there is none and another that indicates Calvary Cemetery is "open space". Frankly, I was in shock that the city would put out a document with such egregious errors. We all deserve better and I believe taking the time to make this document right is the best way forward.

>

> In hope that you will see fit to insist on getting this right rather than done, Kathy Shaw



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Do not vote on this

James Twigg <jtwigg312@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Feb 26, 2025 at 10:47 AM

Hello Meagan,

I am a concerned Evanston resident. The speed at which the local government is trying to pass this land use plan is scary. Why are we rushing this? Why are we not allowing plenty of time to have proper discussions with actual residents. It sounds like it is all about getting tax revenue and not what is best for Evanston. This is not going to solve affordable housing. Let's not try and pretend it will. Please stop this. Slow this down. There are much better ways we can go about this. Other communities that have gone through this have taken years for planning and discussions and we are jamming this through so fast.

Again please do not pass this plan

Thank you for your time,

James Twigg

ENVISION
EVANSTON **2045**

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comments from Steve Test
1135 Hinman Avenue



First comments on the second draft for Land Use Commission by Steve Test

1135 Hinman Avenue

February 24, 2025

These are my comments primarily on the housing and related portions of the Comprehensive Plan. The second draft is long and complex and will require much more time to read and formulate comments on the whole thing. I urge the LUC to take its time to gather feedback and urge the City Council to allow LUC the time to amend this document until it's content is acceptable to as many Evanstonians as possible. Then you will be able to send it on to City Council knowing it is the best document to proceed with.

Based on my reading of just the housing-related sections, this draft is better than the first, faint praise to be sure, but it still makes claims that I do not believe accurately reflect the will of the people in Evanston. For example, I don't believe there is a strong desire for more population density in Evanston.

The plan still does not do much to define housing affordability, quantify how much Evanston has and how much is needed, identify who will live there, etc. There ought to be a much more extensive and deep discussion of affordability, both in housing and transportation.

I encourage the LUC to shift the emphasis to the ideas in the plan that very well could lead to more affordable housing. Land trusts, using city land to partner with builders, identifying, expanding the inventory and preserving NOAH. Let's also look at incremental zoning changes targeted where opportunities are identified, not blowing up the whole system, against the wishes of Evanston's residents, and with unforeseeable, possibly undesirable consequences.

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Fellow Evanstonians,

I'm delighted to share this new draft of our comprehensive plan for Envision Evanston 2045. This document outlines the community's shared values and vision, providing the City with a roadmap to guide decisions on development, projects, programming, infrastructure, spending, and more.

We are in the midst of a years-long process that has requested a great deal from residents.

We've asked you to share your time, input, ideas, experiences, connections to other community members, and trust as we've begun to shape what this twenty-year plan will look like. Through Envision Evanston 2045, the community puts down a marker and says that, here and now, we commit to achieving these collective aspirations for the next generation.



This draft is a reflection of the invaluable input received from community members. We're appreciative of everything you've shared so far and will continue engaging with the community to learn more. Is what we have so far accurate? What is missing and what needs to be tweaked? In the coming months, we will continue to rely on your input to shape and finalize this plan, ensuring that this plan is rooted in community feedback.

As a community member of Evanston, you play a vital role in shaping both the Evanston of today and its future. I am deeply grateful for your dedication and commitment to this process and for contributing to the creation of a thriving and strong community for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Biss

I have deleted some of the chapters, struck through here, in this comments submission as I haven't had a chance to read those chapters yet.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term planning document that outlines the vision, goals, policies, and actions for a city or town's growth. This plan serves as a guide for future development and decision-making related to land use, housing, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, parks, the environment, and more.

A comprehensive plan helps ensure that future development aligns with the community's values and needs. It provides guidelines for zoning decisions, investments, and public services. Additionally, it can be used as a tool to secure funding, promote consistency and transparency in decision-making, and improve the well-being of community members. Comprehensive plans typically cover a timeframe of 10 to 20 years and are periodically updated to reflect the changing circumstances and needs of the community.

Evanston's last Comprehensive Plan was approved in 2000. Since then, Evanston has experienced many socioeconomic events and shifts, such as the Great Recession, the housing crisis of 2008, and the COVID-19 pandemic, among other nationwide events. The development of a new Comprehensive Plan, part of Envision Evanston 2045, will help the City of Evanston navigate these socioeconomic and political shifts while preparing for future challenges and opportunities.

Envision Evanston 2045 is a community-driven process that will lead to a new Comprehensive Plan and zoning code. This initiative seeks to reflect a shared vision for the future of Evanston, addressing key areas such as land use, racial equity, affordable housing, and arts and culture. The Plan will provide a guiding framework to inform decision-making and prioritize resources. The Plan's contents and recommendations are developed from engaging with Evanston residents, reviewing existing plans and policies, taking stock of the city's resources and amenities, and identifying key challenges and opportunities.



Source: City of Evanston

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan is structured into key sections, beginning with "What We Heard," which highlights major themes that emerged from engaging with the community. It then progresses to "Evanston Today," offering a historical overview, current demographics, key metrics for tracking community changes, and emerging trends to monitor. "Evanston Tomorrow" outlines the Plan's overarching goals, the vision statement derived from engagement, and the framework for guiding future development. The following sections focus on specific topic areas:

- Neighborhoods and Places
- Community Systems
- Getting Around
- Environment
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces
- Housing
- Health and Well-being
- Economic Development
- Arts and Culture- Community Building, Placemaking, and Connection Making
- Preservation

Each of these chapters reviews existing conditions, describes key challenges and opportunities, and recommends policies and actions.

USING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The final chapter of the Plan, Implementation, provides a framework for evaluating progress toward carrying out the recommended policies and actions in the Comprehensive Plan. This critical part of the Plan includes an annual evaluation and a five-year assessment that will consider new trends; policy changes at the local, state, and federal levels; and land use dynamics.

Regularly evaluating the Plan will ensure its policies and actions are built for success and widespread support. This structured and consistent review process builds transparency and accountability into Envision Evanston 2045, ensuring the Plan remains flexible and reflective of the changing needs of the community. The Plan will allow for amendments to ensure it remains a forward-thinking guide for Evanston's future.

Engagement was altogether unsatisfactory. Too many people never heard of what was going on. Some who did were insulted by the limits and pre-conceived notions driving the process.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT WE HEARD

With Envision Evanston 2045, we aim to ensure that Evanston remains a thriving and inclusive community for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, and play. To achieve this, the plan must consider the community's diverse needs and expectations. To align the plan with lived experiences and community values, the City of Evanston designed a robust and inclusive engagement plan, divided into five phases:

- **Phase 1** captured the lived experiences of thousands of community members.
- **Phase 2** engaged stakeholders in developing a shared vision for Evanston's future based on the lived experiences.
- **Phase 3** collaborated with stakeholders to shape strategies for realizing that vision.
- **Phase 4** (current phase) aims to finalize the draft plan based on feedback.
- **Phase 5** will incorporate additional feedback from final engagement activities to refine the plan.

Through these engagement phases, City staff provided community members with opportunities to shape the direction of Envision Evanston 2045. This revised version of the plan includes solutions and best practices to meet the needs and priorities voiced by community members throughout this process.

The City of Evanston's planning team launched public engagement efforts in February 2024 to inform the creation of Envision Evanston 2045, the draft Comprehensive Plan aimed at guiding progress and prosperity within our community. Between February and October 2024, City staff facilitated 70 in-person public engagement events and used various digital methods of engagement through the Envision Evanston 2045 website. To develop the Comprehensive Plan collaboratively, City staff released a draft version of the Comprehensive Plan in November 2024, allowing community stakeholders to review and provide feedback.



Source: City of Evanston

ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND OPPORTUNITIES

WEBSITE

In February 2024, the City launched the Envision Evanston 2045 website, providing a convenient platform for community members to stay informed about upcoming events and updates. This website was created to support all phases of the process. Visitors could subscribe to the e-newsletter, review key documents, ask questions via email, and request office hours sessions with City staff. A "Big Idea" submission feature was also available on the website, giving residents the opportunity to share additional feedback regarding Evanston's vision. The website was introduced at a launch event in February 2024, and between February and May 2024, it received nearly 5,700 visits.

PHASES 1–3: ENGAGING AND COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

During a series of in-person and digital engagements, we gathered and documented valuable input and direction from the Evanston community. We designed the engagement activities with community members of all ages and abilities in mind. To accommodate varying schedules and needs, we hosted the events at various locations, on different days of the week, and at various times of day. All feedback gathered through these efforts has been carefully analyzed and documented, forming the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan.

SURVEY #1:

Between February and May 2024, nearly 2,500 community members participated in a survey, offered in English and Spanish in digital and paper formats. The survey collected input on a range of topics including housing, transportation, downtown vibrancy, and parks and recreation, and prompted respondents to rate their level of agreement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree) with a set

of statements. An open response field allowed respondents to share more thoughts beyond the specific questions asked.

SURVEY #1 OUTCOMES:

The survey received 2,361 responses from the Evanston community, with white respondents making up the largest share at 60 percent, followed by Hispanic or Latino respondents at 16 percent, Black or African American respondents at 15 percent, and Asian respondents at 5 percent. Other racial groups accounted for the remaining 4 percent. The highest response rates came from Wards 3, 6, 4, and 7. Renters comprised 54 percent of respondents, while 42 percent were homeowners, and 4 percent did not live in Evanston but were stakeholders in other ways, such as business owners or nonprofit employees. An outreach partnership with Evanston Cradle to Career (EC2C) resulted in 28 percent of responses coming from those engaged through EC2C-led outreach.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents (31 percent) were between 45 and 64 years old, closely followed by those 65 and older at 30 percent. Individuals aged 25 to 44 made up 26 percent of responses, while those under 24 made up just 10 percent.

The survey results highlight several key insights related to housing, community needs, and perceptions of the city across various demographics. The data shows significant differences in housing satisfaction based on race/ethnicity, ownership status, and participation in Evanston Cradle 2 Career (EC2C)¹. Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino respondents were more likely to disagree that Evanston currently has housing options that meet their needs compared to White and Asian respondents. Similarly, renters and nonresidents of Evanston expressed less satisfaction with housing options than homeowners. Individuals engaged through EC2C outreach were also less likely to agree that their housing needs were being met, indicating a potential gap between community expectations and available housing solutions.

The report also explored perceptions of affordability and long-term housing security. Respondents generally expressed concerns about the affordability of housing in their neighborhoods, with Black or African American and "Other" race groups disagreeing the most. Confidence that Evanston's housing options could meet future needs was relatively low

among renters, nonresidents, and individuals engaged through EC2C-led outreach. Age and ward-based differences were also noted, with older respondents (65+) showing more confidence in housing options compared to younger groups. Additionally, residents from the 5th and 8th wards were the least likely to agree that current housing options met their needs, highlighting geographic differences in housing satisfaction.

On community vibrancy and economic opportunities, younger respondents were more optimistic about Evanston as a place to open a business, whereas older groups were more neutral or skeptical. There was also a common desire for mixed-use buildings combining housing, retail, and services, reflecting a community interest in dynamic, multifunctional urban spaces. However, opinions on the visual appeal and neighborhood integration of newer buildings varied, with Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American respondents showing more positive views than white respondents. These findings underline the importance of inclusive urban planning and the need to address demographic-specific concerns to improve community satisfaction and cohesion.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE MEETINGS

The City’s planning team facilitated a series of in-person meetings between February and May 2024. Seven community-wide 'Perspectives' meetings were hosted in various locations and online formats. A list of these meetings is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE MEETINGS

Between March and September 2024, the planning team held a series of in-person meetings with local organizations. A total of 12 “Organization Perspectives” meetings were hosted in various locations and online. A detailed list of these meetings is also available in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

WARD MEETINGS

Ward-specific meetings were held for all nine of Evanston’s wards between March and October 2024. These meetings were led by the council members with support from City staff. A list of these meetings is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

FOCUS GROUPS

City staff facilitated eight focus group sessions in August 2024 covering the following topics:

- Jobs and economy
- Development
- Community design professionals
- Housing and community development
- Social gathering places
- Equity and prosperity
- Transportation and mobility
- Land use and the built environment

A digital version of the questionnaire used in the focus groups was posted on the Envision Evanston 2045 website to offer a convenient way for community members to provide feedback. A list of these focus groups is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.



Source: City of Evanston

POP-UP SESSIONS

A total of 15 pop-up engagement sessions were held by City staff and supporting consultants between April and August 2024 to provide information about Envision Evanston 2045 and allowed community members to ask questions or share their perspectives. Participants were encouraged to complete a survey and interact with boards to provide feedback via maps and sticky notes. These pop-up sessions were made possible through coordinated efforts with local organizations. A list of these pop-up sessions is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

“MEETING-IN-A-BOX”

To encourage further dialogue, City staff provided materials for community members to host a “meeting-in-a-box” through the Envision Evanston 2045 website. The materials included a meeting-in-a-box packet with a discussion guide related to each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Upon request, “meeting-in-a-box” events could be supported by City staff. A total of 42 “meeting-in-a-box” events were held between March and April 2024, with 184 participants. This engagement activity was popular among stakeholders between the ages of 35 and 70; 54 percent of participants were within this age range.

To expand outreach impact, the City of Evanston facilitated a partnership with EC2C, who gathered volunteers to host meeting-in-a-box activities, primarily through their networks of Advocates for Action and Advocates Para La Acción.² The volunteers were trained by City staff on how to conduct activities and perform survey outreach.

BOARD, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

Group-specific presentations were facilitated between February and October 2024 for all of Evanston’s administrative boards, commissions, and committees. A list of these presentations is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO WORKSHOP

To inform the draft zoning code, project consultants led a development scenario workshop with key community members and decision-makers. Attendees were presented with development scenarios for three locations with future development potential. Participants worked with project consultants to finalize a scenario that included height, density, and other development regulations using real-time 3D visuals.

ARTS AND CULTURE TOWN HALL

On August 20, 2024, City staff and Morreale Communications facilitated guided group discussions at the Evanston Arts Council Town Hall Event, held at the Evanston Art Center. Attendees included individuals engaged with the Evanston Arts Council, who were split into small groups to discuss a guide of questions focused on Evanston’s arts community and its future.

VISIONING WORKSHOP

On May 18, 2024, project consultant HDR led a visioning workshop to support the creation of the Envision Evanston 2045 vision statement. Community members were invited to participate and help inform the vision statement, which was posted on the Envision Evanston website and presented at other engagement events.

PERSPECTIVE POSTERS

Interactive posters were posted in nine community centers and local businesses to collect feedback from community members. The posters encouraged community members to write three words that would describe their ideal vision of Evanston in 2045. A list of the poster locations is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

LOCAL BOARDS

Group-specific presentations were facilitated for all of Evanston’s administrative boards, commissions, and committees between March and April 2024. A list of these presentations is detailed in Appendix A: Public Engagement.

PHASES 4–5: INCORPORATING FEEDBACK INTO DRAFT PLAN, RELEASING, AND REVISING

SURVEY #2

A second survey was launched digitally on the Envision Evanston 2045 website between November 2024 and February 2025, offering community members an opportunity to provide feedback on each of the chapters within the Comprehensive Plan.

SURVEY #2 OUTCOMES

Community members were asked to provide qualitative feedback, and a total of 206 respondents participated. The key takeaways of each section of the survey are detailed below.

That is not many respondents in a city of 70K+ !!

LAND USE:

- Adjust zoning regulations to encourage affordable housing.
- Include specific incentives for green-building practices.
- Maintain protections for open spaces and community gardens.
- Revise mixed-use guidelines to better balance commercial and residential needs. **What guidelines?**
- Add more detailed protections for historic districts.
- Remove restrictions perceived as barriers to accessory dwelling units.

Zoning alone won’t produce affordable housing. \$\$ support is needed.

TRANSPORTATION:

- Improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure for safer routes.
- Add electric vehicle charging stations in public parking lots.
- Remove proposals that expand car-centric infrastructure.
- Maintain current funding for bike lane expansion.
- Increase public transit accessibility, especially in underserved areas. **Yellow Line stop**
- Include clearer goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE:

- Enhance maintenance plans for existing parks.
- Add native plant landscaping initiatives.
- Remove underused facilities and repurpose for community needs.
- Retain large natural areas for conservation and wildlife habitats.
- Reevaluate park-use policies to better support community events.
- Include more playgrounds and facilities for all age groups.

ENVIRONMENT:

- Strengthen climate action goals with measurable targets.
- Introduce incentives for renewable energy adoption by residents and businesses.
- Remove reliance on nonrenewable energy sources in municipal operations.
- Retain environmental education initiatives and outreach programs.
- Update stormwater management policies to address increased flooding risks.
- Add urban tree canopy expansion targets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Prioritize support for small, locally owned businesses over large chains.
- Add programs for workforce development and job training.
- Remove incentives for developments not aligned with sustainability goals.
- Maintain focus on revitalizing key commercial corridors.
- Streamline permitting processes to attract new businesses.
- Include provisions for equitable economic growth across neighborhoods.

HOUSING:

Revise density only if housing is guaranteed affordable.

- Revise density limits to accommodate affordable housing.
- Add specific targets for affordable and senior housing development.
- Remove restrictions on multifamily housing in some areas.
- Retain existing policies that promote housing for diverse income levels.
- Enhance inclusionary zoning policies to require more affordable units.
- Include tenant protections and rent stabilization measures.

PLACEMAKING:

- Expand community engagement in placemaking projects.
- Add art installations and cultural markers that reflect community identity.
- Remove overly prescriptive design guidelines that limit creativity.
- Continue emphasizing walkable, vibrant public spaces.
- Improve accessibility in public spaces.
- Include shade structures and seating in high-traffic areas.

PRESERVATION:

- Update criteria for designating landmarks to include more diverse histories.
- Add funding opportunities for property owners to maintain historic homes.
- Remove unnecessary bureaucratic steps in the preservation approval process.
- Retain strong protections for culturally significant sites.
- Strengthen enforcement mechanisms for preserving historic properties.
- Include digital archives for historic resources.

LAND USE COMMISSION MEETINGS

The key takeaways below are based on public comments shared during meetings held from November 2024 through January 2025. These meetings fostered open discussions, ensuring a broad range of perspectives from residents, families, seniors, commuters, and other community members were heard and considered. The feedback highlights the importance of addressing housing diversity, environmental sustainability, transportation, and equitable development – all of which are essential for creating a thriving, inclusive, and



Source: City of Evanston

Who supported this? Not at any meeting I attended.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

HOUSING:

- Expand and diversify housing options to accommodate a wide range of needs.
- Support for increased housing density and transparent zoning.
- Prioritize affordable housing across all demographics and protect against displacement.
- Encourage mixed-use zoning and transit-oriented development.
- Assist both homeowners and renters.
- Provide data on housing stock, supply and demand, and needs and density.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY:

- Strengthen resiliency and sustainability language in the plan.
- Provide detailed information on natural resource growth, parks, green space, and historical context on environmental injustices.
- Emphasize a zero-waste economy and revitalization of brownfield sites.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY:

- Expand transportation options and transit service offerings.
- Reduce car dependency.
- Reform parking policies to address parking in transit zones.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Examine R1 zoning (single-family districts).
- Create a more flexible approach to zoning.
- Safeguard existing homes and community character.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Address the impact of the tax base, particularly for schools, on affordability and explore potential solutions.
- Support small businesses and strengthen local economies by improving job accessibility through improved transit options.
- Preserve community character, including architectural features, tree canopy, and green space.
- Promote repurposing existing structures, including historical buildings.

SENIORS AND AGING POPULATION:

- Prioritize senior housing and aging in place.
- Ensure affordable housing options to prevent senior displacement due to rising costs. How?

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Facilitate an inclusive and comprehensive approach to community engagement, gathering diverse input.
- Promote communication and transparency in the planning and decision-making process.



I hope this is done better than the public engagement used on EE2045

These appear to be mutually exclusive. Changing R1 zoning rules will lead to loss of existing homes.

ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK KEY THEMES AND PRIORITIES (ACROSS ALL ENGAGEMENT METHODS)

NEIGHBORHOODS AND PLACES

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 5 - Neighborhoods and Places:

- Refine zoning maps: Adjust zoning maps to align with updated land-use priorities.
- Preserve local character: Uphold neighborhood-specific zoning guidelines to preserve local character.
- Support zoning clarity: Simplify zoning codes to reduce confusion for residents and potential developers.
- Promote sustainable development: Establish incentives for developments that meet sustainability standards.

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 6 - Community Systems:

- Address public safety: Empower our emergency responders to improve public safety.
- Sustain partnerships: Continue and strengthen partnerships between the City and local organizations and institutions that provide essential services for residents.
- Prioritize student needs: Employ student-centered decision-making across educational institutions.
- Embody fiscal responsibility: Demonstrate fiscal responsibility to continue providing essential services to community members.
- Maintain resources for vulnerable populations: Uphold the resources and staffing needed to support Evanston's homeless population and people with mental illness.

GETTING AROUND

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 7 - Getting Around:

- Improved connections: Enhance connections between different modes of transportation to elevate transportation experience and safety.
- Need for bike lanes and increased safety: Increase the number of protected bike lanes and signage to support smooth traffic flow and improve safety for bicyclists.
- Improved sidewalks: Repair, maintain, and fill gaps in sidewalk infrastructure to support pedestrian safety and active transportation.
- Sufficient parking: Increase parking access so the community can enjoy Evanston's recreational and commercial amenities.
- Public EV charging: Increase electric vehicle charging stations in public parking lots.
- Maintain funding: Uphold current funding for bike lane expansion.
- Improved CTA access: Add connections to the CTA.



Source: City of Evanston

ENVIRONMENT

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 8 - Environment:

- Educate our community: Retain environmental education initiatives and outreach programs.
- Renewable energy incentives: Introduce incentives for residents and businesses to adopt renewable energy.
- Address flood risks: Update stormwater management policies and strategies to address increased flooding risks.
- Expand urban tree canopy: Set urban tree canopy expansion targets.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACES

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 9 - Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces:

- Enhance public spaces and activities: Provide more parks and outdoor spaces and host more street activities.
- Maintain our parks: Enhance maintenance plans for existing parks and open spaces.
- Accommodate for community events: Reevaluate park-use policies to better support community events.
- Facilities for all ages: Develop more playgrounds and facilities for all age groups.
- Encourage native plant growth: Develop native plant landscaping initiatives.
- Maintain activities and events: Uphold existing community events such as the summer concert series.

HOUSING

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 10 - Housing:

- Make space for affordable housing: Revise current density limits to accommodate affordable housing needs for younger families and low-income populations.
- Establish targets: Develop specific targets for affordable and senior housing developments.

How?

What existing policies?

- Uphold diverse housing: Retain existing policies that promote housing for diverse income levels.
- Policies for affordability: Enhance inclusionary zoning policies to require more affordable units.
- Protect and empower renters: Establish tenant protections and rent stabilization measures.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 11 - Health and Well-being:

- Celebrate culture: Support initiatives that recognize and celebrate Evanston's diverse cultural fabric.
- Support vulnerable populations: Strengthen existing community systems to empower our vulnerable populations.
- Promote inclusivity: Prioritize inclusive practices across all City-led initiatives and programs.
- Address brownfields: Identify programs and opportunities to address existing brownfields to mitigate their impacts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 12 - Economic Development:

- Support local businesses: Provide more resources and initiatives to local and family-owned businesses, instead of large franchises.
- Foster a vibrant downtown: Add more shops, restaurants, and entertainment options downtown.
- Revitalize key corridors: Maintain focus on revitalizing key commercial corridors, such as those along as Central Avenue, Green Bay Road, Chicago Avenue, Main Street, Dempster Street, Dodge Avenue, Noyes Street, Asbury Avenue and Oakton Street.
- Balance new development with existing businesses: Maintain affordability for existing and family-owned businesses amid new development.
- Encourage partnerships: Maximize the local economy through partnerships between local businesses and community hubs such as Northwestern University.

Density limits should only be revised in R1 if housing is guaranteed affordable. Otherwise, no revisions.

PRESERVATION

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 14 - Preservation:

- Preserve community character: Encourage adaptive use and rehabilitation projects that promote preservation-based development and retain cultural and built character.
- Establish ordinances: Enhance the ability to protect heritage and cultural assets through updated preservation ordinances.
- Protect natural features: Establish protective measures for Evanston's tree canopy and lakefront.
- Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Program: Establish an NCD Program to support community-led preservation.
- Follow the roadmap: Implement guidance from Preserve 2040⁴ to encourage the preservation of Evanston's diverse heritage.
- Reinstate incentive programs: Restore incentive programs for maintaining the character-defining features of commercial, historic, or legacy buildings and businesses.
- Honor Indigenous heritage: Refine criteria for designating landmarks to recognize Indigenous heritage.
- Fund historical preservation: Establish funding opportunities for property owners to maintain historic homes.
- Develop digital archives: Establish and maintain digital archives that support the identification and documentation of Evanston's cultural assets and resources.

- Refine permitting processes: Simplify permitting processes to attract new businesses.
- Promote equitable growth: Establish provisions for equitable economic growth across our neighborhoods.
- Uplift the workforce: Establish programs for workforce development and job training to promote career development and job security for Evanston's residents.

COMMUNITY BUILDING, ARTS AND CULTURE, AND PLACEMAKING

The following themes and priorities emerged from digital and in-person engagement activities and are supported by policies detailed in Chapter 13 - Arts and Culture- Community Building, Placemaking, and Connection Making:

- Engage the community: Expand community engagement in placemaking projects to promote Evanston's diverse cultural heritage.
- Reflect identity: Create art installations and cultural markers that reflect community identity.
- Prioritize public spaces: Maintain walkable public spaces to encourage community building.
- Promote use of public spaces: Add shade structures and seating options in pedestrian-centric areas.
- Enhance access to public spaces: Design public spaces for people of all ages and abilities.
- Cultivate partnerships: Support public-private partnerships via technical assistance and financial support to implement more dynamic arts programming related to community building and placemaking.
- Follow the Evanston Thrives Plan: Implement marketing and financial sustainability strategies for community building and placemaking activities outlined in the Evanston Thrives Plan.³



Source: City of Evanston

CHAPTER 3: EVANSTON TODAY



CHAPTER 3: EVANSTON TODAY

EVANSTON'S HISTORY: HOW WE GOT HERE

EVANSTON TODAY: A CALL TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR HISTORY

Evanston is not just a city; it is a rich tapestry woven from the stories of its residents – stories that deserve recognition and respect. From the Indigenous peoples who first walked this land to the settlers who built a thriving community, understanding our history is vital in shaping a more inclusive and just future.

INDIGENOUS PRESENCE

Long before European settlers arrived, the land that is now the City of Evanston was home to Indigenous peoples, including the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa nations, who were part of the Council of Three Fires. These communities lived, traded, and traveled along the shores of Lake Michigan and throughout the region, relying on its rich natural resources for food and cultural practices. Their presence is an essential part of Evanston's history, though forced removals and land cessions due to treaties with the U.S. government significantly changed their way of life and access to ancestral lands.¹

FOUNDING AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The City of Evanston's origins trace back to the mid-19th century, when settlers from the East Coast arrived in search of new opportunities. The City's development was significantly influenced by the founding of Northwestern University in 1851 by a group of Methodist business leaders and educators from Chicago, who wanted to establish a premier university in the Northwest Territory. One of these founders, John Evans, submitted city plans to the county judge, leading to its renaming as Evanston in 1857.

The arrival of the Chicago and North Western Railway sped Evanston's growth, making it an attractive option for those wanting a slower-paced environment than Chicago. Officially incorporated as a city in 1863, Evanston quickly developed into a cultural and educational hub. The Chicago Fire of 1871 prompted the arrival of many Chicagoans seeking to rebuild their homes elsewhere.

By the 1890s, Evanston had introduced several civic advancements, including telephone service, free mail delivery, and the expansion of local newspapers. During this time, a variety of social, philanthropic, and cultural organizations were born, including the Woman's Club, founded in 1899, and the Rotary Club in 1920 (Rotary International moved its headquarters from Chicago to Evanston in 1954). As part of its expansion, Evanston added the former villages of North and South Evanston to the City, as well as valuable unincorporated land in the northwest and industrial zones in the west, solidifying its status as an independent city distinct from Chicago.²

NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Evanston's development pattern is deeply reflected in its built environment. Originally made up of three distinct communities – South Evanston (Ridgeville), North Evanston, and Central Evanston – each area established unique commercial hubs. South Evanston thrived around Main Street, North Evanston around Central Street, and Central Evanston around the original downtown area. These areas remain vibrant mixed-use districts to this day, supporting the broader surrounding neighborhoods.

As Evanston grew, the City became known for its unique architecture and cultural vibrancy, even being known as the "City of Homes." From grand Victorian homes of the 19th century to groundbreaking modernist designs of the 20th century, Evanston's architectural heritage is preserved through its historic homes and landmarks. These distinct neighborhoods and business districts celebrate Evanston's rich social, political, cultural, and architectural history, fostering a strong sense of place and collective memory.³

SEGREGATION AND HOUSING INEQUITY

Evanston's history is also marked by racial inequities in housing and land-use policies. While race-based zoning was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1917, discriminatory practices such as redlining and covenants emerged, shaping the City's housing landscape. The Great Migration brought a significant increase in Evanston's Black population, yet segregation efforts, including discriminatory steering, began as early as 1918.⁴

By 1940, Evanston had over 6,000 Black residents, the largest Black suburban population in Illinois at the time, yet over 80 percent were concentrated in the 5th Ward, where homes were smaller, located near industrial zones, and lacked access to essential amenities. In the following decades, urban renewal projects, such as those led by the Land Clearance Commission, disproportionately displaced Black families. While the Fair Housing Act of 1968 banned explicit redlining, its impact continues to be felt through long-standing inequality in housing access, zoning policies, and economic opportunity.

ECONOMIC EVOLUTION

Northwestern University's presence has been a key economic driver in Evanston's history. The addition of two commuter rail lines set Evanston further apart from its northern suburban peers, transforming it into the commercial hub of Chicago's North Shore. Downtown Evanston developed into a bustling hub featuring department stores, restaurants, and corporate headquarters, including Rotary International, which remains headquartered in Evanston today.

During the mid-20th century, Evanston also served as a prominent industrial center. By the 1960s, it was home to over 70 manufacturing companies producing a diverse range of goods, from textbooks and food products to machinery. However, like many Midwestern cities, Evanston experienced industrial decline as manufacturing relocated to larger greenfield sites or was impacted by globalization. In response, the City leveraged its transit accessibility and academic presence to move toward a knowledge-based economy, attracting a workforce focused on healthcare, education, and creativity.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Evanston's rich history is deeply intertwined with its people, institutions, transit infrastructure, business districts, and architecture. Establishing Northwestern University and expanding rail lines kickstarted the City's early growth, while its economic evolution transformed it into a vibrant hub of education, commerce, and culture. However, the City's past is also marked by racial segregation and housing inequities, the effects of which persist to this day. Through its built environment, Evanston continues to reflect its storied past and look toward the future, offering a tangible connection between past, current, and future generations.



Source: City of Evanston



Source: City of Evanston

WHO WE ARE TODAY

When reviewing Census data, it is important to note that the U.S. Census Bureau has a difficult time keeping records on hard-to-count populations. This includes populations that are hard to find, contact, and/or interview, such as:

- Young children
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- People who speak languages other than English
- Low-income individuals
- Undocumented immigrants
- People who are LGBTQ+
- People with disabilities
- People who do not live in traditional housing

A subset of hard-to-count populations are historically undercounted populations, which have been undercounted in the 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020 Censuses. These include:

- The Black or African American population
- People who indicate they are another race than the categories offered
- The Hispanic or Latino population
- Young children, ages 0 to 4
- Renters
- Males, ages 18 to 29 and ages 30 to 49



Source: City of Evanston

If so, why does density have to increase?

POPULATION AND DENSITY

Evanston, located just north of Chicago, has a high population density of 9,840 people per square mile. Despite being a suburban area, it is relatively dense, likely due to its location near Chicago and its reputation as an educational and cultural hub. Northwestern University is a significant influence on the population, contributing to both the local economy and the City's cultural and intellectual vibrancy. Data on population and density can be found in Table 1 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.⁶

HOUSEHOLDS

Evanston has a relatively high number of smaller households, particularly one-person and two-person households. This is likely because students and young professionals are drawn to the City's urban amenities, closeness to Chicago, and the presence of Northwestern University. Household data can be found in Table 2 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

GROUP QUARTERS

Group quarters typically refer to housing where residents live in a collective setting, such as university student housing, nursing facilities, correctional facilities, and military quarters.

Evanston has a rather high percentage (9 percent) of its population living in group quarters, far above the county (2 percent) and Chicago (2 percent) averages. It's clear that Evanston is home to a large number of group-living arrangements, likely driven by Northwestern University. College towns or cities with large universities, such as Evanston, often have a high ratio of people living in group quarters due to on-campus housing, dormitories, or university-affiliated apartments. Data on group quarters can be found in Table 3 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Evanston stands out in its diversity, especially when compared to other suburban areas like Wilmette and Lincolnwood, where the white population is far more dominant. However, it is less racially diverse than areas like Chicago and some urban neighborhoods like Rogers Park, which have more substantial Black, Hispanic, and Asian

Then why the big push to add more multifamily housing at the expense of single family?

of multifamily housing in higher-density buildings. This mix reflects its urban-suburban nature, influenced by the presence of Northwestern University and its closeness to Chicago. Compared to wealthier suburbs like Lincolnwood and Wilmette, Evanston has a more multifamily-oriented housing market. Data on units in structure can be found in Table 8 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

HOUSING: BEDROOMS

Evanston has a diverse housing mix, with a significant number of one- and two-bedroom units that likely cater to students, young professionals, and smaller households. The City also has a notable share of three-bedroom to five-bedroom homes, accommodating families and larger households. Compared to suburban areas like Lincolnwood and Skokie, Evanston has a more urban housing profile with a higher proportion of smaller apartments, reflecting its university-town nature and closeness to Chicago. Data on bedrooms can be found in Table 9 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

populations. Compared to other areas, Evanston has a balanced racial makeup, which contributes to the City's unique cultural identity and its reputation as a progressive, diverse university-driven community. Data on race and ethnicity can be found in Table 4 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

AGE

Evanston's age distribution is relatively balanced, with 40 percent of its population between 18 and 44 years old. The City is also a hub for middle-aged and older residents, with 24 percent aged 45 to 64 and 18 percent aged 65+. The age diversity in Evanston reflects its role as a university town with a young, academic population, while also supporting a broad range of age groups, including a considerable number of older adults. Data on age distribution can be found in Table 5 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

MEDIAN AGE

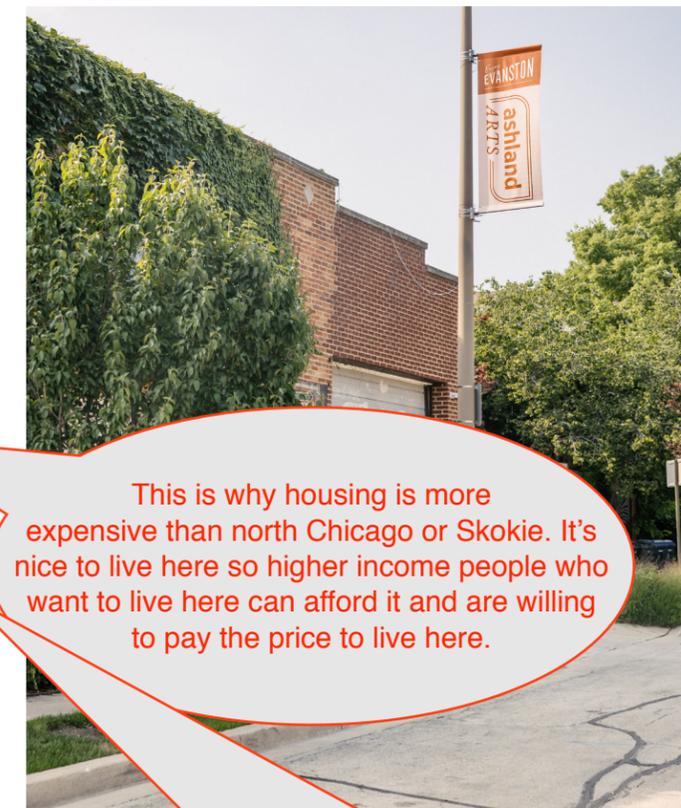
Evanston has a moderately older population compared to Chicago and Cook County, with a median age of 38.0. It strikes a balance between the younger population of urban areas like Chicago and the older populations of suburban areas like Wilmette and Lincolnwood, reflecting its unique mix of academic, residential, and professional communities. Data on median age can be found in Table 6 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Evanston has a higher-than-average median household income. The City has a relatively wealthy population compared to Chicago and Cook County, and is more economically diverse than wealthier suburbs like Wilmette. Evanston's income distribution highlights its status as a prosperous urban-suburban mix, with most of its residents in higher income brackets. Household data can be found in Table 7 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

HOUSING: UNITS IN STRUCTURE

Evanston's housing stock is diverse, with a strong presence of detached single-family homes and a significant share



This is why housing is more expensive than north Chicago or Skokie. It's nice to live here so higher income people who want to live here can afford it and are willing to pay the price to live here.

Same reason San Francisco, Seattle and parts of LA are expensive.

HOUSING VACANCY

Evanston's housing vacancy rate is relatively low, with 93 percent occupancy, indicating a stable housing market. A notable proportion of vacant homes are for rent or sale, suggesting a healthy level of property turnover. The percentage of vacant units due to other reasons is also typical, reflecting common housing dynamics in both urban and suburban areas. Evanston's vacancy rate is consistent with nearby regions but slightly higher than suburban areas like Skokie and Wilmette, which have near-full occupancy rates. Data on housing vacancy can be found in Table 10 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

HOUSING: HOME VALUE

Evanston has a relatively high housing market value, especially for larger homes, indicating a wealthier and more desirable housing market compared to surrounding neighborhoods. Its three-bedroom and four-bedroom homes are significantly more expensive than those in Cook County and Chicago. Data on home value can be found in Table 11 of Appendix B: Supporting Data. **Because it is a more desirable place to live than other places. Homes are larger, lots are bigger, etc.**

ECONOMY: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Evanston's labor-force participation and unemployment rate are consistent with broader regional trends. With a 3.6 percent unemployment rate, Evanston outperforms Chicago. This suggests Evanston benefits from a stable economy and employment opportunities, likely influenced by Northwestern University and the City's wealthier population. Data on labor force and employment can be found in Table 12 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

ECONOMY: JOB SECTOR SHARE

Evanston's economy is heavily shaped by educational services, largely due to Northwestern University, and the healthcare sector, which account for a large share of jobs. The city has relatively fewer jobs in business services, retail trade, and manufacturing compared to Chicago. Data on job sector share can be found in Table 13 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

TRANSPORTATION: COMMUTING

Evanston residents heavily rely on personal vehicles, with 42 percent driving alone to work. While lower than Cook County (56 percent) and Chicago (46 percent), it is still a high proportion compared to other suburban areas. In terms of alternative commutes, Evanston sees 13 percent of its residents using public transit, comparable to Cook County but lower than Chicago, where transit is central to commuting. Interestingly, 11 percent of Evanston residents walk to work, which is higher than both Cook County (4 percent) and Chicago (6 percent), indicating the City's walkability and presence of jobs within walking distance, particularly in areas around Downtown Evanston and Northwestern University. Overall, 26 percent of Evanstonians work from home. Community data can be found in Table 14 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.

TRANSPORTATION: ACCESS TO A VEHICLE

In Evanston, most households have access to at least one vehicle (50 percent), and 27 percent have access to two vehicles. This reflects the City's more suburban nature, where personal vehicle ownership is typical, yet with a notable portion (16 percent) of households without a car. Data on personal vehicle access can be found in Table 15 of Appendix B: Supporting Data.



Source: City of Evanston

How many are NU employees?

How many without cars are NU students, skewing results?

Evanston is very diverse.

High frequency transit access seems very low. We have buses on main streets and CTA. 1/2 mile is pretty far. Evanston is only 2.5 miles wide.

KEY METRICS

Metrics are essential for tracking community change, as they provide a clear, data-driven overview of trends and progress over time. These metrics can help the City of Evanston and partner organizations identify areas of growth, challenges, and emerging needs, helping policies and initiatives to remain responsive and effective. Additionally, tracking these metrics fosters accountability, transparency, and community engagement, as community members can see the impact of strategies and call for adjustments to plans as needed. The following metrics were selected to align with the goals of the Plan:

METRIC	CURRENT VALUE	UNIT	GOALS
Population density	9,840	Population / square mile	Housing, Sustainability, Economy, Equity, Transportation
Race and ethnicity	<u>42 percent</u>	People of color / total population	Equity, Housing, Arts and Culture
Income distribution	0.55	Gini coefficient	Equity, Health, Economy, Housing, Arts and Culture
Life expectancy	82	Years	Health, Equity
Lead exposure	9	Lead Exposure Risk Index	Health, Economy, Sustainability, Housing, Equity
Commuting mode share	42 percent	Drive alone / workers 16+	Transportation, Housing, Equity, Sustainability, Economy
High-frequency transit access	<u>10 percent</u>	Population within 1/2 mile of high-frequency transit	Transportation, Sustainability, Housing, Equity
Greenhouse gas emissions	36 percent	Reduction from 2005 baseline	Sustainability, Health, Equity
Building energy consumption	669,900	Metric tons of CO2e	Sustainability, Health, Housing, Equity
Sales tax revenue	\$23,725,230	Annual sales tax dollars	Economy
Business ownership diversity	476	Businesses owned by women and/or people of color	Economy, Equity
<u>Housing cost-burden</u>	34 percent	Cost-burdened households / total households	Housing, Equity, Economy

Seems really low.

Define high-frequency transit.

30% of income to housing costs.

EMERGING TRENDS

Several emerging trends are important to consider, as they may have a significant impact on the City of Evanston over the next 20 years. The following trends fall under the below categories: Demographic, Economic Restructuring, Governance, Housing, Resources, Technology, and Transportation. Additional data supporting these emerging trends is detailed in Appendix B: Supporting Data.

CATEGORY	TREND	
Demographic	Declining middle class	
	Suburban remix	
	Smart cities	
	Aging populations	
	<u>Migration to the Rust Belt</u>	Losing population? Then why the push to build?
	Declining life expectancy	
Economic Restructuring	<u>Rise in climate displacement</u>	
	Nomadic workforce	
	Upskilling and reskilling	
	Policy "pendulum shifts"	
	Climate impacts	
	Rising personal debt	
Governance	Trust in government	
	False information operations	
Housing	<u>Aging housing stock</u>	Some people think old houses are an asset.
	Gentrification and displacement	
	The affordable housing crisis	Crisis? Or a problem with solutions that don't require upending the entire city.
	<u>Zoning reform</u>	Reform wisely on the margins without blowing up the whole thing.
Resources	Sustainable energy	
	Food insecurity	
	Sustainable architecture	
	Climate justice	
	Water scarcity	
Technology	Artificial intelligence (AI) regulations	
	Sharing economy	
	Digital inclusion	
	Fourth Industrial Revolution	
	Infrastructure overhaul	What about parking for all the households with cars?
	Rise in innovation districts	
Transportation	<u>Carless households</u>	
	Rethinking the public right-of-way	

The City of Evanston will greatly benefit from actively monitoring emerging trends to ensure sustainable growth, economic resilience, and community well-being. By staying ahead of these trends, the City will be better prepared to address community members' evolving needs, enhance quality of life, and attract investment. In a rapidly changing world, keeping a pulse on emerging trends will help Evanston remain a vibrant and inclusive community.



Source: City of Evanston

CHAPTER 4: EVANSTON TOMORROW



CHAPTER 4: EVANSTON TOMORROW

A VISION OF EVANSTON IN 2045

The community was asked to imagine Evanston in 2045, a future shaped by the collective vision and aspiration of its residents. The shared dreams and aspirations of the community helped shape Envision Evanston 2045, a Comprehensive Plan and long-range policy guide for Evanston's future development. This vision reflects the valuable feedback and collaborative efforts of Evanston's residents, whose voices are essential in ensuring a thriving, growing community.

What does this community look like in 2045?

Evanston is a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming community for all, where arts, culture, history, and neighborhoods are celebrated. With easy and convenient access to parks and open spaces, and a commitment to preserving the City's heritage, we foster physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

Evanston is energy and resource efficient, decarbonized, and resilient to the effects of climate change. Our buildings and transportation systems are constructed of sustainable materials and powered by renewable energy. Our social and physical infrastructure are designed to withstand extreme weather events and protect residents.

Evanston neighborhoods offer diverse housing choices, ensuring residents feel secure in their homes. The housing supply aligns with the community's needs and residents enjoy a wide range of social and recreational amenities without fear of displacement.

Our strong circular economy provides job security and opportunity, with steady growth and innovation creating jobs in a wide range of fields. Evanston's small, minority-owned businesses are thriving, contributing to a vibrant and resilient local economy.

Neighborhoods are connected through a robust network of pedestrian, bike, and transit options, ensuring travel is safe, convenient, and affordable.

Envision Evanston 2045 outlines our ambitious yet attainable vision. We invite community members, like you, to join us in bringing this vision to life through proactive planning, community collaboration, and bold action.

VISION STATEMENT

In 2045, Evanston is a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming community for all. Evanston celebrates its diversity through our arts, culture, history, and neighborhoods. Steady growth in our local circular economy creates opportunities close to home while achieving ambitious and necessary climate action. Our abundant access to parks and open spaces promotes well-being, and extensive housing options make living in Evanston safe and within reach. Evanston's neighborhoods are connected through a robust network of transit, bike, and pedestrian options. We will achieve this vision through proactive planning, community collaboration, and bold action.

GOALS

Achieving the vision requires identifying specific and measurable steps that serve as a roadmap to completion. Based on the themes identified through public engagement, the following goals and action steps were developed:

FOSTER A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

We strive to build a vibrant, inclusive community for all residents by:

- Improving public health through programs that provide support and wrap-around services, while proactively preparing for emergency situations.
- Reimagining Evanston through design and decarbonization efforts to enhance livability and foster physical, mental, and social well-being.
- Ensuring equitable access to safe and attainable housing and daily needs, including food and medical services, while ensuring protection from pollution and environmental hazards.
- Promoting safety by designing accessible neighborhoods with well-lit streets, abundant sidewalks, and designated bike lanes to encourage active transportation for all.
- Fostering accessible transportation systems that support individuals of all abilities.

- Enhancing the aesthetics of the built environment through thoughtful urban design, green spaces, expanded biodiverse natural landscapes for people and wildlife, and the creation of visually pleasing and inspiring places for residents to live, work, and play.

STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

We aspire to build a prosperous, inclusive community where economic vitality and quality of life are interconnected and beneficial for all by:

- Supporting local businesses and promoting workforce development initiatives.
- Encouraging entrepreneurial pursuits and small business development through accessible resources, streamlined development review, and financial incentives.
- Reviving and supporting business districts to create thriving hubs characterized by a mix of public spaces, retail, dining, entertainment, office spaces, and housing.
- Celebrating and retaining Evanston's unique identity and sense of place, encouraging adaptive use and rehabilitation projects, and increasing opportunities for heritage tourism to encourage preservation-based economic development.

PRIORITIZE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We strive to actively preserve our natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations by:

- Fostering adaptive use and rehabilitation, repair, salvage and reuse of high-quality building materials, and prioritizing deconstruction rather than demolition.
- Conserving lakefront, beaches, and ecologically sensitive areas through sustainable management practices that build resilience to the effects of climate change, maintain water quality, support biodiversity, and provide public access and enjoyment.
- Integrating biodiverse ecosystems in parks and open spaces to promote health and well-being.
- Expanding green infrastructure to prevent flooding, reduce heat island effects, and provide nature-based solutions to stormwater management.

- Coexisting with and managing Evanston's local wildlife communities by encouraging positive nature experiences and using best practices to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

INVEST IN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

We strive to push for and invest in an equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable transportation system where every resident has choices by:

- Eliminating greenhouse gas emissions through increasing active transportation and mass transportation options.
- Creating corridors that improve the reliability and safety of all modes of transportation.
- Working with transit agencies to ensure accessible and reliable transit for all who depend on it and seek to use it.
- Investing in transportation choices that meet the needs of all ages and abilities.

INCREASE HOUSING DIVERSITY

We strive to build resilient and inclusive neighborhoods where people can find suitable, efficient, and attainable housing by:

- Developing a wide range of housing types and sizes to meet our community's diverse needs. **Already have it.**
- Implementing policies and programs that prevent displacement. **How?**
- Removing barriers to affordable housing solutions that bridge the gap between single-unit homes and large apartment complexes. **Already have many multi-unit housing options.**
- Increasing the efficiency and resilience of housing and addressing health and safety concerns.

Conflicts with goal of preserving existing housing stock.

CREATE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

We strive to build an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable community where every community member has the opportunity to thrive and enjoy a high quality of life and well-being by:

- Enhancing transportation options and access for all ages and abilities. **Yellow line stop in SW Evanston?**
- Promoting local businesses and workforce development to enhance economic vitality.
- Removing barriers to housing choice in all neighborhoods.
- Celebrating arts and culture to bring the community together.
- Prioritizing environmental sustainability and access to nature spaces to enhance health and well-being for all residents.
- Fostering a culture of active community participation in decision-making.

CELEBRATE ARTS AND CULTURE

We aim to honor our history, celebrate our diversity, and foster a thriving cultural landscape for all by:

- Preserving, rehabilitating, and adapting our diverse historic resources to maintain Evanston's heritage and connect residents to our shared past.
- Supporting diverse cultural expressions and events that reflect our community's unique identity.
- Developing vibrant public spaces with impactful public art, fostering opportunities for people to gather, interact, and engage.

FACILITATING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Evanston must take bold action to achieve the goals of Envision Evanston 2045. The City's land constraints cause tension with important issues like increasing housing diversity and prioritizing climate mitigation and resilience.

It is possible to reconcile these seemingly conflicting goals by integrating environmental justice, equitable development, and smart growth approaches to maintain healthy and inclusive neighborhoods. Envision Evanston 2045 provides a framework that can evolve and adapt as new trends emerge.

LAND-USE APPROACH

This Plan outlines a land-use strategy focused on connecting people and places through mixed-use centers and corridors. It also uses historic preservation as a land-use tool to maintain architectural diversity and celebrate cultural heritage. Additionally, the Plan incorporates a citywide analysis to identify existing community resources, amenities, and areas with development potential, supporting the development of centers and corridors.

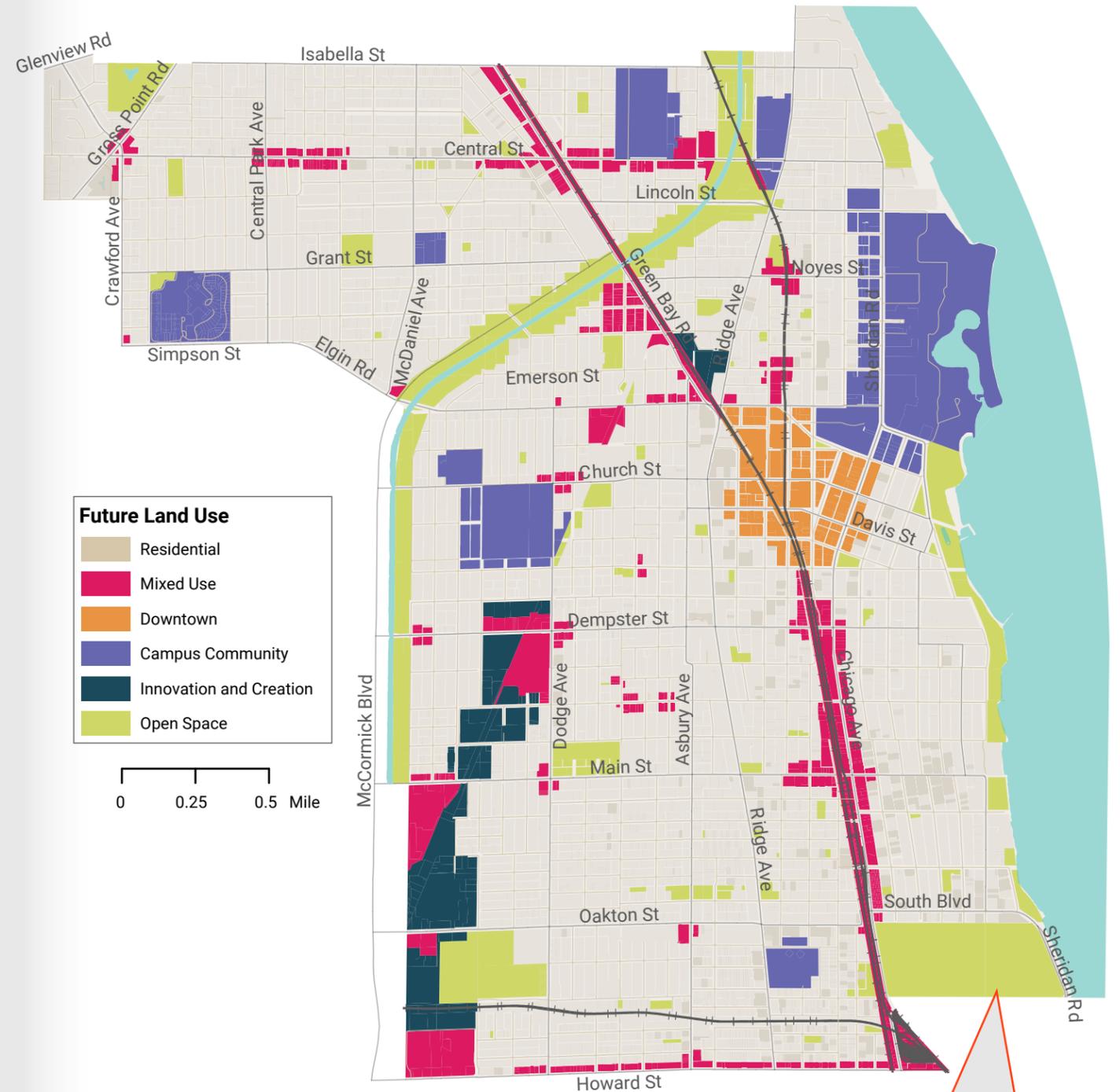
Coordinated land use and transportation planning is essential to implementing the centers-and-corridors framework, as they have a direct impact on each other. For example, directing higher-density development toward transit stations and along major corridors is not sustainable without a robust transportation network. Mobility plans are successful when they connect people to places that meet their needs and lifestyles, which is largely influenced by land use. The Future Land Use Map (see right, Figure 1) and its development process are outlined in Chapter 5 - Neighborhoods and Places. This map serves as an important policy tool that will guide the City's development decisions over the next 20 years. Future changes to regulations such as zoning and development standards will be guided by this map.

POLICIES

In addition to land use and transportation, additional policies addressing quality-of-life factors including health and well-being, economic development, and housing work together to bring our vision to life. The chapters that follow outline recommended policies and actions in further detail.

Housing is already diverse.

FIGURE 1. FUTURE LAND USE



Source: HDR, Inc

Is a cemetery really open space?

CHAPTER 5: NEIGHBORHOODS AND PLACES



CHAPTER 5: NEIGHBORHOODS & PLACES

Evanston's origin story is seen in its built environment today. The major economic and population boom between 1860 and 1870 allowed the City to grow and develop independently of Chicago through the 19th century. With the combination of Northwestern University, access to Lake Michigan, the mansion boom after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, and easy access to city life in Chicago, Evanston developed a reputation as a cultural and educational hub.

Evanston was originally built as three separate communities, each with its own commercial hubs including South Evanston/Ridgeville centered around Main Street, North Evanston along Central Street, and Central Evanston as the original downtown area. These areas remain as mixed-use hubs that serve the surrounding neighborhoods. North Evanston was added in 1874, and South Evanston in 1892, to form the municipality of Evanston.

Evanston grew and developed in part because of two rail systems that provided fast and convenient public transportation within Evanston and to downtown Chicago. The current Metra North Line started as the Chicago and Milwaukee line in 1854, was leased by the Chicago and North Western Railway (CNW) in 1866, and purchased by CNW in 1883. The Calvary station original to the line closed in 1958 with more than 20 stops in and near Chicago as CNW focused on suburban and long-haul traffic. The Metra North line currently has three Evanston stations at Main, Davis, and Central streets. The Northwestern Elevated Railroad extended its mainline service to the Evanston Line in 1908, which ran between Central Street and the Chicago Loop. The line was extended to Linden Avenue in Wilmette in 1912. The current line known as the Purple Line went into effect in 1949 as part of major service changes to the North-South rapid transit system by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Several stops including Isabella and Calvary were closed, leaving the current South Boulevard, Main, Dempster, Davis, Foster, Noyes, and Central stops in Evanston. The Niles Center Branch of the Chicago Rapid Transit Company (CRT) was placed in operation in 1925 with Evanston stops at Ridge, Asbury, and Dodge, and continued to Skokie. This service was discontinued in 1948 when the CTA purchased the CRT and was replaced by the 97 bus line. The Skokie Swift line went into service in 1964 from Howard to Dempster without any Evanston stops.

As the community developed, it became known for its unique architecture, from the grand Victorian homes of the 19th century to innovative modernist designs of the 20th century. Evanston is filled with historic homes and landmarks that embody the City's rich history and cultural diversity. Over the years, the City has cultivated distinct neighborhoods and business districts that showcase a development pattern that celebrates its heritage. This built environment supports tangible connections to, and a collective memory of, the past. Evanston's neighborhoods offer a little bit of everything – as each ward showcases below. From a walkable and urban downtown, to quaint residential blocks, each neighborhood has evolved and maintains a strong sense of community.

1ST WARD

The 1st Ward includes most of Downtown Evanston and a large area of the Northwestern University campus. This ward features a blend of historic and contemporary architecture, including early 20th-century commercial buildings and modern high-rises. Residential options range from vintage apartments to newer condominiums, catering to diverse needs. The ward's location near Lake Michigan offers scenic views and access to waterfront parks. The 1st Ward is home to a diverse mix of retail shops, restaurants, outdoor terraces, and rooftop spaces with panoramic views. It is a cultural and entertainment hub, featuring venues like the Evanston cinema and the upcoming opening of the Northlight Theatre. The area attracts millions of visitors annually, drawn by its dynamic urban atmosphere and cultural offerings.

2ND WARD

The 2nd Ward is known for its diverse residential neighborhoods and active community. Housing styles range from mid-20th-century bungalows and ranch-style homes to contemporary townhomes. Commercial activity takes place largely along Dodge Avenue and Church Street, where a variety of local businesses and services thrive. Key community assets include the Robert Crown Community Center, offering recreational and cultural programs, and Mason Park, which provides green space and sports facilities. The Ward is also home to Evanston Township High School, a key educational institution.

The 3rd ward also has many square blocks of three-flats, six-flats, courtyard apartment buildings and condominiums dating back as far as the 1920's. Large, multi-story apartment buildings occupy the southern blocks of Chicago Avenue. The southeast section of the 3rd ward surely has some of the highest population density in the city.

3RD WARD

Located in southeast Evanston, the 3rd Ward is characterized by its historic residential areas and proximity to Lake Michigan. The ward boasts tree-lined streets and well-preserved homes with architectural styles from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. Residents enjoy easy access to lakefront recreational spaces, including Garden Park and South Boulevard Beach. In addition to the ward's scenic and residential charm, it is home to the bustling Main-Dempster Mile, a walkable district that serves as a key corridor offering a variety of dining options; live music venues; and tasteful retail shops, galleries, and studios along Chicago Avenue, Main Street, and Dempster Street.

4TH WARD

The 4th Ward covers the central area of Evanston and includes a mix of residential and commercial spaces. Housing options range from single-family homes to apartment complexes, highlighting the ward's diverse community. The 4th Ward shares sections of Downtown Evanston with the 1st Ward, and features several local businesses and community resources that serve its residents.

5TH WARD

The 5th Ward is known for its rich cultural history and strong community ties. Its neighborhoods feature a variety of housing styles, including single-family homes, apartments, lofts, and live-work units. The Hill Art District supports a variety of local businesses. Ongoing community initiatives and development projects work to enhance local facilities and preserve the ward's history and culture. The 5th Ward has lacked a neighborhood school since Foster School closed in 1967. However, District 65 is in the midst of constructing a new K-5 school, having started in July 2024, with plans to open for the 2026–2027 school year.

6TH WARD

Encompassing parts of northwest Evanston, the 6th Ward has a more suburban feel, with spacious residential areas, parks, and schools. The ward offers a peaceful environment with tree-lined streets and well-maintained public spaces – desirable for families with young children. Commercial areas in the 6th Ward include parts of the Central Street district, known for its local businesses, bakeries, coffee shops, boutiques, and restaurants. Willard Elementary School and Haven Middle School are key institutions that provide quality education to local students.

7TH WARD

The 7th Ward, bordered by Lake Michigan on the east, is known for its scenic beauty and residential neighborhoods with diverse housing styles. Quality of life is high, with easy access to beaches and recreational facilities. The 7th Ward also includes parts of the Central Street district and Northwestern University's athletic campus, providing a range of cultural and recreational activities. In addition, the ward is home to educational institutions including Orrington Elementary School and Haven Middle School.



Source: City of Evanston

8TH WARD

Located in south Evanston, the 8th Ward features a blend of residential and commercial areas. It is known for its active community associations and commitment to promoting local businesses and improving its neighborhoods. The ward includes the Howard Street district, which forms the southern border between Evanston and Chicago. The Howard Street CTA station is a vital transfer point for trains on the Red, Purple, and Yellow lines as well as several bus routes, offering ample connectivity for commuters.

9TH WARD

The 9th Ward stretches from south-central to southwest Evanston, and comprises residential neighborhoods with a community-focused atmosphere. Housing options are diverse, and the area includes local parks, fostering a family-friendly environment. Its eastern border is part of the Chicago Avenue corridor, which runs parallel to rail lines and serves as the primary north-south route in Evanston. Chicago Avenue connects the Main Street, Dempster Street, and downtown shopping districts, so residents have access to diverse retail and dining options.

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Most of Evanston’s land is developed, meaning any new development must be thoughtful and meet the community’s needs. To foster a sense of place and preserve the unique identity of Evanston’s neighborhoods, both new development and redevelopment should commit to quality design that reflects and enhances the defining features of surrounding areas. This encourages design solutions that are compatible with the existing built environment, and responsive to the community’s values and needs.

Developments should aim to complement the neighborhood’s architectural style, scale, and materials while integrating modern elements that support functionality and sustainability. New projects must contribute positively to the neighborhood’s sense of place by harmonizing new and existing structures. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining visual continuity, enhancing pedestrian experiences, and supporting a

welcoming atmosphere that promotes community bonding. In aligning with these principles, development should not only meet aesthetic and practical standards but also strengthen the social and cultural fabric of the neighborhood. By prioritizing quality design, we ensure our neighborhoods remain vibrant, inclusive, and resilient for future generations.

Development will also need to mitigate its impact to achieve the City’s climate goals. The built environment accounts for over 70 percent of greenhouse emissions, split between natural gas and electricity. These emissions result in indoor and outdoor air pollution, which is harmful to the health and well-being of community members. The City must work to decarbonize existing buildings and ensure new development is carbon neutral to have a more resilient building stock and community.¹

To address these constraints, the Future Land Use Map and policies should encourage new development near transit and along major road corridors to connect people and places. The land use strategy should also prioritize the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and strategic opportunities to expand housing choices in all neighborhoods. Evanston’s architectural history offers opportunities for adaptive reuse – transforming older, underused buildings into modern, energy-efficient spaces. This approach reduces demolition waste, preserves historic character, and contributes to a more sustainable built environment. New developments and renovations must meet building codes such as LEED certification or similar standards to ensure energy efficiency, water conservation, and reduced carbon footprint. Development should also help expand the urban tree canopy and support public amenities such as parks and placemaking initiatives. These changes, combined with efforts to streamline the development review process, should improve predictability so people know what to expect as neighborhoods evolve.

Strategic, not willy-nilly anywhere!

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

A land use map guides development decisions and describes the scale and type of development suitable for each area. The map guides the community, City staff, and decision-makers when reviewing development proposals and zoning changes to determine if they are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Map is designed to achieve the goals of Envision Evanston 2045 and implement the vision of new development near transit and along major road corridors

to connect people and places. The following sections summarize the intent of each land use category identified on the map.

RESIDENTIAL

The residential land use category includes a wide range of residential developments, from single-family neighborhoods to more densely developed areas featuring courtyards, walk-up apartments, and condominiums. This land use category should celebrate the diversity of housing types, accommodating both low-density, suburban-style homes and higher-density urban residences. Future development in these areas should preserve the defining features of each neighborhood that form their distinct identities. This includes integrating new housing types that complement existing architectural styles, harmonizing density and scale while enhancing community cohesion and accessibility. Whether in established low-density enclaves like the neighborhoods surrounding Central Street, or more urban and walkable neighborhoods surrounding downtown and local business districts, diverse housing supports a vibrant, inclusive fabric where all residents can live and thrive.

MIXED USE

The mixed-use land use category includes areas that blend residential, commercial, and service uses, supporting walkable neighborhoods that meet both the needs of residents and businesses. These areas range in scale and include small, locally oriented business areas tucked in residential neighborhoods. These pockets provide essential services, local shops, and small businesses that enhance the quality of life for nearby residents, encouraging a tight-knit environment. Future development and zoning in these pockets should continue to prioritize a balance of residential and commercial uses, fostering local commerce while maintaining the intimate, pedestrian-friendly nature of the area.

Mixed-use areas also include established commercial hubs and vacant land – including the abandoned Mayfair railroad – that can potentially accommodate additional development. With easy access to public transportation, these districts are well suited for strategic development opportunities that expand housing supply. Future development and zoning should prioritize a mix of businesses, offices, and residences

to support the local economy and create desirable places to live, work, and play.

Finally, the most intense mixed-use neighborhoods have a dynamic mix of residential and commercial properties, often located along major roads or near transit options. While some of these areas still rely on car traffic due to their past uses, there remain strategic opportunities to support new development. As infrastructure improves and transportation options increase, these areas will continue to evolve, allowing for a mix of lower- and higher-density buildings to support sustainable, walkable neighborhoods. Future development and zoning should aim to enhance the synergy between residential and commercial uses, ensuring each mixed-use area contributes to a thriving, diverse urban fabric that supports local businesses, provides services, and encourages pedestrian activity.



Source: City of Evanston



Source: City of Evanston

DOWNTOWN

The downtown land use category captures a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that blends commercial, residential, institutional, and recreational uses. The area features a combination of historic mid-rise brick buildings, contemporary glass-and-steel towers, and traditional storefronts that contribute to a distinctive urban character. The neighborhood is anchored by a variety of retail, dining, and entertainment establishments concentrated along key corridors such as Davis Street and Sherman Avenue. Office buildings, including those serving professional services and corporate tenants, are spread throughout, particularly near transit hubs. Residential development ranges from luxury high-rise apartments and condominiums to smaller-scale multifamily housing, fostering a diverse and active community. Northwestern University's presence along the north edge of downtown contributes to the area's economic and cultural vibrancy.

Future development and zoning regulations in Downtown Evanston must carefully balance the integration of new high-rise structures with the preservation of lower-density areas to maintain the district's character and livability. High-density projects should be strategically placed near transit nodes and commercial corridors, while mid-rise and low-rise buildings should be prioritized in areas that transition into surrounding neighborhoods. Thoughtful zoning and design guidelines must ensure harmony between architectural styles, walkable streetscapes, and green spaces to enhance the urban fabric. Sustainable development practices, including green-building initiatives and transit-oriented development, should be encouraged to support economic growth while maintaining Evanston's unique sense of place.

CREATION AND INNOVATION

These areas consist of industrial areas that host both retail and service businesses, along with some lighter industrial uses. This land use category attracts new types of businesses like research, technology, and labs to adapt and support local jobs. As these areas transition, they will reduce the impact on nearby homes and lead to fewer environmental issues.

EVALUATING ZONING PROPOSALS FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Future Land Use Map is based on the policies and data contained in the Comprehensive Plan. It shows the general land use recommended and corresponds to a range of land uses and intensities within each category. The designation of an area does not mean the most intense zoning district described in the land use categories is automatically recommended. A range of densities and uses are encouraged within each category, and zoning districts reinforce this range and balance infrastructure capacity. The future land use categories should not be interpreted to support or prevent development. Zoning proposals should support implementation of the Plan's vision, themes, and policies, and mitigate impacts on streets, schools, parks, and other community facilities. When deciding whether a proposed use or zone aligns with the Comprehensive Plan, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the proposal consistent with the vision, themes, and policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan?
- Does the proposal significantly change the recommended land use of the area?
- Will transportation infrastructure and community facilities be available at City standards to serve the proposal?

These areas are light industrial and big box retail. Why not call them what they are?

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

These areas contain various institutional campuses, like universities, high schools, hospitals, sports facilities, and senior care communities. Land within this category typically contains multiple buildings that provide an array of programming and services. Campus communities evolve as institutions change their goals. Since these campuses mostly operate within their own boundaries, rules should allow flexibility to accommodate the changing needs of the community and emerging trends.

OPEN SPACE

This category includes open space that the community values and uses frequently. This land is usually owned by the City and is used for different recreational activities, including parks and community centers. Since these are public areas, rules should keep these green spaces intact and protect natural habitats while making them available for everyone's use.

Take the cemetery out and there is a lot less open space.



Source: City of Evanston

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

To implement the vision established by the future land use strategy, Evanston will need to adopt policies and actions aimed at achieving goals of sustainable growth, climate resiliency, housing choice, and transportation accessibility.

1. SUPPORT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT NEAR TRANSIT AND MIXED-USE AREAS.

LU 1.1 Update zoning regulations to remove barriers to mixed-use development that support opportunities for people to live, work, and operate businesses near transit and within mixed-use areas.

LU 1.2 Require all development to be carbon neutral with zero on-site greenhouse gas emissions, while exploring on-site renewable electricity generation to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

LU 1.3 Update the development review and permitting process to make it more predictable and remove barriers for property owners and potential community investors.

LU 1.4 Develop policies and update zoning regulations to attract, support, and retain local businesses.

LU 1.6 Regularly review and update zoning regulations to ensure they achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

2. ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, AND ZONING DECISIONS IMPLEMENT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

LU 2.1 Update zoning regulations to align with the Comprehensive Plan. **Comp Plan has contradictory goals**

LU 2.2 Develop an implementation roadmap to prioritize the policies and actions of the Plan.

LU 2.3 Create a public dashboard to track the implementation of the Plan.

LU 2.4 Routinely review and update the Plan to ensure it achieves the stated goals and proactively addresses emerging trends.

3. EVALUATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO MEASURE THEIR IMPACT.

LU 3.1 Develop criteria to analyze the economic impact, emissions mitigation and climate resiliency measures, infrastructure and utility capacity, housing diversity, and environmental justice implications.

LU 3.2 Update development applications to require the data needed for evaluation.

LU 3.3 Include evaluation results in reports to inform decision-making and for public awareness.

4. PRIORITIZE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

LU 4.1 Establish criteria to prioritize capital improvement projects based on equity and community impact.

LU 4.2 Develop a system to track maintenance needs and proactively invest in City facilities.

LU 4.3 Align capital improvement projects with private investment to leverage mutually beneficial outcomes.

5. ENCOURAGE THE TRANSITION OF INDUSTRIAL AREAS AND BUILDINGS TO SUPPORT INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SHARED RESOURCES.

LU 5.1 Streamline policies, regulations, or processes that remove barriers and support emerging sectors.

LU 5.2 Strengthen partnerships with local businesses, institutions, and community groups to achieve entrepreneurship goals that lead to the creation of innovation hubs in Evanston by:

- Establishing regular communication and setting goals with local partners.
- Encouraging and participating in networking events.
- Attracting and retaining startups and emerging markets that align with institutional programming.

- Ensuring land and spaces that support the creation of research and innovation hubs.

LU 5.3 Explore the use of city-owned properties to support the creation of innovation hubs.

6. COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO IMPLEMENT ENVISION EVANSTON 2045 AND ADDRESS EMERGING TRENDS.

LU 6.1 Expand and encourage partnerships with local institutions through proactive planning and communication.

LU 6.2 Support innovations in healthcare programming and remove barriers to ensure equitable distribution of providers and services throughout the City.

LU 6.3 Update zoning regulations to support emerging trends in programming and the modernization of aging facilities on institutional campuses.

7. ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS QUALITY DESIGN.

LU 7.1 Establish a Design Review Committee or process that provides technical assistance for new development and integrates it into a predictable review and approval process.

LU 7.2 Promote quality design and site planning early in the development process and before financial commitments to ensure design decisions align with the goals of the Plan and established guidelines.

LU 7.3 Develop guidelines for new development that align with the vision and goals of the Plan and consider the defining features of neighborhoods, sustainable materials, and energy efficiency.

This should have been in place long ago. Some debacles might have been avoided. i.e. Container house on Noyes Ave.

8. ENCOURAGE THE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF EXISTING OR UNDERUSED BUILDINGS.

LU 8.1 Update zoning regulations to remove barriers and encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings in all neighborhoods.

LU 8.2 Promote incentives that support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, including tax credits and other financial tools.

LU 8.3 Update zoning regulations to allow existing homes to add new units within the existing building footprint. **and existing envelope?** Divide a house into apartments? Add a story to a single story house? A third to a two story? Define.

9. PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES IN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS.

LU 9.1 Assess neighborhoods to identify opportunities to add diverse housing typologies that meet the needs of community members.

LU 9.2 Establish policies that reduce displacement of community members who would like to stay in Evanston.

LU 9.2 Update zoning regulations to allow diverse housing typologies based on the assessment.

LU 9.4 Streamline the approval process for new housing projects to reduce barriers that increase the cost of housing, even marginally.

Inventory existing housing stock and find the lots in residential neighborhoods that have the conditions and context that might make them reasonable locations for more housing units. (For example, 1311 Judson Ave, a tumbling down single-family house next to a couple of nice townhomes.) Make the list public and engage the community in finalizing that list. Then change the zoning on those lots only, with the owner's consent. Zoning on all other residential lots not identified in the survey would not be changed.

Streamline, but not compromise on quality of design and construction, mandating that the new housing unit is compatible with the look and feel of its surroundings and in fact enhances the neighborhood.



Source: City of Evanston

CHAPTER 10: HOUSING



CHAPTER 10: HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the framework for increasing housing choice and supply, maintaining existing housing stock, preventing displacement, and preserving the racial and economic diversity of Evanston. Key principles of this plan include fair, safe, stable, secure, connected, healthy, attainable, and accessible housing. The table below outlines policy statements that will inform housing decisions and ensure they are aligned with key goals.

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Increase housing supply and expand housing options. ← Contradictory if increase is in single family home neighborhoods.
2	Preserve existing homes and prevent displacement. ←
3	Support alternative housing models.
4	Prioritize healthy buildings and neighborhoods.
5	Increase funding for housing initiatives.
6	Build and leverage local capacity and foster partnerships.

Access to quality housing improves people's physical and mental health by providing safe and stable environments. It also boosts the local economy by increasing investment in the community. Additionally, sustainable housing not only benefits the environment but also improves quality of life for residents. Prioritizing housing that supports health, the economy, and the environment builds a stronger community for residents now and in the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Evanston is a racially and economically diverse community, but significant segregation remains within the City's neighborhoods. For many years, there has been a high demand to live in Evanston, leading to significant increases in housing costs – both for renters and homeowners. This disproportionately impacts people with lower income, people living with a disability, people of color, and people experiencing unstable housing.

Long-time residents, including seniors on fixed incomes, families of color, and Northwestern graduates are facing pressure to move out. Children of residents, Evanston employees, and others are being priced out of returning and/or moving to Evanston. As public and private investments continue to enhance Evanston's neighborhoods, displacement pressures should be proactively addressed.

Construction of luxury market rate apartments will not help renters who are cost burdened.

HOUSING COSTS

More than one-third of Evanston households are cost burdened, spending at least 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. However, this disproportionately affects renters. Less than a quarter (24 percent) of households that own are cost burdened and 12 percent are severely cost burdened. Meanwhile, nearly half (47 percent) of Evanston's renting households are cost burdened, and 27 percent are severely cost burdened, spending at least 50 percent of their household income on housing costs.⁷

Over the past 10 years, Evanston's median gross rent, including utilities, increased about 41 percent to \$1,625 per month.⁸ In 2012, about 1,250 renter households paid gross rents of \$2,000 or more per month; in 2022 that number rose to over 4,000 households. Similarly, about 4,400 renter households paid less than \$1,000 per month in gross rent in 2012. Ten years later, that number shrank to under 1,500 households.⁹

Since 2012, the number of homeowner households without a mortgage has increased by 55 percent to about 6,500 households. Less than a third of these households spend at least \$1,500 per month in housing costs. However, almost 90 percent of homeowner households with a mortgage spend at least \$1,500 per month in housing costs, and over 43 percent spend at least \$3,000 per month.¹⁰ The rise in households without a mortgage increases current housing affordability, but also masks the cost for prospective homebuyers, who will likely need a mortgage to purchase a home.

Housing cost burdens often stem from low incomes and a lack of affordable housing, with households struggling to pay for other essentials like food, transportation, and medical care. The issue is worsened by wages not catching up with rising housing costs. Additionally, traditional housing affordability formulas overlook transportation costs – usually a household's second-largest expense. Neighborhood amenities, such as walkability and access to jobs and services, heavily influence transportation costs. Compact, well-connected neighborhoods tend to be less affordable. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation (H+T[®]) Affordability Index, Evanston households spend 46 percent of their income on housing and transportation, with 32 percent allocated to housing and 14 percent to transportation.¹¹

Define

Although little vacant land is available, this Plan outlines a path toward increasing housing choice and supply through gentle density, missing middle housing, and focused growth in centers and corridors. This plan also addresses preserving existing homes and preventing displacement. Together, the City can aim to preserve Evanston's racial and economic diversity, while increasing the prosperity and vibrancy of the community.

HOUSING STOCK

Evanston has a diverse housing stock. Less than a third (32 percent) of Evanston's housing units are single-unit detached buildings and 5 percent are single-unit attached. About 14 percent are in buildings with 2 to 4 units, 11 percent are in buildings with 5 to 9 units, and 8 percent are in buildings with 10 to 19 units. About 14 percent are in buildings with 20 to 49 units and 17 percent are in buildings with 50 or more units.¹

A slight majority (56 percent) of Evanston's occupied housing stock is owner occupied and the remaining 44 percent are renter occupied.² About two-thirds (65 percent) of owner-occupied units have three or more bedrooms and 8 percent are studios or one-bedroom units. Conversely, about 80 percent of rentals have two or fewer bedrooms and 5 percent have four or more bedrooms.³ This can make it difficult for larger households to find rental housing and for many households to find attainable housing for sale.

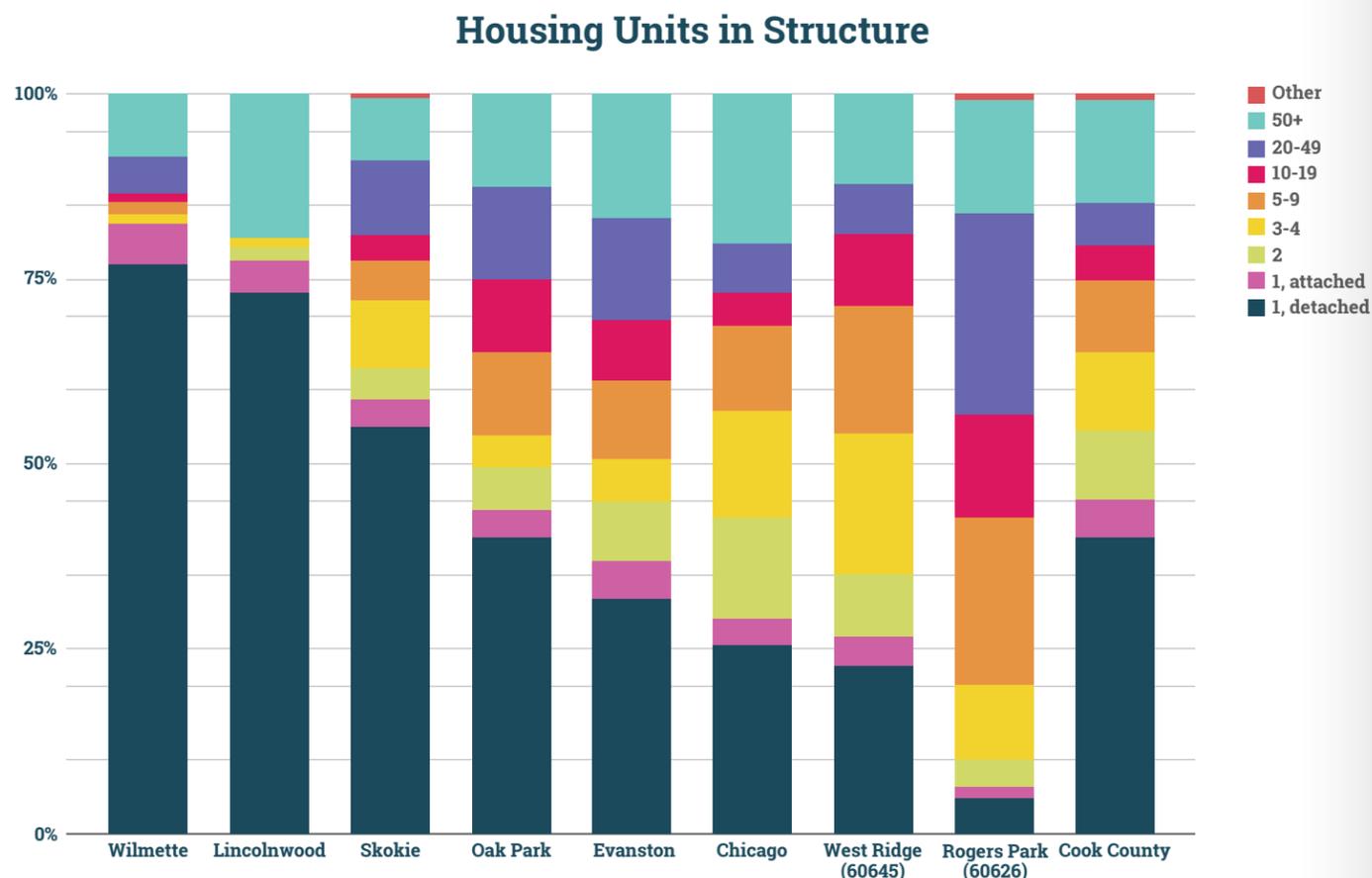
True everywhere, not just Evanston.

There are a variety of subsidized affordable housing units in Evanston. Over 440 units are restricted to income-qualified seniors and over 200 units are single-room occupancy. Over 100 units are for specific populations such as persons with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence.⁴ Over 85 units are from the City's Inclusionary Housing program.⁵ Additionally, over 550 Evanston households use Housing Choice Vouchers to afford monthly rent payments.⁶

The three largest permanent supportive housing providers in Evanston are Connections for the Homeless, Impact Behavioral Health Partners, and the YWCA Evanston/North Shore. Family Promise and Interfaith Action also provide emergency shelter for those in need. Figure 5 illustrates housing units in structures in Evanston, surrounding communities, Chicago, and Cook County.

Speculation. Households without mortgages are likely retired old people who also have much lower incomes than working people with mortgages. Property taxes can be a large percentage of a retired income.

FIGURE 5. HOUSING STOCK



Source: City of Evanston

HOUSING INSECURITY

Housing insecurity is a growing challenge both nationally and locally as housing prices continue to rise. Throughout suburban Cook County, close to 1,200 individuals experienced homelessness during the 2024 Point in Time Count.¹² Evanston shelters are operating at full capacity and there is a significant lack of emergency beds. Reducing barriers to providing a variety of housing options can help ensure every Evanston resident can access safe, stable housing.

How many are homeless due to factors other than cost of housing? Mental illness, addiction, etc. How many will actually be helped by housing affordability? How many actually need some other kind of help/intervention?

STUDENT HOUSING

Evanston is home to over 13,500 undergraduate and graduate students, with over 2,500 attending public institutions, and about 11,000 attending private institutions.¹³ Students represent over 17 percent of the City's population and are an important demographic group, though student housing needs are diverse. Evanston's student incomes and assets vary widely, mirroring the total population. Student household makeup also differ, encompassing individuals, partners, and unrelated adults – including and without children. Some students live with their parents or in student housing, while others rent apartments or own their homes. Evanston is home to Northwestern University's main campus, which has a substantial economic, cultural, and housing impact on the

Units become available all the time. People die. People move.

City. An estimated 8,000 undergraduate students attend Northwestern University, many of whom live in Evanston. Northwestern University requires first-year undergraduate students to live on campus for two years and transfer students to live on campus for one year. It provides over 35 housing options for undergraduates, including dormitories, residential colleges, and fraternity and sorority houses. Additionally, Northwestern University provides three graduate-student dormitories.¹⁴

The cumulative inflation 2014-2024 was 32.2% so this increase can be explained simply by inflation.

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SOARING HOUSING COSTS

In June 2024, the Zillow Home Value Index for Evanston, which reflects the typical value of homes in the 35th to 65th percentile range, was approximately \$430,000 – an increase of about 30 percent over the past 10 years.¹⁵ In the same period, one- and two-bedroom home values in Evanston increased by at least 60 percent and 52 percent, respectively.¹⁶ However, Zillow's index does not account for other costs of ownership, including but not limited to mortgage interest, insurance, closing costs, maintenance, property taxes, and HOA fees.

Renters are also experiencing significant increases in housing costs. The median rent has increased by about 41 percent over the past 10 years.¹⁷ Over that same period, the number of renter households spending less than \$1,000 per month on housing costs has greatly decreased, by about 67 percent, to less than 1,500 households.

This means demand is greater for housing for small families, not large families as stated elsewhere.

INCREASE THE HOUSING SUPPLY

The chronic underbuilding and underinvestment in housing has resulted in a nationwide shortage of around 4.9 million homes in 2023.¹⁸ As high housing costs are driven by a shortage of available homes, increasing the housing supply through new developments, less restrictive zoning, and repurposing underused spaces can provide renters and buyers more options. Expanding housing benefits households at all income levels, from low to high. New market-rate developments give higher-income households options to

move into, making available older units with more attainable prices available.¹⁹ Additionally, new market-rate developments with inclusionary housing units options for households of all income levels. Typo

Furthermore, the U.S. is facing a significant shortage of 7.3 million rental homes that are affordable to renters at or below 30 percent area median income.²⁰ Among over 5,000 renter households earning less than \$50,000 per year, about 9 in 10 (88 percent) are cost burdened.²¹ This shows the need for more affordable housing for Evanston's low-income households. More market rate housing won't help them.

COMBAT DISPLACEMENT

Developing an antidisplacement strategy is essential to protecting Evanston's income diversity. The benefits of new development need to be felt by current residents. Without strategies, policies, and funding in place, low- and moderate-income households – particularly renter households – may be forced to move out of Evanston. Cultural displacement is also a concern, as the closure of important community landmarks, like historically Black churches or local restaurants, can erase neighborhood history and, with it, a sense of community.

Evanston can promote positive development by working with community organizations to ensure a successful revitalization that values culture, health, and positive human development, not just increased economic growth. Limiting development out of concern for displacement reduces opportunities for many long-time Evanston residents. The City plans to expand development potential while minimizing displacement, ensuring Evanston community members can benefit from new resources, services, and opportunities.

What about the building and investment in Evanston housing? Jeff Smith's study shows there has been a lot of housing built in Evanston over the last few decades.

High housing costs can be driven by other factors, too. Desirability of the community, proximity to jobs, size and quality of homes, etc.

Unproven theory. See more in comments on page 97.

ILLINOIS POLICY LANDSCAPE

Unlike other states, Illinois has not provided as much state-level leadership or mandates to address rapidly rising housing costs. For example, California requires municipalities to plan the community's housing needs, while Washington's growth management framework requires municipalities to plan housing that is affordable for all income levels. In comparison, Illinois requires municipalities with a serious shortage of affordable housing to develop a housing plan.

Another challenge is the state's ban on rent control, which limits Evanston's ability to stabilize rents. This leaves the City with fewer tools to protect residents from rising rents and displacement.

However, in July 2021, the HB2621 bill went into effect, which includes new property tax incentives for new construction or repaired buildings tied to the provision of affordable rental housing.²² This led to the creation of the Cook County Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program. While the program has yet to significantly impact the number of affordable units in Evanston, current development proposals are planning to participate in the program, and therefore include a larger percentage of affordable units moving forward.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

By collaborating with local and regional organizations, anchor institutions, philanthropic organizations, and financial institutions, Evanston can address housing affordability on a larger scale by developing workforce housing, gathering resources for larger initiatives, reducing duplicated efforts, and unlocking grants, tax credits, or technical assistance. These partnerships will help Evanston leverage its limited resources by tapping into the expertise, funding streams, and networks of these partnerships.



Source: City of Evanston



Source: City of Evanston

Do this before tearing down single family homes. How many properties are available? How many housing units could be produced? Where?

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

These policies and actions provide a varied approach to increase housing choice and supply, preserve existing homes, prevent displacement, and preserve racial and economic diversity.

1. IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STRATEGY

H 1.1 Develop and implement a strategic housing plan to guide the City's housing investments and initiatives.

H 1.2 Complete a housing needs assessment to determine the types and qualities of housing needed for Evanston's population.

H 1.3 Collect and analyze local housing data routinely to inform data-driven housing decisions.

2. INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY AND HOUSING CHOICES

H 2.1 Encourage a diversity of housing types throughout Evanston.

H 2.2 Update zoning regulations to reduce the cost and increase the ease of housing rehabilitation and new construction.

H 2.3 Facilitate the use of new and innovative construction technologies, such as manufactured, modular, and mass timber construction, and remove barriers in plan review, permitting, and inspection processes.

H 2.4 Update live/work and occupational use regulations to allow a wider range of businesses and services.

H 2.5 Streamline zoning approval and entitlement processes, building plan review, permitting, and inspection processes to promote development.

H 2.6 Speed up the entitlement process for developments that highly exceed the percentage of inclusionary units required by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

H 2.7 Update building codes to accommodate more energy- and cost-efficient building designs.

H 2.8 Develop preapproved design plans for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, triplexes, cottages, and other neighborhood-scale housing to expedite approval processes and reduce development costs.

H 2.9 Develop an ADU financing and technical assistance program to speed up the development of ADUs that provide income for low- and moderate-income homeowners and income-restricted housing units in high-cost neighborhoods.

H 2.10 Redevelop underused city properties to increase the supply of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households, and integrate housing into new construction and rehabilitation of City assets.

3. PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Yes! Do not incentivize tear-downs of single family homes.

H 3.1 Increase funding to rehabilitate housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income residents to maintain decent, safe housing, and incorporate energy-efficient and climate-resilient features.

H 3.2 Develop funding sources to assist owners of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) – private properties that are affordable without government subsidies – to decarbonize and remove environmental hazards.

H 3.3 Work with local housing providers to protect NOAH.

H 3.4 Develop a housing database to proactively monitor and preserve existing housing stock.

YES!

LUC instructions to remove previous language in this section allowing townhomes etc in all neighborhoods and removing limits on lot sizes, parking etc was a good thing. That language was right off the website of out-of-town activists who lobby for developers. Now LUC should instruct staff to insert language that reflects the wishes of Evanston residents, along these lines: "The Evanston neighborhoods whose lots are currently in use for single-family homes should continue to have their preferred and best use as single-family homes. The only exceptions should be in the case of specific lots identified by the city as having the character, context and setting to make use as a multi-unit building acceptable and where the design and construction of that building blends with its surroundings and in fact enhances its neighborhood."

Incentivizing tear-downs of single family homes, replaced with expensive new multi-unit residences will displace residents

4. PREVENT DISPLACEMENT OF EVANSTON RESIDENTS

H 4.1 Develop and refine an antidisplacement strategy to address the changing development landscape in Evanston.

H 4.2 Evaluate policies and programs and update existing programs or introduce new ones that help renters, particularly those with lower incomes, maintain stable housing.

H 4.3 Research and develop technical and financial support for shared-equity housing models, including community land trusts and limited-equity cooperatives. **do it now!**

H 4.4 Expand the availability of and access to programs including financial literacy, education, workforce development, and career pathways to help lower-income households build economic stability and self-sufficiency.

5. PROMOTE HEALTHY BUILDINGS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

H 5.1 Adopt and enforce zero-emissions building codes and standards to improve indoor air quality, maintain natural light, achieve energy efficiency, and remove environmental hazards like lead to ensure living spaces contribute to a healthy living environment.

H 5.2 Incentivize and facilitate the construction of all-electric living spaces, installation of solar panels and heat pumps, and other technologies that address climate change and improve sustainability.

H 5.3 Promote green building practices, such as LEED certification, WELL standards, passive house, and universal design in rehabilitation and new construction.

H 5.4 Prioritize housing development on sites with access to green spaces, parks, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and other amenities that promote physical activity and mental well-being and improve climate resilience.

H 5.5 Incorporate public health data and best practices into planning and residential and commercial entitlement processes to ensure they meet health and safety regulations and support community well-being.

6. SEEK OUT AND EXPAND REVENUE SOURCES FOR HOUSING INITIATIVES

H 6.1 Develop a comprehensive funding strategy that includes current, anticipated, and new revenue sources to support the housing goals outlined in this plan and in the strategic housing plan.

H 6.2 Evaluate and implement new revenue sources such as development linkage or impact fees to increase, diversify, and provide more consistent funding for affordable housing.

H 6.3 Work with surrounding cities, counties, and the state to establish funds dedicated to investing in and preserving NOAH. **Identify and inventory existing NOAH, make list public.**

H 6.4 Encourage community and regional financial institutions to explore potential private financing for small-scale, locally owned, multiunit developments and home improvements.

H 6.5 Pursue additional federal, state, and county funding to address housing needs.



Source: City of Evanston

7. BUILD AND LEVERAGE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TO EXPAND HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

H 7.1 Leverage public-private partnerships with philanthropic foundations, regional and community banks, nonprofit organizations, and real estate investment trusts (REITs) to increase funding for housing.

H 7.2 Engage Evanston institutions and businesses to develop programs that expand housing availability and affordability within institutional campuses such as Northwestern University and Continuing Care Communities, and employer-assisted housing programs.

H 7.3 Establish strategic partnerships with transit agencies, school districts, and faith-based organizations for housing (re)development.

H 7.4 Initiate education, outreach, and engagement efforts that make use of social marketing best practices and storytelling to highlight the need for affordable housing and its community benefits.

H 7.5 Build relationships with developers, real estate professionals, home builders, and homeowners to continue removing housing development barriers.

From page 93: Unproven theory. There is ample data showing that simply increasing the supply of market rate residential units does not increase the supply of affordable housing. See quote from Journal of the Urban Institute: "We find that land-use reforms that reduce restrictions to increase allowed density lead to a 0.8% increase in housing supply, on average, in the cities we study. However, we find no statistically significant evidence that these reforms lead to an increase in affordable rental units within three to nine years of reform passage. We do find that such reforms are associated with an increase in units affordable for above-middle-income household, and that effects on units affordable to those with extremely low incomes and very low incomes are positive but with large standard errors, likely because of the small number of units affordable at these levels baseline. Therefore, we do not have enough data to conclude that the impacts are significant."