

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.
Michelle Chlebek	2207 Orrington A	3/12/2025	2207 Orrington A	Opposed	In person		Self	
Luke Harris-Ferr	1425 Washington	3/12/2025	Comprehensive	In favor	Written comm	Thank you for the work you have done on reviewing this Comprehensive Plan. As is true with any item of big change in Evanston, there will be plenty of suspicion and resistance. We live in a highly educated and independent community. But, there comes a time when it is time to move beyond the resistance to change and act swiftly for our neighbors who are in need and for the betterment of our community. This comprehensive plan sets out worthy goals, which will be continually reviewed. It is time to get into the meat of the conversation, which is setting the policies that will enact these goals, mainly zoning. We could all discuss this plan to death for the next 5 years, hoping to get all of our personal goals written into the plan, but with such opposing ideas, we will never reach consensus. Please do not delay any longer and begin to move forward to the work that will make these goals and changes a reality. Again, thank you for your work.		
Steve Test	1135 Hinman Ave	3/12/2025	Envision Evanston	Opposed	Written comm	<p>I have submitted comments on details of EE45 but I am here to comment on the EE45 process in its entirety. Some of you may be aware that as early as July 2022, on the website of Joining Forces for Affordable Housing, there was this statement "the groups above (a list of community advocacy groups being provided compensation by Joining Forces) will work with Joining Forces to prepare recommendations on zoning that the city has agreed will feed into the upcoming Comprehensive and Strategic Planning processes, as well as into a future overhaul of the Zoning Code." It doesn't say who at the city - staff or elected or both - agreed but the fact that the Housing chapter of the first draft of the comprehensive plan looked like it could have come directly off the Joining Forces/Connections website confirms what happened. I am for affordable housing but the radical upzoning of residential neighborhoods advocated by Joining Forces isn't the way to do it. The most egregious language has been removed, but the bias in the comprehensive plan is still obvious.</p> <p>Now I believe there are clearly compromises to be made that could increase housing units in R1 neighborhoods without radically upzoning the whole city. Those compromises to bring moderate solutions to bear could create a document that will find consensus. I am concerned that those in city leadership who invited Joining Forces in on the ground floor may still be in a position to have their thumb on the scale as the EE45 process continues and scuttle any compromises that might, in good faith, be made. I am not alone in my fear that some in city management, staff and elected, have forgotten they work for all the citizens of Evanston. I ask you, the LUC commissioners, to be advocates for moderation, consensus and for all the citizens of Evanston.</p>		
John Cooper	3614 Hillside Rd	3/13/2025	Evanston 2045	Opposed	Written comm	<p>Hi. Thank you LUC for your honesty in examining the arguments for and against. I am most concerned about the rezoning push. I do not see details in the plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you detached the Zoning issue from the remainder of the plan? 2. I have read many of the comments for and against. While there is passion on both sides of the issue, many of the comments against the zoning contain facts. There is a disturbing lack of facts for those in favor of the zoning. Lots of passion, little facts. 3. Example: 2102 Harrison street single family sold for \$520,000 3/16/18 Then developer built a duplex with each unit selling for over \$1,600,000. Tell me, what IN THE PLAN will NOT allow that to happen? <p>Thanks, John Cooper</p>		
Ezra Shevick	935 Maple Ave	3/12/2025	Envision Evanston	Undecided	Written comm	<p>Can this commission explain what is going on with the Housing & Community Development committee?</p> <p>We heard from one of their members at the LUC in January. She explained that they had put the strategic housing plan to the side to work on Envision.</p> <p>Since then, the first 2 meetings of HCDC were cancelled, citing lack of agenda items. Seems peculiar to me. The member who spoke at LUC seemed to indicate that this board was extremely busy.</p> <p>If one of the main priorities of the Envision process is affordable housing, it seems to me the Strategic Housing Plan should be of the utmost importance. But it seems the timeline that was publicized was completely thrown out. Can you offer any clarification?</p>		
Jim McKee	631 Forest Ave.		Comprehensive	Opposed	In person		Self	
Jim McKee	631 Forest Ave.	3/12/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	In person		Self	

						<p>Michael Lohr, Ward 1 for 17 years. Oppose Envision Evanston 2045 as currently described in the draft Comprehensive Plan. So many flaws hard to know where to start. First, plan is an advocacy document, not a straight down the middle assessment of Evanston's existing land use, much less an accurate or evenhanded forecast for the future. In addition, I lost track of how many times in the document that the writers recommend zoning changes in a document that is supposed to precede the zoning review; in the writers view, it seems that the solution to every real or perceived Evanston land use ill is a zoning change. The document refers to a survey where only 206 responded. I responded to that survey. The survey was like an essay question on the SAT – big blank spaces for each section of the then draft asking for comment. And I like to see the data supporting the statement, "adjust zoning regulations to ensure housing affordability." The document is full of that sort of statement, as always, unsupported by any data, for example, on page 16 the bold recommendation, "revise current density limits." Where did that come from? Classic case of cart before the horse. Perhaps instead, look at the bullets on page 14 reflecting the many community meetings and hearings, such as simply, "examine R1 zoning," not the blanket call for rezoning every single R1 and R2 parcel in the city as the authors would have you believe. At a prior meeting I addressed the Emerging Trends chart on page 28, but those so-called trends are very misleading not only with respect to Evanston, but the entire state of Illinois. The document repeatedly refers to the lack of housing diversity in Evanston, but nothing could be further from the truth, and the data in the report proves that, pages 91-93 in particular: "less than a third of Evanston is single family homes, and another 25% are between 2 and 4 and 5 and 9 family." The bar chart on page 92 is worth reviewing, as Evanston has a very balanced assortment of housing types, much more so than many surrounding communities. And if I could, discuss some conclusions I might draw from the stats that I see revealed in the plan – the US population currently sits at 341M, Evanston at 76,000, thus Evanston represents just over .022% of the entire US population - two one hundreds. Next the plan sites the figure 5M as representing the housing shortage in the US. If I take two one hundreds of 5M and round generously, Evanston needs roughly 3-4 more family housing units for its fair share of the US shortage. In other words, we not going to solve the problem of a US housing shortage in Evanston alone. And as I pointed out the last LUC meeting, the Illinois Dept of Public Health in a study less than a year ago projects that Illinois will lose population between now and 2035, thus needing less housing.</p>		
Michael Lohr	726 Milburn St.,	3/12/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	Written comm			
Lee Greenberg	2207 Orrington A	3/12/2025	Envision Evanst	Undecided	In person		Self	
Paula Twilling	2664	3/12/2025	Comp Plan		Written comm	<p>The new draft of the Comp Plan is still deficient with lack of data to support the argument that density somehow equates affordability. There is no finished housing report which appears to have been set aside until the Comp Plan is finished. This is an egregious example of the "cart before the horse." Why is it that everything about this Comp Plan and the proposed zoning changes were rushed with very little public knowledge with so much missing data and information? One might conclude that this was purposeful in order to adopt a "Comp Plan" that still isn't one because the zoning changes were the real intent.</p>		
Andrea Liss	496 Sheridan Rd	3/12/2025	Envision Evanst	Opposed	Written comm	<p>I understand there are problems to solve and a future to think about and plan for. But to upzone and turn the entire city of Evanston upside down without data to support the vision outlined in the comprehensive plan and its chosen tactics of change including higher density, taller buildings and larger footprints seems rash and threatens to destroy the Evanston that we know and love.</p> <p>Evanston is a wonderful place to live and to work. We have natural resources including our beautiful lakefront and streets lined with mature trees. We are home to many architectural jewels, a range of homes and business districts with historic charm and vintage character at a human scale. It feels good to be here.</p> <p>I don't understand why we are throwing all that to the wind with a rushed plan conceived by out-of-towners who don't live here that focuses on solving national and regional issues without equally focusing on the qualities that make Evanston what it is. We should do our part to ease the housing issues being felt across the nation and here at home, but not at the expense of undermining our foundation so it becomes unrecognizable, diminishes our quality of life, and changes Evanston forever.</p> <p>I think we are being sold a bill of goods based on good intentions and not facts. Many who are experienced in the affordable housing and construction industries have explained that increased housing density does not create affordability. Let's not ruin what we have in pursuit of changes that will not solve the problem and instead open the doors to making Evanston a developer's dream that leaves us with a crowded big city, not the town we know and love.</p> <p>The comprehensive plan should build on what is wonderful about Evanston, not focus on steps that will dismantle it.</p>		
Cat Vielma	2738 Central Par	3/12/2025	Envision Evanst	In favor	Written comm	<p>LUC - I am writing to share my support of Envision Evanston, and more specifically, of the gentle upzoning that would be allowable in R-1 districts. As a parent in the 6th ward, more homes and more neighbors are important to me because my child's nursery school and local public elementary school are struggling with declining enrollment. While some of that is due to natural demographic shifts, it's also driven by the challenging housing market and the growing percentage of empty nesters. This combination has made the housing market a nightmare as there are less homes available and more families competing for them, which has made the cost out of reach for many – including working professionals. We need more young families to support our small businesses, enjoy our local playgrounds, and be a part of D65. Evanston must try something to help build more homes, of all types, so that we can continue to enjoy a diverse, sustainable, and energetic community. Gentle upzoning is a national policy tool proven across various jurisdictions that provides for gradual redevelopment to provide more homes without federal or local subsidy.</p> <p>Additionally, I want to add that as a working parent -- I hope my written comments are valued equally as those in-person comments. It has been eye opening, to put it kindly, to receive unsolicited flyers from "long-term" Evanston residents depicting an apocalyptic change to Evanston with gentle upzoning, and then to hear shocking, ugly comments during the public comment period. It has been hurtful to receive flyers that imply that newcomers to Evanston are not welcome and their opinions are not "as" valid as long-time residents -- whether you own or rent. I am so grateful to have a varied group of my neighbors and hope those opposed to gentle upzoning can see that we need to do something to ensure the continued vibrancy of our neighborhoods, small businesses, and public schools. More homes = more neighbors. It's a good thing!</p>		
Sara Friedman	3046 Hartzell St	3/12/2025	EE45	In favor	Written comm	<p>I support EE45 because it will allow the housing supply to expand, which is necessary in order to reduce the rapidity with which housing costs increase. It will allow more people to live in denser arrangements, which are more energy-efficient. EE45 will increase the residential population of our commercial districts, providing local businesses with more customers, and it makes important strides in continuing to move Evanston away from the practice of discriminatory redlining. It also will not cause change as rapidly as the opposition is arguing it will due to the limited number of properties on the market in a given year and due to the increasingly limited funding currently available in the markets.</p>		

Sasha Friedman	3046 Hartzell St	3/12/2025	EE45	In favor	Written comm	I am in support of EE45 and rezoning residential areas to support multifamily housing. Three years ago I moved to Evanston from Portland, Oregon, where a similar plan was put in place. The direct impact of having more density was all positive, from more housing, to more families in neighborhoods, to more tax, to more community. While I understand that people are resistant to change, my lived experience was that most homes remained single family. After all, what to do with your property should be an individual decision and based on demand.		
Caroline Hays	2430 Ridgeway A	3/12/2025	Rezoning	Opposed	Written comm	This is not an affordable housing solution, so let's please stop calling it that. If we need to increase density to increase our tax base then we need to have strict guidelines and rules as to what can be built. I would support two story townhomes or cluster type homes that blend in with the architecture of the neighborhood only. Building four flats will ruin the character of many neighborhoods and block sunlight. The new homes need to have a parking requirement. Many streets are already very crowded and you can barely drive down them--- for example Cowper Avenue in the 6th ward. Also given the passage of the Healthy Building Ordinance I find this whole initiative very odd since tearing down existing homes and building new construction hurts the environment.		
Michele Jonas	1218 Noyes St	3/12/2025	Envision Evanston	In favor	Written comm	I am in favor of Envision Evanston 2045 because it is a crucial step in moving Evanston away from the practice of discriminatory redlining and towards a more equitable community. In addition, it opens the door for - increasing housing supply - creating greater density which is better for energy efficiency - increasing tax revenue for the city		
Aleks Walker	2753 Reese Ave	3/12/2025	Envision Evanston	In favor	Written comm	I'm writing in support of taking a progressive approach to the Envision Evanston plan and allowing for more housing types in Evanston, including duplexes, townhomes, and 3-4 flats in current R1 neighborhoods. I believe this is the best way to address the changing needs of our community and give young families the chance to own and live in Evanston. Currently in my NW Evanston neighborhood, any time a modest family home is on the market, a developer purchases it, tears it down and replaces it with a giant lot-line home that is priced out of reach of most middle-class residents. Why not offer the opportunity for multifamily housing that would give 2 to 4 families a new home in a great neighborhood, supporting our schools, taking advantage of the Central Business District and great parks? I encourage you not to let longtime Evanston residents who are resistant to change of any kind lead this discussion and prevent others from enjoying living in a vibrant, diverse, and modern town.		
Tom	Daly	3/12/2025	Envision 2045	Opposed	Written comm	I believe that the entire view of rezoning requires much additional discussion. We as a community have had much disagreement about what we want downtown to look like without resolution and now we are talking about major changes to land use without really talking and agreeing as to what we want Evanston to be for the people that already live here. I believe that we need to look at land use neighborhood by neighborhood and not attack this issue in one bite.		
Ellen Estabrook	2343 Ridgeway A	3/12/2025	2343 Ridgeway A	In favor	Written comm	EE45 feels simple to me. It provides the opportunity expand housing supply (over time), increase energy efficiency, help control rising home costs, and repair long standing damage from historic redlining. I moved to this town to live in a way that is more aligned with my value of equity. Let's lay the foundations!		
Rob Biesenbach	2011 Orrington A	3/12/2025	Comprehensive	Opposed	Written comm	I urge the Committee to slow down this process in order to gather more input from the community. The current version of the plan will not result in more affordable housing but will instead allow developers to raze old houses to build multi-unit luxury condos. I understand there are thousands of vacant housing units in Evanston — it seems much more expedient, economical and environmentally sound to fill those homes rather than construct new ones. Finally, I would urge you not to gauge public opinion based on the people who show up in-person. Many of the supporters of the plan appear to be students or very young and likely do not have the same obligations as those of us who need to get multiple children back and forth to their games, practices, lessons and other activities.		
Trisha Connolly	1428 Darrow Ave	3/12/2025	A. Comprehensive	Opposed	Written comm	I'm very concerned that we continue to work on a draft for the comprehensive plan, without a housing impact statement, or the strategic housing plan in place. There is a lot of talk about affordable housing, density, etc. but we have NO guide for a starting point. Why would staff put a Strategic Housing Plan on hold until the Comprehensive Plan is done? We need data to be provided as a starting point and to guide our vision for what needs we may have in the future (certainly, subject to change). Please ask that you get this information first before the completion of this plan. What numbers of new affordable housing units of all types and for all family sizes are we aiming for in 5 years? 10 years? 15 years? What measures by our local government will need to be taken so that we can ensure we meet the need? Land trusts, cooperative housing, supporting more small landlords to take vouchers? We need to have this information now. We should be including a racial impact study with any plan presented. Thank you for your service. I cannot attend the meeting tonight, I hope you will be willing to discuss this issue, which is a VERY important part to moving forward with the comprehensive plan. **I'm concerned that in the backdrop we have the Civic Center that may be sold off, when what I've spoken of here is a possible chance to put it in a land trust. Trisha Connolly 2nd Ward		

Comments on the revised Comprehensive Plan
Jack Weiss, Director Emeritus, Design Evanston
3.7.25

There is no uniformity in the way material is presented. For example:

1. A Vision Statement occurs only in Chapter 4 and none of the others.
All chapters should include this feature...or none.
2. Policies & Actions, containing summary bullet points, occur in Chapters 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 but do not occur in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 15.
This feature should be included in all chapters.

Last month the Preservation Commission requested a chapter on “Urban Design and Community Character.” This appears to be what spawned the Neighborhoods and Places chapter, although specific references to quality human-centered design are lacking.

A reference to a “Design Review Committee” occurs in Chapter 5: Neighborhoods and Places, as bullet points under Policies & Actions. This important concept is completely misplaced in the Plan. It deserves far more visible placement and more detailed description.

We would prefer the term Urban Design Commission and references to it should be found in Chapter 1: Introduction; Chapter 5: Neighborhoods and Places; and Chapter 15: Implementation.

Following is language largely crafted by Cade Sterling for the June 2023 draft ordinance for an Urban Design Commission and my attempt to contextualize it within the three following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction (Page 7)
Insert before “Using and Updating the Plan” section

USING QUALITY DESIGN TO ACHIEVE THE CITY’S DIVERSE GOALS

The concept of quality design is inherent in every chapter of this Comprehensive Plan. Maintaining a high-quality built environment positively impacts the health, well-being, and general welfare of the public, contributes toward the City’s unique character and identity, strengthens the local economy, and enhances the vibrancy and resiliency of Evanston’s business and downtown districts.

An Urban Design Commission could provide technical assistance and expert advice and opinion on development and redevelopment proposals in both the public and private realm; advocate for human-centered design solutions for projects which have the potential to impact the experiential quality of the built environment; promote the highest quality of design in order to ensure built interventions create and retain economic,

environmental, social, and cultural value; and, advance all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 5: Neighborhoods & Places (Page 38)
Insert before “1st Ward” section

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

- Identify and celebrate the unique character and patterns of development that exist within distinct neighborhoods, business districts, downtown areas, and other unique cultural landscapes across the city.
- Define quality urban design concepts and strategies
- Include modeling and other visual examples that communicate preferred treatment approaches

Chapter 5: Neighborhoods & Places (Page 45)
Insert after “9 Promote the Development” section

10 FOSTER QUALITY DESIGN TO ACHIEVE THIS CHAPTER’S POICIES AND ACTIONS

To Ensure that all of the goals of this chapter can be met, an Urban Design Commission can be established that would be a legislative, advisory body appointed by the Mayor and comprised of resident experts in areas of architecture, design, and planning.

The goals of the Urban Design Commission would be:

- Prioritize human-centered, creative, and authentic design solutions.
- Foster civic pride in the beauty of the City’s built environment and assure a functional, vibrant, and visually attractive City for the future.
- Improve the general appearance of buildings, structures, and landscapes to maintain and improve the economic vitality and vibrancy of Evanston’s diverse environments.
- Encourage new development and redevelopment that recognize and integrate with the City’s existing physical identity through excellence in design, authenticity, and creativity.
- Create transparency and efficiency in the development and entitlement processes through early consultation and technical assistance.

Chapter 15: Implementation (Page 124)
Insert after “Annual Review of Progress” section

QUALITY DESIGN CAN ENSURE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The importance of design cannot be overstated. Design affects nearly every aspect of our City’s diverse population in every neighborhood. With an Urban Design Commission in place, nearly every aspect of this Comprehensive Plan can be successfully realized.



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Envision Evanston

Kate McCarthy <kjamcc@gmail.com>
To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 11:41 AM

Hello,

I have lived in Evanston for nearly 20 years and my husband is an employee of the City of Evanston. I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes in the Envision Evanston plan.

While I agree that affordable housing is important, we are going about this the wrong way. Increasing housing density and getting rid of green spaces in our community is short-sighted and unnecessary.

I am particularly concerned with the proposed zoning changes for the property which houses Lincolnwood elementary school, as this green space is the hub of our neighborhood. If the zoning changes to R1, that property would just be developed into luxury condos or multi-million dollar homes, not affordable housing. Meanwhile, people of all ages in our community would lose a beautiful place to gather.

I am unable to attend the meeting tonight, but I wanted to make sure that my concerns are heard.

Thank you,
Kate McCarthy
2411 Noyes St.



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

LUC Comments - EE45

1 message

P OConnor <gr8skape@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 8:32 AM

To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

Ms. Jones,

Please include the following comments regarding the 2nd draft of EE45 for Commissioners at the March 12 meeting.

I am:

- **AGAINST** the implicit and explicit call for more density throughout the city and throughout the 2nd draft of the Comp Plan. The community does not want more density.
- **AGAINST** the assertion that Evanston is clamoring for more "affordable" housing throughout the Plan. The data in the Plan does not support this. The city's own reporting reveals there are thousands of vacant housing units in Evanston right now. Seems more responsible to first complete a Strategic Housing Plan before stating conclusions about housing in the Comp Plan.
- **AGAINST** the haphazard and rushed schedule of the Comp Plan. It took staff and the consultant team almost a year to get to the draft issued Feb 21. It seems disrespectful to the citizens and LUC to think that meaningful review, public comment and revisions can happen in a few weeks. The fact that the City has now fired its main consultant and thrown away most of their work product screams that things haven't exactly gone to plan and schedule needs to adjust. A huge missed opportunity for the new Council not to get to work on it.
- **AGAINST** the disingenuous Chapter 2 "What We Heard" of the new draft. This is not what we heard. Read the surveys, review resident comments, watch the LUC meeting tapes.
- **AGAINST** the mandate that all new development be carbon neutral and free of greenhouse gas emissions (LU1.2, page 23). This will be massively challenging and expensive for homeowners and renters.
- **AGAINST** the policy objective of adding more parkland until meeting national average (**page 80, No. 8**)- thus further reducing the tax base.
- **AGAINST** the idea of a design review process (LU7.1 page 44). We already a design review and it's called Planned Development.
- **CONCERNED ABOUT** the Plan's failure to address the need to balance goals with the City's financial stability and limit to what taxpayers will tolerate. It's irresponsible to put forth a 20-year plan with no acknowledgement of the tradeoff between goals and the City's ability fund its future
- **CONCERNED** that making it easier for developers to build luxury townhomes will lead to gentrification.
- **CONCERNED** that Evanston no longer values its unique character. It's mentioned here and there in the new draft but no longer central to Evanston's vision. Future Evanstonians will remember these Commissioners as the ones who put an end to 160 years of Evanston's unique character.

- **FOR** the idea of a Comp Plan - the City needs one. A good one. How many other Comp Plans have you read for reference? Are you proud to put your names on this one?

- Patrick O'Connor
7th Ward



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

LUC MEETING

1 message

victoria Proctor <proctorvikki@icloud.com>

Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 11:20 AM

To: mmjones@cityofevanston.org

I'm writing to request that the LUC slow down the process for reviewing Envision Evanston. Although i have many concerns, the push to develop more low and high rises to increase density seems to contradict climate action goals. Why not push to use vacant housing spaces available now?

The public needs more meetings, more opportunities to weigh in on changing the landscape if Evanston.

I understand Mayor Biss is pushing hard for approval before the election. That should be a solid reason not to approve without more public input.

Vikki Proctor

1508 Hinman Ave

Sent from my iPhone



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

For an Equitable Zoning Code

1 message

Jonathan Singer - jsinger1@luc.edu <ConnectionsfortheHomele@ujoin.co>

Sun, Mar 9, 2025 at 10:35 AM

Reply-To: jsinger1@luc.edu

To: Land Use Commissioners <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Dear Commissioners,

I am emailing today to urge you to support the City's efforts to create a more equitable zoning code during the Envision Evanston 2045 process. If the current zoning code is not revised we will only see more inequities and segregation, and less racial/ethnic diversity.

Evanston's zoning code hasn't been updated in over 20 years, meaning many of our laws are outdated (such as, defining what a family is through zoning) and a source of many of the inequities we see in our community. Evanston has grown, and so our zoning laws must grow as well. We deserve a zoning code that prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of residents, encourages affordability and prosperity through innovation in design and development, and embraces our many diverse communities.

As the Land Use Commission begins to hold hearings on zoning revision, we urge you to prioritize and push for policies that promote housing affordability, encourage housing abundance, and embrace our City's vision for equity.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Singer

Evanston, Illinois



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

LUC Meeting

1 message

E Taveirne <taveirne@att.net>
To: "mmjones@cityofevanston.org" <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 12:05 PM

Land Use Committee,

This is to assert that the undersigned are absolutely opposed to the plan as it exists. We have yet to see legitimate studies with factual data supporting the vast majority of the flowery document that was originally drafted.

Do we want Evanston to "move forward"? Yes. Does that mean increasing population and building grossly disproportionate high rises in/around the downtown, given the existing empty space and open housing finds us favorable? NO.

Thank you for your vote NO until hard data is revealed and this is not merely being pushed down Evanston denisen's throats. More than cynicism, this is all about big money, increasing their bottom lines. Do any of those behind (funding) existing development ideas live in Evanston? I just bet I already know the answer to that.

E & Rebecca Taveirne
[1635 Hinman Ave #2](#)
EVANSTON, IL

Feedback on the EE2045 Comprehensive Plan, Draft 2

Joining Forces convened a team of community advocates who are Evanston residents on February 22, 2025, to review and discuss the Comprehensive Plan in preparation for the Land Use Commission meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 26. We reviewed just the chapters with explicit content related to housing and have summarized our observations and recommendations below.

Bottom Line:

- The new draft supports the types of action and change, including zoning, that will allow for increased housing affordability and equity, without including provisions that are likely to preserve existing barriers or create new barriers.
- However, because the plan is high level and necessarily addresses intersecting and sometimes opposing community priorities in generalities, it will be open to interpretation and will likely be used both to support affordability and equity efforts and to oppose them.
- Our primary recommendation is that the case for prioritizing equity and affordability be made more explicit throughout the plan so that decision-makers have the clearest possible direction when they use the comprehensive plan as a guide in their work.

Chapter 1: Introduction

No comments at this time

Chapter 2: What We Heard

No comments at this time

Chapter 3: Evanston Today

“Segregation and Housing Inequity” (p. 23): The plan states “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.” This theme is not sufficiently reinforced in the rest of the plan’s descriptions of the city, as noted below.

“Who We Are Today” (p. 24): The plan provides descriptions that do not include any value statements, assessments or acknowledgement of needs. For instance:

- On page 24, the lead-in paragraph to the section notes that the census typically undercounts “hard-to-count populations.” However, it does not address the ramifications of this phenomenon or how the city can address those.
- **“Race and Ethnicity” (p. 24):** The plan does not mention how the racial and ethnic make-up of Evanston has been changing in a relatively short period of time. This is an important factor that should be acknowledged, given Evanston’s reputation for and pride in its diversity.
- **“Household Income” (p. 25):** The plan does not mention the Gini coefficient, which indicates a very high disparity in Evanston between high- and low-income households—which greatly impacts the needs for housing, infrastructure, and services.
- **“Housing: Bedrooms” (p. 25):** The plan does not include important data that owner-occupied housing has the overwhelming number of larger units, while rental housing has the overwhelming number of smaller units, making it difficult for singles to find home-ownership opportunities and for lower-income families with more than 3 people to find affordable options with enough bedrooms. We note that this is mentioned later in the Housing chapter.

“Key Metrics” (p. 27): Interpretation of some of the metrics should be provided, along with a more specific description of the goals. Those related to housing include the following:

- **Race and ethnicity:** Instead of just listing the % of people of color in Evanston, the plan should list population percentages by race both now and 10 and 20 years ago, since the loss of the Black population in Evanston is of concern.
- **Income distribution:** The Gini coefficient used for this metric needs to be explained. Additionally, the significance of this metric should be acknowledged, as Evanston was the municipality with the 10th worst income inequality in the country in 2022 (according to [this article](#)). This metric has implications for housing goals.
- **Life expectancy:** Evanston’s E-Plan shows a disparity in life expectancy metrics by ward. The comprehensive plan should show this in its assessment of Evanston Today, as this has implications for what the plan’s goals should be.
- **Housing cost burden:** A definition of this metric should be provided.

Chapter 4: Evanston Tomorrow

“A Vision of Evanston in 2045” and **“Vision Statement” (both on p. 32)**: Explicit statements that housing options for people **at all income levels** should be included.

“Foster a Healthy Community” (p. 32): We appreciate that housing is included. Throughout the plan, some reviewers questioned the use of “attainable” as a descriptor for “affordable housing,” considering it a euphemism that potentially obscures what the real need is. In this chapter, we additionally have use of the word “accessible,” likely to refer to housing that is accessible to people with disabilities. We ask that wording be used precisely and be well-defined so as to prevent vagueness and ambiguity.

“Increase Housing Diversity” (p. 33): The plan should include a more definitive statement that more housing options for people at all income levels are needed. Preservation of existing affordable housing and support for landlords of affordable units should also be included.

“Create Equitable Opportunities for All” (p. 34): Consider including more ways for a greater diversity of citizens to participate as members of the Land Use Commission and in all the processes related to land use and housing decisions at the municipal level.

Chapter 5: Neighborhoods and Places

Evanston’s Wards (pp. 38 – 40): The plan describes the assets throughout the wards of the City but does not differentiate the wards from each other in ways that pertain to land use, nor does it define the deficits. The comprehensive plan should identify things like the racial and socio-economic segregation that exists in Evanston, the differences in density across wards, and the other differences documented in the City’s E-Plan. These are all pertinent to what the goals of the plan should be.

“Key Challenges and Opportunities,” “Residential,” “Mixed Use,” and “Downtown” (pp. 40 – 42): Housing affordability is not discussed. It should be. This is a serious omission.

Chapter 6: Community Systems

No comments at this time

Chapter 7: Getting Around

It doesn’t appear that the comprehensive plan is recommending the elimination of parking minimums in new developments. This does not mean that this isn’t a strategy that could be introduced in the zoning code, but it is troubling that, while it is discussed as an option, it is not an actual recommendation.

Chapter 8: Environment

No comments at this time

Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

No comments at this time

Chapter 10: Housing

“Introduction” (p. 90): Increasing affordability or decreasing housing cost burden should be a goal.

“Existing Conditions” (p. 90): This is the best description of where the housing inequities in Evanston exist. More of this should be included throughout the plan, or at least referenced, in pertinent sections.

“Housing Stock” (p. 91): While this section quantifies the subsidized affordable and permanent supportive housing units in Evanston, these numbers are meaningless without information about the existing need and the size of the waiting lists. That information should be shared as well.

“Housing Costs” (p. 91): This section has excellent information on housing cost burden. This information should be referred to in many other sections of the plan.

“Housing Insecurity” (p. 92): This section should include information about the number of households with low incomes experiencing housing cost burden—these households should be counted among those who are unstably housed, along with those who are already homeless.

“Student Housing” (p. 92): This section should provide information on the shortage of housing for students and the predatory nature of some landlords who are profiting off of students. Students regularly have to pay security deposits in January for apartments that they won’t move into until September because the competition for units is so intense. Student housing is a critical need.

“Increase the Housing Supply” (p. 93): This statement should be modified: “Additionally, new market-rate developments with inclusionary housing units options for households of all income levels.” The IHO has not yet yielded units that are options for people with incomes under 50% of the AMI. The plan acknowledges in the following paragraph that there are insufficient options, and few opportunities to create more options, to provide housing for these households, but the statement about the IHO should be corrected.

“Combat Displacement” (p. 93): This section is extremely vague. It should include some examples of displacement strategies and communicate the intention to create an anti-displacement plan with measurable steps and accountabilities.

“Policies and Actions” (pp. 95 – 97): This section addresses many of the concerns above and more. It is a solid list of strategies.

Chapter 11: Health and Wellbeing

No comments at this time except that we appreciate the integration of housing and health in this chapter.

Chapter 12: Economic Development

No comments at this time

Chapter 13: Arts and Culture, Community-Building, Placemaking, and Connection Making

No comments at this time

Chapter 14: Preservation

“Key Challenges and Opportunities” / “Balancing Historic Preservation and Development Needs” (p. 129): This sub-section includes interesting and hopeful ideas to use preservation as a mechanism to encourage investment in such a way as to prevent displacement.

“Policies and Actions” (pp. 130 – 131): These include anti-displacement measures as well that could off-set the probability of excluding people from historic neighborhoods who cannot afford the costs normally associated with historical preservation.

Chapter 15: Implementation

This chapter appears to be incomplete. Without seeing more of the City’s Strategic Housing Plan, or having that described in this chapter, it is difficult to assess what should be here. This could be an area where other plans the City has in place are referenced, if they have the level of detail needed in an actionable implementation plan.



Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Comment on the 2045 Comprehensive Plan

1 message

larrygavin@aol.com <larrygavin@aol.com>

Sun, Mar 9, 2025 at 6:36 AM

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

Dear Meagan Jones, you indicated at a recent Land Use Commission meeting that if people wished to submit a written document in a pdf format as their public comment on the revised draft of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan that they could submit it to you. So, I am attaching my written comment, and ask that you include it as part of the public hearing testimony on the draft comprehensive plan for the March 12, 2025 meeting of the Land Use Commission. I do not plan to present oral comments at the meeting.

My name is Larry Gavin, and my email address is 2400 Simpson Street, Evanston. I have lived in Evanston for 47 years.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you, Larry Gavin. Cel. 847-274-6821



Comment on draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan, by Larry Gavin.pdf

133K

Comments on the draft revised 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Submitted by Larry Gavin, 2400 Simpson Street, Evanston, larrygavin@aol.com. Evanston resident for 47 years.

The statement in the draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan about the chain-of-moves theory is overly broad and fails to reflect current research with its many nuances. Because the plan is intended to guide the city's affordable housing policy for the next 20 years, it should reflect current research. The statement should be deleted and revised.

The city's revised draft comprehensive plan summarizes in a few sentences its theory that increasing market-rate housing for higher income households will benefit all income levels, including low- and moderate-income households. The draft plan says, "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." (Draft plan, Chapter 10 on Housing, at page 93.)

The theory the city is relying on has been referred to by researchers as a chain-of-moves theory, a filtration theory, or a trickle-down theory.

Recent research – including that relied on by the city – contradicts the premise that new market-rate housing for higher-income households will benefit low- and moderate-income households. Depending on whether housing markets are strong or weak and other neighborhood factors, building new market-rate housing may make housing less affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Even worse, it may end up displacing those households.

The statement in the draft revised 2045 plan about the chain-of-moves theory is overly broad and not supported by current research. It should be deleted and replaced by a statement that accurately describes the current research, with all its nuances. This is important because the plan is intended to be a guide for the next 20 years. If the guide supports a faulty premise, new zoning and policy decisions may be based on that faulty premise.

I support increasing density to incentivize the development of affordable housing in the R1 and R2 districts. But I think the increased density should be provided through an affordable housing overlay, which can provide the increased density if developers build housing that would be affordable to households at a specified income level. And that level could even be at the median income, so that many teachers, firefighters, police, social workers, and employees of the city and the hospitals can afford to live here.

The affordable housing overlay could include a variance procedure, and it should be coupled with a firm commitment by the city to work with private developers, nonprofits and others to develop affordable housing. An affordable housing overlay may be more appropriate to discuss when the Land Use Commission begins anew to look at new zoning.*

But for now, it is important to recognize that increasing market-rate housing for higher-income households is not enough. Research indicates that it will not generate housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Putting the city's housing development in the hands of private developers, which may include private equity firms and hedge funds, is a mistake.

1. The sole report relied on by the city counters its position

The city cites only one research report in support of its chain-of-moves theory: "National Low Income Housing Coalition. (March 2024). The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes. <https://nlihc.org/gap>."

That Gap report, prepared by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), makes clear that the "filtering down," "chain of moves" or trickle-down theory is much more complex than stated by the city, and that, depending on the particular housing market involved, the impact of new housing built for higher-income households may end up making older housing in the area more expensive and thus less affordable to low- and moderate-income households. It may displace those households.

The Gap report describes the filtering process as follows: "Through the filtering process, new market-rate development for higher-income households can result in a chain of household moves that helps lower-income households: higher-income households move into new, more expensive homes, leaving behind their older and presumably less expensive housing, which is then occupied by other households who leave even older housing behind, and so on." (Gap Report, p.21)

But the Gap report goes on to say that filtering does not always benefit low- and moderate-income households, and it in fact may have a negative impact on those households. The report says, "However, housing does not always filter downward towards lower-income renters. Filtering can vary in direction and magnitude over time and across locations, suggesting that filtering is responsive to local housing market conditions (Spader, 2024). In strong markets, for example, owners might have an incentive to redevelop their properties to receive higher rents from higher-income households leading to upward filtering. In weak markets, on the other hand, owners might have an incentive to abandon their rental properties or convert them to other uses when rental income is too low to cover basic operating costs and maintenance. Even when downward filtering occurs as expected and

properties' share of occupants with low incomes increases with building age, the process does not necessarily result in a reduction in housing costs or cost burdens (Spader, 2024; Myers & Park, 2020)." (Gap report, p. 21)

In a separate memo to its members, the NLIHC summarized Jonathan Spader's study, which is titled, "Has Housing Filtering Stalled? Heterogenous Outcomes in the American Housing Survey, 1985 -2021" (Feb. 2024). The NLIHC said, "To analyze filtering dynamics, Spader relied on two panels of the American Housing Survey (AHS): from 1985 to 2013, and from 2015 to 2021. The AHS collects detailed information on a representative sample of housing units and their occupants every two years, allowing for analysis of changes in housing unit and household characteristics over time.

"Analyzing the AHS, Spader found that housing units, on average, filtered downward between 1985 and 1993 and between 2005 and 2013, while between 1995 and 2003 and between 2015 and 2021, filtering either stalled or there was significant upward filtering. The period from 2015 to 2021, on average, saw upward filtering of housing units to higher income households across the country. These findings directly contradict prior research that concluded that housing filters down on average."

The abstract of Spader's report summarizes some key points: "The extent of filtering can vary widely in response to local housing market conditions, and this variation carries implications for the affordable housing strategies used in different areas. ... In particular, the estimates for 2015-21 suggest that downward filtering of housing units stalled or reversed as housing markets tightened in recent years. The directions and extent of filtering is also shown to vary significantly across metropolitan areas with higher and lower home price appreciation. These findings highlight the importance of heterogeneity in filtering outcomes to the conclusions drawn for policy. They also provide insight into the potential limitations of filtering as a source of affordable housing supply."

In the conclusion of his report, Spader says, "metropolitan areas that exhibit consistent downward filtering of housing units may be able to rely on filtering to contribute on net to the supply of housing units available to low-income households. Conversely, filtering of market-rate units may not be a reliable source of affordable housing supply in metropolitan areas that have experienced heterogeneous outcomes across time periods – especially if filtering outcomes have been procyclical, with upward filtering when the housing market is strong and downward filtering during market busts. In these areas, supplying affordable housing units may require lower reliance on market-rate units and greater reliance on production of new housing units through LIHTC, inclusionary zoning, and other strategies for producing new affordable units."

Spader is manager of the National Mortgage Database at the Federal Housing Finance Agency. He primarily completed his paper while working in the Social, Economic and Housing Statistics División of the US Census Bureau.

While Evanston's inclusionary housing ordinance applies to housing developments that contain seven or more housing units, its zoning code does not provide any requirements or incentives to provide affordable housing for smaller projects.

In December 2024, Erick Villagomez, the Editor-in-Chief at Spacing Vancouver and a teacher at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning, published an article "Understanding Affordable Housing: The Trickle-Down Theory of Housing – Myths and Realities."

Villagomez says, "So, what is the trickle-down theory, exactly? It's the idea that as new, higher-end housing is built, wealthier households move into it, leaving behind older, less expensive housing for middle- and lower-income groups. On the surface, it sounds like a natural and efficient way to address housing affordability – simple, right? Well, too simple. The reality of housing markets is far messier, shaped by supply constraints, inequalities, and policies that disrupt this supposed flow.

"To understand why the trickle-down theory doesn't work as neatly as advertised, we need to unpack the assumptions it's built on. Here are the three big ones and why they fall apart in practice:

- **Housing Supply is Elastic Across All Levels:** This assumption suggests that developers can and will build enough housing at all price points to meet demand. But in reality, restrictive zoning laws, high construction costs, and regulatory barriers make it easier to focus on high-end projects, where profits are higher. This leaves lower-income households with few, if any, new options.
- **Market Dynamics Alone Ensure Equitable Distribution:** The theory assumes that as wealthier households vacate older units, these homes will naturally "filter down" to lower-income groups. But what actually happens? Older units are often renovated, repurposed, or snapped up by investors, especially in gentrifying neighborhoods. Rather than trickling down, housing tends to "trickle up," with wealthier households outbidding poorer ones for any available stock.
- **Homogeneous Housing Needs:** The theory also presumes that the vacated housing stock will suit lower-income households in size, quality, and location. In practice, this rarely aligns. Housing that's too far from jobs or services—or units that are too

large and expensive to maintain—don't solve affordability issues for those most in need.

“These flawed assumptions explain why the trickle-down theory fails as a standalone solution. It reduces the complex issue of housing affordability to a simplistic, linear process that ignores structural inequities and spatial realities. Left to their own devices, market forces prioritize profits, not inclusivity, leaving the most vulnerable populations underserved. The market is a mechanism without feelings or moral values.”

In a November 2004 article, “Supply Skepticism or Supply Realism?”, Anthony Damiano, a research associate of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota, says,

“Emerging research tends to show that two things can be true simultaneously – new market-rate supply helps moderate rent growth, but also the benefits are weighted toward the top of the income/housing quality distribution. Furthermore, the magnitude of the effects estimated to date are not large enough to provide safe and affordable housing for all. In fact, some studies show that easing supply restrictions and creating more market-rate units may have unintended negative outcomes for lower-income households. Researchers have identified negative externalities including increasing home values as the investment value of land rises and higher rents in the short term due to increased demand to live near new high-end properties (Damiano & Frenier, [Citation2020](#); Kuhlmann, [Citation2021](#); Singh & Baldomero-Quintana, [Citation2022](#)).”

At the neighborhood level, Damiano says it is important to assess what is happening in various submarkets within that neighborhood. He says that he and a coauthor found in one study that increasing the supply of high-end housing in a neighborhood “resulted in lower rents for nearby existing higher-end buildings as these new units directly competed with existing high-end units. Conversely, we saw higher rents for the lowest quality rental units near new high-end apartment buildings, likely due to increased amenities that often accompany new high-end construction.”

Current research does not support the city's statement about the chain-of-moves theory, and the statement should be revised.

2. In addition, any theorized benefit to low-and moderate-income households may be regional, rather than in Evanston

A report titled [Supply Skepticism Revisited](#) by Vicki Been, Ingrid Gould Ellen and Katherine O'Regan, published by the New York University School of Law in March 2024 as part of the law and economic research paper series, reviews many recent studies that

analyze whether increasing the supply of new market-rate housing will benefit households at all income levels. (NYU report)

The report contains five findings, the first two of which are:

- “Increases in housing supply decrease (or slow the growth in) rents in the region,” and
- “While the evidence is somewhat mixed, at least in some circumstances, new construction also reduces rents or the rate of growth in rents in the surrounding neighborhood” (NYU Report, p. 44)

So, increasing the supply of housing may benefit the “region,” but the evidence is “somewhat mixed” about the impact in the surrounding neighborhood. In “some circumstances,” the new housing may benefit “the surrounding neighborhood.”

The study goes on to say that additional research is needed in many areas to understand the effects of adding new housing (Id. pp. 44-48).

Another finding in the NYU report is: “The chains of moves sparked by new construction, and the alternatives the new construction gives higher-income households who might otherwise renovate older housing, works *across a jurisdiction* to free up apartments that are then rented (or retained) by households across the income spectrum” (NYU Report, p. 44, emphasis added).

The report thus supports the theory that market-rate housing can open up housing “across a jurisdiction.” But one important issue is: Where? Nationally, regionally or in Evanston?

To open up housing for low-, moderate- or middle-income households in Evanston, the higher-income households who buy or rent new market-rate housing in Evanston would have to relocate from housing located in Evanston to the new housing in Evanston. Only then would it open up supposedly less expensive housing here. However, if the higher-income households who buy new housing in Evanston come from Chicago, Des Plaines, Ann Arbor, etc., their move would open up housing in the city they left, but not in Evanston.

And even if a first-round renter at an apartment complex moved from a home in Evanston, a chain breaks if a vacated unit becomes occupied by someone moving from outside Evanston. And the same down the line.

And additionally, if a vacated unit located in Evanston was bought and renovated by a higher-income household, the chain-of-moves would be broken and instead of filtering down, the result would be filtering up and becoming more expensive, along the lines described by Spader, *supra*.

The leading study cited in the NYU report that discusses migration chains is “The effect of new market-rate housing construction on the low-income housing market,” by Evan Mast.

That article describes “how new market-rate housing construction loosens the market for lower-quality housing through a series of moves.”

In his study, Mast analyzed address histories of 52,000 current residents of 686 large new-market rate multifamily apartment buildings located in 12 large cities: New York City, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco/Oakland, Denver, Seattle and Minneapolis. He found that 67% of the first round of renters in those new buildings came from the same “metro area,” and many of those came from high-income areas. The percentage of the first-round renters who came from the same metro area as the new apartment building varied significantly. For the new apartment buildings in Boston, the percentage was 38%; for the new buildings in New York City, the percentage was 68%.

He concluded, “This exercise suggests that new market construction loosens the market for middle- and low-income housing, even in the short run, pointing to an important role for policies that increase construction.” Significantly, though, Mast used the word “suggests.” He did not evaluate whether in fact the new market-rate housing increased the affordability for low- and moderate-income households. He acknowledged, “I do not estimate price effects, which are particularly unclear in neighborhoods where rents are already close to operating costs, leaving little room for reduced demand to lower them further.”

As noted above, Spader found that during the period from 2015 to 2021, there was an upward filtering of housing units to higher income households across the country. This contradicts Mast’s speculation.

But in addition, Mast’s findings about migration patterns are for large cities where it is more likely that a person will move into a new home in the same large city, but his findings are not applicable to Evanston, which is much smaller. There is no evidence showing how many people who moved into new apartment buildings in Evanston moved out of a housing unit in Evanston, rather than Chicago, Des Plaines, Ann Arbor or another location.

A recent demographic report prepared in November 2024 for School District 65 by McKibben Demographics noted that “most of the non-college in-migration to Evanston occurs in the 0-to-9 and 25-44 age groups (the bulk of which come from areas within 100 miles of [District 65]).”

So, most of the people who migrate into Evanston come from areas within 100 miles of the city, which is a very broad regional area. And, in addition, some come from beyond 100 miles.

Absent more specific evidence about migration patterns in Evanston, it is highly speculative to assume that new market-rate housing for higher-income households in Evanston will benefit low- and moderate-income households in Evanston through a chain-of-moves effect.

And even then, it is unclear whether the chain-of moves effect would be toward lower-income levels, rather than higher income levels in Evanston’s neighborhoods.

3. Large scale studies' analyses of zoning changes on affordable housing

Several large-scale studies also cast doubt on whether new market rate housing will provide any significant benefit to low- and moderate-income households.

A report “Zoning Change: Upzonings, Downzonings, and Their Impacts on Residential Construction, Housing Costs, and Neighborhood Demographics” (2023), was published in the Journal of Planning Literature, by Yonah Freemark, the lead of the Practice Area on Fair Housing, Land Use and Transportation in the Metropolitan Housing Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Freemark examined all relevant peer-reviewed studies he could identify (26 studies in all) to determine the impact that zoning changes have on regional construction and affordability.

Freemark says, “The breadth of evidence shows that adding supply moderates price increases, though it is insufficient to achieve affordability for low- or moderate-income families.”

Freemark adds, “Researchers must be particularly careful to examine neighborhood versus regional impacts on housing cost; a reform increasing metropolitan affordability through filtering may simultaneously reduce affordability in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification.”

This caution is particularly important for certain areas of Evanston that are gentrifying.

In another expansive study published in Urban Studies, “Land-use reforms and housing costs: Does allowing for increased density lead to greater affordability?” (Nov. 2023), Chrisina Stacy and six colleagues at the Urban Institute, USA and one at the University of Illinois-Champaign analyzed how land-use reforms in eight U.S. metropolitan regions, including 1,136 cities, impacted housing prices between 2000 and 2019.

The report said, “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.”

The authors also state, “These results indicate that policies targeting affordable housing may need to accompany measures designed specifically to increase supply. Direct development or preservation of affordable units through non-profit housing developers may be more successful at increasing the supply of low-cost units in the short run than regulatory reform alone.”

Conclusion

The city’s chain-of-moves theory as stated at page 93 of the revised draft comprehensive report should be deleted and replaced by a statement that accurately describes the current research, with all its nuances.

The views in this essay are those of the author only.

Footnote:

*My article “Analysis: City’s zoning plan may not benefit moderate- and low-income households” posted in the Evanston RoundTable on Dec. 19, 2024, discusses the potential of an affordable housing overlay in more detail. While some housing advocates say that providing increased density in the zoning code is a precondition to affordable housing, the density could be provided in an affordable housing overlay, which would allow the increased density as a matter of right if the housing provided was affordable. Providing increased density in an affordable housing overlay, rather than in the base zoning, would have many advantages, including: First, any housing developed using the increased density would be affordable, and the city would not be relying on a chain-of-moves theory or a trickle-down effect to generate affordable housing. Second, the increased density would go toward the development of affordable housing rather than the development of larger, more expensive single-family homes. Third, if the increased density would have to be used to develop affordable housing, it may eliminate some of the competition between private developers of market-rate housing and developers of affordable housing for property suitable for development in Evanston.

.....

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Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Comp Plan v2

Jeff Smith <jeff@jefflaw.com>
To: Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>
Cc: zoning@cityofevanston.org

Tue, Mar 11, 2025 at 4:20 PM

Meagan,

I'm attaching my markup of the first 23 pages of the draft Comprehensive Plan as a .docx with comments panes. Per staff request I am providing as markup ("redline" tho that's now a loaded term) rather than just a narrative.

There are a great many comments in the sidebar, many explanatory, many, I confess, reflecting some venting, that if I were less pressed for time I might moderate. However, the enormous number of not-quite true statements — and in the historical narrative, just outright omissions — how can the 4-mile rule be omitted??? — was overwhelming.

I am sorry that this is still very much an advocacy rather than a true planning document, perhaps even more so than the first draft, and that is extremely frustrating to residents who have to plow through and deal with spin at every turn. However, if the document is sincere about wanting collaboration, I hope it will be taken in the best possible way and in civic spirit, as much as none of us want to be edited or corrected.

Please forward to Chair Lindwall and the members of the Commission.

My cross-out of the last couple pages in this document is not reflective of a desire to X all of it out, I just didn't get to it and that's what word processing does if you try to delete pages you initially included for markup.

I am happy to discuss any of the historical chapter at length. I can also provide references for much, but, again, it's not as if this markup is too brief.

I thank you in advance. Please let me know if the .docx does not show Comments panes or redlining and if I need reformat somehow. I believe that it will open in either Pages or Word but that you will have to manually open the Comments pane.

Yours,

Jeff Smith

 **CompPlanv2-JPS-markup_§§1-3p23.docx**
66K

COVER

Comment [1]:

An improvement over v1. Not focused on Wilmette :) Now downtown-centric, still omits residential neighborhoods. NW Evanston still invisible. Aerial view interesting but not how most people experience Evanston.

p. 3

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

Comment [2]:

Because the mayor is a member of the Council that ultimately passes on a plan recommended by the Commission, having the Plan come "from" the mayor before it gets to the mayor and Council is procedurally problematic. Historically the mayor is not so instrumental in the Plan, for sound due process reasons.

Comment [3]:

if it is going to be "shared values and vision" it should make more attempt to seek consensus and not be gamed and rammed through like an attempted legislative win

Comment [4]:

the process to date has eroded trust. Early appraisal by planning staff recognized that there was a problem with community trust. The response to that has been to try and otherize and out-maneuver members of the community who are not on board.

Comment [5]:

Because this is a second draft a redlined version should have been provided instead of making the public wade through the entire document again from scratch.

Comment [6]:

It is beyond "tweak." The fundamental problem is that a small group wanted zoning change and the entire planning process has been driven by that, which is backwards. The process is foundationally unsound and that has colored myriad aspects of it.

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~~ present and future development. This plan serves as a guide and legal standard for ~~future development and~~ decision-making primarily related to land use, including 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~~ against which zoning and preservation decisions are measured, and for 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~~ 15 to ~~25~~ 30 years, and are periodically ~~rarely~~ updated in the interim to reflect the changing circumstances and needs of the community, and both inform and are supplemented by other more specific planning (such as a transportation plan or a lakefront plan).

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~~ financial crisis of 2008-09, 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 possibly followed by zoning code changes. This initiative seeks to reflect a shared vision for the future of Evanston, addressing key areas such as land use, taking into account objectives Evanstonians value such as 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.

Comment [7]:

Under state authorizing statute and Evanston ordinance, a plan was designed primarily for land use, tho it relates to all the other subjects. It serves as not merely a guide but as an actual legal standard against which planned developments, requests for variances, and preservation decisions are measured

Comment [8]:

Evanston's average is 21.6 years.

Comment [9]:

I'm unaware of any Evanston plan being periodically updated.

Comment [10]:

The 2007-08 event referred to is rarely called a "housing crisis." It was a financial crisis, centered on mortgage and lending and derivative instruments. Housing prices did not plummet because of a shortage. There was in fact a housing GLUT leading up to the 2008 implosion, characterized by speculative OVERdevelopment, that both drove and rewarded unorthodox financing. Following the meltdown, banks retained shadow inventory for years, hoarding homes in order toto prevent further slippage in value.

Comment [11]:

How can we navigate something that has already occurred?

Comment [12]:

It would be wonderful if this were true but Envision Evanston 2045 has not to date been community-driven. It has been a top-down process with disproportionate influence of an organized and professional lobbying effort, and documented effort to amplify some voices while marginalizing and othering different ones.

Comment [13]:

It should not be a given that there will be a "new zoning code." Again, that is backwards. The Plan should be developed first. Then the existing code measured against that to see whether amdnement or overhaul makes more sense. The statement in the RFP that the Plan should be written so as to warrant a rewrite of the Code is procedurally grotesque and quite possibly fatal.

Comment [14]:

These are beyond the scope of the enabling ordinance §2-7-2 et seq. and are beyond the typical scope of a comprehensive general plan.

Comment [15]:

Again, would that this were so, but the emerging record is that this is not how this Plan has developed. A re-zoning (and specifically an upzoning) agenda preceded the initiation of any public planning sessions. An initial planning RFP was improperly derailed in the middle of the bidding and award process and a second one promulgated without Council vote to create a plan that would warrant re-writing the zoning code to that effect.

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.

Comment [16]:

This seems backwards. Why would you not always start with where you have been and where you are? The discussion of what was "heard" should be based in context.

Comment [17]:

This is a workable framework. There is no one perfect format. It could be more or it could be less.

Comment [18]:

because like many municipalities we have a "Parks & Rec" department and/or board there is a tendency to think of recreation only in terms of parks/open spaces, but the fact is that most of residents' recreation does not occur in our parks or open spaces, but at their homes and their friends' homes. Other recreation takes place at churches or at recreation businesses — such as the bowling alley Evanston has lacked for decades.

Comment [19]:

Evanston is not a new town in a greenfield. It is developed. The emphasis on "development" skews towards never-ending pursuit of novelty and growth, and in the process slights the existing economy and the needs of those already in it. Economic Sustainability would be preferable but why not just "Economy"? The state and federal governments have departments of commerce, not commerce development.

Comment [20]:

any section title this long and jargony is a red flag that something is amiss

Comment [21]:

why is a 5-year assessment needed if this is already done annually? Annual reports on all City functions, however, are a good thing, it is mind-blowing that that does not already occur.

Comment [22]:

no, it adds an accountability step, but it doesn't make the current plan more transparent, it actually makes it less transparent by suggesting that there is a moving target underneath a shell. Transparency comes from certainty not from the possibility that everything can change with the next bright shiny object or personnel change.

Comment [23]:

No. See previous comment. There is a statutory and ordinance process for amending a Plan. This is a diversioary measure to tell people not to pay too close attention "because it can always be changed." In reality municipalities don't do that. If anything, Evanston could be more candid by saying "a Plan doesn't really matter because recent Councils ignore Plans whenever it suits them." But that doesn't sound very visionary.

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, and try to find common ground. 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 some favored 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.

Comment [24]:

Even if it were true that this Plan was intended to be driven by what planners heard from the public at large, the methodology used was not designed to produce that.

Numerous complaints were made about the inadequacy of the survey methodology and process and the vagueness and leading nature of its questions. Asking "what is important to you" is not the same as asking "what should be the priority of municipal government." What is important to a person or family is not necessarily the role of local government to address; some things are the provi...

Comment [25]:

The endless stress on differences is exhausting and ultimately divisive. Commonality is the way to peace and understanding.

Comment [26]:

many people have commented to the LUC that the process was neither robust nor inclusive. My review of results provided either on the EE45 website or through FOIA unfortunately agrees with this assessment. The process was skewed in multiple ...

Comment [27]:

Additional aspects detract from the characterization of "robust." The survey data shows signs of non-neutral data-gathering. Evidence ranges from the speed with which some surveys were filled out, to out-of-state IPs, to the significant number of ...

Comment [28]:

Putting 3 sticky notes, limited to a few words each, of "favorite places" on a map or easel, does not constitute "capturing lived experiences." Phase 1 was Romper Room stuff. It was part of what turned people off and bred distrust. Possibly it was fun f...

Comment [29]:

This is objectively not a true statement. The process has been, not to develop something shared, but to try and club one faction over the head with another's vision.

Comment [30]:

yeah, no, this added text should not be included. But it is what has happened. I could add that the "strategies: have included ageism, racialization, painting longtime homeowners and community volunteers as bigots, regressive, selfish, etc., and ...

Comment [31]:

Draft #2 is only in some respects an improvement on #1. It is nowhere near ready for "finalization." In some respects it is worse than Draft #1 because it has doubled down on flawed and unsupportable prem...

Comment [32]:

Someone should review the City planning ordinances. The Plan Commission is supposed to take the lead. They are to be supplied with staff time and even economic resources. This is not supposed to be a staff project with merely editorial commet...

Comment [33]:

Actually, the Plan was released at a time and with such a schedule as to grossly impair if not prevent any real collaboration. This caused a completely unnecessary amount of time and emotional energy to be wasted in

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.

Comment [34]:

I had one such session and thought it a good conversation. I believe it came as a result of a request conveyed at an engagement session to a staffer. However, there should have been formal outreach to groups like Central Street Neighbors proactively, much earlier, and especially to groups who were targeted to be greatly impacted by the upzoning agenda. I am not aware of any formal effort to reach out to homeowner group representatives, block clubs, etc.

Comment [35]:

How many by bots? What was average length of visit? What was level of interaction? How was website publicized? I know many including myself (and I am an extremely experienced website user and sometime designer) who found it alternatively hard to navigate and dumbed-down

Comment [36]:

The statements were not neutral and in some respects resembled a “push poll” more than an actual attempt to glean data. Many respondents simply ranked them in the order presented.

Comment [37]:

This is extraordinary evidence of sampling bias. A representative sample would have been flipped, as the homeownership % in Evanston is 55.9%. Moreover, homeowner civic participation is always higher because they are literally more invested; to skew otherwise is almost unheard of. Data should have been normed to account for the sampling error.

Comment [38]:

These should have been separated out and discussed separately. No one from Wilmette or Chicago asks me what I think. Someone who does not live here does not hold the same stake and has less right to tell Evanstonians how to live or what impositions they need to accept on their home.

Comment [39]:

This is extraordinary. Another enormous sample skew. Not to mention, in all likelihood, weighting the survey/engagement with a demographic unlikely to have even ever looked at a zoning provision.

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). 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 business and employer organizations, excluding homeowner or resident organizations from such a process. 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, although the degree to which the input could have impact varied greatly; for example, the meeting for the 6th Ward was not held until almost Halloween and the first draft of the Plan.

Comment [40]:

This is plausible but in order for this statement of “based on” to be made, we need to account and control for confounds such as income and wealth, or these results cannot be so attributed. But that data was not collected, and data collected such as homeownership has not been separated out.

Comment [41]:

A prompting bias suggests itself.

Comment [42]:

Any control or test or variable for KNOWLEDGE of housing options in Evanston?

Also, the suggestion that this data point is something Evanston needs to address is not warranted. In general, homeowners are significantly happier than renters, period. P. Centopani, “Are Homeowners Happier Than Renters?” The Mortgage Reports (4/3/24), <https://themortgagereports.com/111945/homeowners-happier-than-renters/>; “New Research Says That Homeowners Are Happy, While Renters Regret Not Buying,” Montchanin Builders (10/30/19), <https://montchaninbuilders.net/news/new-research-says-that-homeowners-are-happy-while-renters-regret-not-buying/> (citing Bank of America survey); Sophie Wallis, “Renters vs homeowners,” Finder (upd. 10/16/24), <https://www.finder.com.au/insights/renters-vs-homeowners> (survey of 60,000 respondents); J. Campbell, “Home owners happier than renters,” BrokerDaily (12/19/24), <https://www.brokerdaily.au/property/19736-homeowners-happier-than-renters/>; Seiler Zimmermann, Y., Wanzenried, G. (2019). Are Homeowners Happier than Tenants? Empirical Evidence for Switzerland. In: Brulé, G., Suter, C. (eds) Wealth(s) and Subjective Well-Being. Socia ...

Comment [43]:

A couple of confounds here. One is that many older Americans are actually overconfident of their ability to live on limited income and savings. But another is that the high cost of living in Evanston has a “weed-out” factor, and the 65+ers staying here are probably different than their peers nationally.

Comment [44]:

High correlation of youth with never having opened a business! And vice versa!

Comment [45]:

Most of the earliest apartments in Evanston were mixed-use, above stores. Historically almost no one has problem with one or two stories above streetfront, on arterial streets or in small business districts. But too much residence above storefronts can work the opposite of vibrancy. Rents become too high. Sherman Plaza has never, I believe, had full retail occupancy.

Comment [46]:

Increasing housing supply does not increase the satisfaction of a demographic for a level of housing until demand by the demographic is reduced at the margin. The hypothesis that additional construction will occur without anyone else moving to Evanston, or that a seller's market for housing will become a buyer's market — necessary for the “options” of the dissatisfied to increase — is dubious.

[released a week later, was nearly complete.](#) 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

[These focus groups, all held on one weekend, were known in advance to select interest groups but generally not to the general public.](#) 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.

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. [Most were in south Evanston, and none of the 15 were held in the 6th Ward.](#) 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. [The Central Street Neighbors session had 20 attendees, but the other 41 events averaged only 4 participants each.](#) 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, [although this is technically the City talking to the City, and in particular to mayoral appointees.](#)

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO WORKSHOP

To inform the draft zoning code, project consultants led a development scenario workshop with key community members and decision-makers. [The general public was told not to attend this session.](#) 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. [No alternative date was provided for invitees who had a conflict, and invitees who could not attend could not send someone else in their place, meaning that some organizations or stakeholders were simply excluded.](#)

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, or less than 1/10 of the number who filled out the first survey. The key takeaways of each section of the survey are detailed below.

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.
- Add more detailed protections for historic districts.
- Remove restrictions perceived as barriers to accessory dwelling units.

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.
- 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.

Comment [47]:

It was so immediately apparent that the first draft was such a flawed document, untethered to actual fact and manifestly the product of ideology, that almost no one in the community bothered with a survey on it that was even more vague and meaningless than the first.

Comment [48]:

It is revealing that more space is devoted to takeaways of the results of a 200-person survey than that of the alleged 2,300-person survey. And that no copy of the survey is provided, no copy of the results, and, unlike the 2,300-person survey, no geographic, demographic, or any other analysis of the respondent pool.

Comment [49]:

As multiple witnesses with expertise have testified, there is no discernible relationship between Evanston's zoning and its alleged lack of affordability. Upzoning low-rise residential will not facilitate affordability because of land cost and scale; upzoning for highrises requires above-market units to compensate for "affordable" units or offsets, making no average impact on affordability. Moreover, any supply-demand imbalance is largely from demand side, not supply side, which has been concealed from EE45 participants

Comment [50]:

These were supposed to be required, at least for buildings of size, some years ago

Comment [51]:

People also want to maintain protection for their own property and would like to enjoy what they paid for, and not have it involuntarily transformed for someone else's economic profit. Any fair survey would confirm this. This is fundamental to property ownership.

Comment [52]:

It strains credulity to believe that the public actually clamored for this. Feedback I have gotten from all over Evanston is that people not only like Central ...

Comment [53]:

this is cryptic

Comment [54]:

ADUs by and large have a higher cost per square foot than conventional housing. The folks erecting them in Evanston are those who already have \$800K-\$1M+ properties.

Comment [55]:

This takeaway and the following takeaway are contradictory

Comment [56]:

I don't think there were any such proposals in the first draft

Comment [57]:

I can't believe that native plant advocates didn't urge that this be a requirement, not an "initiative." The idea that the City of Evanston, which has ...

Comment [58]:

In almost 40 years in Evanston I have never — never — heard a resident say "close a park." This has ONLY come from within City Hall.

- 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 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.

Comment [59]:
I don't believe any resident actually ever uttered these words. This is jargon so cryptic I am not even sure what is meant.

Comment [60]:
Again: this has been debunked

Comment [61]:
Neither draft has ANY backup about even basic construction costs per square foot, or land cost per acre! Zero analysis of feasibility! Also: almost no seniors are moving from houses into highrises. This "market" for "downsizing" is grossly exaggerated.

Comment [62]:
I believe that there is a small group that favors this. I believe it is probably equally matched by small landlords who believe it would drive them out of business or into foreclosure.

Comment [63]:
few actual humans in normal life talk about "placemaking." New urbanists do, etc. What Evanstonians say is "why was Independence Park (expensively) redesigned without one iota of outreach to me or my neighborhood group? Why did they put in stairs on the corner most likely to be approached by a parent with a stroller? How can an equipment shed with a toilet possibly cost \$600,000?"

Comment [64]:
never heard a resident complain about this in my life. We have allowed some really banal and even ugly public art.

Comment [65]:
A Pres. Comm'n member recently bragged that they have approved every single request in the past several years. What steps are "unnecessary"? Neighbors and the public have rights too.

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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 balanced community.

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/Leave R1/R2/R3 zoning alone (single-family and two-family districts), bulkwise, because the changes proposed won't lead to significant affordable housing anyway, just million-dollar duplexes.
- Create a more flexible approach to zoning.
- Safeguard existing homes and community character.
- Explore and attempt to build consensus around tools that could realistically efficiently add housing units while doing the above

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Address the impact of the tax base, particularly for schools, on affordability and explore potential solutions.

Comment [66]:

This is just not a true statement. The meetings arguably did not meet the minimum of due process, comment was so truncated, and there was almost zero give-and-take with the public. There was some open discussion on the Commission.

Comment [67]:

Whoever wrote this must not have been at the same meetings many of us attended. There was great defense of existing low-rise residential zoning. Other than the comments organized by professional lobbyists, it was actually fairly one-sided against radical change in any residential or multi-use district.

Comment [68]:

We should stop saying this, It's just code for density/upzoning. It was actually well-demonstrated that we already have diverse housing options, and in fact skew multi-unit; to make it more "diverse" we would have to add single-family detached! Adding more multi-unit to what is already disproportionately multi-unit makes our housing stock more homogeneous and less diverse.

Comment [69]:

That was not a clear takeaway. I'd say the opposite.

Comment [70]:

What was proposed in Draft 1 was not "transparent zoning." The only comments about transparency were that calling something R1 or R2 that was essentially R3 was dishonest to residents who did not realize they were being upzoned.

Comment [71]:

Everyone is "for" affordable housing and no one is "against" it. In the abstract. It's like mom or apple pie. But few want any specific measure that might create that. The market has no interest in it. Given land costs and labor costs in Evanston, it's not clear it's even feasible anymore except for a few units here or there, except where an entire building like the Marguerita Inn opens up. And any discussion of a jump-in-with-both-legs "solution" like public housing has to have a far deeper and more incisive discussion as to sociological effects and risks than anything that has taken place. Certainly, however, expanding height allowances for all of R1-R3 will...

Comment [72]:

The comments on this were not a request to provide it, but a condemnation that the draft was not BASED on data. The Evanston data that emerges does NOT support the principal density/affordability thesis.

Comment [73]:

what is "resiliency"? Learning to roll over and take it? We should be combating what threatens sustainability.

Comment [74]:

I am not opposed to these — I don't think the last is realistic, but we can aim — but I didn't hear either of these as a key takeaway. If Evanston was so green I would have been elected mayor. :)

Comment [75]:

I don't think either the pro- or anti- forces said this.

Comment [76]:

This is well worded but could be taken two ways. It is extremely tricky and delicate.

- Support small businesses and strengthen local economies by improving job accessibility through improved transit options.
- Preserve community character, including [type of built environment](#), architectural features, tree canopy, [human scale, small-town suburban feel](#), 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.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Facilitate an inclusive and comprehensive approach to community engagement, gathering diverse input [with particular attention to input from residents of neighborhoods most likely to be impacted by proposed changes, regardless of where that is-](#)
- Promote communication and transparency in the planning and decision-making process.

Comment [77]:

I don't think I heard anyone say this. This is planspeak, not resident-speak. Staff needs to do much harder crunching to see where older Evanstonians are going when the taxes get too high. By and large they are not going to smaller houses or to condos, tho maybe 10% are — who wants to pay Evanston closing costs and seller transfer taxes TWICE? It is not the lack of alternative housing that is causing people to leave Evanston, it is the taxes and cost of living period.

It is true that several of the local quasi-independent/progressive-assisted facilities into which SOME older Evanstonians move are extremely expensive. Many/most people cannot afford the Mather, Merion, Three Crowns, Westminster, Alden (which, by the way, cumulatively contribute to skewing older). This is not unique to Evanston, "senior living" is an incredible bite everywhere. Not sure anyone has an answer. Probably at least half the residents of the above are not from Evanston, they move there to be closer to kids or friends (who may be in Evanston).

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.

Comment [78]:

This was a theme but I think it was a minority sentiment. I don't think most Evanstonians think existing zoning is out of whack or a big problem. I also think that many who do are not really cognizant of what is driving Evanston prices.

Comment [79]:

I don't recall hearing a single person saying this. I've never heard a resident say "I'm so confused about my zoning." What's so confusing? There's a map and there's a code telling you what it means. Some of it is badly written. Some of the updates didn't flow across to all affected sections (like the ADU provisions). Most of that is bad RECENT drafting. We just had an omnibus cleanup in 2022 or 2023, that's likely all that is needed for any "confusion." The idea that people are walking around so confused by our zoning is sheer bogus. A problem is turnover. Everything becomes confusing if everyone is new. The "simplify" was a leading question prompted by some of the engagement "tools" and did not organically spring from the public.

Comment [80]:

All OK except what is "Evanston's" homeless population is debatable (somewhat inherently) and fluid; by some accounts we already have disproportionate populations. Why? Is a greater % of our population becoming homeless, or are we a magnet? Do we want to "support" a homeless population — or reduce homelessness? Real transparency, not just repeating the word, is needed here. I believe Evanston is happy to do more than its share, but not unlimited.

Comment [81]:

Evanston has too much signage already. This has been known since the 1970s! and has only gotten worse.

- 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.

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.
- **Encourage wildlife habitat**
- **Expand urban tree canopy:** Set urban tree canopy expansion targets.
- **Reduce light pollution**
- **Address greenhouse gas impacts of construction, beginning with disclosure**

Comment [82]:

There is a conflict between this and incentivizing smaller lot sizes with more built structure per lot

Comment [83]:

This was a communitywide initiative of Natural Evanston (part of CGE). If it did not arise in EE45 planning it is another outreach failure

Comment [84]:

Both mayoral candidates committed to both these goals at a recent forum

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 **and better** 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.

Comment [85]:

We have a lot of parks. Don't sell any off. But a lot of them are just lawn. Dumpy. Unimaginative. Then every 15 years we overspend on some new playground equipment. There is a deficit in holistic design, the use of border shrubs for a sense of safety and security. We don't have creative things like solar-powered phone charging stations with the solar cells as awning/umbrella.

Comment [86]:

This hypothesized if-then was not supported by data presented before or during public engagement and, if anything, was effectively deflated by contrary evidence and explanation. Evanston land is expensive. "Density limits" are not the problem, and raising them would actually result in land prices increasing.

Comment [87]:

Our existing policies don't do that. Our existing policies have encouraged developers to pay off the City with payments-in-lieu in order to develop luxury housing. The proponents of higher density are the chief recipient of the cash.

Comment [88]:

Realize that this either requires the developer to themselves subsidize affordable housing from their profits (as if) or raise the price/rents of all the non-affordable units, of which there are fewer because of the set-aside, and/or to increase the size of the project (which increases financing costs, construction time...)

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.
- 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.

Comment [89]:
I did not hear this at any session tho I have no doubt there is some support for the sentiment in Evanston. But not if you ask small landlords which includes many persons of moderate income/wealth or from historically disadvantaged communities.

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.

Comment [90]:
I simply do not believe that this was the #1 health and well-being concern/takeaway. Plus, we have been explicitly "celebrating diversity" till we are blue for years.

The idea that this is conceivably more important than, say, replacing lead service lines or getting more fresh vegetables in daily diet is staggering.

Comment [91]:
Evanstonians and store owners have been saying this for years. Mega-development largely excludes such businesses.

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/Intelligently enhance key corridors/historic small business districts: Maintain focus on revitalizing/look for cost-efficient ways to support and reduce costs for businesses in key commercial corridors/districts, such as those along as Central Avenue Street, 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.
- 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, starting with a comprehensive survey of Evanston employer needs to produce job matching.

Comment [92]:
There are at least 5 empty restaurant spaces within steps of my office. Despite our adding a couple thousand units since I began working in downtown Evanston. High rents by landlords who refuse to negotiate, a saturation of restaurants, competition from other options for downtown Evanstonians to purchase alcohol (or cannabis), DoorDash & Uber Eats, Illinois' longest COVID "emergency," a m...

Comment [93]:
Literally everyone says Central Street is working. I guarantee NO ONE from north Evanston with a business there or who regularly shops there said v...

Comment [94]:
Asbury is not a commercial corridor, almost entirely residential, tho it is an important alternative transportation route to escape the traffic that has ...

Comment [95]:
The ill-thought-out "safety" drive to reduce speed limits on an important transportation route like Oakton to 25mph is one more signal to those who ...

Comment [96]:
Eliminating the word "corridor" would go a long way toward convincing Evanstonians that they are seen as humans, not ants or numbers

Comment [97]:
How??? That has happened almost nowhere. New development raises land values and thus taxes including for adjacent businesses (who usually als...

Comment [98]:
cryptic feel-good jargon — or some sort of one-size-fits-all mandate? hard to tell. If one district has a good Christmas season.... do we confiscate profit ...

Comment [99]:
If engagement did not reveal that there is a need for affordable art-making space, then it was not successful engagement of the arts community. Sn...

Comment [100]:
Is this consultantese for "more money for bad murals"?

Comment [101]:
We should be working to break down barriers based on identity.

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
- Support and grow Evanston’s museum community

Comment [102]:
Not all spaces need or should be all things to all people. There is nothing wrong with a playground being oriented toward kids, nor some spaces being purposely more quiet. The most public places should of course be accessible for all. But the ADA does not require irrational unrealism.

Comment [103]:
not a mention of museums in discussion of culture. !!!!!

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.

Comment [104]:
I was not at preservation-specific meetings so cannot dispute what was heard.

- 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 or memory of Evanston’s diverse heritage.

Comment [105]:
This is more environmental than preservation. I support regardless, but placement is odd.

Comment [106]:
Devil is in the details.

Comment [107]:
typo?

Comment [108]:
we have already lost some of this.

- Reinstatement 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.

Comment [109]:
This is about to become a massive issue. The enormous building boom of the 1920s is manifesting into an enormous inventory of 100-year-old structures. What seemed just a little old-fashioned and quaint 35 years ago is now becoming venerable — but also has serious infrastructure challenges. Preserving this inventory will add great value to Evanston but has a cost. Many older homes are not landmarks yet may still need support because the cumulative effect of the contributing structures is great.

VISION STATEMENT

In 2045, Evanston is a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming community for all. Evanston celebrates its diversity, life of the mind and spirit, and shares perspectives through our arts, culture, history, and neighborhoods. Steady growth in our A sustainable local circular sub-economy cultivates opportunities close to home while achieving ambitious and necessary climate action. Our abundant access to parks and open spaces, in both the public and private realm, promotes well-being and respect for nature, and extensive Continued support for our existing housing options and a cherished built environment make living in Evanston safe, certain, and attainable.

Evanston's neighborhoods are connected through a robust network of transit, bike, and pedestrian options and our embrace of differences. We achieve this vision through proactive planning, community collaboration, and bold thoughtful action.

Comment [110]:

A lot of Evanstonians would like Evanston to be quieter, at least in the neighborhoods. There has been too much cheerleading and insufficient surveying on how bustling we want to be. Everyone would like downtown not be so dead, but that requires some forensics that have not yet been performed.

Comment [111]:

this is kind of a low-bar, negative

Comment [112]:

or for "all who can still afford it"? It would be stunning that after a year of beating up homeowners and residents over "affordability" not a word about that appears in the vision statement, except that EE45 is not about affordability, it is about density for density's sake. If "attainability" is the vision we should drop all the pretense about affordability.

Comment [113]:

"celebrating diversity" has become a cliché but also is not why people participate in arts, history, or preservation. "Diversity" arose as a factor an entity could permissibly take into consideration along with many others, it was never intended to be a focal point, otherwise it reduces people to numbers in demographic categories, devaluing the individual and actually reinforcing stereotype. Moreover, Evanston currently tends not to even tolerate let alone celebrate diversity of thought, but to enforce a groupthink and orthodoxy. We would be better served by re-examining original ideals and returning to the best of those while avoiding the traps of ...

Comment [114]:

these are actually two of the principal pillars on which Evanston was built and that historically define its character. Also, it is ridiculous not to have at least a nod to the fact that we are a University town

Comment [115]:

We can do more to keep money circulating locally but our economy is not and will not be circular. Evanston could grow a lot more food but it would still be insufficient, the city has no farmland. We ...

Comment [116]:

an anomalous and under-discussed portion of our permeable surface, carbon sequestration, tree canopy, pollinator and wildlife habitat, etc., is maintained by private property owners. Immediat ...

Comment [117]:

environment has value in itself, not just anthropocentric; Evanston should be nurturing stewards of the planet

Comment [118]:

by and large, greater density correlates with less safety by many markers, this is apparent on Evanston's own arcgis maps.

Comment [119]:

unpredictability is the enemy of investment

Comment [120]:

there is a saying in aviation: "There are bold pilots, and there are old pilots, but there are no bold old pilots." Measure twice, cut once will serve us better than "Shoot first, then aim."

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. Although there were few if any long-lasting permanent settlements in what is now Evanston, due to its being largely wetlands, these communities camped, lived, traded, and traveled along the shores of Lake Michigan and throughout the region, forging trails that outlined future Evanston roads and development, and 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.

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 and established a few scattered farms and roadhouses in the area known as Gross Point after the prominent jut into the lake where the lighthouse now stands. The City's formal development was ~~significantly influenced by the result of~~ the founding of Northwestern University in 1850 ~~+~~ by a group of Methodist business leaders and educators from Chicago, who wanted to establish a premier university in the Northwest Territory and were chartered to do so by the State of Illinois in 1851. One of these founders, John Evans, purchased approximately 360 acres centered in what is now downtown Evanston in 1853, toward the northernmost extent of a township called Ridgeville that was centered in what is now Chicago. In 1854, the same group of Methodists founded Garrett Bible Institute and the First Methodist Church in Evanston, and Evans recorded a plat for the town, laid out by business agent Philo Judson, with the county.

In 1855 the first University structure was completed and doors opened for classes, and the same year, Illinois granted an amendment to Northwestern's charter that forbade sale of alcohol within four miles of the University. In 1857, the state legislature approved Evanston, from approximately Crain street north, splitting off from Ridgeville Township, which was renamed Lakeview submitted city plans to the county judge, leading to its renaming as Evanston in 1857.

Comment [121]:

This source is inaccurate in some respects (founding of Evanston), omits important detail (like the name of the Treaty of prairie du Chien and its sketchy circumstances), and is outdated (Illinois now recognizes one tribe and is returning land near Lake Shabbona). The Gichigamiin (former Mitchell) Museum is a better source than the Daily. <https://gichigamiin-museum.org/land-acknowledgement/>. Frank Grover's "Our Indian Predecessors: The First Evanstonians" (Ev. Hist. Soc. 1901) while imperfect, is rich with detail and useful as well.

Comment [122]:

It is shocking that even an abbreviated history of Evanston would fail to mention temperance, which shaped its image, growth, and economy for more than a century, or its relatively pioneering planning and zoning.

The Northwestern group held off on final commitment to Evanston until Northwestern trustee Andrew Brown through sale of right of way and land for a station induced The arrival of the Chicago and North Western Milwaukee Railway to route through the proposed town; train operation began in late 1854, facilitating sped Evanston's growth, making it an attractive option for those wanting a slower paced environment than access to and from the much larger and fast-growing Chicago. Officially incorporated as a citytown in 1863, Evanston resisted becoming a city despite state grant of authority for that in 1869, and in 1872 voted to become a village under the new Illinois city and village act, but quickly developed into a cultural and educational hub, shaped in large part by its educational institutions, literary reputation, and image of morality related to its temperance and religious roots. The Chicago Fire of 1871 prompted accelerated the arrival of many Chicagoans seeking to build or rebuild their homes elsewhere and a building boom occurred during 1871-1873, ending only with a financial panic.

In 1892, after several westerly annexations that more than doubled the land area and annexed the small village of North Evanston, Evanston finally voted to incorporate as a city, annexed the Village of South Evanston, and a street railway line came in, parallel to the larger gauge railroad tracks, now owned by the Chicago & North Western. By the 1890s, Evanston had introduced several civic advancements, including a free public library, telephone service, free mail delivery, and the expansion of local newspapers. During this time, a variety of social, philanthropic, and cultural organizations werehad been born, including the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1874, Woman's Club, founded in 1899, and the Rotary Club in 1920 (Rotary International moved its headquarters from Chicago to Evanston in 1954), and the League of Women Voters of Evanston (1922). Evanston considered, but in 1904 rejected, annexation to Chicago, confirming its desire for distinct status.

From the arrival of the first apartment buildings toward the turn of the century through the end of the World War, and with the arrival of automobiles in growing numbers, Evanston started to experience land use conflicts. In 1919, Evanston adopted a city plan, and in 1921 became the first municipality in Illinois to enact a zoning code. The certainty provided by the establishment of what could and could not be built triggered a building boom that did not end until the Great Depression. During 1913-1928, -As part of its expansion, Evanston added the former villages of North and South Evanston to the City, as well as valuablemade final annexations of unincorporatedfast- land in the northwest and largely unsettled agricultural-industrial zones in the southwest, solidifying its status as an independent city distinct from Chicago.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Evanston's development pattern is deeply reflected in its built environment. Originally made upcentered around-of three distinct communities that roughly paralleled the light rail lines — South Evanston (Ridgeville), North Evanston, and Central Evanston — each area established multiple unique commercial and residential districts hubs. South Evanston thrived around Main Street, North Evanston aroundalong 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. Smaller business and artisan commercial districts also grew up in western Evanston and along Howard Street.

Comment [123]:

this is really an oversimplification. Until automobiles and zoning you could put almost any kind of business anywhere, and impromptu business districts sprang up, sometimes to the consternation of neighbors.

As Evanston grew, the City became known for its unique architecture and cultural vibrancy. With no apartments in the town for the first 30 years of its existence, it became, even being known as the “City of Homes.” From grand Victorian homes of the 19th century to groundbreaking modernist designs of the 20th century, but also including modest bungalows, farmhouses, and apartment buildings, much of Evanston's history of development and architectural heritage is preserved through its historic neighborhoods, 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

Comment [124]:
This nickname was not about a few mansions, it was about the purposeful and philosophical preference for houses and homeownership as opposed to apartments/tenements and tenancy)

Comment [125]:
many of Evanston’s landmarks stem from the apartments that emulated house-like comforts and sprang up in the early 20th century or earlier.

Comment [126]:
Should also mention “City of Churches.”

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, Especially in the wake of multiple societal upheavals from 1917-1920, some of the “refinement” of Evanston gave way to classism, nativism, and racism. Discriminatory practices such as segregated hospitals, youth groups, and recreational facilities saw their real estate and financing counterparts in redlining and racial covenants emerged, which reinforced and concentrated along racial lines shaping the City’s general separation of housing by wealth and income levels, landscape. Because Evanston with its strong religious and abolitionist roots by comparison with much of America was seen as a desirable destination, the Great Migration brought a significant increase in Evanston’s Black population, yet segregation efforts, including discriminatory steering by real estate developers and sellers, began as early as 1918.⁴

Comment [127]:
Buchanan v. Warley was not a zoning case. It does not even mention zoning or districts. It is not the reason zoning became popular.

Comment [128]:
These were not City policies. The redlining was by insurance with support from a New Deal agency. Covenants were private, and not as common in Evanston as elsewhere.

Comment [129]:
There is a missing piece in a narrative that otherwise says essentially that black people flocked to a center of racism.

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 an area east of the canal roughly corresponding to the 5th Ward, where homes were generally smaller, often closer to rail lines or industry than in some other neighborhoods, located near industrial zones, and lacked access to essential amenities where residents and their aldermen complained of inferior city services. 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, the concentration of poverty, and the dehumanizing consequences of physical segregation.

Comment [130]:
This cuts two ways. Ward lines were drawn with race in mind — as still occurs, and which gives a minority group, if voters vote along racial lines, a chance to elect one of their own group. Evanston could have drawn lines so as to deny black voters that chance (assuming a color line in the pooling place), and then there would not have been a “concentration” by ward — although it would still largely have existed as defined by the canal, the C&NW tracks, and Church or Dempster depending on decade.

Comment [131]:
not sure what is meant here

Comment [132]:
I know zoning is being used as the bogeyman, but I really don’t think that is supportable logically or historically. Redlining and steering did far more and would have had the same effect even if all of the 6th and 7th wards were R2. The “railroad” thesis of the Weiss article doesn’t hold up. Happy to discuss.

Evanston, soldily Republican since the Civil War, made national news in 1970 for its voluntary desegregation of schools and over the following half-century came more and more to be perceived as extremely liberal, and Evanston became both more diverse demographically and less segregated geographically over the following 20 years. However, especially since the mid-1990s, the steady physical growth of both Northwestern and Evanston’s business districts is perceived as having a gentrifying impact, and Evanston’s black population has declined in each of the last several censuses, while Latino population has grown.

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, [along with the roads that led to and through Evanston, for decades](#) into the commercial hub of Chicago's North Shore. Downtown Evanston developed into a bustling [hub retail destination](#) featuring department stores, restaurants, and corporate headquarters, including Rotary International, which remains headquartered in Evanston today. [The quaint downtown with its historic architecture was a charming favorite stop for area shoppers.](#)

During the mid-20th century, Evanston also [served as a prominent industrial center had a moderate amount of industry](#). By the 1960s, it was home to over 70 manufacturing companies producing a diverse range of goods, from [textbooks](#) and [food products](#) [soda pop](#) to [electronics](#) and [toys](#) [machinery; it was also the headquarters city of a national hardware store chain.](#)

However, like many Midwestern cities, Evanston experienced industrial decline as manufacturing relocated to larger greenfield sites, [the de-unionized Sun Belt](#), or was impacted by globalization. [Competition from large suburban shopping malls combined with a changed built environment in a still-“dry” Evanston to create challenges for downtown restaurants and stores.](#) 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, [and beginning with allowance of beer and wine with meals in 1973, moved towards heavy emphasis on a dining and modest nightlife vibe for its downtown-](#)

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Evanston's rich history is deeply intertwined with its people, [ideals](#), institutions, transit infrastructure, business districts, and architecture. Establishing Northwestern University and expanding rail lines kickstarted the City's early growth, [planning and zoning just as the automobile came into vogue fostered boom years of housing construction as an inner-ring suburb](#), 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.

Comment [133]:

our being essentially a highway, or just off highways, was recognized as early as the Plan of Evanston in 1917. Downtown business strategies evolved from trying to keep “Sunday drivers” out in the 1910s to trying to ATTRACT drivers and get them to shop downtown after Old Orchard opened, to once again making Evanston car-hostile thru lane narrowing of McCormick and Green Bay, and the widespread perception of Evanston's aggressive parking ticketing.

Comment [134]:

not sure they were printed here, but I am willing to be corrected on this; we certainly had HQ of a couple publishers.

Comment [135]:

Bell & Howell and Shure were more into projectors, business and audio equipment than “machinery,” Evanston really never had the heavy industrial base that Skokie or Lincolnwood did let alone Chicago. There was a metal fabricating mill. There was a major distribution center for the True Value stores.

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

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 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 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.

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.

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.

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:

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.

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.

Steve Test
3/8/2025

Comments on first half of second draft through chapter 7:

Pages without annotations were removed for space considerations.

My only comment on chapter 6: **COMMUNITY SYSTEMS**
page 53

CS 4.8. The lead service pipe replacement program should be at the top of the city's priority list. Lead pipes are a clear and present danger. We know what the solution is. The city should set a much more aggressive goal than to finish replacement in 20 years.

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VIEWPRO

ZONECO

MULTILINGUAL

MCADAMS

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). 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

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. **0.03% of the population. 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, especially adding multi-unit uses in R1 zones, which will be market-rate and will replace the most inexpensive single-family homes in the city with much more expensive homes. \$\$ support is needed to produce authentic, long-term affordable housing.

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.

Commercial corridors currently functioning well, i.e. Central Street, should be left alone.

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:

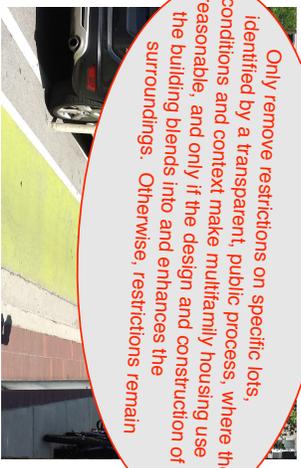
- Expand community engagement in placemaking projects.
- Add art installations and cultural markers that reflect community identity.
- Remove overly prescriptive design guidelines that limit creativity.
- Continue emphasizing walkable, vibrant public spaces.
- Improve accessibility in public spaces.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



Source: City of Evanston

Only remove restrictions on specific lots, conditions and context make multifamily housing use reasonable, and only if the design and construction of the building blends into and enhances the surroundings. Otherwise, restrictions remain

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. *Property taxes are a large part of housing costs for both. Reducing the increase in property taxes should be a priority.*
- 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.

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

Radical upzoning will directly conflict with this.

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.



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. *OK but...*
 - Preserve local character: Uphold neighborhood-specific zoning guidelines to preserve local character. *Yes*
 - 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 need: 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.

Yellow Line stop at Dodge.



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.

List and map in appendix.

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, Ashbury Avenue and Oakton Street. **Those that are working well leave alone.**
- 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 lakelands.
- Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Program: Establish an NCD Program to support community-led preservation.
- Follow the roadmap: Implement guidance from Preserve 2040¹ 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.

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



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.⁵

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.

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.

Evanston is very diverse.

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:

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.

METRIC	CURRENT VALUE	UNIT	GOALS
Population density	9,840	Population / square mile	Housing, Sustainability, Economy, Equity, Transportation
Race and ethnicity	42 percent	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	10 percent	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
Housing cost-burden	34 percent	Cost-burdened households / total households	Housing, Equity, Economy

30% of income to housing costs.



Source: City of Evanston

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>
	Declining life expectancy
	Rise in climate displacement
	Nomadic workforce
	Upskilling and reskilling
	Policy "pendulum shifts"
Climate impacts	
Economic Restructuring	Rising personal debt
	Trust in government
	False information operations
	Aging housing stock
	Gentrification and displacement
Housing	The affordable housing crisis
	<u>Zoning reform</u>
	Sustainable energy
	Food insecurity
	Sustainable architecture
Resources	Climate justice
	Water scarcity
	Artificial Intelligence (AI) regulations
	Sharing economy
	Digital inclusion
Technology	Fourth Industrial Revolution
	Infrastructure overhaul
	Rise in innovation districts
Transportation	<u>Carless households</u>
	Rethinking the public right-of-way

losing population? Then why the push to build?

Some people think old houses are an asset.

Crisis? Or a problem with solutions that don't require upending the whole city. Reform wisely on the margins without blowing up the whole thing.

What about parking for all the households with cars?



Source: City of Evanston

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.

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. **How?** **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 it.** **How?** **Addressing the diversity of housing options, 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 together.**
- 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.

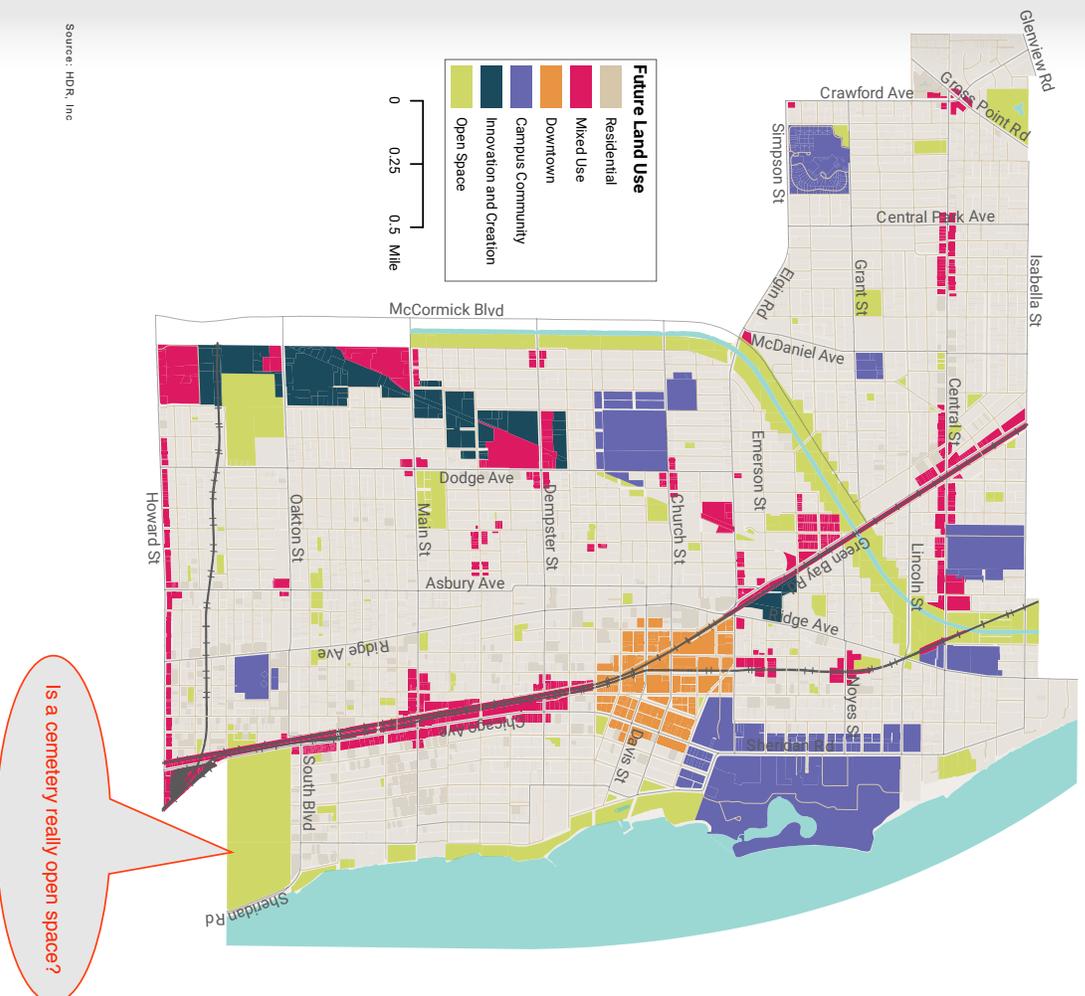
Coordinated land use and transportation planning is essential to implementing the centers-and-corridors framework, as they have a direct impact on each other. For example, directing higher-density development toward transit stations and along major corridors is not sustainable without a robust transportation 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

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 North 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, Hoyes, 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, Ashbury, 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 quiet 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 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

Shouldn't this be vigorously explored before rezoning the city? If it's not realistic, because of location, past pollution, etc., why mention it?

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 development, they 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 multi-family 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? 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 7: GETTING AROUND



CHAPTER 7: GETTING AROUND

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes Evanston's existing transportation infrastructure and mobility landscape. Historically, Evanston's development has been closely tied to transportation planning and investments. This plan section focuses on creating a holistic, multimodal transportation system by expanding access to diverse transportation options. These efforts align with goals in regional and statewide transportation plans, including Connecting Cook County - 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and the Illinois Department of Transportation's Long Range Transportation Plan.² Furthermore, this section supports local initiatives such as the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, the ADA Transition Plan, and the Complete and Green Streets policy.

As climate change intensifies, reducing emissions from transportation activities is crucial. In 2022, greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle miles traveled accounted for 22 percent of total emissions in Evanston. Investments in public and active transportation options are essential to reduce reliance on cars, decrease vehicle miles traveled, and ultimately lower greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. Additionally, this section supports local initiatives such as the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, the ADA Transition Plan, and the Complete and Green Streets policy.

As climate change intensifies, reducing emissions from transportation activities is essential. In 2022, greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle miles traveled accounted for 22 percent of total emissions in Evanston. Investments in public and active transportation options can reduce reliance on cars, lower vehicle miles traveled, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles.

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Work with regional transit partners to improve Evanston's transit network coverage, improve service levels, and further vehicle decarbonization efforts.
2	Enhance Evanston's transit infrastructure and programs to ensure transit is safe, accessible, affordable, desirable, and convenient for all.
3	Facilitate development that prioritizes safe, convenient access to public transit.
4	Invest in upgrades and policies that support a safe, accessible, and convenient pedestrian network.
5	Support walking as a preferred mode of transportation and recreation through targeted infrastructure and programs.
6	Enhance Evanston's active transportation network to support safe, convenient travel locally and regionally for people of all ages and abilities.
7	Enhance biking infrastructure to promote the use of Evanston's bike lane network.

Create a task force to engage CTA, on an ongoing basis, for the purpose of adding at least one Yellow Line stop in SW Evanston, most likely at Dodge. Must be a continuing effort.

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
8	Support programs and initiatives that make cycling more accessible to community members of all backgrounds and skill levels.
9	Integrate shared active transportation options into existing networks to enhance accessibility and maximize effectiveness.
10	Encourage a greater adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce emissions and support the EV infrastructure needed.
11	Support policies and infrastructure that enhance road safety and encourage responsible driving behavior.
12	Utilize data-driven strategies to optimize parking management and improve user experience.
13	Create a comprehensive network of Complete and Green Streets to support sustainable, multimodal travel throughout Evanston.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following sections provide a comprehensive overview of current transportation modes used to move people and goods in Evanston and highlights existing challenges. Six key themes have emerged through analyzing the City's transportation network: efficiency, equity, accessibility, safety, placemaking, and carbon neutrality. These themes were emphasized through engaging with the public throughout the planning process. Suggested policies and actions are outlined at the end of each section.

Efficiency: Does the transportation system facilitate timely and reliable movement of people?

Equity: Are burdens and barriers for marginalized communities reduced or mitigated? Are options affordable and diverse?

Accessibility: Does the system eliminate barriers to mobility and create affordable, desirable transportation options for people of all ages and abilities

Safety: Can people of all ages and abilities travel safely and comfortably throughout our transportation network?

Placemaking: Does transportation infrastructure foster community bonds and serve as a place for connection?

Carbon neutrality: Is the transportation system free from fossil fuels and resource efficient? What is its impact on air quality?

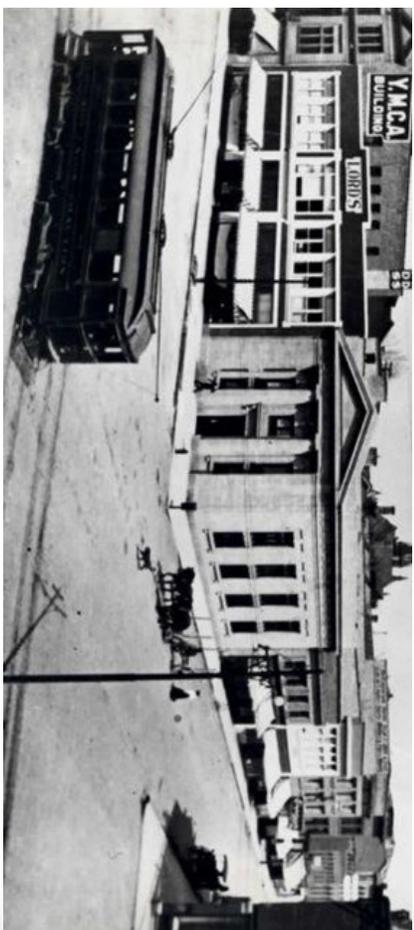
TRANSIT

Evanston's transit network includes a mix of bus and rail services connecting residents to local and regional destinations. The CTA and Pace operate nine bus lines, including the Pulse Dempster Line, which provides efficient service between Downtown Evanston and O'Hare Airport.

Commuter rail is provided by Metra's Union Pacific North (UP-N) line, with stations at Central Street, Davis Street, and Main Street. The CTA Purple Line also runs through Evanston with seven stops, offering access to Chicago. The CTA Yellow Line runs along the city's southern edge, though it lacks a stop within Evanston. Figure 3 on the right illustrates the transit routes and stops throughout Evanston.

Transit usage in Evanston is relatively high, with 15.3 percent of workers commuting by transit – 1 percent higher than Cook County and more than double Illinois' average (7 percent).

While ridership has not fully recovered to pre-COVID-19 levels, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) reported in June 2024 that ridership is steadily increasing. May 2024 saw over 32 million rides, 64 percent of pre-COVID-19 levels.³



Source: City of Evanston

WALKING

Evanston's street network largely follows a grid pattern, which makes it pedestrian friendly. However, certain infrastructure elements – large arterials, rail tracks, and the North Shore channel – can disrupt neighborhood connectivity and obstruct foot traffic. Nevertheless, the sidewalk network is extensive and well maintained. Most neighborhoods feature approximately 5.3-foot detached sidewalks, separated from roadways by landscaped buffers, enhancing walkability. Additionally, back alleys used for trash collection and garage access minimize curb cuts along street fronts, promoting a comfortable walking experience.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rates Evanston neighborhoods as either "Most Walkable" or "Above Average," highlighting the City's exceptional walkability.⁴ Residents often cite the ease of walking to the lake, grocery stores, parks, and other amenities as a key benefit of living in Evanston; this was a recurring theme across public engagement activities throughout the planning process.

FIGURE 3. TRANSIT ROUTES AND STOPS



Source: City of Evanston



Source: City of Evanston

BICYCLING AND OTHER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Biking is a popular transportation and recreation choice in Evanston, supported by local bike shops and events like monthly rides hosted by Downtown Evanston and the Evanston Transit Alliance. The Evanston Bicycle Club's North Shore Century attracts around 2,000 cyclists each year.

Evanston features a range of biking facilities, including protected and unprotected bike lanes, bike routes, and shared-use paths, mostly along major roads and in parks like James Park and the North Shore Channel Trail. Protected bike lanes are limited to areas like Sheridan Road, Dodge Avenue, and Church Street.

The city promotes bike accessibility with racks at transit stops and retail areas, and secure, covered bike parking in two municipal garages. As of 2024, Evanston's bike share program has 14 stations and 140 bikes, supporting sustainable travel, reducing congestion, and enhancing connectivity.

DRIVING

Despite the variety of transit options, driving remains the primary mode of travel for Evanston residents. About 47.1 percent of workers aged 16 or older commute by car, whether driving alone or carpooling – a rate lower than that of Cook County (65.1 percent) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) region (71.1 percent). Evanston car commuters drive an average of 10,996 miles per year, with vehicle miles traveled per person annually in Cook County and the CMAP region approximately 20 percent and 42 percent higher, respectively.

Most Evanston households own at least one vehicle. According to the 2018–2022 American Community Survey five-year estimates, around 16 percent of households do not own a vehicle, while 34.5 percent own at least two cars. This is slightly lower than in Cook County (41.4 percent) and the broader CMAP region (51.1 percent).⁵

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Evanston has a strong network of north–south routes like Chicago Avenue, Dodge Avenue, Ridge Avenue, and Green Bay Road, along with key east–west roads such as Dempster, Central, and Oakton Streets, all crucial for traffic flow and access to I-94. Some major roads, like Dempster and Central, are state owned.

The city also has over 300 unpaved alleys, which are graded periodically to fix potholes. Paving these alleys – funded through special assessments – offers long-term benefits, including less wear on vehicles, reduced flooding, improved safety, and better access for emergency and delivery services.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV)

The electrification of vehicles stands at the forefront of transportation policies across federal, state, and local levels – all aimed at combating climate change.

In Cook County, EV registrations saw significant growth from March 2019 to March 2024. In Evanston, the number of registered EVs increased from 316 to 1,239 during this same period.⁶ The City has responded to this growing demand by installing 17 EV charging ports across five locations, in addition to public chargers managed by other entities.

Vehicle electrification is a key component of Evanston's Municipal Operations Zero Emissions Strategy, which aims for net zero municipal carbon emissions by 2035. The City has committed to transitioning its entire municipal fleet to zero-emission vehicles by 2035. As of 2024, Evanston's municipal fleet includes over 20 electric vehicles.⁷

PARKING

The City of Evanston owns and operates three parking garages and 37 surface lots across our neighborhoods. Real-time occupancy data for City-owned garages and lots is available on the City's website. Use of these parking spaces generally requires a fee. In Downtown Evanston, the City charges for on-street parking Monday through Saturday, with garage fees collected 24/7.

In residential areas outside downtown and business districts, on-street parking is generally available, governed by both permit-required and nonrestricted zones. Evanston's developmental guidelines historically require a minimum number of off-street parking spaces to accommodate the growing needs of residents and businesses.

TRUCK AND DELIVERY SERVICES

Efficient freight movement is vital for Evanston's residents and businesses. The State of Illinois, CMAP, and Cook County have developed plans for a multimodal freight network to meet current and future needs while advancing decarbonization.

In Cook County, trucks and trains account for 60 percent and 25 percent of freight⁸, respectively. Evanston, however, sees relatively low truck traffic, with heavy commercial vehicles making up less than 3 percent of daily traffic. To manage this, the City has designated truck routes, including Chicago Avenue and Central Street, while restricting other roads like Ridge Avenue and Sheridan Road.

Evanston's limited freight traffic is due to its location away from major truck routes. Although the Union Pacific railroad passes through, it primarily serves passenger rail, with minimal freight.

COMPLETE AND GREEN STREETS

The Complete Streets approach designs streets for safe and efficient travel for all users, regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode. It promotes equitable access for historically underserved populations, including seniors, children, people with disabilities, households without cars, and communities of color. Strategies are tailored to local needs and may include protected bike lanes, crosswalks, median islands, landscaping, curb extensions, and accessible transit stops.

Envision Evanston 2045 recommends Complete Streets for comprehensive road rehabilitation projects, focusing on connectivity and safety. It also supports the development of a strong active transportation network for bikes, e-scooters, and other sustainable modes.

Green Streets enhances Complete Streets by incorporating stormwater management solutions like permeable paving, vegetated swales, and stormwater planters. These systems help create safer, more resilient infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable road users.

Adopted in 2014 and updated in 2017, the Complete and Green Streets policy shifts focus on active transportation and flexible, context-sensitive design. It includes a Livability Checklist to ensure projects meet goals for livability, active transportation, and connectivity while addressing local needs.



Source: City of Evanston

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TRANSIT

Evanston offers public transit options that connect the community to local and surrounding areas; however, significant barriers to equity, efficiency, and accessibility remain, as voiced by the community during the planning process.

Transit Network Connectivity

Evanston's rail network provides good north-south connectivity, but limited access in the west. However, neighborhoods in the west and southeast lack direct connections to CTA and Metra stations, making commuting harder for those not near a rail station.

Transit Service Limitations

Bus service is sparse, ending by 9 p.m., with no Sunday service, affecting essential workers and evening travel. Inconsistent schedules also disrupt students' access to school, with buses often running late or operating at 30-minute intervals. Public feedback shows service is insufficient and unreliable.

Transit Infrastructure Challenges

Only one Purple Line station, Davis Street, is ADA-compliant, and Metra stations lack elevators. Many rail stations are far from pedestrian routes and lack amenities. Bus stops offer little shelter, seating, or lighting, making travel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Transitioning to Low-Emission Transit

As of 2025, Evanston has yet to realize any carbon-neutral transit services. Pace has committed to a 100 percent zero-emission fleet by 2040, and CTA aims to electrify its bus fleet by the same year.² Although CTA trains are electric, the power source is not yet zero emission, and Metra UP-N trains are currently diesel powered, though plans are in place to gradually adopt zero-emission locomotives.

As long as this is the condition of public transit how can the city emphasize transit-oriented development, especially with insufficient on-site parking for the cars that will result from deficient transit infrastructure?

WALKING

Community members at workshops and engagement sessions shared several concerns about walking in Evanston, especially on safety and gaps in infrastructure.

Sidewalk Gaps and Accessibility Issues

Evanston faces significant sidewalk, gaps and accessibility challenges, particularly for residents using wheelchairs or mobility devices. Many sidewalks are only on one side of the street or are too narrow for safe use, creating mobility barriers and tripping hazards.

Safety Concerns

Residents report feeling unsafe crossing streets, backed by 2022 data showing 30 pedestrian and 31 bicyclist injuries.³ Factors include high-speed traffic, distracted driving, and limited crossing options, often forcing unsafe crossings. Crashes usually take place around downtown, especially on Ridge Avenue, Church Street, and Lake Street, with emerging hotspots in the southern part of the City.

Conflict Points on Sidewalks

The growing use of bicycles, scooters, and mobility devices creates crowded sidewalks and potential crashes. Focus-group participants noted the lack of a safe on-street cycling network, pushing cyclists onto narrow sidewalks and increasing safety risks. Continuous evaluation of policies and infrastructure is needed to ensure safe, shared use for all users.



Source: City of Evanston

Impact on Vulnerable Populations

Safety issues affect vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly, at similar levels as pedestrians in other age groups – highlighting the need to address these safety concerns to protect the more vulnerable population.

BIKING AND OTHER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

Evanston has made significant progress toward creating a bike-friendly environment. However, the following challenges continue to limit those who choose to cycle.

Safety Concerns Due to Inadequate Infrastructure

Many Evanston bike routes lack proper separation from traffic, leaving cyclists vulnerable. Routes like Main, Dempster, Central, and Green Bay Road are particularly unsafe, discouraging potential cyclists including children, seniors, and inexperienced riders.

Sidewalk Biking and Shared Use Concerns

Biking on sidewalks is allowed in some areas but can lead to conflicts with pedestrians. As active transportation grows, the city must ensure safe, shared use of public spaces.

Challenges with Affordable Access

The cost of bikes, safety gear, and maintenance limits access for many residents. To address this, the city offers a bike share program to improve affordability.

Need for Education and Awareness

Most residents lack formal cycling and traffic safety training. The city should promote educational programs and improve signage to encourage safe biking practices.

Gaps in the Cycling Network and Trail Connectivity

Evanston's disconnected cycling network forces cyclists onto busy streets with minimal protection and lacks clear trail connections. Many trails require detours onto residential streets, and bike lanes often end suddenly without proper signage. Lakefront trails, especially in the south, are interrupted by private property, forcing cyclists and pedestrians onto roads and increasing safety risks.

SHARED ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Evanston's shared bike docking stations are poorly integrated with public transit, making transfers inconvenient. Four of the seven CTA stations lack nearby docking stations, and many are not near bus stops. Increasing docking stations near transit stops would improve mode transfers.

Challenges with Access and Payment Options

The Divvy system requires a smartphone and cashless payment, which limits access for those without these tools. While some rentals are available at kiosks for single rides, they still require a debit card and can be more expensive. This system may exclude lower-income residents, highlighting the need for more accessible payment options.

DRIVING

Driving is costly and environmentally harmful. Traffic leads to lost time and increased fuel consumption, contributing to carbon emissions. While Evanston's car commute rate is lower than that of surrounding areas, car use remains dominant. The City's 2018 Climate Action Plan calls for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to create a more sustainable future.

Balancing EV Promotion with Investments in Transit and Active Transportation

Electric vehicles (EVs) help reduce emissions but don't address traffic congestion or reduce road space. Investments should focus on enhancing transit and active transportation to reduce car dependency and support sustainability goals.



Source: City of Evanston

STOP sign scootflaws are a major problem, too.

Challenges with Speeding and Distracted Driving

A culture of speeding and distracted driving poses safety hazards on Evanston's roads, highlighting the need for continued education, enforcement, and infrastructure solutions to improve safety for all road users.

Use of Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)

Autonomous vehicles (AVs) could help with first- and last-mile connections but may contribute to congestion and exclude lower-income residents due to high costs. Cities must ensure AVs complement, not replace, public transit to meet mobility needs.

PARKING

Downtown Evanston has an extensive parking network. Despite that, challenges remain, and strategic actions are essential to ensure parking in Evanston is safe and convenient for everyone.

Land Use and Alternative Potential

Parking facilities occupy relatively large spaces, limiting opportunities for other uses. Parking lots cover approximately 5.5 percent of Evanston's total land area, with a larger percentage downtown.¹¹ Many of these lots remain empty for most of the day, taking up space that could be repurposed for housing or other community-enhancing assets.

Impact of Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements

Minimum off-street parking requirements force private developments to set aside space for parking that could be used for community, economic, or green spaces. These parking facilities, often along main streets and retail areas, disrupt the urban walking experience.

Minimums also keep cars off neighborhood streets. Consequences of Reducing Parking Fees

Lowering parking fees may make downtown more convenient but could increase traffic and economic costs and reduce space turnover. Longer parking stays could limit availability, impacting local businesses, especially during peak hours.

Financial Sustainability

Parking fees are important for funding the operations and maintenance of parking facilities. Reduced parking revenue would require reallocating other public funds, thereby reducing resources available for important municipal services that benefit the community.

Where will the cars park at night then?

TRUCK AND DELIVERY SERVICES

Managing truck and delivery services in Evanston presents unique challenges due to high demand on limited curbside space from a variety of users.

Demand on Limited Curbside Space

Although Evanston experiences relatively low freight traffic on its roads, challenges arise as commercial trucks compete with other transportation modes for limited roadway space. The growth of e-commerce has increased last-mile deliveries to homes and businesses, further increasing competition for roadway space and contributing to traffic.

Curbside Management

Implementing a comprehensive curbside management plan, similar to the Chicago Curbside Management Plan, could help manage and optimize curbside usage to balance the needs of diverse users effectively. **Explain.**

Until there is substantial progress achieving these first two actions, transit-oriented development without parking has to be limited. As progress is made improving transit then revisit parking minimums. Needs data and transit goals.

POLCIES AND ACTIONS

1. WORK WITH REGIONAL TRANSIT PARTNERS TO IMPROVE EVANSTON'S TRANSIT NETWORK COVERAGE, ENHANCE SERVICE LEVELS, AND ADVANCE TRANSIT VEHICLE DECARBONIZATION EFFORTS.

T 1.1 Promote the expansion of transit lines, including arterial rapid transit, to improve access to both regional and local destinations, with a focus on enhancing east-west connections. **Set goals:**

T 1.2 Collaborate with transit partners on opportunities to decarbonize the transit system.

T 1.3 Work with transit agencies to review service needs and increase service frequencies in areas that need it. **Set goals:**

T 1.4 Partner with regional, state, and federal agencies to secure more funding for transit services in Evanston and the surrounding region. **Good luck!**

COMPLETE STREETS AND GREEN STREETS

Evanston's Complete and Green Streets policy faces challenges due to limited funding and competing priorities. Many guidelines are suggestions, leading to inconsistent implementation. While the policy encourages developers to adopt these principles, they are only required for projects that meet certain thresholds, limiting citywide adoption and funding.

2. ENHANCE EVANSTON'S TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS TO ENSURE TRANSIT IS SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, DESIRABLE, AND CONVENIENT FOR ALL.

T 2.1 Encourage all transit stops and stations to be ADA accessible.

T 2.2 Explore programs and policies to expand the installation of shelters, benches, and other street furniture to improve the transit experience.

T 2.3 Remove barriers that limit access to transit stations.

T 2.4 Implement placemaking strategies around rail stations and key bus stops (e.g., Dempster and Dodge) to create inviting community gathering spaces.

Until these are accomplished how can transit-oriented development be equitable?

Typical battered street! Is there a plan to deal with this?



Source: City of Evanston

3. FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT THAT PRIORITIZES SAFE, CONVENIENT ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSIT.

- T 3.1 Update zoning regulations to support development and redevelopment near transit stations.
- T 3.2 Coordinate with transit agencies to align decisions, strategies, and investments with the City's land use objectives.
- T 3.3 Develop and implement specific station area mobility plans with transit agencies to provide seamless transitions between transportation modes and providers.
- T 3.4 Establish designated passenger pick-up and drop-off zones at transit stations to support ride-share services, improve pedestrian safety, and enhance traffic flow.
- T 3.5 Integrate curbside provisions for paratransit services, placing them as close as possible to primary entrances at transit stations.

4. INVEST IN UPGRADES AND POLICIES THAT SUPPORT A SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AND CONVENIENT PEDESTRIAN NETWORK FOR ALL USERS.

- T 4.1 Improve existing sidewalks to ensure ADA compliance and prioritize safe travel for people of all ages and abilities, with a focus on vulnerable populations.
- T 4.2 Invest in pedestrian safety measures and traffic-calming designs.
- T 4.3 Review and amend City Code and policies related to sidewalks, driveways, crosswalks, speed limits, alleys, parkway plantings, and other elements impacting pedestrian safety.
- T 4.4 Collaborate with neighboring communities and organizations to develop, connect, and strengthen regional trails, such as the North Shore Channel Trail.
- T 4.5 Provide public amenities, including benches, drinking fountains, and restrooms, to make transit use more accessible and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities.

5. SUPPORT WALKING AS A PREFERRED MODE OF TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION THROUGH TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS.

- T 5.1 Review and update the Safe Routes to School program on an ongoing basis and as school attendance boundaries change.
- T 5.2 Develop programs to promote and encourage walking for health and recreation.
- T 5.3 Identify locations for temporary or permanent pedestrian malls or car-free streets.

6. ENHANCE EVANSTON'S ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO SUPPORT SAFE, CONVENIENT LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAVEL FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

- T 6.1 Develop a complete, cohesive, and low-stress network of separated bike lanes on identified bike routes, allowing active transportation with minimal car interaction while addressing pedestrian and traffic impacts.
- T 6.2 Increase bike lane visibility through measures such as painting lanes at key conflict points, using bike traffic signals, and adding bike turn boxes at high-traffic intersections.
- T 6.3 Prioritize infrastructure improvements that support safe access to schools for children using active transportation.
- T 6.4 Focus on infrastructure improvements that facilitate multimodal access along the lakefront from Wilmette to Chicago.
- T 6.5 Explore opportunities to deploy electric battery charging stations for active transportation.

All of the bicycle transportation policies are fine but expecting bicycles to become a large, permanent part of Evanston's transportation network ignores the realities of our weather. There are a few hardy souls who bike in the winter, but not many. Biking in summer thunder storms isn't pleasant either.

7. ENHANCE BIKING INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROMOTE THE USE OF EVANSTON'S BIKE LANE NETWORK.

- T 7.1 Install additional bike racks near commercial, retail, and institutional sites both inside and outside Downtown Evanston to encourage short bike trips.
- T 7.2 Support improved bike parking at major destinations, in garages and lots, and at all transit stations outside downtown. Work to improve security and reduce bike theft.
- T 7.3 Explore the installation of bike repair stations along key bike and transit routes and at popular biking destinations.

8. SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THAT MAKE CYCLING MORE ACCESSIBLE TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS AND SKILL LEVELS.

- T 8.1 Support, develop, and expand programs that facilitate bicycle ownership and access for community members with diverse needs.
- T 8.2 Collaborate with area schools, including District 65, District 202, and Northwestern University, to educate students on safe biking and commuting practices.

9. INTEGRATE SHARED ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS INTO EXISTING NETWORKS TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND MAXIMIZE EFFECTIVENESS.

- T 9.1 Expand the bike share network by adding stations and prioritizing locations that connect existing transportation hubs with popular origins and destinations.
- T 9.2 Partner with third-party providers to develop additional shared active transportation programs, increasing transportation options for the community.
- T 9.3 Promote the collection and analysis of data on active transportation usage patterns and impacts to guide policy adjustments and infrastructure investments.

10. ENCOURAGE GREATER ADOPTION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs) TO REDUCE EMISSIONS AND SUPPORT THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED.

- T 10.1 Support car-sharing options through partnerships with existing third-party vendors or Evanston-specific providers.
- T 10.2 Invest proactively to decarbonize and electrify all City fleet vehicles in alignment with the City's Zero Emission Strategy.
- T 10.3 Create a plan to expand the network of EV charging stations for public use, focusing on areas of high demand as well as broad geographic distribution for citywide EV access. Identify publicly owned properties that could serve as EV charging and mobility hub sites, and provide a publicly accessible map.
- T 10.4 Develop pilot programs for curbside, public right-of-way, streetlight, or utility pole charging to provide charging access for residents without off-street parking options.
- T 10.5 Explore infrastructure and programs to establish EV charging solutions that reduce barriers for lower-income households.



Source: City of Evanston

11. SUPPORT POLICIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ENHANCE ROAD SAFETY AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE DRIVING BEHAVIOR.

- T 11.1 Promote safety campaigns, including educational and enforcement efforts, that encourage seat belt use, reduce distracted driving, and mitigate speeding.
- T 11.2 Implement policies and infrastructure that encourage slower vehicle speeds, reduce conflicts between different transportation modes, and improve visibility at key points.
- T 11.3 Establish research partnerships with Northwestern University to study the safety impacts and feasibility of autonomous vehicles (AVs) on Evanston's transportation network.

12. UTILIZE DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGIES TO OPTIMIZE PARKING MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE.

- T 12.1 Pilot automated parking garages to increase parking capacity within a smaller footprint.
- T 12.2 Enhance mobile payment options for parking to enable real-time tracking of parking availability.
- T 12.3 Continue to collect data on general parking conditions and usage of off-street parking lots over time. Use trends and insights to inform future parking policies, such as setting parking maximums or reducing parking lots.

13. CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK OF COMPLETE AND GREEN STREETS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE, MULTIMODAL TRAVEL THROUGHOUT EVANSTON.

- T 13.1 Identify and prioritize areas for potential Complete and Green Streets implementation.
- T 13.2 Evaluate all modes of travel in street design to ensure a balanced, multimodal approach.
- T 13.3 Consider a transportation impact fee for new developments to fund active transportation infrastructure, mitigating land use impacts.
- T 13.4 Review and update municipal code to include guidelines and examples for Complete and Green Streets features, ensuring alignment with best practices.



Source: City of Evanston



Source: City of Evanston

Steve Test comments
March 9, 2025

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. <i>Contradictory if increase is in single family home neighborhoods</i>
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.

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 YMCA 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 to receive income from working people with mortgages. Property taxes can be a large percentage of a retired income.

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

HOUSING COSTS

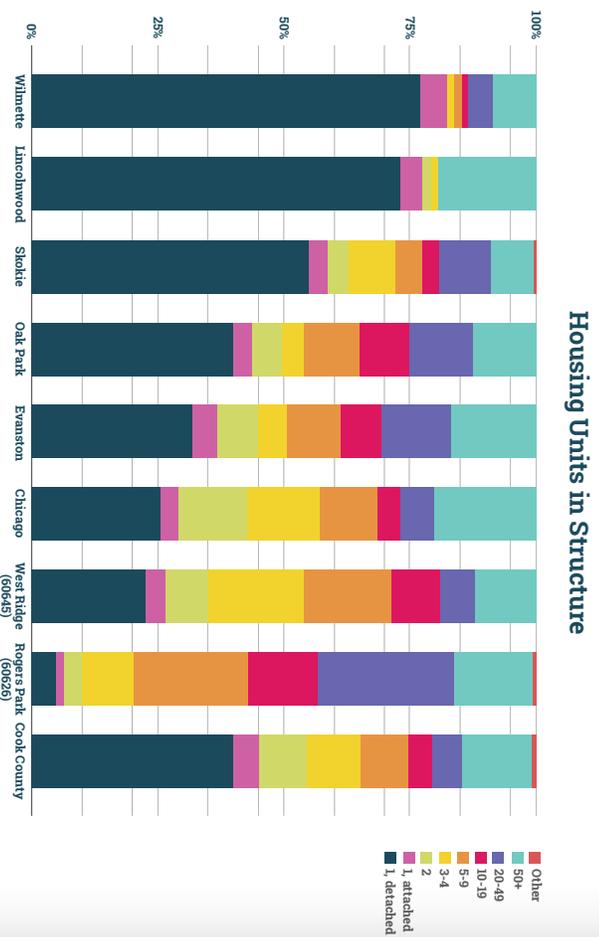
More than one-third of Evanston households are cost burdened, spending at least 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. However, this disproportionately affects renters. Less than a quarter (24 percent) of households that own are cost burdened and 12 percent are severely cost burdened.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

FIGURE 5. HOUSING STOCK



Evanston already has the most diverse housing stock of the listed suburbs, more diverse than Cook County in total.

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?

Housing Units in Structure

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

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 3.5th to 6.5th 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 larger 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

Unproven theory. See additional comments annotated on page 97..

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 yet prices have increased regardless.

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

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

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 quantities of housing needed for Evanston's population.
- H 1.3 Collect and analyze local housing data routinely to inform data-driven housing decisions.

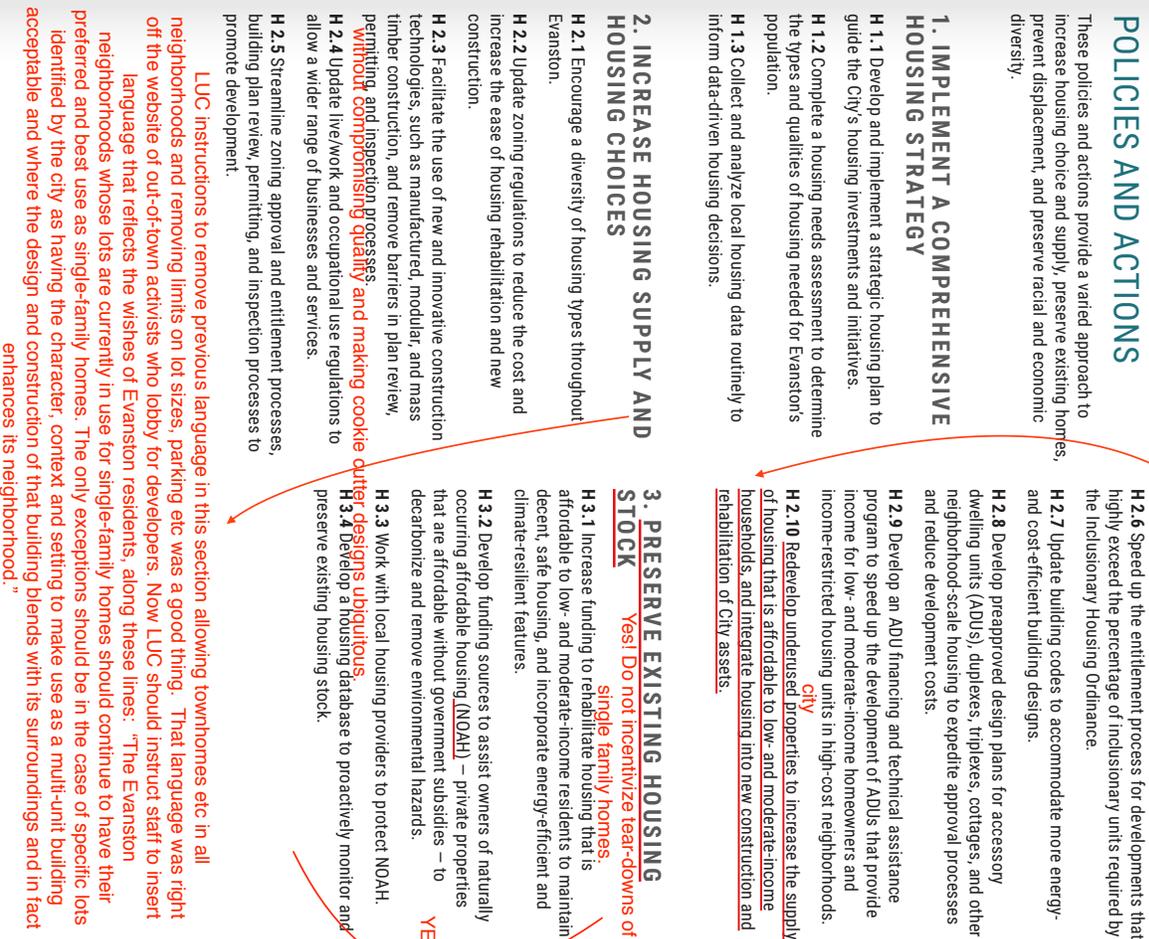
2. INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY AND HOUSING CHOICES

- 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.

3. PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

- 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.

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



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 homeowning residents 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."