

ENVISION EVANSTON 2045

The City of Evanston is excited to unveil **Envision Evanston 2045**, an ambitious comprehensive plan designed to shape the future of our vibrant community! This draft plan provides a roadmap for Evanston's growth and development over the next **20 years**.

Over the next five months, the Land Use Commission and City Council are eager to hear your feedback as they review the draft. Your input will play a crucial role in shaping the final version!

- What stands out to you?
- What do you think is missing?
- How can the plan be improved to better meet the community's needs?

Let's work together to finalize this plan and make Evanston an even more dynamic place to live, work, and play!



What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan sets forth a city's vision for its future, outlining goals and strategies to achieve that vision. Evanston's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 2000.

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



Vision For Evanston



Promote Community Health & Well-being



Boost Local Economic Resilience & Growth



Champion Environmental Sustainability & Climate Action



Expand and Enhance Transportation Choices



Diversify Housing Options for All Income Levels



Ensure Equitable Access to Opportunities & Resources



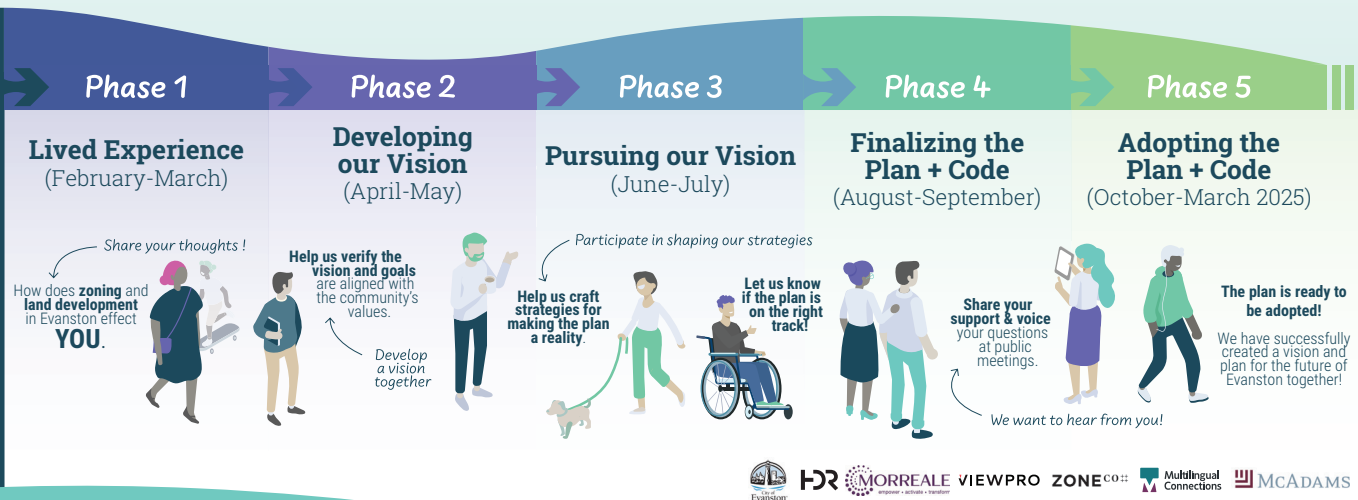
Support & Celebrate Arts, Culture, and Creative Expression

How Did We Get Here?

The Road Map

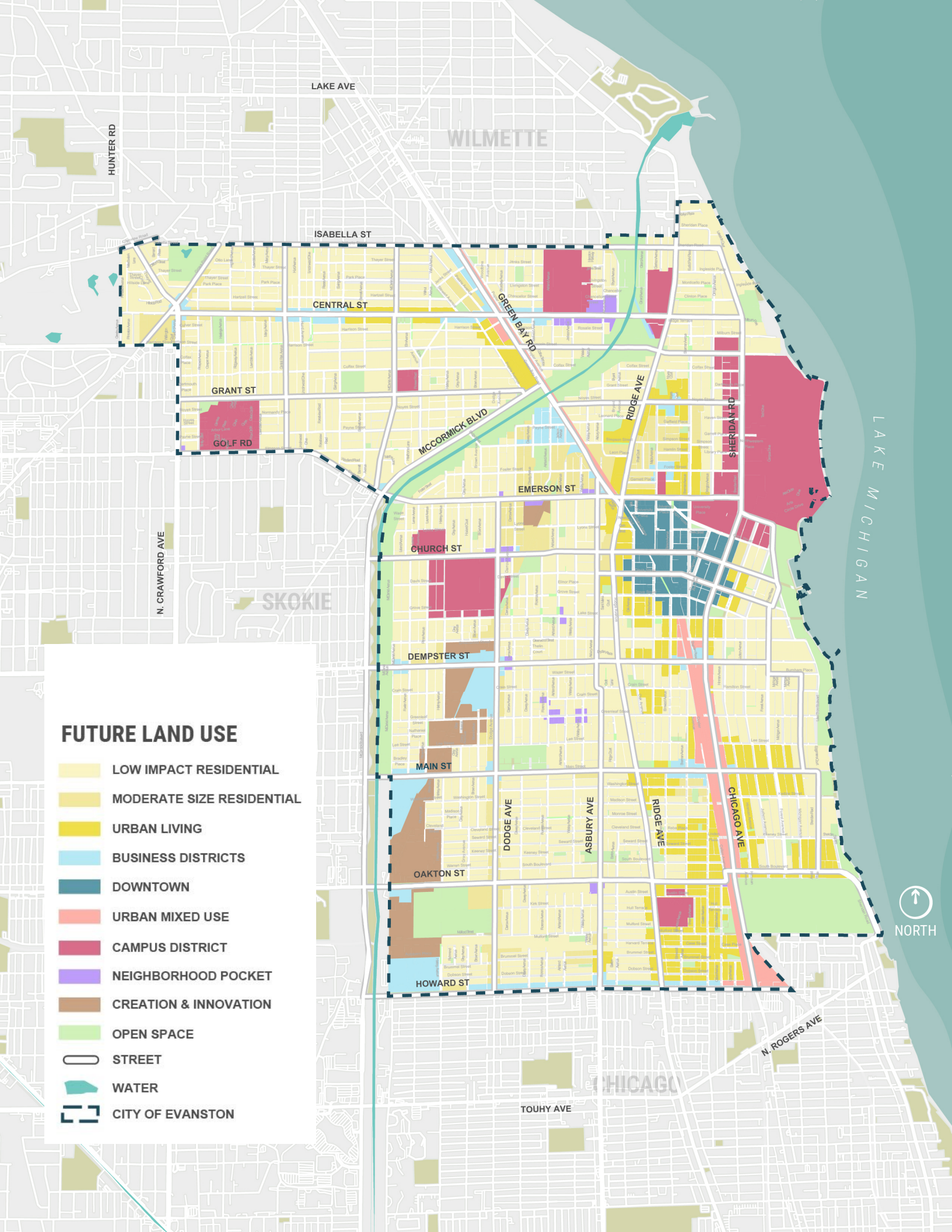
Each stage of the planning process will have distinct tasks and resulting reports that will come together to form the final plan and zoning code.

We want to hear from as many voices as possible. This plan will be built on understanding your lived experience!



Learn More

Visit us online at EnvisionEvanston2045.com to review documents and learn more about the process.



FUTURE LAND USE

- LOW IMPACT RESIDENTIAL
- MODERATE SIZE RESIDENTIAL
- URBAN LIVING
- BUSINESS DISTRICTS
- DOWNTOWN
- URBAN MIXED USE
- CAMPUS DISTRICT
- NEIGHBORHOOD POCKET
- CREATION & INNOVATION
- OPEN SPACE
- STREET
- WATER
- CITY OF EVANSTON



NORTH

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Chapter 2: Land Use

The Land Use Chapter outlines policy directives for Evanston’s land resource management, integrating environmental justice, equitable development, and smart growth principles to foster healthy, inclusive neighborhoods. This strategy emphasizes a “centers and corridors” framework, focusing on developing densely populated centers linked by transportation corridors with efficient public and active transit options. Centers are mixed-use hubs for economic, social, and cultural activities, enabling residents to live, work, and play in one area. Corridors, serving as vital links between centers, enhance connectivity and accessibility. This holistic approach and the policies outlined below support Evanston’s vision and goals for 2045.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Direct development to centers and corridors to ensure the efficient use of land and access to transportation choices and amenities.
2	Ensure development, infrastructure improvements, and zoning decisions implement the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.
3	Evaluate development and redevelopment proposals to measure their impact.
4	Prioritize capital improvement projects in centers and corridors.
5	Encourage the transition of industrial areas and buildings to support innovation districts with a thriving entrepreneurial and research scene that foster collaboration, innovation, and economic development through close proximity and shared resources.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
6	Collaborate with local institutions to implement Envision Evanston 2045 and address emerging trends.
7	Ensure public facilities are carbon neutral, support workforce and customer needs, and improve service delivery.
8	Prioritize efficient utility planning to sustain system adequacy, manage costs, and keep the City's utility rates competitive while addressing sustainability and climate resiliency.
9	Ensure equitable and proper stormwater management by improving infrastructure, programs, and regulations to improve the health of urban watersheds.
10	Ensure universal broadband access across all neighborhoods in Evanston by prioritizing underserved areas to close the digital divide to achieve 100% broadband availability by 2045.
11	Collaborate with the energy utilities to continue to modernize, decarbonize, and increase efficiency.



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Chapter 3: Transportation

Evanston’s development has historically been shaped by transportation planning and investments. This section emphasizes creating a comprehensive, multimodal transportation system that expands access to diverse transportation options. These efforts align with regional, statewide, and local goals. With climate change intensifying, reducing transportation emissions is critical. Investing in public and active transportation can decrease car dependency, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This approach and the policies detailed below support Evanston’s transportation goals for 2045.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Collaborate with and support regional transit partners to improve and expand Evanston’s transit network coverage, service levels, and vehicle decarbonization.
2	Invest in Evanston’s transit infrastructure and programs to ensure that transit is a safe, accessible, affordable, desirable, and convenient option.
3	Enhance the safety, accessibility, convenience, and usability of the existing active transportation network for all ages and abilities.
4	Invest in infrastructure and programs that encourage walking for both transportation and recreation.
5	Develop infrastructure that encourages use of the bike lane network.
6	Support and create programs that reduce financial and skill barriers, promote safe road practices, and increase participation in active transportation.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
7	Expand the shared active transportation fleet, integrating it into existing networks for maximum effectiveness.
8	Develop an educational and regulatory framework to support safe, positive active transportation experiences.
9	Support an increase in the share of electric vehicles (EVs) within Evanston.
10	Implement policies and infrastructure improvements that support EV use by the City of Evanston and other fleets operating in the city.
11	Encourage reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by Evanston residents.
12	Promote safe driving practices through infrastructure and traffic operations improvements.
13	Encourage infill development on surface parking lots.
14	Support data-driven parking management solutions.
15	Revise the parking fee structure to balance affordability with transient parking goals.
16	Apply best practices in street design and construction to promote all forms of transportation.
17	Manage truck and delivery vehicle use to support local businesses while minimizing adverse impacts.
18	Ensure seamless transitions between travel modes and service providers to enhance the user experience.

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Chapter 4: Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces are vital for enhancing physical, mental, and environmental well-being. They promote community health, improve quality of life, strengthen social bonds, connect people with nature, and preserve natural areas. By designing high-quality parks that reflect community demographics, we can increase equitable access and address environmental injustices. Focusing on community health, equity, and environmental resilience strengthens the cultural, economic, emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, and social fabric of our community. Parks also offer a means to address and reverse the impacts of past inequities. The policies below highlight the vision for Evanston’s parks and open spaces for 2045.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Evaluate existing park and recreation programming.
2	Ensure park facilities are age-appropriate based on user demographics.
3	Assess and invest equitably in parks.
4	Increase city investment to maintain and operate park and recreational facilities.
5	Evaluate and establish a plan for an accessible public bathroom system.

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Chapter 5: Environment

The climate, air quality, water, natural resources, and their sustainability are fundamental to life in Evanston. This chapter explores Evanston’s natural resources, ecosystems, green infrastructure, and urban tree canopy. Nature-based solutions can mitigate climate change, pollution, and resource scarcity. As Evanston grows, investing in its natural assets is essential for a sustainable future for all residents. The policies below outline the vision for the future of Evanston’s natural environment.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Incorporate climate resilience measures into infrastructure projects to mitigate future climate impacts, including increased flooding, heat waves, and storm events.
2	Effectively manage natural resources to optimize ecosystem health.
3	Effectively manage the tree canopy to optimize the benefits of the urban forest.
4	Employ land-use practices that optimize soil health.
5	Manage land along the lakeshore and the North Shore Channel to limit habitat degradation and protect and preserve water quality.
6	Ensure a sustainable water supply by protecting Lake Michigan and promoting water conservation practices across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.
7	Prioritize stormwater management strategies that protect water quality, manage flood risks, and enhance the natural function of wetlands, floodplains, and water bodies.
8	Increase circularity of materials and resources to reduce burdens on the environment.

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Chapter 6: Economic Development

Economic development enhances a community’s economic well-being and quality of life. Effective economic development builds a dynamic, sustainable economy, creates quality jobs that support residents’ prosperity, and improves overall quality of life. Fostering a vibrant, resilient local economy requires strategic planning and investments in business support, workforce development, and infrastructure. Evanston has the potential to exemplify how transforming local economies means not only creating jobs but also cultivating places where people want to live, work, and play. Policies supporting Evanston’s economic development are outlined below.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Increase economic mobility, especially those who have the lowest median household incomes.
2	Increase the number of families who choose to live in Evanston.
3	Provide support for the growing senior population.
4	Continue to create and preserve attractive public spaces and vibrant retail streets which contribute to Evanston’s unique identity.
5	Expand workforce development.
6	Continue revitalization efforts of the local retail economy.
7	Increase digital presence and awareness of Evanston as a desirable place to do business, to live, and to have fun.

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Chapter 7: Housing

This housing chapter outlines a framework to expand housing choices and supply, preserve existing homes, prevent displacement, and uphold Evanston’s racial and economic diversity. Key goals include ensuring that housing is fair, safe, stable, connected, healthy, affordable, and accessible. The Great Migration led to a significant increase in Evanston’s Black population, met largely with segregation policies, including steering as early as 1910. Decades of discriminatory practices, such as “slum clearance” targeting Black communities and racially motivated redlining (outlawed by the Fair Housing Act in 1968), have left a lasting legacy of inequity. These past harms, along with continued issues in zoning, land use, and housing policies, still impact Evanston today.

Access to safe and stable housing is vital for a healthy, diverse, and economically vibrant community, supporting residents’ physical, mental, and economic well-being. The following policy statements will guide housing decisions, linking them to core initiatives and aspirations for the community’s future.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Increase housing supply and housing choice.
2	Preserve current homes and prevent displacement.
3	Expand support for non-traditional housing models including community land trusts, shared housing, and limited-equity cooperatives.
4	Focus on healthy buildings and neighborhoods.
5	Expand revenue for housing initiatives.
6	Build and leverage local capacity and partnerships.

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Chapter 8: Placemaking, Arts and Culture

Placemaking is a multifaceted approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces that emphasizes community engagement, cultural expression, and the creation of vibrant, inclusive environments. Placemaking can take many forms, from the creation of lively public squares and pedestrian-friendly streets to the integration of public art and cultural events and activities that reflect a community's unique identity. Effective placemaking strategies create a strong sense of belonging and transform public spaces. Arts-based placemaking, focused not on the art itself but on fostering community connections, invites residents to engage, share ideas, and build bonds.

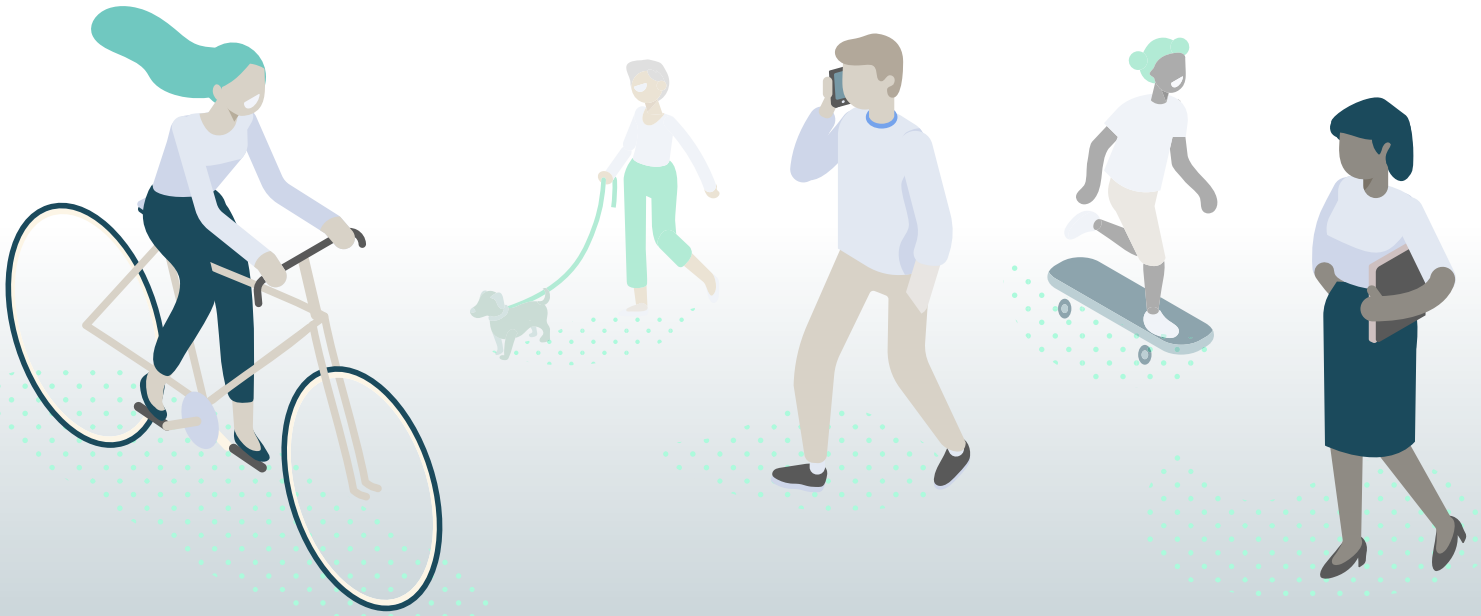
Arts and culture significantly shape Evanston's identity, enhance livability, drive economic development, and foster social cohesion. Through dance, music, murals, theater, and sculpture, art can create welcoming public spaces that contribute to the community's health, happiness, and multicultural dialogue. This approach and the associated policies that follow will allow Evanston to achieve its goal of celebrating arts and culture.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Make public spaces more accessible and friendly to all ages and abilities.
2	Encourage more ground-up placemaking initiatives in the community.
3	Align placemaking strategies with climate adaptation and mitigation goals.
4	Connect public spaces through a network of active transportation infrastructure.
5	Enhance cultural arts activities that increase participation in local arts and culture and engage all ages and abilities.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
6	Integrate arts and culture in City decision making.
7	Promote equity by including historically underrepresented communities in the creation and preservation of placemaking, arts, and culture.
8	Expand the use of public space for creative and cultural activities.



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Chapter 9: Preservation

Historic preservation is key to Evanston’s future, safeguarding the cultural, architectural, and historical assets that shape its identity and sense of place. As a foundational land-use tool, preservation helps balance the City’s long-term goals for economic development, housing, sustainability, and culture. Integrating historic preservation into future planning enables Evanston to retain its unique character and collective memory while supporting new housing, revitalization, and heritage tourism for future generations. The preservation of Evanston’s culture, architecture, and history is supported by the following policies.

Policies

POLICY	POLICY STATEMENT
1	Support adaptive use and rehabilitation of historic buildings to support the City’s economic development and housing goals.
2	Continue to survey and document properties eligible for historic designation and protection.
3	Promote historic preservation tools and approaches in line with the City’s growth, housing, and economic development goals.
4	Preserve spaces that embody historic, social, and cultural periods, people, and events.
5	Promote inclusive economic development in historic areas.
6	Establish, maintain, and leverage a range of incentives and programs to address neighborhood rehabilitation and stabilization needs.
7	Include residents, educational institutions, and other partners in preservation efforts.