



Memorandum

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee

From: Martin Lyons, Assistant City Manager
Johanna Leonard, Economic Development Division Manager
Economic Development Division Staff

Subject: 2016 First Quarter Report

Date: June 6, 2016

Summary & Highlights:

Although the winter months are typically slow for new business openings, January, February, and March of 2016 brought **22 new businesses** to Evanston compared to only 13 during the same period last year and 10 in the first three months of 2014. Evanston's vacancy rates for commercial space remain below those of neighboring communities due to the strong demand. Unemployment rates are similarly impacted, remaining below state and national averages closing out the first quarter at 4.9%

The first three months of 2016 saw Evanston named one of [Livability.com's top 10 downtowns](#) and a [2016 World Wildlife Fund Earth Hour](#) City, winning each of these honors for the second time. Other highlights from the first quarter included news that basketball star [Kareem Abdul Jabbar plans to sell part of his oriental rug collection at Minasian Rug Co.](#), the [president of Crate and Barrel buying a newly-constructed home in Evanston](#), and celebrity chef Alpana Singh announcing her latest restaurant concept, [Terra & Vine](#) which will open later this year in the former Bravo Cucina space in Downtown Evanston. The cast of NBC's *Chicago Fire* also spent some time [filming an episode of the show in Evanston](#).



In February, the newly-formed Evanston-North Shore Black Business Consortium held the first Tour De Noir bus tour in honor of Black History Month. The event showcased black-owned businesses throughout Evanston. The group also offered options for virtual tours and self-guided tours of over 30 participating businesses online.

New businesses:

22 new businesses opened their doors in Evanston during the first quarter of 2016, including the new **Dollar Tree** store in Evanston Plaza. In February, preservationist and investor Jennifer Pritzker opened **Stone Terrace Bed and Breakfast**, her second such venture after Stone Porch by the Lake. Financial services firm **Accuity** opened its new headquarters at 1007 Church Street, bringing 200 new jobs to downtown Evanston. Downtown Evanston also gained two new burger establishments this quarter, with both **Epic Burger** and **Red Robin Burger Works** opening their doors, along with Szechuan restaurant **Peppercorns Kitchen**. On Howard Street, **Maxwell Style Grill** took over the long-vacant former Dairy Queen building. Evanston businesses collectively produced over **\$4.3 million in sales tax** revenue during the first three months of 2016.



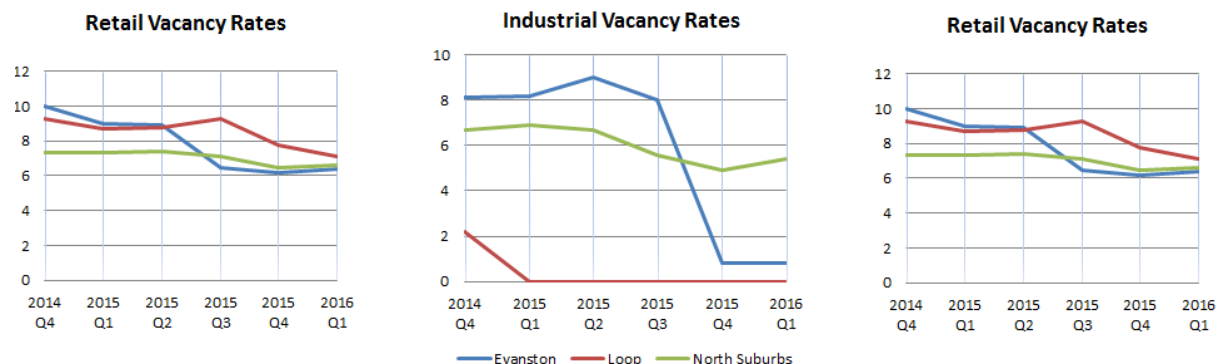
22 New Businesses in Q1 2016

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| Evanston Eye Wellness, 704 Main St. | Evanston Stitchworks, 906 Sherman Ave. |
| MVT Public Relations, 1007 Church St. | North Shore Athletics, 614 Dempster St. |
| Doug Human Photography, 1601 Payne St. | Exhale, 1890 Maple Ave. |
| Turing Group, 1718 Sherman Ave. | Breakthrough Technologies, 1880 Oak St. |
| Red Robin Burger Works, 1700 Maple Ave. | Epic Burger, 1622 Sherman Ave. |
| Pizza Hut, 1115 Emerson St. | Wired Coffee, Davis Street Metra Station |
| Accuity, 1007 Church St. | Dollar Tree, 1908 Dempster St. |
| Maxwell Style Grill, 999 Howard St. | Peppercorns Kitchen, 620 Davis St. |
| Stone Terrace Bed & Breakfast, 1622 Forest Pl. | Sweet Temptations Bake Shop, 607 Howard St. |
| WorkComp Strategies of Illinois, 900 Chicago Ave. | MEP Infrastructure Solutions, 1603 Orrington Ave. |

Construction & Real Estate:

The City received **\$953,436 from commercial building permits** from an estimated **\$52.7 million** in commercial construction activity throughout the city this quarter, including work on new and existing buildings, including the Hotel Orrington, Sketchbook Brewing Company, and a multi-unit commercial building located at 1806 Church Street. On the Northwestern University campus, continuing work on Rocky Miller Park, Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts, and a new residence hall on Lincoln Street were among the largest projects receiving permits this quarter.

Vacancy rates for commercial property in Evanston remained below those of neighboring communities in nearly every category, suggesting strong demand. The City



Clerk's office recorded **196 real estate transactions** between January 1 and March 31 of 2016, 17 of which were sales in excess of one millions dollars. These transactions include both commercial and residential property sales, which generated a total of **\$425,789 in real estate transfer tax revenue** in the first quarter.

Entrepreneurship & Workforce Development:

In March, the Youth & Young Adult Services Division hosted the annual job fair for the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. This year's event was the largest ever, drawing 615 Evanston teens and 50 area employers, including Northwestern University, McGaw YMCA, the City of Evanston, and Six Flags Great America.

The second cohort of the Sunshine Enterprises Community Business Academy began on January 30th with 24 women and minority business owners participating in weekly classes at the Gibbs-Morrison Cultural Center. The next cohort will begin in June.

The Economic Development Division partnered with NorthShore Community Bank and Northwestern University to host a startup showcase event at The Garage, Northwestern University's on-campus entrepreneurship lab. The event drew 100 attendees to hear pitches from five Evanston companies.

Evanston's unemployment rate remained lower than state and national unemployment rates throughout the first three months of 2016.

