

**CITY OF EVANSTON  
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION  
July 14, 2005**

**Group 1:** *Thinking about the future of the City of Evanston, identify the types of services, businesses, entertainment, neighborhoods, general land use that would be most important to consider in the strategic planning process.*

**Types of Services:**

- ❑ Assessment of existing services before adding new ones
  - Trash, police, fire, public works, parks/recreation
- ❑ Connecting downtown to satellite business districts, e.g., trolley
- ❑ Development process (e.g., easier, faster, address appearance)
- ❑ Liaison to City for satellite business districts
- ❑ 1 person at City for small businesses to go to for questions and assistance
- ❑ Comprehensive zoning city-wide (not just neighborhoods/wards)
- ❑ Accessible transportation throughout City (e.g., city-wide transportation study to include pedestrian involvement, address crosswalks with traffic incidents (sign))
- ❑ Emphasis on helping families and community (e.g., work together on problems – reduce crime, fire prevention, etc.)
- ❑ Non-monetary promotion of non-profits (e.g., networking, coordination of services especially among grantees)
- ❑ Coordinate enforcement/changes to utility infrastructure
- ❑ Permanent City/University relations committee

**Businesses:**

- ❑ Promotion of independent businesses and programs to encourage them (e.g., network of services, marketing)
  - De-commercialization
  - Keep and regain character of Evanston
    - Sherman Plaza shops – national
    - Loss of theatres at Central Street
- ❑ Maintain mix of retail – national and small independent
- ❑ Ensure strong corporate consciousness/conscience
  - Community involvement when large corporations proposed
- ❑ Focus not just on retail, but knowledge base in Evanston and innovative businesses – jobs, revenue, education population
  - Northwestern University as partner and other large institutions (hospitals, rotary) to retain/enhance knowledge base and related businesses

- ❑ Ensure balance of residential/commercial land use
- ❑ Promote small business park
- ❑ Require corporate give-backs (e.g., mentoring)

### **Entertainment:**

- ❑ Cultural arts center
- ❑ More night clubs, music, night life
- ❑ Bring back Northlight Theatre
- ❑ More theater, dance, performing arts
  - Partner with Northwestern
  - More networking/marketing among art groups
- ❑ Arts apprentice programs for youth, etc., with give-backs to the community
- ❑ Arts districts/campus/street
- ❑ More development of work/live spaces for creative artists

### **Neighborhoods:**

- ❑ Family-focused
- ❑ More community centers
- ❑ ID type of neighborhoods
- ❑ Continue mix use with pedestrian traffic and local customer base
- ❑ Green/beautify neighborhoods – unified effort across City while still maintaining character of different neighborhoods
- ❑ Enhanced public safety – seniors, youth, etc.
- ❑ Workable traffic patterns
- ❑ More neighborhood activities, fairs, street festivals
- ❑ Enhance inter-neighborhood activities and promotion
  - Get people to go to other neighborhoods
- ❑ More art fairs
- ❑ Enhance each neighborhood to be a destination

### **General Land Use:**

- ❑ Create industrial park
- ❑ Neighborhood commercial districts/base
- ❑ Design of artist districts
- ❑ Keep lake accessible
  - Monitor Lake Shore Drive
- ❑ Encourage residential/retail density at transit

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**Group 2:** A SWOT Analysis. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

**Strengths:**

- Walking community
- Location – North of Chicago / close to lake
- Public transit
- Transition between urban and suburban – we are a City
- Diversity/racial/ethnic/class
- Human resources – education – civic commitment
- Arts and culture – arts organizations
- Large important inst., i.e., educational/medical/rotary
- Housing for seniors
- Neighborhoods/diverse housing stock
- Traditions – good government/religious/mora/political
- Tolerance
- Strong business districts
- Law enforcement
- Schools
- Open space/parks/trees/recreation
- Manageable density
- Capital – wealth
- Support for mentally ill
- Northwestern University

**Weaknesses:**

- Aging infrastructure, i.e., roads, city buildings
- Limited tax base
- High property tax
- Move from public to private schools
- Affordable housing
- Urban spill over – traffic, crime
- Town/government relations
- Lack of vision and strategies

- ❑ Lack of coordinated leadership in government
- ❑ Little follow through on previous plans
- ❑ Government bureaucracy
- ❑ Loss of corp. headquarters, colleges, and manufacturing
- ❑ Self-satisfied complacency
- ❑ Citizen over involvement in government
- ❑ Polarization of issues
- ❑ Racism/segregation
- ❑ Non-protection of environment

### **Opportunities:**

- ❑ Improved town/government relations
- ❑ New leadership on board/City
- ❑ Growing the tax base – making City more business friendly
- ❑ New residential development – new residents/harnessing their resources
- ❑ Internet
- ❑ Creative transportation developments
- ❑ Rethink City from environment and resource
- ❑ Business and arts working together
- ❑ College student involvement
- ❑ Pilot City on various topics such as environment, class relations, good government, etc.
- ❑ Political clout in state and national government

### **Threats:**

- ❑ Long-term availability of energy/price
- ❑ Unrestricted market forces
- ❑ High turnover – demographic and economic
- ❑ Lack of urban planning
- ❑ Gridlock – traffic
- ❑ Crime
- ❑ Pollution
- ❑ Greed
- ❑ Loss of economic and other diversity
- ❑ Over communication
- ❑ Transit cuts
- ❑ Erosion of confidence in public schools



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**Group 3:** *Thinking about the future of the City of Evanston, identify the types of services, businesses, entertainment, neighborhoods, general land use that would be most important to consider in the strategic planning process.*

**Types of Services:**

- Transportation
  - Issue of planning (density)
  - (1) ○ Alternative forms of transportation (non-fossil fuel, bicycle paths on streets, trolleys, shuttles)
  - Collaborative planning with neighboring municipalities (i.e., Chicago, etc.)
- Roads
  - Maintenance
  - Spend more \$ on roads
  - Traffic flow
  - Vision for road development
- (2) □ Staff that can support “kids in trouble” and underachieving kids; vocational/other opportunities for non-college bound kids
- Need to enhance feeling of safety for all citizens, in all neighborhoods
  - (2) ○ Strong police and fire
- Shovel sidewalks/snow removal
- Need alternative sources of revenue
- (3) □ Willingness to spend more \$ for services

**Businesses:**

- Fewer chains and more independent businesses
  - Quality of chain
  - Commitment to the community
  - Fewer junky auto repair shops
- More clothing stores (all ages, more affordable)
- Keep tech companies in town
- Support for existing, smaller businesses
  - Assess what they need to thrive, grow
- (1) □ Stronger bond between city, chamber, businesses
- (2) □ Parking friendly environment
  - Use of underground parking
  - Review use of parking meters
- Willingness to pay more for service

## **Entertainment:**

- Preservation of lake front for entertainment
  - (1) ○ Maintain open green spaces – public access
- (2) □ Encourage development of entertainment in non-downtown areas, ex:
  - Arcades
  - Activities for kids
  - Bowling alley
- Need to look at use of rec/community centers
- Keep great performance groups here
- (3) □ More performance spaces
- More music
- City and NU – more cooperation with the arts

## **Neighborhoods:**

- (1) □ Maintaining quality of life and integrity of neighborhoods
- (1a) □ Control traffic and noise in neighborhoods
- (1b) □ Limit encroachment of development on neighborhoods
- (1c) □ Assess which neighborhoods (that do not have them) need community centers
- Enhanced def/use of TIF districts
  - Way we use them and where
- More medical clinics serving the neighborhoods
- Integration of new residents
  - How to encourage involvement
  - Assess needs for services
  - How to introduce to the City
    - Welcome wagons, meetings with Alderman

## **General Land Use:**

- (1) □ May need to revisit existing zoning ordinance to determine if they work for community
- (1a) □ Stricter architectural use
- (1a) □ Green space – in all areas
- (1a) □ Walking paths
- (1a) □ Setbacks
- (1a) □ Density and height considerations
- What is it developers need to make a profit – development process needs to take into account existing zoning ordinance

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**Group 4:** *Certain trends are occurring in society and the world that will have an impact on the City; which should we consider in our planning process?*

- Terrorism
- Use of land
- Increasing diversity
- Growing intolerance
- Job outsourcing
- Cuts in educational spending
- Gaps in income threat to middle class
- Tax increases (property)
- Shifting responsibility from federal government – state – municipality
- Aging population
- Increase in violent crimes
- Shifting of blame
- Local government spending
- Technological advancement
- Environmental trends and issues (green movement)
- Downtown development does not cross socioeconomic lines
- Increased housing costs
- Less affordable housing
- Pushing seniors out for young professionals
- Increased energy costs
- Local transportation
- Streets
  - Traffic/speed bumps
  - Increased traffic
  - Traffic management
- Disassociation with school system
- School failure with lower socioeconomic students
- Economic and social polarization
- Transportation (public)
- Inequitable distribution of public transportation resources (routes cut in poorer neighborhoods)

- ❑ Gender
- ❑ Vocal minority control
- ❑ Lack of resources for Latino community (i.e., grocery store)
- ❑ Trend toward green design
- ❑ Condo dwellers – new trend in town (young and empty nesters)

**Summary:** (key priorities)

- ❑ Inadequate distribution of resources
  - Education
  - Transportation
  - Job training
  - Affordable housing
  - Vocal minority
- ❑ Aging population shift
- ❑ Shifting responsibility from federal – state – municipality
- ❑ Green and sustainable development
  - Use of resources
  - Conservation of energy resources
  - Healthy building and development practices
  - Transportation
- ❑ Urban/downtown revitalization
  - Pros
  - Cons – ignore neighborhoods
- ❑ Destination neighborhoods

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**Group 5:** *Considering that there are always more things to do than we have time and resources, what opportunities/issues facing the City of Evanston should we focus on?*

**Key Areas of Focus:**

- (1)  Preserving character
  - Preserving context, quality, and character of diversity (the good things)
  - Neighborhood business districts, support and revitalize
  - Supporting branch libraries
  - Residential and commercial quality of neighborhood, pedestrian enabled – quality of, fosters foot and bicycle traffic – barrier free
  - Education at all levels
  - Affordable housing and distribution of affordable housing
- (2)  Taxes
  - Taxes that effect residential community and retention of families
- (3)  Long-term quality development/environment
  - Design guidelines
  - Grow tax base – diversity – but done carefully and with quality
  - Long-term development plan
  - Follow existing plans – adopted
  - Maintain and attract employers
  - New Civic Center on Westside with community rooms and facilities for children
  - Westside development
  - City in drivers seat in development – use it, for quality, quality, quality
  - Green buildings, bike path, environmental concerns
  - Litter, gum on sidewalks
  - Street bicycle paths marked
  - Policies that reward use of public transportation
  - Improve access to public transportation, walkways, signage, dialog with CTA/Pace/Metra

- (4)  Infrastructure improvement
  - Streets, sidewalks, parks, lighting
  - Industrial and commercial tax base
- (5)  Northwestern
  - Relationship with Northwestern
    - Resolve, communicate, partnership, constructive relationship
- (6)  Crime
  - Gang and organized criminal activity
- (7)  Customer service
  - Customer response system – automated
  - Communication between government and citizens
  - Community outreach programs, projects, informational series
  - Wireless access across city (wifi, wimax) for profit
  - Monthly report, short status report on issues



**Executive Partners**  
Strategy Design and Execution



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**Group 6:** *A SWOT Analysis. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.*

**Strengths:**

- People
- Willingness to participate
- Lakefront and beaches
- 3 core downtowns
- Accessibility
- Mass transit
- Neighborhoods
- Grass roots organizations
- Parks/green space
- Educational and cultural institutions
- University
- Diversity – cultural, racial, economic
- City Manager form of government
- Police and fire
- City – not a suburb
- Geographic location
- Progressive mindset
- Evanston is a state of mind attitude
- Housing
- Architecture
- Trees
- Resourceful

### **Weaknesses:**

- ❑ Street conditions
- ❑ Sidewalk conditions
- ❑ Too much through traffic
- ❑ City responsiveness
- ❑ Zoning does not protect neighborhoods
- ❑ Parking in the neighborhoods
- ❑ Not enough open space
- ❑ Evaluation process of residential parking
- ❑ Pedestrian safety
- ❑ Lack of space for large industry
- ❑ Failure to implement the bike plan
- ❑ Density (population and building)
- ❑ Human services for youth – antisocial
- ❑ Too accommodating
- ❑ Northwestern's relationship with City
- ❑ Taxes
- ❑ Finding and maintaining affordable housing
- ❑ Dual school districts
- ❑ Racial isolation/interaction

### **Opportunities:**

- ❑ Creating new small businesses
- ❑ More downtown residential for economic development
- ❑ Re-evaluate master plan (comp plan) with an eye toward rewriting the zoning ordinance to protect neighborhoods
- ❑ More environmentally sensitive and visionary
- ❑ Use existing manufacturing areas to draw more in
- ❑ Be more pedestrian friendly
- ❑ More neighborhood parking lots

### **Threats:**

- ❑ Gangs
- ❑ Drugs
- ❑ Violence
- ❑ High cost of real estate
- ❑ Traffic
- ❑ Pollution – air, water, noise
- ❑ Taxes
- ❑ Losing our middle class
- ❑ Disparity between growth of city and taxes
- ❑ Inability for the second generation to live in Evanston
- ❑ Inability to pay for all city services



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**Group 7:** *Considering that there are always more things to do than we have time and resources, what opportunities/issues facing the City of Evanston should we focus on?*

**Key Areas of Focus:**

- (1)  Cultivate and nurture “the City of ideas”
- (2)  Efficient and responsive government
- (3a)  Engage in positive environmental practices
- (3b)  Celebrate and participate in the network of communities that are engaged in protecting the lake and region wide resources (natural)
- (4)  Remain mindful of the importance of education
- (5)  Maintain quality of life and enhance tax base
- (a)  Encourage elected officials to focus on governance vs. management
- (b)  Implement bike plan
- (c)  Streamline the decision making process (more efficient
- (d)  Forge a successful partnership with Northwestern
- (e)  Create a traffic and transportation scheme
- (f)  Maintain a good place for retirement
- (g)  Tax exempt property issues
- (h)  Encourage and welcome participation from “all” citizens in Evanston
- (i)  Identify and recognize trends and demographics that may affect the City

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**Group 8:** *Certain trends are occurring in society and the world that will have an impact on the City; which should we consider in our planning process?*

- ❑ Eminent domain
- ❑ Aging/growth of the senior population
- ❑ Affordable housing
- ❑ Non-renewable resources
- ❑ Energy efficiency
- ❑ Access/cost of health care
- ❑ High expectation for education
  - Not fund/education government
- ❑ Tax base; mix of commercial - non-profit entities – global thinking – economy
- ❑ Community of small business
- ❑ Changing family structures
  - Grandparents raising children
  - Growing gay community
  - Poverty
  - Altered human services response
  - More guidance for minority students
  - Early intervention
- ❑ More balanced education curriculum for minorities
- ❑ Globalized community/more diversity
- ❑ Higher educational standards for students – raised level of education
- ❑ Aids/HIV
- ❑ Kids taking personal responsibility
- ❑ Greater emphasis on education/socialization
- ❑ Class – ism in education
  - Well to do vs. poor
- ❑ City infrastructure
  - Better planning
  - More citizen information
  - Street improvements
- ❑ Inclusiveness of all races in the education system

- ❑ Privacy
- ❑ Security/terrorism
  - No money to enhance City services
- ❑ Diversity within Evanston
- ❑ Market control
  - Development
  - Housing
  - Property taxes
- ❑ Transportation/congestion – too many cars/bicycles
- ❑ Pedestrian safety

**Summary:** (key trends)

- ❑ Global economy
- ❑ Changing family structure
- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Diversity
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Financing for public services
- ❑ Energy/environment

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**Group 9:** *Make a list of all the governmental City services that you can think of. Evaluate 1-10 (10 being high).*

<b><u>City Services:</u></b>	<b><u>Ranking</u></b>
(1) <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety	
<input type="checkbox"/> Police/fire	9
(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Public works	
<input type="checkbox"/> Streets	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Water	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering/department of transportation	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	3
(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Human resources	
<input type="checkbox"/> Health	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health	9
<input type="checkbox"/> General assistance	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Community on aging	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Child care	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Latino ombudsman	
(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Community development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Building	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Property maintenance	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing rehab	
<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing	3
(3) <input type="checkbox"/> Parks/recreation/forestry	
<input type="checkbox"/> Park maintenance	6.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Park development	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch Elms	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Beaches	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation programs	8

	○ Community centers	8
	○ Arts	9
	○ Festivals	9
(6)	□ Library	9
(5)	□ Economic development	8
(7)	□ City administration	8
	○ Finance	
	○ City clerk	
	○ Office of management/budget	

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**Group 10:** *Make a list of all the governmental City services that you can think of. Evaluate 1-10 (10 being high).*

<b><u>City Services:</u></b>	<b><u>Ranking</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Water and sewer	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Police	7.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Drug enforcement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire	8.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and human services	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Streets	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Snow removal	2, 5, 7
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage pick up/sanitation	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	8.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Community development	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking enforcement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public land beautification	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	
<input type="checkbox"/> DARE program	
<input type="checkbox"/> Crime prevention	
<input type="checkbox"/> Human resources	
<input type="checkbox"/> City clerk	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior citizen ombudsman	
<input type="checkbox"/> Street repairs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Elm tree inoculation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree maintenance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer youth employment	
<input type="checkbox"/> City engineer	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation infrastructure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior services	

	<b><u>Ranking</u></b>
❑ Fire/paramedic services	9
❑ Liquor licensing	
❑ Voter services	
❑ Permits	
❑ Inspections – property standards	
❑ Police – emergency response	
❑ Emergency response – disaster preparation	
❑ Mental health services	
❑ Traffic engineering	4
❑ Alderman/legislative	
❑ Family planning/HIV clinic	
❑ Dental services	
❑ Birth and death records	
❑ Lakefront/beach services	
❑ Homeless services	4
❑ Parks and recreation classes/programs	
❑ Libraries	10
❑ Farmer’s market	10
❑ Youth services	
❑ Preservation	
❑ Public art	9