

**DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES
AND OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING**

CABLE ADMINISTRATION	2
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	3
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	4
FIRE FIGHTING AND EMS	5
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	6
HUMAN RELATIONS	7
HUMAN RESOURCES	8
LAW DEPARTMENT	9
LIBRARY	10
PARKS/FORESTRY AND RECREATION	11
POLICING	13
PUBLIC WORKS	14

CABLE ADMINISTRATION TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Critical issues to consider are:

- ❑ Cable companies are finding ways to reduce revenues coming back to the City.
- ❑ Legislation is being proposed that would seriously impact the ability of cities to charge for and control the use of their right-of-way.
- ❑ VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) will reduce City revenues from telephone tax and 911 surcharges.

Opportunities to consider are:

- ❑ Combining and negotiating cable franchises for several communities.
- ❑ Consolidation of Public Access space between communities to reduce costs.
- ❑ The Evanston Community Media Center (ECMC) is one of the finest public access operations in the Chicago area.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- ❑ Current development trends in Evanston are primarily mixed use, mid-rise to high-rise, with ground floor retail and condominiums built above. Should this trend continue? Should there be mandatory design guidelines or mandatory architectural review? Should the City wide redevelopment continue, or do we risk losing the "character" of Evanston?
- ❑ What should Evanston's approach to affordable housing be?
- ❑ What is the best approach to redeveloping sections of the west side, while not disturbing the housing affordability and character of the neighborhoods?
- ❑ Best approach to improving Howard Street.
- ❑ How can we best preserve our landmark and historic districts?
- ❑ The Zoning ordinance needs to be amended to reflect the concerns and issues confronting Evanston in 2005. Evanston is a much different community than in 1993 when the ordinance was last amended.
- ❑ The development process needs to be studied and reviewed, to insure that the process is understandable, and performed in a timely fashion, with concerns for developer timelines and affected neighborhood input.
- ❑ How do we retain our middle class in Evanston, with the current cost of housing, property taxes, and other expenses?
- ❑ What is the best approach for keeping commercial vacancy rates low, while providing the goods and services that Evanstonians need?
- ❑ How much of our downtown retail should be devoted to serving the needs of Northwestern students?
- ❑ Once Sherman plaza is completed, should there be continued redevelopment in the downtown? What parts of the downtown should not be touched?

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

- There is a need for a long-term strategic plan for all City facilities – acquisition, renovation, disposal, and maintenance.

This would include the Civic Center. Technological opportunities should also be considered.

- With the projections of continued rising energy costs, comprehensive emergency management systems (lighting, HVAC, etc.) are needed to help reduce energy corruption.

The community expects comfortable – green buildings to work in.

- In case of terrorism or other emergency events, an emergency management/ business continuation plan for facilities would be an important consideration.

Some FEMA and state funds may be available. Some information from national agencies may also be available.

FIRE FIGHTING AND EMS TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

- In the last 10 years, fire and life safety service calls have increased over 20%.

This trend is projected to continue as you consider increased residential occupancies, increased building densities and the aging population.

Fire fighting methodologies are changing for all structural fire fights and, particularly, in dealing with increased number of high-rise buildings.

- Technology will continue to improve the way we do our job. Technology will improve in the way we need to track and account for all firefighters during a fire and to be able to monitor their health and welfare on a real-time basis. We will also need to depend on technology to get information to us in a timelier manner to address hazardous materials and environments, pre-plans of buildings and patient information.
- Over the last couple of years, we have seen a turnover of personnel, many of which were hired in the late 1970's. Currently:
 - 25% of the department has less than 5 years
 - 4 of the 4 Division Chiefs are eligible to retire
 - 3 of the 3 Shift Chiefs are eligible to retire
 - 13 of the 27 Captains are eligible to retire

As a result, training will continue to be a critical component to prepare members for promotions and other responsibilities.

- Homeland Security will continue to be an unknown variable where the responsibility will fall initially on local responders.

Long-term improvement of the EMA center should be a consideration.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Important trends to consider are:
 - Evanston is unique – not Chicago – not north suburbs, but the problems of each
 - This leads to a unique matrix of service demands which may not be adequately supported by public, private, and state agencies, i.e.,
 - Evanston hospital direction
 - State public health direction
 - Changing community demographics
 - Increasing gay population
 - Increasing blue collar African American population – leadership???
 - Reduced blue collar community in other ethnic groups - cost of living escalation
 - Aging “eccentric groups” becoming much larger community health and safety issues

- Critical issues to consider are:
 - Funding a decentralized community approach to a unique problem matrix
 - Can we obtain our share of centralized external funding sources?
 - Department time and energy to address the aging issues
 - Insular community outlook
 - A need for a strategic vision for health and human services

- Opportunities to consider are:
 - Develop an Evanston health and human services vision
 - Define and develop a viable funding strategy for the Evanston niche matrix
 - Develop strategic aging and mental health programs
 - Work with community resources on leadership development for ethnic groups
 - Think as a unified body for health and human services

**HUMAN RELATIONS
TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- ❑ Since the minority representation in the community is on the increase, there is a need to bring these cultures together.
- ❑ Since Section 8 voucher holders are continuing to increase (900+ to 1,000 in last two years), there is an increasing need to assist them in developing a productive relationship with their landlords.
- ❑ Determining a strategy to maintaining as much of the current 14,000 residential rental units would be important.
- ❑ Continuing to create job opportunities and assistance for our youth, needs to be a key focus.

HUMAN RESOURCES TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Important trends to consider are:
 - Increased turnover
 - Increased health insurance utilization – cost escalation
 - Increasing demands for succession planning
 - Use of technology driving additional competency demands on all employees
 - Dramatically increased activity in human resource functions (hiring, training, evaluation, benefits, negotiations ...)

- Critical issues to consider are:
 - Communications – must be more comprehensive, extensive, timely, and clear
 - Need a vision for the human resource environment:
 - Culture?
 - Retention or early retirement?
 - Promote from within or outside?
 - Training – what, where, how?
 - Part time, full time, permanent part time mix?
 - Specific department requirements?
 - HR needs to know where departments are going to develop good support

- Opportunities to consider are:
 - Jointly develop an HR vision
 - Update HR infrastructure
 - Implement proactive management training
 - Develop a team environment with all stakeholders from council to employees
 - Implement integrated communications plan

**LAW DEPARTMENT
TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- City of Evanston is beginning to manage law suites and claims, and the circumstances leading up to them, proactively, in an effort to resolve and reduce such actions. Law suites at the moment are declining.

This will require more coordination and training among City departments.

- There is an opportunity to change our relationship with the not-for-profit organizations in the City of Evanston and reduce or eliminate the litigation tension.
- There is not only a need for “new” hearing procedures relative to plan commission, preservation commission, and zoning board, but also a need for comprehensive revision of ordinances applied by these bodies.

LIBRARY TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

- The internet is changing the information needed from the library.
 - Library patrons are spending less time in the library.
 - Questions for librarians are more complex because simple research questions can be answered quickly through the internet.

The library will need to expand beyond the four walls of the library. Library service will need to be brought outside of the actual library. Reference database and other sophisticated tools will need to be offered to library patrons.

New thinking regarding library space and what that means, as well as fee structures tied to level of service will be important considerations.

- The service to children of all ages needs to be expanded and upgraded.
 - Kids have more sophisticated needs.
 - The space needs to be inviting and more child focused.

Currently expanding the children's room. Creating more age focused zones.

- Allocation of resources needs to be watched closely.
 - Librarians do not have enough time to spend with patrons.
 - Need to aspire to do a good job in every area – instead of an adequate job.
- Expand library services to better reach lower income individuals – especially children.

Have set up an Outreach program to bring the library to lower income areas.

- Future challenges include:
 - Resource allocation
 - Continued use of internet
 - Promotion and marketing of library services
 - Expanding internet use will drive more complex questions that need more time from librarians.

PARKS/FORESTRY AND RECREATION TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Increasing demand over the last several years is driving the following strategic park and recreation considerations:

- **Facilities**

Evanston's 4 recreation facilities, Noyes Cultural Arts Center, and the Ecology Center are a critical component to the fabric of the community. Continued capital investment in all of these facilities is essential in meeting the ever-increasing demand for services.

The Crown Center requires replacement and will become non-functional without reconstruction.

- **Programs**

Recreation, cultural arts, and environmental programs promote healthy behaviors and result in an improved quality of life for all participants.

Additional program opportunities are necessary for certain key programming areas to meet the increasing demand of the citizens.

This is proven by the societal trend toward a healthy life style and increase in demand for outdoor recreation.

More program opportunity is tied to facility considerations above.

- **Parks**

Parks and open space provide families with a safe place to recreate, while developing community pride and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

There is a continued need for park redevelopment and renovation in support of balancing open space, park utilization, code compliance, and demand.

The national trend toward more outdoor recreational space and unique facilities will require new innovative approaches.

- **Scholarships**

It is incumbent on the City to provide equal opportunities for all individuals to participate in programs regardless of socioeconomic status.

The demographics of the community require an even greater need to scholarship programs in the future.

- Continued development and maintenance of Evanston's urban forest is extremely important to the character of the City.
 - The pruning programs have reduced overtime storm clean-up costs.
 - Diversity of tree species must be maintained in order to protect the integrity of the urban forest.

POLICING TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Policing experience level in transition
 - 50% of sworn officers are under 5 years of service
 - 18% of sworn officers are eligible for retirement

This will continue to impact development of future leadership and, perhaps, the need for incentives.

- Resourcing to budgeted levels
 - Societal trend – less people want careers in policing
 - Routinely operate at staffing levels 15% below full staffing levels (i.e., vacancies, academy, FTO, OJJ, etc.)

This will probably require a different approach to resourcing and structuring police work.

- Evanston is a destination (or at least a passage way for those living outside of Evanston)
 - 66% of all traffic stops are non-Evanston residents
- Crime rates have declined 43% since 1995 and police service call levels have declined 13% in the same time frame.

Although release of incarcerated individuals is projected to increase and may have an impact on crime rates.

- Future challenges include:
 - Maintain commitment to quality of life issues
 - Core downtown safety
 - Robberies
 - Traffic flow and parking
 - Gangs/drugs – especially Hispanics
 - Homeland security
 - ID theft/computer crime
 - Domestic violence

**PUBLIC WORKS
TOP ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONSIDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- The number one issue is funding of street redevelopment. Based on a consultant study done 3 years ago, Evanston is investing about half of the necessary 4 million dollars recommended.
 - This is one of those pay me now or pay me later issues and is clearly an important citizen concern.
- Finding ways to partner and, perhaps, leverage viaduct owners should be an important planning consideration, more aggressive recycling is a potential cost savings opportunity.
- Renegotiating our water contracts is a potential revenue opportunity.