

CITY OF EVANSTON

ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY INVESTIGATION



REPORT

DRAFT 11-14-2025



City of
Evanston™

Acknowledgments



This report was developed with the support of hundreds of dedicated Evanston neighbors and stakeholders who shared their time, energy, input, and ideas across the 15-month investigation process.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

The place we know today as Evanston was the ancestral homeland of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk nations.

It was also a crossroads and gathering place for many other Native Peoples. We respectfully acknowledge and honor the Native Peoples of this land, as well as the diverse Native communities who call this area home today.

Labor Acknowledgment

Like all institutions and forms of government in the U.S., Evanston benefits from the unaddressed legacy of stolen labor that is at the foundation of this nation and its vast and inequitable wealth. We respectfully acknowledge this debt to enslaved people, primarily of African descent, whose labor and suffering built and grew the economy and infrastructure of a nation that refused to recognize their humanity.

While the practice of slavery is officially ended, we know that the impacts from this unjust and cruel practice are still felt by many today.



Community Leaders

Janet Alexander Davis

Co-chair, Environmental Justice Evanston

Virna Garcia

Community Organizing and Family Issues

Jerri Garl

Co-chair, Environmental Justice Evanston

Jack Jordan

Executive Director, Climate Action Evanston

Ndonga Muboyayi

NAACP Evanston Branch, Youth Council

Audrey Rose

Community Member and Activist

Baxter Swilley

Communication Manager, Evanston Cradle to Career

Andrew Wymer

District 65 School Board Official
NAACP Evanston Branch

City of Evanston Staff

Cara Pratt

Sustainability and Resilience Officer, Department of
Sustainability & Resilience

Kirsten Dreihobl Vega

Sustainability and Resilience Coordinator, Department of
Sustainability & Resilience

Kristin Meyer, MPH

Management Analyst, Department of Health & Human
Services

Consultant Team

MKSK

CDTA Partners

Added Dimension

Revitalized Communities

Table of Contents

1

Introduction

Purpose of the Study
Community Outreach & Engagement

P. 6

2

Environmental Injustice in Evanston

Historical Injustice
Investigation Framework
Open Space, Parks & Trees
Housing & Development
Streets & Transportation
Community Services

P. 22

3

A Framework for Environmental Equity in Evanston

Introduction
Open Space, Parks & Trees
Housing & Development
Streets & Transportation
Community Services

P. X

4

Building Capacity for Environmental Equity

Introduction
Action Framework

P. X

1 Introduction

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Purpose of the Investigation

What is Environmental Equity?

The natural environment and humans are intrinsically connected. When one is healthy and cared for, so is the other. This relationship, however, also works in the inverse. As reported by the Brookings Institution, “environmental destruction and racial injustice have always been interlinked—through colonialism, enslavement, and structurally racist policies such as segregation and single-family zoning. Such wealth-extracting systems have adversely impacted Black communities and increased their vulnerability to environmental burdens.”¹

This investigation centers on environmental equity in Evanston, Illinois, and the impacts that community members face when systemic inequities and burdens exist over many generations. For the purposes of this investigation, the following definition of **environmental equity** was used:

All people have the same opportunities for health and prosperity without unfair disadvantages from physical, economic, or social structures.

Why Study Environmental Equity?

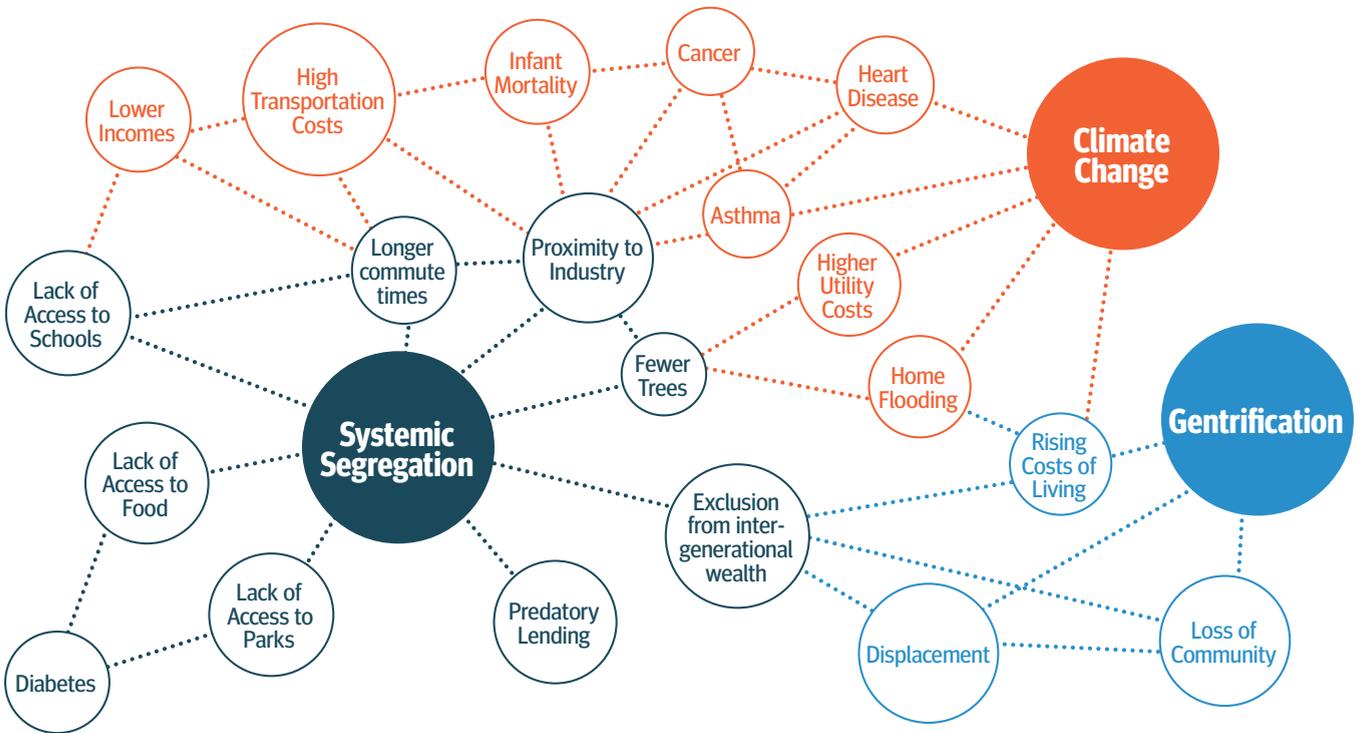
This investigation was initiated after the City of Evanston adopted an Environmental Justice Resolution (72-R-20) in 2020. The ordinance was developed in collaboration with several community groups, including Climate Action Evanston, and the City’s Equity and Empowerment Commission and Environment Board. The resolution defines **environmental justice** as:

When every community member experiences the same degree of access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks, and an opportunity to play an effective role in making decisions that affect the quality of life in this community.

The purpose of the Evanston Environmental Equity Investigation (EEI) is to advance the Environmental Justice Resolution by deepening an understanding of environmental justice issues in Evanston today. Physical, economic, and social systems are interconnected and can unintentionally shift environmental equity. This work builds upon Evanston’s longstanding climate, justice, and equity efforts that have made the community more sustainable and inclusive. The timeline that follows highlights key past initiatives that inform this investigation.

¹ Brookings Institution, “The case for climate reparations in the United States,” 2023.

Interconnected Environmental Systems



The diagram above illustrates how different environmental conditions and concerns can connect and compound into experienced burdens.

Environmental Equity Milestones



2006

Former Mayor Lorraine H. Morton signs the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in response to perceived federal inaction on climate issues



2013

The City reduces greenhouse emissions to 12 percent, a goal established by the 2008 Evanston Climate Action Plan

2016

Achieved the five goals of the 2014 Evanston Livability Plan, all focused on setting and achieving good emission-reduction goals

Former Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl signs the Global Covenant of Mayors, an international coalition to address climate change

2018

City Council approves the Climate Action and Resilience Plan and Evanston is the first City in Illinois to set the goal of achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050

2008

Evanston Climate Action Plan (ECAP) is adopted

2014

Evanston Livability Plan is adopted

2017

Former Mayor Steve Hagerty commits to the Climate Paris Accord emissions reduction goals and joins the Mayors for 100% Clean Energy

2019

Evanston passes Resolution 58-R-19, a “Commitment to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity,” which led to the establishment of the Reparations Committee and a local reparations fund



2021

Evanston becomes the first City in the U.S. to begin distributing reparations to Black community members for past housing discrimination

2020

Evanston adopts its Environmental Justice Resolution, acknowledging the harm that communities of color have experienced due to environmental injustices and outlining corrective actions the City will take

2022

The City of Evanston completes the Evanston Project for the Local Assessment of Needs (EPLAN) to prioritize environmental justice and climate resilience in future policy and development initiatives.

2024

Evanston Environmental Equity Investigation process begins to evaluate how where people live influences their wellbeing



2025

Evanston Environmental Equity Investigation concludes and is shared out with the community

Purpose of the Investigation

Goals & Process

The following list of goals was developed by Evanston community members, in partnership with City leadership, to guide the process and outcomes of this investigation:

- 1 Center community experience, knowledge and expertise via extensive public engagement, particularly with Black, Latino/Hispanic, and low-income Evanstonians
- 2 Document disparities in the lived experiences of disenfranchised Evanstonians
- 3 Assess existing City plans and programs
- 4 Assess programs and decision-making processes that contribute to the root causes of environmental inequities
- 5 Provide recommendations that reflect the realities of the City's planning processes
- 6 Ensure recommendations delineate short- and long-term tangible solutions, both programmatic and legislative changes that incorporate climate resilience
- 7 Ensure recommendations speak to preserving housing affordability and mitigating gentrification

This Investigation explores how City policies, practices, and priorities have perpetuated environmental inequities.

Policies

A rule or guideline adopted by a municipal government to manage local issues and direct community development.

Practices

Programs, actions and decisions made by City Leadership that support or oppose matters within the community.

Priorities

A condition or issue regarded as more important, leading to more urgent use of resources to address.

How do these actions perpetuate unequal burdens or barriers to opportunities across Evanston?

The 15-month process to complete the EEI and craft this report was spearheaded by Environmental Justice Evanston, a Climate Action Evanston Program, which worked with City of Evanston staff who engaged a team of consultants to facilitate the investigation. The consultant team was led by planning, landscape architecture, and urban design firm, MKSK, and included Revitalized Communities, CDTA Partners, and Added Dimension. The investigation process was divided into four phases, detailed below.

Phase 1

Identified and documented injustices

Public Workshop #1

Phase 2

Inventoried and assessed ongoing efforts

Public Workshop #2

Phase 3

Defined best practices and actionable opportunities

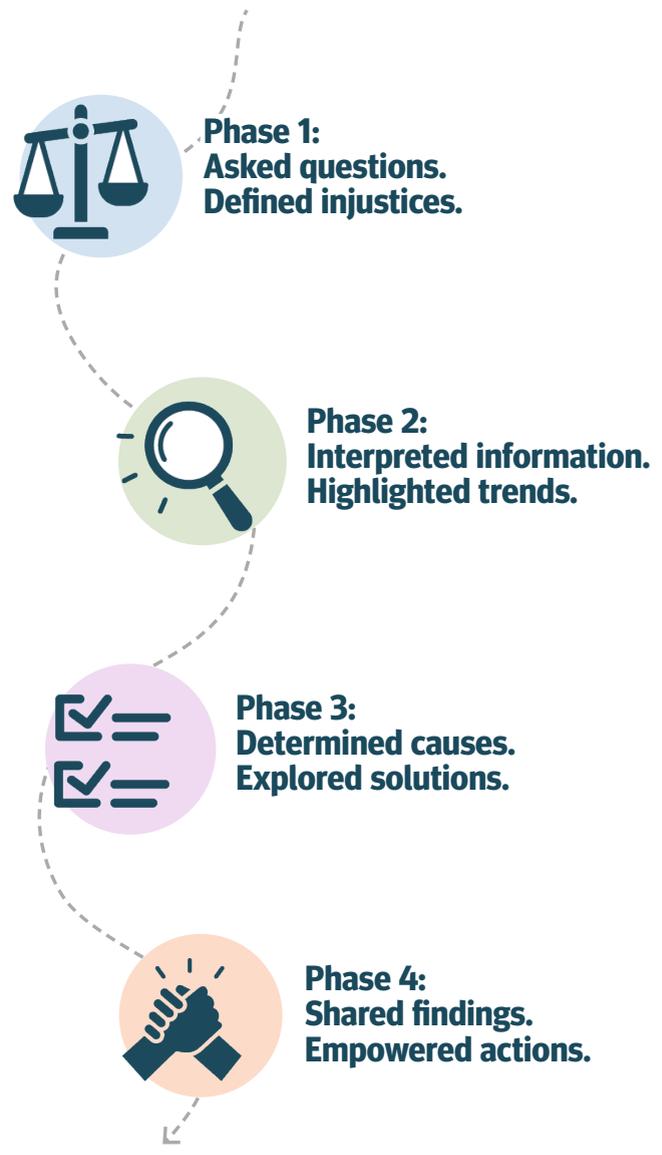
Public Workshop #3

Phase 4

Developed and refined recommended actions and implementation plan

Public Workshop #4

The Investigation Process



Community Outreach & Engagement

Summary

The Evanston Environmental Equity Investigation followed a process that aligned with ongoing City and Community sustainability and equity work. Desired outcomes were to create an inclusive environment, to establish an inclusive environment for productive dialog, to hear all voices, and to address challenges and opportunities to justice and equity.

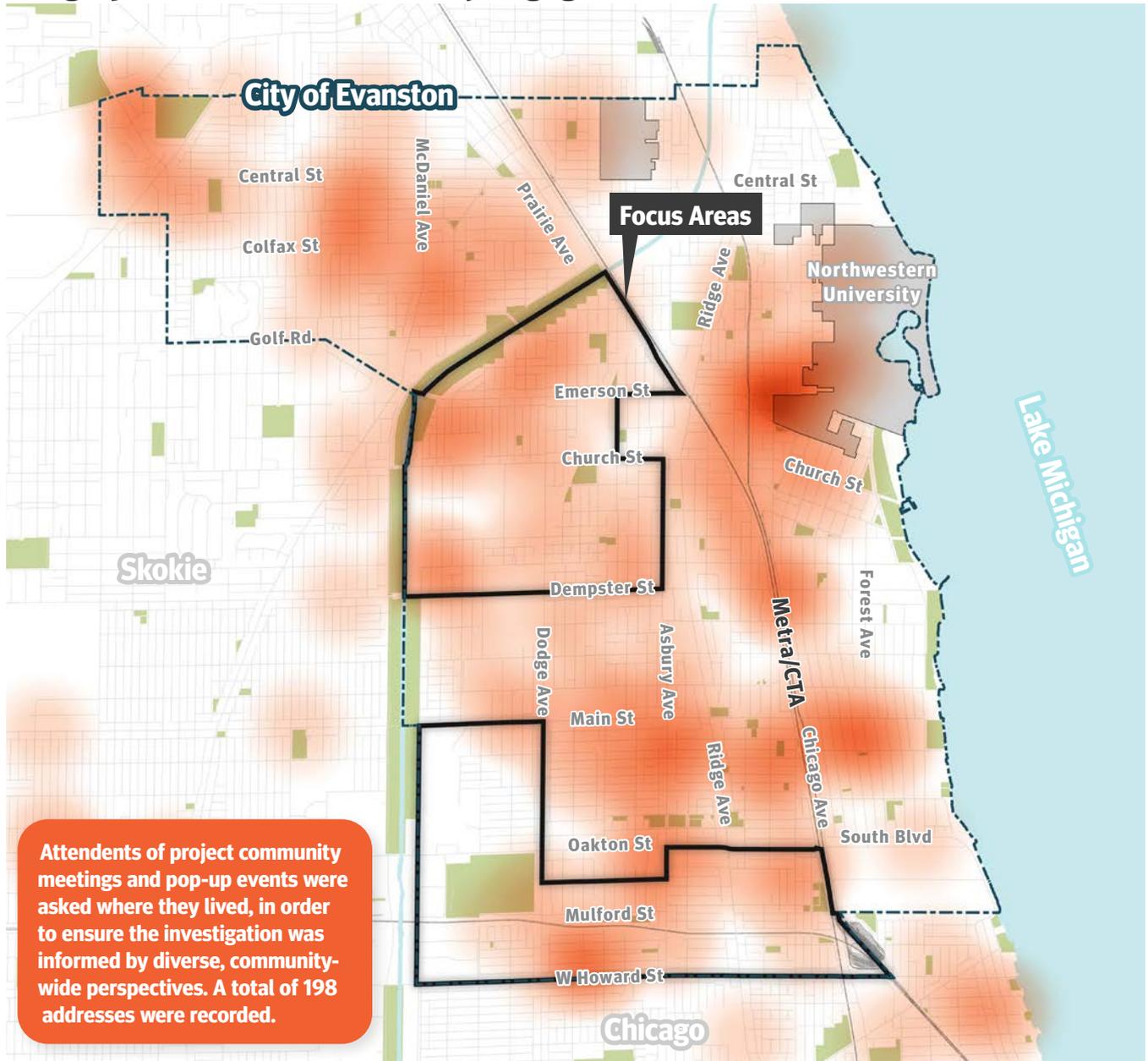
Participatory Engagement Principles

Engagement practices used throughout the investigation process were informed by four key principles:

- **Meet people where they are:** Engage with the community in the spaces, places, and times that were most inclusive and accessible.
- **Uplift voices of individuals and groups that have been historically discounted:** Center their experiences in thinking about priorities for the future.
- **Apply a racial equity lens:** Acknowledging and addressing racial disparities, with the ultimate goal of understanding the burdens and responsibilities of all.
- **Empower ongoing work:** Engage institutional partners, nonprofit organizations and government in the process, and reinforce the value of ongoing work.



Geographic Reach of Community Engagement



Attendees of project community meetings and pop-up events were asked where they lived, in order to ensure the investigation was informed by diverse, community-wide perspectives. A total of 198 addresses were recorded.

More Respondents Fewer Respondents

Community Outreach & Engagement

Engagement Methods

Key groups, representing a diversity of perspectives, knowledge, and experience provided invaluable feedback and perspective throughout the Evanston Environmental Equity Investigation process. The following section summarizes the methods used to reach people and the results of those methods.

Leadership Committee

A seven-member Leadership Committee guided and advised the investigation process. The committee was comprised of local individuals representing allied organization and institutional partners that focus on sustainability, environmental justice, and racial equity. The Committee provided critical feedback throughout the process, context for other community conversations, and analyzed the key issues with the Investigation Team. The Leadership Committee met four times during the project to address the following:

- Meeting #1 – Project Kickoff
- Meeting #2 – Initial Findings Review
- Meeting #3 – Plan Framework Review
- Meeting #4 – Draft Recommendations Review
- Meeting #5 – Final Plan Review

Technical Workgroup

A Technical Workgroup convened several times throughout the process to discuss analysis findings and technical content of the investigation in more detail. The workgroup of City staff and department leadership as well as Jerri Garl, co-lead of the Environmental Justice Evanston program. The Technical Workgroup met three times during the project and provided a governance and implementation feasibility lens to the conversation.

- Meeting #1 – Identifying Challenges and Opportunities
- Meeting #2 – Tree Canopy
- Meeting #3 – Draft Actions Review

Focus Groups

Focus Groups were hosted throughout the process to gather input select stakeholders. Small groups up to eight participants convening around a specific topic of study. The groups served as a platform to share findings and collect feedback in a more conversational format than the Public Workshops. A mix of subject matter experts and community members, particularly those sharing their unique lived experience, collaborated in the Focus Group meetings to develop a deeper understanding and to guide the Investigation Team. The Investigation Team facilitated four focus group meetings over the course of the project.



Pop-up Events

The Investigation Team collaborated with the Leadership Committee to identify existing local events to engage with the broader community early in the process. Pop-up Events provided an opportunity to inform attendees about the investigation, gather necessary input from people who might not traditionally engage, and encourage participation in other aspects of the investigation. Below is a list of the three Pop-up Events that the team attended:

- Pop-up Event #1 – Zombie Scramble at Ladd Arboretum
- Pop-up Event #2 – Trunk or Treat at the Robert Crown Community Center
- Pop-up Event #3 – Holiday Tree Lighting at Fountain Square

Online Survey

In addition to in-person engagement, the Investigation Team developed a digital survey to gather a larger array of public perceptions and feedback aimed at identifying key environmental equity themes and community priorities. It was designed to collect both community-wide and location-specific quantitative and qualitative data to inform the development of the project's goals and strategies. The data collected guided the Investigation Team's research efforts and supported the creation of infographics and charts to effectively communicate the findings.

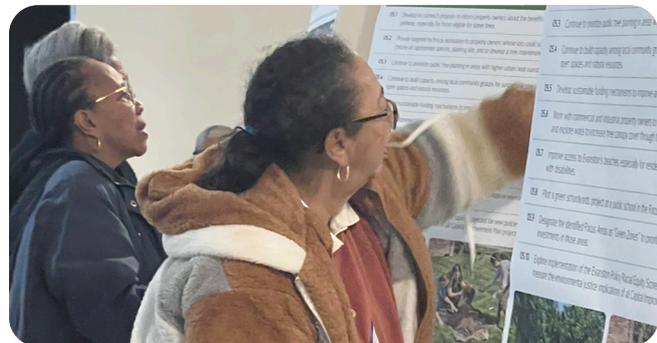
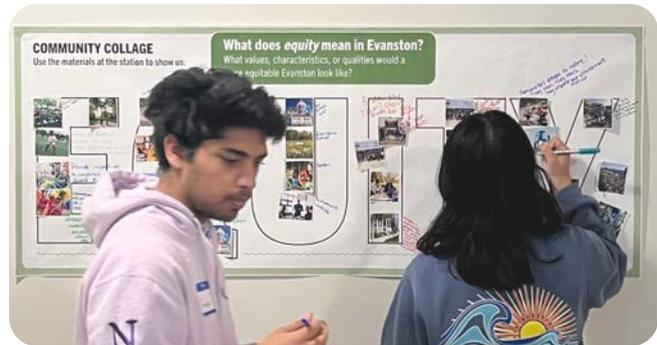
Community Outreach & Engagement

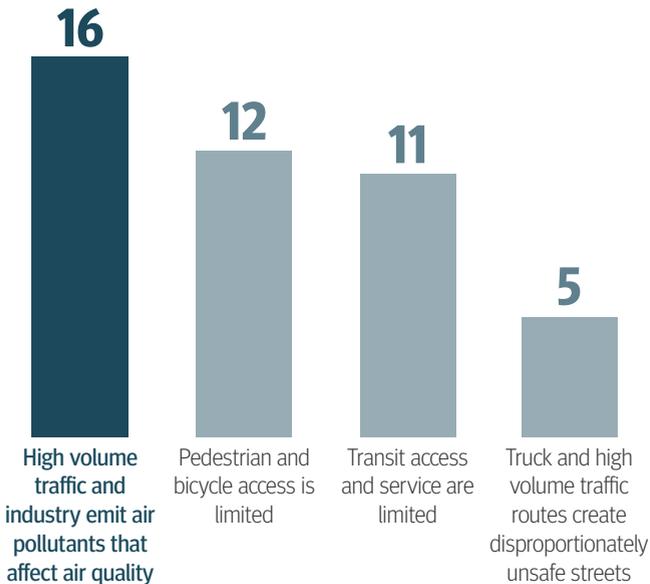
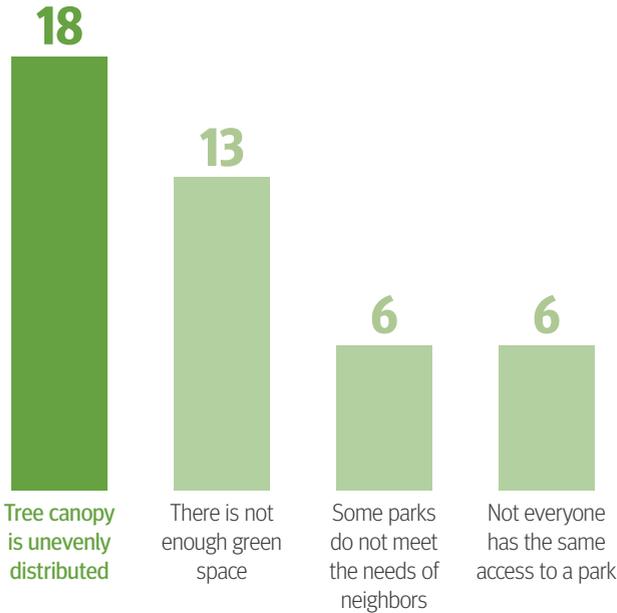
Engagement Methods

Public Workshops

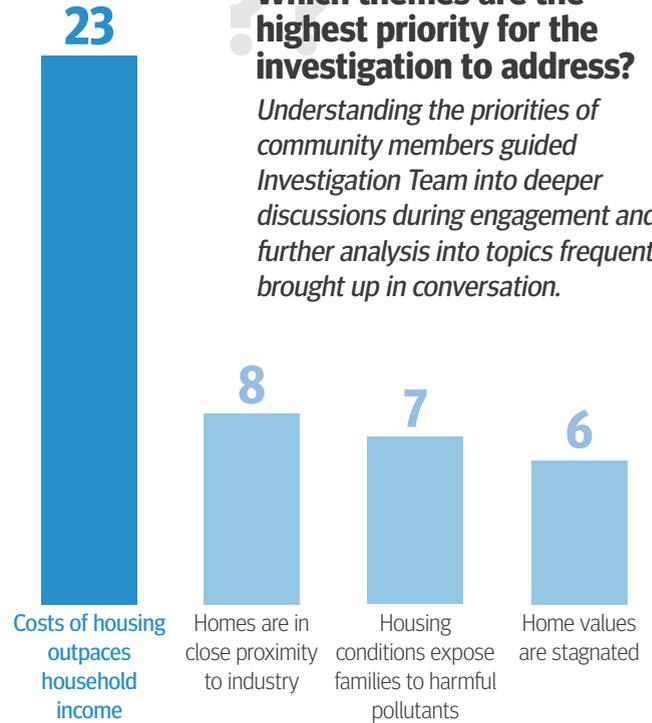
Four Public Workshops were hosted at various community spaces throughout the City to provide shared spaces for transparent dialog about the issues impacting Evanston's diverse communities.. Workshops were hosted within various wards and communities that have been traditionally underrepresented at public meetings in the past. A series of interactive methods were utilized to convene community members such as themed stations for feedback, round table discussions, open house style dialogs, collage creation, and interactive presentations.

- Community Workshop #1 – Introduction + Listening at City of Evanston Civic Center
- Community Workshop #2 – What We Heard + Learned at Ebenezer AME Church
- Community Workshop #3 – Investigation Findings at Levy Senior Center
- Community Workshop #4 - Draft Recommendations at Ebenezer AME Church





Which themes are the highest priority for the investigation to address?
Understanding the priorities of community members guided Investigation Team into deeper discussions during engagement and further analysis into topics frequently brought up in conversation.





Environmental Injustice in Evanston:

Past and Present

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

Historical Injustice

Settler Colonialism: Why It Matters

To grapple with the environmental injustices present today in Evanston, it is important to reckon with the past. This section serves as a summary rather than an exhaustive historical account, intended to provide a foundational understanding of historical factors that have proliferated a legacy of environmental racism and injustice in Evanston. Additional information can be found through local institutions such as the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum, the Shorefront Legacy Center, Evanston History Center, Northwestern University Center for Native American and Indigenous Research, and others.

Evanston's environmental inequities are rooted in the broader legacy of settler colonialism that shaped land ownership, access, and environmental conditions across the region. The displacement of Indigenous peoples from the lands that became Evanston established a pattern of exclusion—removing communities from their ancestral territories and erasing sustainable relationships with the land. As Evanston developed, decisions about land use, housing, and infrastructure were guided by systems that privileged white settlers and wealthier community members while limiting opportunities for others.

Long before the formal founding of Evanston, the lands along the western shore of Lake Michigan and the ridges of what is now the North Shore region were inhabited and cared for by Indigenous nations. The territory lies within the traditional homelands of the Potawatomi people—who form part of the

Anishinaabeg language-family and the broader confederation known as the Council of the Three Fires (comprising Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi).

As the United States expanded through the 19th century, Indigenous peoples of this region were pressured through treaty processes and removal policies. A critical moment occurred under the Treaty of Prairie du Chien (1829), by which the Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi ceded land between the Rock River and Lake Michigan, including much of what became Evanston. In 1833, the Treaty of Chicago ordered the removal of nearly all Native people from Illinois, effectively displacing the Potawatomi and other nations from their ancestral lands. This displacement cleared the way for the founding of Evanston in 1853.

This process of displacement laid the groundwork for the environmental injustices that followed. With the removal of Indigenous stewardship, the land passed into the hands of settlers who imposed new land-use patterns: drainage of wetlands, clearing of forests, subdivision and infrastructure, and enforcement of racialized housing and development. Through this rapid development and the loss of Indigenous stewardship practices with the land, concentrated environmental burdens began to surface—flood risk, lack of green space, degraded soils, and industrial exposures—in neighborhoods with less political power and fewer resources.

Historical Injustice

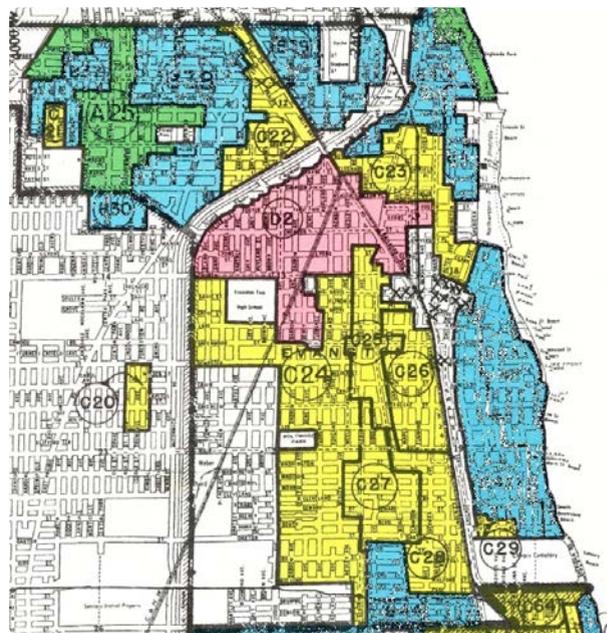
Redlining: How Discriminatory Planning Practices Shaped the City

Beginning in the 1930s, the federal government began “redlining,” a planning practice that has left scars in many cities across the U.S. This practice involved the surveying of cities to evaluate their mortgage risk, and thereby assigning grades to residential neighborhoods that reflected their mortgage security or risk. When determining the grade to assign, the organization responsible for this evaluation, the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) factored in housing quality, recent sale and rent values, and crucially, the race, ethnicity, and class of the community members who lived there. Banks and mortgage lenders would then reference this information from the HOLC when determining who should receive loans and which areas of cities were “safe” investments. This was a blatant discriminatory practice that has resulted in a legacy of disinvestment and underinvestment in many Black, Brown, and low-income communities across the U.S.

Evanston, too, had Redline maps of the city, which designated the area that is most congruent with today’s 5th Ward as “hazardous,” depriving that area of mortgage access and entrenching a pattern of structural disinvestment in that community. This pattern created a perception of the area as “undesirable” and led to lower property values than other parts of Evanston. As a result, the redlined neighborhood and areas surrounding it became zones for industrial land uses, which have also been perceived, over time, as undesirable and a nuisance. Industrial uses, though they provide jobs, also generate large volumes of freight traffic, noise, and pollution, which further exacerbates the negative perceptions and pattern of disinvestment.

The color-coding of the redlining maps was as follows:

- A** “Best” neighborhoods, considered the safest for lending; typically affluent, homogeneous, and white.
- B** “Still Desirable” neighborhoods, viewed as stable but with less growth potential than green areas. Predominantly white.
- C** “Definitely Declining” neighborhoods, with a perceived risk of other “undesirable populations” moving in.
- D** “Hazardous” neighborhoods, considered the most risky for lending, almost always graded red if they had Black community members.



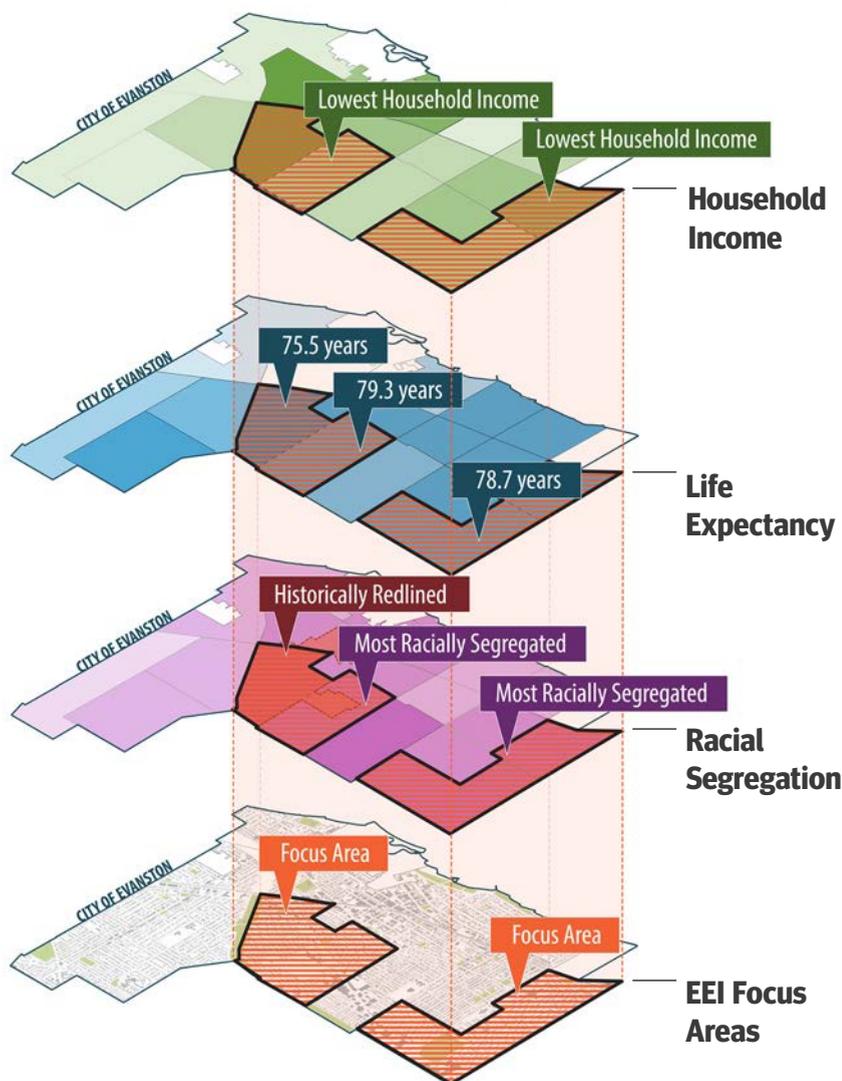
Source: HOLC

Investigation Framework

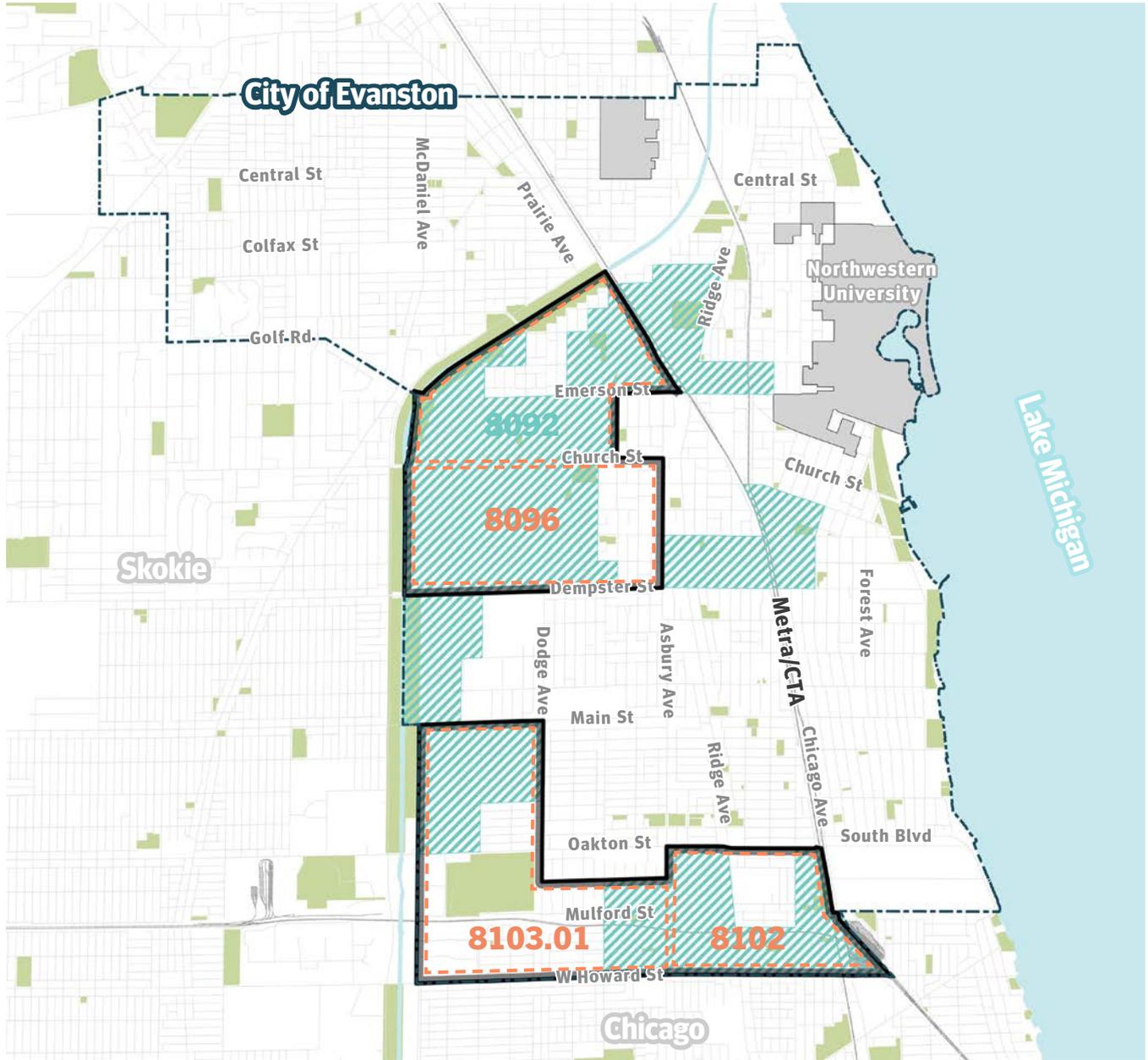
Focus Areas: Neighborhoods Most Burdened

To guide the analysis and evaluations conducted through this process, the Investigation Team worked to identify areas most likely to be impacted by environmental injustice in Evanston, referred to as Focus Areas.

The census tracts included as Focus Areas were those with the greatest overlapping concentration of socioeconomic traits—where home values are lowest, where non-white community members are concentrated, and where life expectancy is lowest. These traits are intimately tied to environmental conditions, public health, and the systemic impacts of historic development patterns. These areas were then compared to the state and nationally-defined Environmental Justice (E) communities census block groups and the municipal boundary to confirm that the Focus Areas were the right areas to concentrate the investigation. Based on the socioeconomic comparison of those geographies combined with public input, these Focus Areas were determined to accurately depict the areas of Evanston with the greatest likelihood for environmental inequities.



Focus Areas



- Focus Areas
- Census Tracts
- Environmental Justice Communities

Investigation Framework

Investigation Process

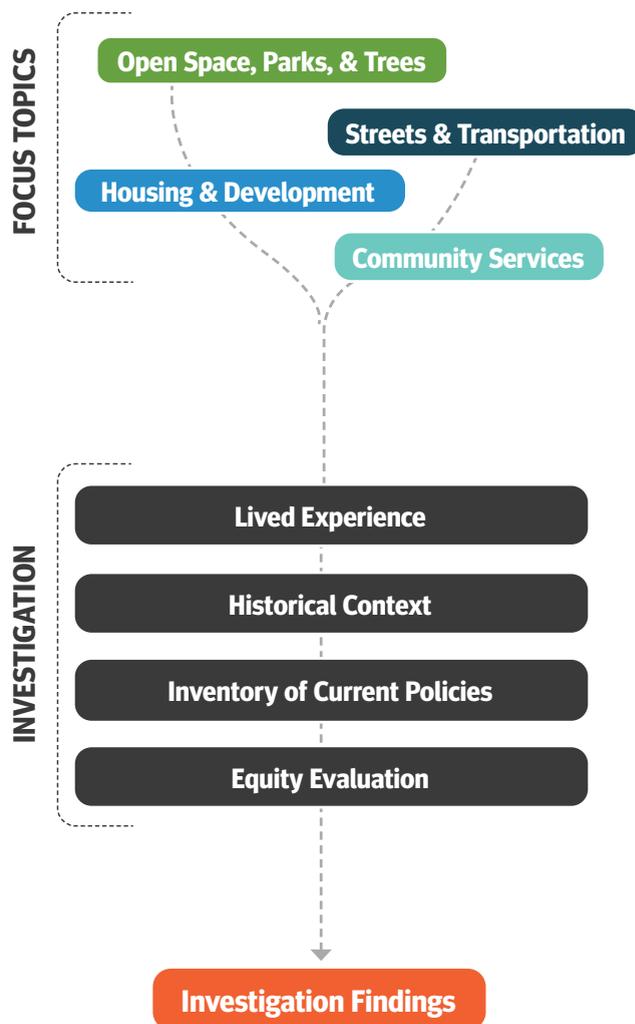
Analysis by Topic

Through various methods of rigorous community engagement, key feedback led the investigation to focus on four key topics: Open Space, Parks & Trees; Streets & Transportation, Housing & Development; and Community Services.

Since the diverse community populations of Evanston have varying lived experiences with environmental equity, the investigation's analysis was conducted through the lens of four distinct evaluations:

- Lived Experience
- Historical Context
- Inventory of Current Policies
- Equity Evaluation

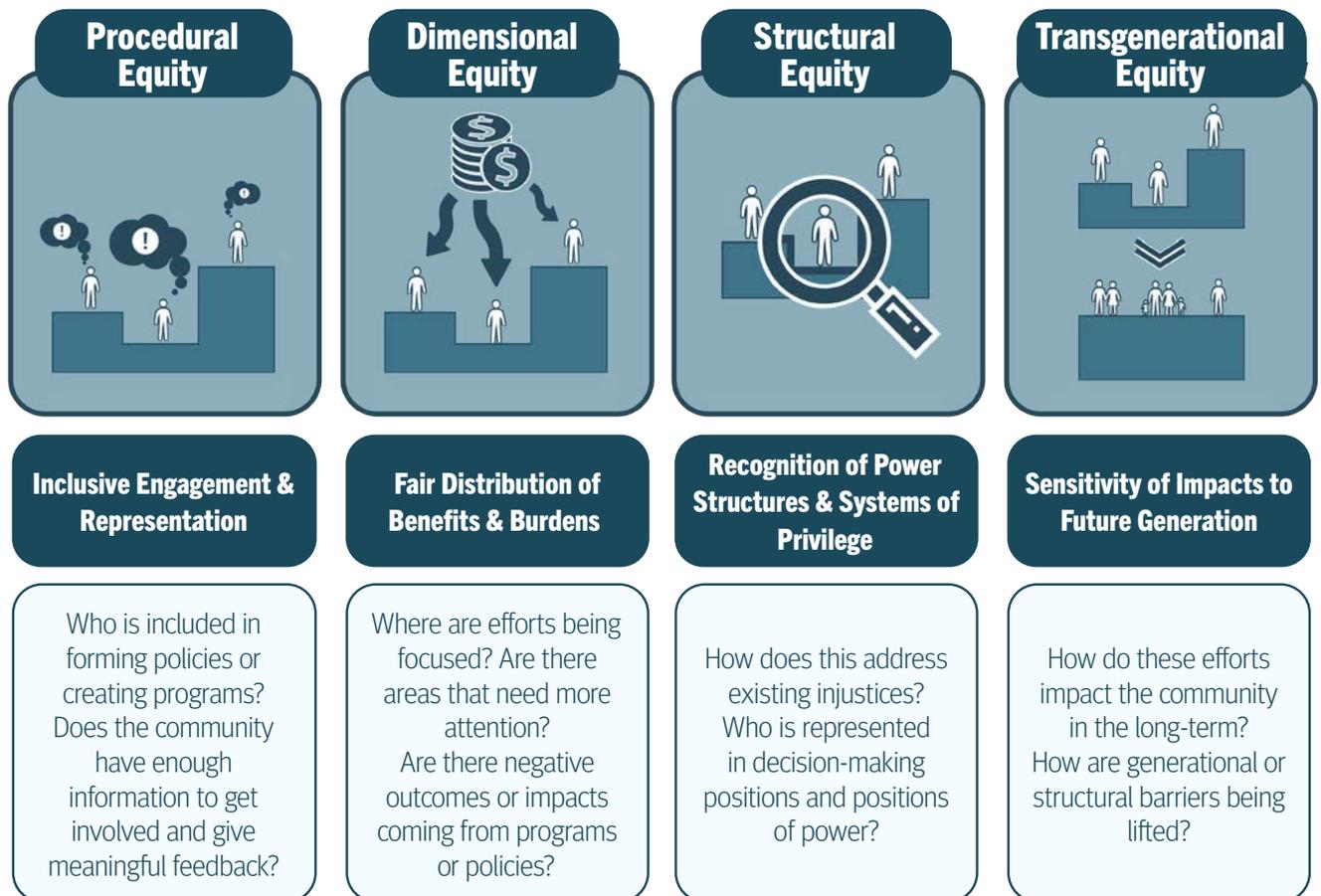
By applying a multi-faceted analysis to each topic, the investigation was informed by a complex understanding of how various topics impact individuals uniquely in both visible and and invisible ways. To further the evaluation of environmental equity, a deeper dive was needed to understand the different dimensions of equity; how certain groups of people may or may not be heard, helped, or harmed through attempted actions to rectify injustices.



Investigation Framework

Equity Evaluation

The four dimensions of equity, detailed below, allow for cross-examination of the outcomes of existing or future policies and programs present in Evanston.





Open Space, Parks & Trees



Open spaces, parks, and trees are more than amenities—they're lifelines for healthy, vibrant communities. They contribute to cleaner air, cooler neighborhoods, and they protect people from the rising risks of heat and pollution. Parks also offer safe, welcoming places to play, gather, and connect. This section explores how well these benefits are shared across all of Evanston's neighborhoods.

Topics investigated through a lens of Environmental Equity:

- Tree Canopy Coverage
- Access to Parks & Park Conditions



Tree Canopy Coverage



Introduction

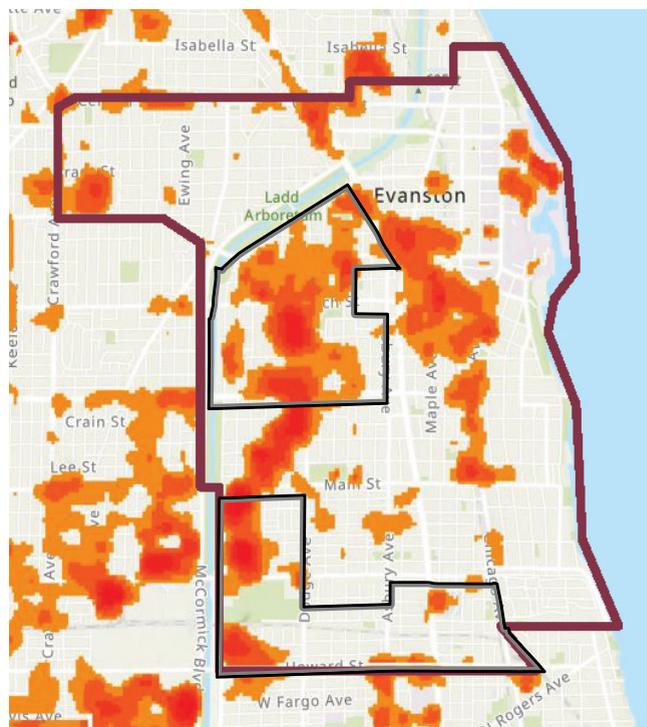
What is Inequitable About the Tree Canopy in Evanston?

Tree canopy is unevenly distributed throughout the City of Evanston. Shade from the tree canopy can help mitigate urban heat island effect and regulate temperatures in urban areas. The Focus Areas not only include census tracts with lower canopy coverage than other tracts, but they also include the highest concentration of vulnerable Evanstonians. Without enough shade from trees, community members in these census tracts are more exposed to excessive heat due to lack of shade, which can put them at risk of health concerns or even death. With average summer temperatures increasing, protection from heat is crucial to anyone spending time outside, especially older populations.

Trees also shade buildings from the sun and help keep them cool, resulting in less energy and costs for buildings with air conditioning needed in warmer months. This shade is especially important for buildings without air conditioning as not every household has air conditioning. Households in the Focus Areas are also disproportionately burdened by energy costs needed to cool buildings that are less shaded by trees.

High Urban Heat Island Index

Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan



Extreme heat causes:

1,300

deaths/year in the U.S.

1.4° increase

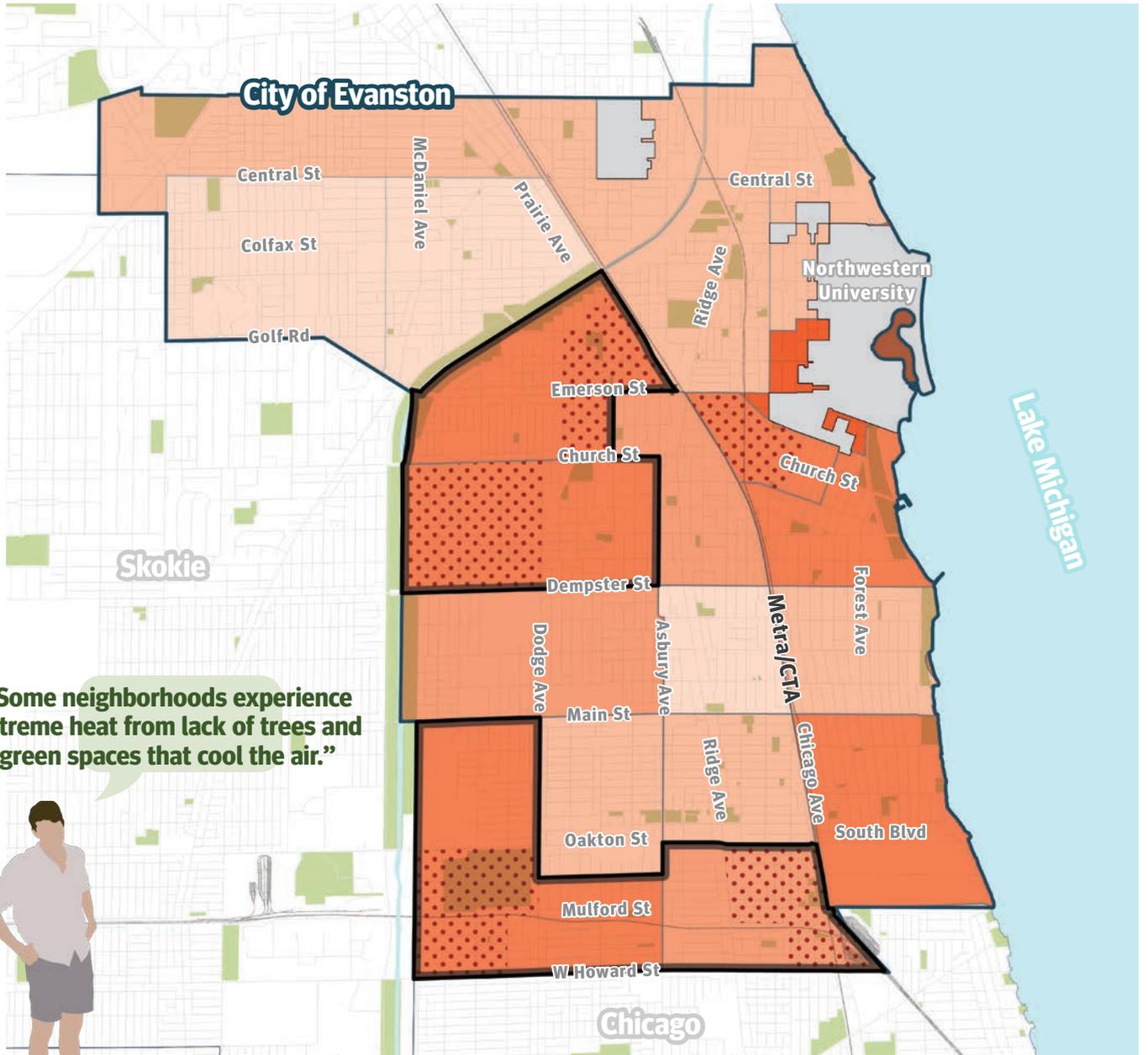
in the average summer
temperature in the region each
year since 1970

Source: US EPA

Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic
Plan

DRAFT 2.0

Tree Canopy



“Some neighborhoods experience extreme heat from lack of trees and green spaces that cool the air.”



Source: EPLAN

Least Canopy Coverage



Most Canopy Coverage

High Tree Inequity & Vulnerable Residents

Tree Canopy Coverage



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue?

The following indicators of injustices are factors and considerations that contribute to the inequitable distribution of tree canopy in Evanston:

Tree Diseases: Diseases impacting certain species of trees require maintenance or removal.

Age of Trees: Older trees that are larger can provide more shade than smaller, younger trees. Areas historically without shade trees will continue to be at a disadvantage until trees mature. The 2nd, 5th, and 6th wards have the largest on average.

Space for Trees: Smaller lot sizes limit the area that trees can exist or be planted in the future to add to tree canopy. The City's 5th ward has the smallest average lot size among all wards, which means less space for privately owned trees. Some streets do not have parkways where public trees are commonly planted by the City, which means limited space for the City to plant trees.

Public vs. Private Trees: Trees on private property make up about 70% of Evanston's urban forest, so maintenance and preservation of private trees makes a significant impact on the citywide tree canopy. Public trees found in parks and parkways are managed by the City. Public tree canopy distribution is fairly even across all wards.

3rd Ward Tree Canopy



5th Ward Tree Canopy



Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done About It Today?

Previous plans have recommended the protection and expansion of public and private trees of the citywide tree canopy (EPLAN and CARP) as well as highlighted vulnerable, or historically disinvested areas to focus tree canopy efforts (Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan). Multiple allied organizations are also working with the City of Evanston to improve the City's tree canopy coverage.

Informing and Engaging the Community:

Evanston Environment Board that meets monthly fosters transparency, accountability, and community involvement.

Climate Action Evanston volunteers and collaborates with the City to achieve goals set forth in the CARP and advocates for climate action.

Natural Habitat Evanston provides education and outreach about importance of native tree and shrub planting and has coordinated community-led tree planting focused in the 2nd and 5th wards.

Planting New Trees: Parkway Tree Planting (Forestry Division) plants roughly 500 new trees each year.

Protecting Existing Trees:

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Insurance assists property owners with removal of private diseased elm trees when the community member is enrolled in the Insurance Program.

The Tree Preservation Ordinance was passed to protect tree canopy on private property, protecting trees from construction damage and removal.

The Public Tree Canopy Preservation Policy and Private Tree Canopy Preservation Policy outline the permitting requirements, replacement and mitigation rates for damaged/removed trees, fees and penalties/fines, and species groupings. Trees must be replaced or a mitigation fee can be paid instead. Property owners with reduced income may be eligible for a waived fee.

“The risk of a tree falling on my property and cost of repairs keeps me from planting new ones”



Tree Canopy Coverage

Equity Evaluation



What is Preventing More Equitable Tree Coverage?

Capacity and Information:

The City and its partner organizations have limited capacity for the sustainable care and maintenance of trees, parks, and natural resources in Evanston.

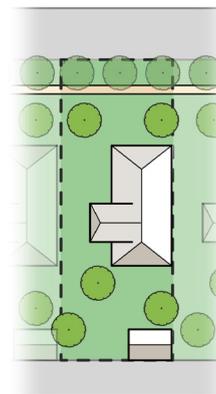
Private property owners may not have the right information or know-how to support private tree planting, maintenance, or responsible removal and replacement. Community members who lack the information to maintain a tree on private property may never plant one.

Planting New Trees:

Despite the City's efforts of tree planting and preserving existing trees, Evanston is still losing more trees each year than planted due to disease and storm events. Planting trees on public property and parkways only contributes to small percentage of the total canopy, so efforts focused on private trees can address a larger portion of the citywide tree canopy.

Discrepancies in lot sizes may also affect a property owner's decision to plant a tree on their property; if their lot is smaller, planting a tree too close to their home may be too large a risk for future property damage.

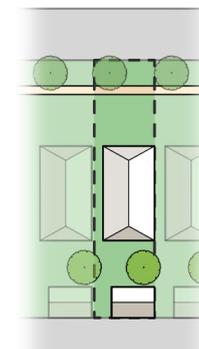
3rd Ward Typical Lot Size:
~11,375 square feet



73%

of this lot is open space where trees could be planted

5th Ward Typical Lot Size:
~5,250 square feet



57%

of this lot is open space where trees could be planted

Equity Evaluation

Protecting Existing Trees: The permitting process for tree protection during construction requires a thorough understanding of what construction activities apply, a complex formula to determine how to replace a removed tree, a detailed application, and paying a fee. Although reduced income property owners can qualify for waived mitigation fees, the ordinance is not clear on who qualifies, and additional effort is required for the property owner to get fees waived.

Maintaining Affordability: Increasing green space and tree canopy in Focus Areas can drive up property values because they are more desirable, which can increase the risk of displacement for lower income or marginalized community members, a process known as “green gentrification.” Tree canopy and other beautification landscaping should make areas more comfortable while maintaining affordability.

Benefits of Tree Canopy in Cities:

(citygreen.com)

Temperature regulation	Beautifies streets and spaces
Air quality improvement	Encourages outdoor activity
Stormwater management	Reduces energy consumption for cooling
Biodiversity support	

Summary

The City is planting hundreds of trees in parkways each year, but some streets in the City do not have parkways.

The loss of private trees accounts for a larger portion of Evanston’s tree canopy than the public trees that the City maintains or plants.

Multiple programs and policies are aimed at protecting existing trees on private property, but these processes may still be confusing or a cost prohibitive to homeowners.

Park Access & Conditions



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Park Access and Conditions in Evanston?

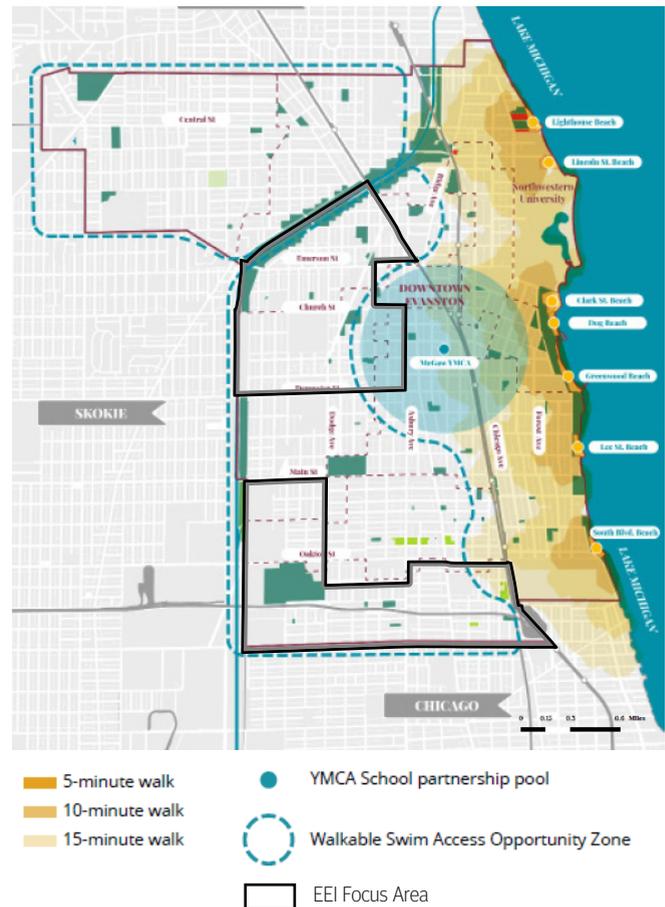
While Evanston offers a greater quantity of amenities than many other cities, those amenities are not evenly distributed. North central and southeast Evanston community members have access to a wider variety of recreation amenities than those living in west Evanston. In general, households in the Focus Areas have access to fewer parks and playgrounds.

Focus Areas lack access to water recreation, such as swimming and boating, and most vulnerable or low-income populations in Evanston are not within reasonable walking distance of public beaches. Areas of Evanston experiencing high urban heat island effect are nearly two miles from a beach. Without any outdoor swimming pools or spray pads, Evanstonians have little to no options for outdoor activities that can also be cooling.

Green spaces with parks and walking/biking path amenities along the canal do provide nearby recreation opportunities proximate to the Focus Areas; however there are still gaps in that network of open spaces and trails. The paths are more continuous on the western side of the canal in Skokie.

Existing Beach Access & Indoor Pool Access

Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan



Access to Parks & Park Conditions



Indicators of Injustice

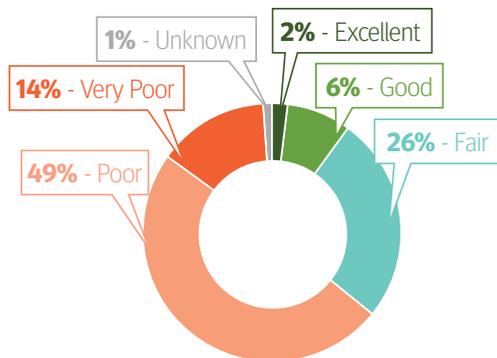
What is Inequitable About Park Access and Conditions in Evanston? (continued)

Despite the number of park facilities for Evanstonians to enjoy citywide, the majority of park facilities and playgrounds are in poor or very poor condition. These poor conditions are due to facilities and equipment that are old and beyond their recommended lifespan.

Areas with high rates of child poverty across the country typically have less access to playgrounds, and this is true for the Focus Areas. Limited access to outdoor recreation at a young age can have developmental, mental and physical implications.

Conditions of All Assessed Features

Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan



Facilities in poor or very poor condition:



Acres per community member is less than peer cities:



Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan

History of Evanston's Beach Access

Like many public places, beaches were also segregated and policed to restrict use and access by Evanston's Black population. While not legally segregated, beach guards were empowered to police access to the beach, intensifying as beaches grew in popularity with White community members. By the 1930's, beach access was formally restricted by charging a fee which likely made going to the beach unfeasible for many Black community members. Redlining also played a role in physically separating Black community members from beach, relegating them to certain areas of the City—areas without desirable, easy beach access.

What is Contributing to this Issue?

The following indicators of injustices are factors that contribute to the inequitable distribution of parks in Evanston:

Uneven Distribution of Amenities: Community members in the North Central and Southeast areas of Evanston have access to over six types of amenities within walking distance. Conversely, community members in areas further inland along the Skokie border have much less variety.

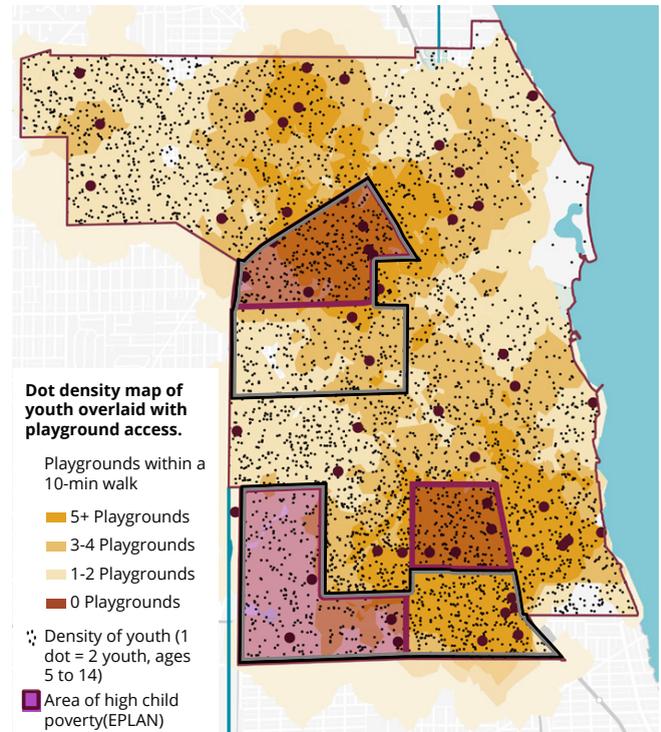
Getting to Parks: Youth access to parks is tied to walkability and safety of walking routes. Parks that require transit or access to transportation through a parent are largely inaccessible to youth who live farther away.

Programming for Age Groups: While programs for teens are available, much of the programming offered are actually programs for other age groups (youth and adults) which happen to overlap and allow teens to participate. They are not as well-served as other audiences.

Size of Parks: The quantity of parks citywide makes parks accessible to nearly all Evanstonians, but many of those are small pocket parks and cannot support a variety of activities or amenities and can more easily feel overcrowded. Most parks are not large enough to support flexible spaces/lawns or walking paths that would appeal to range of preferences.

Tree Canopy: There is inequitable tree canopy in the City's parks, with many lacking shade trees for cooling and comfort.

Density Map: Youth and Playground Features



Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan & EPLAN

Access to Parks & Park Conditions



Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done About It Today?

Informing and Engaging the Community:

Park improvement projects, as well as the Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan, have included several opportunities, in both English and Spanish, for the public to provide input.

Public education resources help inform Evanstonians on how to prepare for and combat days of extreme heat.

The My City, Your City, Our City Initiative and Year Round Youth Drop-in Centers partner with local organizations to provide activities and a place for middle school and high school-aged youth to spend time after school.

Investments in Park Facilities in Areas of High Need:

Prioritization for Streetlight Master Plan Pilot Programs consider uncontrolled intersections near parks among others as priority locations.

The following park upgrades in or near areas of high need have recently been completed or are planned:

- Prieto Community Center building systems improvements
- Expansion of Mason Park with new recreation amenities
- Beck Park Expansion includes extending the bike path and resurfacing the path through the park.
- James Park Playground and Pathway Renovations
- Twiggs Park Playground Renovations improved two playgrounds in an area of high child poverty.

Distribution of Maintenance and Capital

Improvements: The Ridgeville Park District helps fill key park and program gaps in south Evanston by providing neighborhood green spaces, recreation programming, and community events in an area that has historically had fewer City-run amenities.

Access to Parks:

The Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan acknowledges areas with high need (areas with prevalence of multi-family units, low-income households, communities of color) and areas with a high density of youth and high rates of child poverty do not have equal access to parks.

The Mason Park expansion, Beck Park expansion, and James Park Pathway Renovations includes non-motorized transportation improvements and path improvements and connection, making the parks more accessible.

Recreation Fee Assistance (Access Evanston) provides a discount (up to 75%) for recreation programs/activities. Access Evanston discounts are based on a scale that takes both income and family size into consideration.

The Sidewalk Improvement Program places routes to City facilities/parks as the 5th most important phase in its prioritization for sidewalk repair/construction projects.

Addressing Environmental Concerns with Parks:

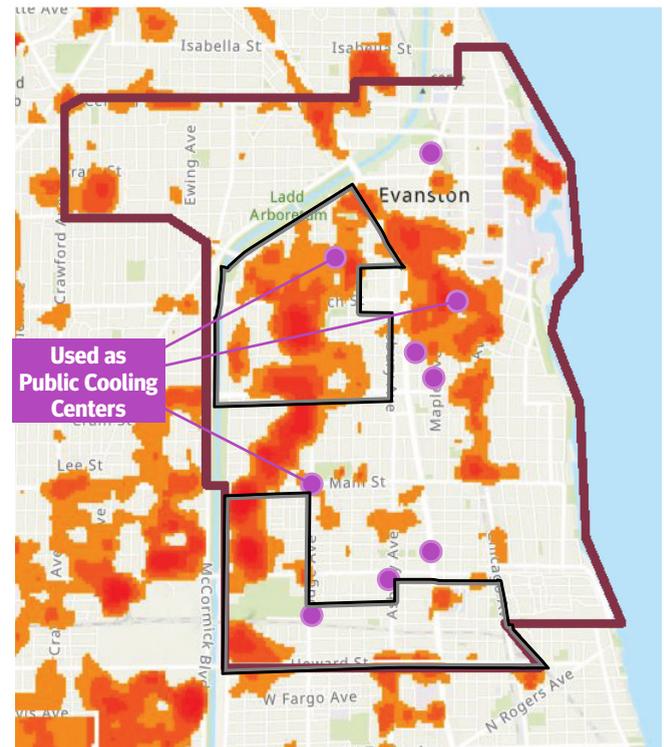
The City has established public cooling centers in the summer months, and both CARP and the Parks & Green Space Strategic Plan discuss how improved park facilities can help Evanstonians can stay cool in the summer months.

3 out of 5 of Evanston's pesticide-free parks (part of a pilot program in 2015) are in areas of high child poverty. This shows an investment in healthy outdoor spaces for children in Evanston.

CARP has a goal for full municipal decarbonization by 2035, which includes all community centers. Projects include solar at the Robert Crown Community Center, electric heat pump installation and LEED gold certification at the

Evanston Ecology Center, and upcoming building systems improvements at the Prieto Community Center that will improve indoor air quality and eliminate reliance on fossil fuels.

Urban Heat Index & Indoor Public Facilities



Source: Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan

Access to Parks & Park Conditions



Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done About It Today? (continued)

Water Recreation/Activities:

Evanston Environmental Association is fundraising to bring an accessible non-motorized boat launch back to the North Shore Channel at the Ecology Center/ Ladd Arboretum to increase water recreation opportunities.

In addition to planning to build the boat launch, the City is already offering a lot of canoeing events. The North Channel Community Rowing is working to increase access to rowing for underrepresented youth.

Evanston beaches are free to all Evanstonians. Passes must be obtained in-person, available at 7 different community centers. CARP also recommends reducing cost barriers that limit access to cooling assets, such as pools, during extreme heat events.

Evanston beaches provide portable roll-out accessibility mats and beach wheelchairs for disabled individuals or wheelchair users and life jackets for free.

What is Preventing More Equitable Distribution of High-Quality Park Amenities?

Distribution of Maintenance and Capital Improvements:

Funding and capacity remains a barrier for maintaining and implementing improvements to aging park facilities. The Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan details and outlines action items to address capacity needs for park maintenance and programming. Less than half (6 out of 14) park projects this year are within or near areas identified with high rates of child poverty (5 out of 14 are within Focus Areas). A greater focus on implementing park facility improvements in areas with high rates of child poverty will create more equitable distribution of park amenities for children.

“It would be great to have a pool or splash pad we could take our kids to in the hot summer months.”



Because Ridgeville Park District operates as its own taxing district, however, Ridgeville relies on an additional property tax paid only by residents within its boundaries. This model supports valuable local services but also raises equity concerns, since some households pay extra for amenities that others in Evanston receive through the general parks system.

Access to Parks:

Enrollment in the Recreation Fee Assistance program must be renewed each year, but enrollees are not notified when their benefits are set to expire. Access Evanston must be renewed every two years, creating a disruption in the streamlined process intended for the benefit program. Despite this program, community members are still concerned about the parks discounts being difficult to access and the cost of parks programming.

Physical plastic tokens are used for beach access to Evanstonians. Utilizing digital passes may prevent community members from possibly losing these tokens, and a combination of both physical and digital access methods could accommodate all ages, with or without access to smart phones.

Addressing Environmental Concerns with Parks: There may be a geographic gap in provision of public cooling centers in areas with the greatest urban heat island effect.

Summary

While most Evanstonians can walk to a park from their home, it might not be a park that best serves them. Varying park sizes and offerings may prevent some groups from accessing the facilities or programming they desire close to home.

Despite proximity to Lake Michigan, North Central and Southeast areas of Evanston lack water amenity access and could benefit from public pools or splash pads as cooling assets, especially during extreme heat events

The age of most park equipment or playgrounds is the primary reason for poor conditions ratings of park facilities citywide.



Streets & Transportation



Streets and transportation systems shape how people move, connect, and access opportunity. The design and quality of these systems determine who can travel safely, breathe cleaner air, and reach jobs, schools, and essential services. Historically, many communities—particularly low-income neighborhoods and communities of color—have faced disproportionate burdens from highways, traffic, and pollution, while lacking safe sidewalks, bike lanes, and reliable transit. This section explores how these burdens show up in Evanston today.

Topics investigated through a lens of Environmental Equity:

- Noise & Air Pollution
- Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety
- Transit Access



Noise & Air Pollution



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Noise and Air Pollution in Evanston?

In Evanston, fossil fuel pollution caused by vehicles account for 21% of total emissions. In addition to personal vehicles, some areas of Evanston experience truck traffic due to industry or large commercial areas. Air pollution from fossil fuels is not only damaging to the environment, but it also can have significant health impacts to those who live in polluted areas. Air pollution has a known link to asthma, allergies, and respiratory disease; an estimated four million new childhood asthma cases develop each year globally due to traffic pollution.

The location of state routes and industrial/major commercial areas in Evanston disproportionately causes nearby census tracts to have more air pollution. Air pollution is most concentrated in western Evanston and the Focus Areas, particularly the area west of Dodge Avenue and south of Main Street. Noise pollution and vibrations felt from large trucks traveling on nearby roads can also negatively impact quality of life for Evanstonians who experience noise and vibrations in their homes on a regular basis.

240,000 new cases of childhood asthma each year in the US

Source: Lancet Planetary Health

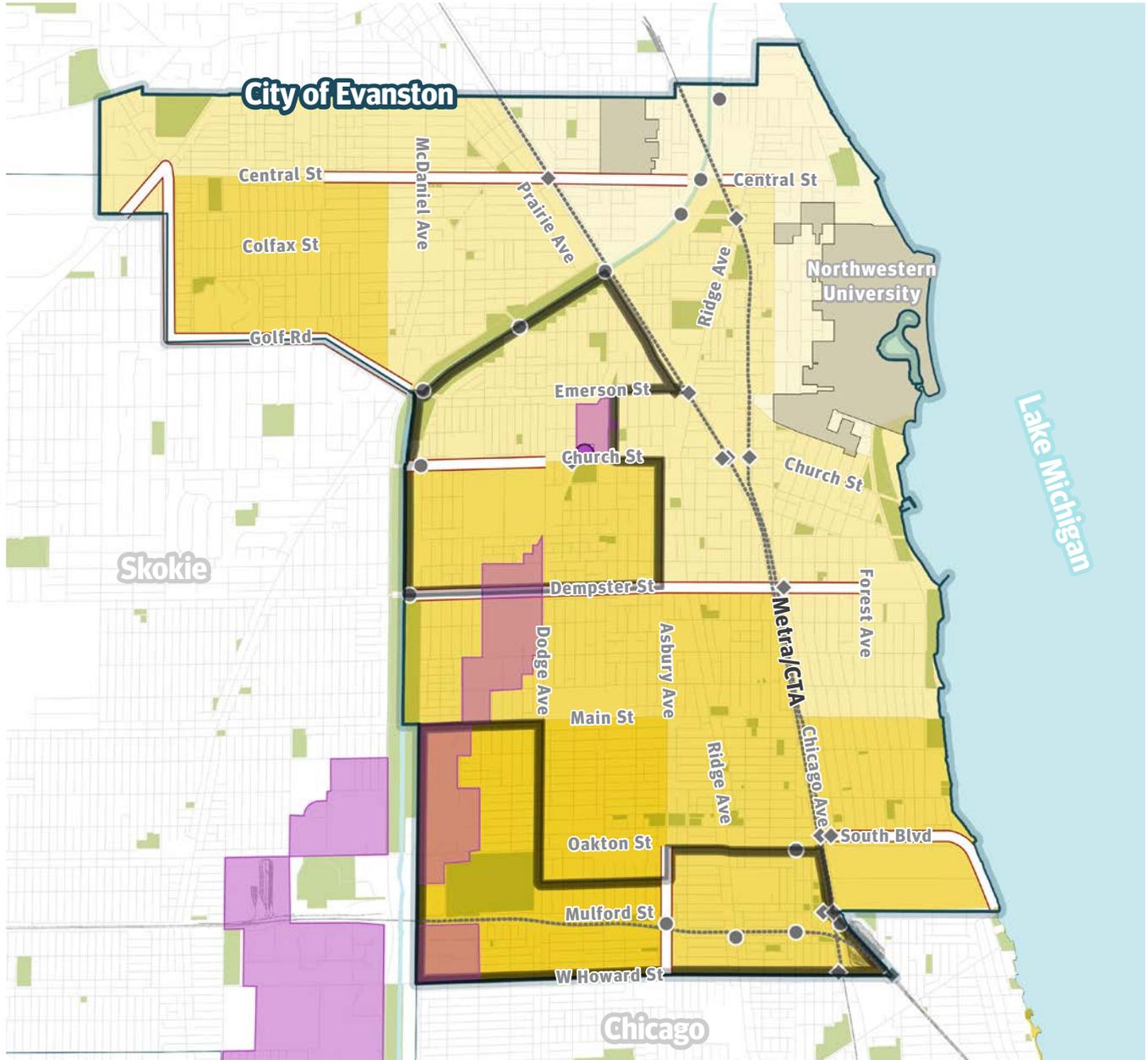
\$3k - \$13k yearly costs of child asthma

Source: National Institutes of Health

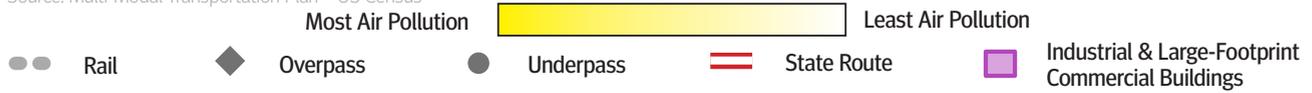
“I can feel the buildings shake around me when a heavy truck drives by.”



Air Pollution



Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan + US Census



Most Air Pollution Least Air Pollution

Air & Noise Pollution



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue?

The following indicators of injustices are factors that contribute to the inequitable air and noise pollution in Evanston:

Adjacency of Industrial Land Uses: Land use patterns in Evanston demonstrate the close proximity of homes to industry and large-footprint commercial in western Evanston. Industry and large commercial areas in Evanston are located in the census tracts with the greatest concentration of Black community members. The presence of trucks for industrial and commercial uses near residential areas contributes to noise and congestion on major routes bordering these residential areas.

High Traffic Areas: Several major roads and state routes travel through and border the Focus Areas. Church Street, Dempster Street, and a portion of Asbury Avenue are state routes. The major corridors of Dempster, Church, and Oakton Streets are connectors for industrial and large-footprint commercial areas that generate truck traffic for deliveries and operations, as well as people driving to/from retail establishments. These roads carry a larger amount of traffic, which present concerns of traffic and congestion, safety, noise, and air pollution.

Trucks on Neighborhood Streets:

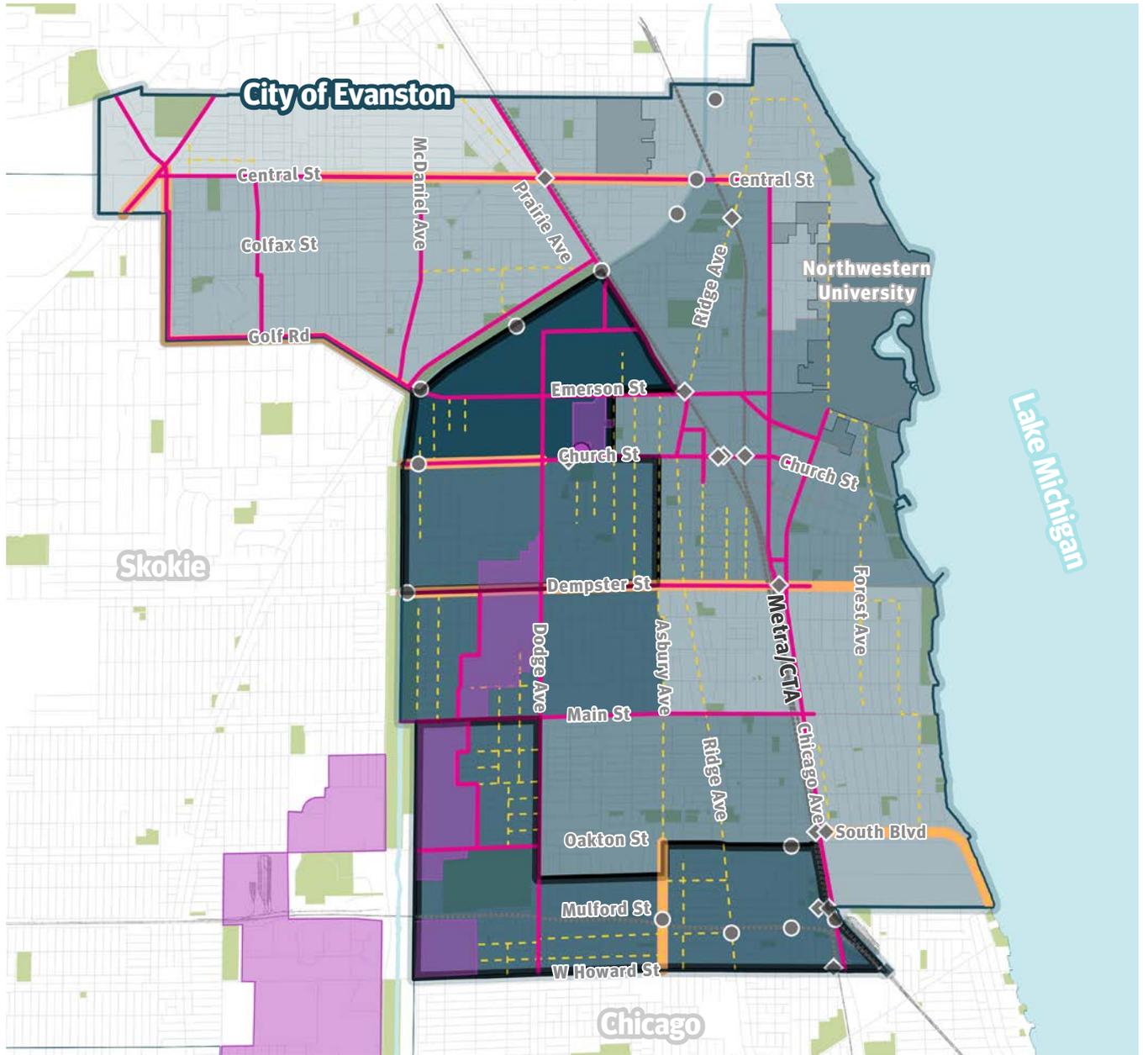
Trucks on small neighborhood streets create issues such as additional noise or congestion and the potential for trucks to damage smaller roadways that are not designed for trucks. The increasing prevalence of the online economy today and deliveries to individual residences has resulted in more trucks on the roads and on neighborhood streets.

Some neighborhood streets in Evanston prohibit trucks through residential areas, many of which exist in the Focus Areas, particularly on residential streets next to commercial uses. Further north around Emerson Street and Church Street, however, fewer residential streets prohibit trucks. Despite prohibiting trucks on certain streets, truck drivers may still use these neighborhood streets as shortcuts or detour around busy areas.

Diesel exhaust causes:

100x more toxic emissions than gasoline exhaust

Race Distribution, Industrial Land Uses, State Routes & Truck Routes



Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan + US Census

●● Rail
 ◆ Overpass
 ● Underpass
 — Truck Route
 - - - Trucks / Large Vehicles Prohibited
 — State Route
 ■ Industrial & Large-Footprint Commercial Buildings

Least Concentration of White Residents Greatest Concentration of White Residents

Air & Noise Pollution



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue? (continued)

Availability of Alternative Forms of Transportation:

Transitioning from gasoline-powered vehicles to electric vehicles helps reduce the fossil fuel pollution in the air from transportation. However, to adequately support the daily use of electric vehicles, more infrastructure is needed throughout the City beyond private charging facilities to make charging electric vehicles more accessible and convenient.

Alternatively, using a different mode of transportation from vehicles entirely – such as biking or using public transit - is another effective way to reduce fossil fuel pollution. The frequency, locations, and reliability of other modes of transportation is a barrier to Evanstonians from using alternative modes of transportation. Transit service and bike infrastructure is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Mitigating the Impacts of Trucks and Industry: The Anti-idling Ordinance prohibits standing/parked vehicles that are over 8,000 lbs. in weight from idling their engines for more than five minutes in any 60 minutes. There is also a weight limit on City streets to limit large truck traffic through Evanston. Tonnage fees from the waste transfer station agreement are being used to mitigate impacts of the facility and invest in areas around the waste transfer station.

Church Street Waste Transfer Station

The waste transfer station, where trucks drive their solid waste before it is moved to a landfill, is a large cause of truck traffic noise and air pollution, and harsh odors.

A 6-month air quality study determined the presence of certain particulate matter, but there is no indication that the findings are out of compliance with Cook County, IEPA, or EPA regulations.

A 30-day traffic study determined that noise reached a max of 105 decibels, which can be very loud and dangerous if lasting more than 30 minutes, equivalent to being next to a motorcycle or construction site.



Equity Evaluation

What's being done about it today?

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Fossil Fuel Pollution:

The CARP, Municipal Neutral Fleet Action Plan, and the Municipal Operation Zero Emissions Strategy all recommended ways the City can fossil fuel pollution and achieve carbon neutrality, fulfilled by actions by the City, through reduced use of vehicles, electrification of buses and municipal fleet vehicles, education and enforcement of the City's no idling law, incentivizing EV infrastructure, and encouraging ride-sharing services. CARP includes a variety of recommendations to reduce pollutants from vehicle tailpipe emissions.

The Multi-Modal Transportation Plan recommends the following: (1) increase the City's participation in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Green Fleets Program, (2) accommodate and promote car sharing, (3) establish an eco-pass program, (4) consider adopting a green roads rating system, (5) and continue developing TOD supporting land use policies.

Informing and Engaging with the Community:

The City publishes daily air quality status updates on their website to keep community members aware of air quality in Evanston. When air quality has been particularly poor, most recently due to wildfire smoke, the City sends out alerts to the community, provides accommodations to outdoor workers, and adjusts outdoor programming to keep community members safe.

DRAFT 2.0

The waste transfer station has long been a concern for nearby Evanstonians who have felt the negative impacts of the waste transfer station. Mitigating those impacts of the facility to its neighbors remains a priority for the community and the City.

Availability of Transportation Alternatives:

The EPLAN recommends reducing carbon emissions from vehicles and protecting and expanding public and active transportation options. CARP recommends educating and encouraging Evanstonians to use travel options that are non- or low-polluting modes of transportation. This will help to buffer community members from the impacts of fuel and energy price spikes.

The City has several public and private EV charging stations citywide and utilizes an interactive map service for Evanstonians to locate charging stations.

Complete and Green Streets Policy addresses multi-modal and green street design to encourage use of alternative transportation for public health benefits, air quality improvements, reduce traffic congestion and improve efficiency, and improve stormwater management.

The Multimodal Transportation Plan recommends installing bicycle parking at transit stations and Metra stations to encourage biking as a first-/last-mile connection to using transit.

Air & Noise Pollution

Equity Evaluation



What is Preventing More Equitable Air & Noise Pollution?

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Fossil Fuel

Pollution: The City has made progress in electrifying its own municipal fleet, but that progress is mostly limited to light duty vehicles, not the heavy-duty vehicles responsible for a larger share of pollution.

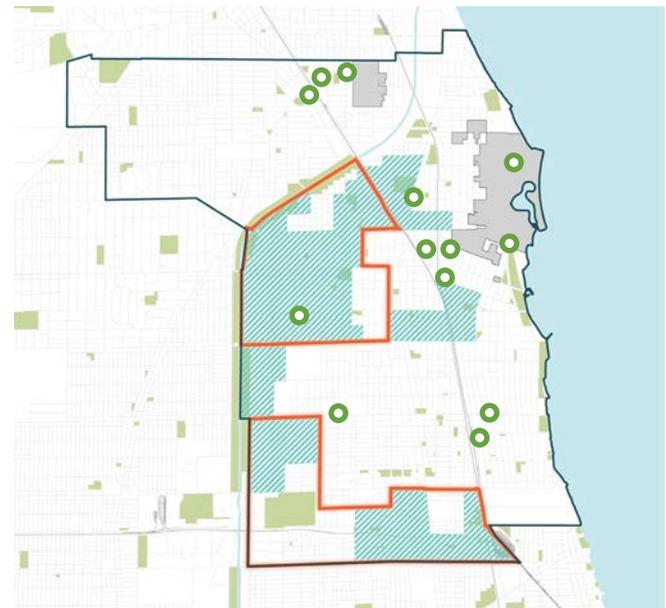
Availability of Alternative Forms of Transportation:

The City is installing more EV charging stations every year, but only 3 EV charging stations currently exist west of the Metra Line, suggesting availability of EV charging is not as frequent in western Evanston/the Focus Areas than other areas of Evanston.

Transitioning to an electric vehicle requires changes in habitual actions such as how frequently to refuel/charge, where to refuel/charge, typical associated maintenance, etc. There may also be misconceptions on cost and expected travel times per charge that need to be addressed through education and outreach.

Public Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Source: <https://www.plugshare.com/>



Focus Areas

Environmental Justice Communities

Public Electric Charging Stations*

* Does not include charging stations on residential private property

Equity Evaluation

Impacts of Industry Rooted in History:

The solid waste transfer station has been grandfathered into approval with the Illinois General Assembly statute making an exception for any “facility which is in existence on January 1, 1988,” so the waste transfer was not prohibited by the statute. This further maintains the status quo of industry operations in historically Black or disinvested neighborhoods perpetuating the impacts of industry on Evanstonians.

The waste transfer station remains a top concern for neighbors, residents, and environmental justice activists today. Any concrete actions pertaining to the station will require regional, state, and federal partnerships

Trucks on Neighborhood Streets:

Very few City streets in Evanston explicitly prohibit trucks. More efforts could be targeted on residential streets around commercial/industrial areas that are in minority/disadvantaged residential areas that are near commercial/industrial areas/operations.

City does allow exceptions to truck route weight/size restrictions on a permit basis which may make regulations or enforcement of truck routes unclear to community members.

Summary

Historic land use patterns rooted in segregation have resulted in a higher likelihood for non-white individuals to be located near industrial land uses. Industrial land uses have direct health and safety impacts to nearby Evanstonians due to higher levels of pollutants emitted from these uses.

The City of Evanston limits and enforces truck routes throughout, however due to the higher concentration of industrial and big-box commercial land uses on the West side of the City, Evanstonians on that side of the City are more likely to be impacted.

There are initiatives to reduce the number of petroleum-powered vehicles and increase the use of other transit modes, however this does not address the presence of truck traffic and the undesirable consequences.

Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Bike and Pedestrian Access and Safety in Evanston?

Sidewalk gaps are more prevalent in West Evanston than other parts of the City. Most gaps are found on the neighborhood streets around industrial and commercial areas in West Evanston. Marked crosswalks only exist on major roads, such as Church Street and Main Street, but not at every intersection. Crosswalks also mainly exist near most schools and other public facilities. A good portion of sidewalk gaps in Evanston exist in the Focus Areas and particularly near schools in the Focus Areas.

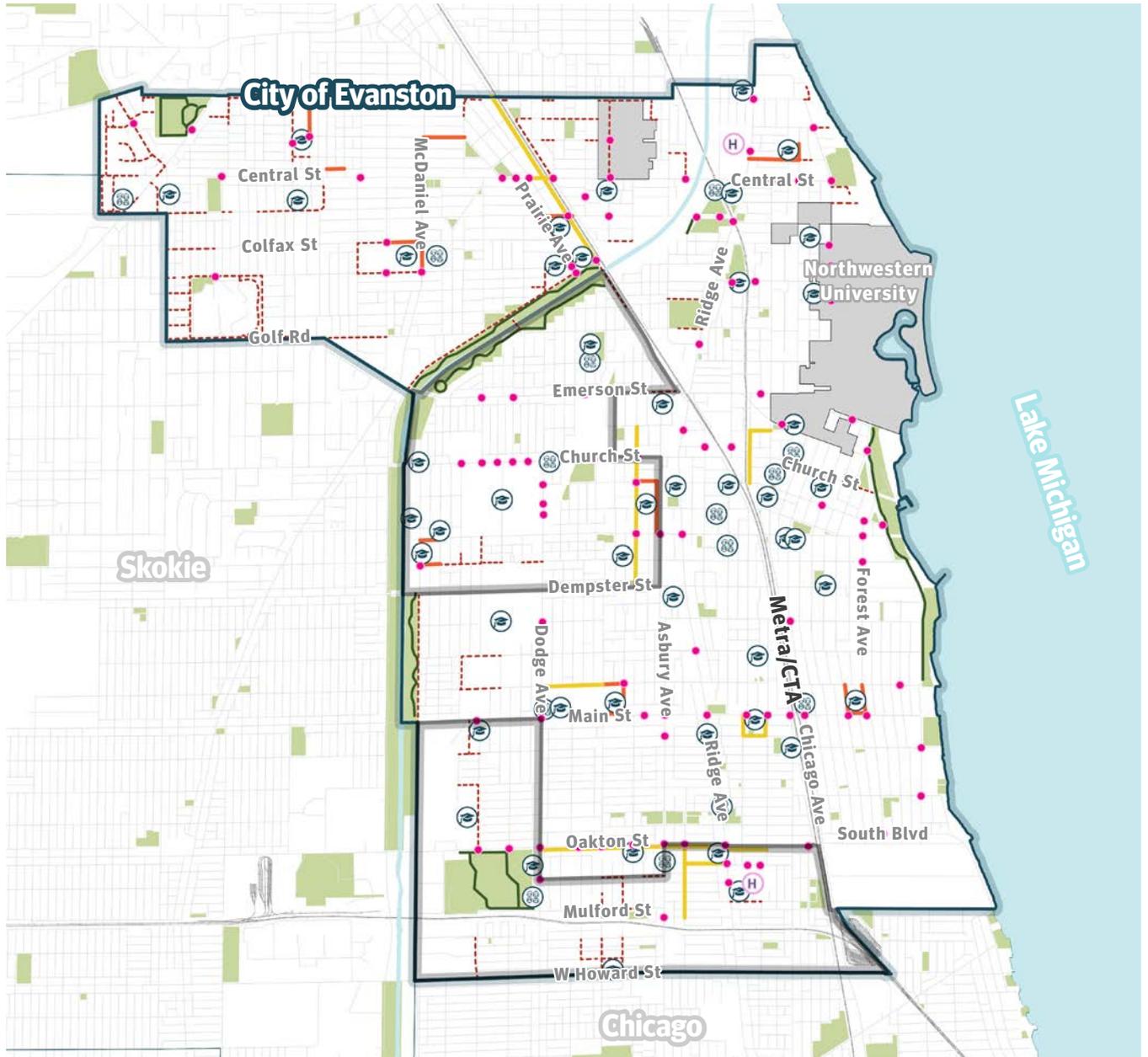
In census tract 8092, which has one of lowest neighborhood-level walkability scores, and has the highest proportion of Evanstonians with a disability, nearly one in five households lacks a vehicle. This suggests that there may be a high level of unmet transportation needs in this neighborhood.

Today, dedicated bike lanes are limited and exist only on portions of major roads, including Emerson Street, Church Street, Dodge Avenue, and Main Street. Bike lanes cross the canal on Emerson Street and Main Street, providing connectivity to other parts of Evanston and Skokie. Signed bike routes are used to complete the network of bike routes

on major roads throughout the City. However, with gaps in dedicated bike lanes in Evanston, some community members might not feel comfortable sharing the road with vehicles on signed bike routes.

Aside from Dodge Avenue and Church Street, existing dedicated bike lanes don't connect to each other. Dedicated bike lanes often coincide with public bus transit routes, but do not frequently serve to connect other areas of the City not served by transit to these transit route corridors. Therefore dedicated bike lanes in Evanston do not always serve as a first-/last-mile connection or enhance access to transit.

Pedestrian Access & Sidewalk Improvements



- Sidewalk Gap
- Existing Crosswalk
- Sidewalk improvement (under construction)
- Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Improvement (under construction)
- Grade School
- Community Facility (Library, Recreation Center, etc.)
- H Hospital

DRAFT 2.0

Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Indicators of Injustice

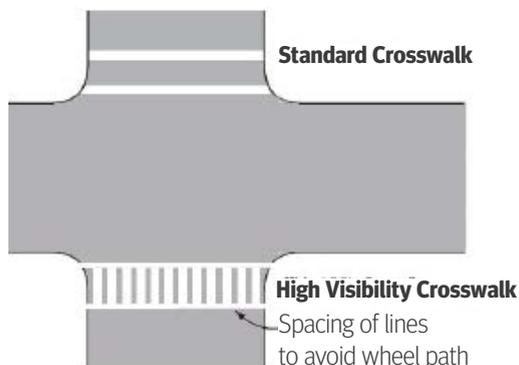
What Is Contributing To This Issue?

The following indicators of injustices are factors that contribute to the inequitable bike/pedestrian access and safety in Evanston:

Visibility:

Clearly marked crosswalks are very important to pedestrian safety to adequately indicate and warn motorists of pedestrians crossing the street.

In the EEI Focus Areas, particularly in residential areas, crosswalks are two painted lines marking the pedestrian space, but in more commercial areas, painted ladder crosswalks are utilized with signalized intersections. Surrounding schools there are a handful of mid-block crossing of painted crosswalks, but few traffic calming/signage/signalized interventions exist to make these crossings even safer.



Survey of Crosswalk Conditions:

Two-Stripe
Painted
Crosswalk



Intersection of Dewey Avenue and Dobson Street

Reflective
Signage &
Ladder-Painted
Crosswalk



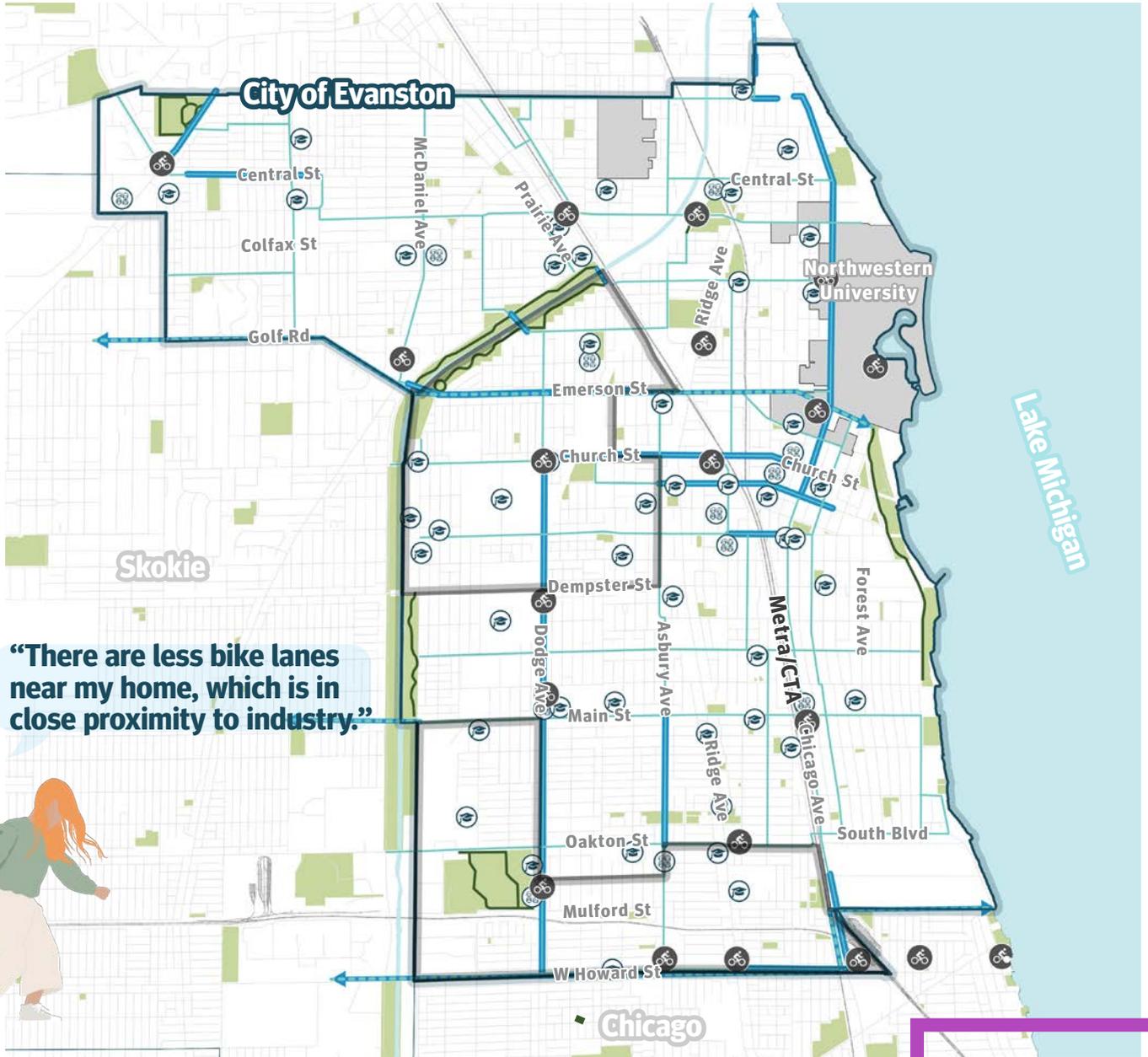
Church Street, in front of the Willie May Fieldhouse

Paver
Material
Crosswalk,
Signalized
Intersection



Intersection of N Clark Street and Ashland Avenue

Bike Routes, Trails, and Bike Shares



- Existing Designated Bike Lane
- Existing Signed Bike Route
- - - Proposed Regional Bikeway
- Trails/Multi-Use Path
- - - Future Paths
- Existing Divvy Bikeshare Station
- Future Divvy Bikeshare Station
- Grade School
- Hospital
- Community Facility (Library, Recreation Center, etc.)



Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Indicators of Injustice

What Is Contributing To This Issue? (continued)

Barriers to Biking:

The decision to ride a bike for daily travel, such as to and from work, can be impacted by the space and comfort of the public realm around their home, especially around higher-volume and higher-speed routes. Those who are not avid cyclists may not feel comfortable sharing the road with vehicles, and a dedicated bike lane would provide the space and separation for some to feel more comfortable biking on streets. If the route to a destination has gaps in the bike lane network, that may be challenging or prevent someone from biking there if the route doesn't feel safe enough.

The availability of bike racks is important to accommodating people biking to destinations and having a dedicated, safe place to lock up and park their bikes.

Financial means to accessing a reliable bike and securely storing it may also be a factor.

Comfort of Public Realm:

Multiple factors and elements of street design play a role in making streets feel safe and comfortable for all users, including adequate lighting, quality of sidewalks, tree canopy, vehicle speeds, widths of parkways and sidewalks, etc.

Traffic signals that allow for safe pedestrian crossing are typically only found on major roads outside of residential blocks. Residential blocks may have fewer vehicles at slower speeds, but lack consistency in sidewalks, particularly in the focus areas, increasing likelihood of vehicle interaction.

Technology integrated into signalized intersections impacts the function and safety of intersections for all users. Walk signals that automatically change with traffic signals, without being triggered by a button, are typically safer, more convenient, and more efficient because they signal pedestrian crossings every cycle of the traffic signals, give pedestrians enough time to cross, and are synchronized with the flow of traffic.



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today?

The Multimodal Transportation Plan recommends a wide range of policies and physical improvements for transit access, the pedestrian realm, cyclist safety, road design standards, and more.

Informing and Engaging the Community:

Corridor improvement projects, like the Oakton Street Corridor, and ADA* improvement projects have included several opportunities for the public to provide input. The ADA Transition Plan** included public input as one of 4 evaluation criteria to prioritizing improvement projects.

The Summer Cycling Education Series is a collection of free workshops for Evanstonians of all ages and skill levels to become more comfortable biking around Evanston. This series loans out necessary equipment, educates people on safe bike riding, and encourages Evanstonians to ride their bikes more.

The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy states that Evanstonians can request neighborhood traffic calming methods, such as speed humps, through either a neighborhood meeting with City officials/staff or through a petition.

The City's website hosts a "Street Resurfacing, Water Main and Sewer" landing page that details all capital improvement projects regarding alley and sidewalk improvements, multi-modal improvements, and more.

Accommodating Multiple Modes and Supporting Alternative Transportation:

Complete and Green Streets Policy states all public way projects should consider all multi-modal users and green street principles.

Developers are required to provide a multi-modal study if the project is within or next to a designated Transit-Oriented Development area.

***ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act):**

A U.S. law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and ensures access to public spaces, transportation, and housing.

****ADA Transition Plan:**

A document intended to guide the City of Evanston in implementing and advancing a culture of inclusivity for all community members regardless of their ability.

Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today?

(continued)

Availability and Quality of Sidewalks:

The EPLAN recognizes that Evanston's walkability citywide is better than average, but walkability is lower in the northern and western areas of the City where sidewalk gaps are more prevalent.

All Safe Routes to School projects identified in the grant funding to repair and replace existing sidewalks are under construction as of the summer of 2025.

The Multimodal Transportation Plan's Priority Sidewalk Assessment indicated zones among the highest priority for improvement that overlap with the Focus Areas.

The Sidewalk Improvement Program replaces sidewalks/ completes gaps with no cost for the adjacent property owner. Top priority phases (1 and 2) were chosen to promote equity by prioritizing sidewalks used by vulnerable populations (children, senior citizens, and near medical facilities) followed by routes to transit facilities, grocery stores, and City facilities and parks (phases 3, 4, and 5).

The water line replacement program includes concrete curb and sidewalk repairs as needed in coordination with those infrastructure projects.

Encouraging Biking as Transportation:

The Multimodal Transportation Plan recommends making biking more accessible citywide by including bike racks at transit stations, requiring bicycle parking in new development, improving and expanding the bike facility network, and a bike share program.

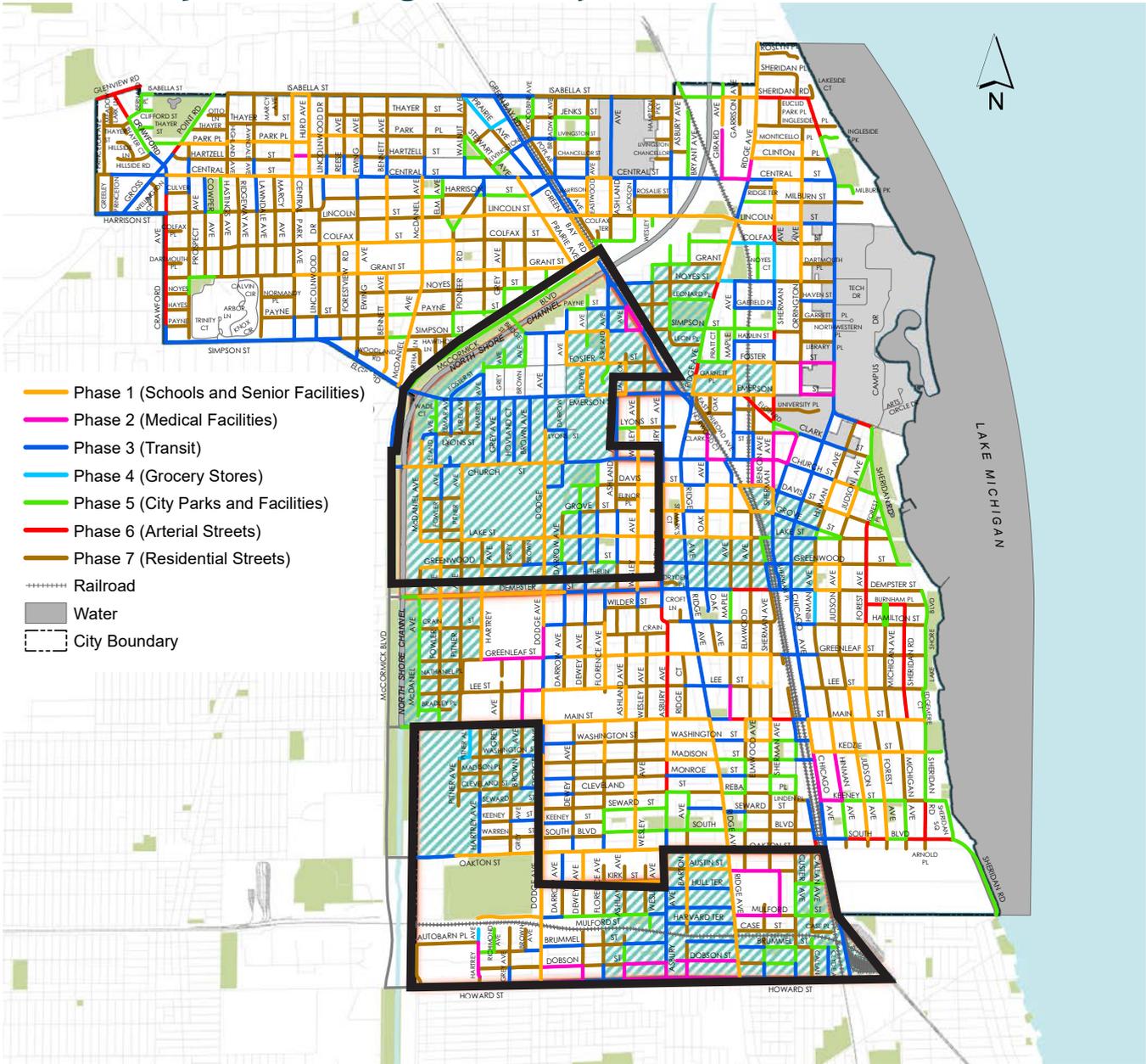
The Church Street Bike Infrastructure project will fill a gap between Harbert Park and Beck Park with a bike path along the North Shore Channel from Dempster to Church, linking to new bike lanes in Skokie. Other corridor improvements projects around the Focus Areas to Chicago Avenue, Green Bay Road, Oakton Street, and Church Street will also increase the bike network in Evanston.

Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot provides funds for randomly-selected applicants living in Evanston with household income at or below 80% AMI to purchase or service a bike locally. The pilot awarded 65 bikes to Evanstonians in total.

TOD (Transit-Oriented Development):

A planning approach that concentrates housing, jobs, and amenities near public transit to encourage walking, reduce car use, and increase access to transit options.

Sidewalk Improvement Program Priority Phases



- Phase 1 (Schools and Senior Facilities)
- Phase 2 (Medical Facilities)
- Phase 3 (Transit)
- Phase 4 (Grocery Stores)
- Phase 5 (City Parks and Facilities)
- Phase 6 (Arterial Streets)
- Phase 7 (Residential Streets)
- Railroad
- Water
- City Boundary

Source: City of Evanston

Focus Areas

Environmental Justice Communities

Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today? (continued)

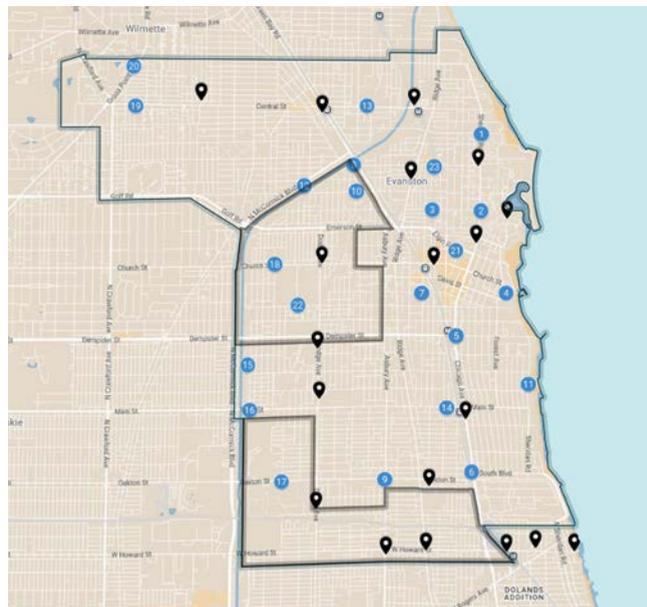
All CTA and Pace buses are equipped to hold bikes, and bikes are allowed on CTA and Metra train cars except for rush hour periods, making using public transit easier for those outside of a walking distance to a stop.

Per City Code, planned developments are required to include a system of walkways, marked street crossings for pedestrian access, and bicycle paths if warranted.

Divvy Bike Share Program began in Evanston in 2016 with 14 stations and 140 bikes available citywide today, and an expansion of the Divvy network is planned. Evanston's Divvy for Everyone (D4E) Program subsidizes a one-time year-long Divvy membership for qualified Evanstonians.

The City will be launching a scooter share pilot program in 2026 as another way to get around Evanston.

Existing and Future Divvy Bike Share Stations



- Focus Areas
- Existing Divvy Stations
- 📍 Future Possible Divvy Stations

Overall Roadway Safety for All Users:

CARP recommends assessing City infrastructure and prioritizing support for properties that provide services to vulnerable populations and ensuring they are accessible.

The Streetlight Master Plan studied 31 locations throughout the City, and determined that lighting levels generally do not meet IESNA or City of Evanston recommended lighting levels. The plan prioritizes lighting improvements to areas of concern heard from the community; these include public gathering areas, houses of worship, libraries, and senior centers.

Corridor Improvement projects including Chicago Avenue, Green Bay Road, and Oakton Street are planning and implementing complete street designs, traffic calming, and enhancements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users to these corridors around the Focus Areas.

Bike/Pedestrian Access & Safety



Equity Evaluation

What is Preventing Equitable Walkability and Bikeability?

Overall Roadway Safety for All Users:

Prioritization for Streetlight Master Plan pilot programs consider high accident locations, uncontrolled intersections near schools and parks, and in and around transit hubs, but not necessarily areas of disinvestment/disadvantage.

The Multimodal Transportation Plan recommends best practices for safety measures such as crossing treatments and bike facilities, but does not specify recommendations for where some of the measures may be needed.

Availability and Quality of Sidewalks:

Sidewalk Repairs recommended in the Multimodal Transportation Plan indicate most of the Focus Areas as lower priority.

ADA improvements from the 2022 ADA Transition Plan were prioritized based on facility use, number of elements needed, use as a polling place, and public input. Prioritization did not consider vulnerable populations or areas of high need.

All safe routes to school identified in the grant funding are under construction in the summer of 2025, but for the most part did not fill any sidewalk gaps, just replaced existing sidewalks in need of repair.

Because of the backlog of deteriorated sidewalk, replacement through the Sidewalk Improvement Program may take several years. Property owners can get their sidewalk replaced immediately by paying for the replacement, which may result in discrepancies in quality public realm based on income.

Design and Frequency of Crosswalks:

Painted crosswalk designs may show signs of wear and tear more quickly than ladder crosswalks, as they require vehicles to drive over the paint repeatedly, causing visibility issues.

Crosswalks with a change in material or color are more effective in signaling drivers to stop for pedestrians, however are more expensive to install and maintain. These crosswalk designs are currently found on commercial corridors and spaces with more walking activity, but not in connection to residential areas.

Accommodating Multiple Modes and Supporting Alternative Transportation

Taxicab Coupons work for private taxicab companies and not more modern forms of rideshare such as Uber or Lyft. These coupons may need modernization to accommodate new technologies in ridesharing.

Both Evanston's and Pace's taxicab subsidy programs are limited geographically, which means some longer trips or cross-city trips are not covered.

Equity Evaluation

Encouraging Biking as Transportation:

Bicycle parking facilities are included as part of City Code for new public buildings, hospitals, university/college buildings, and shopping centers, but the City does not require bicycle parking for other private developments.

Divvy for Everyone Program only subsidizes a single year of membership, reducing the efficacy of community members making a long-term habit of biking for transportation.



Bike Rack at Main Station, a popular transfer destination for the Metra UP-North and the CTA Purple lines.

Summary

Bike/Pedestrian Access and Safety is advancing through a variety of policy initiatives, program subsidies, and infrastructure projects that are transforming streets throughout Evanston.

Street and sidewalk infrastructure maintenance hinders pedestrian safety and comfort, due to the pace at which the repairs and replacements take place and potential nonalignment with priority phases and locations of vulnerable populations.

While other transit modes have integrated improvements for cyclists, there are few dedicated, separated lanes and cyclist-only spaces that can support complete trips from start to finish by bike only.

Transit Access



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Transit Access in Evanston?

Pace Suburban Bus provides bus service throughout the City of Evanston. Metra rail connects the entire Chicagoland area and runs through Evanston. The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates both bus and rail service, including the Evanston Circulator. The west and southeast areas of Evanston lack direct connections to CTA and Metra stations, making commuting via rail harder to access.

Bus service is insufficient and unreliable to meet the needs of Evanstonians who depend on taking the bus to meet their daily needs or travel to/from work. Bus service 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.

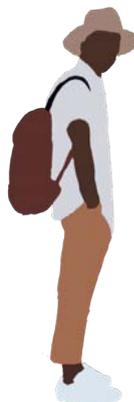
5,174

Housing units without access to a personal vehicle

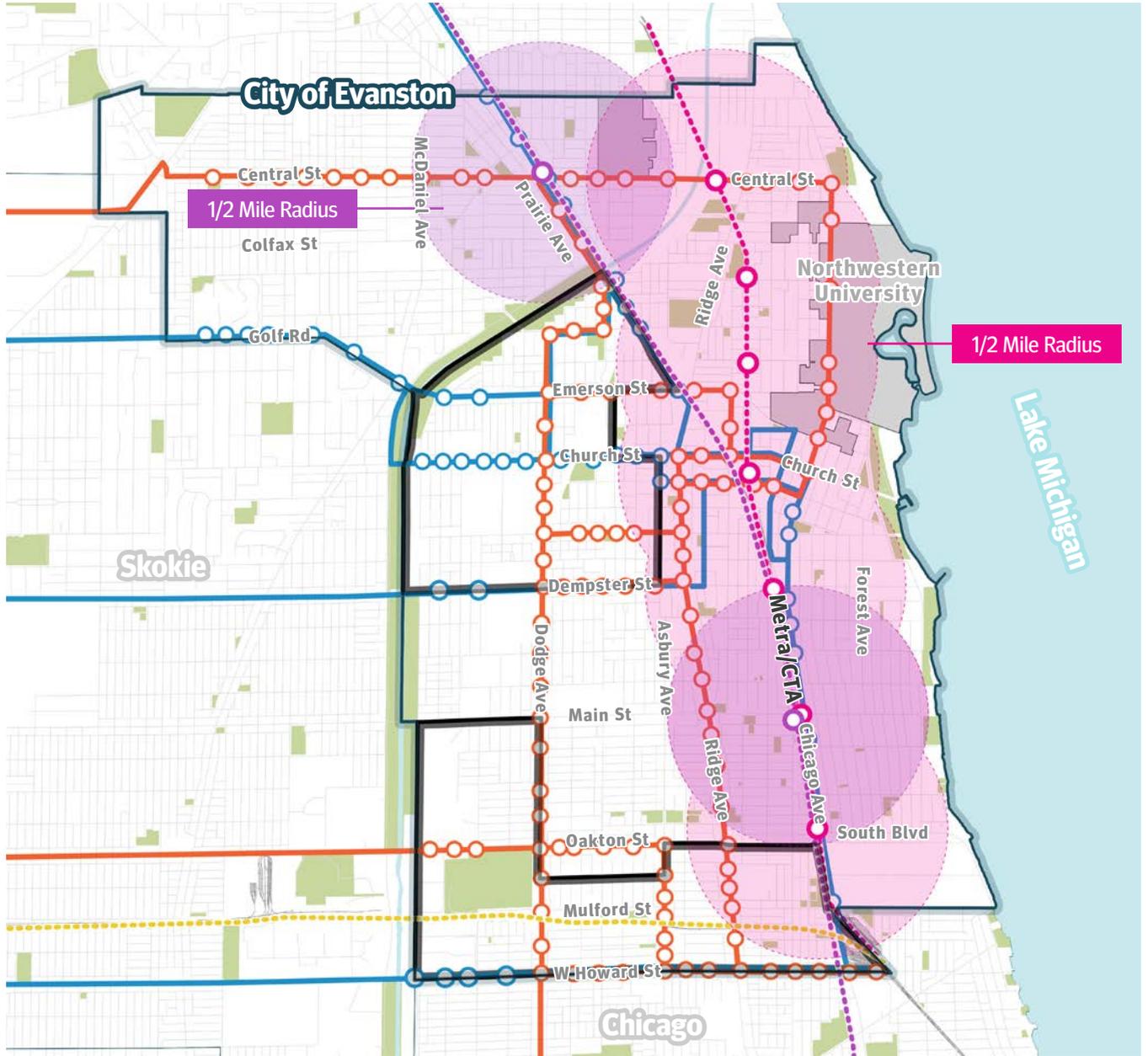
Source: Esri Business Analyst

“There is no shelter at the bus stop on my street, making long waits uncomfortable.”

“There is no east to west bus route near me, the extra transfer makes me late to work.”



Transit Service



Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan + US Census

- PACE Bus Line
- CTA Bus Line
- Metra Rail
- CTA Purple Line
- Skokie Swift / CTA Yellow Line

Transit Access



Indicators of Injustice

What Is Contributing To This Issue?

Quality of Transit Stops:

The transit rider experience begins at the bus stop, while they are waiting for the bus to arrive. Well-designed transit stops can provide shade from the sun, shelter from weather, a place to sit, and other amenities to make the rider's wait more pleasant. The design and quality of transit stop across the City of Evanston vary widely - from simple signs to partially-enclosed shelters with benches and trash receptacles.

First- and Last-Mile Connections to Transit:

Getting to transit stops can also have an impact on the rider experience and a community member's willingness to choose transit as a form of transportation. Many Evanstonians may live several blocks from the nearest stop they need to use in order to get around on transit. Long walks can significantly add to one's commute if they must travel several blocks to a bus stop. Sidewalk connections, therefore, are also important to transit riders as well as pedestrians to walk to their destinations. Most bus stops are surrounded by existing sidewalks, but west and south Evanston has several gaps in the sidewalk network near bus stops.

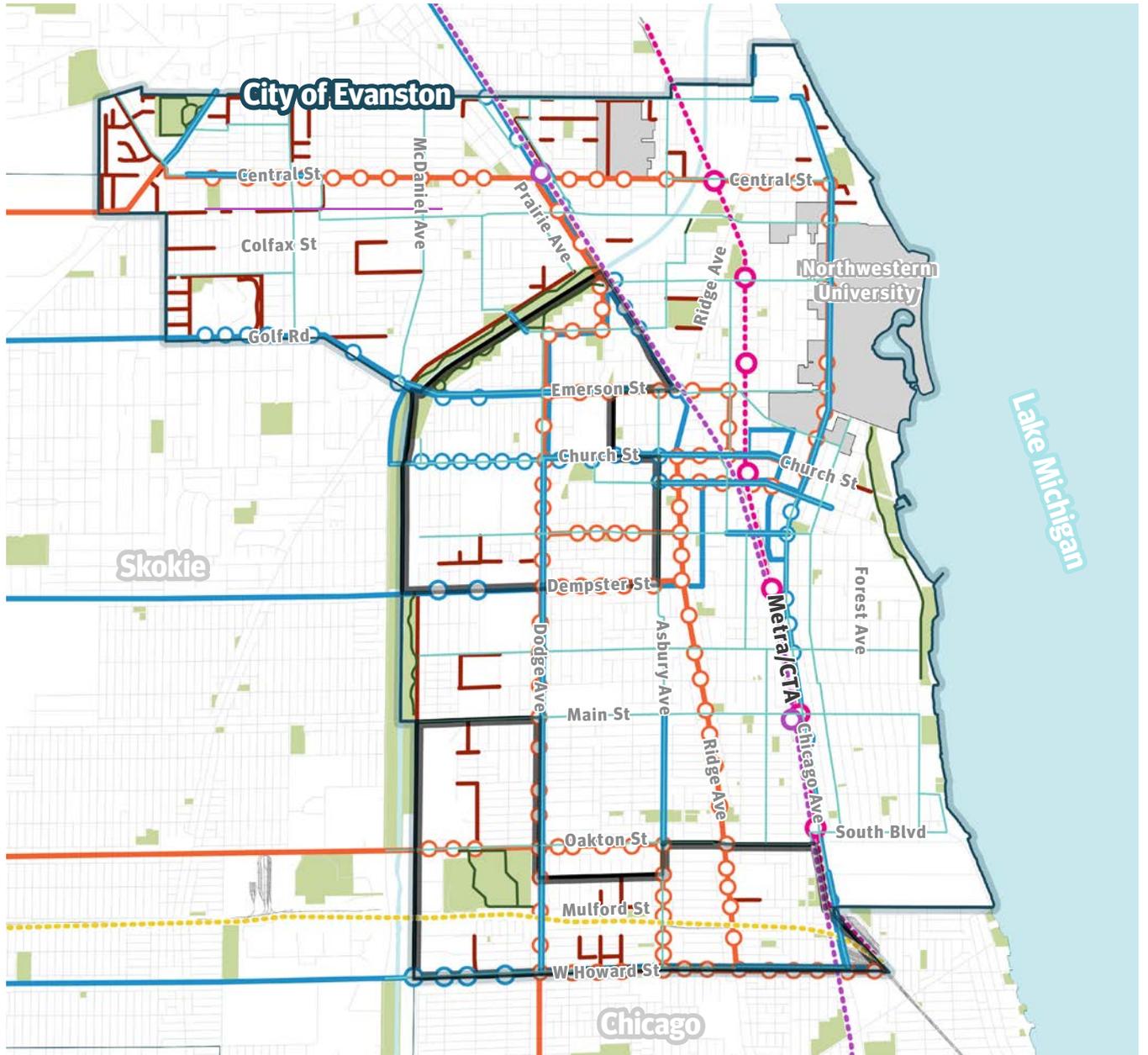
Biking can be a quicker option of getting from home to a bus stop, and the consistent presence of bike lanes to and around transit stops supports easier access to transit stops via bike. Most dedicated bike lanes in Evanston run alongside transit routes, but few connect the places in between transit routes.

In order to encourage Evanstonians to choose public transit for transportation instead of their personal vehicles, getting to bus stops must be easy and convenient, and the bus stop areas must be comfortable and safe.



Bus stops throughout Evanston

First- and Last-Mile Connections to Transit



Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan + US Census

- PACE Bus Line
 ■ CTA Bus Line
 ■ Metra Rail
 ■ CTA Purple Line
 ■ Skokie Swift / CTA Yellow Line
- Sidewalk Gap
 ■ Existing Designated Bike Lane
 ■ Existing Signed Bike Route

DRAFT 2.0

Transit Access



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today?

Engaging and Informing the Community: Pace's ReVision Plan has included several ways for the public to stay updated and involved with the plan process and other projects.

Improving Quality of Transit Stops:

Prioritization for Streetlight Master Plan pilot programs consider high accident locations, uncontrolled intersections in and around transit hubs, among others.

The Oakton Street and Chicago Avenue Corridor Improvement projects includes transit stop improvements.

Transit Programs and Incentives:

The City's Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds a number roadway repair projects. Locations included in each phase of projects are listed on the City's webpage.

Access Evanston program offers subsidies for transportation options, including the Subsidized Taxicab Coupons for taxicab and ride share options traveling within the City limits. The number of coupons available varies by income. The Transportation Debit Card that Evanstonians can use for any mode of transportation is a subsidized transit option. Participants can load money onto the debit card monthly, and the City will match up to a certain amount.

Pace's Taxi Access Program (TAP) is another subsidized transit program for eligible riders that will cover part of the cost of taxi rides if the origin of the trip is within Chicago.

Increasing Access to Transit:

CARP advocates for maintaining or expanding the bus transit network in Evanston.

The Evanston Transit Alliance has been advocating for re-opening the CTA Yellow Line Station in Evanston, which would serve areas around the Levy Senior Center and Ascension Saint Francis Hospital. The City conducted initial feasibility studies and community engagement in 2012.

Pace identified in its ReVision plan that 45% of low-income suburban community members live more than a half-mile from bus or rail service, and 48% of people of color live more than a half-mile from bus or rail service. The ReVision plan is studying options for an expanded transit network.

The Zoning Report recommends zoning code updates that prioritize expansion of public transit areas and require density and affordable housing near transit.

Pace offers grade school students to ride public transit for free on the first day of school and reduced fares for the entire year for Chicago Public Schools and suburban schools.

Access Evanston program offers subsidized transportation benefits including Transportation Debit Card that eligible Evanstonians can use for any mode of transportation within and outside of City limits. Participants can load money onto a debit card monthly, and the City will match up to a certain amount of funds on the card.

In 2018, Pace and CTA participated in the North Shore Transit Service Coordination Plan and Market Analysis to improve coordination of both bus services where they overlap and investigate opportunities for expansion.

Pace's Rideshare Access Program (RAP) is another transit subsidy program for eligible riders that Pace will cover for Uber or UZURV rideshare trips to cover a portion of the cost of a trip. The program covers up to 30 trips per month, accommodating nearly daily use.

Pace, CTA, and Metra all offer free rides on fixed route buses for riders with disabilities who are certified for ADA Paratransit through the RTA. Reduced fares are also available for riders who are not ADA Paratransit-certified but are 65 and older and/or with a disability through medicaid.

First- and Last-Mile Connections:

The City's pilot of Divvy scooters citywide in 2026 will pay attention to locating some stations near transit station/stops and areas of the Evanston that has less transit options such as the west side of the City.

Summary

While Evanston's public transit system is reasonably robust, there are inequities around evening/weekend service availability, access for those with mobility challenges, and lack of east to west bike and bus services and infrastructure.

The conditions of bus stops and pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks vary greatly throughout Evanston. Targeted investments are needed in residential neighborhoods with vulnerable populations and dependency on transit outside of major commercial corridors that see more significant public realm investment.

Further alignment is needed in what priority areas have been established across the number of transit and mobility-related plans, to make sure capital improvements and investments are maximizing impact



Housing & Development

In Evanston, access to safe, healthy, and affordable housing remains difficult—mirroring patterns of environmental injustice seen across the country. Historically marginalized communities, particularly Black and low-income community members, have been disproportionately impacted by housing conditions – a key determinant of physical, mental, and social well-being – that compromise health and well-being. As housing costs rise across Evanston, finding quality housing that is affordable becomes an increasing barrier to housing security, stability, and overall well-being, with generational impacts.



Topics investigated through a lens of Environmental Equity:

- Rising Housing Costs
- Housing Conditions



Rising Housing Costs



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Rising Housing Costs in Evanston?

As housing costs rise and affordable options dwindle, low-income households become increasingly cost-burdened, often forced to choose between rent and other necessities like food and healthcare or settle for substandard housing conditions. Increasing home values are making it even more difficult to attain homeownership. Environmental injustice is perpetuated when access to healthy housing is determined by income, race, or geography.

Overall, both rents and homes values have been increasing, making both housing options challenging to afford quality housing. When individuals or families struggle to pay rent or mortgages, they face eviction which uproots families and forces them to relocate in search of another housing option they can afford. In gentrifying neighborhoods, this may also force community members to leave their neighborhoods—which may have been home to these families generations—in search of more affordable options; this displacement can result in the loss of cultural and social networks and changing of schools for children that disrupts their education and their stability.

Utility and homeowner insurance costs continue to increase, leaving many households—particularly those with lower incomes—struggling to make ends meet. Improvements to increase energy efficiency that would reduce utility costs can feel like a significant initial investment, despite the potential for long-term savings, that may feel out of reach for some homeowners. This may prevent homeowners from exploring energy options or starting projects for energy efficiency in their homes.



of Evanstonians spend over 1/3 of their income on housing

In the past 10 years in Evanston...

Median rent has increased by

41%

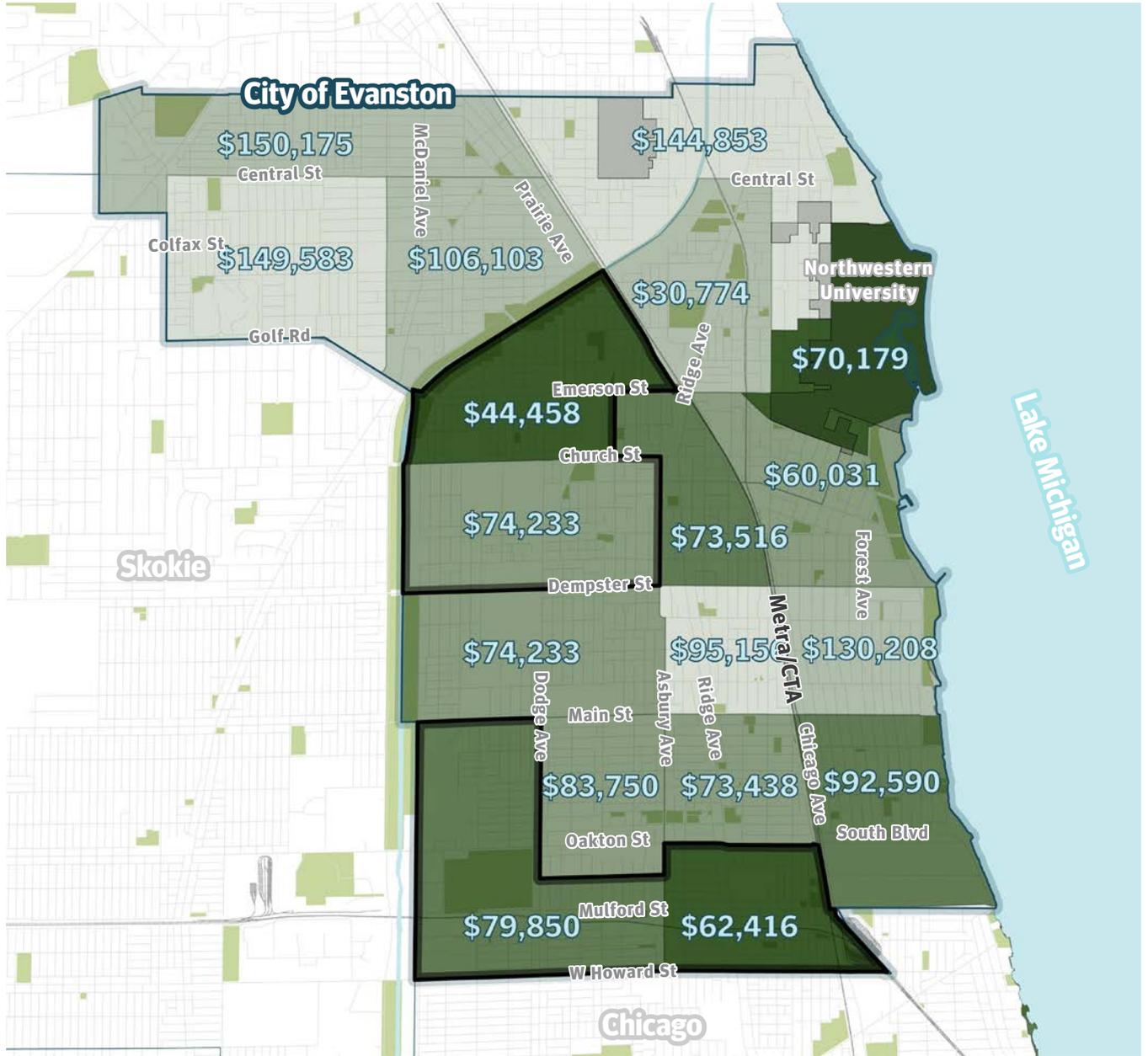
1-bedroom home values have increased by

60%

2-bedroom home values have increased by

52%

Median Home Values & Median Household Incomes



Lowest Median Home Value



Highest Median Home Value

Rising Housing Costs



Indicators of Injustice

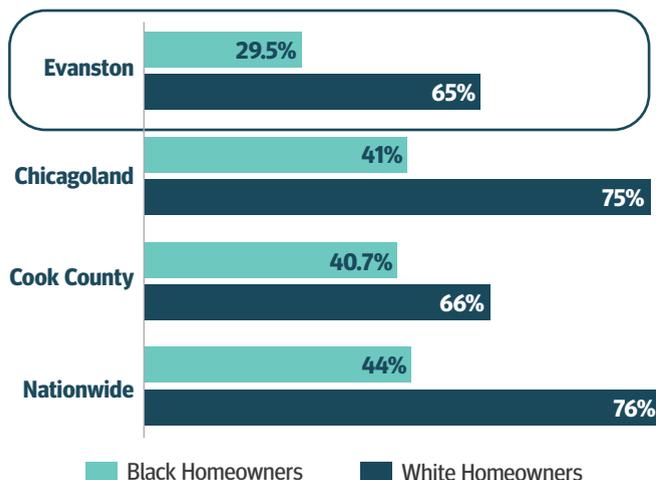
What is Contributing to this Issue?

Household Income & Homeownership:

Significant racial disparities in homeownership and income between Black and White community members in Evanston was a key finding based on data and viewpoints from the lived experiences of Evanstonians. Black households on average earn far below the city-wide household average and almost 50% less than White households in Evanston.

The percentage of income required for housing costs is becoming larger, leaving households with less money left for other needs, such as food, gas, clothing, etc., let alone to put away into savings for the future or homeownership.

Black and White Homeownership Rates



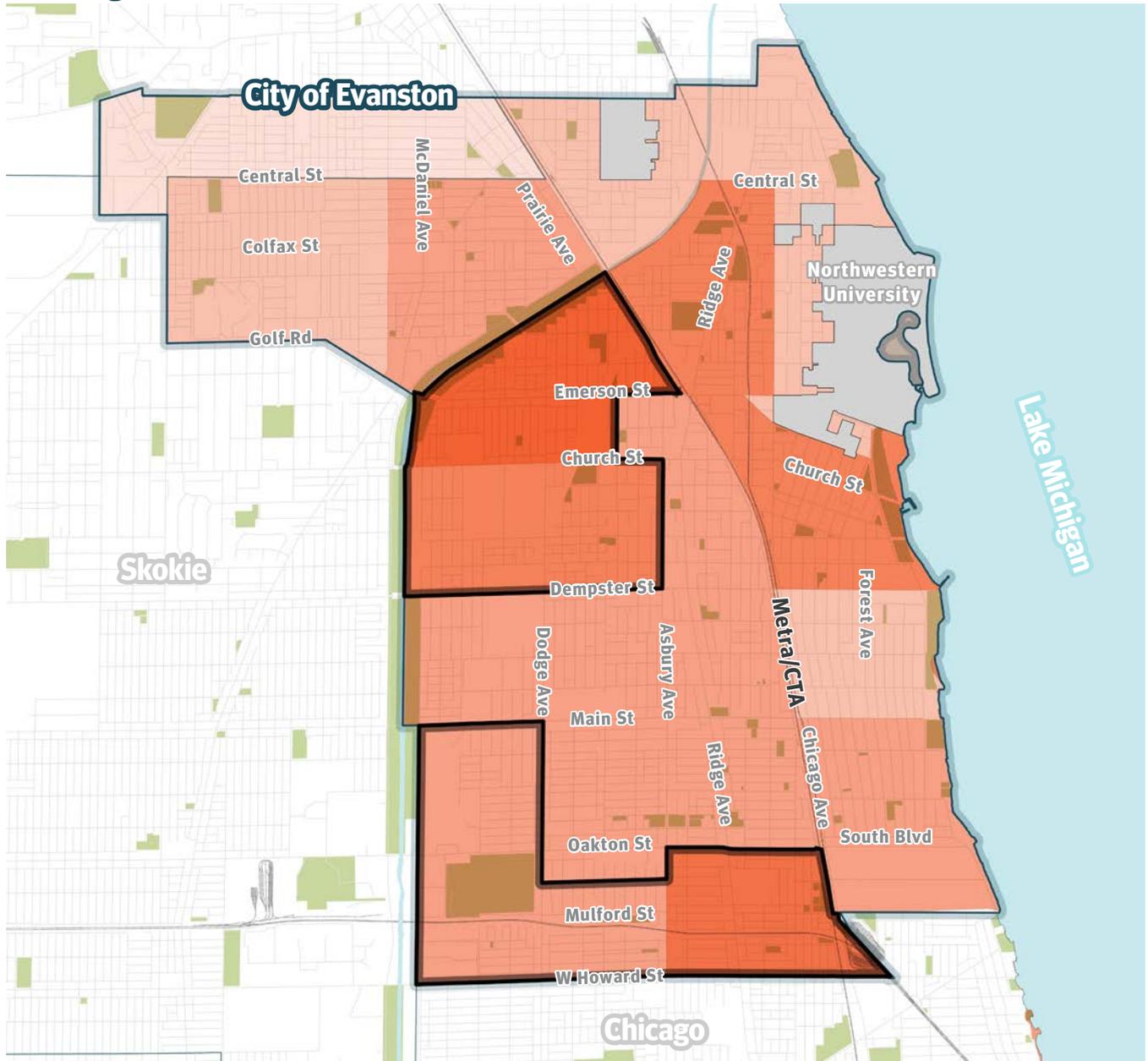
With 27% of Evanston renters spending half their income on housing, many are vulnerable to housing instability, forced moves, or homelessness. This strain especially impacts lower-income families, single-parent households, and communities of color.

Less than a third of these households spend at least \$1,500 per month in housing costs. However, almost 90% of homeowner households with a mortgage spend at least \$1,500 per month in housing costs, and over 43% spend at least \$3,000 per month.

The cost-burden of housing perpetuates the cycle of not being able to afford higher quality housing, as high prices hinder the ability to build up personal savings. Renting is often viewed as a step toward building wealth required to purchasing a home. Without affordable rents, renters are forced to spend more on housing while saving less and cannot build savings toward a down payment for a house.

Entry costs for new buyers—like down payments, closing costs, and home prices—remain prohibitively high. This underscores generational and income-based divides in access to homeownership.

Housing Cost Burden



Source: EPLAN

Greatest Percentage of
Cost-Burdened Households



Lowest Percentage of
Cost-Burdened Households

Rising Housing Costs



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue? (continued)

Utilities, Energy and Invisible Costs:

Many homes across the US were constructed before building energy codes were being created in the 1980's. These older homes often have higher energy costs due to factors such as inefficient systems, poor or older insulation, outdated windows and doors, etc. The lack of energy efficiency or deterioration simply from age and wear-and-tear means that older homes are more expensive to heat or cool and eventually will need replacement of its systems, such as water heaters or air conditioning. Emergency repairs from aging structures of homes are a surprise, and often very expensive, cost that may use a large portion of someone's earning or savings to pay for them. These repairs can have a ripple effect on a household's ability to afford other necessities, and these repairs may get overlooked or ignored due to the high cost.

Utility and energy costs and determining improvements that can alleviate these cost-burdens and achieve building energy efficiency can feel like a complex topic. Community members may lack the knowledge and understanding of utility bills and energy efficiency to weigh their options and determine what upgrades and improvements are appropriate.

Fossil fuels for energy are subsidized which makes natural gas cheaper than electricity even though combusting methane gas indoors is known to be harmful to health. Often the additional cost of converting to and using a cleaner or more sustainable energy source is not perceived as a necessary cost.

Renters have less control over improvements such as energy efficiency upgrades, despite having a desire to live sustainably, than property owners do. Not all landlords or property managers are incentivized to make these types of improvements and investments in their properties unless there is a clear return on investment.

Homes built in the 1990s in the U.S. are about

30% more efficient

in space-heating than homes built before 1950.

Source: International Energy Policy & Program Evaluation Conference

Supply of Housing:

The housing shortage experienced nationwide shows that demand outweighs the supply of affordable housing, both rental and for-sale housing.

Gentrification, limited land availability, and certain developer practices are exacerbating the affordability crisis. Despite the trend of family sizes decreasing nationally, there are still families who need multiple-bedroom homes or apartments to provide enough space for their family to live comfortably. Larger families may struggle to find adequate rental space, while many households may be priced out of buying the few smaller, more affordable homes. Voucher holders face increasing competition for units with skyrocketing rents and fewer available properties that meet bedroom requirements. The needs for families can often be overlooked in the development of rental units that supply only one- to two-bedroom units. For example, concerns were raised that developers may use smaller unit sizes to technically meet affordability targets without meeting the actual needs of families.

A graphic showing the number 80 inside a blue circle, with a percentage sign to its right.

of rental units have two or fewer bedrooms...

making them less suitable for larger households.

Subsidized Units Breakdown in Evanston:

440+ units for income-qualified seniors.

200+ single-room occupancy units.

100+ units set aside for vulnerable groups (e.g., those with disabilities or escaping violence).

85+ units developed through the City's Inclusionary Housing program.

550+ households rely on housing choice vouchers to make rent viable.

Rising Housing Costs



Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done about it Today?

Evanston's Housing and Community Development Committee guides City policy on the use of federal entitlement funds and local resources to develop vibrant, welcoming, sustainable neighborhoods, improve housing, combat homelessness, and maintain and expand housing affordability.

The Evanston Housing4All Strategic Housing Plan is currently underway to identify housing policies and programs that respond to specific housing needs.

Engaging and Informing the Community:

The Evanston Care Network is a platform where individuals can search for free and low-cost resources, including food, housing, childcare, social services, etc.

The Affordable Housing Steering Committee engages Evanstonians to learn about housing needs and ideas on how to address them. The Evanston Reparations Committee that meets monthly fosters transparency, accountability, and community involvement.

The City's website has a consolidated list of various affordable housing resources and contact information.

Financial Assistance: Several financial assistance programs are available to eligible Evanstonians in need, including:

- The Vulnerable Population Assistance Program: funds for basic needs, such as some housing, food, clothing assistance, other necessities
- Emergency Assistance Program: assistance in emergency or life-threatening situations (i.e. evictions, utility disconnection), for rental/mortgage payment assistance, and other financial needs
- General Assistance Program: assistance to persons who are not eligible for any other state or federal financial assistance programs and who do not have income or resources
- Community Member Relief Fund: funds for those who do not qualify for General or Emergency Assistance programs, but have life-threatening circumstances (eviction, utility disconnection, food insecurity, or other emergency needs)

In addition, HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant Rental Assistance Program is designed to assist people with regaining stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

Homeownership:

The EPLAN identifies the expansion and support of homeownership opportunities as a key way to build Black and Brown wealth.

Local Reparations Program is a formal recognition by the City of past harm in housing policies, and aims to address the harms done to past Black Evanstonians and the lack of generational wealth-building opportunities for them and their families created by past discriminatory housing practices.

This program provides funds for eligible Black Evanstonians for housing-related expenses, such as down payments on a home or paying for home repairs. This program emphasizes the importance of protecting long-term community members by focusing on those who were directly impacted by discriminatory practices in the 1900's and direct descendants of those Evanstonians.

Utilities, Energy, and Additional Costs:

The EPLAN and CARP acknowledge the need to reduce financial burdens associated with climate hazards like high utility bills. The CARP recommends several ways for the City to support and incentivize energy efficiency improvements, promote renewable energy and make it more accessible to Evanstonians, and create benefits and cost savings particularly for lower-income households.

The Affordable Water/Sewer Rate is available for individuals who qualify for the Access Evanston benefit card to receive reduced rate for water/sewer services (as of 2024). Qualified Evanstonians can receive an annual payment and do not pay a water/sewer bill.

The Evanston Green Homes Pilot Program also assists homeowners and rental properties with health and safety improvements and energy conservation/efficiency upgrades at no cost; the program pays for these improvements with no required match or any payment from the homeowner. The program's goal is to create healthier living spaces while reducing utility costs, with emphasis on low- to moderate-income Black and Latino/Hispanic households and census tracts with the most vulnerable community members. The process for determining recommended improvements is done by professionals who can help interpret and discuss the options with the property owners, making the improvements easier to understand.

A Housing Rehab Loan through the Housing Rehabilitation Program provides financing to maintain and improve housing that is occupied by low- and moderate-income households in the form of market rate loans that can help manage the initial investment of these home improvements over time.

Rising Housing Costs



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today? (continued)

Solar as a renewable energy source can be an effective way for homeowners to utilize sustainable energy and lower energy costs. Evanston's Accessible Solar Program supports low-income households accessing solar power. The Community Solar Program guarantees a 10% savings of community solar credits on all Evanstonians' energy bills. Income-qualifying Evanstonians receive 100% savings of community solar credits on their bills.

Supply of Affordable Units:

Evanston's Housing4All Plan focuses on preserving affordable housing units, creating new housing units to address gaps in the supply, and protecting Evanstonians from displacement. This plan aims to form the foundation for long-term action to ensure that every Evanstonian — regardless of income, age, race, or background — has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

The Envision Evanston 2045 Comprehensive Plan identifies more parts of the City for multi-unit buildings to increase unit supply and better distribute housing types. The plan also includes a study and revision of the City's zoning codes (Equitable Zoning Project Report) toward housing affordability, increasing housing supply, and promoting equity. The report recognizes the relationship between zoning and redlining that perpetuates inequities and segregation in housing equity, supply, and affordability.

The EPLAN recommends strengthening housing and development policies that protect existing and build new affordable housing options.

The Zoning Code demonstrates a commitment to affordable housing through inclusionary housing bonuses requiring certain percentage of low-, moderate-, and middle-income price points in housing development projects. Also, the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance mandates an inclusionary requirement for developments which helps increase supply and variety of affordable units.

The Code also has flexible regulations regarding existing accessory structures to be used as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to increase available housing options. To further encourage the use of ADUs toward increasing housing stock and affordability, the City of Evanston published a Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that explains these regulations and promotes use of ADUs as rental units to increase housing supply.

In 2025, Evanston secured a federal PRO Housing Grant to address affordable housing challenges in the community.

What is Preventing Equitable Housing Costs?

Despite efforts, housing unaffordability is disproportionately impacting people of color and low-income households and is resulting in those already vulnerable community members being displaced from their neighborhoods.

Utilities, Energy, and Additional Costs:

Some community members may not know enough about smaller-scale investments that could improve their homes' energy efficiency and may perceive such improvements to be too expensive.

Supply of Affordable Units:

The Zoning Code is outdated, lacking clear policy/regulation for increasing housing diversity, and needs to be updated. Regulations in the code can prohibit housing diversity in certain areas by prioritizing neighborhood character over more inclusionary housing practices.

Current ordinances prohibit more than three unrelated people from living in one household, which limits shared-housing arrangements on the basis of mitigating costs.

Regulations in the zoning code may be a barrier to new

housing development.

Summary

Rising housing costs in Evanston are placing a disproportionate burden on low-income and Black Evanstonians, who are more likely to spend a higher share of their income on rent, utilities, and other housing-related expenses. These increasing costs combined with limited affordable options make both renting and homeownership less attainable.

Despite ongoing programs and policy efforts, structural barriers such as outdated zoning regulations, continue to limit housing supply that meets the needs of the community.

Energy efficiency in buildings is a long-term investment that City programs are helping property owners understand and implement in their homes. Still, energy efficiency may not be a priority for community members budgeting to afford basic needs.

Housing Conditions



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Housing Conditions in Evanston?

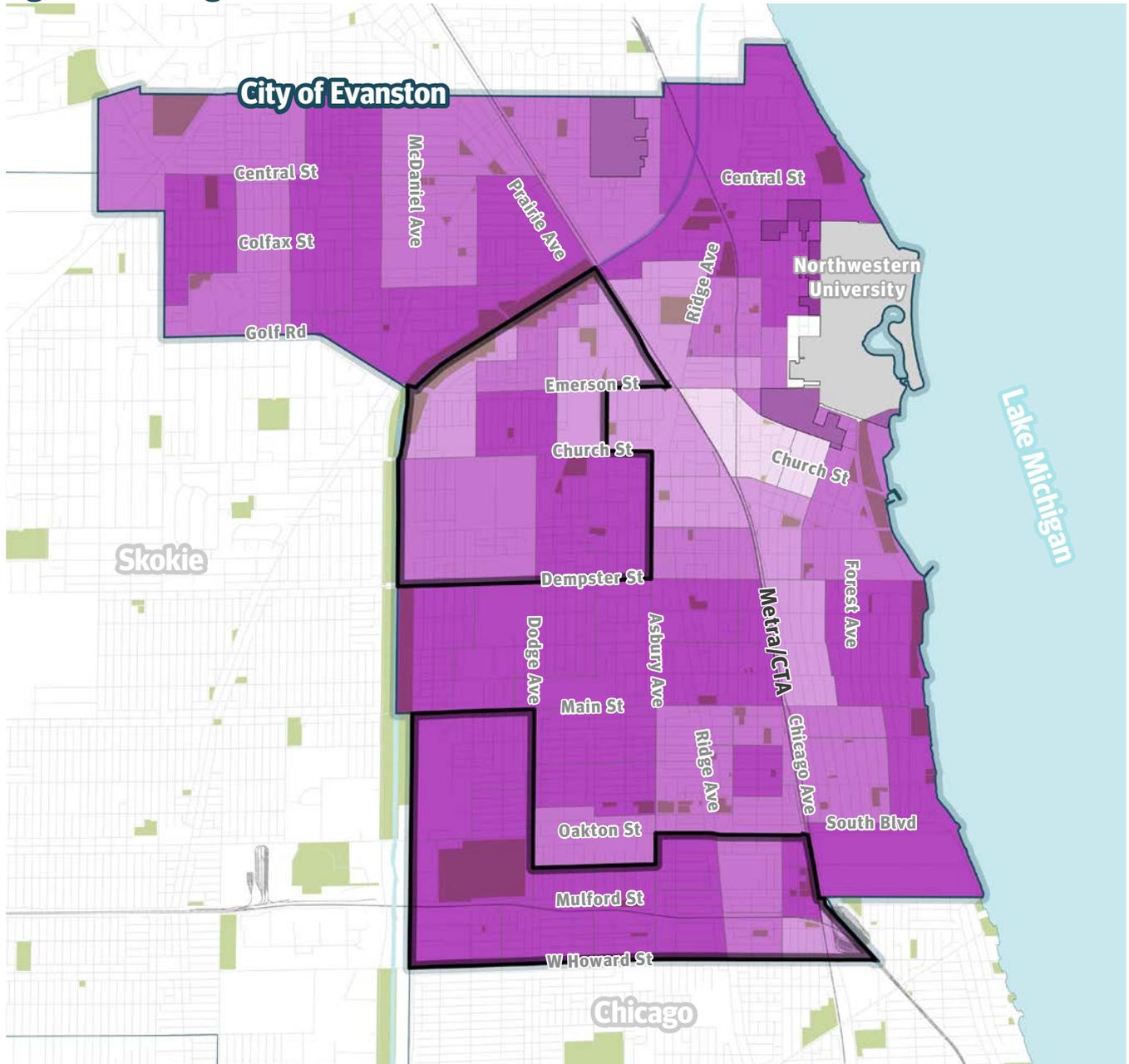
Many low-income and marginalized communities live in areas with limited green space, higher pollution levels, and unsafe infrastructure, leading to poorer health outcomes and reduced mobility. Substandard housing quality—including poor insulation, mold, and outdated infrastructure—further exposes families to environmental hazards and chronic health risks.

As with higher energy costs, older homes built across the US before the prevalence of building codes may present construction, infrastructure, or other issues that come with aging buildings and materials. This is true for Evanston's housing stock, with a large portion of homes built before 1960. The maintenance and upkeep of aging buildings can be increasingly costly as conditions worsen, adding a significant cost to home maintenance and repairs. Often, these maintenance or repairs may be overlooked by homeowners or property owners due to the investment required to complete some repairs or building upgrades.

41% of Evanston homes
considered a high risk for lead exposure

Source: EPLAN

Age of Housing Stock



Higher Percentage of
Pre-1960 Housing Stock



Lower Percentage of Pre-
1960 Housing Stock

Housing Conditions



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue?

Health Risks and Chronic Illnesses: Substandard homes without proper insulation, ventilation, or structural stability expose community members to environmental hazards, such as extreme temperatures, mold, or toxins. These conditions contribute to chronic illnesses, injuries, and vulnerability during extreme weather events—issues that disproportionately affect underserved populations.

Costs of Improvements and Maintenance:

Evanston's aging housing stock adds to the burden, as older homes require more maintenance and upkeep as they age. The cost of lead mitigation, especially lead paint that is prevalent in older homes, is also very high. Improvements to mitigate health hazards such as lead paint can feel like a significant initial investment, despite the potential for long-term savings, that may feel out of reach for some homeowners.

Many homeowners lack awareness or clarity of City codes and permitting processes, sometimes completing repairs without the proper approvals. These oversights can reduce property value and create hurdles during resale.

Poor and Predatory Landlords/Management:

Poorly managed rental units were also flagged as a concern, with such housing negatively affecting property values and community perception, particularly in neighborhoods with for-sale housing.

Requirements for Assistance Programs:

A longstanding cultural and historical distrust of government remains a barrier to accessing public assistance programs.

Required inspections for grants and loans deter participation, as many community members are uncomfortable allowing inspectors into their homes. Concerns were also raised about liens being placed on properties receiving government aid, which some fear could lead to the eventual loss of their home.

Exposure to dampness and mold in homes is estimated to contribute to

21% of asthma cases
in the US

Source: National Library of Medicine

Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done about it Today?

The City has dedicated committees focused on housing conditions and housing equity. Evanston's Housing and Community Development Committee guides City policy on the use of federal funds and local resources to develop vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods, improve housing, combat homelessness, increase housing affordability and diversity, and more. The Evanston Reparations Committee that meets monthly fosters transparency, accountability, and community involvement.

Engaging and Informing the Community: The City's online Water Service Line Dashboard has searchable information about every property's water pipe material for both public and private water lines, including a map and other resources, that are publicly available to aid any Evanstonians in understanding if their households are impacted by lead pipes. The City also has a dedicated staff member for public outreach about the program.

Costs of Improvements and Maintenance:

Programs such as the Lead Mitigation/Free Lead Hazard Reduction Program and Water Line Replacement Program assist with lead hazard removal and upgrades to aging infrastructure at no cost to the property owner, which helps reduce barrier of paying for these types of improvements. The Water Line Replacement Program priorities for 2025 are focused in one of this study's Focus Areas, within the 5th Ward, concentrating on vulnerable populations.

Further, Homeowner Initiated Lead Service Line Replacement coordinates with homeowners who decide to replace the private side portion of their lead service line. The City will replace the public side portion from the parkway to the water main at no expense to property owner. This matching effort by the City expedites lead pipe replacements for those that can afford to replace their lead pipes.

The Yard Waste Discount (available through the Access Evanston Benefit Card) provides enrolled Evanstonians with discounted price of stickers for bags of yard waste for pickup and discount on purchase of yard waste carts. This discount assists with responsible collection and disposal of yard waste through the City and supports property upkeep.

Housing Conditions



Equity Evaluation

What Is Being Done About It Today? (continued)

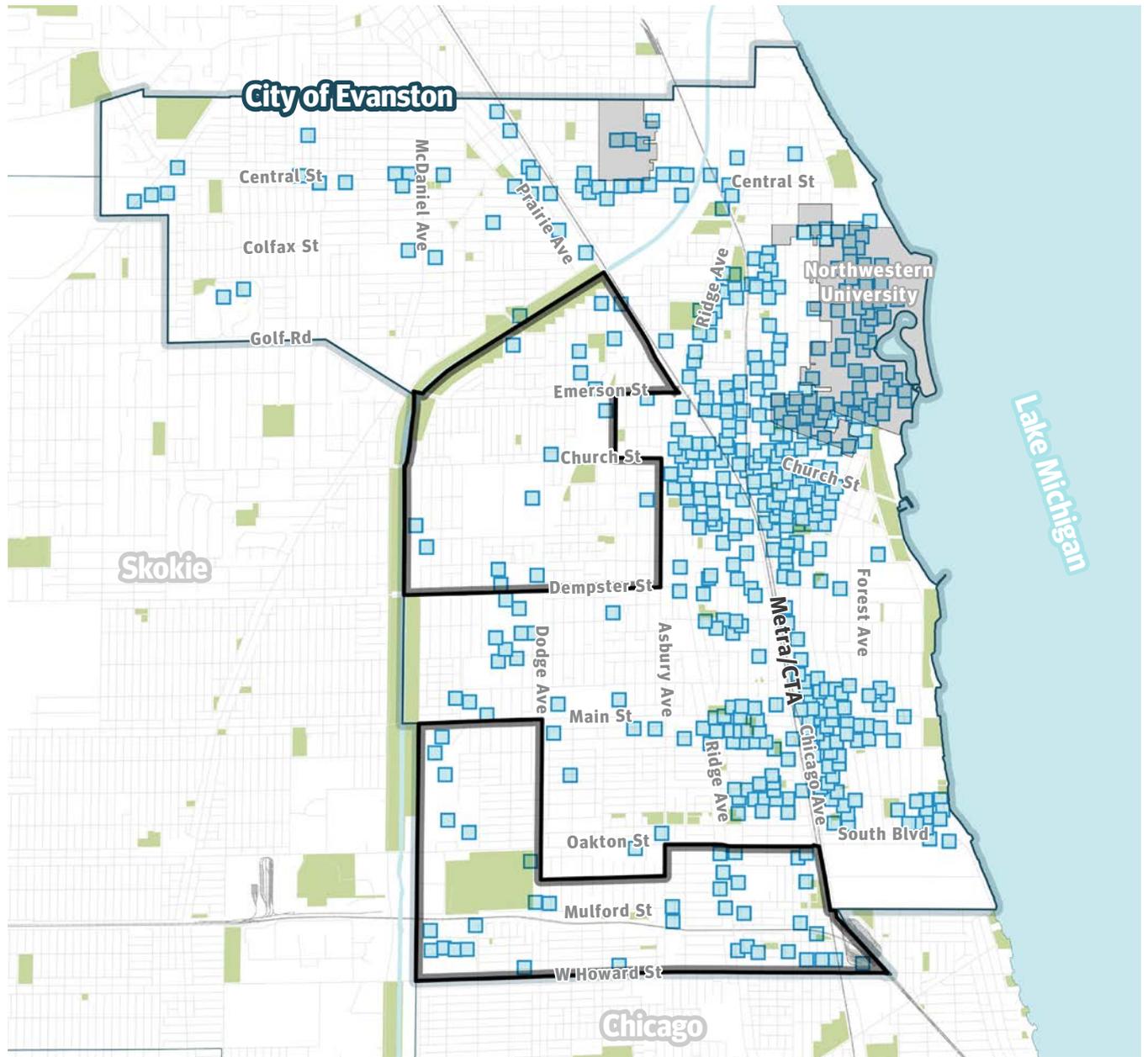
Overall Sustainable Building Practices: The CARP outlines strategies toward net-zero fossil fuel pollution building standards, assessing energy performance of existing buildings, and setting efficiency requirements that are now codified in the Green Building Ordinance, Healthy Buildings Ordinance, and the Illinois Stretch Energy Code. The EPLAN also recommends reducing building energy consumption and household energy cost-burden associated with utilities.

The 2050 goal for the Healthy Buildings Ordinance is to have buildings meet performance standards and using all renewable energy sources. There is an equity prioritized building assessment process included that will direct technical and financial assistance to those buildings.

Poor and Predatory Landlords/Management:

The Equity and Empowerment Commission Gentrification Reduction Initiative is a policy aimed at preventing harassment and predatory behavior by developers. The Fair Housing Ordinance also prohibits discriminatory practices by landlords toward tenants or prospective tenants. These policies support renters' right to live in quality housing conditions without feeling stuck in a substandard living environment.

Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (RLTO) outlines the rights, responsibilities, and requirements of tenants and landlords in Evanston. The City of Evanston provides a model lease agreement as an example resource that complies with the RLTO, which works as a guideline to fair and just terms for renters.



Housing Conditions

Equity Evaluation



What is Preventing Equitable Housing Conditions?

Costs of Improvements, Maintenance, and Energy Efficiency:

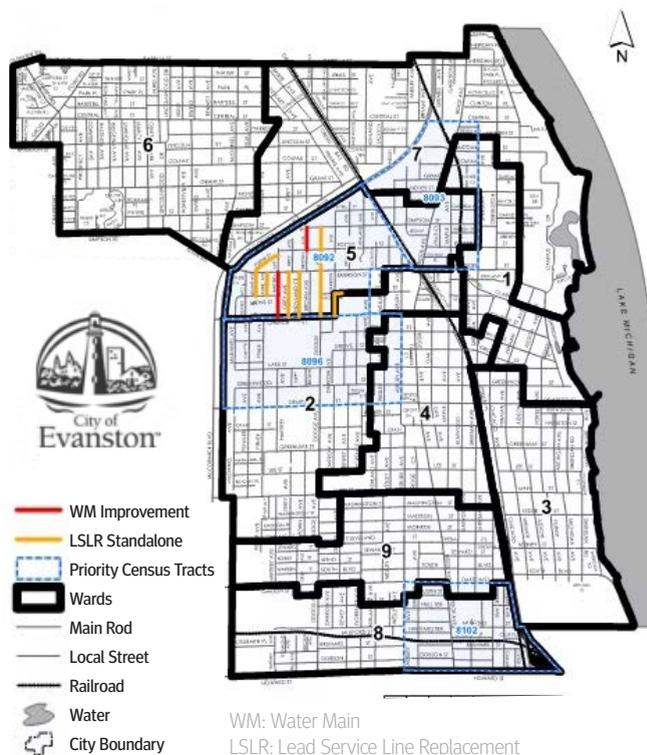
Seniors who are aging-in-place often cannot afford to do these home improvements or do not have the physical capacity themselves. Seniors can be especially vulnerable to health hazards in older homes, so targeted assistance for these improvements will help create a healthier living environment for seniors in their homes.

The Water Line Replacement Program participation requires property owners to stay informed of the water lines to be replaced ahead of time in order to apply for participation.

Overall Sustainable Building Practices: Because the HBO applies to buildings over 20,000 square feet, this generally does not apply to residential homes except for large apartment buildings. While community members acknowledged the intention behind the Healthy Building Ordinance to promote healthier environments, very few buildings subject to HBO are in the Focus Areas (57 out of 500 buildings). Further, fewer HBO properties are focused on older homes in these Focus Areas. There are concerns that difficulties in compliance can lower property values for owners who lack the resources to meet the new standards, creating unintended financial consequences.

2025 Prioritized LSLR Projects

Source: City of Evanston



Summary

Aging and substandard housing exposes Evanstonian to health hazards like mold, lead, and poor insulation. City programs assist with mitigating many of these hazards and improve housing quality, but high costs continue to be a concern.

Energy-efficiency and sustainable building policies are mitigating fossil fuel pollution citywide, but more efforts could be targeted in the Focus Areas.



Community Services



Equitable access to reliable and responsive community services can help to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of Evanston residents, especially those in historically under-invested neighborhoods. By maintaining infrastructure that reduces flooding, conserves energy, and minimizes trash, Evanston can advance resilience for the entire community.

Topics investigated through a lens of Environmental Equity:

- Waste Infrastructure
- Flooding & Stormwater
- Alley Conditions



Waste Infrastructure



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Waste Infrastructure in Evanston?

Collections/Services:

Multi-family buildings may provide different carts or containers for trash, recycling, or compost than the City depending on the waste hauler. Service options are available based off of residential building type, with different eligibility for single-family buildings, buildings under 6 residential units, condos, and multi-family residential buildings. Recycling in multi-family housing buildings is often optional, which sometimes leads to overflowing trash containers. Mixed-use buildings are excluded from the City's waste removal service options altogether, relying on private services. It is up to the property management of these larger buildings to understand the needs of the building, provide services accordingly, and schedule the pickup days.

Evanston's trash and recycling collection is scheduled to provide more frequent (twice-a-week) service for buildings with higher density of community members (as opposed to once a week for residential service) as a way to offset the larger volumes of trash expected in multi-family buildings or denser developments. However, trash collection is still inconsistent for these buildings and trash overflow can still be an issue in multi-family buildings. Persistent overflow of trash affects the cleanliness and appearance of those properties and streets and further negative impacts to neighbors and overall perception of the surrounding area.

Recycling Utilization in Evanston

33%

Evanston's total waste is recycled

1,000 lbs

Of waste per household is recycled yearly

Source: Solid Waste Agency, Cook County

There never seems to be enough room in the trash bins for everyone's waste in my apartment building.



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue?

Multi-Family Buildings and Rentals:

Inconsistency in service is most common at multi-family apartment buildings which may impact the overall perception of certain properties and Evanstonians who live there.

Tenants of rental units are typically subject to the municipal waste services that the landlords or property owners are willing to pay to provide. This leaves tenants with less choice in how to dispose of their waste responsibly through recycling and composting due to lack of access.

Other Collections/Services:

Composting service is available to Evanston community members but, this service is more costly than trash service, which is a deterrent and barrier to choosing and be able to afford incorporating composting into one's lifestyle.

Service Fees:

The two options for community members trash service offer different sized containers and different rules regarding additional trash bags outside of containers. Additional trash bags can be tagged for an additional fee if they are not permitted in the service option. This may be confusing to community members who see trash bags on the curbs and might not be aware of the different allowances.

The location of garbage bins and dumpsters for multi-family buildings may be less accessible to garbage trucks, leading to inconsistent pickup.



Source: Bailey Zimmerman, Evanston Roundtable

Waste Infrastructure



Equity Evaluation

What is Being Done about it Today?

The CARP recommended a zero waste strategy and educate the community on waste management strategies. The EPLAN also recommends strategies to minimize waste.

Engaging and Informing the Community:

The City published an updated 2025 guidebook outlining trash and recycling schedules and options.

The City partners with Recycle Coach, which is a resource hosted on the City's website and available as an app, to offer information to community members on waste programming, including how to sort into waste containers and finding drop-off locations.

Community members can report lost or damaged containers and missed collections through 311.

Service Fees:

Recycling collection is included in the billing for households paying for residential trash service. This makes recycling more accessible in Evanston than other communities that charge an additional fee for recycling service.

Yard Waste Discount (Access Evanston Benefit Card) provides enrolled community members with discounted price of stickers for bags of yard waste for pickup and discount on purchase of yard waste carts.

Access to Services and Other Collections:

The City Code includes a "Equal Access to Service" section that protects community members and tenants rights to access to these City services.

Once a year, the City hosts the Evanston Recycles collection event to provide community members with the opportunity to dispose of electronic waste and other items for free.

The City of Evanston partners with Collective Resource Compost to sign up for compost services for a recurring fee depending on the service option. Knowing the costs of composting services, the City offers two complimentary drop-off locations.. Both locations are in West Evanston, making this compost option closer in proximity to Focus Area community members.

Financial Assistance:

Established in 2023, the City of Evanston has created a grant program for select eligible groups to take advantage for sustainability initiatives. Such initiatives could include waste related services.

Recycling Audit:

City staff conducts a yearly inspection of what can be found in trash and recycling receptacles in order to better inform the public on how to sort items properly. Staff then circulates "Oops!" tags on front doors of houses, informing them of items to handle differently in the future.

What is Preventing Equitable Waste Infrastructure?

Informing the Community:

Helpful feedback on proper methods of recycling circulated by the “Oops!” tags (via the Evanston Recycling Audit) left on front doors are harder to circulate effectively for multi-family buildings, which may leave these community members continuing unhelpful or improper practices.

It is unclear whether or not residential home types outside of single-family residences are included in the auditing process. The exclusion of other housing types may cause a discrepancy in who is being educated on recycling practices for better utilization of the city service.

Multi-Family Buildings and Rentals:

Management of large multi-family residential and mixed-use buildings may have different standards for waste and recycling collection than the City of Evanston, making it hard to track down information on best practices to dispose of materials properly.

849 of 30,900 Households

audited for recycling practices

Source: City of Evanston 2024 Recycling Audit Report



Source: Bailey Zimmerman, Evanston Roundtable

Flooding & Stormwater



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Flood Risk in Evanston?

Flood risk on residential properties often manifest as basement flooding after heavy storm activity. A basement overflow can be a stressful and costly event for most homeowners and can have immediate physical health impacts, on top of the financial burden of cleanup. Conditions that can lead to flooding are largely based on the maintenance and resilience of public infrastructure.

Development Patterns:

Denser residential patterns with smaller lot sizes tend to include less green and previous surface to absorb stormwater impacts, leaving them with a higher risk of flood damage in the event of a storm.

Connectivity Impacts:

In the event that the public realm floods, community members who walk, cycle, or use transit to commute may experience more difficulty traveling to work, depending on the severity of the storm and level of water covering streets and sidewalks.

Health Impacts:

Illnesses from mold buildup or contaminated water can compound onto existing health conditions; in neighborhoods where air and water quality is already lower, a flood event can cause significant health impacts.

Financial Impacts:

Water extraction, drying, and sanitation in a basement after a flooding event can be costly; property owners may forgo necessary additional steps of the remediation process if the price tag exceeds their means to pay.

Additional property damage may occur to those that do not have a private garage or parking space and must park their vehicles on the street or store items outside.

Cost Impacts of Flooding

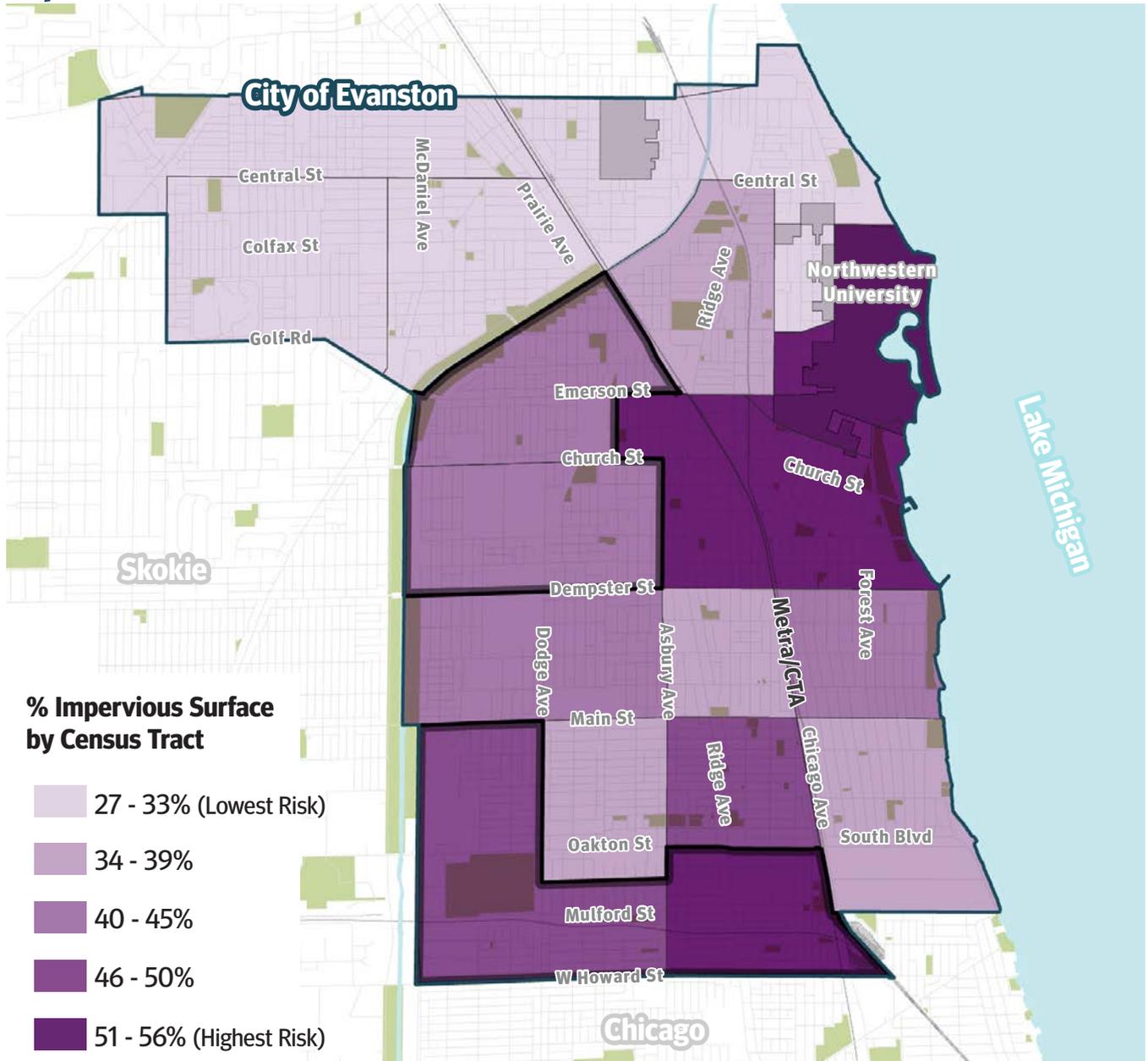
\$4,272 average insurance payout in Cook County

**\$200-
\$100,000** potential cost of property damage after a flood event

67% of flood impacted households in Cook County are low-income earners

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology Prevalence and Cost of Urban Flooding in Cook County, 2014

Impervious Surfaces



Source: EPLAN

Flooding & Stormwater



Indicators of Injustice

What is Contributing to this Issue?

Soils:

Evanston's land is made up of a thin layer of topsoil, followed by minimally porous clay, which causes slow groundwater filtration.

Weather Patterns and Climate Change:

Increasing flood frequency and intensity due to global climate change means this is an ever-pressing issue; flood impacts from more intense and frequent storms can exacerbate existing inequities, including health disparities and housing security.

Impervious Surfaces:

If streets and alleys have dips or slopes down onto adjacent properties, water runoff will occur. Neighborhoods with irregular alley maintenance or pavement are more likely to experience the effects of this water runoff.

10 of 23 Zip Codes

with the highest numbers of insurance claims also fall within the ZIP codes with highest levels of impervious surface

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology Prevalence and Cost of Urban Flooding in Cook County 2014

What is Being Done about it Today?

Previous Plans:

There are several recommendations in the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) regarding stormwater including public investment recommendations and incentively property owners to implement stormwater management.

Engaging and Informing the Community:

The Stormwater Master Plan included public involvement/participation, with specific mention of Environmental Justice Areas, as part of the plan process.

Property owners can report information and be connected to resources during an emergency weather event by calling 311.

Stormwater Management:

2023 Stormwater Master Plan used a model-based analysis to inform future capital improvement projects

The EPLAN and the Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan discuss green infrastructure as a way to increase climate resilience.

Long Range Sewer Improvement Program was initiated in 1990 to replace the combined sewer system that increased likelihood of flooding, Replacement was completed in 2008.

Water Line Replacement Program priorities for 2025 are focused in one of this study's Focus Areas, within the 5th ward, concentrating on vulnerable populations.

Complete and Green Streets Policy addresses multi-modal and green street design to encourage use of alternative transportation, improve stormwater management, and encourage permeable surfaces.

The Stormwater Guide provides a framework for a resilient stormwater management system and considers Environmental Justice in future policy/regulations.

Severe Storms & Flooding Events:

Ways to prepare for, recover from, and reduce impacts of severe storms/weather events were also recommended in the CARP.

- Emergency Assistance Program provides assistance in emergency or life-threatening situations (i.e. evictions, utility disconnection).
- Emergency Management Plan
- Evanston Green Homes Pilot Program includes projects for flood protection as qualifying improvements.

\$210 million

invested in stormwater infrastructure over 22 years

Source: City of Evanston, Stormwater Management Guide

What is Preventing Equitable Flood Prevention?

Pervious Pavement:

Pavers and other pervious materials that allow for better absorption of water runoff may be costly to install and maintain. The maintenance checklist for these surfaces must be performed a minimum of three times a year.

Impervious Surfaces:

Streets and alleys cover about 13.5% of the surface area of Evanston, and not all right-of-ways are wide enough to include green street infrastructure.

Gravel alleys do not have sewers, and cannot be retrofitted with stormwater infrastructure.

Alley Replacement Service:

The replacement service does not currently offer a range of greener replacement designs and materials that could reduce water runoff and reduce the impact of water runoff on the City's sewer system.

Greenspace and Green Infrastructure:

Neighborhoods with higher levels of impervious surfaces have less available public and private greenspace and tree canopy, which could help remediate storm impacts.

Alley Conditions



Introduction

What is Inequitable About Alley Conditions in Evanston?

Grading:

Unpaved alleys can cause many problems for community members such as flooding, car damage, and difficulty navigating the alley into garage spaces. Paved alleys have a hump in the middle which causes water to roll back onto private properties often causing flooding.

Development Patterns:

Alleys that have fewer users may maintain better conditions over longer periods of time, due to less use. Community members who live in more dense neighborhoods with mixed housing types will have more users per alley, causing more wear and tear in need of repair.

Cost:

The cost of alley paving is currently split 50/50 between the City and adjoining property owners. Higher income neighborhoods may experience better alley conditions due to the ability to more easily pay for upgrades.

Accessibility:

Unpaved alleys can be difficult for pedestrians or cyclists to navigate. While alleys are not intended to aid connectivity, the poor condition of unpaved alleys may cause harm or injury to non-vehicular travelers, especially those with mobility impairments.

72 Miles of Alleys in Evanston

Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

What is Contributing to this Issue?

Financial Barriers:

The menu of options for the replacement of alley materials does not include lower cost alternatives or green design. Giving property owners a range of lower cost options could result in the replacement of more alleys per year.

Grading:

Unpaved alleys can develop unevenness in grading, causing more vehicle damage over time and increased difficulty navigating.



Source: City of Evanston

Alley by Material



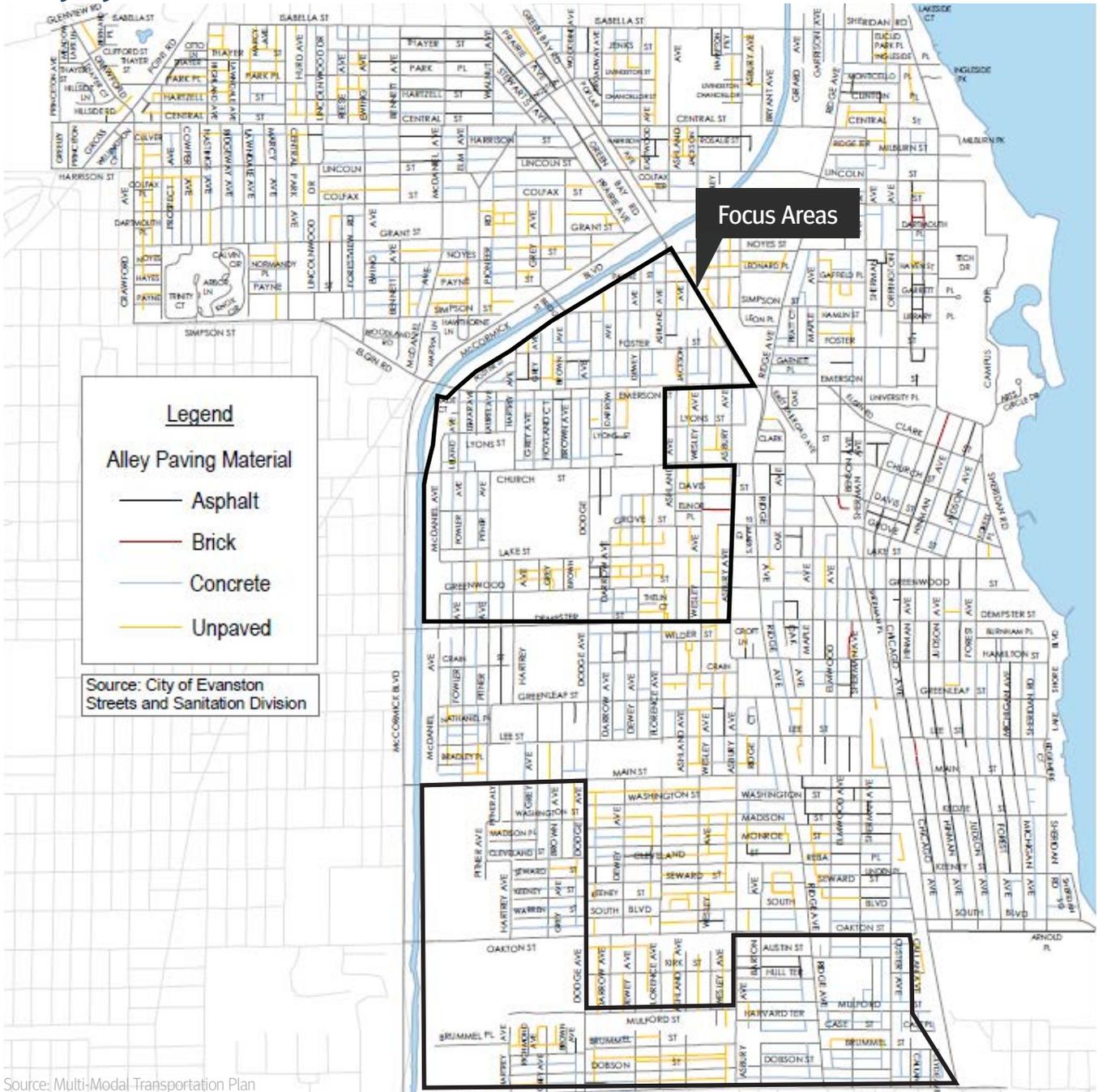
Legend

Alley Paving Material

- Asphalt
- Brick
- Concrete
- Unpaved

Source: City of Evanston
Streets and Sanitation Division

Focus Areas



Source: Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

Alley Conditions



Indicators of Injustice

What is Being Done about it Today?

Previous Plans:

The 2009 multi-modal transportation plan contains a dedicated section of recommendations for alley maintenance to improve physical conditions as well as reduce the cost of upkeep over time.

The Complete Green Streets Policy supports the implementation of more green infrastructure.

Engaging and Informing the Community:

Property owners can report street and alley conditions and be connected to resources by calling 311.

The City of Evanston publishes an informational brochure on the benefits of paved alleys and the procedures for upgrading unpaved alleys.

Alley Replacement Service:

Property owners meeting income eligibility guidelines can receive assistance in paying for their half through a fund established under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Evanston has an alley speed bump program to deter motorists from traveling through the alleys. Speed bumps are only appropriate on paved alleys. Alley speed bumps are part of the neighborhood traffic management program and are implemented at no cost to the property owners.

What is Preventing Equitable Alley Conditions?

Previous Plans:

The Complete Green Streets Policy does not explicitly mention alleys as apart of the targeted right-of-way for green infrastructure projects..

Alley Replacement Service:

Alleys are considered for paving by property owner request. The City requires that a majority of the property owners served by the alley agree with the request.

Repaving an alley may be too costly to consider for some property owners, as the cost is split 50/50 between the City of Evanston and the adjacent property owner. Currently, upgrading unpaved alleys involves providing drainage infrastructure as well as surfacing.

The costs of materials for green alleys, such as recycled concrete and permeable pavement, are higher than traditional alley paving materials.

Historically, up to ten alleyways per year have been programed, limiting how many people can utilize this service. Only one may use the CDBG program for funding.

The installation of speed bumps along alleys to deter through traffic is only available for paved alleys, meaning this strategy cannot be utilized by many community members.

Topic Summaries

Waste Infrastructure, Flooding & Stormwater and Alley Conditions

Waste Infrastructure Summary

There are many options for property owners in Evanston to consider for their waste management needs including garbage, recycling, and composting.

Evanstonians of multi-family buildings may be at a disadvantage for utilizing these services due to lack of control over management choices, and lack of inclusion in educational material that the City supplies more regularly in single-family neighborhoods.

Flooding & Stormwater Summary

The City of Evanston has made considerable investments in stormwater infrastructure over the last 20 years, greatly reducing the frequency of basement flooding.

community members in Evanston would benefit from more localized, site specific interventions to remediate flood risks, such as integration of more pervious surfaces and green infrastructure.

Alley Conditions Summary

There are more unpaved alleys in and around the Focus Areas of this investigation. These conditions can cause flooding, car damage, and difficulty navigating into private parking spaces.

Of the unpaved alleys, poor conditions are common and not specific to one neighborhood or census tract.

The Alley replacement service may still be too cost preventative for many community members to utilize.

3 A Framework for Environmental Equity in Evanston

Today and Tomorrow

Introduction

Action Framework

This chapter presents a framework for advancing environmental equity through coordinated action at multiple levels. It highlights strategies the City can pursue through policy, investment, and partnerships; ways allied organizations can contribute through education, advocacy, and direct service; and opportunities for individuals to participate in creating a more sustainable, just, and resilient Evanston. Together, these efforts form a roadmap toward an equitable future—one in which every Evanstonian can live in a safe, healthy, and thriving community.

Building on the City's and community organizations' ongoing work in equity, sustainability, and climate resiliency, this report identifies three key pillars (right) to guide and strengthen these efforts. By grounding actions in these pillars, the City, its partners, and community members can work together to advance environmental equity and create lasting benefits for all.

Prioritization

Directing decisions, resources, and investments to communities and areas most affected by environmental burdens, addressing inequities, and promoting just, positive outcomes.

Education & Awareness

Empowering community members with knowledge about programs and resources, fostering informed participation and collective action

Capacity Building

Enhancing the ability of community members, organizations, and City departments to implement and sustain equitable environmental initiatives, laying a foundation for long-term resilience and shared responsibility.

General Recommended Actions

The following several actions don't fit neatly into one topic area, rather they are more general in nature. The remaining topic-based actions can be found on the following pages in this chapter.

GE.1. Designate the identified Focus Areas as “Green Zones”. Formally establish the Focus Areas as “Green Zones” to prioritize funding, programs, and partnerships toward projects that advance sustainability, resilience, and public health in historically under-invested neighborhoods.

GE.2. Integrate racial and environmental equity into policy and capital planning. Apply the Evanston Policy Racial Equity Scorecard to new City-led initiatives and create a complementary tool to evaluate environmental justice impacts for all Capital Improvement Plan projects, ensuring equitable decision-making across City investments. A framework for this type of equitable decision-making tool can be found on page 122 .

GE.3. Develop an environmental justice tracking dashboard. Develop a public-facing dashboard that tracks key indicators like those identified in this report to monitor progress and foster accountability in advancing environmental justice.

GE.4. Continue to host environmental justice education and training programs. Programs like the Evanston Environmental Justice Conversation Series are a great way to build shared understanding of environmental justice principles and empower more equitable participation in sustainability and planning efforts.

GE.5. Continue to actively engage with and empower underrepresented groups to improve procedural equity. Strengthen engagement practices that remove barriers to participation—such as language access, meeting accessibility, and trusted partnerships—so that all voices can meaningfully shape City policies and programs.

Case Study: Minneapolis Green Zones

In 2017, Minneapolis established two Green Zones—the Northside and Southside—to address the cumulative impacts of pollution, disinvestment, and racial inequities. The Green Zones are community-driven areas where the City prioritizes environmental justice, public health, and sustainable economic development. Each zone has a community council that guides strategies to improve air quality, expand access to green jobs, support local food systems, and increase clean energy adoption. Through this program, Minneapolis has leveraged partnerships and funding to pilot solar programs, advance energy efficiency in housing, and expand tree canopy and green infrastructure in historically overburdened neighborhoods.



Open Space, Parks & Trees



Vision for Equity

Evanston's green spaces and tree-lined streets bring neighborhoods to life, offering places to gather, play, and connect with nature. Every Evanstonian deserves access to safe, welcoming, and vibrant parks, trails, and urban forests. By focusing on equitable investment and environmental stewardship, the City can enhance public health, strengthen community bonds, and build a resilient, thriving landscape for future generations.

Recommended Actions

OS.1. Develop an outreach program to inform property owners about the benefits of healthy trees on their property and parkway. Create a coordinated outreach strategy to educate community members about the environmental, economic, and health benefits of trees. This program could include workshops, informational materials, and direct engagement to encourage tree planting and care, with a focus on supporting property owners who qualify for street tree programs.

OS.2. Provide targeted technical assistance to property owners whose lots could support tree planting. Offer individualized guidance to community members to match appropriate tree species to specific sites, considering factors like soil, sunlight, and neighborhood context. Support could include on-site consultations, planting guides, and follow-up maintenance advice to ensure long-term tree health and canopy growth.



“This year I planted a new tree in my yard. I wanted to reduce my energy costs, after hearing about the benefits and receiving guidance from the City.”



OS.3. Continue to prioritize public tree planting in areas with higher urban heat island effect and higher air pollution. Focus tree planting efforts in neighborhoods most affected by heat and poor air quality to maximize environmental and health benefits. This could include more robust outreach on the Parkway Tree Planting program in these areas.

OS.4. Continue to build capacity among local community groups for sustainable care and maintenance of Evanston’s open spaces and natural resources. Provide training, resources, and partnership opportunities to neighborhood associations, environmental groups, and volunteer organizations to strengthen their ability to maintain parks, gardens, and natural areas. Empowered local groups can help ensure long-term stewardship and equitable access to green spaces.

OS.5. Explore ways to increase tree canopy cover through the zoning code. Update zoning and development standards to encourage green infrastructure and expand urban canopy coverage citywide.

OS.6. Work with commercial and industrial property owners to identify potential green infrastructure for their sites. Collaborate with private sector stakeholders to integrate stormwater management, permeable surfaces, and additional tree plantings into commercial and industrial areas.

OS.7. Develop sustainable funding mechanisms to improve and maintain park facilities. Identify and implement reliable funding sources, such as grants, partnerships, dedicated City budget allocations, and/or park impact fees to ensure parks are well-maintained, accessible, and inclusive of community member needs.

OS.8. Improve access to Evanston’s beaches and Parks & Recreation programming, especially for community members of the Focus Areas, youth, older adults, and people with disabilities. Assess current barriers to beach access and develop strategies such as transportation options, accessible paths, and reduced barriers to obtain a beach pass. The goal is to ensure that all Evanstonians can enjoy lakeshore amenities safely and comfortably.

OS.9. Pilot a green schoolyards project at a public school in the Focus Areas. Incorporate trees, gardens, and permeable surfaces to provide environmental education, improve on-site stormwater management, and enhance outdoor learning spaces.



Streets & Transportation



Vision for Equity

Safe, sustainable streets are the foundation of a connected City. Evanston is working to make it easy for people to walk, bike, take transit, or drive in ways that reduce emissions and support climate resilience. Thoughtful design and investment in mobility infrastructure can create streets that are not only functional, but also greener, more inviting, and better integrated into every neighborhood.

Recommended Actions

- ST.1. Bolster the public transit network and service in Evanston and explore first-mile/last-mile transportation solutions to provide better access to transit stops for all Evanstonians.** Collaborate with regional transit providers, like CTA, Metra, and Pace, to improve service frequency, coverage, and reliability, while piloting mobility solutions such as micro-transit and community shuttles to connect community members to key destinations and transit hubs.
- ST.2. Improve existing transit stops to make them more accessible, safe, inviting, and comfortable.** Upgrade bus shelters and train stations with amenities such as seating, lighting, real-time arrival information, and ADA-accessible design, creating a better transit experience for all users.
- ST.3. Adopt a truck ordinance and strengthen the anti-idling ordinance to reduce nuisances and pollution from freight traffic.** Implement stronger regulations to limit idling, designate appropriate delivery hours, and minimize cut-through traffic, improving air quality and neighborhood livability, especially in predominantly residential areas and in areas already overburdened by pollution.



“I feel more comfortable as a transit user now that the stops have more comfortable facilities, especially awnings for shade and protection from weather.”



ST.4. Modify design elements of designated truck routes to make them more efficient for freight traffic and to incentivize trucks to utilize the designated routes instead of other roadways. Enhance signage, roadway design, and signal timing on truck routes to improve efficiency and safety, while discouraging heavy vehicles from traveling through residential streets. Ensure that any overpasses on truck routes include adequate height clearance for trucks.

ST.5. Invest in a low-stress, connected network of cycling and walking facilities across the community for all ages and abilities. Fill gaps in the sidewalk network and continue to invest in protected bike lanes and multi-use paths to create a safe, comfortable, and equitable active transportation network. Expand the Divvy bike sharing system within the Focus Areas. Expand bicycle education and programming to teach safe riding practices.

ST.6. Update Neighborhood Traffic Management Policy to incorporate the latest best practices for traffic control measures. Revise the policy to integrate tools such as traffic calming, speed reduction, and safe crossings and to eliminate outdated tools, like culs-de-sac.

ST.7. Integrate green infrastructure and tree planting into traffic control measures and road diets across Evanston. Pair street redesign and safety projects with stormwater management strategies, such as permeable pavement, bioswales, and street trees, to create safer, cooler, and more climate-resilient streets.

ST.8. Explore pilot “green alleys” projects in the Focus Areas to mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding for already overburdened neighbors. Retrofit alleys with permeable materials and subsurface drainage systems to reduce localized flooding, improve water quality, and reduce property damage for nearby homeowners.



Housing & Development



Vision for Equity

Evanston's neighborhoods are defined by the homes within them, and the way we build today shapes the City of tomorrow. Sustainable, resilient housing and development can reduce energy use, support green infrastructure, and withstand the impacts of a changing climate. By prioritizing equity, the City can ensure that all Evanstonians—regardless of income or background—have a safe, healthy place to call home.

Recommended Actions

HD.1. Develop programs and outreach that help property owners with electrification, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and weatherization home upgrades.

Create targeted assistance programs that make it easier for homeowners and landlords to access rebates, technical support, and financing for energy-efficient, low-emission home improvements. Expand outreach efforts to make more property owners aware of programs like the Free Lead Risk Assessments, the Evanston Green Homes Pilot, and the Healthy Buildings Ordinance. Create programming that helps seniors with home improvements to encourage aging in place.

HD.2. Explore licenses for rental housing instead of the current registration requirements to improve landlord accountability and property maintenance.

Transition from a simple registration system to a licensing model that includes periodic inspections and compliance standards, promoting higher-quality housing and equitable treatment for renters.



HD.3. Build on the Love Your Block program to mobilize neighbors to take an active role in the care, maintenance, and vitality of their blocks.

Expand this successful model to provide more micro-grants, materials, and community-building support for community member-led projects that improve neighborhood appearance, safety, and environmental health. This could also include community organizing efforts, like the formation of block clubs, hosting block parties, organizing neighborhood cleanups, and more.

“I am able to save for my daughter’s future now that I have moved into a more affordable rental unit.”



HD.4. Advocate for inclusionary zoning and increased housing diversity to mitigate housing cost burdens and gentrification that are impacting Evanston’s most vulnerable community members.

Promote zoning and land use policies that encourage a range of affordable housing types—such as accessory dwelling units, missing middle housing, and multifamily developments—to ensure long-term affordability and inclusion.

HD.5. Expedite the entitlement process for developments that exceed the percentage of inclusionary units required by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Reward developers who provide deeper affordability or additional affordable units by streamlining approvals and permitting, helping deliver equitable housing outcomes more quickly.

HD.6. Explore the use of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) to create mutual benefits from new developments between developers and existing neighbors.

Encourage the negotiation of CBAs that align new investments with community priorities—such as local hiring, affordable housing, and green infrastructure—to ensure development contributes to shared prosperity.



Community Services



Vision for Equity

Reliable public services—from water and energy to waste management and emergency response—are essential to everyday life in Evanston. When these systems are designed for equity and sustainability, they not only meet current needs but also help neighborhoods prepare for climate-related challenges. Investing in resilient, efficient infrastructure strengthens communities and ensures that every Evanstonian can count on the services that make life safe, healthy, and predictable.

Recommended Actions

CS.1. Improve the appearance, safety, and functionality of waste enclosures for new or redeveloped multifamily residential properties to reduce waste overflows and enhance neighborhood beautification.

Establish design and maintenance standards for waste and recycling areas that prevent litter, improve accessibility, and contribute positively to neighborhood character and cleanliness.

CS.2. Expand programming and education about City services, like the public service guide, to 6+ unit multifamily residential, mixed use, and commercial properties. Enhance communication and outreach strategies to ensure community members, tenants, landlords, and business owners in larger buildings are informed about available public services, sustainability programs, and other City resources.

CS.3. Continue to support the dissemination of air quality monitors for indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring and partner with organizations to monitor and interpret the data.

Expand community-based air quality monitoring in collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and community members, using data to identify local pollution sources and guide interventions that protect public health.

CS.4. Prioritize funding for stormwater infrastructure projects within the Focus Areas and in areas with more impervious surfaces. Direct capital investment to high-need neighborhoods to reduce flooding, manage runoff, and improve resilience through upgraded storm sewers, permeable surfaces, and green infrastructure.

CS.5. Expand the use of rain barrels in the Focus Areas to mitigate stormwater and flooding for already overburdened neighbors. Consider providing free rain barrel installation and education to community members in those areas. Launch targeted rain barrel distribution and education programs to help community members capture and reuse rainwater, reducing strain on stormwater systems and mitigating localized flooding.



CS.6. Align environmental sustainability efforts with local workforce development to encourage people to enter “green” careers. Partner with schools, job training programs, and employers to connect community members to opportunities in energy efficiency, green construction, waste management, and other sustainability-related fields.



CS.7. Create targeted outreach programs to increase youth participation in local governance and civic engagement. Develop youth leadership and mentorship initiatives that give young people a voice in City decision-making and help build long-term community capacity for civic participation.

CS.8. Establish a citizen academy or educational outreach program to inform and engage community members in local governance and decision-making. Offer hands-on learning opportunities for community members to better understand City operations, budgeting, and planning processes, fostering transparency and civic empowerment.



4 Building Community Capacity

Introduction

The work of a more equitable Evanston does not end with the completion of this report. Rather, environmental equity must be operationalized and ingrained into the efforts of the City of Evanston, allied community organizations, and even individual community members. This chapter provides guidance for how to turn the actions in this report from idea to reality through collaboration, prioritization, capacity building, and monitoring progress.

Alignment with City Initiatives

This report should be referenced as part of daily operations within the City of Evanston as public and private decisions are made concerning policies, programs, land use, zoning, development projects, capital improvements, and other initiatives. Key City Staff familiar with this work can lead this charge by introducing other department staff, boards, and commissions with the document to train them on how best to use the report. The report should also be aligned with ongoing and future planning efforts, including capital improvement planning, zoning code updates, mobility planning, parks and recreation planning, and more.

Stewardship and Capacity Building

One of the most essential components to successful implementation is identifying the group or groups that will lead the charge. A recently formed group, the Evanston Environmental Justice (EJ) Coalition, would be an ideal group to steward this report and the outcomes of this investigation from an organizational perspective. As a community organization, they have the ability to bring together cross-sectoral partners to the table to advance environmental justice and equity in Evanston. This coalition should ideally include other allied community organizations, private and non-profit entities, philanthropic organizations, and liaisons from government agencies.

To steward this work, the EJ Coalition could also take a lead role in monitoring and reporting progress toward implementation of the actions in this report. The action matrix on the following page suggests possible metrics that can be tracked over time to measure progress. This can serve as a starting point for this work. The cross-sector nature of the EJ Coalition means that data collection and monitoring might be more effective than if completed by a single organization.

Finally, to report progress, it is recommended that a dedicated webpage for this work be created and a dashboard be included on the webpage that communicates the findings from monitoring the metrics, as described above. This dashboard will help to foster transparency and accountability to help advance equity within Evanston.

EVANSTON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION

Community/Advocacy Organizations

- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
- Evanston/North Shore NAACP
- E-Town Sunrise
- Evanston Cradle to Career
- Climate Action Evanston
- Students for Ecological & Environmental Development (SEED)
- Joining Forces for Affordable Housing
- Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club
- Evanston Community Foundation

Private/Non-Profit Partners

- Northwestern University
- Faith-based Institutions

Government

- City of Evanston
- State of Illinois
- School Districts 65 and 202
- Cook County

Philanthropy

Equity-Based Decision-Making Framework

The following is a framework to guide change makers and implementation partners to prompt explicit integration of environmental and racial equity into decisions, foster intentional changes, and anticipate adverse consequences. This can be used alongside other decision-making tools and processes, such as the Evanston Racial Equity Scorecard and participatory budgeting.

1

Historical Inequities

- Does this decision reduce or exacerbate historical inequities for communities of color?
- What additional information or data do you need to address this question?



2

Benefits, Burdens, and Trade-offs

- What are the benefits and burdens of this decision: financial, environmental, social?
- Who will benefit most from this decision? Who will be the most burdened? Explore impacts to all vulnerable populations, such as children, low-income households, and people with disabilities.
- How will burdens be mitigated? How might benefits be redistributed?
- Identify possible unintended consequences or trade-offs. How would we mitigate these if we uncover them later?
- Analyze and consider benefits and burdens to future generations.

3

Community Engagement and Empowerment

- What are the methods of engaging communities in the making of this decision?
- What are the socioeconomic demographics of communities engaged during the consideration of this decision?
- Were there any specific issues raised by communities of color about the impact of this decision? Did they impact/change the consideration of this decision? If yes, how? If no, why?



5

Accountability

- How does this decision address accountability measures for all implementation partners?
- What are the accountability measures?
- How will we track compliance with this decision and what are the incentives or disincentives for not meeting compliance?
- Do the accountability measures include engaging with communities? If yes, how is this done? If no, why?



6

Outcomes

- How will we measure environmental equity impact and effectiveness of this decision?
- How will we track, measure, and report outcomes?
- What additional resources are needed to accomplish this?

4

Reparative Justice

- Does this decision provide restorative justice measures for the communities most burdened? If yes, what are they? If no, why?
- What are some other best practices or examples of restorative justice measure that would address the impact of this decision on the most burdened?



Adapted from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Racial Equity Framework for Decision Making

Action Matrix

The matrix on the following pages is a compilation of the recommended actions for environmental equity in Evanston set forth in the previous chapter. The matrix connects each action with the following supporting details:

Change Maker: the responsible party for leading implementation of each action



City of Evanston



Allied Organizations



Households/Individuals

Potential Partners: other organizations or programs that could collaborate to ensure successful implementation of each action

CAE Climate Action Evanston

CoE City of Evanston

CRTI Chicago Region Trees Initiative

EC2C Evanston Cradle 2 Career

ECF Evanston Community Foundation

IEPA Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

ILDOT Illinois Department of Transportation

MWRD Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

NAACP Evanston North Shore Branch NAACP

RPD Ridgeville Park District

D65 Evanston-Skokie School District 65

D202 Evanston Township High School District 202

YAC Youth Advisory Committee

Y.O.U Youth & Opportunity United

Alignment: the existing plans, studies, or initiatives that reinforce each action

Timeframe: the amount of time it will take to complete each action

 Short-term (0 –4 years)

 Mid-term (5 – 9 years)

 Long-term (10+ years)

 Ongoing

Metrics: the data that can be tracked to measure progress toward each action

General

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Maker</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
GE.1.	Designate the identified Focus Areas as “Green Zones”.		CAE, Blacks in Green			City investments by census tract over time
GE.2.	Integrate racial and environmental equity into policy and capital planning.			Capital Improvement Plan		
GE.3.	Develop an environmental justice tracking dashboard.	 	CAE, IEPA			Unique visitors to the dashboard website
GE.4.	Continue to host environmental justice education and training programs.	 	CAE, NAACP, Evanston Public Library, Northwestern University			Attendance of programs
GE.5.	Continue to actively engage with and empower underrepresented groups to improve procedural equity.	  	NAACP			

Open Space, Parks, and Trees

<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Maker</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
OS.1. Develop an outreach program to inform property owners about the benefits of healthy trees on their property and parkway.	 	CAE, CRTI, MWRD, Openlands	CARP, EPLAN		Percentage of tree canopy coverage on private property over time, number of people reached
OS.2. Provide targeted technical assistance to property owners whose lots could support tree planting.	 	CAE, CRTI, MWRD, Openlands	CARP, EPLAN		Percentage of tree canopy coverage on private property over time
OS.3. Continue to prioritize public tree planting in areas with higher urban heat island effect and higher air pollution.		CAE, CRTI	CARP, EPLAN		Public trees by ward
OS.4. Continue to build capacity among local community groups for sustainable care and maintenance of Evanston's open spaces and natural resources.		CAE, Openlands, Natural Area Stewards	CARP, EPLAN		Number of people trained
OS.5. Explore ways to increase tree canopy cover through the zoning code.		Property Owners	Zoning Code Update		Tree canopy coverage over time
OS.6. Develop sustainable funding mechanisms to improve and maintain park facilities.		RPD	Parks & Green Space Strategic Plan		Quality and condition ratings of park facilities over time
OS.7. Work with commercial and industrial property owners to identify potential green infrastructure for their sites.		CAE, IEPA, MWRD	Zoning Code Update		Number of new green infrastructure projects at commercial and industrial properties
OS.8. Improve access to Evanston's beaches and Parks & Recreation programming, especially for community members of the Focus Areas, youth, older adults, and people with disabilities.	 	RPD	Parks & Green Space Strategic Plan		Beach pass usage by ward and demographics, number of participants benefiting from fee assistance in the Access Evanston Program
OS.9. Pilot a green schoolyards project at a public school in the Focus Areas		D65, D202	D65 Sustainability Plan		Number of green schoolyards projects

Streets and Transportation

<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Maker</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
ST.1. Bolster the public transit network and service in Evanston and explore first-mile/last-mile transportation solutions to provide better access to transit stops for all Evanstonians.		Pace, CTA, Metra, Divvy	Envision Evanston 2045		Transit ridership
ST.2. Improve existing transit stops to make them more accessible, safe, inviting, and comfortable.		Pace, CTA, Metra	Envision Evanston 2045		Transit ridership, number of improved transit stops
ST.3. Adopt a truck ordinance and strengthen the anti-idling ordinance to reduce nuisances and pollution from freight traffic.		CAE, D65, D202	CARP, EPLAN		311 reporting on related issues
ST.4. Modify design elements of designated truck routes to make them more efficient for freight traffic and to incentivize trucks to utilize the designated routes instead of other roadways.		ILDOT			Truck traffic on designated routes
ST.5. Invest in a low-stress, connected network of cycling and walking facilities across the community for all ages and abilities		CAE	Envision Evanston 2045, Climate Action and Resilience Plan		Bike counts
ST.6. Update Neighborhood Traffic Management Policy to incorporate the latest best practices for traffic control measures.		ILDOT			Number of new traffic control measures implemented
ST.7. Integrate green infrastructure and tree planting into traffic control measures and road diets across Evanston.		MWRD, IEPA	Stormwater Master Plan		Number of new green infrastructure projects
ST.8. Explore pilot “green alleys” projects in the Focus Areas to mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding for already overburdened neighbors.		MWRD, IEPA	Stormwater Master Plan		Number of green alleys installed

Housing and Development

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Maker</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
HD.1.	Develop programs and outreach that help property owners with electrification, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and weatherization home upgrades.		CoE, CAE	Evanston Green Homes Pilot	○	Referral and participation in programs
HD.2.	Explore licenses for rental housing instead of the current registration requirements to improve landlord accountability and property maintenance.		Landlords, Property Owners	Housing4All	◐	Number of licenses issued
HD.3.	Build on the Love Your Block program to mobilize neighbors to take an active role in the care, maintenance, and vitality of their blocks.		Neighborhood Associations, ECF, CAE	HUD Consolidated Plan, Storefront Modernization Program, Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan, Envision Evanston 2045	○	Number of resident-led block groups and community organizations, code enforcement citations remedied
HD.4.	Advocate for inclusionary zoning and increased housing diversity to mitigate housing cost burdens and gentrification that are impacting Evanston's most vulnerable community members.		CAE, Neighborhood Associations, Joining Forces for Affordable Housing	Envision Evanston 2045, Zoning Code Update	○	
HD.5.	Expedite the entitlement process for developments that exceed the percentage of inclusionary units required by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.		Developers		○	Number of inclusionary units
HD.6.	Explore the use of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) to create mutual benefits from new developments between developers and existing neighbors.		Neighborhood Associations, Developers		○	

Community Services

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Change Maker</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>	<i>Metrics</i>
CS.1.	Improve the appearance, safety, and functionality of waste enclosures for new or redeveloped multifamily residential properties to reduce waste overflows and enhance neighborhood beautification.		Property Owners, Waste Management, Waste Hauling Companies			Compliance rate for new developments, number of properties with improved waste enclosures
CS.2.	Expand programming and education about city services, like the public service guide, to 6+ unit multifamily residential, mixed use, and commercial properties.		Property Owners			Participation in city services by dwelling units
CS.3.	Continue to support the dissemination of air quality monitors for indoor and outdoor air quality monitoring and partner with organizations to monitor and interpret the data.	  	CAE, IEPA, NAACP, Resident Trainees			Pollution and asthma impacts
CS.4.	Prioritize funding for stormwater infrastructure projects within the Focus Areas and in areas with more impervious surfaces.		CAE, IEPA, MWRD	Stormwater Master Plan, Climate Action and Resilience Plan		Resident 311 reporting on flooding
CS.5.	Expand the use of rain barrels in the Focus Areas to mitigate stormwater and flooding for already overburdened neighbors.	 	MWRD, CAE	Stormwater Master Plan		
CS.6.	Align environmental sustainability efforts with local workforce development to encourage people to enter “green” careers.	 	CAE, NU, EC2C, Rebuilding Exchange, Trade Collective			
CS.7.	Created targeted outreach programs to increase youth participation in local governance and civic engagement.	 	CAE, Y.O.U., YAC			
CS.8.	Establish a citizen academy or educational outreach program to inform and engage community members in local governance and decision-making.	 	League of Women Voters			Participation in city programs

