

**Exhibit A - Executive Summary
City of Evanston**

Background

With a population of 78,000, the City of Evanston stretches four miles along Lake Michigan's western shoreline just north of Chicago. Evanston's 7.8 square miles include vibrant residential neighborhoods, thriving business districts, and varied recreational facilities and offerings. Interspersed throughout the community are over 290 acres of parks, including five public swimming beaches, athletic fields, and bicycling and jogging trails. Evanston is located 12 miles from downtown Chicago by Metra, CTA, car, or bike. The City of Evanston boasts a dense and diverse populace in religious, racial, educational, and economic composition. Evanston is home to Northwestern University, NorthShore University HealthSystem Evanston Hospital, Ascension Saint Francis Hospital, Rotary International headquarters, and two highly regarded school districts. Evanston Township High School is ranked in the top 3% of high schools in the nation.

Despite Evanston's significant location and amenities, housing production has stagnated in part due to adoption of early land use controls and adoption of the first zoning ordinance in Illinois in the 1920s – an effort to maintain Evanston's verdant suburban character. Evanston's historic development patterns predate exclusionary zoning practices and these neighborhoods are inexorably linked with the City's identity. They represent vibrant human-centered environments and a rich juxtaposition and diversity in residential densities, socio-economic strata, and housing choice that remain desirable but are not replicable under current land use controls. The resulting decades have seen housing demand far outweigh housing supply – creating significant affordability and displacement pressures including erosion of existing attainable housing stock and starter homes. Evanston has seen a rapidly widening disparity between household income and rising housing costs – both for homeowners and renters. 37.5% of Evanston households are housing cost burdened, paying 30% or more of their total income on housing, and the majority of this burden, over 20%, is placed on households making less than or below 60% of the AMI. The burden is higher for the subset of households that are renter-occupied with 53% being cost burdened. This represents a significant need for additional rental housing supply.

Past Activities

Evanston has implemented and administered housing forward policies since the 1960s. The 1968 Fair Housing Ordinance and 2019 Reparations Program, attempt to eliminate exclusionary practices against protected classes, and provide restorative justice for de-facto racial zoning and segregating real estate practices. A 2020 amendment to the Zoning Ordinance created opportunity for small-scale and affordable housing production and additional revenue streams for homeowners by legalizing internal and detached accessory dwelling units without parking requirements. Another amendment to the Zoning Ordinance in 2023 created an Adaptive Use Code, expanding potential uses with no minimum parking or maximum density regulations. Since 1974 the City has administered the Community Development Block Grant program and since 2010 the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to prevent the collapse of the housing market in the lowest income census tracts through housing rehabilitation and emergency

assistance to qualifying homeowners – initiatives that maintain community fabric. These efforts have slowed destabilization of low to moderate income neighborhoods, and have modestly expanded housing choice and varied housing production strategies throughout the City as well as successfully leveraged a percentage of affordability through market-rate developments, 72 total units to date, in well resourced neighborhoods through the City’s 2007 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and its subsequent amendments.

However, these initiatives have not addressed more significant barriers that exist in the public's perception of affordable housing and the populations these programs serve. They have not comprehensively addressed the significant land use controls and entitlement processes that limit a wide range of housing typologies and varied housing densities for all income levels throughout all neighborhoods. Nor have they identified leverage points and opportunity sites to adequately and efficiently leverage public and privately owned assets to advance housing priorities. Currently 836 households are on the City’s Affordable Housing Wait List with only 13 available units and 91 currently in the pipeline for future production – a demand the City is failing to meet. The Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code rewrite already underway will seek to remove these barriers, but they require additional support and resources to find success. This grant provides that opportunity – to supercharge these initiatives at a time when they are needed most.

Generational Opportunity

Between 2023 and 2025 the City is undertaking a generational opportunity to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan, new Zoning Code, and update its Inclusionary Housing Ordinance – all critical initiatives that will position Evanston to grow, be more inclusive, more affordable, more resilient, and less economically and racially segregated. These efforts will advance Evanston’s goals and objectives around the creation of sustainable, vibrant, and human-centered places – places that prioritize people, walkability, and alternative and mass transportation over cars – vibrant human experiences and attainable housing over parking – authentic, compatible, and varied architecture over commodified and isolating development patterns – and a sustainable utilization of our city owned assets which represent publicly controlled, significant leverage points for creating lasting and meaningful primarily affordable housing opportunities.

Evanston expects to streamline entitlement and permitting processes, drive additional and diverse market-driven attainable housing production, add much needed density to support our City services, transit systems, business districts, and local schools, and capitalize on newly created market rate development potential through a stronger Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. To amplify these opportunities and expedite meaningful progress toward our shared housing goals, the City has identified the following key barriers that must be overcome immediately. These barriers have associated strategies and activities that the City does not have the capacity to implement on its own – activities that, with help, will provide transformative outcomes and opportunities that strengthen Evanston and make for a more vibrant and resilient city.

Barriers

Barrier 1: Misunderstandings

Misunderstandings of what affordable housing is, what it looks like, who it serves, and how it impacts the community, suppress implementation of affordable housing initiatives and housing production.

Strategy 1: Facilitate

Preemptively address common concerns and misunderstandings through neighborhood planning and community-wide education and advocacy efforts.

- Implement a social marketing and community outreach campaign.
- Develop a pattern book of existing and potential housing typologies that are compatible with Evanston's diverse residential land use pattern, and varied neighborhood character. "This is affordable housing."
- Provide regular housing information sessions and an annual "State of Housing" report.
- Engage in ongoing planning efforts in order to build local support around housing needs, strategies, and production at the neighborhood level.

Barrier 2: Insufficient Data

An incomplete understanding of Evanston's existing housing stock and potential opportunity sites prevents data driven decision making and agile implementation of housing production strategies.

Strategy 2: Identify

Inventory Evanston's existing housing stock to implement housing preservation policies and identify significant opportunity sites in order to leverage and implement housing production strategies.

- Conduct a citywide survey of housing that includes existing naturally occurring affordable housing, and underutilized public and privately owned opportunity sites.
- Produce a housing conditions database – an online inventory that identifies existing affordable housing, potential public and private opportunity sites, and potential sites for future land acquisition.

Establish strategies that facilitate future public-private development partnerships on identified opportunity sites and housing preservation programs in areas at risk of housing displacement.

- Prioritize opportunity sites by their ability to maximize and leverage affordable housing production in resource rich areas.
- Overlay existing infrastructure conditions with identified opportunity sites in order to prioritize annual capital improvements that facilitate future housing production needs.
- Develop illustrative development scenarios for priority opportunity sites that are reviewed by the surrounding neighborhood through neighborhood planning and outreach.
- Actively market identified opportunity sites, and issue a preliminary Request for Expression of Interest to assess development interest and identify a range of possible development opportunities. Create a schedule and competitive procurement process for development of prioritized sites with demonstrated private development interest.
- Regularly engage private landowners to judge development interest and to communicate housing production priorities and opportunities for public-private partnership.
- Examine locations of naturally occurring affordable housing for cohesive land use patterns or common housing typologies that may be suitable for future Conservation Districts or as Thematic Resource Designations. Conduct neighborhood planning and community engagement sessions in identified areas of interest to increase community awareness and support for these housing preservation strategies.

Barrier 3: Underresourced

Limited internal and external financial and staffing capital restricts active management policies for housing preservation, and expansion of anti-displacement programs throughout Evanston.

Strategy 3: Fund

Regularly examine existing housing conditions and data in order to strategically expand financial and staffing capacity for programs that advance housing preservation and anti-displacement where it can have the most impact.

- Develop and administer an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) financing and development program to increase construction of detached and internal ADU's as both a housing production and anti-displacement strategy. Provide homeowners with technical assistance including but not limited to site planning, lease agreements, and tenant management support.
- Develop, administer and add capacity to anti-displacement programs and funding mechanisms including housing provider mitigation, homeowner retention and

supplemental resources to mitigate fee increases, housing rehab and emergency assistance, tenant organizing and right of first refusal programs.

- Expand the capacity of Evanston’s existing land trusts and limited equity partner organizations through additional staff and financial support.
- Develop and administer a property acquisition fund to facilitate strategic and rapid purchase of property capable of leveraging affordable housing production.

Barrier 4: Complex Processes

Existing development frameworks create difficulty navigating the City’s permitting processes, confusion meeting complex code requirements, and add unnecessary time and costs to developments through burdensome entitlement processes.

Strategy 4: Create

Provide information and technical assistance that help homeowners and developers navigate common housing rehabilitation and housing production permit types expeditiously.

- Develop incentives and a streamlined entitlement and permitting process for developments that are primarily affordable.
- Create a step-by-step resource for homeowners for types of common housing rehabilitation and housing production permit types. “Start Here Campaign”.

Summary

The ability to address these key barriers through implementation of the proposed activities provide opportunities for people and families to achieve housing security and to reap the psychological and physical benefits thereof. These activities confront misconceptions and common talking points used to sabotage housing production. In turn they remove barriers to the implementation of public-private partnerships capable of creating significant primarily affordable developments in resource rich areas, and activities that add capacity to implement and maintain anti-displacement and housing preservation programs for populations and neighborhoods most at risk. Evanston has a local and regional obligation to address these barriers and to address our shared housing crisis. Our location near job opportunities and transit access, our history of advancing progressive housing policies, and our shared and determined vision for the future, combined with our community capital and political will, positions the City to leverage housing production and housing preservation strategies where they can have the most impact and to provide a significant and immediate return on this investment.