

# PRESERVE 2040

## Preservation Commission Long-Range Plan

**City of Evanston  
Historic Preservation Program  
Division of Planning & Zoning  
Adopted December 6, 2022**

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# Acknowledgments

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# Why plan?

The long-range work plan shall be viewed as the Commissions principal policy document regarding the identification, documentation and stewardship of Evanston's significant heritage resources -- buildings, sites, structures, people, stories and objects -- and a guide for the oversight and administration of the community's historic preservation program, principally facilitated through the City's Planning & Zoning Division with support from the Preservation Commission as well as other partner organizations.

Evanston's historic resources are vitally important and define Evanston's built character and identity. However, additional resources neither landmarked nor within districts but contributing to Evanston's heritage and vibrancy are consistently under threat from improper alterations, neglect, and demolition. To preserve these resources while accommodating the City's growth, economic development, and revitalization, a clear, forward-thinking understanding of Evanston's preservation priorities needs to be established. This document outlines specific goals, policies, and strategies for the Preservation Commission to follow to achieve short and long-term community heritage preservation goals across the next 20 years.

## Utilization

The Preservation Commission, and Evanston's preservation partners and advocates, will utilize this long-term work plan to guide future preservation efforts outside of resource management and binding design review activities. This plan should also be used to monitor and create accountable benchmarks for the implementation of short and long-term preservation initiatives, advocate for adjusting municipal preservation policy when needed and warranted, and integrate preservation policies and strategies into other plans and studies the City may undertake in the future.



Aerial view of downtown looking north.  
Circa 1930s.  
Credit: Evanston History Center Archives

# Key Objectives

1. **Educate:** Review previous preservation-based education and advocacy efforts and propose an engaging and ongoing program of outreach, education and advocacy efforts that builds community awareness and stewardship.
2. **Prioritize:** Determine future survey and documentation priorities in order to safeguard Evanston's evolving cultural identity and values embodied in its built environment.
3. **Include:** Consider historic and cultural contexts and their associated heritage resources. Include and prioritize Evanston's settlement by different ethnic and racial groups.
4. **Review:** Assess the effectiveness of the Preservation Ordinance as well as Commission operations and administration, and the viability of partner organizations by evaluating the type and frequency of poor outcomes and capacity for implementation.
5. **Align:** Explore opportunities for developing and integrating preservation-based policies and initiatives within the City's Climate Action and Resilience Plan, Affordable Housing Program, and Economic Development goals.
6. **Incentivize:** Determine the barriers to implementing effective preservation programs and explore the creation of incentives for both residents and developers.
7. **Engage:** Create new organizational approaches to facilitating preservation - approaches that build local capacity and involve private and community stakeholder participation.
8. **Organize:** Create an action-oriented work plan that prioritizes specific initiatives, identifies potential partners, as well as funding sources if applicable.

# Mission

To enhance the quality of life for all Evanston residents and visitors through the ongoing work and benefits of historic preservation.

# Vision

A vision is an aspirational statement regarding the future state of preservation in Evanston. Based on the feedback provided by subcommittee members and members of the broader preservation community, the following draft vision statement was created.

“In 2040 Evanston, Illinois is one of Midwestern America’s most vibrant places - a city known for its **rich historic, cultural, architectural, and environmental legacy**.

The Evanston Preservation Commission and community at-large has fostered that legacy through **careful planning and stewardship** of Evanston’s historic, cultural, architectural, and environmental resources, by **engaging a diverse group of residents, local stakeholders, and policy makers** on the benefits of historic preservation.

In turn, these efforts have **enhanced sustainability and accessibility**, identified endangered resources - and registered new resources especially those not previously acknowledged as significant; **celebrated and stabilized neighborhood character**; solidified **preservation as an economic development tool**; and promoted the increased appreciation of Evanston’s **diverse cultural heritage**.

The Evanston Preservation Commission, City of Evanston, School Districts, Northwestern University, and other private-sector and nonprofit organizations **maintain ongoing partnerships** through meaningful advocacy efforts, preservation planning initiatives and **expanded educational resources and financial incentives**.”

# Values

**Value statements are intended to describe the Preservation Commission and municipal preservation programs core beliefs and act as broad guiding principles.**

1. Evanston's cultural and architectural resources are tangible links to its current and past identities. Future Landmark and District designations keep pace with evolving preservation trends and aspirations for future identities.
2. Preservation embodies inherent sustainability and is essential to climate resilience.
3. A Preservation Commission membership that reflects Evanston's demographics supports a more representative, equitable, diverse, and inclusive program.
4. Enhancing public-private partnerships and capacities promotes broad community involvement, advocacy, and educational outreach.
5. Effective municipal leadership supports positive preservation outcomes.
6. An effective, well-managed, and well-staffed municipal preservation program facilitates positive community outcomes.
7. A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion within municipal preservation programming facilitates positive community outcomes.
8. Preservation promotes Evanston as a residential city of choice in the Chicago Region.
9. Preservation contributes to vibrant, human-scaled environments.
10. Preservation is a revitalization and economic development tool for small businesses and neighborhood business districts.
11. Evanston's historic resources are integral to community identity and placemaking and bind its residents to their physical environments.
12. Effective community partnerships and ongoing technical assistance advance a preservation advocacy ethic in Evanston.
13. Annual reporting of performance trends and benchmarks promotes transparency and trust with the public the Commission serves.



Organized marches protesting unfair housing restrictions in downtown. Circa 1962  
Credit: Chicago Tribune

# Plan Organization

**A successful preservation program, and this work plan, is organized around four key elements.**

1. Survey and Documentation;
2. Program Administration and Resource Management;
3. Community Revitalization, and;
4. Education and Advocacy

## Survey and Documentation

Survey and documentation efforts require in-field assessment and background research into the historical, cultural, and architectural significance of Evanston's buildings, sites, structures, and objects as well as their eligibility as Landmarks or as part of a Local District. These efforts include preparation of survey reports, Local District and Landmark nominations, undertaking local history projects, and creating interpretive exhibits. Maintaining an active program in survey and documentation forms the foundation for effective community preservation planning. Effective survey and documentation provides the basis for identifying and understanding the community's historic resources, what resources are high value and significant as well as what resources are threatened.

**Goal #1: Identify and Preserve Resources Significant to Evanston's Identity, Heritage, and Vibrancy.**

**Policy 1.1: Support initiatives that continue to identify and document Evanston's heritage resources.**

**Initiative 1.1: Re-Survey the Ridge Historic District**

First listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, the Ridge Historic District has not been re-surveyed since. A re-survey initiative should be undertaken at an intensive-level, documenting architectural styles and building forms, exterior conditions and features, building alterations, accessory structures, building permit

data, and any historical background information. Best practice dictates re-survey every 10 years in order to understand the existing integrity of all buildings and whether they contribute to the significance of the district as it has evolved since the mid 1980s. A re-survey should also include an online portal and database similar to the Lakeshore Historic District.

**Initiative 1.2: Re-Survey the Northeast Historic District**

First listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, the Northeast Historic District has not been re-surveyed since. A re-survey initiative should be undertaken at an intensive-level similar to the description above for the Ridge Historic District. The Northeast Historic District re-survey should encompass the entire Federally designated district and have special emphasis on the portions not designed locally to understand the impact on integrity and condition of buildings which do not fall under binding review.

**Initiative 1.3: Prioritize new areas in Evanston for survey and documentation**

Future survey areas should include residential neighborhoods to the west and southwest which include many 1920s and post-World War II resources, and the northwest which include many late Victorian and early 20th Century resources.

**Initiative 1.4: Conduct a citywide reconnaissance survey of Evanston's historic downtown and neighborhood business district resources**

Evanston's heritage has always been defined in-part by its commercial resources and the businesses housed within them. However, in the past five to six decades, there has been a significant loss of built fabric and integrity of these resources, particularly within the Downtown and along the Chicago Avenue corridor. Identifying and documenting Evanston's historic and contributing commercial resources, as places significant to Evanston's heritage and as opportunities for community and economic development, should be a high preservation planning priority.

**Initiative 1.5: Conduct a cultural landscape survey of Evanston including its park system**

Evanston's park system, including its lakefront, have long been of historic, social, and cultural importance. An intensive-level survey is recommended to determine what aspects of these resources should be documented and preserved for future

generations as areas of shared collective memory. Data and research should influence future planning and design decisions by the Parks Department and Public Works Agency.

**Initiative 1.6: Conduct a citywide survey of Evanston’s post-war resources**

Evanston has a proud history of documenting and registering Landmarks and Districts. However, the majority of these resources identified were Late Victorian and early 20th Century resources that fell within the fifty-year threshold at the time. As this threshold marches on, and new best practices place emphasis on post-war, mid-century, and other contemporary resources, a citywide survey should be conducted to understand what resources exist and what their significance and contribution to our heritage and identity is.

**Initiative 1.7: Document and include the built resources that identify and embody historic, social, and cultural periods and events, and the groups and people who have contributed to Evanston’s unique character and identity. Prioritize resources associated with identity groups not adequately represented currently**

Like many communities, past documentation efforts often focused on the more significant architectural resources present in the community – the high-style residential property types and some vernacular structures representative of Evanston’s broad built history. However, the resources that often reflect Evanston’s working-class, minority, and ethnic population groups were not identified or registered to the same level. Specific ethnic, racial, and gender groups should be identified and subject to further research and documentation.

**Initiative 1.8: Integrate survey and documentation efforts as part of future City planning efforts**

Over the last several decades, the City has conducted several planning studies. Depending on available resources, future planning efforts should incorporate a survey element to document historic resources and identify eligible buildings, sites, and structures as Local Landmarks and Districts. Missed opportunities to integrate this in the recent past include the Central Street Master Plan, the Green Bay Road Corridor Study, the Chicago Avenue Corridor Study, the West Evanston Master Plan, and others.



Evanston Hospital circa 1920s.  
Credit: Chicago Tribune

## **Policy 1.2: Support designation of significant resources as Landmarks and Historic Districts as recommended through survey and documentation activities**

### **Initiative 1.9: Advocate for designation of the Oakton National Register District as a Local Historic or Conservation District**

The Oakton District was first established as a National Register District in 2004. A local designation was not adopted, and the resources within the District do not fall under the Ordinances binding design review procedures. Thus, the designation is honorary only with no regulatory framework to protect integrity and condition nor manage change. As a result, resources within the District have seen diminishment to their integrity and ability to communicate their past effectively. Staff routinely fields calls from residents within the District who are unhappy with alterations and construction occurring. Without a local designation, integrity and condition will likely continue to decline and the significance of the District could come into question. Due to these factors as well as the uniqueness and significance of the District, a local designation is recommended.

### **Initiative 1.10: Nominate Evanston's historic downtown resources and other business district resources to the National Register as a multi-property thematic resource listing**

Evanston's downtown and other commercial resources may not have sufficient integrity or cohesion of built fabric and location to justify a traditional historic district. However, these resources may be eligible as a theme or pattern of development. A similar process was followed for Evanston's Thematic Apartments listed in the National Register. Listing in the National Register places no burden on existing property owners, but provides recognition and allows access to significant incentives which would help spur preservation-based economic development and adaptive use.

### **Initiative 1.11: Prepare an annual study list of eligible resources in Evanston**

An annually updated study list of potential landmarks should be published which includes those properties identified during ongoing survey and documentation efforts. The study list would promote a better community-wide understanding of

what resources are identified as worthy of preservation in Evanston and help partner organizations and residents with nomination of such resources.

**Initiative 1.12: Advocate for expansion of the boundaries of the Northeast Historic District to overlay its National Register Counterpart**

The Northeast National Register Historic District extends north of Lincoln Street, the boundary of the Local District, to the border of Evanston and Wilmette. Best planning practices dictate that a Local District overlay a National Register District to effectively manage change and preserve and retain the condition and integrity of the District as a whole. Currently binding design review only exists for the southern half of the National Register District, leaving the northern half vulnerable to non-sympathetic new construction, alteration, and demolition. A first step would be to re-survey the Federal District to understand what loss of integrity, if any, has occurred over the past 20+ years.

**Initiative 1.13: Prepare Neighborhood Conservation District Plans and support neighborhood planning efforts in areas where residents have expressed interest in enhancing and stabilizing neighborhood character, identity, and affordability**

Conservation Districts must have a cohesive land pattern and identifiable physical characteristics and features. They can be as small as one block and are intended to represent a distinguishable collection of historic, cultural, social, or architectural importance, or areas that possess distinctive exterior elements the neighborhood wishes to preserve. NCD's are often managed through a separate neighborhood planning process and neighborhood plan where the community being protected determines what elements are of importance and how they would like them to be managed moving forward. NCD's have the ability to not only preserve character, but maintain affordability as well.



View of Sherman Avenue in downtown.  
Looking north.  
Former City Hall to left (demolished in 1942).  
Circa 1930s. Credit: Chicago Tribune

# Program Administration and Resource Management

Program Administration includes the operations and management of the preservation program at the City level, principally the mechanisms for designating Landmarks and Local Districts as well as conducting resource management or design review over those resources already registered both administratively and by the Preservation Commission. The regulatory frameworks are primarily outlined in the Preservation Ordinance but also the Commission's Rules and Procedures, Design Guidelines, and the Comprehensive General Plan.

**Goal #2: Enhance the ability to protect and promote significant heritage and cultural resources through updated ordinances and additional preservation-based tools.**

**Policy 2.1: Maintain an up-to-date Preservation Ordinance which reflects nationwide best practices.**

**Initiative 2.1: Review and update the Historic Preservation Ordinance and consider the following changes**

1. Include designation criteria and design review procedures for future cultural resource designations.
2. Eliminate criteria for integrity when reviewing nominations as cultural resource designations.
3. Include a section on procedures for establishing Neighborhood or Commercial Conservation Districts.
4. Include standards and processes outlined in Section 6-15-11-5 for providing recommendations on proposed zoning relief.
5. Amend the standards for new construction to include retention of landscape features which contribute to a Landmark or Districts setting.
6. Advocate for appeals of the Commission's decisions to be determined in Circuit Court to align with other Boards and Commissions.
7. Require rescission of Landmark designation prior to proposed demolition.

8. Require testimony by a representative of the Commission or the Commissions Administrative Officer for all matters sent before the Planning and Development Committee and/or City Council.
9. Incorporate the ability for the Commission to initiative demolition delay proceedings for threatened resources identified but not registered.
10. Make reference to maintaining a full-time historic preservation planner position. The Commissions workload and body of resources under its charge supports the need for a full-time preservation planner. This is especially true as the Commission is charged with additional responsibilities. A full-time preservation planner should also coordinate various preservation-based economic development, climate resilience, and education and advocacy initiatives with other City departments and partner organizations.

**Initiative 2.2: Prepare and formally adopt a set of design guidelines or guiding principles for facilitating binding design review activities**

A comprehensive set of guidelines which educate historic property owners and design professions and address specific preservation treatment procedures, should be created to set clear expectations as well as provide information on appropriate treatments that fall outside binding design review authority, such as routine maintenance and restoration which do not require a permit.

**Policy 2.2: Adopt new preservation tools and incentives.**

**Initiative 2.3: Work with the Building and Inspection Services Division to create a framework for permit fee waivers if recommended by the Commission**

The preservation program currently has very few financial incentives to offer, and no locally based financial incentive. Building permit fee waivers are a common and effective financial incentive that should be considered for the programs more modestly-valued or vernacular Landmark properties where the appropriate alterations or new construction are cost prohibitive as a percentage of the homes overall value. Providing permit fee waivers as a trade for more sympathetic and appropriate alteration and construction would have a positive community impact and ensure retention of the structures character defining features.



Forest Avenue looking south. Circa 1930s  
Credit: Chicago Tribune

**Initiative 2.4: Work with the Planning and Zoning Division to amend the zoning code to include an adaptive use section.**

Adaptive use ordinances aim at facilitating the reuse of properties, most often buildings of assembly, or institutional or industrial properties. The ordinance should study barriers to adaptive use including the potential for additional permitted uses, relaxed or eliminated parking requirements, and increased density for proposed residential uses to help offset rehabilitation costs as well as a series of incentives such as fee waivers, grants, or expedited project reviews and entitlement processes. Adaptive use is a central tenet of preservation planning. It achieves climate resilience goals through the reuse of significant structures rather than their demolition, it achieves affordability and housing goals through diversified housing typologies and stock, and retains the built fabric associated with Evanston's identity and its residents' collective memories of place.

**Initiative 2.5: Explore implementation of form-based zoning overlays in areas of significant redevelopment potential adjacent to historic districts or where high concentrations of Landmarks exist**

Areas of significant redevelopment potential, particularly in Transit Oriented Development Corridors adjacent to Local Districts, such as the Chicago Avenue Corridor, represent a potential threat to integrity of setting. Form based overlays should be explored which identify approaches which enable more sensitive transitions in height, bulk, and form as a new development approaches a District's boundary.

**Initiative 2.6: Advocate for creation of and donation into a preservation-based fund as a public benefit for Planned Developments**

As a legislative process, Planned Developments that request development increases above the base zoning maximums should provide public benefits commensurate to the increase requested. However, in the past several decades, many planned developments, particularly in the downtown, have eroded character defining, and human-centered aspects of the built environment without commensurate public benefit to offset that loss. Future Planned Developments should be encouraged to pay into a preservation-based fund used to enable retention of existing character

defining and historic resources as well as fund financial incentives and other programmatic functions of the Commission aimed at retaining human-centered environments.

**Initiative 2.7: Reinstate incentive programs for maintaining the character defining features of commercial historic or legacy buildings and businesses**

The Commission should work with the City to re-establish a Commercial Building Facade Grant Program. The program could provide matching funds to property owners, up to a certain value, seeking to rehabilitate their commercial buildings, facades, or storefronts. In turn, the owners would go through a binding design review process to ensure the proposal was compatible with the structures existing design vocabulary as well as adjacent vocabularies, or to restore previously degraded storefronts to a condition more sympathetic to its original design.

**Initiative 2.8: Work with the Economic Development Division to enact a legacy or heritage business program**

Evanston's heritage resources are vitally important, bind its residents to their physical environment, and define the City's unique character and identity. However, Evanston's living heritage remains largely underrepresented and vulnerable from threats such as improper alterations, increasing rent structures, changes in the market economy, and corresponding development pressures. The purpose of a Legacy Business Program is to celebrate, advocate for, and retain Evanston's living heritage as embodied through the legendary businesses which contribute significantly to the City's historic, cultural, economic, or social identity.

**Initiative 2.9: Establish a Neighborhood Conservation District Program**

Neighborhood Conservation Districts are an alternative tool to historic districts used by cities and communities to preserve historic resources in neighborhoods and areas not eligible for National or Local designation due to integrity issues but merit some level of resource management due to the neighborhoods overall visual character and continuity. This tool could prove important to preserving character and affordability in Evanston's west and southwest neighborhoods which may not have sufficient integrity or meet the eligibility criteria for a Local Landmark District designation.

**Initiative 2.10: Organize a Preservation Consortium or Preservation Advisory Sub-Committee to support and help implement aspects of this plan**

Re-activating partner organizations and engaging with and delegating tasks to other City Departments is critical to this plan's success and the ability to implement its initiatives effectively. Monthly or quarterly meetings should be considered to discuss priorities, delegate tasks, and discuss progress. Consider including members from the City's Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Agency, Evanston History Center, Preservation League of Evanston, Mitchell Museum, Shorefront Legacy Center, Design Evanston, Frances Willard House Museum, Landmarks Illinois, Northwestern University, and Districts 65 and 202.

**Initiative 2.11: Benchmark Commission accomplishments and performance trends in an annual public report given to the Planning and Development Committee**

On an annual basis, the Preservation Commission and lead City staff members should review operations, collect statistics, and establish benchmarks to measure the success of the program and implementation of this plan. Benchmark or performance indicators that could be tracked include the number of COA's reviewed, the number of resources surveyed, private capital leveraged through rehabilitation or adaptive use projects, leveraged financial or volunteer resources, the number of education and advocacy efforts conducted, and the number of projects applied for, reviewed administratively, reviewed by the Commission, the number of projects approved, the number denied, and common standards of concern or routine issues with treatment approaches.

**Initiative 2.12: Actively recruit and solicit potential candidates for future Commissioners with a focus on building a membership reflective of Evanston's diverse demographics**

Active recruitment of future commissions is essential to maintaining the viability of the Commission's programmatic and binding design review functions as well as maintaining a full membership to ease the burden of the Commissioners as volunteers. An emphasis should be made to recruit members reflective of Evanston's demographics, location of residence, as well as diversity in background to provide diverse perspectives on projects and human capital for volunteer opportunities.



Former Evanston Post Office on Davis Street  
Circa 1910. Credit: Unknown

# Community Revitalization

Preservation in Evanston should extend to more than its registered Landmarks and Local Districts. For example, historic buildings provide affordable housing and lower rent structures for local and start-up businesses, maintain housing opportunities for working and young families, and can help revitalize business districts and stabilize older neighborhoods threatened by development pressure. Additionally, historic buildings contain significant embodied energy and help to achieve the City's Climate Action and Resilience goals. At the local level, community development and revitalization initiatives should integrate preservation policies and initiatives that work to attract investment, generate jobs, enhance sustainability, and maintain affordable rent and ownership structures. Some initiatives may include preservation based economic development, neighborhood planning, and incentive programs to attract investor interest in adaptive use projects or facade rehabilitation.

**Goal #3: Encourage adaptive use and rehabilitation projects which spur preservation-based economic development and retain vibrant and contextual built fabric.**

**Policy 3.1: Support planning and development that advance preservation and community revitalization priorities.**

**Initiative 3.1: Explore creation of a downtown revolving loan or venture fund**

The City has no programs currently to encourage preservation-based economic development in the downtown, although retention of the downtown's remaining character-defining resources is routinely discussed as a community priority. A private-sector financed venture fund that focuses on business development activities and new retail start-ups could help reduce ground floor vacancies, stabilize rent structures, and generate a critical mass of pedestrian traffic in the downtown. The private financing could come in-part through donations to the preservation-based public benefit fund or other downtown corporate donations.

**Initiative 3.2: Collaborate with Evanston Special Service Areas, Chamber of Commerce, and broader business community to identify and advance preservation priorities**

The City and Commission should explore opportunities to partner with Evanston's various SSA's and Chamber of Commerce to advance preservation planning objectives including advocating for new incentive programs, creating commercial and business district design guidelines, and providing technical assistance and workshops to property owners on the benefits of preservation-based economic development.

**Initiative 3.3: Collaborate with the Economic Development Division to assist in marketing and buyer recruitment for historic commercial, industrial, and institutional properties**

The Commission and City's Planning staff should collaborate with the Economic Development Division to identify significant and vacant or underutilized buildings extant in the City. A survey should be conducted which provides a baseline of information on the number of buildings that are candidates for adaptive use. The City could then catalog those properties for future planning initiatives, as well as developer recruitment and marketing efforts.

**Initiative 3.4: Target Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in areas of newly created Neighborhood Conservation Districts**

Community Development Block Grant funds are used to facilitate rehabilitation of housing stock in areas throughout Evanston. The CDBG program is administered by the City's Housing and Grants Program within the Community Development Department. Future use of CDBG funds could be targeted in conservation areas to achieve improvements in overall neighborhood character. The use of CDBG funds for preservation-based programs is allowed and has been done sparingly in the past.

## Policy 3.2: Coordinate and expand heritage tourism activities and programming.

### **Initiative 3.5: Support the creation of a heritage tourism advisory group**

Support creation of an advisory group amongst Evanston's heritage tourism related partner organizations. The advisory group should create an inventory of existing and potential heritage tourism assets, identify each assets potential as a tourism attraction, and develop strategies for their enhancement and marketability. An end product should be recommendations for strategic investments and programmatic development related to heritage tourism in Evanston by way of a Heritage Tourism Plan.

## Policy 3.3: Integrate and expand preservation priorities which align with Climate Action and Resilience goals

### **Initiative 3.6: Advocate for adoption of a citywide deconstruction ordinance**

Deconstruction ordinances require the deconstruction of a building rather than its demolition. The materials are sorted and salvaged for re-use and can be donated or sold, with the goal of diverting materials commonly sent to a landfill while creating a cache of cheaper/affordable and often higher-quality building materials for future rehabilitation, restoration, or new construction projects. Deconstruction supports affordability, job growth, as well as a reduction in overall carbon footprint. Consider partnerships with local rebuilding exchanges or similar entities.

### **Initiative 3.7: Incentivize historic property owners to salvage materials that contain significant embodied energy or high craftsmanship**

Utilize incentives, persuasive arguments, and the standards for alteration to retain rather than replace historic building materials that contain significant embodied energy. If these materials cannot be reused on-site, they should be stored for reuse, or salvaged and donated to a rebuilding exchange rather than enter the landfill.



Neighbors assess significant storm damage in the Lakeshore District  
Circa 1980. Credit: Chicago Tribune

**Initiative 3.8: Conduct annual reconnaissance surveys of historic properties to identify materials and finishes in poor condition before replacement is necessary and provide technical assistance for their proper repair**

Identifying materials and finishes in poor condition before replacement is necessary is a cost effective solution for homeowners which retains the resources integrity, original and high quality building materials, and avoids unnecessary landfill waste and new material consumption.

**Initiative 3.9: Invite professionals to speak on the appropriateness of various composite and synthetic materials which accurately mimic historic building materials that are either non-sustainable or cost prohibitive**

New composite or synthetic building materials are constantly being developed and refined in order to better mimic their historical counterparts. These materials can be less expensive, or more expensive, but often have longer life cycles than traditional materials sourced today. These materials may be cost-effective or more environmentally conscious choices that could be considered as in-kind replacements so long as they are non-tactile and no change in general appearance would result.

**Initiative 3.10: Support the retention of significant landscape features which offer citywide environmental and cultural benefits**

Retention of significant environmental features such as heritage trees should be considered integral to the collective integrity of setting for a district. These distinguishing original features, many predating the architectural resources themselves, should not be destroyed due to their cultural, social and environmental benefit to the health and general welfare of the citizenry. The Commission could further advocate for and support a citywide Tree Preservation Ordinance.

DAVIS ST. FROM CHICAGO. ST., EVANSTON, ILL.



North half of Davis Street between Chicago Avenue and Orrington Avenue  
Looking northwest. Circa 1880s. All buildings demolished except the Landmark University Building (far right)  
Credit: Unknown.

# Education and Advocacy

Proactive educational and advocacy efforts are critical to maintaining stakeholder participation and support for heritage preservation. Evanston's community stakeholders, homeowners, merchants, and investors and developers need to understand the tools and resources available to participate in our preservation program and help rehabilitate, adapt, and protect the City's historic resources. Elected leaders need to understand the role preservation plays in maintaining Evanston's vibrancy and sense of place, in neighborhood stabilization, and the economic impact and rate of return on its investments and participation in City-supported preservation initiatives as well as heritage tourism activities. Often education and advocacy is most effective as part of an established and nurtured institutional framework between the Commission, neighborhood leaders, preservation thought leaders (architects, planners, designers) the City, and partner organizations such as the Preservation League, and Evanston History Center.

**Goal #4: Advocate for the power of preservation and its ability to sustain and enhance a high quality of life for all Evanston residents.**

**Policy 4.1: Create new educational tools that inform design professionals, contractors, developers, residents, and civic leaders on the benefits of preserving and adapting historic structures.**

**Initiative 4.1: Reinstate a quarterly preservation and design oriented newsletter and make it available online and on social media**

A quarterly newsletter should be the foundation for the Commissions education and advocacy programmatic functions and should include variety in content and content contributors and be cross promotional with similar outreach provided by partner organizations. A newsletter can increase transparency in, and support for, the preservation program and a general preservation ethic.

**Initiative 4.2: Prepare additional educational publications and videos**

Initiatives should include materials describing incentive programs, proper routine and seasonal maintenance and other treatment procedures, nomination and designation procedures, and the overall benefit of preservation to the Evanston community. These should be made available online to enhance public access to information.

**Initiative 4.3: Support an annual endangered properties list**

An endangered historic properties list can be a significant tool to help raise public awareness of properties threatened with demolition due to neglect or imminent redevelopment. The list should be created by a partner organization with an advocacy arm, but can be promoted and supported by the Commission.

**Initiative 4.4: Prepare a preservation training publication and offer one-on-one orientations for elected officials**

City staff and the Commission should provide initial and on-going training and orientation services to incoming elected officials describing the history and impact of the program, the design review and nomination processes, as well as Council members roles and responsibilities associated with the program including determination of appeals and nominations.

**Initiative 4.5: Support the creation of a network of current Landmark owners and a welcome program for new homeowners**

Current and prospective owners play an indispensable role in shaping and maintaining the character and condition of the resource they occupy. A support network of Landmark property owners can help new owners navigate unforeseen or complex challenges, seek assistance from qualified restoration or repair professionals, insurance and real-estate agents, preservation-oriented architects and contractors, and in navigating the COA and permit processes. Welcome letters help new owners understand what resources are available, where to access information, and who to contact at the City with questions or concerns.

**Initiative 4.6: Develop a pipeline for bringing youth into the local preservation community**

Finding ways to reinvigorate partner organizations, increase membership, and instill a preservation ethic in a younger generation is a challenge across the country. The Commission should consider initiatives such as inviting groups of ETHS students to Commission meetings, an internship program for regional college students, and teacher professional development and curriculum opportunities with District 65 and ETHS in order to engage a new generation of preservationists.

**Initiative 4.7: Compile and publish a list of restoration professionals who perform work in Evanston.**

The Commission and City staff should create a list or registry of restoration professionals, contractors, and architects who have successfully completed preservation-based projects in Evanston, are familiar with the application requirements, and who understand the standards for review and framework for binding design review at an administrative or Commission level. This registry will be a valuable resource for homeowners when seeking and selecting design professionals by trade.

**Policy 4.2: Continue to disseminate and publicize educational content utilizing the internet and other digital platforms**

**Initiative 4.8: Expand outreach to the City’s various social media platforms**

To improve access and reach a wider and younger audience, consider expanding education and advocacy efforts to digital and social media platforms as well as connect with various Evanston based social media influencers who already provide regular preservation-based content.

**Initiative 4.9: Digitize and make available early publications of the Commission**

The archived files and databases created by the Commission and City in its early years should be digitized and incorporated in a website that permits online access to researchers and other interested citizens. These include statements of significance, survey notes and inventories, and various education and advocacy materials as well as printed technical assistance brochures.

**Initiative 4.10: Update existing heritage tourism publications, such as the early Commissions self-guided walking tours, and make them available online**

Existing heritage tourism marketing formats are outdated. Moving forward, these materials should be re-designed and re-formatted for print, as well as smartphone and tablet technology so visitors can easily access information. Examples include the sampler of self-guided historic district tours, the Evanston past and present booklet, and the historic Evanston architecture walking tour brochures as well as others.

**Policy 4.3: Conduct annual fundraising events, educational programs, and training opportunities**

**Initiative 4.11: Support partner organizations in the creation of preservation oriented lectures and/or workshops**

The Commission and City should support partner organizations such as Design Evanston, the Preservation League, History Center, Frances Willard House and Museum, and the Shorefront Legacy Center, to organize and host an annual lecture or workshop series on important preservation topics.

**Initiative 4.12: Provide annual preservation-based training for local realtors and financial professionals and consider a certification program**

Realtors and bankers are key intermediaries in the disposition of historic properties. Certification should be offered to individuals who complete a City program that educates realtors and financial professionals on the City's preservation program including its Landmarks, historic districts, preservation procedures, incentives, and the benefit of historic preservation.

**Initiative 4.13: Facilitate additional regular historic district guided and app-based walking tours**

Although tours of Evanston historic districts and other neighborhoods occur during select events and certain times of the year, there are not regular or frequent tours hosted by any partner organizations. To further promote Evanston's heritage resources and make widely available the rich architectural history of Evanston and its neighborhoods, regular tours should be hosted and supported by the Commission.

These should be conducted by trained volunteers and docents and occur by fee-based admission. Consider a free virtual tour inventory.

**Initiative 4.14: Establish an annual program of brief guest lectures at the start of monthly Commission meetings**

It is often difficult for volunteers to attend conferences, workshops and other training due to time and financial constraints. To remain diligent in the Commissioners continuing education, the City should invite guest speakers to provide information on a variety of topics at the start of each meeting or every other meeting. A schedule of lectures and speakers should be published at the start of each calendar year and made available to residents and design professionals alike to encourage attendance.

**Initiative 4.15: Stop the annual Design Awards Program, and support a new Awards Program.**

The existing Design Awards Program has come under scrutiny as elitist and a marketing tool for local design professionals. A new, more diverse program should be considered and administered by a larger consortium of preservation, cultural, social, and design oriented partner organizations to reach a wider audience, expand categories for consideration, and elevate publicity and visibility of the event by way of an annual symposium.

**Initiative 4.16: Create new fundraising events and opportunities to promote and facilitate preservation-based programmatic functions**

The Commission and City should support and help implement annual fundraising mechanisms and social events in collaboration with various preservation partners to advocate and gain support for future preservation initiatives. Initially, these events do not need to be elaborate but should be effectively programmed and promoted to gain future interest and support. As support builds, the Commission, City, and partner organizations should look at additional larger-scale events such as a preservation symposium or annual historic homeowners fair.

**Initiative 4.17: Support ongoing oral history projects**

Both the History Center, Art Institute, and the Shorefront Legacy Center have active oral history projects. The Commission and City can support these efforts by recommending individuals to interview, consider creation of a crowd sourced oral history project, or suggest themes for new oral histories such as a compliment to the Legacy Business Program.

**Initiative 4.18: Create and promote a citywide Century Home program for homes that may not meet the eligibility criteria but are 100 years or older**

Many residents in Evanston who are not within a historic district or designated as a Landmark have an interest in their home's history and are dedicated to proper restoration and rehabilitation efforts that maintain their value and character defining attributes. Many of these homes may not be eligible for Landmark designation, but may be deserving of recognition as part of a Century Home Registry. Owners of homes 100 years or older could purchase a Century Home plaque as a way of recognition and promotion. The proceeds of the program would be used to finance additional preservation-based programmatic functions and initiatives.



Grosse Point Lighthouse Keeper. Circa 1980s.  
Credit: Chicago Tribune

# Implementation

## Survey and Documentation

**Goal #1: Identify and Preserve Resources Significant to Evanston’s Identity, Heritage, and Vibrancy.**

**Policy 1.1: Support initiatives that continue to identify and document Evanston’s heritage resources.**

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers   |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>1.1:</b> Re-Survey the Ridge Historic District   |         |     |     |      |     | CON; COE          | Medium   |
| <b>1.2:</b> Re-Survey the Northeast Historic District   |         |     |     |      |     | CON; COE          | Medium   |
| <b>1.3:</b> Prioritize new areas in Evanston for surveys.   |         |     |     |      |     | CON; COE          | High     |
| <b>1.4:</b> Conduct a city-wide survey of Evanston’s downtown and neighborhood business district resources.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | High     |
| <b>1.5:</b> Conduct a cultural landscape survey of Evanston.  |         |     |     |      |     | CON; COE; HPC     | Low      |
| <b>1.6:</b> Conduct a citywide survey of Evanston’s post-war resources.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | Medium   |
| <b>1.7:</b> Document and include the built resources that embody historic, social, and cultural periods and events, and the groups and people who have contributed to Evanston’s unique character and identity. |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; POR          | Pressing |
| <b>1.8:</b> Integrate preservation survey and documentation as part of future City planning efforts.  |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | High     |

**Policy 1.2: Support designation of significant resources as Landmarks and Historic Districts as recommended through survey and documentation activities**

| Initiative   | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|--|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers  |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>1.9:</b> Advocate for designation of the Oakton National Register District as a Local Historic or Neighborhood Conservation District  |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; POR          | High     |
| <b>1.10:</b> Nominate Evanston’s historic downtown resources and other business district resources to the National Register as a multi-property thematic resource listing. Provide access to tax credits for income producing properties.  |         |     |     |      |     | POR               | High     |
| <b>1.11:</b> Prepare an annual study list of eligible resources in Evanston.   |         |     |     |      |     | POR; HPC          | Medium   |
| <b>1.12:</b> Advocate for expansion of the boundaries of the Northeast Historic District to overlay its National Register Counterpart  |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; POR          | Low      |
| <b>1.13:</b> Prepare Neighborhood Conservation District plans and support neighborhood planning efforts in areas where residents have expressed interest in enhancing and stabilizing neighborhood character, identity, and affordability. |         |     |     |      |     | CON; HPC; COE     | Medium   |



Varsity

"THE GAZEBO"  
GLENN FORD  
"DOG OF FLANDERS"  
NEXT FRI. "TOBY TYLER"

Varsity

TINTING SHOE REPAIRING

Varsity Theater on Sherman Avenue.  
Looking northwest. Circa 1960s.  
Credit: Evanston History Center

# Program Administration and Resource Management

**Goal #2:** Enhance the ability to protect and promote significant heritage and cultural resources through updated ordinances and additional preservation-based tools.

**Policy 2.1:** Maintain an up-to-date Preservation Ordinance which reflects nationwide best practices.

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>2.1:</b> Review and update the Historic Preservation Ordinance   |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; COE          | High     |
| <b>2.2:</b> Prepare and formally adopt a set of design guidelines or guiding principles for facilitating binding design review activities.                    |         |     |     |      |     | CON; COE          | Low      |

**Policy 2.2:** Adopt new preservation tools and incentives.

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>2.3:</b> Work with the Building and Inspection Services Division to create a framework for permit fee waivers if recommended by the Commission.            |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | High     |
| <b>2.4:</b> Work with the Planning and Zoning Division to amend the zoning code to include a section for the adaptive use.                                    |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Medium   |
| <b>2.5:</b> Explore implementation of form-based overlays in areas of significant redevelopment potential adjacent to historic districts.                     |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Low      |

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>2.6:</b> Advocate for creation of and donation into a preservation based fund as a public benefit for Planned Developments.                                |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; COE          | Medium   |
| <b>2.7:</b> Reinstate incentive programs for maintaining the character defining features of commercial historic or legacy buildings and businesses            |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | High     |
| <b>2.8:</b> Work with the Economic Development Division to enact a legacy or heritage business program.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Pressing |
| <b>2.9:</b> Establish a Neighborhood Conservation District Program  |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | High     |
| <b>2.10:</b> Organize a Preservation Consortium or Preservation Advisory Sub-Committee  |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Pressing |
| <b>2.11:</b> Benchmark Commission accomplishments and performance trends in an annual public report   |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Pressing |
| <b>2.12:</b> Actively recruit future Commissioners with a focus on building a membership reflective of Evanstons diverse demographics.                        |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | High     |



Downtown Fountain Square looking northwest  
Circa 1940. Credit: Evanston History Center

# Community Revitalization

**Goal #3:** Encourage adaptive use and rehabilitation projects which spur preservation-based economic development and retain vibrant and contextual built fabric.

**Policy 3.1:** Support planning and development that advance preservation and community revitalization priorities.

| Initiative   | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|--|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers                  |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>3.1:</b> Explore creation of a downtown revolving loan or venture fund.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC; POR     | High     |
| <b>3.2:</b> Collaborate with Evanston Special Service Areas, Chamber of Commerce, and broader business community to identify and advance preservation priorities.              |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | High     |
| <b>3.3:</b> Collaborate with the Economic Development Division to assist in marketing and buyer recruitment for historic commercial, industrial, and institutional properties. |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Medium   |
| <b>3.4:</b> Target Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in areas of newly created Neighborhood Conservation Districts.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | High     |

### Policy 3.2: Coordinate and expand heritage tourism activities and programming.

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>3.5:</b> Support the creation of a heritage tourism advisory group.  |         |     |     |      |     | POR; VOL          | Low      |

### Policy 3.3: Integrate and expand preservation priorities which align with Climate Action and Resilience goals

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>3.6:</b> Advocate for adoption of a citywide deconstruction ordinance.   |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; COE          | Pressing |
| <b>3.7:</b> Incentivize historic property owners to salvage materials that contain significant embodied energy or high craftsmanship.   |         |     |     |      |     | HPC; COE          | High     |
| <b>3.8:</b> Conduct annual reconnaissance of historic properties to identify materials and finishes in poor condition before replacement is necessary and provide technical assistance for their proper repair. |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Medium   |
| <b>3.9:</b> Invite professionals to speak on the appropriateness of various composite and synthetic materials which accurately mimic historic building materials that are non-sustainable.                      |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | High     |
| <b>3.10:</b> Support the retention of significant landscape features which offer citywide environmental benefits  |         |     |     |      |     | HPC               | High     |



Unknown Location and date.  
Credit: Unknown

# Education and Advocacy

**Goal #4:** Advocate for the power of preservation and its ability to sustain and enhance a high quality of life for all Evanston residents.

**Policy 4.1:** Create new educational tools that inform design professionals, contractors, developers, residents, and civic leaders on the benefits of preserving and adapting historic structures.

| Initiative  | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|---|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| <b>HPC:</b> Historic Preservation Commission; <b>COE:</b> City of Evanston; <b>CON:</b> Consultant; <b>POR:</b> Partner Organizations; <b>VOL:</b> Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| <b>4.1:</b> Reinstate a quarterly preservation and design oriented newsletter and make it available on social media.  |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Pressing |
| <b>4.2:</b> Prepare additional educational publications.  |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | Medium   |
| <b>4.3:</b> Support an annual endangered properties list  |         |     |     |      |     | POR; HPC          | Low      |
| <b>4.4:</b> Prepare a preservation training publication and one-on-one orientation for elected officials.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC          | Pressing |
| <b>4.5:</b> Support the creation of a network of current Landmark owners and a welcome program for new homeowners.  |         |     |     |      |     | POR; VOL          | Medium   |
| <b>4.6:</b> Develop a pipeline for bringing youth into the local preservation community.  |         |     |     |      |     | COE; HPC; POR     | Medium   |
| <b>4.7:</b> Compile and publish a list of restoration professionals who perform work in Evanston.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Pressing |

## Policy 4.2: Continue to disseminate and publicize educational content utilizing the internet and other digital platforms

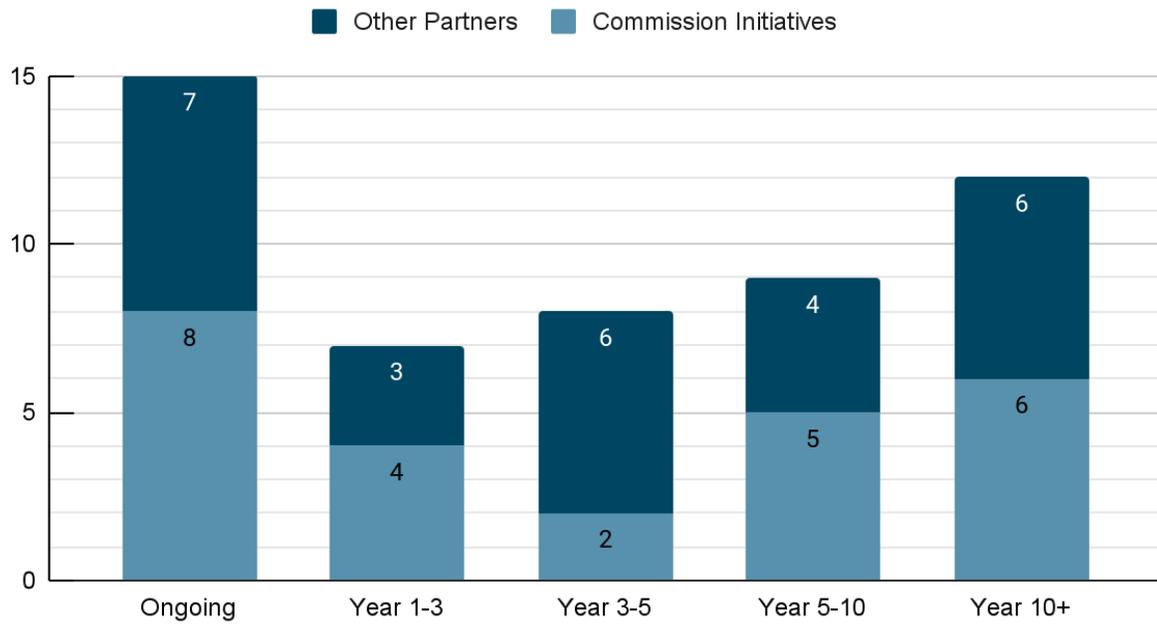
| Initiative   | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party | Priority |
|--|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------------------|----------|
| HPC: Historic Preservation Commission; COE: City of Evanston; CON: Consultant; POR: Partner Organizations; VOL: Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                   |          |
| 4.8: Expand outreach to the City's various social media platforms  |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Low      |
| 4.9: Continue to digitize and make available early publications of the Commission.   |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Medium   |
| 4.10: Update existing heritage tourism publications and make them available online.  |         |     |     |      |     | COE               | Medium   |

## Policy 4.3: Conduct annual fundraising events, educational programs, and training opportunities

| Initiative   | Ongoing | 1-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10+ | Responsible Party  | Priority |
|--|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|--------------------|----------|
| HPC: Historic Preservation Commission; COE: City of Evanston; CON: Consultant; POR: Partner Organizations; VOL: Volunteers |         |     |     |      |     |                    |          |
| 4.11: Support partner organizations in the creation of preservation oriented lectures and/or workshops                     |         |     |     |      |     | POR; VOL; COE; EPC | Medium   |
| 4.12: Continue annual training for local realtors, insurance, and financial professionals.                                 |         |     |     |      |     | POR; COE           | Medium   |
| 4.13: Establish brief guest lectures at monthly Commission meetings  |         |     |     |      |     | COE; POR; HPC      | High     |
| 4.14: Support additional regular historic district guided and app-based walking tours                                      |         |     |     |      |     | POR                | Low      |
| 4.15: Stop the annual Design Awards Program, and support a new Design Awards Program.                                      |         |     |     |      |     | POR; COE           | Low      |
| 4.16: Create new fundraising events and opportunities  |         |     |     |      |     | POR; HPC           | Low      |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |          |        |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--------|
| <b>4.17:</b> Support ongoing oral history projects              |  |  |  |  |  | POR      | Medium |
| <b>4.18:</b> Create and promote a citywide Century Home program |  |  |  |  |  | COE; HPC | Medium |

### Implementation by year by responsible party





Evanston Hospital Candy Strippers. Circa 1950  
Credit: Chicago Tribune