

B1-B3*

Business Districts

(Zoning Ordinance Sections 6-9-2, 6-9-3, 6-9-4, 6-9-5
Updated April 2026)



*See Title 6, Chapter 9 of the Evanston Code of Ordinances for more information, definitions, additional requirements and exceptions to these regulations. A Zoning Analysis is strongly recommended for major projects prior to submitting an application for building permits.

PURPOSE STATEMENTS

B1 Commercial District

Promote and preserve small scale, limited shopping and business uses that service the neighborhoods in which the business uses are located. Uses share common characteristics such as relatively small storefronts built to the front lot line and provide limited square feet in size.

B1a Commercial District

Accommodate continued use of neighborhood-oriented business districts and pedestrian-oriented shopping areas found primarily on arterial roadways and often adjacent to single-family residential areas. The district can also accommodate specialty retail, professional, office and financial service facilities that attract a larger market area. The established physical pattern is typically buildings built to the front lot line with continuous bands of storefronts. No individual use should exceed 20,000 square feet in size.

B2 Commercial District

Promote and preserve the older, neighborhood, and pedestrian shopping areas found primarily at arterial roadway intersections and new mass transit facilities. This district can also accommodate specialty retail and service facilities that attract a larger market area. The established physical pattern is typically buildings built to the front lot line with continuous bands of storefronts. No individual use should exceed 20,000 square feet in size.

B3 Commercial District

Provide for higher density business development at compact locations adjacent to mass transit facilities that can support intense business uses and accommodate greater building heights than the B1 and B2 business districts. The district reflects established uses and should provide for appropriate infill and redevelopment at such locations.

MINIMUM LOT SIZE

	B1	B1a	B2	B3
Residential, square feet per dwelling unit	2,500	900	400	400
Nonresidential	No requirement			

MINIMUM LOT WIDTH

	B1	B1a	B2	B3
	No requirement			

YARD SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

Principal Structures		B1	B1a	B2	B3
Front	Corner Property; Property comprising > 40% block width	3 ft.			Max 5 inches ¹
	Others	Lesser of 3 ft. or setback of adjacent property			
Abutting					
Street Side	Type M	3 ft.			Max 5 inches ¹
	Type C or D with front abutting Type C, D or M	None			
	Type C or D with front abutting any other street	3 ft.			
	All other local streets	None			
Interior Side	Residential district	10 ft.			15 ft.
	Nonresidential district	None			
Rear	Residential district	15 ft.	25 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.
	Nonresidential district	10 ft.	15 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.
Parking Setbacks		B1	B1a	B2	B3
Front		Open, unenclosed parking prohibited, including aisles & ramps			
	Abutting				
Side	Type M, C or D	Open, unenclosed parking prohibited, including aisles & ramps			
	All others	5 ft.			10 ft.
Rear	Residential district	15 ft.			5 ft.
	Nonresidential district	5 ft.			

C = Collector Street; D = Distributor street; M = Major street

¹ Minimum 70% of façade must be located within 5 inches of the front property line.

MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT

	B1	B1a	B2	B3
Feet	40	40	45	85
Stories	N/R	3	N/R	N/R

N/R = No Requirement

MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO


	B1	B1a	B2	B3
FAR	2.0			3.0

PERMITTED, SPECIAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW USES

Note: Permitted Uses in the B1 District are limited to 7,500 sq. ft. in size and Permitted Uses in the B1a and B2 Districts are limited to 20,000 sq. ft. in size.

	B1	B1a	B2	B3
Administrative review uses per Section 6-3-5-16(B)	S	S	S	S
Artist studios and accessory dwelling units (dwelling shall not front upon any street)	P	P	P	P
Animal hospital	S	S	S	S
Aquaponics	S	S	S	S
Assisted living facility			S	S
Automobile service station				S
Banquet hall	S	S	S	S
Bed and breakfast establishments	S			
Boarding house	S		S	S
Brew Pub	P	P	P	P
Business or vocational school	S		S	S
Cannabis craft grower		S	S	S
Cannabis dispensary per Section 6-4-11		S	S	S
Cannabis infuser		S	S	S
Cannabis transporter		S	S	S
Caterer	P	P	P	P
Commercial indoor recreation		AR	AR	P
Commercial outdoor recreation		S	S	S
Commercial parking lots				S
Convenience store	S	S	S	S
Craft alcohol production facility	S	S	S	S
Cultural facility	P	P	P	P
Daycare Center – adult or child	S	S	S	S
Daycare Center – domestic animal	S	S	S	S
Drive-through facility (accessory or principal)		S	S	S
Dwellings (located above the ground floor)	P	P	P	P
Dwellings – Multiple-family	S	S	S	S
Dwellings – Single-family detached	S			
Educational institution – private or public	P	P	P	P
Financial institution		P	P	P
Food store establishment (hours of operation between 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 midnight)	P	P	P	P
Food store establishment	S	S	S	S
Funeral services excluding on-site cremation	S	S	S	S
Government institution	S	P	P	P
Independent living facility		S	S	S
Kennel	S	S	S	S
Live-work units		P	P	P
Long-term care facility			S	S

	B1	B1a	B2	B3
Membership organization	S	S	S	S
Micro-Distillery	S	S	S	S
Mixed-use market (7,500 sq. ft. or less)	AR	AR	AR	AR
Mixed-use market (exceeding 7,500 sq. ft.)	S	S	S	S
Neighborhood garden	P	P	P	P
Office (located above the ground floor)	P	P	P	P
Office (at ground level)	AR	AR	AR	AR
Open sales lot	S		S	S
Planned development	S	S	S	S
Performance entertainment venue	S			
Public utility	S	S	S	S
Recording studio				S
Religious institution	S	P	P	S
Resale establishment	S	S	S	S
Residential care home – Category I (located above the ground floor)	P		P	P
Residential care home – Category I		P		
Residential care home – Category II	S		S	S
Restaurant – Type 1	P	P	P	P
Restaurant – Type 2	AR	AR	AR	AR
Retail establishment - Goods or Services	P	P	P	P
Retirement home			S	S
Retirement hotel			S	S
Sheltered care home			S	S
Tattoo and body art establishment		S	S	S
Trade contractor (no outside storage)		S	S	S
Transitional shelters				S
Transitional treatment facility – Category III			S	S
Urban farm, rooftop	S	S	S	S
Uses permitted exceeding 7,500 sf.	S			
Uses permitted exceeding 20,000 sf.		S	S	
Vocational training facility		S		

P = Permitted Use AR = Administrative Review Use
 S = Special Use  Not permitted, not eligible Special Use or Administrative Review Use

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https://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/community_development/planning_zoning/zoning.php