2025-2029 Goals (Priorities) & Key Initiatives

Housing Affordability

Provide opportunities to increase access to safe, high-quality, and affordable housing by expanding housing, preserving existing affordable units, and implementing policies that reduce housing cost burdens for residents.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Council approval of market-rate developments with 150 inclusionary affordable units by 2029.
    - The City Council has approved a total of 101 affordable housing units within market-rate developments.
- Attract at least 50 new subsidized housing units by 2029.
    - Staff continues to evaluate sites for affordable and mixed-income housing projects that would be funded primarily with Low Income Housing Tax Credits, as well as a Supportive Living Facility (SLF) to address the growing need for assisted-living levels of care for low-income older adults.
- Increase support for maintaining Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) through the rehabilitation of 25+ units by 2029.
    - Since 2025, the City has increased Community Development Block Grant funding for housing rehab. For the City's Owner-Occupied Rehab Program, six projects have been approved, and three are in pre-approval stages. The Housing and Community Development Committee is reviewing program guidelines for a multi-family rehabilitation program to improve 14 units by 2029.
- Preserve at least 50 rental housing units with affordability restrictions that end between 2026 and 2031.
    - The purchase of Neighborhood Stabilization Plan 2 scattered-site housing with affordability restrictions expiring between 2026 and 2031 will be proposed for City Council approval in Q4 of 2026. This will be funded in part with ARPA and the City's PRO Housing grant.
- Create a Landlord Mitigation Fund to support housing providers who rent to households with perceived risk factors by 2028.
    - Through the PRO Housing grant, the City is working on a program that would dedicate $474,671 in financial support to reduce the

        - perceived risks for housing providers that expand housing options to low-income residents.
- Support the expansion of shelter capacity for people experiencing homelessness by 30 beds by 2028.
    - The City secured a $2M grant from DCEO for Connections to rehabilitate Hilda's Place. The groundbreaking is on August 12, 2026.

Climate Action and Resiliency

Offer pathways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen community resiliency through sustainable policies, resilient infrastructure, and proactive climate action with guidance from our Climate Action & Resilience Plan.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Procure 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations annually.
    - Achieved on January 12, 2026, through a contract award with MC Squared through June 30, 2027 (RFP 25-63). The price of renewable electricity credits is included in the electricity rate. The agreement with MC Squared achieves cost savings compared to the ComEd rate to compare.
- Implement at least one recommendation from each action plan area of the Environmental Equity Investigation by the end of 2027.
    - Staff has had preliminary conversations with the Environmental Justice Coalition to discuss the EEI. There have also been several internal conversations to identify action leads within the implementation plan. Staff has preliminarily identified the following action items to be implemented by the end of 2027:
        - General GE.2: Integrate racial and environmental equity into policy and capital planning.
        - Open Spaces, Parks, and Trees OS.3: Continue to prioritize public tree planting in areas with higher urban heat island effect and higher air pollution.
        - Streets & Transportation 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 community members.
        - Housing and Development HD.1: Develop programs and outreach that help property owners with electrification,

energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and weatherization home upgrades.
            - Community Services CS.4: Prioritize funding for stormwater infrastructure projects within the Focus Areas and in areas with more impervious surfaces.
- Council approval of funding for at least 100 fossil fuel pollution reduction and climate resilience projects through the Sustain Evanston and Evanston Green Homes programs by 2029.
        - 9/100 projects in progress
        - Evanston Green Homes
            - 1 project in progress - Oak Tree Village ($240,000 to upgrade the electrical panels and install heat pumps, electric water heaters, and electric stoves; contract approved September 8, 2025)
        - Sustain Evanston
            - 6 projects approved:
                - Allfresh Food Products, Inc. ($25,000 for roof, door, window replacement, insulation)
                - Saville Flowers ($6,300 for annual composting service)
                - Chiaravalle Montessori ($25,000 for lighting upgrades)
                - No Longer Human ($5,173 for annual composting services and a reusable cup program)
                - Central Street Business District ($1,500 for composting, recycling, and compostable food wares for the Takeout Picnic event August 25, 2026)
                - Fred's Bread Bakery & Cafe ($25,000 for reusable and compostable food wares)
            - 2 projects in the pipeline:
                - Evanston Vineyard ($25,000 for roof insulation and replacement)
                - Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Evanston ($11,370 for smart thermostats and energy efficiency measures)
- Create decarbonization plans for all municipal buildings by 2030.
        - Staff has been drafting a Request for Proposals to be issued this year. This project is referred to as the "City Facilities Healthy Buildings Compliance Assessment" with a $500,000 budget in the 2026 Capital Improvements Plan.

- Electrify 25% of the municipal vehicle fleet by 2030.
    - Staff has developed a Tentative Replacement Strategy for Municipal EVs based upon the research and industry information that staff has at this time. The strategy may change as EV technology changes and as EV equipment and charging capabilities become more or less available. In addition, this strategy is based upon available funding for vehicle and charger purchases. The tentative milestones to electrify 25% of the municipal fleet by 2030 is as follows:
    - 375 total municipal vehicles in the Fleet
    - 31 existing EVs currently in 2026
    - 17 new EV replacements anticipated in 2027
    - 10 new EV replacements anticipated in 2028
    - 16 new EV replacements anticipated in 2029
    - 19 new EV replacements anticipated in 2030
    - 93 Total anticipated EVs out of 375 in 2030 will be 25% of the Fleet
- Develop and implement a plan to modernize lighting to LED across all City infrastructure (parks, facilities, and right-of-way) by 2035.
    - "Streetlight LED Conversion/Pole & Fixture Replacement" has a $350,000 budget in the 2026 Capital Improvements Plan. Staff purchased an additional 10 Tallmadge poles for inventory and replacement of damaged poles resulting from knockdowns. Staff has also completed fixture upgrades at locations identified for improved visibility, including along Main Street between Hinman Avenue and Sheridan Road and Chicago Avenue between Davis Street and Church Street. Staff intends to continue implementing additional fixture upgrades throughout the remainder of 2026.
    - As of 2026:
        - 93% LED traffic lights
        - 22% LED streetlights
        - 60% LED lighting in parks and facilities
    - It is normal practice for Facilities Electricians to upgrade all lighting in City facilities to LED when performing in-house renovation projects.

Economic Development

Propose initiatives to strengthen economic vitality and fiscal sustainability by promoting responsible development of commercial and business districts through recruiting, supporting, and retaining local businesses.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Create a “Pop-Up Leasing” program to reduce storefront vacancies by June, 2026.
  - The City Council approved a contract with a consultant. First pop up/ storefront incubator will launch in downtown Evanston fall of 2026.
- Create a "Signature Events Series" in 2027 to draw visiting artists to Evanston.
  - The city's art and cultural engagement specialist is staffing a multi-organization committee with plans underway for a 2027 festival.
- Publish a "Business Start-up Guide" and implement a satisfaction survey system to create a baseline with a 70% or higher satisfaction rate by December, 2026.
  - Business startup guide is published and posted on the Economic Development website. Satisfaction survey to be designed and distributed during the fourth quarter of 2026.

Finance & Operational Performance

Implement sound financial management policies and strengthen operational performance through data-driven decisions, modernized systems, improved efficiency, and greater accountability to ensure responsible stewardship of public resources.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Reduce the structural deficit by 2028 through a balanced mix of new and expanded revenue sources and targeted expenditure reductions, resulting in an adopted budget in which recurring revenues meet or exceed recurring expenditures.
  - CMO and Finance Staff have met with the City Council and Departments to discuss ideas for reducing the 2027 budget deficit. Based on this feedback, the 2027 budget will aim to begin closing the gap between revenues and expenses.
- Deploy zero-based, priority-based, or outcome-based budgeting for one department annually, resulting in measurable operational efficiencies and improved resource allocation.

    - Public Works completed the first round of zero-based budgeting. Staff is determining the best way to proceed with similar future efforts to identify some tangible financial and operational efficiencies.
- Implement Denver Peak Academy to identify process improvements, reduce redundancies, and enhance customer experience.
    - We are identifying an internal staff champion who will lead efforts and undergo “train the trainer” curriculum to then train our staff.
- Identify major areas of required capital spending; develop a 10-year forecast for the Enterprise Funds and Capital Improvement Funds; and use them to produce a range of projected debt issuance needs, including timing, amounts, and funding strategies.
    - This work is in progress and will share additional information with Council later this year.
- Consolidate major technology platforms to improve interoperability, reduce expenses, and significantly enhance payment integration and offerings.
    - Staff conducted a deep review of software platforms to identify redundancies and where software tools could be consolidated or eliminated altogether.
    - A new cashiering platform, EUNA, is nearly ready for deployment; it consolidates multiple payment systems into one and expands the payment options available to residents.
- Elevate our What Works Cities (WWC) certification from Silver to Gold by 2027 and Platinum by 2029.
    - The previous WWC staff leader left for a leadership position at the City of Chicago. We are identifying new staff to serve as an internal champion to work on the next level of certification - Gold after we secured the Silver level in .
- Conduct the National Community Survey (NCS) and utilize results to assist in making better data-driven decisions regarding budget, service delivery, and resource allocations.
    - We have contacted the vendor to secure pricing and timeline so we can take it to the City Council for consideration this fall.

Reduce the Average Time to Close 311 Service Requests 25% by 2027 and 50% by 2029

- Partnered with the Northwestern ISBE Analytics Student consulting team on a pro bono Spring 2026 project to evaluate the City's 311 customer survey results and identify opportunities to improve service delivery. Provided operational expertise, shared data and workflow processes, and helped refine the scope of the analysis.

The project produced data-driven recommendations focused on improving customer satisfaction, increasing operational efficiency, streamlining service request workflows, and identifying implementation strategies to support the future growth and effectiveness of the City's 311 program.

- Conducted comprehensive training for City of Evanston staff on the 311 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, QAlert. Held open question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions for City staff to provide ongoing support, answer questions, address challenges, and reinforce best practices for effectively managing 311 service requests.
- Strengthened collaboration between 311 and City departments by promoting standardized processes for reviewing, assigning, updating, and closing service requests. Developed best practices for customer communication, encouraged greater departmental ownership of requests, and supported initiatives to improve response times, increase first-contact resolution, and deliver a more efficient, transparent, and customer-focused service experience.

Public Health and Safety

Protect and enhance public health and safety by ensuring effective emergency response, promoting community well-being, and delivering equitable, proactive public health services.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Achieve a 10% reduction in Crimes Against Persons in Evanston by December 2029, compared to 2024 levels, using data-driven strategies, enhanced intelligence sharing, and community policing efforts. (We average about 880 crimes against persons per year, most of which are assaults, batteries, and intimidation. A ten percent reduction is about 80 fewer incidents.)
    - The Special Operations Group will continue conducting targeted deployments in violence-prone areas, focused enforcement of repeat violent offenders, crime suppression operations, warrant service, and coordinated operations with local and regional partners to reduce violent crime.
    -

- Fill 95% of sworn officer positions at the Evanston Police Department by December 31, 2029, through targeted recruitment campaigns, streamlined onboarding processes, and increased engagement.
    - The Police Department Recruitment Team researched best practices in testing and hiring during the first quarter of 2026. As part of that review, the Department identified National Testing Network (NTN) as a potential partner to assist in modernizing the current hiring process. The proposed model would provide more frequent access to qualified candidates while reducing the costs associated with the Department's existing testing process. Team members subsequently met with NTN to review available services and implementation options. Following those discussions, the proposed hiring model and supporting information were presented to Human Resources for review and consideration.
- Fully implement a coordinated plan between mental health providers, the Evanston Police Department, and the CARE Team to comply with the Community Emergency Services and Supports Act (CESSA).
    - EPD has been selected to participate in a pilot CESSA program for local PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Point). As part of this initiative, EPD will test the Illinois revised Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols and provide operational feedback to assist with the statewide implementation of the new standards. Training for EPD dispatchers is scheduled to begin in September 2026.
- Renew our Insurance Office Standards (ISO) Class 1 rating for Evanston Fire Department by 2029.
    - Developed a robust data tracking credential in Vector Solutions to make the next audit prep more efficient. The next step will be to maintain an assigned “compliance officer” to help ensure trackable objectives are completed, recorded, and readily accessible for future audits. Began working with Public Works to access the water system data they’ve been gathering related to an ISO audit.

Parks and Infrastructure

Propose investing in and maintaining high-quality parks and resilient infrastructure to enhance quality of life, support community connectivity, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Key Initiatives Include:

- Develop a 10-year capital improvement plan to update playgrounds and other park amenities, aligned with safety, equity, and park utilization data.
    - Compare current park updates with those with little to no investment to ensure parks in high-need, high-usage areas are prioritized for updates.
    - A plan for each park/playground will be completed as a part of a three year investment plan.
    - Staff is currently reviewing applications for a GIS Intern who will assist with completing the City's comprehensive park and green space inventory, including asset mapping, data collection, and GIS analysis to support the development of the Parks and Green Space Plan.
- Identify locations of public restrooms and identify where current restrooms can be updated and new facilities added.
    - This work is in process as part of the Parks and Green Strategic Plan. A working committee will be assembled by the end of the year.
- Construct a new police station that complies with industry best management practices and that supports both existing City police department operations as well as other public health and safety initiatives developed in compliance with City Council goals. Identify the target location by the end of 2026 and complete construction by the end of 2029.
    - Locations are being studied as part of the Putting Assets to Work process, which is expected to be complete later this year.
- Prioritize inclusivity and accessibility in City infrastructure improvements.
    - Continue implementing the ADA transition plan for City infrastructure projects.
    - Staff will continue to reference items from the ADA transition plan when planning for infrastructure improvements in the same approximate region and within similar scope to ensure progression toward compliance is consistent with policy.
- Ensure all City amenities and services are fully accessible to all members of the public.
    - Accessibility advisors who identify as persons with disabilities have been hired to access public spaces and provide feedback to ensure spaces are fully accessible to the public.
    - Families of children with disabilities have been identified to evaluate playground accessibility. These families will be provided a stipend to complete an accessibility assessment, providing valuable first-hand feedback on the usability, inclusivity, and accessibility of

the playgrounds from the perspective of those who rely on these features most.

- Develop and implement a long-term, phased plan to systematically rehabilitate existing sidewalk infrastructure, with measurable milestones and sustained annual funding, prioritizing sidewalks as a critical component of the public transportation network for all community members, including people with disabilities.
  - Multiple sidewalk improvement projects are planned for 2026 to be completed by the end of the year:
    - Downtown Sidewalk Replacement (Chicago Avenue, Davis to Church) and Gap Infill Locations - Substantially Complete
    - Sidewalk Improvement Program - Under Construction
    - Sidewalk Grinding - Expected to begin in mid-late September and Substantially Complete mid October.
    - CDBG Alley and Sidewalk - Under Construction
    - Alley and Pedestrian Crossing Improvements - Under Construction crossings to be completed in advance of school season.
    - Staff will work on revising the existing sidewalk improvement program document/approach to include a revised phasing schedule, updated cost and timeline to meet measurable milestones.
- Develop a long-term plan to accelerate alley improvement timelines, including streamlining both the grant-eligible and Special Assessment processes.
  - A plan is being developed for discussion by the end of 2026 which will include an update on the existing condition of infrastructure, waitlist of special assessment petitions and alternate funding strategies as identified by staff.
- Review and update asphalt and concrete design standards by 2027 to support a holistic, sustainable resurfacing program, while maintaining industry standards for performance and serviceability.
  - Not yet started.
- Develop an enhanced capital plan for a comprehensive and detailed 5-year program with additional key capital needs forecasted for Years 6-10.
  - This is ongoing and will be included as part of the FY2027 budget.
- Present final plans for 2100 Ridge, Police/Fire Headquarters site, and Noyes Cultural Arts Center, as part of the Putting Assets to Work Initiative.
  - This is ongoing, and should be complete in Fall 2026.

- Present final options for the long-term City Hall location.
    - This is ongoing as part of the Putting Assets to Work (PAW) Initiative.
- Replace lead service lines throughout Evanston. Beginning in 2027, the City will be required to replace 500/year until all lead and galvanized services have been completed (2047). This amount could increase to 1,000/year if the federal Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) are enacted.
    - The number of lead services replaced to date is 161, with a total of 617 services to be replaced under the 2025/2026 Annual Projects. While one project may extend into 2027 based on seasonal constraints, we are expected to exceed the target for lead service line replacements.
- Begin replacing 3.2 miles (previously 1.5 miles) of water mains each year beginning in 2026.
    - Under the Annual Watermain Improvements Contract, locations scheduled to be initiated and completed in 2026 are anticipated to include approximately 11,230 linear feet (2.10 miles) of watermain improvements. Additionally, 8,390 LF (1.59 miles) of water main replacement is to be completed under the 2026 Annual Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) Watermain Improvements Contract. Combined, these projects are expected to exceed the originally proposed goal of completing 3.2 miles of watermain improvements.

City Plans and Initiatives

Any goals, priorities, or decisions should be acted upon in accordance with existing City plans adopted by the City Council. Plans have undergone community engagement processes with residents, boards, committees, and commissions (BCCs), stakeholders, and elected officials to finalize documents that reflect the community's needs, values, and priorities.

Such Current and Future Plans Include:

- Evanston Process for Local Assessment of Need (EPLAN)
    - HHS has started the process and should finalize the newest EPLAN by Fall of 2027.
- Envision Evanston
    - The City released a request for proposal for the Zoning Rewrite Project.
- Climate Action Resilience Plan (CARP)

        - The 2025 CARP Report will go to Environment Board Q3 and City Council Q4.
- Evanston Thrives
        - The city continues to execute this plan.
- Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan
        - Staff is currently developing a phased implementation timeline for the Parks and Green Space Plan. The timeline will identify key actions and milestones over the next 90 days, 180 days, six months, one year, five years, and ten years to provide a clear roadmap for plan development, implementation, and long-term investment in Evanston's parks and green spaces.
- Bike Plan
        - Staff, in coordination with the Bike Plan Update Steering Committee, will begin public engagement on draft network concepts in early fall.
- Environmental Equity Investigation
        - Preliminary meetings with stakeholders ongoing.
- Preserve 2040
        - This document continues to serve as the primary policy document for staff and the commission.
- Shoreline Repair Plan
        - Following completion of the Evanston Shoreline Repairs Study, staff presented the study findings and recommended next steps to the City Council, identifying the shoreline locations requiring repair and establishing priorities for future improvements. The highest-priority location identified was the Sheridan Road corridor adjacent to Calvary Cemetery, for which a preliminary set of conceptual plans was developed by SmithGroup.In late 2025, staff identified the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program as a potential external funding source to advance Phase I and Phase II engineering for a comprehensive corridor improvement project. The proposed project included revetment wall rehabilitation, multimodal transportation improvements, and enhanced multi-jurisdictional connectivity along the Sheridan Road corridor. Staff submitted a BUILD Grant application on February 20, 2026. On July 7, 2026, the City was notified that the application was not selected for funding. No local Illinois projects were awarded through this funding cycle; the only Illinois recipient was the State.

    - Recognizing the significant capital investment required to implement shoreline stabilization improvements, the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes a placeholder project titled "Shoreline Stabilization – Future" within the 2032–2036 planning horizon. This placeholder is intended to identify funding needs for future preliminary engineering, design, and construction planning as additional grant opportunities and funding sources become available. Additionally, the proposed CIP includes a new project, "Shoreline Stabilization – Greenwood Beach," to initiate consulting services as early as 2029. This effort is intended to advance planning and design for shoreline stabilization improvements at Greenwood Beach, with construction anticipated in 2032 or later, subject to funding availability and project development.
- Stormwater Master Plan
    - One example of how the Stormwater Master Plan is being utilized is the recommendation to extend a sewer system in support of an alley improvement project scheduled for construction in 2026. Staff used the model recommendations to evaluate anticipated runoff conditions and incorporated the necessary stormwater improvements into the project scope. This reflects the City's approach of continuing to monitor system performance and implementing targeted improvements when opportunities arise through planned capital projects. While the Stormwater Master Plan identified several larger-scale potential improvements for future consideration, each recommendation will continue to be evaluated based on engineering feasibility, overall system benefit, cost effectiveness, and alignment with the City's long-term infrastructure priorities. Some modeled improvements may not be advanced if the anticipated benefit does not justify the level of investment required or if they do not align with planned capital improvements. This approach allows the City to prioritize stormwater investments that provide the greatest community benefit while maintaining responsible fiscal management.
- Housing4All
    - City Council voted to adopt Housing4All, a 10-year strategic housing plan, at its meeting on May 11, 2026. On May 20, the Housing and Community Development Committee voted to recommend an 18-month work plan (through year-end 2027) to begin implementing Housing4All. Projects and programs to protect

residents from displacement and preserve existing and develop new affordable housing units are described in the Housing Affordability section of Goals (Priorities) & Key Initiatives above.