



## Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Lara Biggs, City Engineer  
CC: Edgar Cano - Public Works Agency Director  
Subject: Resolution 21-R-25, Authorizing the City Manager to Direct Staff to Move Forward with Permanently Relocating Evanston City Hall to a Downtown Evanston Location and to Begin Identifying Options for a Non-Municipal Use or Exploration of an Adaptive Reuse of the Building and Property at 2100 Ridge Avenue  
Date: March 10, 2025

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Recommended Action:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution 21-R-25, Authorizing the City Manager to Direct Staff to Move Forward with Permanently Relocating Evanston City Hall to a Downtown Evanston Location and to Begin Identifying Options for a Non-Municipal Use or Exploration of an Adaptive Reuse of the Building and Property at 2100 Ridge Avenue.

CARP:

Municipal Operations

Council Action:

For Action

Summary:

On February 10, 2025, the City Council approved a motion to discuss the Civic Center as a special order of business at the City Council meetings on February 24, 2025, and March 10, 2025. The focus of the two meetings was as follows:

- 2/24/25 - Discussion regarding whether or not to continue considering a renovated 2100 Ridge Avenue as a viable location for city hall services and potentially consider the next steps if it is determined not to be a viable option
- 3/10/25 - Provide guidance to staff on how to proceed regarding 2100 Ridge Avenue as a potential option for renovation.

Councilmembers requested additional information at the February 24, 2025, City Council meeting.

### Item 1 - Actual Lease Costs

Provide the actual lease costs at 909 Davis Street if the City stays for 15 years and if the City opts out after 7 years.

The costs are as follows:

- 15 Year Lease - \$36,321,506
- 7-Year Lease with an opt-out penalty - \$22,478,670

The detailed breakdown of costs is included as an attachment.

### Item 2 - Partial Rehabilitation Cost for 2100 Ridge Avenue

Provide a partial renovation for three floors of the Civic Center.

A partial renovation cost, as described, is challenging primarily because the cost of replacing the HVAC is more than 50% of the valuation cost of the building. Therefore, the entire building must be brought into compliance with modern building codes. The list of items to be addressed includes, but is not limited to:

1. HVAC - The HVAC for the entire building would be replaced. Even if the City only occupies three floors and rents out two floors, by City policy, the entire building would be required to meet the Climate Action Resilience Plan (CARP) for no onsite greenhouse gas emissions. Forced air ventilation is required to be added by the building code.
2. Electrical - A new building electrical service is needed. The main electrical switchgear and all of the distribution panels are at the end of their installations are not code compliant. They would need to be replaced, even on floors the City does not occupy.
3. Structure - The structural walls and some of the floors are constructed of materials that do not meet modern building codes for fire safety in a structure of this size and use. They will need to be demolished and replaced to meet building codes. This is required for all floors, regardless of city occupancy.
4. Fire Code Requirements - In addition to the structural fireproofing, the building needs to have a fire sprinkler system added. All stairwells are required to be enclosed. Fire doors and fire walls need to be reinstated.
5. Plumbing - The building will need additional restrooms added on floors with City occupancy to meet required fixture counts. A water booster pump needs to be added to provide adequate water pressure to the upper floors.
6. Security/Customer Service - A new lobby needs to be added with all public entrances routed through that lobby. This will require substantial reconfiguration of the floor layouts on lower floors and on City-occupied floors.
7. ADA - New entrances need to be installed that are fully ADA compliant. The ADA transition plan identified improvements that would cost approximately \$3-\$5M in order to be ADA compliant. This could be prorated for floors that are not city-occupied.

8. Space Efficiency - The current space layout is inefficient. For the City to occupy fewer floors, most of the walls on those floors would need to be removed with staff sitting in an open office concept layout.
9. Building Envelope - There are 192 large, custom-sized windows, most of which are not operable and none of which meet energy efficiency requirements for CARP. There have been spot repairs on the brick facade, but the entire facade needs to be inspected and structurally stabilized.
10. LEED Gold Certification - The City of Evanston building code would require a renovation of this size to be LEED Gold certified.
11. Preservation Tax Credits - As discussed at City Council on 2/10/25, preservation tax credits are of limited use unless the City converts 2100 Ridge Avenue to an income-producing use. In a shared-use scenario, they could only be applied to the portion of the building that is not being used for city services.

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. There may be savings from a partial rehabilitation, although many of the systems (and the items that are expected to be most expensive) require a whole building update even if the City only occupies a portion of the floors. (For example, the City would not be able to obtain a building permit to renovate only three floors without bringing the entire building into compliance with fire-safety building codes.)

#### Item 3 - Cost Escalation for 2100 Ridge Avenue Renovation

Why have the civic center costs continued to escalate? The original renovation costs from AECOM were provided in 2023. Because construction inflation has been so high (averaging 10% - 20% annually since 2020), staff have been escalating the costs to bring them to 2025 dollars to keep the comparisons with other costs relevant. When showing future year costs, they have been escalated at 3% annually, which is more in line with historic cost increases other than the last five years. However, the longer the City takes prior to beginning the renovation, the more expensive the renovation will be.

#### Attachments:

[21-R-25 Relocation of City Hall and Non-municipal Use or Adaptive Reuse of 2100 Ridge Avenue](#)

[Actual 909 Davis Lease Costs](#)

**21-R-25**

**A RESOLUTION**

**Authorizing the City Manager to Direct Staff to Move Forward with Permanently Relocating Evanston City Hall to a Downtown Evanston Location and to Begin Identifying Options for a Non-Municipal Use or Exploration of an Adaptive Reuse of the Building and Property at 2100 Ridge Avenue**

**WHEREAS**, the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center (“Civic Center”) located at 2100 Ridge Avenue in Evanston has experienced significant deterioration of multiple building systems over decades of regular use, several of which are no longer considered to be reliable for long-term operation; and

**WHEREAS**, although the City of Evanston is committed to the equitable delivery of programs and services, due to its age and physical condition, the Civic Center is at risk of falling out of compliance with the Illinois Accessibility Code and the federal American with Disabilities Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Civic Center is substantially not in compliance with modern building codes, including those for fire safety; and

**WHEREAS**, the Civic Center has limited accessibility through public transportation; and

**WHEREAS**, because of its layout, the Civic Center continues to be a challenge to provide adequate security for building occupants and visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the antiquated building layout of public services at the Civic Center provides a poor customer service experience for community members; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Evanston is committed to climate action and resiliency for all City infrastructure, and the current Civic Center building does not align with multiple goals from the City's adopted Climate Action Resilience Plan (2018), including goals for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, 100% LED lighting, and water efficiency; and

**WHEREAS**, because the layout is inefficient, the Civic Center includes an estimated 40,000 square feet that would not be needed (or could be repurposed to an alternate use) if the building were laid out more appropriately for office use, and the City is utilizing significant energy to heat and condition the extra space as well as resources to maintain and operate the space; and

**WHEREAS**, the community has been discussing this issue since 1998 without a resolution that includes adequate funding for the necessary improvements, and during which time significant staff resources and funds have been consumed in studying potential options versus other productive work on behalf of the City of Evanston; and

**WHEREAS**, without allocation of adequate funds to renovate failing building systems, the building has continued to further deteriorate while the cost of renovation continues to increase; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost to renovate the Civic Center to resolve the above issues is currently estimated at approximately \$71.1M million and there are multiple potential options for permanently relocating the Civic Center into Downtown Evanston at an estimated cost of \$XX - \$55M; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been determined that the City of Evanston should provide a safe, accessible, inclusive and productive city hall space for staff and community members as soon as is practicable; and

**WHEREAS**, permanently relocating the city hall services into Downtown Evanston aligns with priorities identified by the public to have city hall be centrally located in the City of Evanston with easy access by car with free parking, and access to active transportation options, such as rail and bus transit, the bicycle network, and be walkable to as many community members as feasible; and

**WHEREAS**, city hall services are currently being temporarily relocated into Downtown Evanston to provide a safe, secure and productive environment for city staff and the public, leaving the building at 2100 Ridge Avenue vacant; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Evanston does not desire to continue to spend resources maintaining the building and property at 2100 Ridge Avenue indefinitely as these resources could be used to provide services to residents and further stated City Council goals; and

**WHEREAS**, the building and property at 2100 Ridge have potential value for adaptive reuse and property tax generation, both of which could have a significant benefit to the City of Evanston.

**NOW BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS:**

**SECTION 1.** The City Council hereby adopts the foregoing recitals as its findings, as if fully set forth herein.

**SECTION 2.** The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to evaluate different options for permanent city hall relocation into Downtown Evanston and to cease the evaluation of options to renovate the building at 2100 Ridge for the purpose of municipal services.

**SECTION 3.** The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to evaluate options for the non-municipal use and exploration of an adaptive reuse of the building and property at 2100 Ridge Avenue considering City Council goals such as the development of affordable housing and considering possibilities to create long-term income generation for the City of Evanston (for example, through property tax generation).

**SECTION 4.** The resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after the date of its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Biss, Mayor

Attest:

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephanie Mendoza, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alexandra B. Ruggie, Corporation Counsel

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

**Actual Lease Costs For 15-Year Lease and 7-Year with Opt-Out**

Base Rent = \$21.25/sq ft  
 Rented Space = 52,955 sq ft  
 Annual Rent Escalation = 2.5% (by contract)

Base O&M Cost = \$1,001,899.63 (updated based on actual 2025 charges)  
 Annual Escalation = 3.0% (by estimate)

First Rental Year is 10/1/24 - 9/30/25  
 Forgiveness Period for Rent and O&M Costs is 14 months.  
 Opt-out Cost after 7 years is \$8.8M  
 Energy Costs are Not Included (City pays separately from the lease).

**15-YEAR LEASE COST:**

|    | Year              | Annual Rent            | Annual O&M             | Total Annual           | Annual Cost w/Forgiveness |
|----|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1  | 10/1/24 - 9/30/25 | \$1,125,293.75         | \$1,001,899.63         | \$2,127,193.38         | 0                         |
| 2  | 10/1/25 - 9/30/26 | \$1,153,426.09         | \$1,031,956.62         | \$2,185,382.71         | \$1,821,152.26            |
| 3  | 10/1/26 - 9/30/27 | \$1,182,261.75         | \$1,062,915.32         | \$2,245,177.06         | \$2,245,177.06            |
| 4  | 10/1/27 - 9/30/28 | \$1,211,818.29         | \$1,094,802.78         | \$2,306,621.07         | \$2,306,621.07            |
| 5  | 10/1/28 - 9/30/29 | \$1,242,113.75         | \$1,127,646.86         | \$2,369,760.61         | \$2,369,760.61            |
| 6  | 10/1/29 - 9/30/30 | \$1,273,166.59         | \$1,161,476.27         | \$2,434,642.86         | \$2,434,642.86            |
| 7  | 10/1/30 - 9/30/31 | \$1,304,995.76         | \$1,196,320.55         | \$2,501,316.31         | \$2,501,316.31            |
| 8  | 10/1/31 - 9/30/32 | \$1,337,620.65         | \$1,232,210.17         | \$2,569,830.82         | \$2,569,830.82            |
| 9  | 10/1/32 - 9/30/33 | \$1,371,061.17         | \$1,269,176.48         | \$2,640,237.64         | \$2,640,237.64            |
| 10 | 10/1/33 - 9/30/34 | \$1,405,337.69         | \$1,307,251.77         | \$2,712,589.46         | \$2,712,589.46            |
| 11 | 10/1/34 - 9/30/35 | \$1,440,471.14         | \$1,346,469.32         | \$2,786,940.46         | \$2,786,940.46            |
| 12 | 10/1/35 - 9/30/36 | \$1,476,482.92         | \$1,386,863.40         | \$2,863,346.32         | \$2,863,346.32            |
| 13 | 10/1/36 - 9/30/37 | \$1,513,394.99         | \$1,428,469.30         | \$2,941,864.29         | \$2,941,864.29            |
| 14 | 10/1/37 - 9/30/38 | \$1,551,229.86         | \$1,471,323.38         | \$3,022,553.25         | \$3,022,553.25            |
| 15 | 10/1/38 - 9/30/39 | \$1,590,010.61         | \$1,515,463.09         | \$3,105,473.70         | \$3,105,473.70            |
|    | <b>Total</b>      | <b>\$20,178,685.00</b> | <b>\$18,634,244.94</b> | <b>\$38,812,929.94</b> | <b>\$36,321,506.11</b>    |

**7 YEAR LEASE COST W/OPT-OUT:**

|    | <b>Year</b>       | <b>Annual Rent</b>    | <b>Annual O&amp;M</b> | <b>Total Annual</b>    | <b>Annual Cost w/Forgiveness</b> |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1  | 10/1/24 - 9/30/25 | \$1,125,293.75        | \$1,001,899.63        | \$2,127,193.38         | 0                                |
| 2  | 10/1/25 - 9/30/26 | \$1,153,426.09        | \$1,031,956.62        | \$2,185,382.71         | \$1,821,152.26                   |
| 3  | 10/1/26 - 9/30/27 | \$1,182,261.75        | \$1,062,915.32        | \$2,245,177.06         | \$2,245,177.06                   |
| 4  | 10/1/27 - 9/30/28 | \$1,211,818.29        | \$1,094,802.78        | \$2,306,621.07         | \$2,306,621.07                   |
| 5  | 10/1/28 - 9/30/29 | \$1,242,113.75        | \$1,127,646.86        | \$2,369,760.61         | \$2,369,760.61                   |
| 6  | 10/1/29 - 9/30/30 | \$1,273,166.59        | \$1,161,476.27        | \$2,434,642.86         | \$2,434,642.86                   |
| 7  | 10/1/30 - 9/30/31 | \$1,304,995.76        | \$1,196,320.55        | \$2,501,316.31         | \$2,501,316.31                   |
| 8  | 10/1/31 - 9/30/32 | Opt-Out Cost Only     |                       |                        | \$8,800,000.00                   |
| 9  | 10/1/32 - 9/30/33 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 10 | 10/1/33 - 9/30/34 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 11 | 10/1/34 - 9/30/35 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 12 | 10/1/35 - 9/30/36 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 13 | 10/1/36 - 9/30/37 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 14 | 10/1/37 - 9/30/38 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
| 15 | 10/1/38 - 9/30/39 |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
|    |                   |                       |                       |                        |                                  |
|    | <b>Total</b>      | <b>\$8,493,075.97</b> | <b>\$7,677,018.02</b> | <b>\$16,170,094.00</b> | <b>\$22,478,670.16</b>           |