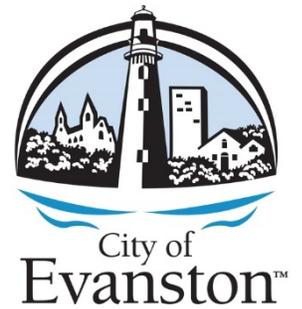




Parking Study  
**City of Evanston, Illinois**

Submitted to:



September 2022



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## I. Purpose of Study & Project Approach

The Evanston Parking Study will determine the best solutions for resolving current parking challenges and assist in proactive parking planning to contribute to the City's growth. This study assesses how the parking system is performing as it relates to the needs of residents and business owners, as well as how it compares to the parking systems in surrounding and other comparable communities.

WGI's approach to project work includes:

- Review of the current rate/fee structure of City-owned parking garages, zones, lots, and permits.
- Review and comparison of Evanston's parking rates/fees versus those in surrounding communities—Chicago as well as other municipalities of a similar size/makeup.
- Consider the effects of increasing parking rates/fines on demand and whether current rates are promoting more parkers or deterring them.
- Consider dynamic parking pricing to understand what the benefits are to charging different rates in different parts of Evanston. Consider the effect of moving to dynamic pricing rather than charge the same Parking rate across the City.
- Review of the possible effects of increasing/decreasing permit fees, including wheel tax, residential permits, and monthly surface lot permits.
- Review of the current parking rules and restrictions in the business districts to understand how the current rules and time limits affect citizens' driving, parking, and shopping habits.
- Comparison with other municipalities and how they handle business parking (long term parking for employees, short term for customers, etc.).
- Consider the potential impacts of issuing residential permits to non-resident business owners and employees.
- Review and comparison of Evanston's parking fines, penalties, and fees versus those in surrounding communities, and further consideration to the current fines' effect on compliance, and how increasing/decreasing fines could change the level of compliance.
- A Review of Northwestern University Football Games and Special Events to understand the effectiveness of current procedures surrounding football games and large-scale Northwestern University events, and the effects of increased events on current parking infrastructure.
- A review of Transit-Oriented Developments (TOD) parking requirements to examine recent TOD developments in Evanston and in surrounding communities and evaluate the effectiveness of the parking requirements and of the overall developments to align future projects
- Review and make recommendations for opportunities to increase revenue and/or decrease costs system-wide. This part of the analysis has been threaded through the document.

City of Evanston parking staff expressed that the three biggest parking challenges for Evanston in their municipality were as follows:

1. Lack of institutional flexibility to make necessary policy, process, and/or parking rate changes
2. Friction with Evanston residents, especially those in the business community, who feel that parking rates and time limits are not meeting their business or personal needs.
3. An inability to invest parking revenues into parking infrastructure improvements



This report includes analysis and recommendations that endeavors to address the changing patterns and behaviors of parking, provide an objective perspective of approaches local and other comparable communities have taken, and make recommendations to improve and position the Evanston parking system for the most effective operation and best possible parking experience for residents and visitors to the City.



## II. Existing Parking Conditions

Between its on-street and off-street parking assets, the City of Evanston has ample parking with 6,870 designated spaces throughout the municipality: 1,995 on-street metered spaces, 325 off-street metered spaces, 1,150 non-metered off-street spaces (including 650 off-street permitted spaces), and 3,400 garage spaces (yielding a 0.9 space per capita ratio). This does not include on-street parking within the City's 25 residential permit areas.

While much of Evanston is residential, there are four notable retail, entertainment, and recreational areas that supply the majority of Evanston's designated public parking: the Downtown Parking District, the Central Street Corridor Parking District, the Main-Dempster Mile Parking District, and the Lakefront area.

### Downtown Parking District

Located in the heart of Evanston, the Downtown Parking District contains much of the City's commercial and entertainment activity. Pictured to the right is angled on-street parking on Sherman Avenue between Clark Street and Church Street.

### On-Street

Evanston charges for on-street parking throughout its downtown. Zoned pay stations, which use license plates to monitor parking time and payment, are located midblock and have replaced single-space meters. These Flowbird pay stations accept coin or credit. In addition to the provided pay stations, parkers can pay virtually for parking via the ParkEvanston app, which is powered by Passport.

The rate for on-street parking in the Downtown Parking District is typically \$2 per hour, with some \$0.50 per hour streets (those with 12-hour time limits). Throughout the City, payment is enforced from 8 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, on-street parking is free.

As shown in **Figure 3**, the majority of the on-street parking in the core of the Downtown Parking District has a 2-hour time limit, while most outlying downtown streets have a 2-hour time limit from 8 AM to 5 PM but then shift to a 4-hour time limit from 5 PM to 9 PM. In the areas with dynamic time limits, evening time limits have recently been increased by the City to

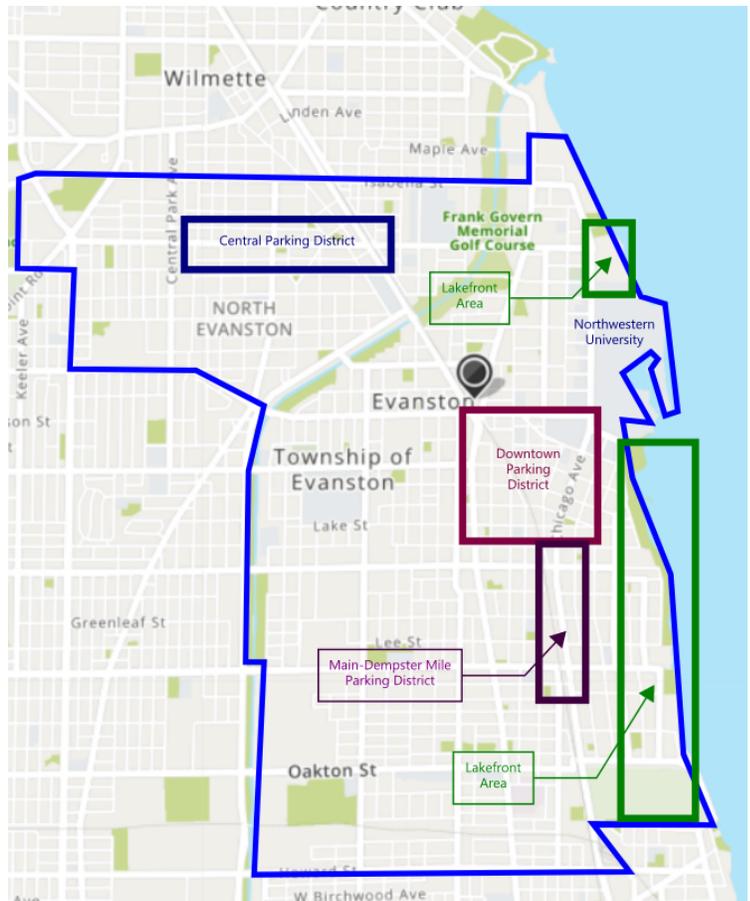


Figure 1: Evanston City Limits & Parking Districts



Figure 2: Sherman Avenue On-Street Parking (Google Maps)



## City of Evanston Parking Study

accommodate evening entertainment and dining and provide more flexibility for business owners and their patrons. Some streets, such as Orrington Avenue and portions of Chicago Avenue have a 4-hour time limit throughout the enforcement period, and streets like Elgin Road and Clark Street have 12-hour time limits throughout the enforcement period.

September 18, 2022

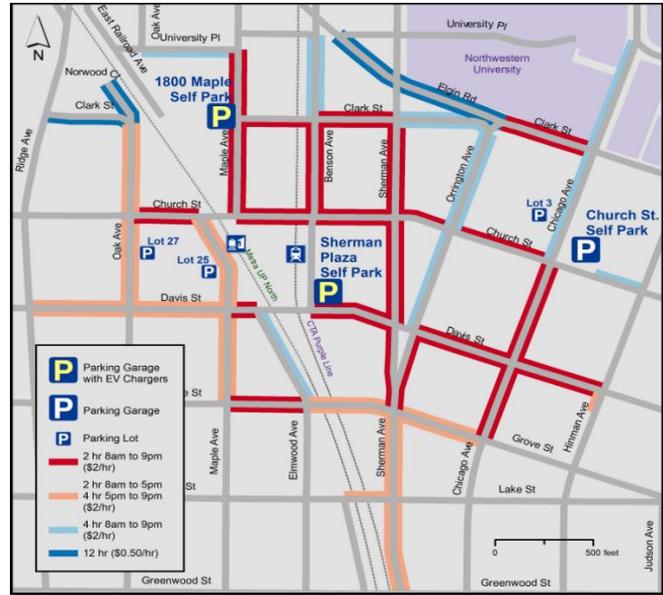


Figure 3: Downtown Parking District Map (City of Evanston)



Figure 4: 1800 Maple Self Park Garage (Google Maps)

### Off-Street

While the on-street parking spaces are enforced for only a portion of the day, Evanston’s off-street parking garages and lots provide longer-duration parking options that collect fees 24/7.

Evanston has three gated parking structures, including the 1800 Maple Self Park garage, the Church Street Self Park garage, and the Sherman Plaza Self Park garage. The 1800 Maple Self Park garage, which is located at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Clark Street, contains 1,400 spaces (25 accessible). The Church Street Self Park garage, which is located on the corner of Church Street and Chicago Avenue, contains 600 spaces (12 accessible). The Sherman Plaza Self Park garage, which is located on the corner of Davis Street and Benson Avenue, contains 1,583 spaces (25 accessible). Parking rates increase incrementally by tiered rate bands depending on the number of hours spent parked, not to exceed \$18 per day. The first hour was free prior to January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 but has since been increased to \$1. Monthly permit parking is also available, ranging from \$115 to \$130 per month depending on the garage. Notably, the Sherman Plaza Self Park garage is the most expensive at \$130 per month, and it costs \$175 per month to have access to all three garages. Parking is free on Sundays and on federal holidays. Each of these garages has automated entry and exit but are attended during the day (with staffing provided by SP+).

Public surface lots are also available throughout the Downtown Parking District, including those shown in **Figure 5**. Most of these lots contain metered parking, which typically costs \$2 per hour, and monthly permit parking, which typically costs \$90 per month.

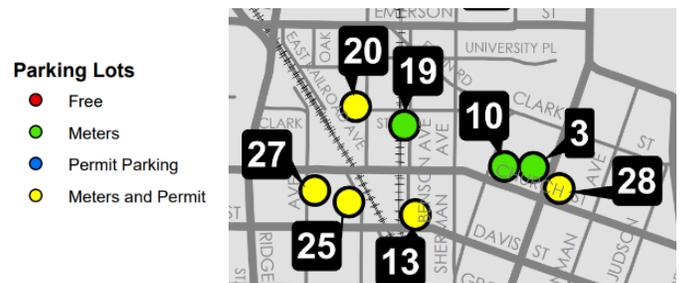


Figure 5: Downtown Parking District Surface Lots (City of Evanston)



### Central Street Parking District

Located near Evanston’s northernmost border with the City of Wilmette, the Central Street Parking District is another hub for restaurant and retail activity. This area is just west of Northwestern’s Ryan Field and experiences considerable traffic on football game days.

### On-Street

Evanston charges for on-street parking on Central Street and just off Central Street on Prairie Avenue. East of Green Bay Road is Residential Permit District 6, while west of this area is Residential Permit District 7.



Figure 6: Central Street West of Green Bay Road (Google Maps)

The rate for on-street parking in the Central Street Parking District is \$2 per hour. Payment is enforced from 8 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, on-street parking is free. As shown in **Figure 7**, the majority of this segment of Central Street has a 2-hour time limit between 8 AM and 5 PM but transitions to a 4-hour time limit from 5 PM to 9 PM, similarly to Downtown, allowing more flexibility for dining and entertainment. Portions of Central Street retain a 2-hour time limit for the entire enforcement period.

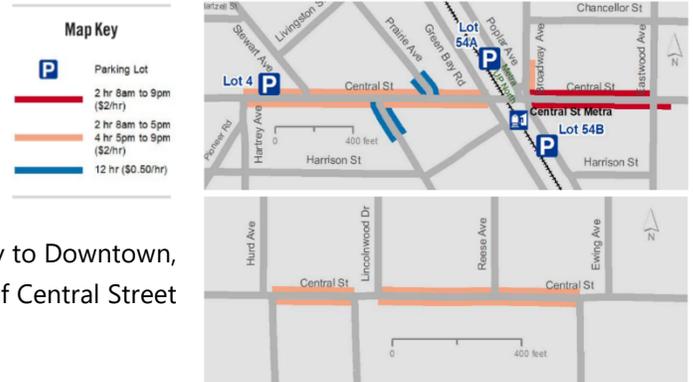


Figure 7: Central Street Parking District Map (City of Evanston)

### Off-Street

Several municipal surface lots flank Central Street as shown in **Figure 8**. Commuter Lot #54, in particular, is metered parking only at \$0.50 per hour with a 13 hour time limit and serves the next-door Union Pacific North (UP-N) Metra Rail Line Central Street stop. Due to its proximity to Ryan Field, however, this lot is opened for game-day parking at a game-day rate. This is discussed in detail in the Special Events section of this report. Monthly permit parking, which typically costs \$90 per month, is available in Lot #64.

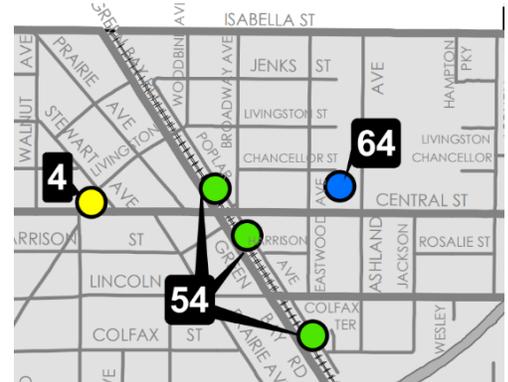


Figure 8: Central Parking District Surface Lots (City of Evanston)



### Main-Dempster Mile Parking

The Main-Dempster Mile is approximately one mile of Chicago Avenue that extends from just north of Dempster Street to just south of Main Street. It runs parallel to the UP-N Metra Rail Line and the CTA Purple Line and is a destination for commercial activity.

### On-Street

The rate for on-street parking in the Main-Dempster Mile Parking District is typically \$2 per hour, with some \$0.50 per hour streets (those with 12-hour time limits). Payment is enforced from 8 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, on-street parking is free. As shown in **Figure 9**, most of the street parking along Chicago Avenue, Dempster Street, and Main Street has a 2-hour time limit from 8 AM to 5 PM and then a 4-hour time limit from 5 PM to 9 PM, allowing for additional flexibility for dining and entertainment, similarly to Downtown and the Central Street District. Some of the on-street parking around the Main Street Metra stop has a 4-hour time limit between 8 AM and 9 PM, and portions of Chicago Avenue allow parking for up to 12 hours for the entire enforcement period.

- Nearby Parking Meters**
- 2 hr. limit | from 8am–5pm
  - 4 hr. limit | from 5pm–9pm
  - 12 hr. limit | from 8am–5pm
  - 4 hr. limit | from 8am–5pm

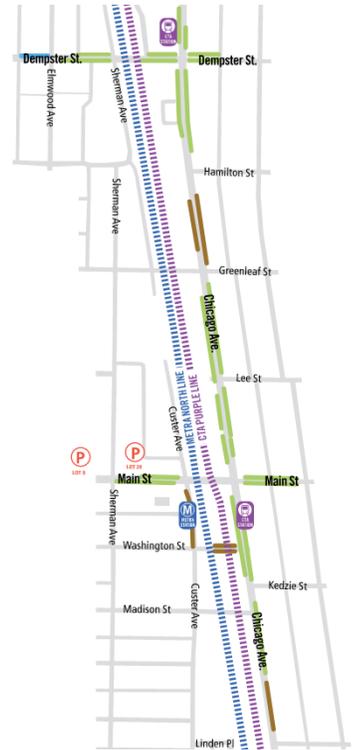
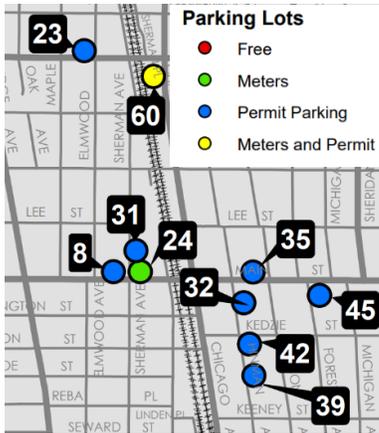


Figure 9: Main-Dempster Mile Parking District Map (City of Evanston)



### Off-Street

Many public surface lots exist in the vicinity of Chicago Avenue as shown in **Figure 10**. The majority of these lots are permit parking only as shown in the adjacent figure and cost \$90 per month.

Figure 10: Main-Dempster Mile Parking District Surface Lots (City of Evanston)

### Lakefront Parking

While the Lakefront area is not included in the three main parking districts recognized by the City, the lakefront is a well-utilized community asset that is frequented by Evanston residents and visitors alike and should be highlighted. The Lakefront area extends much of Evanston’s border with Lake Michigan and provides access to six public swimming beaches, including Lighthouse Beach, Clark St. Beach, Greenwood St. Beach, Lee St. Beach, South Blvd. Beach, and Lincoln St. Beach.



Figure 11: Parking at South Boulevard Beach (Google Maps)



### Paid Pilot Program

A pilot program implementing \$3 per hour parking along the lakefront went into effect on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 and ran until October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. This \$3 per hour parking fee only applied to visitors; the lakefront remained free for Evanston residents with a paid wheel tax. Meters were installed along the 1700 through 1800 block of Sheridan Road, along the 500 through the 600 block of Sheridan Square, and in the Arrington Lagoon lot, the Dawes Park lot, and the Lighthouse Beach lot.

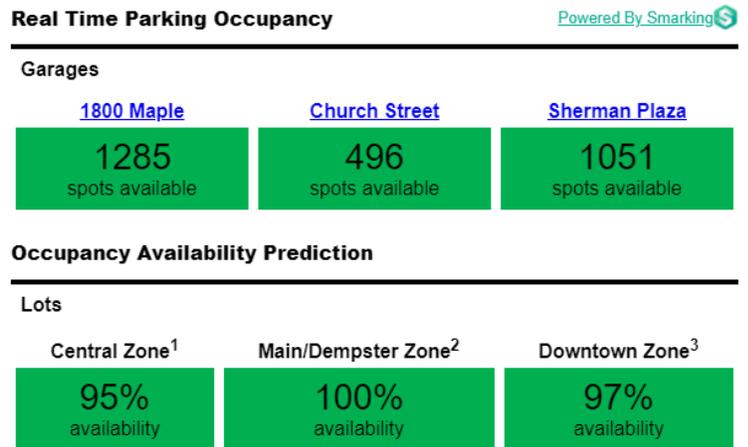
This program was a success, generating over \$89,185 in revenue even while excluding Evanston residents from payment. It was voted to remain a yearlong initiative. The \$3 per hour parking fee would apply from April to October, while the rate would be dropped to \$0.50 per hour the rest of the year when demand for the parking is much lower. Additional sections of Lake Shore Boulevard, Kedzie Street, and Sheridan Road are also being added to the program. While it is understood that charging for *beach access* is a contentious and complicated issue, charging for *parking*, regardless of the land uses or activities the parking supports, is a separate issue and is necessary to balancing the high demand for these public resources. Evanston should consider treating this parking as they would any other parking resource within the City and requiring payment for parking by residents as well as visitors. This program could be used as a model for other charged parking scenarios throughout Evanston.

### Evanston Parking Website

The online parking resources provided by the City are helpful and comprehensive, including real time parking occupancies in the City’s three parking garages and occupancy predictions for primary lots within the Central, Main-Dempster, and Downtown parking districts as shown in **Figure 12**. In the garages, PARCS equipment communicates real time occupancies using Smarking software, while the occupancy predictions in the parking districts are based on historical data.

The website also includes exhibits showing the locations, restrictions, and costs of parking throughout Evanston and provides guidance on parking regulations and violations.

### Parking Garages and Lots - Current Availability



1. Central Zone includes: [Lot 4](#), [Lot 21](#), and [Lot 54](#)  
 2. Main/Dempster Zone Includes: [Lot 24](#) and [Lot 60](#)  
 3. Downtown Zone includes: [Lot 3](#), [Lot 10](#), [Lot 25](#), and [Lot 27](#)

Figure 12: Current Availability on Friday at 12:30 PM (City of Evanston)



### III. Peer City Review

#### Methodology

A core component of this study is a review of the City of Evanston's operations, policies, and rates as they compare to other progressive cities. Input was provided by the City of Evanston to include next-door Chicago but not to limit peer cities to just those that are located in the same geographical area. As such, cities around the country were considered for inclusion in the study based on the following criteria: size (population), climate, extent of City parking management (outsourced or in-house), and even the existence of Transit Oriented Development parking policies. While none of the cities chosen are perfectly comparable to Evanston in all respects, they all are similar in one or more area. Ultimately, the goal of this peer city review was to provide Evanston with a comprehensive picture of what other progressive, forward-thinking cities are doing so that they could pick and choose what was relevant and helpful to their operation.

Fifteen cities were compiled with input from the City of Evanston, including the following:

- Chicago, Illinois
- Portsmouth, New Hampshire
- Oak Park, Illinois
- Palo Alto, California
- Iowa City, Iowa
- Boulder, Colorado
- Lansing, Michigan
- Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Berkely, California
- Pasadena, California
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Portland, Oregon
- Columbus, Ohio

A series of quantitative and open-ended questions—53 in total—were generated and compiled into a questionnaire that was emailed to each of the above cities. The option was given for the peer city to either complete the questionnaire (if not the whole thing, then just the questions that were relevant to them) and return it, or to schedule a virtual meeting with WGI and the City of Evanston to discuss the questions one-on-one.

Of the 15 selected cities, responses were received from seven (7) of them, including **Pasadena, CA, Portsmouth, NH, Minneapolis, MN, Boulder, CO, Columbus, OH, Cincinnati, OH, and Madison WI**. The cities of Pasadena, Columbus, and Cincinnati graciously offered to meet virtually to discuss the questionnaire with WGI and the City of Evanston in more detail. ***WGI would like to formally thank the respondent group for their participation in this process. The spirit of collaboration and partnership exhibited by the group allowed WGI to provide the City of Evanston with a comprehensive assessment of peer cities and their parking systems.*** A copy of this peer review will be offered to these cities as a thank-you for their participation.



Some of these respondents were unable to provide complete data. Where possible, open sources were used to supplement incomplete responses. Questions where responses were not provided or could not be located online were left blank. Because no response was received from the City of Chicago, open sources were used to provide this local context whenever appropriate.

## General Comparisons

### City Population

The bar charts below, which were generated using data from the 2020 US Census, illustrates the City of Evanston’s population and median household income in comparison to the respondent cities. Evanston is smaller than all but one peer city: **Portsmouth, NH**, which has a population of 22,103. **Boulder, CO**, which has a population of 106,392, and **Pasadena, CA**, which has a population of 138,699, are also comparable to Evanston in size. Madison, WI, Minneapolis, MN, and Cincinnati, OH, and Chicago, IL, on the other hand, are all considerably larger than Evanston but were included in this study for context. Notably, most of the cities, such as Palo Alto, CA, Iowa City, IA, Lansing, MI, and Cambridge, MA that more closely resemble Evanston in size did not respond to the request for information.

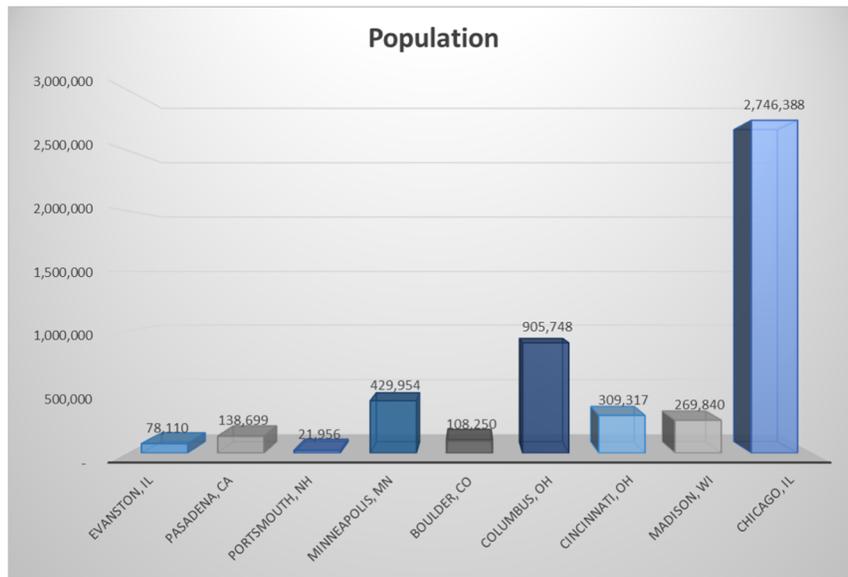


Figure 13: Peer City Populations, 2020 Census

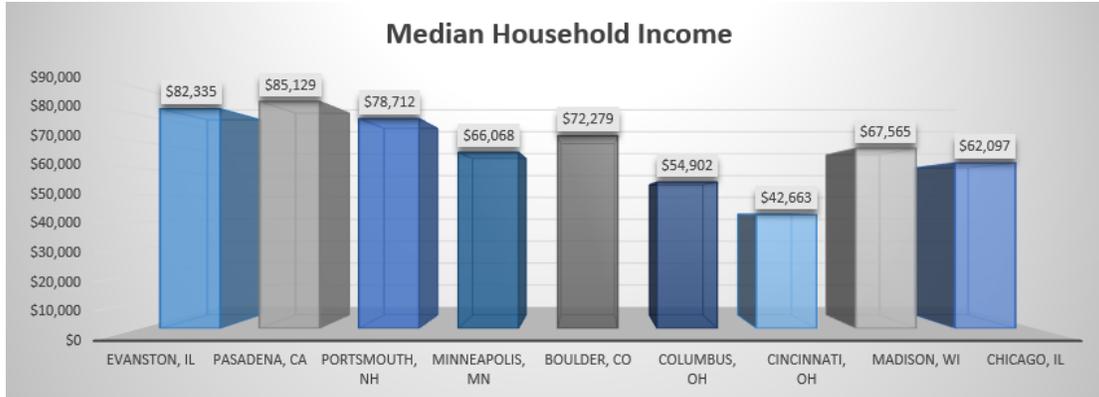


Figure 14: Peer City Median Household Income

It should be noted when comparing peer city populations that these cities likely add to their population during the school year. The US Census Bureau guidance says that students should be counted “where they live and sleep most of the time,” meaning that while it is possible that some of the students in these cities are not being accounted for in these population figures, students should have responded as residents of the city where they are a student, provided that they live there. The number of users demanding parking in cities with universities could be inflated proportionally to their enrollment due to students commuting daily from surrounding communities or issues with response to the Census. **Table 1** provides city populations and 2020 university enrollments for comparable cities with large universities relative to city population.

Table 1: City Population and University Enrollment

City	Population (2020 Census)	University	College Enrollment (Fall 2020, all degree programs)
<b>Evanston, IL</b>	78,110	Northwestern University	22,605
<b>Portsmouth, NH</b>	21,956	University of New Hampshire	14,396
<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	429,954	University of Minnesota	52,017
<b>Boulder, CO</b>	108,250	University of Colorado	34,975
<b>Columbus, OH</b>	905,748	Ohio State University	61,369
<b>Cincinnati, OH</b>	309,317	University of Cincinnati	46,798
<b>Madison, WI</b>	269,840	University of Wisconsin	45,483

### Parking System Management and Enforcement

City of Evanston Parking Services staff manages off-street parking as well as on-street facilities. The only component that is outsourced is the labor force in Evanston’s garages, which is provided by SP+. Of the eight peer cities, three manage both their on- and off-street parking assets—that is, **Portsmouth, NH, Boulder, CO, and Madison, WI**. The other peer cities self-manage their on-street parking but contract out the operation and enforcement of their off-street parking lots and garages. Only Columbus, OH indicated that there were plans to operate internally by the end of 2022.

In terms of parking enforcement, Evanston employs 11 full-time, non-police enforcement personnel. These individuals issue parking tickets throughout Evanston and serve as curbside customer service ambassadors of the City. They also have many other responsibilities ranging from working City events, serving as traffic control officers, acting as crossing guards, and even dispensing personal protective equipment during COVID. They carry a heavy load of varied responsibilities and they



are often visible contributors to the fabric of City life. **Pasadena, Minneapolis, Boulder, Cincinnati, and Madison** all indicated that their enforcement of parking policies and codes is done exclusively by non-police enforcement personnel. In Portsmouth, the police department does write tickets, but they do not work in collaboration with the efforts of the parking enforcement team.

### Parking Inventory

As previously mentioned, the City of Evanston manages a total of 6,870 delineated parking spaces, including 1,995 on-street metered spaces, 325 off-street metered spaces, 1,150 non-metered off-street spaces (including 650 off-street permitted spaces), and 3,400 garage spaces. This does not include residential permit areas, which will be discussed in detail later in this report. For reference, Portsmouth, NH manages 2,357 parking spaces (866 on-street and 1,491 off-street), Boulder, CO manages 5,556 parking spaces (3,108 on-street and 2,448 off-street), and Madison, WI manages 4,843 parking spaces (1,300 on-street and 3,543 off-street).

These values can be generalized to determine how much parking is available per capita. Based on the 2020 Census data and the number of parking spaces managed across the city, the City of Evanston has a parking space per capita of 0.09. Of the peer cities that manage their on- and off-street parking, only Portsmouth, NH has a higher ratio at 0.11 spaces per capita. While their population is relatively low, Portsmouth attributed their need for parking to the significant tourism experienced by Portsmouth during the spring, summer, and fall months, as well as to the 25+ events hosted in the City annually. Both Boulder, CO and Madison, WI have significantly less parking per capita.

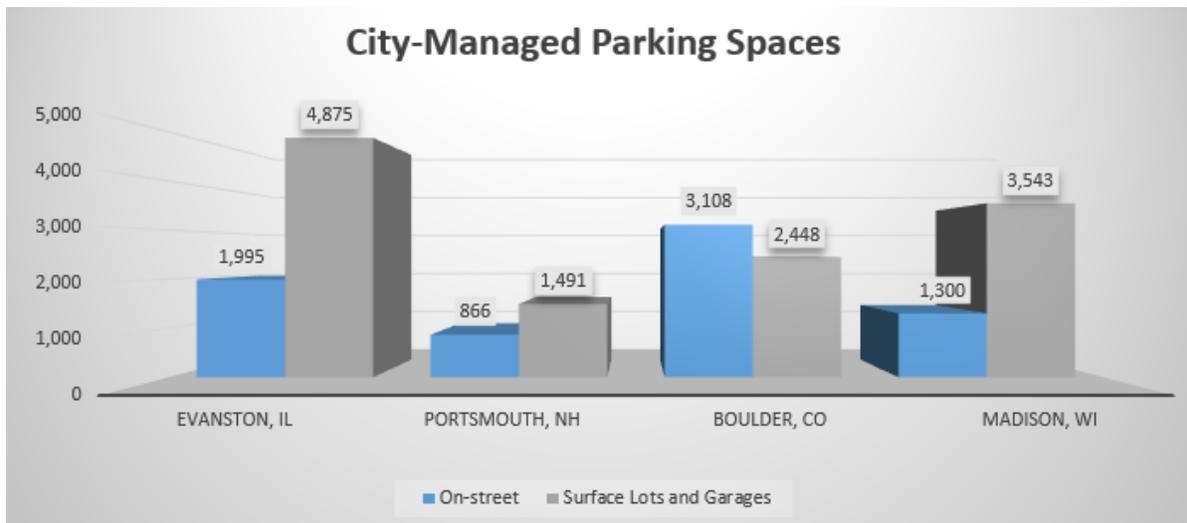


Figure 15: Peer City Parking Spaces

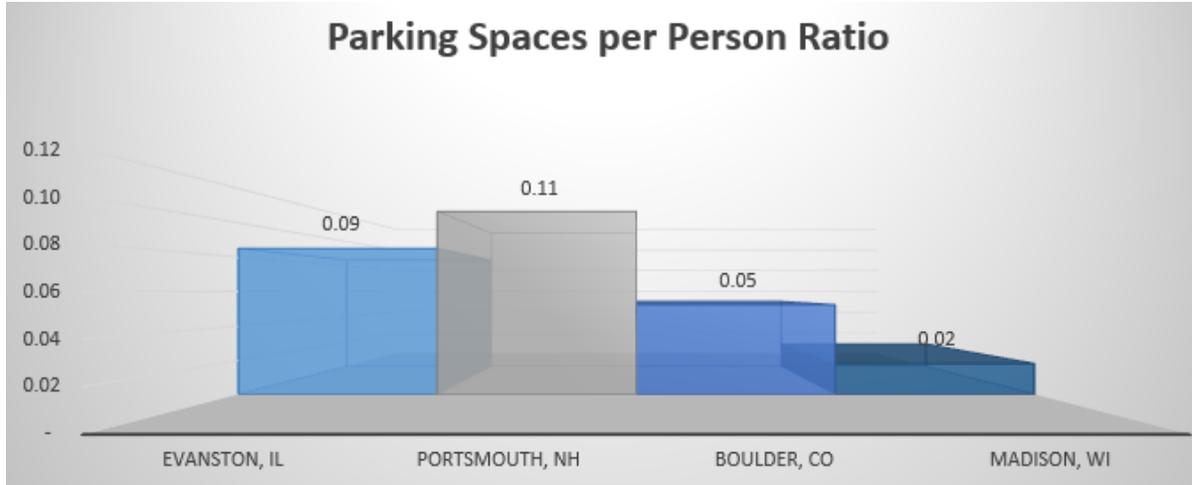


Figure 16: Peer City Parking Spaces Per Person Ratio

As seen in **Figure 17**, Evanston has a relatively high number of parking spaces per person as compared to other peer cities. Since an occupancy study was not performed as part of the scope of this study, the real-time utilization of Evanston’s parking facilities—between specific lots, garages, and on-street spaces—is not known. However, general knowledge of user behavior indicates that parking utilization reflects parking demand and cost to park in a given area. Generally, municipalities should massage on-street and off-street rates to achieve approximately 85 percent occupancy levels, leaving 15 percent vacant at a given time.

The convenience of specific parking facilities is an additional factor that varies based on the type of facility and the user group that is being considered. User Comfort Factors (UCFs) are used to describe a user’s comfort level when forced to walk incrementally higher distances from their parked vehicle to their destination. Based on best practices, WGI recommends the following maximum walking distances by UCF:

Table 2: Maximum Walking Distance by UCF and Facility Type

Parking Facility Type	User Comfort Factor (UCF)			
	A	B	C	D
Surface Lot	350 feet	700 feet	1,050 feet	1,400 feet
Parking Structure	300 feet	600 feet	900 feet	1,200 feet

These UCFs are based on a variety of factors, including user type. Retail and restaurant patrons, for example, require a UCF A in a suburban/general urban environment. Generally, there are many options when it comes to retail and restaurants, so long walking distances to one establishment may encourage patrons to choose another establishment that is easier to access. Alternatively, an office employee may accept as low as UCF C or D because their place of work is not negotiable on a day-to-day basis and they will be willing to walk a bit further. User Comfort Factors should be considered when looking at location of parking facilities and surrounding land uses to ensure availability of parking with an acceptable UCF.



## Most Comparable Cities

Based on the general comparisons presented previously, the City of Evanston compares most closely to **Portsmouth, NH and Boulder, CO** in terms of population, parking system management, and the number of parking spaces managed by the municipality per capita. Additionally, because only Portsmouth, Boulder, and Madison manage their own on- and off-street parking, it was ensured that at least one of these cities was referenced in the discussion of each primary category below. Minneapolis, MN, Columbus, OH, and Chicago, IL are very large and do not experience the same municipal parking challenges that Evanston does to make a direct comparison. It should also be noted that neither Portsmouth or Boulder are located within a major metropolitan area. However, these cities can be a valuable benchmark and provide context for any recommendations made for Evanston.

## Rate & Fee Structure

### On-Street Meter Parking

#### *City of Evanston*

**Evanston's** on-street rates range from \$0.50 to \$3 per hour depending on location. Specifically, the majority of downtown parking spaces are \$2 per hour in 2-hour or 4-hour maximum parking zones, while zones with 12-hour maximum parking limits are \$0.50. The only area charging \$3 per hour is along the Lakefront which began in August 2021 as a new paid parking program. This area, which will be discussed in more detail later, is free for residents with a paid wheel tax. Payment for on-street parking is required from 8 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday; parking is free on Sundays and on federal holidays.

#### *Peer Cities*

The following graph shows the range of on-street parking rates for each peer city. Cities with ranges practice some form of zonal demand-based or dynamic pricing, which will be discussed in a successive section. It should be noted that the average rates provided in bold the adjacent graph are simple averages of the upper and lower rates and do not convey averages weighted by the number of parking spaces at each rate.

Next door neighbor Chicago, which has the highest hourly rates and the widest range, has rates between \$2.50 to \$7 per hour depending on location. Pasadena has the lowest rates, ranging from \$1 to \$1.25 per hour depending on location. Boulder is the only city with a flat rate city-wide.

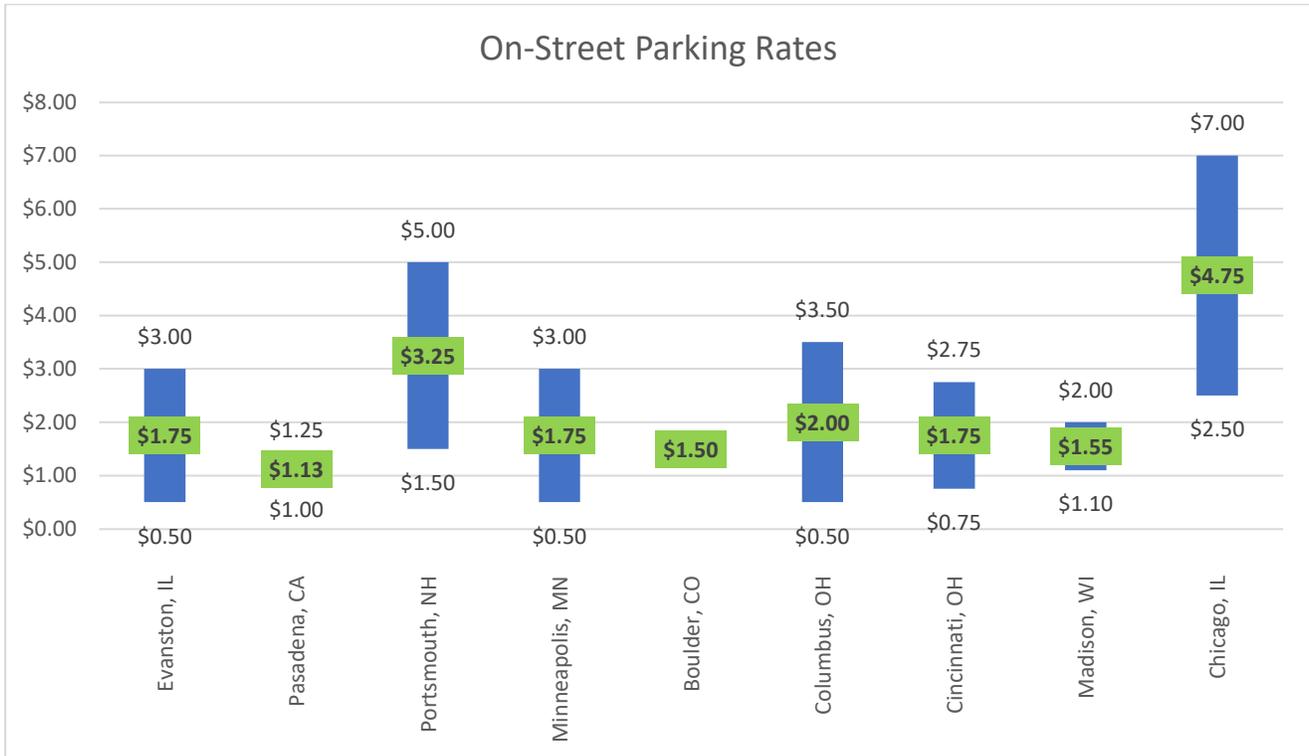


Figure 17: Peer City On-Street Parking Rates

Note: The **bolded value** in the green box indicates the simple average of the upper and lower rates applied citywide.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Evanston’s lower rate is comparable to that of Minneapolis and Columbus but is significantly lower than that of close peers Portsmouth and Boulder. Evanston’s upper rate is at or above that of its peers except for Portsmouth and Columbus, but it should be noted again that the \$3 per hour Lakefront parking zone is a special initiative that is not applicable to Evanston residents. Since Evanston’s maximum parking rate for on-street parking downtown is \$2 per hour, this should be compared to the on-street rates in other downtowns and central business districts (CBDs). Portsmouth, Minneapolis, Columbus, and Cincinnati all have upper rates within their CBDs that are \$0.75 to \$3 higher.

The turnover of on-street spaces, especially in business districts, is vital to the success of downtown businesses. Due to the high demand for on-street parking spaces near restaurants and retail, on-street rates can and should be higher than off-street to encourage frequent space turnover. Evanston’s \$2 per hour rate used in most of the Downtown Parking District is not even the lowest rate Chicago charges for parking *outside* of its central business district. **Evanston should consider raising their \$2 parking rate for on-street parking downtown to a rate that is comparable to that of its peers.**

Additionally, due to the fees and excess labor associated with the handling of coins, **it is recommended that Evanston move from \$0.50 per hour to a flat dollar within the 12-hour parking zones.** This will remove the need for change machines and the human handling of coins during collection and deposit.

Pay stations are expensive to purchase and maintain. Mobile payment is increasingly becoming the norm, and a single pay station will be able to support an entire block as most parkers are getting comfortable using the ParkEvanston app. **It is recommended that Evanston works to lower number of pay stations to one per block to increases efficiencies in the parking system.** This would include areas such as staffing, maintenance, and financing. At the time of this study, more than



half of all parking payment transactions are made via mobile payment. With a further shift in infrastructure to encourage mobile payment, the percentage of transactions using mobile payment will increase efficiencies and profitability for the system overall. **Evanston should continue to review usage data and make adjustments to infrastructure and technology accordingly while continuing to prioritize equity and accessibility throughout the City.**

### Residential Permit Parking

#### City of Evanston

**Evanston** has 25 Residential Parking Districts in areas of high on-street parking demand. Residential permits cost residents \$30 per year upon payment of the city wheel tax. The program uses virtual permits and is managed through license plate recognition (LPR).

#### Peer Cities

Each of the peer cities included in this study has a residential parking permit program. The chart below shows the annual cost to residents.



Figure 18: Peer City Annual Residential Parking Permit Rates

In Pasadena, daytime preferential permits are \$11 per year, but annual overnight permits are the highest at \$81 per year. Boulder’s 2022 residential permits cost residents \$30 per year, but rates will increase each subsequent year for at least three years to account for future increases in demand. In Cincinnati, most residential parking zones cost \$30 per year except in the desirable Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, which is \$60 per year. Portsmouth is currently running a residential permit program pilot program in one neighborhood that is free to residents. Both Columbus and Cincinnati offer affordable permit options for those who qualify as low income.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

As described in the previous section, on-street parking is valuable resource that must be priced to reflect demand. While Evanston’s residential permit annual rate is comparable to that of Minneapolis, Boulder, and Columbus, it is less than that of Pasadena, Cincinnati, Madison, and Chicago. **Evanston should consider raising its rates in higher-demand neighborhoods, akin to the demand-based pricing used in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, and instating a yearly rate increase like Boulder to ensure that the City is planning for future on-street demand.** This dynamism can



be achieved by monitoring the neighborhoods where the most requests for on-street residential permits come in as a proportion of the available spaces in that residential district. Occupancies should be measured using LPR, and rates should be highest in areas where the ratio of demand (i.e., actual occupancy) to supply is highest.

### Off-Street Meter Parking

#### City of Evanston

**Evanston’s** off-street daily rates vary between surface lots and garages. In Evanston’s 37 surface lots, metered spaces average \$2 per hour, while some spaces in underutilized lots are \$0.50 per hour. In the City’s three parking garages, rates increase incrementally in accordance with the adjacent rate schedule. Notably, this schedule does not use a consistent hourly rate but offers tiered rate bands depending on the number of hours spent parked, not to exceed \$18 per day. The first hour was free prior to January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, but has since been increased to \$1. Parking is free on Sundays and on federal holidays.

#### Peer Cities

Pasadena’s surface lots cost \$1 to \$1.50 per hour, while their garage rates range from \$1 to \$3 per hour. While the typical daily maximum is \$6, the daily maximum ranges from \$5 to \$17 per day depending on location. Portsmouth’s two garages range from \$1 to \$2 per hour, with daily maximums ranging from \$20 to \$40 per day. Minneapolis does not provide hourly rates, but simply charges \$3 to \$7 for the first hour and then a flat fee (\$7 to \$18 depending on location) for two hours through the maximum allowable time. In Boulder, garages are \$1.25 per hour with a daily maximum of \$15 per day. Madison’s surface lots range from \$1 to \$2 per hour, while their garages range from \$0.80 to \$1.80 per hour without a daily cap. A maximum daily charge of \$24 to \$48 is possible.

Since not all these cities approach their off-street pricing the same way, only the daily maximums for each of these peer cities are shown in the chart below.

Hours	Rates
0-1 hour	FREE (\$1 beginning Jan. 3, 2022)
1-2 hours	\$3
2-3 hours	\$5
3-5 hours	\$6
5-8 hours	\$10
8-12 hours	\$12
12-24 hours	\$18

Figure 19: Evanston Garage Rates

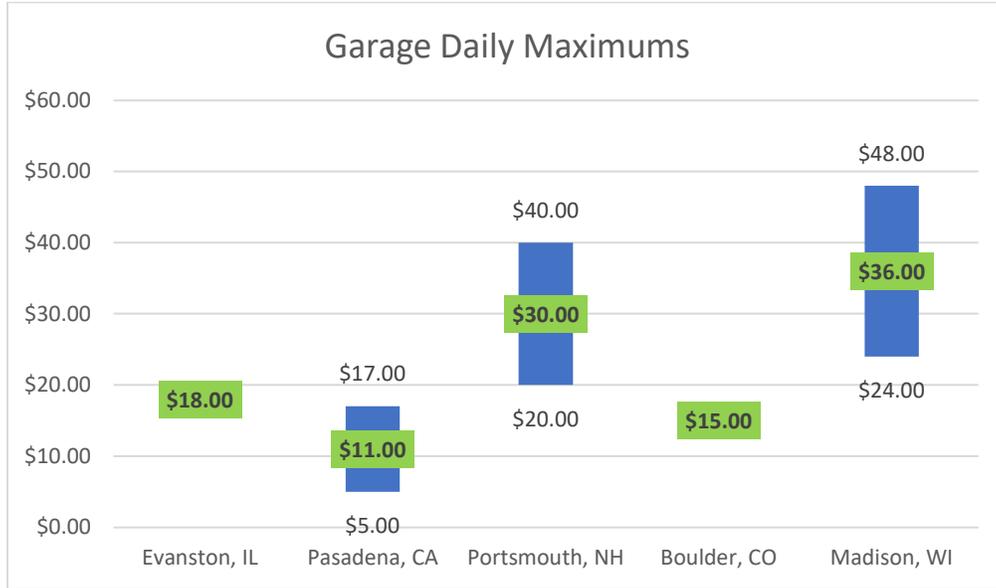


Figure 20: Peer City Garage Daily Maximums

In summary, Pasadena, Portsmouth, and Madison have hourly rates starting at \$1 per hour, ranging from \$1.50 to \$3 per hour depending on location. Boulder is the only peer city that charges a single rate of \$1.25 per hour citywide. All cities except Madison offered a daily cap prior to reaching the maximum fee projected at the hourly rate. Madison simply charges their hourly rate over the entire period the vehicle is parked. None of these peer cities offer a first hour free program, and only Minneapolis has a separate price for the first hour. Most of the peer cities do not use rate bands but simply apply an hourly rate until the daily maximum is reached.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Evanston’s maximum daily rate is comparable to that of Pasadena and Boulder. It is considerably lower, however, than that of Portsmouth and Madison. **Evanston’s maximum daily rate could be increased through a variety of methods, whether through restructuring the schedule from rate bands to a consistent hourly rate of \$2 after the first hour (which would yield a much more drastic increase), or by simply raising the hourly rate in the last two rate bands from \$0.50 per hour to \$0.75 per hour.** The latter would still raise the maximum daily rate to \$22 and would only affect those that are parking longer than eight hours per day.

Off-Street Permit Parking

City of Evanston

The permitted spaces in **Evanston’s** surface lots are primarily \$90 per month but range from \$70 to \$120 per month depending on location and time constraints. For reference, Lot #60, 1200 Chicago offers the most expensive monthly permits (\$120 per month) due to its proximity to downtown businesses, as well as because it offers covered, weather-protected spaces. Monthly permits are also offered in each of Evanston’s parking garages. In the 1800 Maple Self Park garage and the Church Street Self Park garage, permits are \$115 per month. In the Sherman Plaza Self Park garage, permits are \$130 per month. Monthly passes allowing parking in any of these garages can be purchased for \$175 per month. Additionally, rooftop parking for business employees can be purchased for \$60 per month in the 1800 Maple Self Park garage.



Peer Cities

Monthly off-street permit rates are shown in the following chart. These cities have varying rates depending on the desirability of each garage or lot. Minneapolis' upper rate is the highest at \$265 per month, while Pasadena's rates trend the lowest overall and only cap out at \$110 per month.

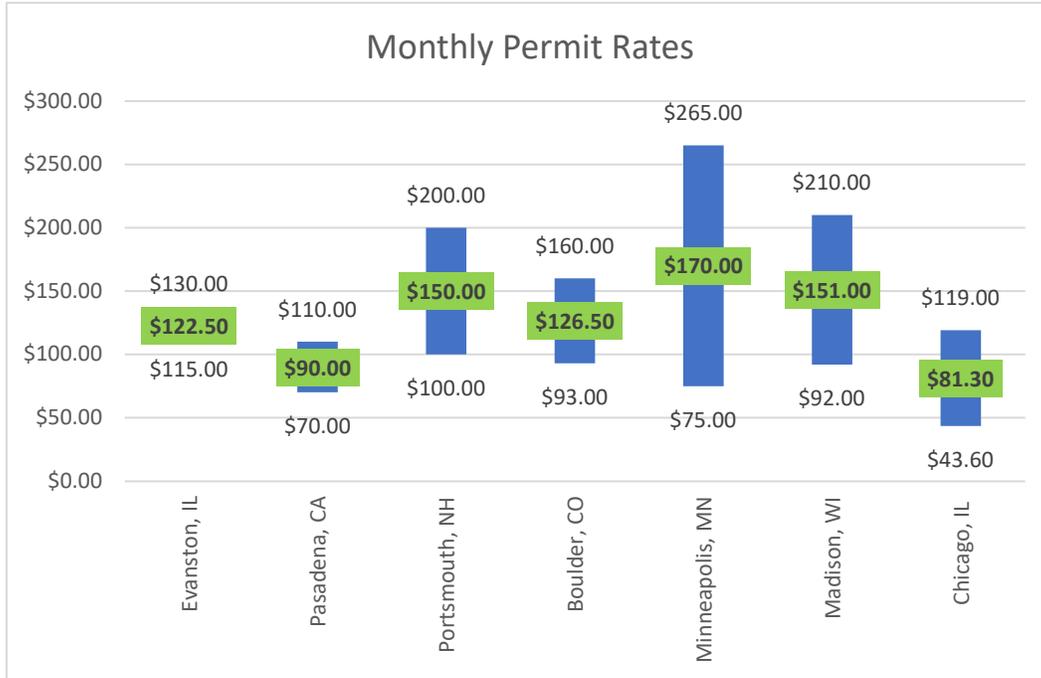


Figure 21: Peer City Monthly Permit Rates

Note: The **bolded value** in the green box indicates the simple average of the upper and lower rates.

The following chart further compares the monthly permit rates in City-maintained lots and garages to that of a sample of privately-owned garages in downtown Evanston: 500 Davis Street Garage, 1603 Orrington Garage, and E2 Apartments Self Park. Clearly, the City's monthly rates fall below that of the going rate even within the local market.

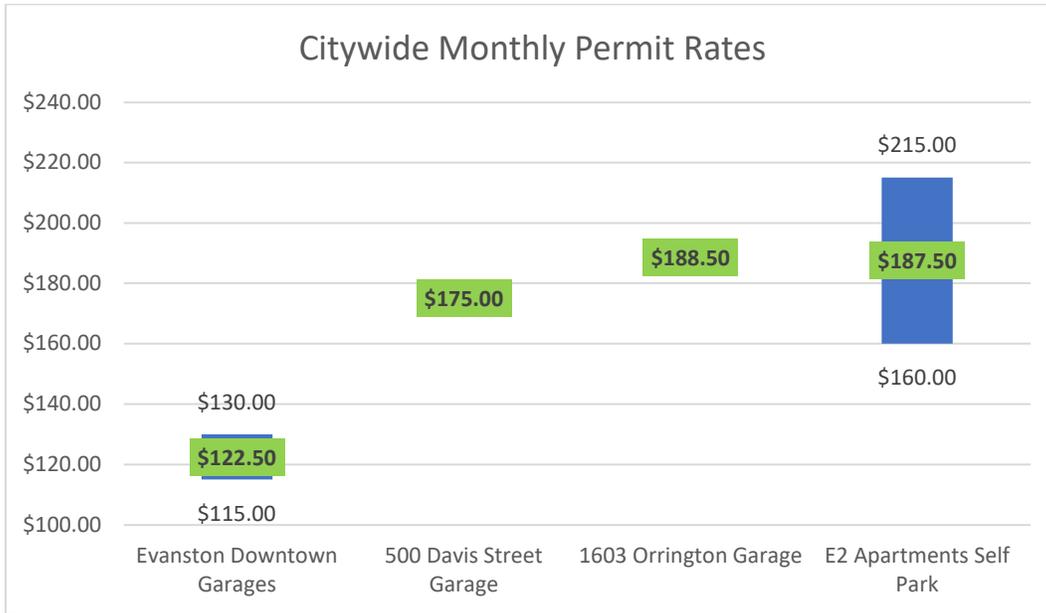


Figure 22: Citywide Monthly Permit Rates

Note: The **bolded value** in the green box indicates the simple average of the upper and lower rates.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Evanston’s standard surface lot permit rate of \$90 per month is comparable to the permit rates of Portsmouth, Boulder, and Madison. **However, Evanston should consider raising its monthly rates for covered garage parking to better compare to that of Portsmouth, Minneapolis, Boulder, and Madison.** Permit parking in the Sherman Plaza Self Park garage, in particular, which is located in the heart of downtown, could be raised to \$150-\$180 per month and still cost significantly less than these peer cities. For reference, an average value would be \$209 per month.

Please note that rates shown for Chicago in **Figure 22**, though seemingly low compared to the other cities used in this analysis, reflect spaces available through ParkChicago, an entity which operates Chicago’s parking system. These rates reflect monthly rates set by city as part of its agreement with ParkChicago, similarly to the other peer cities. However, the rates shown reflect locations outside of Chicago’s downtown core. Inside the Chicago Loop, private parking companies charge in the range of **\$275-\$400 for monthly parking**, which would be the highest rates used in this peer comparison. Clearly, Evanston’s current rates are significantly lower than the market rate in nearby Chicago.

## Parking Rules & Restrictions in Central Business District

### Dynamic Pricing

#### City of Evanston

While **Evanston** does not currently practice dynamic pricing in which rates change throughout the day, it does apply demand-based pricing. As mentioned previously, parking in the Lakefront area was increased to \$3 per hour for visitors as of January 2022, and on-street parking in the CBD is \$2 per hour. Furthermore, prices have been lowered in some underutilized areas to increase utilization.



### *Peer Cities*

Portsmouth practices both demand based and dynamic pricing in the form of their Stay & Pay price curve. This payment schedule, which was implemented in August 2020, was designed to economically encourage space turnover at the third hour. Two of their four parking zones, the high occupancy A-Red Zone and standard B-Blue Zone, are priced at \$2 per hour and \$1.50 per hour, respectively, for the first three hours. At hour four and beyond, these zones increase to \$5 per hour and \$3 per hour, respectively, in these high-demand areas. Portsmouth also has two 15-minute zones which are priced at \$1.50 and \$2 per hour depending on location and have no time flexibility. In Cincinnati, on-street rates are demand-based, ranging from \$0.75 to \$1.50 per hour on neighborhood streets but \$2 to \$2.75 per hour in the CBD. Additionally, Cincinnati offers reduced evening and weekend rates in some underutilized locations.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Parking systems function at a high level of service and efficiency when they have the flexibility and autonomy to adjust rates to changing parking demand and utilization. In tandem with efforts to raise on-street hourly parking rates, **Evanston could consider a dynamic parking pricing program like Portsmouth's that raises rates after a certain time threshold on key downtown streets to further encourage turnover of spaces in high-demand areas. Furthermore, like in Cincinnati, Evanston could consider keeping reduced evening and weekend rates in underutilized locations to increase parking utilization.**

## **Employee Permits**

### *City of Evanston*

**Evanston** does not offer employee parking permits and, by extension, does not give employees special permission to park within designated residential parking areas under the same rules that residential permit holders must adhere to.

### *Peer Cities*

While Portsmouth, Minneapolis, and Columbus all issue employee parking permits, only Minneapolis and Columbus allow employees to use these permits to park on-street within residential permit zones. In Minneapolis, businesses within residential permit areas are typically allowed two permits unless unique exceptions are in place. It is not clear, based on the information provided, what those exceptions might be and how a business would petition for more permits. In Columbus, small business owners within a residential permit area are eligible for up to 10 employee permits. The first four are \$100 each per year and are valid 24/7. The remaining six increase in price by \$100 each up to \$700 per year and are only valid from 6AM to 8PM. Only one license plate may be assigned to a permit at any given time. The ability to offer this type of mixed residential/employee permit on-street parking was attributed to actual curb occupancy data collected and processed using LPR every six months. If Columbus' parking staff determines that there is room for residents to share the curb with employees, they will offer employee permits in that residential permit zone.

It should be noted that both Minneapolis and Columbus allow employees to park within residential parking zones using specific *employee* permits that are restrictive by time-period and, especially in the case of Columbus, are expensive. Minneapolis and Columbus do not sell *residential* parking permits to business employees. Pasadena, Portsmouth, and Minneapolis indicated that off-street parking permits are offered to business employees, and in the case of Portsmouth, they are offered at a reduced rate. Hourly employees of downtown businesses in Portsmouth may use the Foundry garage for \$3 per 10 hours through their DTE320 program, though only one entry and exit per day are permitted.



### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Offering on-street parking permits to business employees within residential permit zones is not common practice among the peer cities reviewed as part of this study. In Evanston, residential permits exist to grant residents who live in mixed-use zones relief from commercial congestion. Employee permits only work against this aim. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to equitably allocate valuable curb space between the residents of those zones and employees without regular internal curb-use and parking occupancy studies within residential parking districts. As Columbus indicated, education of the business district and residents is key. **An on-street employee permit program within residential permit zones is not an appropriate solution for Evanston without active management and review of the program to understand the effects on the residential community. A robust and restrictive permitting process for businesses—both in number of permits issued per business and by proper pricing—is required.** While such programs are often put in place to aid small business owners, monthly fees for employee permits must be higher than that of residential permits to ensure the equitable distribution of curb space to residents living within the zones in question. Without these key components, a program like this is not recommended. Evanston may consider offering an employee permit program in specific underutilized surface lots and garages that provides reduced monthly permit rates for small businesses, similar to what is done in Portsmouth.

### **Citations & Penalties for Parking Violations**

#### *City of Evanston*

Pre-COVID, **Evanston** issued approximately 100,000 parking tickets annually, generating annual fine revenues of \$4-\$5 million. This equates to 1.28 tickets per capita. Within the post-COVID period from June 2021 to June 2022, however, 77,000 parking tickets were issued. This reduction was due to several factors but was in part an intentional reprieve for the residents of Evanston. Despite the reduction, this equates to an average of 7,000 tickets issued per full-time enforcement officer per year.

Evanston's expired meter and overtime base fine amounts are \$25 and \$40, respectively. There is a \$15 penalty after 21 days if the fine is not paid. Repeat violators are charged the same rates. Even though Evanston does not increase fines for repeat offenders, three unpaid violations will place vehicles on the boot list. Both the Barnacle and Denver Boot are used. Towing is also done in accordance with City code.

#### *Peer Cities*

Only Pasadena, Cincinnati, Madison, and Chicago meet or exceed Evanston's number of tickets issued annually. It should be noted, however, that Evanston greatly exceeds the ratio of tickets issued annually per full-time enforcement officer in all peer cities where the number of full-time enforcers is known except in Pasadena and Portsmouth. The following chart shows the amount of full-time enforcement personnel employed by each municipality. Notably, Pasadena supplements their operation with contracted enforcement, and Portsmouth hires 12 additional part-time employees. All cities except Portsmouth have annual fine revenues that meet or exceed Evanston's. (Boulder parking staff were unable to provide this information, so Boulder was not included in this comparison.) This indicates that Evanston's rates are generally less than that of its peers. Specifically, in looking at expired meter fines, every peer city's fine except for Madison's was greater than Evanston's by \$5 to \$45.

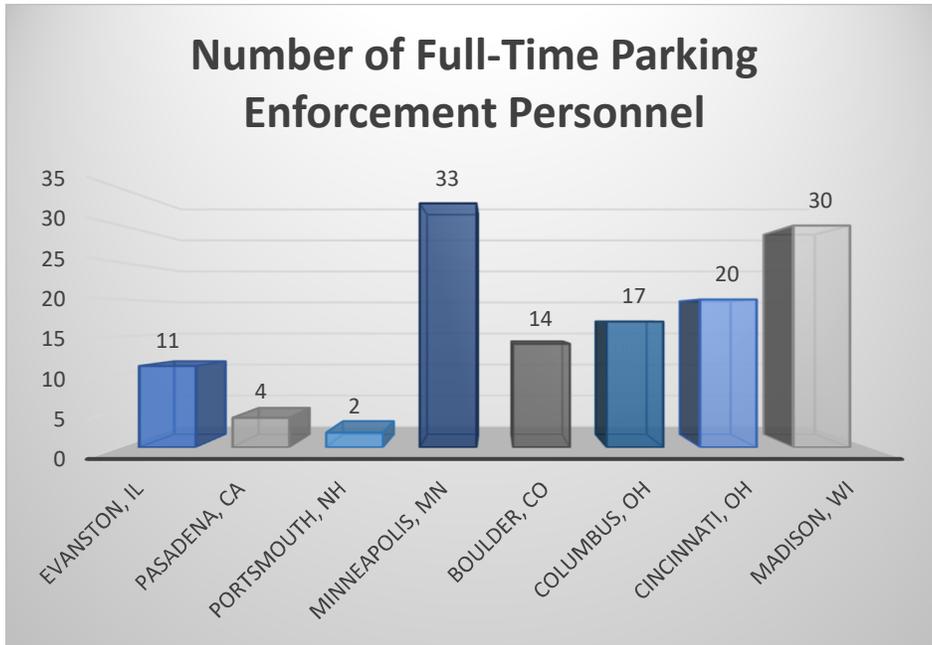


Figure 23: Number of Full-Time Parking Enforcement Personnel

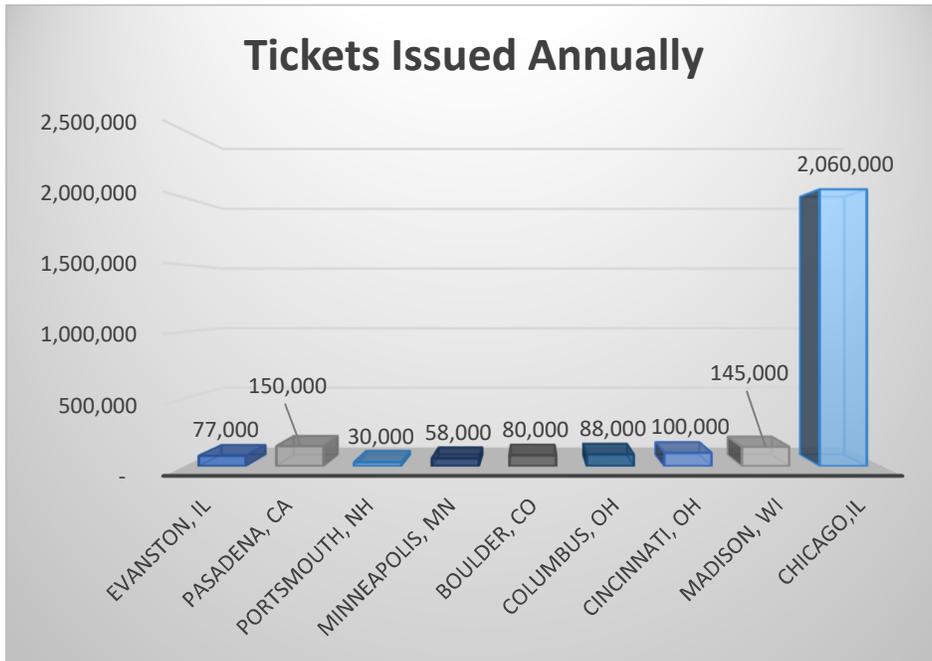


Figure 24: Peer City Tickets Issued Annually

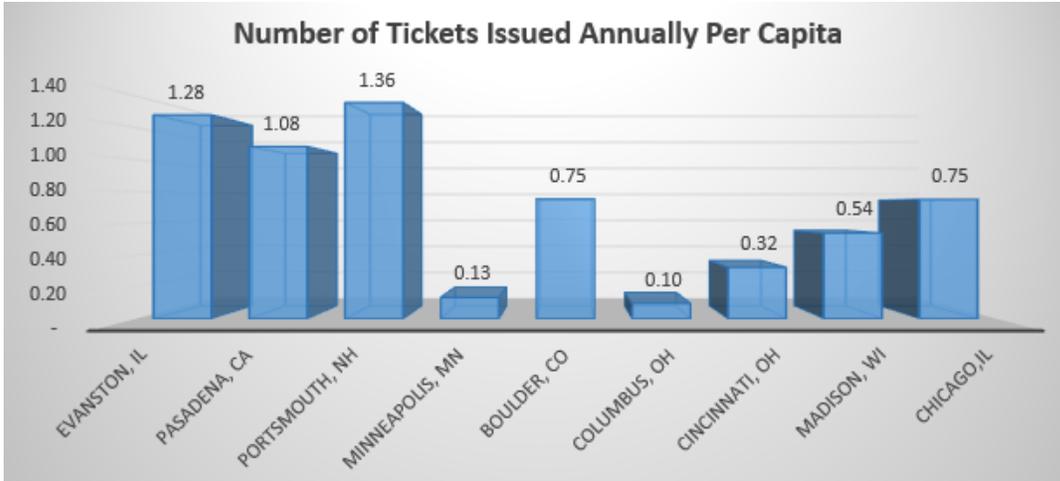


Figure 25: Peer City Tickets Issued Annually Per Capita

Pasadena, Portsmouth, and Boulder have booting policies in place, while Minneapolis, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Madison practice the towing and impounding of vehicles only. Portsmouth is the most stringent in that 10 or more citations or \$125 in outstanding fines puts you on the boot and tow list. In Madison, vehicles are towed and impounded if \$250 or more is owed in outstanding tickets.



Figure 26: Peer City Expired Meter Fines

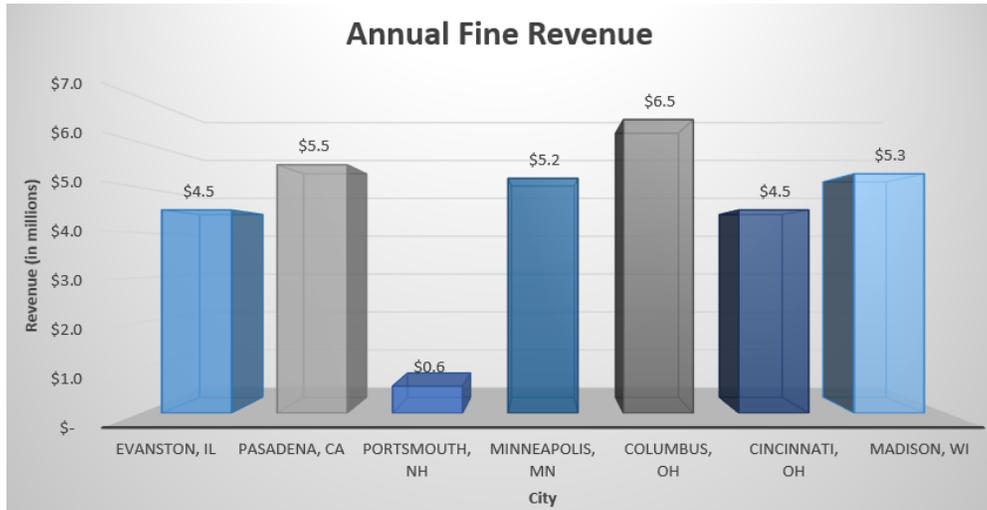


Figure 27: Peer City Annual Fine Revenue

*Conclusions and Recommendations*

Suppressed parking violation amounts will tacitly encourage users to test the enforcement system. The number of tickets issued annually per capita in Evanston is relatively *high* compared to its peers. This is surprising given the relatively *low* number of enforcement personnel employed full-time by the City of Evanston as described previously. This situation could be a product of scofflaws being willing to risk violating Evanston’s parking policies because the fines they are saddled with if they are caught are not a significant enough deterrent. **It is recommended that all of Evanston’s fines be evaluated and increased to better reflect the lost revenues from non-payment for parking, the expense to issue the tickets, and the fines used by their peers.**



### IV. Transit Oriented Development Policies

According to the City of Evanston’s TOD Area Parcels GIS map, “a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area is a development pattern created around a transit station that is characterized by higher density, mixed uses, pedestrian environment, reduced parking, and a direct and convenient access to the transit station. The initial boundaries and zones of each TOD area are described in Appendix A to Ordinance 60-O-15.” TOD zoning applies to all of the gray shaded parcels shown in the adjacent maps and coincides closely with the three primary parking zones discussed previously: Central Street, Main-Dempster Mile, and Downtown.

In 2017, the City released a TOD Parking Regulations Update study that was completed to assess the City’s TOD parking rates in comparison to peer city research and actual parking demand surveys, and to recommend any adjustments required to better reflect the off-street parking needs of developments in TOD areas. This study revealed that the code requirements in the previous ordinance were overstating the actual parking demand in surveyed developments within these TOD zones. As such, updated parking rates for multifamily units in TOD zones were proposed and adopted to Evanston’s TOD parking code, Section 6-16-3-5 Parking Reduction Allowance for the D1, D2, D3, and D4 Districts, as shown below.

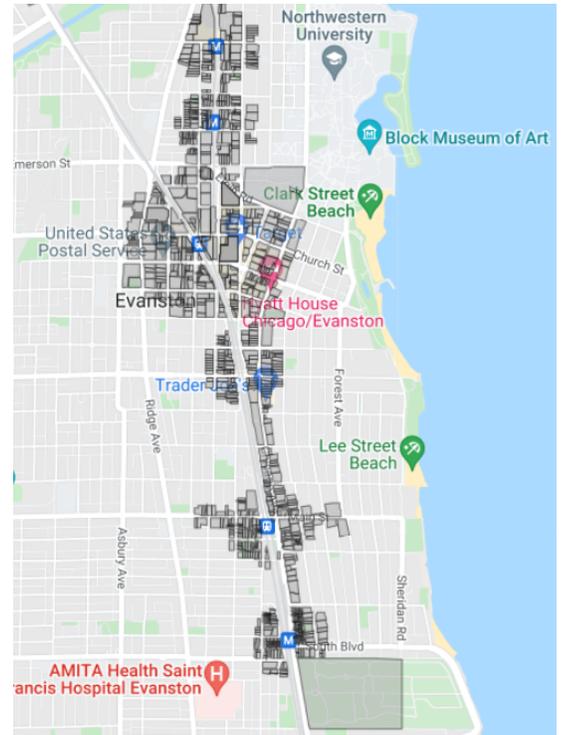
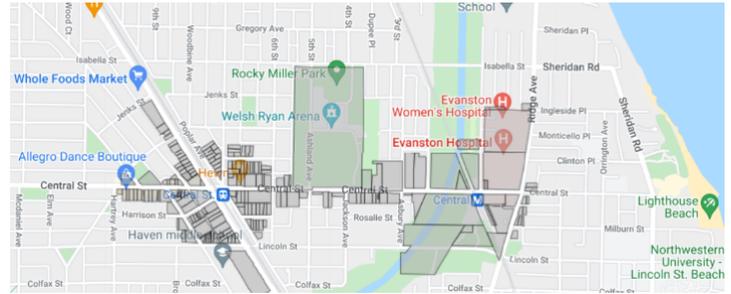


Figure 28: Evanston TOD Zones

Multiple-family dwellings	Multiple-family dwellings shall be provided according to the following schedule:
	Dwelling unit with 1 or fewer bedrooms: 1¼ spaces for each dwelling unit or .55 spaces for each dwelling if within a designated Transit Oriented Development area.
	Dwelling unit with 2 bedrooms: 1½ spaces for each dwelling unit or 1.10 spaces for each dwelling if within a designated Transit Oriented Development area.
	Dwelling unit with 3 or more bedrooms: 2 spaces for each dwelling unit or 1.65 spaces for each dwelling if within a designated Transit Oriented Development area.

While these policies exist in the municipality’s land development code, it was confirmed by Evanston Parking Services staff that zoning is often handled by development on a case-by-case basis. The rates presented above are not always adhered to, and parking variances have been issued by the Zoning Office to developers who then contract with the City of Evanston for parking spaces in nearby municipal garages and lots. While this selective adherence to parking policy and frequent concessions made on behalf of developers may support growth in the short term, this process is slowly depleting public parking resources.



Evanston has a finite and limited amount of public parking spaces. A first come, first served approach to the allocation of these parking resources could be historically viewed as not equitable or sustainable. **Evanston needs to enforce the TOD parking policies it has instated and take proactive measures in place to ensure the equitable allocation of these public resources to all types of developments now and in the future. It is recommended that Evanston perform a parking occupancy and demand study to visualize the rate at which public parking resources are being depleted and understand the effectiveness of TOD policies and their effect on public parking supply.** The results of this study would further reinforce the need for the adherence to existing TOD on-site parking policies and rates.



## V. Northwestern Football Games & Special Events

While most of the Northwestern University campus is located closer to downtown Evanston, Ryan Field and the Welsh Ryan Arena are located a mile away from the downtown at Evanston’s northern border. Bounded by Isabella Street to the north and Central Street to the south, the athletic complex abuts two residential neighborhoods to the east and west. These neighborhoods are primarily made up of single-family homes. Due to the North Shore Channel to the east and Metra commuter rail tracks to the west, accessibility is limited to only a few traffic corridors including Central Street and Lincoln Street, which provide connectivity to the east and west, and Isabella Street, which provides connectivity to the east only.

In 2018, the Welsh Ryan Arena underwent significant renovations with the hopes of hosting more Northwestern and community events. Residents in these adjacent neighborhoods have been vocal about their concerns surrounding this push, claiming that it would cause a parking and traffic problem on their neighborhood streets. Parking Services staff communicated that residents have asked for a more robust residential parking permits program, but that they were quick to rescind this request when these restrictions were mentioned surrounding football games. WGI set out to understand these concerns through on-site observations during some of Northwestern’s most highly attended sporting events: the Northwestern v. Iowa Football Game on November 6, 2021, and the Northwestern v. Indiana Men’s Basketball Game on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

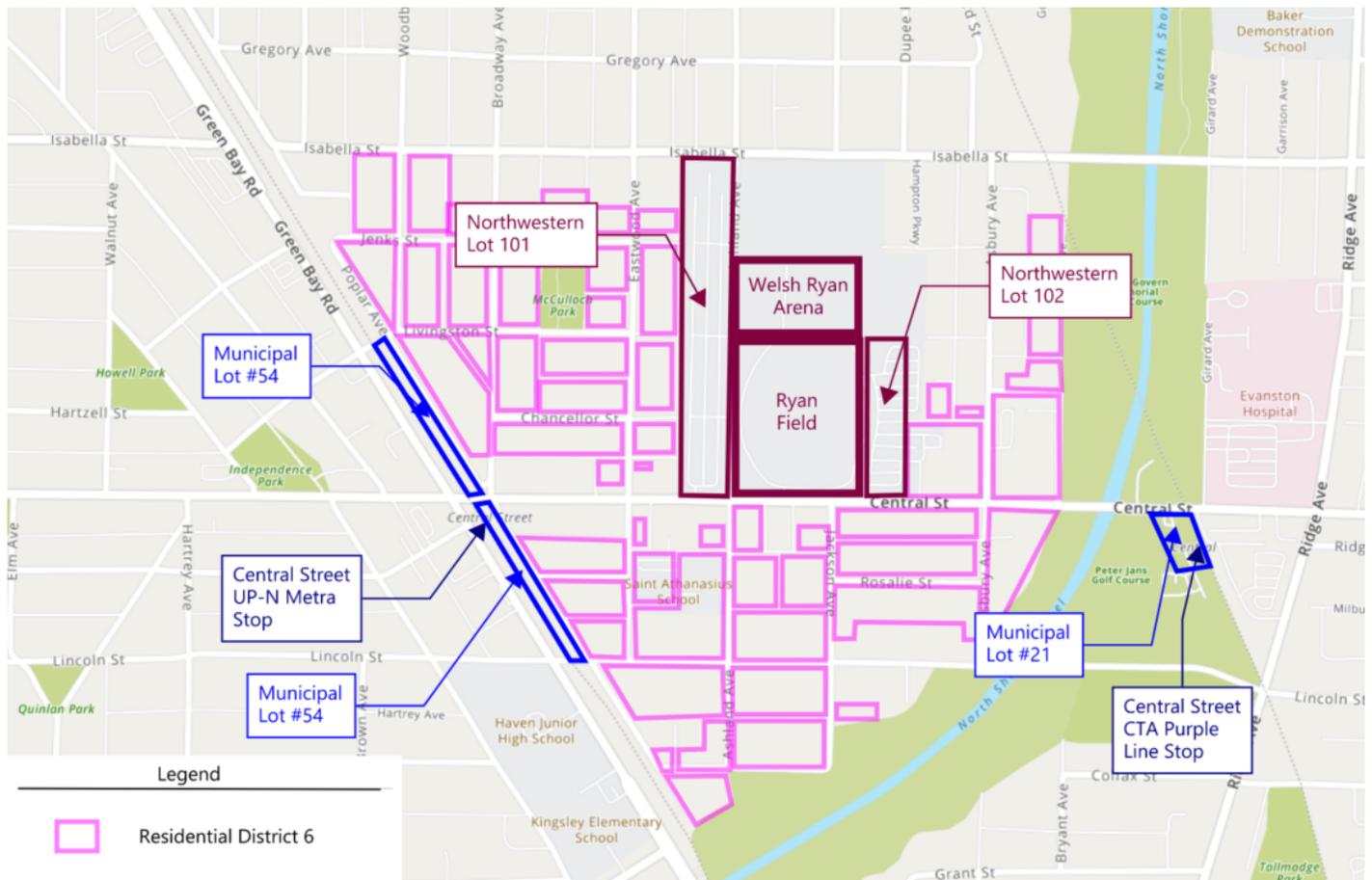


Figure 29: Northwestern Special Events Study Area



## **Football Game: Northwestern v. Iowa | November 6, 2021**

In early discussions with the City of Evanston, it was predicted that the November 6<sup>th</sup> game would be sold out and would, therefore, be an ideal candidate for observations. The desired study area was determined through consultation with City staff and was generally focused on the area bounded by the CTA Purple Line tracks to the east, Lincoln Street to the south, Green Bay Road to the west, and Isabella Street to the north. The residential neighborhood just west of the stadium was identified as a specific area of concern, although the entirety of Residential District 6 borders the stadium and sees game-day impacts.

It should be noted that, because the stadium is located on the City of Evanston's northern boundary with the City of Wilmette, the parking impacts associated with gamedays and other events are not limited to the City of Evanston. Vehicles parking on the neighborhood streets north of Isabella Street are outside the jurisdiction of the City of Evanston but were mentioned in this narrative to provide additional context.

Observations began at 2 PM on November 6<sup>th</sup>, four hours before the 6 PM kick-off, to capture the bulk of the pre-game traffic and parking activity. They started in the residential neighborhood adjacent to the stadium to the west and moved out in a circular pattern. The goal was to determine where people were parking, be it on neighborhood streets, within municipal or private lots, and even on the lawns of residents in the adjacent neighborhoods, get a general sense of occupancies in each of these locations, and provide an assessment of the effects of these high-volume events on the current parking infrastructure within the study area.

The following general observations provide context for the observed traffic and parking impacts:

- Northwestern's opponent, Iowa, is relatively close geographically and has a strong alumni contingent in the Chicago-land area, providing for a well-attended game. ESPN reported that there were 38,141 people in attendance, which equates to 81% occupancy of the 47,130-seat stadium.
- The weather was cloudless and mild with temperatures in the low 60's at kick-off.
- The game was at 6:00 PM, providing ideal tailgating hours.

## **Current Football Gameday Procedures**

The City of Evanston prohibits on-street parking on gamedays on the east-west corridors of Central Street, Lincoln Street, and Isabella Street via the use of temporary NO PARKING signs. No north-south roads were noted to have these same temporary signs.

Additional paid parking options are available and advertised on the City of Evanston website:

- **Canal Shores Golf Course**—This "lot" repurposes portions of the golf course green for parking and tailgating at a \$40 flat rate.
- **Municipal Parking Lot #54**—This surface lot, which is simply a stretch of 90-degree parking stalls off Poplar Avenue, is free for current residents with a paid wheel tax, and \$20-\$40 flat rate for all others depending on the popularity of the game.

Police officers are stationed at intersections on Central Street and Isabella Street to help facilitate the flow of traffic and protect pedestrians.



## Gameday Observations

### On-Street Parking



Figure 30: Study Area On-Street Parking

- When observations kicked-off at 2 PM, it was clear that most of the available on-street parking within the study area was already full. Parking patterns generally spread radially from the stadium, as was expected, with the parking assets closest to the stadium being the most occupied and becoming less occupied depending on proximity to the stadium. After observing the area as generally full, observations were extended as far north as Linden Avenue (which is within the City of Wilmette), as far east as Ridge Avenue, and as far west as Hartrey Avenue to determine the extents of the parking demand.
- Some relatively firm boundaries exist due to the physical features mentioned previously: the channel and Canal Shores Golf Course, for example, essentially blocks any parking in the neighborhoods to the south. Additionally, the North Shore University Health System complex, which is located just east of the stadium, appeared to discourage any football game-induced parking activity further to the east. Notably, foot traffic from the east appeared to mostly be students headed from the direction of the Northwestern campus.
- On-street parking just west of Green Bay Road stayed consistently full throughout the study period. This area seems to be made up of more multifamily residential units and likely has higher residential on-street parking demand than the residential area north of Central Street, which is primarily single-family homes with garages.
- North of Isabella Street, within the City of Wilmette, many of the neighborhood streets had semi-permanent, City-issued signs indicating NO PARKING 2 HOURS BEFORE UNTIL 2 HOURS AFTER NORTHWESTERN FOOTBALL GAMES and listed the dates of the season's home games. Below these signs, a TOW-AWAY ZONE panel was also posted. These signs were generally obeyed with only one block observed to have vehicles parked in violation. Instances of towing were observed for vehicles parked illegally on Central Street. Ticketing, however, was not observed anywhere during the duration of the study; as stated, most vehicles parked on-street were parked legally.



Figure 31: Wilmette NO PARKING Sign



### Off-Street Parking

- Northwestern Lots 101 and 102 were available for season ticket holders only. Northwestern’s website indicates that violators are subject to tow and encourages students to park in other campus lots and/or to use CTA or Metra which are in walking distance to the field. While Lot 102 appeared to be very well utilized by gametime, Lot 101 never filled up and only reached approximately 75 percent of its capacity.
- At \$40 per vehicle, the Canal Shores Golf Course was the largest off-street parking area within the study area was the most heavily tailgated. It was open well before 2 PM as there were hundreds of cars in the designated area of the green between Central Street and Lincoln Street by the time observations began. The area south of Lincoln Street had zero vehicles initially but was heavily occupied by gametime. It appeared that, as the more reasonably walkable parking options filled, the southernmost area of the golf course acted as overflow capacity.
- Municipal Parking Lot #54, which is located along the east side of the Metra tracks, was much less utilized despite charging visitors the same \$40 flat rate. It had considerable availability at the start of observations, gradually filling during the four hours observation period but not to its entirety.
- Two schools on Green Bay Road southwest of the stadium—Haven Middle School and Kingsley Elementary School—had organized pay-for-parking in their surface lots. Despite being a 10–15-minute walk from stadium, both lots appeared to be relatively full by gametime. Fees were being charged, but the cost of this parking is unknown.
- Illegal off-street parking within the adjacent neighborhoods was observed. There were clear instances, primarily on Lincoln Street, Livingston Street, Jenks Street, and Isabella Street, where property owners took advantage of the opportunity to sell parking spaces on their lawns. Some of these locations were even logged in Google Maps as official parking lots. In most of these observed cases, vehicles had to climb over the curb and sidewalk to access this private property. Prices seemed to range from \$30 to \$60.



Figure 32: Northwestern Lot 101



Figure 33: Canal Shores Golf Course Parking



Figure 34: Municipal Lot #54

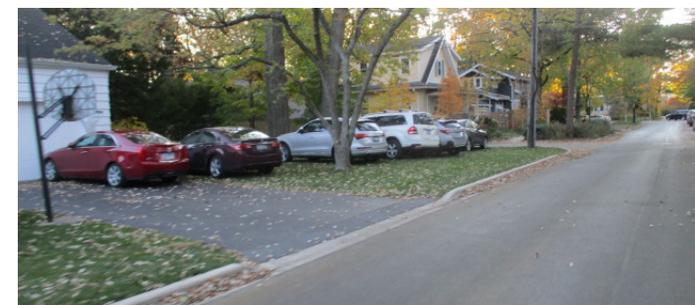


Figure 35: Example Lawn and Driveway Parking



- McCulloch Park, which is located a few blocks west of the stadium between Jenks Street and Livingston Street, remained open and used by residents, and no vehicles appeared to be illegally parked.
- East of the stadium at the North Shore University Health System complex, security staff were observed interviewing drivers attempting to access the hospital garage to avoid unauthorized use of this facility by game-goers.

### **Vehicular Traffic**



Figure 36: Queuing at Ashland Avenue

- Due to the North Shore Channel to the east and Metra commuter rail tracks to the west, the stadium is only accessible via a few key traffic corridors, including Central Street and Lincoln Street, which provide connectivity to the east and west, and Isabella Street, which provides connectivity to the east only.
- To further consolidate traffic, Northwestern Lot 101 can only be accessed via Isabella Street and Central Street, while Lot 102 is only accessible from Central Street.
- Traffic on these corridors was observed to move relatively smoothly with minimal delays and multi-cycle waits. Police were stationed at intersections along Central Street and Isabella Street by the stadium to facilitate the flow of traffic and protect pedestrians.
- The busiest intersection was that of Central Street and Green Bay Street.
- Significant delays were observed at the intersection of Central Street and Ashland Avenue, specifically for the eastbound left-turning movement. It should be noted that there is a single lane on the Central Street eastbound approach, and despite the fact that the curb lane was free due to on-street parking prohibitions, through traffic did not appear to utilize the available space to avoid the queue. As such, Central Street backed up considerably as shown in the image above. Heavy pedestrian activity was also observed at this intersection, adding to the delays. This intersection did have a police officer directing traffic.

### **Pedestrian Traffic & Transit**

- Ryan Field is conveniently located between the Union Pacific North (UP-N) Metra Rail Line and the CTA Purple Line. The UP-N stops at Evanston Central Street every two hours on Saturdays, but no arrivals were observed. The Purple Line, however, arrives at the Central stop every 15 to 20 minutes and was heavily used by game-goers.
- Significant pedestrian traffic was observed from the east as people walked from the Central station and from the Northwestern campus.

### **Basketball Game: Northwestern v. Indiana | February 8, 2022**

As mentioned previously, it was confirmed that most of the complaints by residents regarding parking and traffic impacts actually occur as a result of events at the arena and not as a result of football gamedays. In an effort to understand the specific nuances of a non-football game event day and why residents may have more serious complaints, the February 8<sup>th</sup> men's basketball game versus Indiana was identified for observation. ESPN reported that there were 7,039 people in attendance, which equates to 100 percent occupancy of the 7,039-seat arena.

A similar study area to that of the football game day observations was established. Observations began at 7 PM, one hour before the 8 PM tip off.



## Gameday Observations

- The City of Evanston does not impose any parking restrictions on Central Street, Lincoln Street, or Isabella Street like they do for football games. In a few areas, this makes things significantly worse. On Isabella Street, for example, parking is permitted on both sides of the street near the intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Street. With cars parked on both sides, it greatly reduced the width of available travel lanes and this area became almost impassible for two-way traffic, clogging Isabella Street considerably.
- Within Wilmette, most of the north-south streets just north of the arena are very narrow and permitted parking on both sides of the street. In these cases, it is impossible for two cars meeting to pass each other. One oncoming vehicle must back up, almost to the next closest intersection, to allow another vehicle to pass. Several cars were observed driving through the alleys in this area trying to avoid the congestion. More parking/circling activity in the neighborhood streets north of the arena was observed as opposed to the football game.



Figure 37: Queuing at Northwestern Lot

- There was a very clear traffic “surge” within a compressed timeframe, lasting from 7:15 PM to around 7:45 PM, which was worse than any timeframe observed before the football game. This was primarily limited to Central Street from Green Bay Road to Northwestern Lot 102, and Isabella Street from Green Bay Road to Northwestern Lot 101. Both Central Street and Isabella Street queued up considerably during this timeframe but cleared out very quickly. Lincoln Street remained relatively clear.
  - Before the game, vehicle traffic from the west was generally heavier than traffic from the east. Foot traffic was opposite, being heavier from the east.
  - It appeared that the parking attendants at Lots 101 and 102 were overwhelmed as they tried to get people paid and into the lots during this rush. It is unknown whether there were less attendants than during a football game or if there were simply too many vehicles, too fast.
- Both Lots 101 and 102 were mostly full at game-time. The two municipal lots closest to the arena, Lot #54 and Lot #21, were mostly empty.
  - Before the game, people were observed searching for parking, and vehicles were seen circling an area multiple times before selecting a surface lot or an on-street parking spot. This added considerable “duplicate” volume to the traffic. Additionally, indecisiveness on where to turn and which direction to try next added to delays. The parking signs were challenging to read at night which caused people to get out of their vehicle, read the sign, then get back in the vehicle before trying somewhere else.
  - After the game, people just got in their car and left, usually via the quickest way out which lends to more efficient traffic movement and less delays.

## Key Differences Between Football and Basketball Gamedays

- There are significantly less spectators at basketball games than football games which yields a much smaller traffic and parking impact.
- There is significantly less tailgating for basketball games, and doors to the arena don’t open until 90 minutes prior to tip off.



- While season ticket holders and members of Wilson Club have designated parking areas in Northwestern Lots 101 and 102 during basketball games, non-season ticket holders are permitted to park in these lots for a fee of \$15.
- The City of Evanston does not prohibit on-street parking on Lincoln Street, Central Street, and Isabella Street during basketball games. Furthermore, the City of Wilmette does not appear to restrict parking on their streets just north of the arena.
- The City of Evanston does not change rates in Municipal Lot #54 for basketball game days, but there does not appear to be a demand for these spaces since on-street spaces and spots within Lots 101 and 102 are available for the public.

## Effectiveness of Current Procedures

### Parking on Neighborhood Streets

The on-street parking on the neighborhood streets adjacent to the stadium is a highly utilized resource on gamedays. This area is within a residential parking permit area, District 6, but the only signed parking restrictions found on the neighborhood streets west of the athletic complex restrict parking for non-permit holders from 7 AM to 9 AM on weekdays and restrict all parkers during street cleanings and snow emergencies. There are no signed restrictions that would prevent game day traffic from parking on these streets. **Due to the existing coverage and proximity of Residential District 6 to the stadium, Evanston could easily build a more restrictive permit regulation that would encompass Northwestern game-days and other events, simply by adding a few blocks to the already-established zone.**

Within Evanston, there were no observed instances of vehicles parking along curbs where NO PARKING signs were posted. **So, while most of the curbs that *did* allow parking were full well before game time, unsafe or inaccessible on-street conditions, in which emergency vehicles could not traverse narrow streets due to illegal parking, were not observed.**

Notably, the City of Wilmette posts signs on certain streets to discourage football game day street parking within the neighborhoods just north of the stadium. This is important to note—although the stadium is located on Wilmette’s southern border, they do not allow any football game day parking to spill into their municipality. Therefore, all of the vehicles that wish to avoid paying \$30-\$40 to park for the duration of the game will be searching for a spot along the curb close by in one of Evanston’s adjacent neighborhoods. They will come early, as our observations revealed, to ensure they are able to find a free space.

### Illegal Lawn Parking

City code prohibits parking on private property on “unapproved substrates”—that is surfaces that are not concrete, asphalt, pavers, or other such surfaces. This code is enforceable through Evanston’s Property Standards Department. While rampant illegal parking on lawns and private property is not taking place, a small group of residents is taking advantage of the opportunity to advertise and sell parking space on their lawns and driveways during games. The selling of parking on private property clearly is not done in secret or in fear of repercussions. This could influence some residents to push back against proposals to establish more robust residential permitting programs and restrictions that might prohibit such activities. Additionally, it was unclear whether any residents were illegally charging for on-street spaces. **Consistent enforcement of City code by police is necessary to curbing this illegal behavior.**



### **Municipal Lot #54**

This lot was not fully utilized during the football game despite the fact that Evanston residents could park for free with a paid wheel tax. While it is unknown how many residents were actually parked in this lot, this policy is potentially problematic because residents who live nearby have the opportunity to move their personal vehicles from their driveways, park in this lot for free, and sell their driveway and lawn parking as discussed above. This is also providing a free service in support of a Northwestern event which could be a revenue-driver for the City. **Evanston should consider charging a flat rate for all parkers regardless of residency status.**

### **Collaboration with Northwestern University**

Northwestern's parking lots are only open to season ticket holders during football games. While Lot 102 appeared to be very well utilized by gametime, Lot 101 never filled up and only reached approximately 75 percent of its capacity. **Evanston could explore opportunities for collaboration with Northwestern University to determine whether space may be available within Northwestern lots for some public gameday parking.**

### **Management of Vehicle Traffic**

**Aside from the lawn and driveway parking that must be consistently enforced within Evanston's adjacent neighborhoods, Evanston does not have a gameday parking problem.** Observations before the basketball game reinforced the fact that issues are more closely tied to traffic congestion and circulation. Intersections on Central Street and Isabella Street east and west of the stadium appear to be functioning smoothly during football games and basketball games due to the presence of police traffic enforcers in both instances. However, queuing and delay at the ticketed entrances to the Northwestern Lots 101 and 102 was substantial and trickled back to adjacent intersections. **Evanston must work with Northwestern University to establish better entry and exit procedures that do not clog Central Street and Isabella Street.** One solution is to open the curb lanes (which have been closed to parkers) to through traffic. If carefully directed by police personnel, through vehicles could bypass the queue and reduce delay at Northwestern lot driveways.

## **VI. Recommendations & Conclusions**

The City of Evanston is located within the metro area of the third largest US city. While Evanston may once have been a quaint community with a small-town feel, the City is now urban and dynamic and, therefore, must adapt its parking policies, rates, and fees to accurately account for the growth it has experienced. It cannot afford to remain stuck in its old ways. City of Evanston Parking Services staff prides itself on the fact that their facilities have no deferred maintenance. In order to maintain this practice and address problems as the City's infrastructure ages, rates must increase to follow market trends. Chicago should ultimately be used the metric by which the adequacy of the City's parking policies is measured, but the other cities included in the peer review provide valuable data to support our findings. Notably, if Evanston's rates fall below that of Portsmouth, NH and Boulder, CO—both of which are *not* suburbs of a massive city like Chicago—then they clearly do not reflect the metropolitan environment that Evanston now finds itself in.

The following conclusions and recommendations summarize the results of the peer review, the assessment of TOD policies, and the evaluation of parking assets during Northwestern special events:



**Peer Review**

- Evanston should consider raising their \$2 per hour parking rate for on-street parking downtown to a rate that is comparable to that of their peers.
- Evanston should move from \$0.50 per hour to a flat dollar within the 12-hour parking zones.
- Evanston should focus on promoting the ParkEvanston app to increase efficiencies in staffing, maintenance, and financing.
- Evanston should consider raising their residential permit rates in higher-demand neighborhoods, akin to the demand-based pricing used in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, and instating a yearly rate increase like Boulder to ensure that the City is planning for future on-street demand.
- Evanston's maximum daily garage rate could be increased through a variety of methods, whether through restructuring the schedule from rate bands to a consistent hourly rate of \$2 per hour after the first hour (which would yield a much more drastic increase), or by simply raising the hourly rate in the last two rate bands from \$0.50 per hour to \$0.75 per hour.
- Evanston should consider raising its monthly permit rates for covered garage parking to better compare to that of Portsmouth, Minneapolis, Boulder, and Madison. Chicago's private garages in its downtown, as well as the private garages in downtown Evanston, should also be a metric for determining whether Evanston's monthly permit rates are matching local market trends.
- Evanston should consider a dynamic parking pricing program like Portsmouth's that raises rates after a certain time threshold on key downtown streets to further encourage turnover of spaces in high-demand areas. Furthermore, like in Cincinnati, Evanston could consider keeping reduced evening and weekend rates in underutilized locations to induce demand.
- Evanston should not adopt an on-street employee permit program within residential permit zones without active management and review of the program to understand the effects on the residential community, and without committing to a robust and restrictive permitting process for businesses—both in number of permits issued per business and by proper pricing.
- Evanston's penalties and fines should be evaluated and increased to better reflect the lost revenues from non-payment for parking, the expense to issue the tickets, and the fines used by their peers.



### **TOD Policies**

- Evanston needs to enforce the TOD parking policies it has instated and take proactive measures in place to ensure the equitable allocation of these public resources to all types of developments now and in the future. It is recommended that Evanston perform a parking occupancy and demand study to visualize the rate at which public parking resources are being depleted and understand the effectiveness of TOD policies and their effect on public parking supply.

### **Northwestern Special Events**

- Evanston sees a high demand for on-street spaces on its neighborhood streets during football games. However, no unsafe or inaccessible on-street conditions, in which emergency vehicles cannot traverse narrow streets due to illegal parking, were observed within the study area.
- Evanston does not experience rampant illegal parking on lawns and private property. However, a small group of residents is taking advantage of the opportunity to advertise and sell parking space on their lawns and driveways during football games. Consistent enforcement of City code by police is necessary to curbing this illegal behavior.
- Evanston residents can park for free in Municipal Lot #54 with a paid wheel tax. Evanston should consider charging a flat rate for all parkers regardless of residency status to accrue additional revenue and ensure that residents are not taking advantage of the opportunity to relocate their personal vehicles to sell space on their lawns and driveways.
- Northwestern's parking lots (Lot 101 and Lot 102) are only open to season ticket holders during football games. Evanston could explore opportunities for collaboration with Northwestern University to determine whether space may be available within Northwestern lots for some public gameday parking.
- Evanston does not have a gameday parking problem. Observations before the basketball game reinforced the fact that issues are more closely tied to traffic congestion and circulation, especially at the ticketed entrances to the Northwestern Lots 101 and 102. Evanston must work with Northwestern University to establish better entry and exit procedures that do not clog Central Street and Isabella Street.
- Residential permit District 6, which surrounds the stadium and arena, is an easy candidate for instating more restrictive permit regulations encompassing Northwestern game-days and events.



These recommendations reflect the environment and conditions at the time this study was done. Furthermore, these recommendations are not all-encompassing and should not be viewed as an ultimate solution to all the parking problems in the City of Evanston. As in any city, the parking environment is dynamic and complex. Efficient management requires constant vigilance and adaptation of systems and processes to suit the evolving environment. One significant example is the infrastructure and technology needed to accommodate the ever-growing and anticipated future demand for electric vehicle (EV) parking. This topic was not explicitly addressed in this study, but as the need becomes more and more prevalent, the City should consider performing additional occupancy studies to determine where charging stations can and should be installed. Furthermore, new policies and processes will be required to equitably manage these new amenities. The recommendations provided herein should be viewed as a steppingstone, guiding the City of Evanston to reframe and modernize the conversation surrounding the management of parking.