

CHAPTER 11

THE BIG BANG (1996-2006)

Evanston's population peaked in 1970 at 80,113 with 2.71 persons per household. Then it decreased to 73,706 in 1980 with 2.35 persons per household and 73,233 in 1990 with 2.31 persons per household. But, by the mid-1990s the nation's economy was on a roll and the real estate development industry was in full motion. This was evidenced by the opening of the new 24-story Park Evanston luxury apartment building and its adjoining Whole Food store, both designed by Harry Weese Associates and constructed by John Buck & Co. in 1996-97. This planned development, made possible by tax increment financing, included 283 rental units and 40,000 square feet of retail space plus a parking garage, all at a cost of \$40 million. Rents ranged from \$1,322 for a studio to \$3,200 per month for a three bedroom unit.

However, other parts of downtown, especially the Research Park, were not enjoying the fruits of this investment surge. In fact, when the City Council issued a Request for Proposals to redevelop the Sherman Avenue parking garage site, the responses were few and so unattractive that the project was postponed.

All this changed, however, in 1996 when the City Council and the Charles Shaw Company determined that their commitment to the original Research Park concept had expired. Based on a study by the Balcor Consulting Group, the City Council focused on a new, more marketable mixed-use concept for the balance of the property, similar to the original Downtown II Concept, in order to stimulate the property tax base and business vitality.

The NU/ERPI promptly issued a Request for Proposals for a 5-acre triangle south of University Place, triggering the BIG BANG - - the greatest building boom in the history of downtown Evanston. The City received six exciting proposals for mixed-use development and initiated a methodical and time-consuming developer selection process. The two finalists were the John Buck Co. (developers of the Park Evanston project) and Arthur Hill & Co. (developers of a similar mixed-use project in downtown Denver).



Park Evanston

Following numerous public meetings, highly elaborate and competitive presentations, extensive public scrutiny and comments, some opposition, and lengthy City Council deliberations, Arthur Hill & Co. was chosen in December, 1997.

The Hill proposal (designed by Elbasani & Logan Architects with Teska Associates, Inc. as landscape/streetscape designers) was called Church Street Plaza and included:

- A 12-screen, 2400 seats general cinema;
- A 6-screen, 1000 seats arts cinema;
- A 180 room hotel with banquet/meeting space;
- 85 + condominium residences or 145 rental residences;
- 120,000 sq. ft. retail;
- 20,000 sq. ft. senior center;
- 20,000 sq. ft. performing arts center;

The City Council's commitment included building a new 1,450-space parking garage to serve both the Church Street Plaza and the Research Park. The City Council's willingness to finance the garage with tax increments and parking fees, thereby relieving the developer of this burden, was key to the project's feasibility.

Phase 1 of the project witnessed construction of the parking garage, the pavilion complex and the hotel. In November, 2000 the Church Street Plaza main pavilion opened with a charity benefit gala in its Century Theaters 18-screen movie complex; Wolfgang Puck's restaurant and Urban Outfitters apparel store opened concurrently. Almost instantly, downtown Evanston attracted new customers from miles around. In fact, Century Theaters attracted 1.2 million patrons in 2002, and the same in 2003, exceeding forecasts. The 175-room Hilton Garden Inn opened in 2001.

Phase 2 involved an amendment to the Redevelopment Agreement between Arthur Hill & Co. and the city to replace the senior center and performing arts center with a new corporate headquarters office building with retail uses on the ground floor. The principal tenant is McDougal Littell & Co. which had outgrown its former space in Evanston and was considering relocation elsewhere. This change in plans actually represented the fulfillment of the original Transportation Center concept. OWP&P was the architect and Mesirow Stein was the developer of this building and the public plazas around it. Arthur Hill & Co. retained ownership of the ground floor retail space on Church Street. The corporate headquarters was provided access from Davis Street; hence the building is formally named the 909 Davis Building. It was occupied in early 2002.



Pavilion: Phase 1



Hilton Garden Inn: Phase 1



Municipal Parking Garage: Phase 1



909 Davis Street: Phase 2

Phase 3 of the Church Street Plaza project was completed in 2003. It included the new Borders Books and Music designed by Perkins and Will Architects and the 28-story, 207 unit Optima Views building designed by Optima Architects. This building was also the result of an amendment to the Redevelopment Agreement to permit increased height and more residences.



Borders & Optima Views: Phase 3

Other projects completed in the same period were the 1415 and 1421 Sherman Avenue mixed-use building (designed and developed by Roszak/ADC) with 53 condominium units over 10,000 sq. ft. of business space (2001), the 17 story Church Street Station (2002) with 105 condominium units over 12,000 sq. ft. of business space (designed by Otis Koglin Wilson Architects and developed by Focus), the 21,000 sq. ft. Family Center addition to the YMCA (2002), and the ADA ramps and other repairs to the Davis Street Metra Station (2002).



1415-1421 Sherman Avenue



Church Street Station



Metra Station ADA Ramps

The Fountain Square environs were also changed by the new Optima Towers complex which included 105 condominium units above ground floor businesses. This contemporary project was designed by Optima Architects and incorporated landscaped terraces overlooking Fountain Square and Davis Street. The many balconies drew widespread attention and comment because of their orange color. The project was completed in 2001-2002.



Optima Towers

The community mourned the closure of Chandler's in the late 1990s, the venerable "something-for-everyone" store at the southeast corner of Fountain Square that had been in business at this location since 1929. The Chandler's Building was originally designed by Edgar Ovet Blake. Fortunately, it was acquired by a very creative developer, the Davis Street Land Company, which restored the main building in keeping with its historic integrity, removed a two-story addition to create an active "people place" in front, which accommodates outdoor dining throughout much of the year. This building reopened in 1999. The same developers remodeled 624 Davis Street and constructed a new 4-story building of compatible vintage architecture adjacent to Chandler's at 622 Davis Street, designed by Schroeder, Murchie, Laya Associates, Ltd and occupied in early 2003.



Restored Chandler's Building



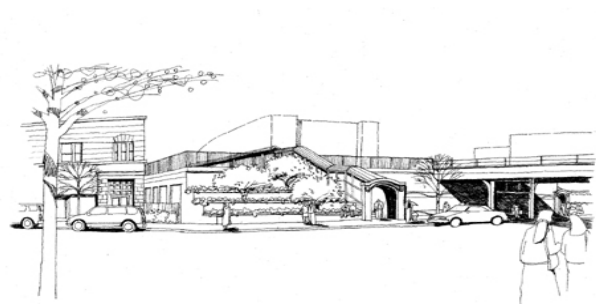
622 Davis Street

As early as 1999 Inventure's Executive Director, Ron Kysiak, became concerned with Evanston's ability to attract qualified employees to satisfy not only the need of existing employers, but future employers. He convened a series of meetings with other city agencies and with the Regional Transportation Authority. In November, 2000 the RTA executed a contract with a consultant team headed by Teska Associates, Inc. and including Valerie Kretchmer & Associates, Inc., MultiSystems, Inc., KLOA, Inc., and Jack Weiss Associates, to undertake a Downtown Evanston Transit, Circulation and Development Study. The client's team consisted of the RTA, the City, Metra, CTA, Pace, Arthur Hill & Co. and Sherman Plaza Venture. The study was completed in December, 2001. Among over 100 recommendations were the following:

- Establish an ongoing "Transportation Management Program" for downtown and, ultimately, the entire city;
- Formulate a consensus between the city and transit service providers (CTA, Metra, Pace) regarding a development, multi-modal access, and circulation vision for downtown;
- Continue intergovernmental discussions on commuter parking policies;
- Improve the Benson Avenue bus and CTA rail transfer point to reduce traffic conflicts and enhance pedestrian access/egress;
- Replace or repair all downtown CTA viaducts and remove two unused Union Pacific/Metra viaducts;
- Install vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signage systems;
- Encourage additional transit-oriented development;
- Expand Pace and CTA bus service in the evening hours and on weekends;
- Intensify transit rider marketing efforts;
- Improve bicycle parking facilities near transit stations.



Davis Street With Unused Union Pacific Viaduct



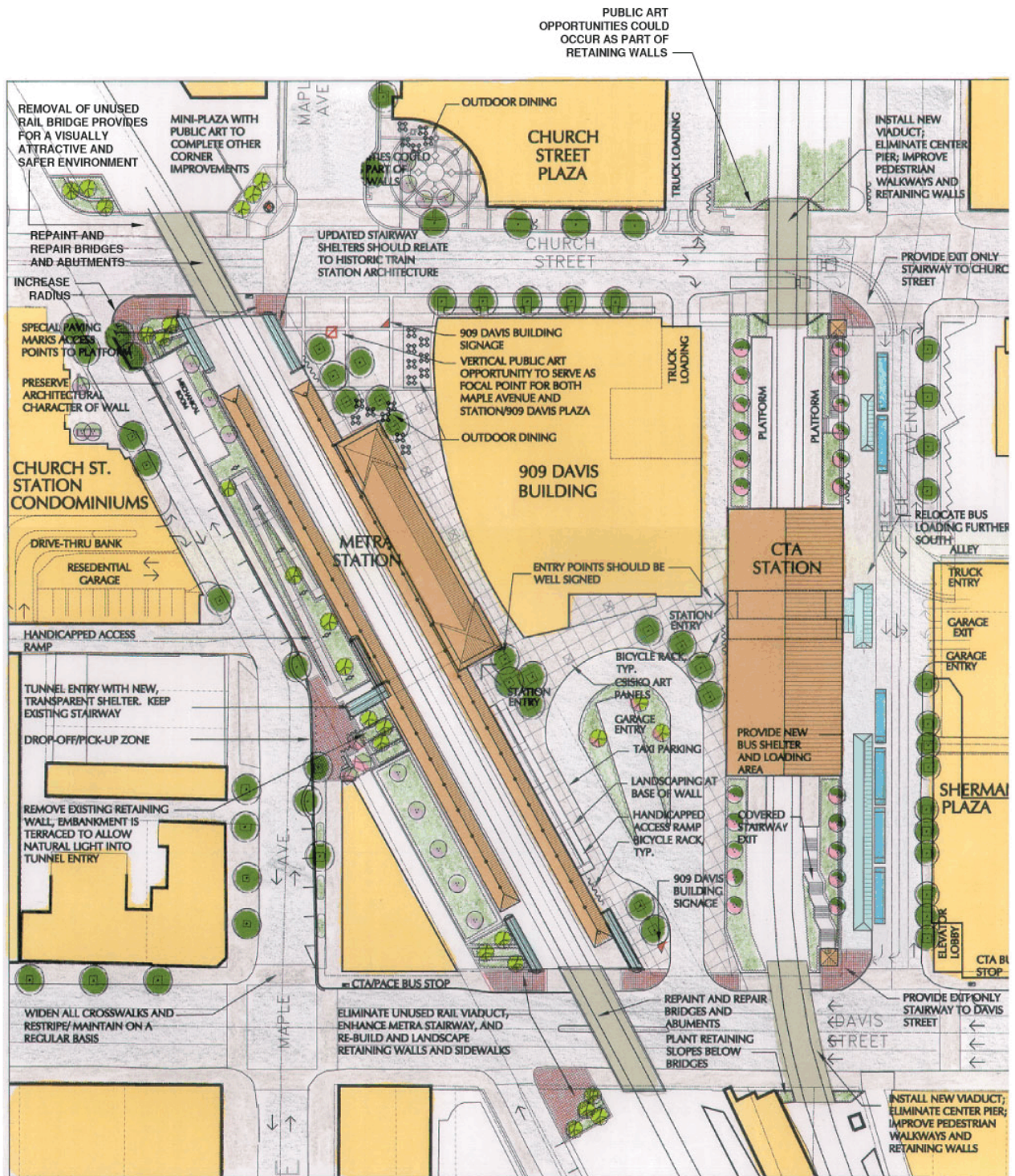
Davis Street Without Union Pacific Viaduct



Church Street With Unused Union Pacific Viaduct



Church Street Without Union Pacific Viaduct



Source: Downtown Evanston: Davis Street Circulation Plans and Transit-Oriented Development Study

The biggest news of 2001 was the announcement of a new project, Sherman Plaza, by a development team of Klutznick-Fisher Development Company, Kaiser Evanston, LLC, Focus Development, Inc. and the City of Evanston. The plan encompassed most of the key city block bounded by Church and Davis Streets, and Sherman and Benson Avenues. It proposed a 20-story building for a senior residential community, 467,000 sq. ft. of commercial floor space anchored by a Sears Roebuck department store, and a 1,300 space public parking garage. Subsequently, the senior residential community was replaced by 229 condominium units to range in price from the \$260,000s for one-bedroom units to \$1.7 million for penthouse units, and the Sears store was replaced by a health club. The plan was designed by Daniel P. Coffey & Associates, Ltd. and received preliminary approval from the City Council, subject to numerous conditions.

The private partners of the development team purchased all of the real estate and relocated all of the tenants at a cost approximating \$17.5 million. Buildings in the southern half of the block were demolished, leaving an unpleasant construction site for over two years while negotiations continued

regarding new tenant leasing, long-term financing, plan revisions, and the city's financial participation. The downtown business community and others were becoming concerned with the adverse impacts of this delay.

Finally, in 2004 the city and the development team agreed to a plan which provided approximately 156,822 sq. ft. of commercial space, 252 condominium units, 60,000 sq. ft. for a health club, and a 1,585 space public parking garage. This agreement permitted the developers to demolish the 35-year old Sherman Avenue parking garage.

According to the City of Evanston Highlights (Fall 2004 edition), the project is located within the Washington National Tax Increment Financing District, enabling the city to use the incremental real estate taxes to fund the \$35 million parking garage and \$3.25 million for relocation and demolition costs. The anticipated cumulative gross tax increment revenue from the project is anticipated to be \$48.8 million during the remaining life of the TIF project. Residences are selling for prices ranging from \$260,000 to \$1,700,000.



Sherman Plaza Proposal

As each year passed the momentum of revitalization seemed to increase, but so did stress within the Evanston community. Not everyone was pleased with the quality of architecture exhibited by certain new buildings, despite review and suggestions to developers by the city's Site Plan & Architectural Review Committee. Such reviews are mandatory for most projects of all sizes throughout the city, but the comments and recommendations of the committee are not binding. Developers may implement them on a voluntary basis. In some cases, however, the City Council may not approve a project unless certain recommendations are implemented. On the other hand, public pressure on the City Council may politicize decisions, absent adopted design guidelines.

One of many cases in point is the Ridge-Emerson apartment complex (The Reserve) completed in 2004, but originally proposed by the developer, Atlantic Realty, in 2001. The first plan for 215 units in one nine-story building with substantial landscaped open space around it was rejected by the neighbors both east of Ridge Avenue and west of Green Bay Road because of height and density. Following further rejection of several alternative plans, the City Council approved a plan for 195 units in three four-story buildings and minimal landscaped open space. Many observers were more unhappy with the process of decision making than with the final product.



The Reserve

The debate over "binding design review" in accordance with adopted design guidelines had been underway for several years. In 2002 the Plan Commission with extensive input from city staff and outside advisors recommended to the City Council a draft ordinance creating a binding design review process. The city's attorney advised the City Council that the recommendation, as proposed, might not be constitutional. As a result, the proposal went back to the drawing board. Eventually, in 2004, the City Council amended the zoning ordinance to expand coverage of the Planned Unit Development process to include all projects over 20,000 sq. ft. of building space. This substitute for a separate binding review process provides the city with greater authority over design, but lacks adopted design guidelines by which to review projects. Design Evanston and other groups continued to recommend that the Plan Commission and City Council adopt design guidelines such as those presented with the draft ordinance for binding design review.

Evanston's pride received a shot-in-the-arm in July, 2002 from the San Jose (CA) [Mercury News](#) editor of the editorial pages, Dennis R. Ryerson. Following a recent visit to Evanston he wrote a complete editorial, "If Evanston did it, so can San Jose." He stated, "In terms of being a lively and inviting people place seven days a week, day and night - - the often stated goal for San Jose - - Evanston wins the prize."

In December 2002, Optima Developers proposed a 36-story, 290,000 sq. ft. mixed-use building complex, including 248 condominiums, ground floor retail, and 573 parking spaces on the west half of the 1800 Sherman block at the corner of Elgin Road and Benson Avenue. The proposal would have required numerous zoning variances. It was opposed by neighbors to the north and rejected by the City Council, based primarily on its unprecedented height. As a result, the developer decided to proceed with a 16-story building of similar capacity to comply with existing zoning. It had the same mixture of uses, but covered more of the site and provided less landscaped open space. The project, called Optima Horizons, featured 1, 2 & 3 bedroom condos to sell from \$188,000 to \$746,000. Residents took occupancy in 2004.



Optima Horizons

To summarize recent trends, the City of Evanston issued a handout in April, 2002 which estimated that since 1996 private investments had exceeded \$500 million and public investments had exceeded \$50 million (much of that in the new Maple Avenue parking garage). Over 1,400 new jobs were created in downtown Evanston, and over 600 new market rate housing units were constructed. Approximately 1,000 more units were in the pipeline.

Although public records do not separate out the downtown, retail sales taxes in Evanston increased 22% between 1997 and 2002. Downtown's contribution to this trend was significant, even though much of the new retail space was not yet occupied. Of particular importance is that downtown hosted over 80 eating places by the end of the year with more scheduled to be opened. Downtown was clearly justified to claim the title of "the Dining Capital of the North Shore". Many of the restaurants provide live entertainment, from jazz and blues to folk and Celtic. With 18 new movie screens and the Music Institute of Chicago's music performance hall which opened in 2003, downtown could also claim to be "the Entertainment Capital of the North Shore".

Public transit remained fundamental to Evanston's accessibility and quality of life. Total boardings on the CTA's Purple Line in Evanston decreased from 3.16 million in 1994 to 2.96 million in 2000. However, total boardings on the Metra Union Pacific North Line increased from 3,076 per weekday in 1993 to 3,574 in 1999. Downtown Davis Street boardings increased from 1,124 per

weekday to 1,395 per weekday even prior to the recent surge in residential and commercial construction. In 2002 the Pace suburban bus system expanded its service on selected routes in the evenings and on weekends to accommodate the increased demand from downtown employees and visitors.

The years 2003 and 2004 witnessed continued private investor interest in downtown Evanston and related events that suggested a necessity for the city to review and update its policies regarding downtown revitalization, especially land-use patterns, density and design. In January, the City Council was faced with a \$3.4 million deficit gap in its proposed fiscal 2004 budget, even after proposed expenditures had been trimmed. That gap increased to \$3.9 in the initial 2005 budget. This fiscal dilemma arises each year in Evanston, and each year the solutions become more difficult to swallow in a community which prides itself for excellent municipal services and schools. One key strategy over the past two decades has been to encourage redevelopment and higher densities in the downtown, thereby increasing the city's property tax base and reducing the fiscal impact on residential properties. However, some citizens and public officials began to raise the question of whether this strategy is equally viable for the next two decades.

The fiscal dilemma was apparent when, in March, U.S. District Court Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer entered a judgement of liability against the City of Evanston in a zoning case brought by the tax exempt Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Evanston, Inc. in 2000 and tried in early 2001. The judge concluded that the city violated Vineyard's right to equal protection and free speech and assembly when it denied the use of formerly taxable commercial property on the western edge of downtown (Ridge Avenue). The extraordinary amount of tax exempt real estate in Evanston has placed a financial burden on the community for many decades. The City Council has consistently sought to prohibit more property being removed from the tax roles.

In February 2003, TR Ridge Partners, LLC (an affiliate of Roszak/ADC) submitted an ambitious proposal to the city – a planned-unit development at 1100 Clark Street including six residential condominium buildings ranging from 6 to 20 stories in height, containing 348 units and a limited amount of ground floor business, totaling 342,000 sq. ft. of floor space. Its proposed density was substantially less than that of recently approved mixed-use projects. The complex featured “green architecture” with numerous themed gardens on the rooftops and intermediate terraces. Ten percent of the units were designated as “affordable.” With suggested architectural refinements the project passed the Site Plan and Architecture Review Committee and was recommended by the Plan Commission.

However, at the public hearing several citizens and at least one Plan Commissioner raised the issue of “Evanston growing too fast” and downtown becoming “too dense”. This may have been the first time in over 30 years this issue had been raised, but it carried over into another public hearing held by the City Council’s Planning and Development Committee. This and other concerns, including architectural design, caused the proposal to be rejected in August.

Prior to the end of the year, TR Ridge Partners, LLC submitted a revised concept plan to the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee for the 1100 Clark Street project (Sienna). This plan proposed 237 condominium units in four 8-story buildings and 15 townhomes, substantially less density than the original plan. This proposal was approved by all reviewing bodies and the City Council in early 2004. Construction began later in the year.



Aerial View Looking South
Issued for site plan review 5 March 2003 © copyright 2003 Roszak/ADC A21

Original Roszak Proposal
Source: Roszak/ADC



Revised Roszak Proposal (Sienna)
Source: Roszak/ADC

Another Roszak/ADC project was constructed in 2003-2004 at 1572 Maple Avenue. This included 28 condominium units in a 7-story building with businesses on the ground floor. The price range of its 2-3 bedroom units ranged from \$318,000 to \$655,000, clearly substantiating once again the market’s appetite for upscale housing downtown.

The trend of new restaurants opening in downtown also came under scrutiny. In March, 2003 the City Council acted on its concern over too many fast food restaurants and the perception of a litter and garbage problem due to such businesses and their customers. It denied a special use permit to an applicant for another fast food restaurant, partially on the basis that several similar businesses were located nearby. Yet, shortly thereafter, the City Council approved an application for a popcorn shop at 1739 Sherman Avenue.

On the down side was an announcement by the Chicago Transit Authority in April that Evanston would not receive the full \$33 million to repair or replace six viaducts on the Purple Line in Evanston as had been stated in the fiscal 2001-2005 capital program of the CTA. Only the \$7.5 million needed to renovate the Main Street Viaduct was to be included in a revised CTA budget. City officials along with U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, State Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg, State Rep. Julie Hamos, and Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin continued to lobby for the reinstatement of the previously budgeted funding. Progress was evident when CTA agreed to add funds for the replacement of at least one downtown viaduct and cooperate with the city to provide temporary “designer” panels over unsightly viaducts.

The New Urban News took note of downtown Evanston's achievements in its June issue with an article by its Senior Editor, Philip Langdon, titled "Lessons of a Satellite City: How Downtown Evanston Went From Stodgy to Sizzling." And, the August 1 edition of the Chicago Tribune featured Part 3 of an extended article, "Welcome to Unauthorized Suburbia," in which downtown Evanston was declared to be "Number 1" of the ten best suburban downtowns in the Chicago region.

How does a not-so-big city go from watching its department stores shut down to experiencing an enormous influx of eating places, apartment and condos, entertainment, and other signs of urban vitality? Some of the answers can be found in Evanston, Illinois, a university town of 73,000 on Chicago's northern border.

In the 1980's, Evanston wore an apprehensive expression. The 8.5 square mile city had lost, or would soon lose, every one of its department stores and furniture stores. The era of the traditional retail hub, with anchor stores attracting people from miles around, was ending.

If you visit Evanston today, you'll find quite a different atmosphere. No matter whether it's a warm summer afternoon or a freezing winter night, there are always people out in downtown Evanston. The big old stores may be gone, but retailing of a different kind is strong, and the downtown is livelier than at any time in the past 30 years.

Evanston's transformation contains lessons applicable to many communities, both smaller and larger.

Philip Langdon, "Lessons of a satellite city: How downtown Evanston went from stodgy to sizzling," New Urban News, June, 2003, p. 11.

In July, 2003 the Evanston Athletic Club, 1723 Benson Avenue, announced a \$5 million expansion and renovation project that will nearly double its space. New features will include a rooftop lap pool and sundeck, outdoor climbing wall, day spa, café, two story atrium and cardio equipment. However, this project remains "on hold."

Adding to the vitality of downtown during the year were several new businesses. Pivot Point International (a beauty academy) moved into One Rotary Center; the Harris Bank and New Race Logix (sporting goods and café) moved into the Church Street Station along with That Little Mexican Café; Bill's Blues opened at 1029 Davis Street; Koi Restaurant opened at 624 Davis Street; Aladdin's Eatery opened at 622 Davis Street; Sashimi! Sashimi! and Bombay Garden restaurants opened in the Carlson Building on Church Street; and Jamaica Café was scheduled to open at 618 ½ Church. Bombay Garden closed in 2004.

By September, downtown included 8.3 million square feet of floor space, according to Evmark, 24% office space, 16% retail space and 60% residential, public and institutional. Although the office vacancy rate was 15.5%, it was better than the 19.4% vacancy for the suburban market overall.

Also that month, the Orrington Hotel LLC, an affiliate of Greenfield Partners, applied for a Planned-Unit Development permit to renovate the existing hotel on Orrington Avenue, add a conference and meeting center, and construct 3-stories for approximately 29 multi-family dwellings above the existing 4-story parking garage at 1717-1725 Sherman Avenue. The developers bought out the lease of McDonald's at the corner of Church and Orrington, and announced plans to replace it with an "upscale" restaurant. The hotel was closed in its entirety at the end of the year and reopened in October, 2004.



Hotel Orrington

Since 1952 the Alonzo C. Mather Foundation has cared for North Shore senior citizens in its retirement home for women (designed by Child & Smith) at the northeast corner of Davis Street and Hinman Avenue. It now serves both men and women as an assisted living facility. In 1990 the Foundation assumed responsibility for The Georgian, across Davis Street, a retirement community for independent living.

This facility has been renamed Mather Place at The Georgian. Now called Mather Lifeways, the parent organization owns the Mather Pavilion at Wagner for assisted and skilled care residents on Foster Avenue in Evanston and another independent living facility in Wilmette. In December 2003, Mather Lifeways announced plans to redevelop its two properties on Davis Street to create a \$125 million unified, state-of-the-art retirement community. It would include 250 apartment homes, 24 assisted living suites and 36 long-term-care suites, underground parking for 250 cars, an underground corridor access between the two new buildings, common areas for recreation, fitness, relaxation, entertaining, dining and life-long learning, and outdoor gardens. The project was to be constructed in phases, starting in 2006 and ending in 2010.

Some enthusiastic supporters of historic preservation in Evanston objected to the demolition of The Georgian, though the building was not on a local, state or national register of historic places. Some nearby residents objected to the project's scale. The debate continued for several months, while many seniors were signing up for the new homes and placing a \$1,000 deposit in escrow with Mather Lifeways. In mid 2004 the City Council denied local historic recognition which, if provided, would have required the adaptive reuse of The Georgian. Preservationists continued to seek state and federal recognition which would highlight the merits of the building, but would not preclude its demolition.



Mather Lifeways Proposal
Source: Mather Lifeways

Also in late 2003 (November), Winthrop Properties submitted plans along with an application for Planned-Unit Development zoning related to redevelopment of 1567 Maple Avenue. The proposal, as amended following initial meetings with the Site Plan and Architecture Review Committee, included 165 condominium units, approximately 4,500 sq. ft. of business floor space, and four stories of required parking in a 220-foot tall building. The existing zoning district would only permit 96 units and a maximum height of 125 feet. When the proposal was reviewed by the Plan Commission in September, 2004, the Commission unanimously recommended rejection to the City Council, primarily because of its bulk, its height, and its architecture. The developer withdrew the proposal rather than submit it to the City Council, which technically could reject the Commission's recommendation and approve the project. This would have been unlikely.

September, 2004 witnessed the release of the [Downtown Evanston Visioning Process Final Report](#). Sponsored by the City of Evanston and Evmark, the process included two workshops with over 50 community leaders from the public and private sectors held in May. The first dealt with Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats; the second dealt with Vision, Goals, Strategies, and Initiatives.

Recommend objectives are:

- Enhance downtown’s livability through higher quality development and better design that places more emphasis on the human scale and pedestrian activity;
- Create efficient traffic patterns and a user friendly parking system;
- Establish strategies that enhance Downtown’s overall economic vitality.

Implementation strategies are:

- Create a comprehensive traffic and parking plan;
- Create a retail marketing/merchandising plan;
- Start physical planning/design initiatives;
- Revise development standards;
- Research potential for cultural/arts theme.

Approximately 50 more specific recommendations were included under the above categories, as well as 25 more suggestions to be given further consideration.

Although the report presented a more general direction than a specific plan of action, it represented a significant consensus among disparate participants to think of downtown as a place to live, not just a center of business, and to focus more attention on design and the pedestrian environment.

In addition, the visioning process triggered two detailed studies, one related to downtown parking and the other related to existing and potential retailing. Both reports were due from the selected consultants early in 2005.

In November Northwestern University announced that it had acquired the privately owned 1800 Sherman office building, to which it intends to move some of its administrative functions and initially occupy approximately 40 percent of the upper floor space. This action reverses a trend of several decades, i.e. the university selling downtown property and returning it to the tax rolls. This action in this block was especially surprising, because the City Council had made such an effort over the past 30 years to convert it from a tax exempt, city-owned public parking lot to revenue producing real estate development in the Downtown II Tax Increment Financing District.

To mitigate the fiscal impact, Northwestern University announced that it would donate more than \$2 million to the City and its school districts, and will continue to pay property taxes on the portion of the building that accommodates private businesses. However, the long-term fiscal impact remains undetermined.

New events in 2005 further dramatized the transition of Downtown Evanston from “suburban” to “urban”. For example, one of the first major municipal revitalization projects of the 1960s, the Sherman Avenue parking garage, was demolished to make way for a 21st century project, Sherman Plaza. Another small, but significant, change resulted from the removal of the Northwestern University/Evanston Research Park pylon at the Emerson Street gateway to downtown, symbolizing the reduced stature of the research park and the possibility of higher density development in this area.

Although no new project was actually completed or opened in 2005, Evanston residents witnessed two of the largest construction projects in city history, Sherman Plaza in the heart of the downtown, and Sienna at 1100 Clark Street. They brought with them heavy equipment, crews of workers, displaced parking facilities, closed streets and traffic lanes, rerouted pedestrian paths and often mud. At times up to four giant cranes operated concurrently on the Sherman Plaza project, and concrete trucks lined Benson and/or Davis Streets. Observers had to be impressed with the magnitude and complexity of this undertaking, especially through the harsh winter months.

In January, Mid-America Real Estate and Goodman Williams Group released a report prepared for the City and Evmark, Retail Market Analysis and Strategy Recommendations for Downtown Evanston. It stated: “The retail market in Downtown Evanston is strong and is poised to expand in the coming years.” Retail categories that appeared to be strong included:

- Specialty foods
- Apparel, accessories and other soft goods
- Household furniture, furnishings, and decor
- Personal/beauty products
- Office supplies
- Restaurants

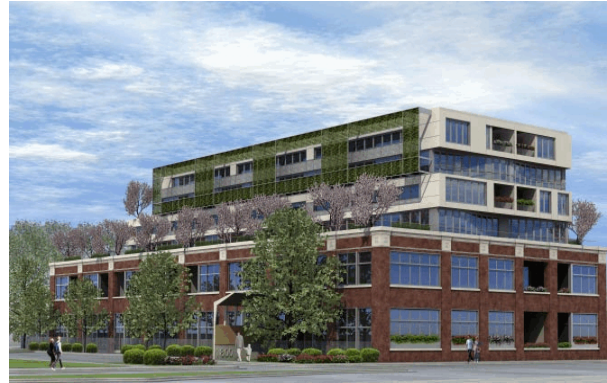
Recommendations included the following:

- Encourage more trips from residents of neighborhoods on Chicago's north side and communities north of Evanston;
- Improve wayfinding into Downtown Evanston;
- Improve signage and wayfinding within the downtown;
- Provide updated, user-friendly marketing materials to patrons of the downtown;
- Encourage growth of the daytime population;
- Institute a formal outreach program to welcome new downtown residents;
- Encourage more nighttime cultural offerings;
- Enhance the public spaces and visual appeal of downtown;
- Encourage the establishment of adequate funding sources to support ongoing management and marketing functions in the downtown.

The report also acknowledged that "a new Civic Center with as many as 600 employees would be a welcome addition to the daytime population in Downtown." This, of course, remains a contested issue in the community.

Two residential condo projects were approved by the City Council and entered the construction phase. They are located on the west side of Ridge Avenue (technically across the street from downtown). One at 1800 Ridge, called Evanston's Elegant Edge, involved the adaptive reuse and expansion of a former commercial building which had been purchased by the Vineyard Christian Fellowship and was the site of a lawsuit between the church and the city. The church won the case but decided to relocate elsewhere in the community. This 34-unit project with 1-4 bedroom residences was developed by Engel & Cunningham Development and designed by Norsman Architects, Ltd. Asking prices ranged from \$320,000 to over \$750,000.

The second is the southwest corner of Green Bay Road and Emerson Street. It is called Grand Bend @ Green Bay. This entirely new 49-unit building provides for 1-3 bedroom units in the price range of \$249,00 to \$734,900. This project was developed by Ferris Homes of Northbrook and designed by Goldberg Downey Architects, Inc.



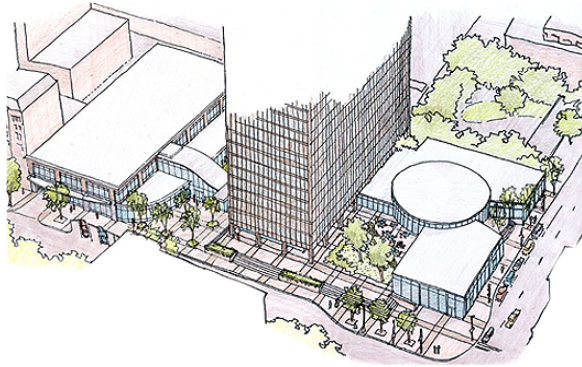
Evanston's Elegant Edge



Grand Bend @ Green Bay Under Construction

Two other projects were approved by the City Council in 2005 with construction to begin in 2006. The first of these, approved in June, involved an amendment of the planned-unit development zoning for the precedent-setting, high-rise project constructed in the late 1960's at 1603 Orrington, known over time as the State National Bank Plaza, NBD Plaza, Bank One Plaza, and now the Chase Bank Plaza. It involves adaptive reuse of the former two-story Borders Bookstore building for new retailers, the physical connection of that building to the 20-story office tower, and the construction of new, one-story retail spaces totaling approximately 11,000 sq. ft. at the corner of Orrington Avenue and Davis Street and on the east side of the existing rotunda on Davis Street. The entrance ramp to underground parking would be relocated at grade on Orrington Avenue and a limited amount of surface parking would be provided off the alley. The architect is the Yas/Fischel Partnership, and the developer is Golub & Company. This project was approved by the City Council, but it has been delayed by a request from the developer to the City

for financial assistance to reconstruct the underground parking entrance. The City has not agreed to this request and the developer is reconsidering the project.



Chase Bank Plaza
Source: Yas Architecture, L.L.C.

The second project was approved in September, a 126-unit, 180-foot tall residential condo building called the Winthrop Club to be located at 1567 Maple Avenue. The project also included 5,200 sq. ft. of ground-level retail space and 210 enclosed parking spaces. Developed by Winthrop Properties, and designed by Fitzgerald Associates, this project incorporated numerous revisions from that which was originally submitted to the city in 2004. Condo prices for 1-3 bedroom units range from \$300,000 to \$1,500,000. This project will be the first of its kind in Evanston to be awarded LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the U.S. Green Building Council.



Winthrop Club
Source: Winthrop Properties

In February, the Mather Lifeways retirement community (first proposed in 2003) received a shot-in-the-arm when the National Register of Historic Places denied a nomination to the State of Illinois because it did not adequately support the eligibility of the Georgian, one of the two existing buildings. In December the Plan Commission approved the Mather proposal following almost six months of public hearings and debate in that forum. In addition, up to that point, the Mather staff had met with neighborhood interests on over 50 occasions. It was finally approved by the City Council in March, 2006. In so doing, the City Council required an increase of the building setbacks on the north side of Davis Street from 10 feet to 20 feet and on the south side from zero to 10 feet. To compensate Mather Lifeways it permitted a partial 11th floor on the north building.

Less obvious to the general public were the several new projects which entered the city's review process in 2005. At 1881 Oak Avenue (fronting on Emerson Street) Carroll Properties, Inc. submitted a proposal for one of the last vacant sites in the research park. The proposal envisioned an 18-story mixed-use building incorporating 7,000 sq. ft. of business on the ground floor, 175 residential condo units above, and 175 enclosed parking spaces. The architect is Fritz Biederman. The project was rejected by the city's Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee, its Plan Commission and Design Evanston, primarily because of its height and its location in a downtown "Transition Zone." However, the City Council approved a slightly revised plan in July, 2006, citing its positive impact on the tax base.

Abutting this property to the east is 1890 Maple Avenue, one of the first office buildings constructed in the research park by Charles Shaw & Co. Here Atira Hotels proposed to construct an extended-stay hotel with 126 to 158 rooms designed by Steve Cavanaugh, architect. The building would be 10 stories in height. The developer proposed to lease parking spaces in the city's Maple Avenue garage rather than provide on-site parking. Subsequently, the developer withdrew the project.

Two projects proposed at the intersection of Davis Street and Chicago Avenue would dramatically change the character of that area. At the northwest corner (601-603 Davis/1604-1608 Chicago) the John Buck Company submitted a planned development proposal for the sites abutting its Park Evanston project. The proposal would preserve the historic two-story University Building on the corner and construct on the narrow vacant property west of it (owned by the same party) a 20-story building designed by Nagle, Hartray, Danker, Kagan, McKay containing 8,000 sq. ft. of ground floor business and 63 residential condos above. The building would provide 90 enclosed parking spaces with vehicular access from the adjacent parking garage north of it rather than from Davis Street, avoiding a curb cut and entrance which would disrupt business and pedestrian traffic. Ten additional surface parking spaces are to be located due north of the University Building. Further review of the project is dependent on the developer obtaining agreement from owners of the Chase Bank drive-thru property to permit windows on the west facade of the new condo building.

On the southeast corner of this intersection Optima proposed its fourth mixed-use building in downtown. This modern piece of architecture would provide 10,000 sq. ft. of business on the ground floor, 30,000 sq. ft. of offices on the 2nd and 3rd floors and 150 to 175 residential condos with 1-3 bedrooms on the upper 15 floors. They would range in price from \$350,000 to \$1,500,000. Optima proposed to vacate a portion of the east-west alley that intersects with Chicago Avenue in order to consolidate several existing properties into one site and proposed to provide access to 350 enclosed parking spaces from the mid-block north-south alley. Two floors of parking would be underground and four floors would be above ground. Although lauded by Design Evanston and others for its architectural merit, the project was opposed by many neighbors and the Plan Commission, primarily for its height, density and alley vacation. The City Council rejected the project in July, 2006.

The future of Chicago Transit Authority viaducts in the downtown has been a community concern for several years. Beginning in October 2004 the CTA met with SPAARC to submit designs for new viaducts and abutments over Church, Davis and Grove Streets (also Greenleaf and Dempster Streets

outside the downtown.) The design engineer is Edwards and Kelcey and the architect is Ross Barney & Jankowski. The proposed prototype design for these clear span girder viaducts responds to three standards:

- Minimize visual impact of the structure and its support.
- Open up and widen street and sidewalk areas below the viaducts.
- Create a consistent aesthetic for all replacement viaducts and abutments.

For most practical purposes, the design is very similar to that of new viaduct installed by the CTA at Main Street in 2005. At a November press conference on the Main Street viaduct CTA President Frank Kruesi said that the CTA board was committed to one downtown viaduct replacement in 2006. Selection of which viaduct it would be was determined jointly with city officials. It was the Church Street viaduct. Construction was completed in fall 2006.



New Church Street Viaduct

A privately prepared concept plan for redevelopment of the triangular block north of Fountain Square was circulated informally in 2005 and drew mixed reactions from some observers. Although it never did see the light of day officially, it suggested that interested public and private parties are giving this block serious thought. Such interest was intensified as the Sherman Plaza project neared completion. In June, 2006 Evanston developer Thomas Roszak proposed a mixed-use project for the entire block, including a 38-story hotel-condo building. At the time, Mr. Roszak did not control the real estate and the project was considered premature by City officials.

Subsequently, other developers have also approached the existing property owners and the City, floating alternative concepts. Although the City does not have specific design guidelines for this block, it is clear that any planned development must provide for an expanded Fountain Square.



Rozzak Fountain Square Block Proposal
Source: Roszak/ADC

As if to commemorate the opening of Old Orchard shopping center 50 years ago, Sherman Plaza celebrated its grand opening in the fall of 2006, proving downtown Evanston's resiliency and bringing back pedestrian oriented businesses to the 1600 Sherman block. In addition to the relocated and expanded Barnes & Noble Booksellers, other businesses included:

- LA Fitness
- Jos. A. Bank
- Ann Taylor Loft
- Pier 1 Imports

- Cereality
- Red Door Spa
- White Hen
- Lakeside Eye Care
- Washington Mutual
- Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions
- Rubloff Real Estate
- Supercuts

Such businesses will certainly heighten interest in existing, new and expanded retailing on the east side of Sherman Avenue. These properties and their ground level businesses have experienced two years of disruption caused by demolition and construction across the street. They are now likely to benefit significantly from increased pedestrian activity generated by Sherman Plaza.

This brings to a fitting conclusion this chapter, the Big Bang (1996-2006), but not the continued revitalization destined for downtown Evanston. For example, redevelopment of the Fountain Square block has the potential of becoming the "icing on the cake" – if properly planned and designed. That chapter of the revitalization story, however, will be left to others to document.



Sherman Plaza Looking South



Sherman Plaza Looking West

CHAPTER 11 LOCATION MAP

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sherman Avenue Parking Garage 2. NU/Evanston Research Park 3. Church Street Plaza Parking 4. Church Street Plaza Pavilion 5. Hilton Garden Inn 6. 909 Davis Street 7. Optima Views and Borders 8. 1415 and 1421 Sherman Condos 9. Church Street Station 10. YMCA Family Center 11. Metra ADA Ramps | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Optima Towers 13. Restored Chandler's 14. 622 Davis Street 15. Sherman Plaza 16. The Reserve 17. Optima Horizons 18. Music Institute of Chicago 19. Vineyard Christian Fellowship 20. Rosack/1100 Clark Street 21. 1572 Maple Condos 22. Evanston Athletic Club | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Orrington Hotel 24. Mather Lifeways 25. Winthrop Club 26. 1800 Sherman 27. Evanston's Elegant Edge 28. Grand Bend at Green Bay 29. Chase Bank Plaza 30. Carroll Place 31. CTA Viaduct |
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THE BIG BANG SUMMARY

<u>Project</u>	<u>Developer</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>	<u>Uses</u>	<u>Space</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Park Evanston	John Buck Co.	Harry Weese Associates	1997	Rental Apts. Retail Parking	283 units 40,000 s.f. 383 spaces	\$40.0 m
Ivy Court	Broadacre Development	Yas Fischel Partnership	1998	Townhouses	30 units	\$5.7 m
Chandler's Bldg.	Davis Street Land Company	Hollibird & Root	1999	Offices Retail	20,000 s.f. 3,500 s.f.	\$1.5 m
1880 Oak Avenue	Scribcor, Inc.	Eckenhoff Saunders	1999	Offices Parking	50,000 s.f. 16 spaces	N.A.
Maple Avenue Parking Garage	City of Evanston & Arthur Hill & Co.	Walker Parking	2000	Parking	1,460 spaces	\$22.0 m
Church Street Plaza Main Pavilion	Arthur Hill & Co.	Elbasani & Logan	2000	Movie Theater Retail/Restaurants	18 screens 140,000 s.f.	\$30.0 m
ENH Research Institute Bldg.	Mesirow Stein	Eckenhoff Saunders	2001	Research Parking	84,000 s.f. 146 spaces	\$10.0 m
Hilton Garden Inn	Regent Partners/ Winston Hotels	Cooper Carey	2001	Hotel	175 rooms	\$11.1 m
1415 Sherman Avenue	Roszak/ADC	Roszak/ADC	2001	Condos Office Parking	29 units 2,700 s.f. 33 spaces	\$3.1 m
1421 Sherman Avenue	Roszak/ADC	Roszak/ADC	2001	Condos Office Parking	24 units 2,000 s.f. 27 spaces	\$2.8 m
Optima Towers	Optima	Optima	2002	Condos Retail Parking	105 units 8,000 s.f. 123 spaces	\$11.5 m
YMCA Family Activity Center	YMCA	LaROI Architects	2002	Fitness Parking	21,000 s.f. 118 spaces	N.A.
Optima Views	Optima	Optima	2003	Condos Retail Parking	207 units 9,400 s.f. 227 spaces	\$71.5 m*
Borders Books & Music	Arthur Hill & Co.	Perkins & Will	2003	Retail	36,400 s.f.	N.A.
909 Davis Street	Mesirow Stein Arthur Hill & Co.	OWP&P	2003	Office Retail Parking	178,000 s.f. 12,000 s.f. 55 spaces	N.A.
Church Street Station	Focus	Otis Koglin Wilson	2003	Condos Retail Parking	105 units 12,600 s.f. 169 spaces	\$10.0 m

*Building value, not construction cost

1622 - 1624 Davis Street	Davis Street Land Company	Schroeder, Murchie, Laya Associates	2003	Retail/Restaurants Office Apartment	8,500 s.f 11,500 s.f 1 unit	\$1.2 m for new bldg.
Music Institute of Chicago (adaptive reuse)	Music Institute of Chicago	Otis Koglin Wilson	2003	Concert Hall	600 seats	N.A.
Optima Horizons	Optima	Optima	2004	Condos Retail Parking	248 units 6,500 s.f 573 spaces	\$79.0 m*
1572 Maple Avenue	Rozsak/ADC	Rozsak/ADC	2004	Condos Retail Parking	28 units 2,500 s.f. 46 spaces	\$1.0.0 m
Orrington Hotel (adaptive reuse)	Greenfield Partners	DeStefano & Partners	2004	Hotel Conference Center Condos Retail/Restaurant Parking	269 rooms 20,000 s.f 27 units 13,000 s.f 234 spaces	\$34.0 m plus condos to be built
The Reserve	Atlantic Realty	Yas/Fischel	2004	Apartments Parking	195 units 213 spaces	N.A.
Sherman Plaza	Klutznick-Fisher Kaiser Evanston Focus Development	Daniel P. Coffey & Associates Otis Koglin Wilson	2006	Condos Retail Fitness Parking	252 units 156,822 s.f. 60,000 s.f. 1,585 spaces	\$190.0 m
Sienna 1100 Clark Street	Rozsak/ADC	Rozsak/ADC	Under Construction	Condos Townhomes Business Parking	220 units 17 units 5,000 s.f. 850 spaces	\$84.0 m
Mather Lifeways	Mather Lifeways	Solomon, Cordwell, Buenz	Approved	Apartments, Assisted Living Long-term Care Parking	250 units 24 units 36 units 250 spaces	\$200.0m
Winthrop Club	Winthrop Properties	Fitzgerald & Associates	Approved	Condos Retail Parking	126 units 5,200 s.f. 210 spaces	\$75.0m
Evanston's Elegant Edge	Engel & Cunningham Development	Norsman Architects, Ltd.	Under Construction	Condos Parking	34 units 53 spaces	N.A.
Grand Bend @ Green Bay	Ferris Homes	Goldberg Downey Architects, Inc.	Under Construction	Condos Parking	49 units 49 spaces	N.A.
Chase Bank Plaza Addition	Golub & Company	Yas/Fischel Partnership	Approved	Retail Parking	13,600 s.f. 20 spaces	N.A.
Carroll Place	Carroll Properties, Inc.	Fritz Biederman	Approved	Condos Retail Parking	175 units 7,000 s.f. 175 spaces	N.A.
Totals				Residential Retail/office Parking	2,455 units 837,700 s.f. 5,555 spaces	
*Building value, not construction cost						

Sources: varied