

## Conflicts of U2 District Proposal with Evanston Comprehensive Plan

Plan Section	Value/Goal/ statement	Conflict w/ U2 District Proposal/Rezoning
<p><b>Values &amp; Goals I. Land Use</b></p>	<p>The growth and evolution of Evanston’s institutions should not have an adverse impact upon the residentially-zoned adjacent neighborhoods.</p>	<p>The growth resulting from the proposed project would have adverse noise, light, traffic, parking, air quality, and quality-of-life impacts upon the adjacent and nearby residentially zoned neighborhoods of Evanston and Wilmette.</p> <p>Even if the noise levels outside the venues are below hearing-damage levels, they will be a too-frequent intrusion on daily life, considered noise pollution under Illinois law, interfering with conversation, concentration, mental health, work by the large number of home-based employees and businesses in the surrounding areas, students attempting to study or complete assignments, and the “quiet enjoyment of the premises” that is the right of every resident.</p> <p>Even if only the substandard parking lot is filled with cars, the proposed annual increase in intensity of use represents scores of thousands of additional vehicle trips, engines starting and idling, and perhaps hundreds of additional hours that Central Street is clogged. Much of this extensive vehicle activity will extend well past normal bedtimes. More probably, however, most guests will continue to park wherever they can, in the neighborhoods.</p> <p>Cumulatively, the arrival, departure, engine starting, and idling in parking lots and traffic by passenger vehicles, buses, and trucks (primarily diesel) for not only attendees but performers, equipment, and vendors will emit, conservatively, an additional five to twenty-five tons of greenhouse gases and pollutants, in the stadium district neighborhood each event.</p> <p>The dramatic increase in events and ancillary business activity will also increase by multiples the amount of light pollution the neighborhood presently experiences.</p>
<p><b>Values &amp; Goals III. Circulation</b></p>	<p>The safety and convenience of pedestrians and bicyclists should be a priority (Ch. 12).</p>	<p>Central Street is already considered so busy and narrow that, except for the far western portion of the street, which has bike lanes, cyclists are instead diverted by City of Evanston plans and signage to Lincoln Avenue. That is during normal traffic. Before and after sports events, congested Central Street becomes a hazard for average bikers. Moreover, such events in the stadium district push vehicle traffic to higher-than-normal levels on Lincoln and other routes that bikers use. Adding thousands of vehicles dozens of additional times per year to streets surrounding the U2 District can only make those streets less safe and less convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists. Increased usage must also necessarily accelerate wear and tear, marginally, on Evanston roads.</p>

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<p><b>Values &amp; Goals</b> <b>IV. Community Environment</b></p>	<p>The historic heritage of Evanston should continue to be identified and preserved for the benefit of current and future residents (Ch. 14).</p>	<p>The initial permitting of the construction of Dyche Stadium was touted by the <i>Evanston Review</i> in 1925 as the most important City decision made that year. As a nearly century-old structure dating to the collegiate football craze in the raccoon-coat “Roaring 20s,” the existing stadium has historical and architectural significance. Only two dozen college stadiums in the United States (including those of Harvard and Yale) are older. In many other countries, communities maintain cathedrals, temples, bridges, and other large institutional buildings many centuries after construction, and they are sources of civic pride and tourism. Even most of the Colosseum in Rome still stands almost 2000 years later, despite earthquake, war, lightning, vandalism, and neglect. Consigning the existing Northwestern stadium to be one more victim of disposable culture, by demolishing it, does nothing for the historic heritage of Evanston. It undermines it.</p>
	<p>Buildings and landscaping should be of attractive, interesting and compatible design (Ch.13).</p>	<p>The proposed building and landscape, like most renderings, are, in and of themselves, and in the abstract, attractive and interesting on paper/onscreen, albeit somewhat generically modern. The before-and-after renderings, however, do vividly illustrate that the principal visual impact of the proposed development will be to replace an existing stadium structure that currently blends into the treetops, from most views, with a mass that immediately becomes the dominant feature, stark against the sky, from most views, with significantly increased signage lighting at night, and seemingly some direct sight lines from within the stadium to the exterior, which will exude bright light.</p> <p>The stadium also will grow much taller on the south end, near Central Street, which will generate a feeling of crowding rather than public gathering space, akin to the narrow sidewalk below the left field bleachers at Wrigley Field.</p> <p>Most residences surrounding the U2 district are single-family homes and older apartment complexes dating to the early-to-mid 20th century. The new stadium bulk, more space-age and digital-era in style than anything nearby, us at odds with the architectural principle of compatibility with surroundings. The new design increases sense of separation from the neighborhood; more accurately, the principal structure seeks to make a grandiose statement of power and authority <i>over</i> its surroundings. The nearby residences, instead of being respected as neighbors by the structure, will become, visually, more like vassals to the castle of a local lord.</p>

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Pt. 1, Ch. 2	P/A: Preserve neighborhood character while supporting redevelopment efforts that add to neighborhood desirability.	<p>The applicant cannot have it both ways, saying everywhere else in Evanston that this project will be transformational, while claiming to the City to have minimal to no impact on the neighborhood. Transforming the U2 district into one where its primary use is entertainment necessarily warps neighborhood character.</p> <p>It is critical to understand the housing stock and its occupants, which Northwestern might do better if it had sought even one public meeting with Central Street Neighbors Association or Most Livable City Association. Except for some development directly along Central Street, the housing stock around the district is predominantly single-family homes of two or more bedrooms, i.e., move-up homes for families with school-age children, not starter homes. The “neighborhood desirability” stems from residential character. Many residents lived elsewhere in Evanston first before purchasing their present home.</p> <p>Almost no buyer purposely moves to such a neighborhood hoping that it will become noisier and more congested. No family with children looks to move to where studying or schoolwork, or putting a child to sleep, will be interrupted or made more difficult by unwanted sound, for hours, of even 70, 75, or 80 decibels. So, for decades, sellers and their agents have sought to calm potential buyers by assuring that the stadium only hosts crowds a handful of times per year. The smaller but still large non-stadium crowds, however, are rarely mentioned, and often come as a surprise to buyers.</p> <p>The project does not preserve neighborhood character, but would intentionally transform it. An economic incentive for many structures will be to support short-term rentals, which Evanston has sought to discourage, and to tear down many of the 1890s-1920s houses in favor of new, less affordable, entrepreneurial, multi-unit buildings, as I Wrigleyville.</p>
	P/A: Encourage creative adaptive reuse of properties available for redevelopment using zoning standards and the Site Plan and Appearance Review process to protect historic character.	Demolition of a 1920s local landmark and wholesale change of the zoning ordinance is the opposite of this “adaptive reuse” action item. Creation of incentives to replace existing housing stock, likewise.

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Pt. 1, Ch. 4	P/A: Monitor Central Street... in the appropriate locations encouraging residential and residential/commercial mixed-use developments in order to enhance the existing character of the neighborhood.	Again, this project will not enhance the existing character of the neighborhood, it will transform it. The closest analogy is Wrigley Field, where most of the modest-income residents of what was part of Uptown were displaced by the surrounding neighborhood's transformation into a party district following the Cubs' 1988 move to night baseball games. Although the ballpark was not the only factor, rents became unaffordable for longtime residents, and it is now often extremely difficult to impossible for a casual visitor to park on neighborhood streets. Brick-and-mortar retail in Wrigleyville has been replaced in many instances with bars that thrive on nightlife and transient stadium attendees "pre-gaming" and after-game continuations. However, that will not be economically viable around the U2 district without a far greater intensity of use than "six concerts."
	P/A: Protect and enhance the traditional character of neighborhood business districts	The project will in some respects conflict or even compete with neighborhood business districts. The proposed stadium design suggests some permanent retail may be an intended use of the ground floor. Congestion already makes shopping at Central Street businesses more difficult on football and basketball game and large stadium event days.
Pt. 1, Ch. 6	GOAL: Support the growth and evolution of institutions so long as the growth does not have an adverse impact upon the residentially-zoned adjacent neighborhoods	See comments on Pt. Ch. 2 and Pt. 1 Ch. 4 above.
	Objective: Assure that institutional development enhances surrounding neighborhoods as well as the economic development of Evanston.	See comments on Pt. 1 Ch. 2 and Pt. 1 Ch. 4 above. This institutional development does not enhance surrounding neighborhoods, it is <i>at the expense</i> of surrounding neighborhoods. Comments from some project advocates make this overt, to sacrifice neighborhood residents for perceived gain elsewhere.
	P/A: Monitor institutional development and evolution using land use regulations to guide effects and limit negative impacts on the surrounding community and adjoining land uses.	See comments on Pt. 1 Ch. 2 and Pt. 1 Ch. 4 above. There has been insufficient monitoring as is. Any study with integrity would document the clogging of Central Street on not just football game days but basketball game days and nights. The corridor for commute of Evanston's two largest employers as well as many others is already not physically capable of handling additional traffic of even the vehicles that come to the much-smaller crowds at Welsh-Ryan Arena without clogging Central Street and Lincoln Street.

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<b>Pt. V, Ch. 16: Environment</b>	P/A: Maintain and enforce policies that minimize noise pollution.	<p>The project does not minimize existing noise pollution at all, and without question would significantly add to noise pollution; the only question is by how much. It is important to remember that while music is pleasant for those who voluntarily listen to it, any unwanted sound source audible for hours, whether lawn service machinery or even one boombox, can be extremely unpleasant for those who have to listen to it involuntarily.</p> <p>An extended period of demolition and construction on the scale projected will also be a noise disruption for an extended time with little precedent in any Evanston residential neighborhood.</p>
<b>Plan (29)</b>	The City should continue to encourage activities of neighborhood groups (block clubs, neighborhood watches, etc.). ...active neighborhood groups in the area can help foster a sense of pride and ownership among residents. The City should also continue the practice of assisting residents to address quality of life concerns through neighborhood-based planning activities.	How this Project has proceeded to date is by marginalizing and attempting to isolate rather than supporting neighborhood groups. The process has not been one of “neighborhood-based planning” but external, top-based pushdown.
<b>Plan (30)</b>	When opportunities for positive new development or redevelopment emerge, the City should (1) encourage creative ideas and adaptive reuses (placing new uses in existing structures), and (2) guide change to enhance the quality of neighborhoods.	See comments on Pt. 1 Ch. 2 and Pt. 1 Ch. 4 above, as well as comments above on adaptive reuse and preserving historic heritage. The Project undermines all these.

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<b>Plan (31)</b>	building designs and site plans should be consistent with the feel of existing neighborhoods. Green space in neighborhoods should be preserved as much as possible, whether it is in a public park, a parkway along a street, or in private front and side yards.	See comments on Community Environment above. The design and site plan is at best indifferent to, and at worst domineering over, the feel of the existing neighborhood. Also, a large green space in the U2 district becomes parking in the plans proposed.
<b>Plan (44)</b>	The City's Zoning Ordinance must be carefully enforced in order to prevent undesired spillover effects related to business activity located in residential areas.	<p>The project is incompatible with the Zoning Ordinance being "carefully enforced." It requires amending that ordinance. City zoning is designed to prevent spillover in the U2 district. The proposed text amendment instead adds much more business activity to a residential area, opening it up to dramatically increased amounts of outside traffic.</p> <p>The project proposal is noticeably deficient in discussion of tailgating, "pre-gaming," and similar pre-event gathering activity, which is a notable and impactful feature of not only athletic events but mass concerts, creating elevated sound levels and residential disruption well beyond the timeframe of such events, both before and after.</p>
<b>Plan (57-58) Institutions</b>	enforcing the standards of the City's Zoning Ordinance is essential if proposed changes would disrupt the residential character and environment of surrounding neighborhoods. Special overlay districts for the hospitals or special zoning districts for university uses are the primary mechanisms for assessing and regulating such change.	The proposed amendment and development do not enforce the existing standards, they seek to change the standards. This subverts the "primary regulatory mechanism" for assessing and regulating the special district for university use.
<b>Plan (59) Public Education</b>	Quality education affects land use planning because it is a key factor in household location decisions.	Actual and potential interference with homework or studying for tests will be disruptive to education in nearby neighborhoods. A greatly increased number of events will cause traffic and parking pressures that conflict with evening uses of Kingsley, Orrington, and Haven schools.

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<p><b>Plan (103) Areas with Significant Parking Shortages</b></p>	<p>Parking shortages are most prevalent in neighborhoods abutting business districts, institutions (e.g., Northwestern University, hospitals, or schools), train stations, or a combination of such land uses. Particularly noted are the Central Street/ Green Bay Road business district....Another type of parking shortage is related to the presence of large institutions. This applies especially to the neighborhoods immediately west of Northwestern University. Other areas that experience this type of problem include those around Evanston and Resurrection/St. Francis Hospitals....</p>	<p>The planned changes in use can only exacerbate parking shortages.</p> <p>Existing parking for the U2 district is grossly inadequate for the attendee capacity, contrary to zoning law, and only exists because of grandfathering, and should not be permitted for a new development. The influx of vehicles for events, as is, transforms residential streets and golf course fairways into parking lots.</p> <p>The projected use of mass transit by most event attendees to mitigate parking and traffic concerns is based on wishful thinking rather than actual transit ridership and capacity, especially given CTA and Metra cutbacks; it also ignores what actually occurs at games or concerts at most other regional venues. Common sense, review of train and bus maps and schedules and capacity, and even a moment of thought make evident that concert attendees from suburbs such as Northbrook or Wheaton, or most Chicago neighborhoods, cannot or will not take mass transit to and from northeast Evanston.</p>
<p><b>Plan (123) Building Design</b></p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING TO SITE The height and mass of each building should be compatible with its particular site. The building site should be planned to accomplish a desirable transition between street, site, and building using setbacks and yards that take into consideration adjacent buildings and pedestrian zones.</p>	<p>See comments under Values &amp; Goals IV. Community Environment, above. The proposed project seeks to intensify the lot use and effectively decrease setbacks and buffers, both physically and visually. It will also on average physically elevate the average source of sound (loudspeakers and crowd noise) from the stadium, reducing buffer potential of trees and other buildings.</p>



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<b>Plan (124)</b>	the importance of strategic urban forestry policies needs to be underscored. ... The presence of many beautiful, old-growth elms is an asset to Evanston.... Tree trimming must ... be done properly	The plan calls for destroying 121 trees, including elms of over 3' in diameter. It will take decades to cumulatively replace the foliage and carbon sequestration of those trees.
<b>Community Landscaping and Infrastructure (125)</b>	signs, although an essential tool in marketing and communication, should be accessory components of the overall composition of a structure. Signs should not be freestanding or dominant architectural elements by themselves.	<p>Some of the proposed signage emblazoned on the principal structure in renderings appears to be unnecessarily large branding. Also, the "Wildcat Way" concept should not be a "turf" marker separating the district from neighborhood rather than engaging with it.</p> <p>Because the iterations of signage have varied in different renderings, are not necessarily integral to the project, and could change, it is difficult to say whether or not the signage will conform to standards. Any permitting of a new stadium or other buildings and structures should be careful to require review by the appropriate City staff and committee so that Central Street and the neighborhood are not subjected to the equivalent of large, permanent marketing or billboards.</p>



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<p><b>Zoning Amendment Standard (D)</b></p>	<p>Public facilities and services should be sufficient to handle the impact of the use for which the proposed amendment is offered</p>	<p>As noted above, public parking and public streets are inadequate for the proposed intensity of use. The U2 district is surrounded by physical barriers to traffic: rail viaducts, the lake and golf course on the east, few east-west streets being through streets, and the angled intersections with Green Bay Road, bottlenecking through the narrow viaducts. No planner would now locate such a district in this location.</p> <p>Increased use of water and sewer services, and groundwater pumping, has not been sufficiently addressed with transparency in the proposal and will require extended construction, disrupting neighborhoods.</p> <p>The Evanston Police Department is capable of handling likely security impacts of increased district use intensity; however, it should be recognized that such impacts will incrementally increase. While, overwhelmingly, attendees have safe and enjoyable experiences at concerts and athletic events, crime is not unknown, ranging from pickpocketing, drug-dealing, and car burglaries to occasional physical violence. Medical emergencies ranging from heat exhaustion to drug and alcohol overconsumption do occur. From Altamont to Burning Man, injury and death have been a statistically minor but regular feature of mass public gatherings, and attract disproportionate media and public attention. The resource cost to the City and its taxpayers of managing these impacts and risks should be part of the cost-benefit calculations.</p> <p>Also, while attendees assume some risk of injury in the crowds which they voluntarily join, a legitimate concern of residents is the unwanted heightened risk of Central Street and nearby streets being difficult or impassable for emergency vehicles or traffic to hospitals at a critical moment.</p>