



Renderings of proposed streetscape improvements along Devon Avenue in Rogers Park, incorporating art-filled crosswalks, creative outdoor seating, bike amenities, community mural, increased parklet, wayfinding signage, bus stop enhancements, and more, from Elevate Devon Corridor Plan released by Rogers Park Business Alliance, Edgewater Chamber of Commerce and Loyola University Chicago.

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[Renderings of proposed Elevate Devon improvements available here >>](#)

Rogers Park Business Alliance, Edgewater Chamber of Commerce and Loyola University Chicago announce **Elevate Devon Corridor Plan** strategic plan for the vibrant avenue in Rogers Park and Edgewater

A multi-year strategic plan will foster placemaking, public art, business attraction, streetscape infrastructure and more, with priority given to highlighting the community’s diverse identity, unique history, and charming characters

CHICAGO (January 31, 2023)—The nonprofits **Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA)**, **Edgewater Chamber of Commerce (ECC)** and **Loyola University Chicago (LUC)** are proud to announce the release of **Elevate Devon Corridor Plan**—a pivotal multi-year strategic plan focused on improving Devon Avenue between Sheridan Road and Ravenswood Avenue—initiated, funded, and to be implemented in partnership by RPBA, ECC and LUC. The plan will bring a series of strategic improvements including a branding initiative, arts and culture development, business activation, streetscape safety infrastructure, placemaking and landscaping, based on

community input collected over a year. For more information and a full copy of the Elevate Devon Corridor Plan, visit elevatedevon.org.

This eclectic 1-mile stretch of corridor forms the geographic border between the diverse neighborhoods of Edgewater and Rogers Park with a combined population of approximately 90,000 residents, and includes part of the Loyola University Chicago campus that serves 21,500 students and faculty. Elevate Devon will be carried out in four quarter-mile sections: Ravenswood Avenue to Clark Street, Clark Street to Newgard Avenue, Glenwood Avenue to Magnolia Avenue, and Broadway Avenue to Kenmore Avenue. Timeline of implementation of different elements and sections vary between 1 and 6+ years hence.

Key Elevate Devon improvement suggestions are embodied in five categories: **Identity and storytelling** calls for a branding campaign to be integrated into streetscape improvements and public programming for seasonal events and diverse cultural holiday celebrations; **Arts and culture** development that supports new public art, murals, and local artists that reflect the identity and history of the corridor; **Business activation** efforts that highlight and celebrate existing local businesses, attract new businesses, increase outdoor seating and public way improvements, establishing a Diverse Business Development Program, and connecting local businesses to financial and technical assistance; **Getting around safely** efforts that prioritize consistent long-term streetscape design and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders; and **Placemaking and circulation** improvements that create gathering spaces and parklets, sustainable landscaping, and additional trash and recycling receptacles.

These suggested improvements were developed based on **six community priorities identified from community input** collected over more than a year: Greater diversity of businesses and reduction of vacancies; more places to sit and dine outdoors; safer pedestrian crossings and bike routes; public art, murals and lighting; seasonal events and community fests; and improvements to facades and signage. Since December 2021, RPBA, ECC and LUC incorporated a comprehensive community engagement process to create the Elevate Devon Corridor Plan, including market study focus groups, a project launch website with a comment map, a public poll, community workshops, outdoor community pop-ups, virtual open houses, and live Q&A sessions. Throughout this process, the three partners worked closely with Loyola University Student Ambassadors, representatives from the 40th, 48th, and 49th Wards, Chicago Department of Transportation, planners and urban design specialists from Teska Associates, Inc., and a steering committee of stakeholders made up of Rogers Park and Edgewater residents and businesses.

Sandi Price, Executive Director of Rogers Park Business Alliance, shares the genesis and goal of the initiative: "The idea to develop a corridor plan for Devon Avenue originated when RPBA created the Vision Clark Street Corridor Plan in 2017. With great vitality, versatility, diversity, history, and charms, Devon Avenue is a special corridor, destination, and home to so many. We see significant potentials in the area, economically and culturally, and want to build the infrastructure that makes those potentials a reality. Elevate Devon is aimed to bring businesses here and help existing businesses thrive, build a safe neighborhood that attracts residents and improves their living environment, and amplify the characters and cultural attractions of the diverse communities. We are particularly proud that Elevate Devon was developed based on community input that revealed the most pressing needs and priorities of residents, which will inform us to shape a vibrant future for this avenue of great historical and cultural prominence."

Christina Pfitzinger, Executive Director of Edgewater Chamber of Commerce, shares the project framework: "The Elevate Devon planning process has helped build stronger connections within the community groups that coalesce in corridor, and now that it's completed, the real work begins. While part of the plan includes creating a cohesive identity for the corridor, others involve a better pedestrian experience and programming that celebrates the culture reflected in the businesses on the street. Attracting and maintaining a vibrant

corridor is a challenge that has become significantly greater in the past decade largely due to dramatic shifts in consumer behavior and retail trends. The Elevate Devon Plan is a collaborative project that engaged the community in a process to reimagine the built environment to better serves businesses and surrounding neighbors.”

Cecilia Rodriguez, Director of the Office of Neighborhood Initiatives at Loyola University Chicago, shares the importance of the corridor to the University and its visions for improvement: “As one of the largest institutions in Edgewater and Rogers Park with thousands of faculty, staff, and students, we want to see our students and their families enjoy the Devon corridor. Together we’re enhancing and building places to experience quality food and services, find lively and entertaining events, experience an array of spectacular art to view, and feel safe driving, riding or walking on Devon.”

Rogers Park Business Alliance is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago’s diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for 30 years. RPBA works to cultivate and sustain a thriving economic environment in Rogers Park, serving businesses and residents with a variety of public events and business initiatives. RPBA programs include the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program, the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Rogers Park Business Alliance, annual Best of Rogers Park awards, Chalk Howard Street Festival, Taco Crawl, and the Glenwood Sunday Market farmers market. In addition to Elevate Devon, RPBA has led numerous Rogers Park strategic planning efforts in its 30-year history, including development guides for commercial corridors along Clark Street, Morse Avenue, Howard Street, Western Avenue and Sheridan Road. For more information, visit RPBA.org.

Edgewater Chamber of Commerce is a 501c6 nonprofit organization. Since 1985, they have worked to create and support a thriving business environment, while attracting new commercial business, contributing to a vibrant Edgewater community. They are also the sole service provider for Special Service Area #26 (SSA #26) on Broadway, Granville, and Devon Avenues. SSA #26 works to continually improve and enhance public spaces, create memorable experiences, encourage local spending, and increase neighborhood pride. In 2020, the Edgewater Development Corporation (EDC), a longstanding 501c3 community-based nonprofit organization with the mission to redevelop the communities commercial resources became a supporting organization of the Chamber. To learn more, visit www.edgewater.org.

Loyola University Chicago was founded in 1870 and is one of the nation’s largest Jesuit, Catholic universities, with nearly 17,500 students. The University has six campuses: five in the greater Chicago area and one in Rome, Italy. The University features 15 schools, colleges, and institutes. Ranked a top national university by U.S. News & World Report, Loyola is also among a select group of universities recognized for community service and engagement by prestigious national organizations including AmeriCorps and the Carnegie Foundation. Loyola has educated generations of leaders across many fields. Today, in hundreds of community partnerships, Loyola faculty, students, and staff address pressing community needs and enhance the lives of individuals and families. Loyola strives for educational excellence with a purpose, called to make a difference as person for others, the work is deeply grounded in a community called home. To learn more about Loyola, visit LUC.edu.

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