



Press Contacts: Louise Yingduo Liu/Maggie Sullivan | The Silverman Group, Inc.
312.961.9290 | louise@silvermangroupchicago.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Rendering images of Howard Street available here >>](#)

Rogers Park Business Alliance and City of Evanston announce **One Howard Street Economic Recovery Plan**

An inter-municipal commercial revitalization plan will foster economic recovery, public safety, affordable housing, cultural development, inclusive community and more

CHICAGO (February 22, 2024)—The nonprofit **Rogers Park Business Alliance** (RPBA) and the **City of Evanston** are excited to publish the **One Howard Street Economic Recovery Plan**, a unified corridor plan for Howard Street between Sheridan Road and Western/Asbury Avenue. Made possible by a near \$100k grant from the State’s [Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Recovery](#) (RISE) Program, this inter-municipal project engaged the community in designing a commercial revitalization plan that fosters economic recovery, employment, public safety, affordable housing, public transit and traffic infrastructure, education resources, cultural development, and inclusive community for diverse residents, on both sides of the street that border the two cities. To see the complete plan details, go to www.rpba.org/one-howard.

One Howard Street was developed by consultant group MUSE Community + Design, and spearheaded by RPBA and Evanston’s Economic Development Division. The plan’s guiding principles were established based on community input collected over ten months, including being pedestrian-oriented, celebrating the diversity of the community, and relying on clear and actionable steps, all of which incorporate a holistic approach to the community’s top priority of being and feeling safe. The plan is informed by (Third Generation) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles—a multi-disciplinary approach that examines how physical and social environments influence public safety and livability. By integrating ideas of livability and quality of life with safety efforts, the plan seeks to sustain a virtuous cycle.

The recommendations include four themes that will be imbedded into four subareas on Howard Street (from west to east: West End from Western/Asbury to Ridge, Restaurant Row from Ridge to Chicago/Clark, Howard Station from Chicago/Clark to Bosworth, and Lakeside from Bosworth to Sheridan). The four themes are: **Quality of Life** with infrastructure improvements including Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility improvements on sidewalks, increasing comfort at bus stops, adding protection to bike lanes where possible, and increasing the tree canopy, and other elements of the pedestrian experience including landscaping, lighting, and general aesthetics; **Rethinking Retail** with the expansion of permitted uses of

underutilized storefronts to convert to non-retail uses, redevelopment and renovation based on municipal planning, and strengthening existing high-quality retail via active ground-floor treatments; **Corridor Identity** creating a unified brand identity for Howard Street with a new wayfinding system and Evanston adopting the recognizable Howard Street brand used by Chicago's Howard Street Special Service Area #19, increasing public art and painted crosswalks, creating neighbors gathering space and events of diverse cultures; and **Big Moves** longer term initiatives with bold vision for coordination among public and private partners, including improvements for CTA stops, Paulina Plaza, 7575 N. Rogers, and others.

The implementation timeline suggests short-term changes to be implemented within five years, mid-term within ten years, and long-term within fifteen years.

Sandi Price, Executive Director of Rogers Park Business Alliance, shares the significance of the joint effort to strengthen the Howard Street corridor: "This is the first time that Evanston and Rogers Park are working on creating a joint corridor plan. While Howard Street is the municipal border between Chicago and Evanston, we are committed to a unified approach to economic recovery and development—Howard Street shouldn't be a boundary, it should be a neighborhood. One Howard Street is an economic recovery plan for a corridor with a storied history and a promising future, being home to many legacy businesses, Juneteenth Celebrations, and the popular Chalk Howard Street festival. The project team engaged with more than 700 residents and stakeholders in the ten months leading up to publishing the plan. We heard from youth, families, violence interrupters, business owners, cyclists, lifelong residents, transit riders, and local employees. In nearly every conversation, a desire to feel more comfortable spending time on Howard Street shone through as the community's top priority. That was our guiding point throughout the creation of this plan."

Paul Zalmezak, Economic Development Manager for the City of Evanston, continues to emphasize the effect the plan will have on both sides: "Markets don't abide by municipal boundaries! One Howard Street is our greatest opportunity to capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit of our independent businesses on both sides of Howard Street by formalizing a unified planning and investment effort between two world class cities. This is a rare but much needed example of regional collaboration in a region known for rugged individualism."

Daniel Biss, the Mayor of Evanston, expresses how unique this opportunity is: "As the only recipient of the grant in the Chicagoland area, I am honored to announce the start of the One Howard planning process. We are confident that by conducting an inclusive planning process with key stakeholders – those who live, work, and are invested in Howard Street – we can establish a strong vision for the corridor that ensures its long-term resiliency, business growth, and vibrancy."

Alderman **Maria Hadden** shares: "As the Alderman for the 49th Ward, I am excited to see the One Howard Street initiative launch! For too long, the Howard Street corridor has not seen the same level of investment as other Northside corridors, so to see unprecedented coordination between the cities of Chicago and Evanston trying to address these issues holistically and equitably is encouraging. Together, our respective communities will continue to work together on issues such as affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, and a thriving business environment that will result in a strong and inclusive long-term vision for the Howard Street corridor. I want to thank the community, the MUSE team, Rogers Park Business Alliance, and the City of Evanston for their hard work and collaboration on this project and I look forward to our continued collaboration to bring this vision to life."

In 2022, the RISE Program provided \$3.5 million to 42 communities and economic development organizations to accelerate long-term economic recovery; RPBA was the only grantee from Chicago.

Rogers Park Business Alliance is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago's diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for over 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 One Howard Street, 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, Devon Avenue, Western Avenue and Sheridan Road. For more information, visit RPBA.org.

The City of Evanston is home to approximately 75,000 residents and is located just north of Chicago. Bordering Lake Michigan and home to Northwestern University and Rotary International, Evanston's unique beauty and character delights visitors and residents of all ages. With a vision to create the most livable city in America, Evanston celebrates the diversity of its opportunities and residents. For more information, visit www.cityofevanston.org.

###

Images l-r:

One Howard Street Virtuous Cycle, renderings of West End cross section proposal and Howard Station Big Moves. Courtesy of Rogers Park Business Alliance.