# The Mabadi Group Reports Steady Migration of Chicago Buyers and North Shore Downsizers Into Evanston

*Sally Mabadi's Compass team says space, schools and the lakefront pull buyers north from Lincoln Park and the Gold Coast, south from Winnetka and Lake Forest*


The Mabadi Group

WINNETKA, IL, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The Mabadi Group, an Evanston-based real estate team affiliated with Compass, reports that buyer demand in Evanston continues to flow steadily from two distinct directions: young families leaving Chicago neighborhoods such as Lincoln Park, the Gold Coast and River North, and downsizers moving in from North Shore communities including Winnetka, Glencoe and Lake Forest.

According to Sally Mabadi, the team's principal and a specialist in Evanston and North Shore luxury properties, the pattern has held remarkably steady in recent years. She estimates that roughly 60 percent of her Evanston business comes from people already living in town, about 25 percent from Chicago buyers, and around 15 percent from out-of-town and North Shore relocations, a split she says has been consistent since 2020.

The typical city buyer, Mabadi notes, is in their thirties and preparing to start a family.

“Usually these buyers are in their thirties, looking to start a family, and they want more space both inside and out,” said Sally Mabadi, principal of the Mabadi Group. “They like Evanston for the quality of the schools while staying close to the city. Many of them actually grew up in Evanston and are returning from the city now that they have started families of their own.”

The team reports that many of these buyers arrive with assumptions that do not survive a first visit.

“Some buyers think Evanston is like any other suburb north of Chicago and will shop it alongside Wilmette and Winnetka, but we really have our own character,” Mabadi said. “We are more connected to Chicago, we have more of an urban sensibility, and our neighborhoods are all very walkable to restaurants, shops and public transportation. Others compare us to Oak Park, and there are similarities, but having Lake Michigan in our backyard is a big attraction, along with the first-rate amenities that come with having a Big Ten school in town.”



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Once buyers are actually walking the streets, Mabadi says, the sale often makes itself. She points to the proximity of the lake, the beauty of the environment and the walkability of Evanston's neighborhoods as the features that consistently win people over.

On value, the team reports that dollars stretch noticeably further north of the city line. Buyers trading a Chicago condo or townhome for Evanston typically gain square footage, outdoor space and parking, along with access to highly regarded public schools and lakefront beaches. Mabadi cautions that the team avoids simple price-per-square-foot comparisons because pricing in Evanston depends heavily on a home's condition and updates.
She is equally candid about what city buyers give up.

“People who truly want an urban lifestyle will not find that here,” Mabadi said. “We love our local small businesses, but we do not have the same density of restaurants and shops that exists in city neighborhoods. What buyers gain are wonderful beaches, a warm community that welcomes newcomers, excellent schools, beautiful homes and miles of bike paths.”

Movement From the North Shore Tells a Different Story

While city buyers are chasing space and schools, the Mabadi Group reports that buyers arriving from the northern suburbs are usually after the opposite: less house and more life within walking distance.

“Downsizers and empty nesters often move to Evanston because they want a more walkable community with easier access to restaurants, live music and theater,” Mabadi said. “Some simply

do not enjoy the traditional suburban lifestyle and want a more vibrant community while keeping the advantages of suburban living. We have even had people move here because they love Big Ten football and want to be close to the Northwestern stadium, and many come to be closer to family."

Evanston's housing stock plays a central role in that migration, according to the team. The city offers vintage condominium buildings, some with elevators, that allow longtime North Shore homeowners to keep cherished furniture and artwork in a more manageable package. Mabadi described one client who sold a large lakefront home on the North Shore and purchased a smaller lakefront home in Evanston near her grandchildren.

Both condominiums and single-family homes remain in demand across buyer types, the team reports, with downsizers and young families alike choosing between the two based on priorities and budget.

A Neighborhood Map for Newcomers

For buyers seeking city energy inside Evanston, Mabadi points to Southeast Evanston and Downtown Evanston. For those who want a setting closer to the classic North Shore feel, she directs them to Northeast and Northwest Evanston.

She also highlights a set of neighborhoods she believes out-of-town buyers consistently overlook.

"There are wonderful neighborhoods just west of downtown that outsiders miss because everyone focuses on east locations," Mabadi said. "The people who live here know what a treasure the Penny Park and Dewey neighborhoods are."

On pricing, the team reports a wide range driven largely by condition. Homes needing significant repairs or updating can still be purchased in the 500,000 to 800,000 dollar range. Recently updated homes in strong condition in east and northwest locations tend to sell between 1.5 and 2.5 million dollars, while homes west of downtown generally trade between 800,000 and 2 million dollars. Many neighborhoods offer good access to CTA and Metra trains, with prices varying based on other factors.

Mabadi says the overall trend line has been steady rather than sudden, and she attributes Evanston's consistent draw to its unusually diverse housing stock, which keeps single-family homes more accessible than in many parts of Chicago.

She adds that Evanston often resolves a familiar household negotiation, where one partner wants to stay in the city and the other wants suburban schools and a yard.

"Evanston is often the sweet spot," Mabadi said. "In one case, the wife really did not want to

move north, but after doing some test runs she realized she could get to her office and to O'Hare just as quickly as she could from their home in the city."

Asked why Evanston became the center of a business that has stretched from the Gold Coast to Lake Forest, Mabadi pointed to the city's range.

"You can find a huge home on an acre lot like you can in Lake Forest, a modern condo like in the South Loop, or a gorgeous vintage row house like in the Gold Coast," she said. "We have the best architecture, the most natural beauty and the best community, so I feel lucky to live and work here. If I had to describe Evanston in one line, I would say it is cooler by the lake."

About The Mabadi Group

The Mabadi Group is a residential real estate team affiliated with Compass, serving Evanston, the North Shore and neighborhoods across Chicagoland. Founded by principal Sally Mabadi, the team has closed more than 750 million dollars in sales and comprises ten licensed agents supported by operations and marketing staff. The group's expertise spans single-family homes, luxury properties, condominiums, cooperatives, multi-family homes, commercial and investment real estate, and international residential sales, with geographic coverage extending from the Gold Coast to Lake Forest. More information is available at https://themabadigroup.com/.

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