

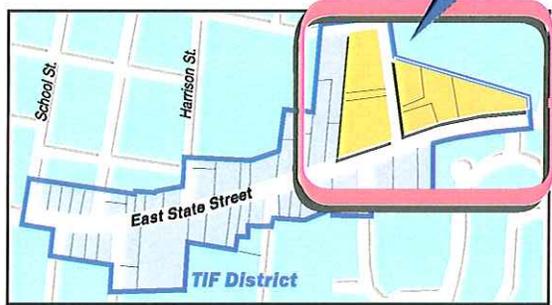
East State Street Corridor

Design & Development Guidelines

City of Geneva, Illinois

*Prepared by
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Geneva's "Eastern Gateway"



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INTRODUCTION

The *Design & Development Guidelines* present basic principles for improving the overall appearance and character of the East State Street Corridor in the City of Geneva, Illinois. The guidelines focus on promoting high quality improvements and developments that will complement the surrounding residential areas and enhance the overall character of the East State Street business district.

In addition to establishing principles and standards for improvement and development, the *Design and Development Guidelines* incorporate photographs of completed projects in the surrounding region to illustrate the type, quality and character of new building and site development that the City desires along the East State Street Corridor.

The purposes of the *Design & Development Guidelines* are to: a) promote high-quality and compatible new commercial and mixed-use development; b) improve the appearance of existing buildings and the public rights-of-way; c) promote more design compatibility among buildings and groups of buildings; and d) establish a distinctive visual image and character for the East State Street Corridor as a “gateway” to Downtown Geneva.

While the *Design & Development Guidelines* focus on new development, they also address the improvement of existing sites and buildings.

The *Design & Development Guidelines* do not attempt to “make all the buildings look the same.” They are not intended to restrict creativity or limit design solutions, but to improve and enhance the overall scale, quality and character of the East State Street business district.

It should be emphasized that the *Design and Development Guidelines* are for overall guidance only. Each individual project will be reviewed by the City on a case-by-case basis, and will be subject to the appropriate City codes and ordinances.

BACKGROUND

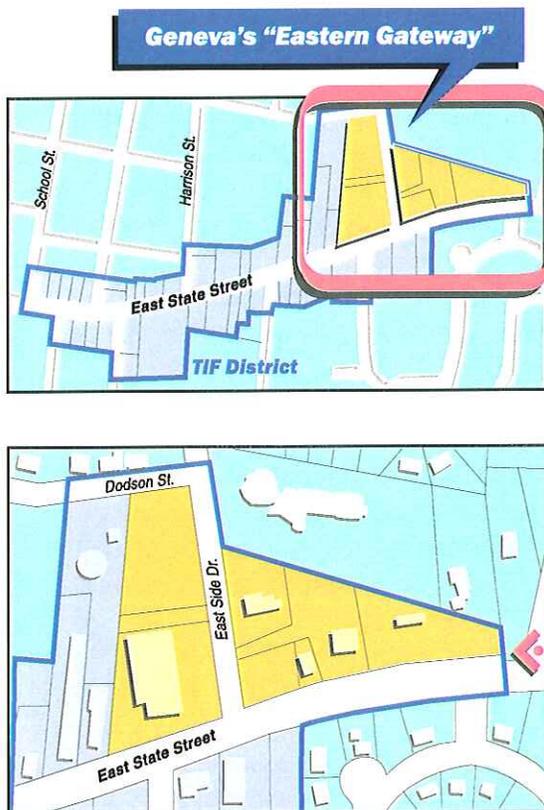
Geneva's "Eastern Gateway" has been the focus of ongoing planning efforts over the past several years. The area contains several vacant and underutilized properties and generally lacks the high-quality appearance and character that is representative of the City of Geneva as a whole. A Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district has been established for a large portion of the East State Street Corridor. The TIF district is a tool which is used by the City to provide incentives and public investments to stimulate and assist new economic development in the area.

With the TIF district in place, private developer interest has increased with regard to the East State Street Corridor. As a "next step," the *Design and Development Guidelines* are intended to assist the City in working with private developers to guide the redevelopment and improvement of properties along the corridor, consistent with the desired character and appearance of the overall Geneva community.

USE & APPLICATION

The *Design & Development Guidelines* are intended to be applied to the portion of the East State Street Corridor extending from School Street on the west to Kautz Road on the east.

The original impetus behind the preparation of the *Design & Development Guidelines* was the need to provide specific direction to the planning and redevelopment of properties located at the northwest corner of East Side Drive and East State Street. However, based on a design workshop held with local residents and business persons, it was decided that the *Guidelines* should be more broadly applied and should encompass additional properties along the East State Street Corridor.



Geneva's East State Street Corridor, the "Eastern Gateway," and the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District.

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DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Building Scale and Design:

New development should maintain a “traditional” scale and charm and should provide a unique character for the East State Street Corridor.

- New commercial buildings should be primarily one-story in height and should complement the scale and character of adjacent residential neighborhoods. Where feasible, two-story buildings are also considered to be compatible.
- Tall architectural elements, such as a clock tower, spire or light well, may be appropriate as design “highlights” at key locations along the corridor.
- Distinguishing exterior building design features, ornamentation and detailing should be encouraged, such as decorative cornices, pilasters, columns, reliefs, medallions, dormers, eave breaks, etc.
- Covered walkways and colonnades should be encouraged along the fronts of the buildings to create a “pedestrian friendly” orientation.
- Architectural details should be visible from the street. Buildings should not be setback so far as to diminish the aesthetic impact of the building on passing pedestrians and motorists. Buildings should be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.
- Buildings can have either a pitched or flat roof, but rooflines must complement the overall design and architecture of the building. Pitched roofs are more representative of the traditional character of buildings in Geneva generally and in nearby residential neighborhoods.



1 – Commercial buildings that complement adjacent residential neighborhoods. **2** – One-story commercial buildings with vertical (two-story) architectural features. **3** – High quality exterior building materials and creative architectural ornamentation and detailing. **4** – Colonnades provide protection for pedestrians and contribute to distinctive architectural design.



5 and 6 - Buildings with pitched and flat roofs that are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods. These buildings also illustrate rooftop mounted equipment that is screened and well integrated into overall building design. **7** - Attractively designed and landscaped masonry trash dumpster enclosures. **8** - Traditional exterior building materials reflect the historical architectural context.

- Mansard roofs are inappropriate and should be avoided.
- Rooftop-mounted equipment and vents should be screened from views along all sides of a building. Rooftop screening should be incorporated into the overall design of the building and be an integral part of its architecture. Roof pitches should be within the range of 6:12 to 12:12.
- Dumpster enclosures should be of masonry construction and should complement overall building design. Dumpster enclosures should be well landscaped, attached to the building where feasible and located at the rear or sides of buildings.

Building Materials:

The use of appropriate building materials is a key to compatible new development and rehabilitation of existing structures.

- Traditional exterior finish building materials such as brick, shingles, limestone and wood clapboard siding should be encouraged.
- High quality materials and design features should be used on all sides of the building, providing an attractive “360-degree” appearance.
- The use of non-traditional materials should be limited; if used, these materials must be compatible with the traditional materials that are representative of the desired character of the area.
- The use of Dry-vit (or EIFS), vinyl and aluminum siding, plastic panels and similar exterior surface materials should be avoided.
- Damaged and deteriorated exterior building materials should be promptly repaired or replaced.

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Site Lighting:

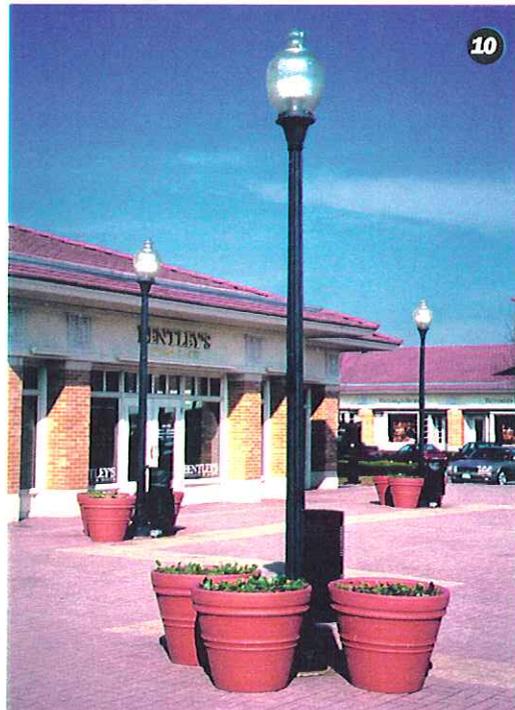
Site lighting helps promote safe and secure parking and pedestrian areas, and it can also serve to enhance the appearance of a property.

- Parking lot lighting should be pedestrian-scaled (12'-16'); tall light standards (25'-40') should be avoided.
- Light poles and light fixtures with an historic or traditional design should be used for all parking lots, walkways and pedestrian areas.
- Bollard lighting can be appropriate as accent lighting and could be used in pedestrian seating areas and to highlight pedestrian walkways and crossings in parking lots.
- Diffused, soft white light should be encouraged; metal halide lighting should be avoided.

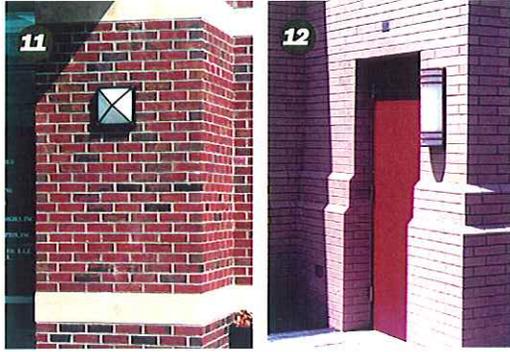
Building Lighting:

The lighting of a building's facade has the dual purpose of advertising a business and discouraging crime.

- Front and rear building entries should be adequately lit for overall security and visibility.
- Most exterior lighting sources should be concealed to provide indirect illumination. Where concealment is not practical, light fixtures should be compatible with building architecture.
- Incandescent lighting creates a warm atmosphere and should be encouraged; fluorescent lighting and metal halide lighting should be discouraged.
- Exterior "spotlighting" may be used to illuminate important signs or "accent" prominent building details.



9 and 10 – Low-scale, traditionally designed light poles and light fixtures reinforce the character of a commercial development. Low-profile "bollard" lighting, as shown in the top photograph, helps define walkways and promotes pedestrian safety during evening hours.



11 and 12 - Indirect lighting can eliminate glare and add to the visual impact of a building. **13** - Low-profile monument signs effectively advertise a business location, but do not visually dominate the site. **14** - The careful location of building signs complements the design details of building façades. **15** - Sign consisting of individual projected letters mounted flat on the building face.

Signs:

Signs are among the most important features of a commercial development. Signs communicate the nature of a business and its products or services. Signs also influence the overall image and character of a commercial area. In general, signs should be simple, relatively small, and complementary to the building architecture.

- The size of signs should complement overall facade proportions, and should not distort the scale of a building.
- The design and color of signs should complement the architectural style of the building.
- Signs consisting of individual projected letters mounted flat on the building face are encouraged.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts, signage for all businesses should be consistent in design, color (preferably white) and placement.
- Exterior signs should be limited to business identification and description; product-advertising signs are discouraged.
- Wall-mounted signs should be designed as integrated components of the building façade, and should not cover important architectural details.
- Internal illumination is preferred for building-mounted signs. In general, letters should be of a light color (preferably white) and illuminated with a white light source.
- Externally illuminated natural metal wall signs may also be acceptable, if they are compatible with other architectural components.
- Rooftop signs are inappropriate and are prohibited.

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- Unused sign supports, hardware and electrical conduits should be removed and building surfaces repaired and restored.
- Attractive, low-profile monument signs should be encouraged, but should be limited to one per building.
- Monument signs should be attractively landscaped and constructed of traditional building materials similar to the primary building on site.
- The letters of a monument sign should be internally illuminated with a white light source. External illumination may be appropriate for a natural metal or “engraved” stone monument sign.
- Pylon signs should be avoided. Billboards and other “off-premises” signs should be severely restricted or prohibited.

Parking Areas:

Adequate parking is essential within the commercial area. Off-street parking lots should be designed and located so that they are safe, attractive and efficient.

- Parking areas adjacent to streets should be no more 60 feet in depth. This depth is sufficient to accommodate a single driving aisle with 90° parking on both sides. Additional parking areas can be provided either behind buildings or behind the front building line.
- The number of curb cuts along East State Street should be minimized and cross access between adjacent parking lots should be encouraged. Where possible, parking areas should be accessible from cross streets.
- On-street parking should not be permitted along the East State Street corridor or the commercial frontages on side streets. On-street parking should only be permitted for residential traffic in the adjacent neighborhoods.



16 – Small parking lot located in front of stores and shops, with perimeter landscaping bordering the sidewalk. **17** – Parking lot located in the “interior” of a commercial development, complemented by sidewalks and pedestrian amenities. **18** and **19** – Parking lot “islands” provide opportunities for light fixtures and landscaping.



20 and 21 – Vertical perimeter landscaping and carefully designed fencing effectively separates commercial developments from adjoining residential neighborhoods.

22 and 23 – Foundation landscaping “anchors” a building to its site.

- All parking areas should be paved, striped and have surfaces in good condition.

Site Landscaping:

Commercial properties should be landscaped in a manner that screens parking, enhances building visibility, and creates an attractive pedestrian environment. All landscaping must be maintained in a healthy and attractive condition. Internal irrigation systems are preferred.

- Perimeter landscape setbacks at least five feet in width should be provided along the edges of parking lots that border public sidewalks. Perimeter landscape plantings should include a continuous hedge (3 to 4 feet in height) accented by trees and ground cover.
- Where site size or configuration does not allow for the minimum five-foot perimeter landscaping, vertical landscaping elements should be employed to provide an effective screen between parking lots and the public right-of-way.
- Decorative wrought iron fencing (3 to 4 feet in height) in conjunction with landscaping is also appropriate along the edges of parking lots that border public sidewalks.
- Areas adjacent to entrances, monument signs and other site features should be considered for seasonal flowers or colorful groundcover.
- Parking lot landscaping should include “landscape islands” at a ratio of approximately one per six to ten parking spaces. Landscape islands should consist of canopy trees (3 to 4 inches in caliper), attractive groundcover, and/or decorative bushes (2 to 3 feet in height).
- Evergreens, berming, and other “vertical” landscaping elements should be used to screen commercial activity from adjacent residential properties. Masonry walls may be considered as a screening device where landscaping alone is incapable of providing an effective screen.

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- Planters and landscaped areas should be encouraged adjacent to commercial buildings. Foundation landscaping should consist of trees, shrubs, and seasonal flower beds.
- Walkways should be adjacent to commercial buildings and separated from parking lots and driving aisles by raised landscape beds. Carriage walks should extend along the parking lot and driving aisle side of the landscape beds.

Parkway Landscaping:

A continuous landscaped area should be provided between the sidewalk and the curb along the full length of the East State Street corridor where possible. The landscaped area should create an attractive “parkway” effect along the street.

- Parkway landscaping should consist of grass and appropriately spaced, salt-tolerant street trees.
- In areas where the right-of-way is insufficient to accommodate a sidewalk separated from the street by a parkway, the City should consider widening the right-of-way or work with adjacent property owners to provide the sidewalk and parkway on private property in return for other considerations.

Other Pedestrian Amenities:

It is important that new development have a “pedestrian orientation” and offer a safe and attractive environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

- Amenities such as benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and special paving treatments are encouraged as integral parts of overall site design.
- New development should provide well-delineated, safe and attractive pedestrian access that “connects” public sidewalks to the inner areas of the development.



25 – Landscaping in front of buildings creates an attractive and inviting commercial environment. **26** – Trees, protected by iron grates, placed along the sidewalk in front of stores and businesses. **27** and **28** – Attractive and functional parkway landscaping along the street, with additional perimeter plantings located between the sidewalk and off-street parking.



28 – Carefully planned site fixtures and amenities create attractive and “pedestrian-friendly” shopping and commercial environments.

29, 30 and 31 – Safe and “inviting” outdoor dining and seating areas serve shoppers, employees, visitors and business patrons.

- Outdoor seating areas, such as those provided by restaurants, should be well landscaped and incorporated into the overall site design. Outdoor seating areas should be set back and screened from parking areas and driving aisles.

Land Use:

The East State Street Corridor should be revitalized as a distinctive new commercial environment that establishes a unique and high quality identity and character for the area. Along with redevelopment, the adaptive reuse and preservation of selected existing buildings, particularly those with architectural or historic interest, should be encouraged. Uses that provide day-to-day goods and services for residents of nearby neighborhoods and the community as a whole are encouraged, as well as uses that would attract customers and visitors from beyond Geneva’s corporate limits.

While a variety of uses can be accommodated along the corridor, several have been identified as “desirable” by east-side residents:

- Specialty grocery store;
- Pharmacy;
- Restaurants and deli/coffee shops;
- Specialty retail;
- Professional offices;
- Personal service uses; and
- Public uses such as a fire station and/or post office.

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