

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 20, 2009 AGENDA**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
Downtown Façade Improvement Program & Downtown Design Guidelines	✓ Resolution Ordinance Motion Discussion Only	Tom Dabareiner, AICP Community Development Director

**SYNOPSIS**

An ordinance has been prepared to provide for a Downtown Façade Improvement Program that includes Design Guidelines.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The Five Year Plan and Goals for 2008-2013 identified *Authentic Downtown – The Heart of the Community*. The Action Agenda for 2008-09 identified *Façade Program: Policy and Development* as a high priority policy agenda item.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The FY09 Downtown Redevelopment TIF Fund includes \$100,000 to fund the Façade Improvement Program.

**UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION**

This item was discussed at the January 13, 2009 workshop. During that meeting, the Village Council requested that previous draft language mentioning any “discouraged” materials be included in the Downtown Design Guidelines. Staff has updated the Design Guidelines to reflect this change.

Staff recommends approval on the January 20, 2009 active agenda.

**BACKGROUND**

In pursuing the Strategic Plan goal of developing and maintaining an “Authentic Downtown”, staff worked with a Planning Consultant in 2008 to develop a Pattern Book for Downtown, which was accepted by the Village Council in September. The document was also presented to the Downtown Management Corporation for review and comment. A primary goal of the Pattern Book was to provide a foundation for the development of design guidelines to be used in conjunction with a Façade Improvement Program. The process of drafting design guidelines and developing the terms of a façade improvement was completed in the fall of 2008.

The proposed façade improvement program requires applicants requesting grants for façade and building improvements to conform to the Design Guidelines. Other projects, not requesting Village funding, will be encouraged to conform to the proposed guidelines, but will not be required to meet the standards. The proposed Façade Improvement Program and Design Guidelines only affect the Downtown TIF District. The specifics of each program are detailed below:

*Façade Improvement Program*

Façade programs are a financial and economic development tool intended to help a specific area improve its appearance. This is consistent with the adopted element of the Village's Strategic Plan which recognizes the downtown as the "heart of our community" and sets out the goal of achieving an "Authentic Downtown." Eligible façade projects must be consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines.

The program would be voluntary for buildings/businesses located within the downtown tax increment district. The program would provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds to improve or preserve building facades provided that the proposed improvements comply with the Design Guidelines. The match will be provided in the form of a reimbursement, with a maximum reimbursement amount of up to \$15,000 for façades. If, *in addition to the façade project*, other eligible improvements (such as fire sprinklers, fire alarms, accessibility enhancements, etc.) are made, the maximum reimbursement amount will be \$40,000.

Staff presented the draft to Downtown Management Corporation in December, 2008. The proposed program was supported by the DMC.. Staff anticipates the Village will begin accepting applications in mid-January 2009.

#### *Design Guidelines*

The Design Guidelines were drafted by Village staff and based on the findings in the Downtown Pattern Book, along with significant input by Downtown Management board members. The Architectural Design Review Board reviewed the draft Design Guidelines on November 13 and recommended the Village Council adopt the guidelines.

The design guidelines are rooted in the architectural history of downtown Downers Grove but are broad enough to allow for new designs of high architectural quality and interest. The guidelines discourage a one-size-fits-all approach, along with other components that are too specific to the business brand (e.g., McDonald's arches made part of the building). The guidelines also reflect the kinds of designs and building relationships deemed successful in other parts of the country, while staying true to this community's history. Therefore, the design component of having a locally authentic downtown can be achieved.

Staff will generally administer the Downtown Façade Improvement Program and Design Guidelines. However, where project costs are estimated to exceed \$10,000 of reimbursement (i.e., projects exceeding a total of \$20,000), applications will be considered and recommended by the Architectural Design Review Board to determine if the projects conforms to the Design Guidelines. The Village Council will consider all requests for grants after the ADRB. For project seeking less than \$10,000 in reimbursement, staff approval of the application will suffice.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Ordinance

Design Guidelines

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY**

**INITIATED:**  Village Attorney  **DATE:**  January 20, 2009   
(Name)

**RECOMMENDATION FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FILE REF:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Board or Department)

**NATURE OF ACTION:**

**STEPS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION:**

- Ordinance
- Resolution
- Motion
- Other

Motion to Adopt "AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT POLICY" and accept the Downtown Design Guidelines, as presented.

**SUMMARY OF ITEM:**

Adoption of the attached ordinance shall adopt a Downtown facade improvement policy and accept the Downtown Design Guidelines.

**RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN:**

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# Village of Downers Grove

## Official Village Policy Approved by Village Council

Description:	<b>Façade Improvement</b>	
Res. or Ord. #:	<b>Ord.</b>	Effective Date: <b>January 20, 2009</b>
Category:	<b>Legislative and General Management</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New Council Policy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amends Previous Policy Dated: _____
	Description of Previous Policy (if different from above): _____	

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

### **AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT POLICY**

WHEREAS, the Village has the authority, pursuant to the laws of the State of Illinois, to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the Village and its inhabitants, to prevent the spread of blight, to encourage private development in order to enhance the local tax base, to increase employment, and to enter into contractual agreements with third parties for the purpose of achieving these purposes.

WHEREAS, the Village is authorized under the provisions of the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, 65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-1, *et seq.*, as amended (the “TIF Act”), to finance redevelopment in accordance with the conditions and requirements set forth in the TIF Act.

WHEREAS, to stimulate and induce redevelopment pursuant to the TIF Act, the Village has, after giving all notices required by law and after conducting all public hearings required by law, adopted the following ordinances:

1. Ordinance No. 3997, adopted December 22, 1997, titled “*An Ordinance Approving the Village of Downers Grove Tax Increment Downtown Redevelopment Plan and Project*” (the “Redevelopment Plan”), as amended by Ordinance No. 4455 on November 5, 2002;
2. Ordinance No. 3998 adopted December 22, 1997, titled “*An Ordinance Designating the Village of Downers Grove Tax Increment Downtown Redevelopment Project Area*” (“Downtown Redevelopment Project Area”), as amended by Ordinance No. 4456 on November 5, 2002;
3. Ordinance No. 3999, adopted December 22, 1997, titled “*An Ordinance Adopting Tax Increment Financing for the Village of Downers Grove*”.

WHEREAS, in an effort to promote revitalization of the Downtown Business District the Village wishes to establish the Façade Improvement Assistance Program;

WHEREAS, the Façade Improvement Assistance Program is made available to provide a significant impact on the exterior of buildings, thus improving the marketing of the Downtown Business District;

WHEREAS, the Façade Improvement Assistance Program is established to provide financial and architectural assistance to building and business owners for improvements made to existing commercial buildings, or for demolition of existing buildings and new construction of commercial buildings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois, as follows:

1. Financial Assistance: Building owners and business owners (“Owners”) with buildings located in the Downtown Business District and the TIF District may be eligible for financial assistance from the Village for certain improvements to their building in accordance with the following guidelines:

a) Improvements to Façade Only – reimbursement of 50% of the total costs of the improvements up to a maximum reimbursement of \$15,000. Façade improvements include but are not limited to the following: maintenance (i.e. tuck pointing, windows, repairing of historic features, not including painting), canopies, awnings, signage, exterior lighting, etc.

b) Improvements to Façade plus Additional Improvements – reimbursement of 50% of the total cost of the improvement up to a maximum reimbursement of \$40,000. For purposes of this section “additional improvements” include but are not limited to life safety code improvements (i.e. fire sprinklers, fire alarms, etc.), ADA accessibility improvements, and demolition of structures identified in the Downers Grove Pattern Book as having no value. In order to qualify for reimbursement for any “additional improvements” all work in connection with the façade improvements must be completed.

2. Procedures:

A) Owners shall submit a completed application, detailed cost estimate and preliminary architectural plans to the Community Development Department.

B) Upon review of the initial submission, the Community Development Department shall schedule a meeting with the Owner to determine whether the project qualifies for the Façade Improvement Assistance Program. Specifically, staff shall determine whether the project complies with the Downers Grove Design Guidelines for the Downtown Business District and the Downers Grove Pattern Book and what, if any, the next steps according to Section C below in the process shall be.

C) If a project qualifies for Façade Improvement Assistance Program:

- i) Applications for reimbursement for \$10,000 or more shall be forwarded to the Architectural Review Design Board for recommendation to the Village Council for approval.
- ii) Applications for reimbursement for less than \$10,000 shall be forwarded to the Village Manager for approval.

3. Project Completion: All project improvements shall comply with all Village Ordinances, building codes and permit processing. In addition, all projects approved pursuant to the Façade Improvement Assistance Program shall be completed within one-year of project approval. Reimbursement shall only occur upon submission of copies of the original detailed invoices and proof of payment.

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Ronald L. Sandack, Mayor

Passed:

Attest:

April K. Holden, Village Clerk

**Design Guidelines  
for the  
Downers Grove  
Downtown Business District**

**January 20, 2009**

## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Village has developed the following design guidelines for the downtown business district. The guidelines have been developed using the August 2008 Downers Grove Downtown Pattern Book prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates & Topografis and a visual preference survey held in October 2008 with Village staff, Downtown Management and other interested downtown parties.

## SECTION 2 – HOW TO USE THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines have been developed to assist in creating a vibrant and diverse downtown and should serve as a guide for downtown development. The guidelines are divided into five separate sections, site design, building design, building base, building middle, and building top. Each section describes elements which support good design and provide visual references which identify both encouraged and discouraged elements of each guideline. The Village encourages that all development in the downtown incorporate items from each section.



1. Building Base
2. Building Middle
3. Building Top

Fig. 1: Building areas

## SECTION 3 - SITE DESIGN

The overall building design is important to create a sense of place, enclosure and activity. The following guidelines are offered:

- ✓ Building massing, height and lot coverage should be proportionate to adjacent buildings. Appropriate massing will assist in creating a sense of enclosure.

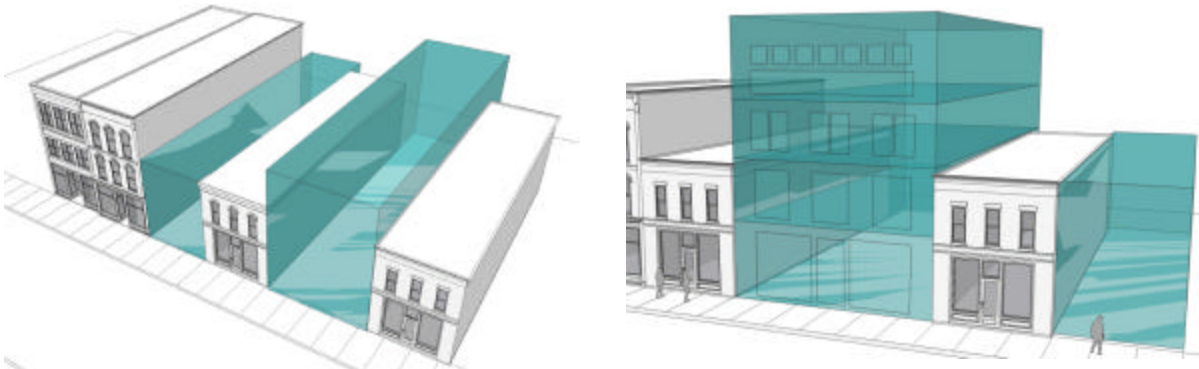


Fig. 1: Appropriate Building Massing

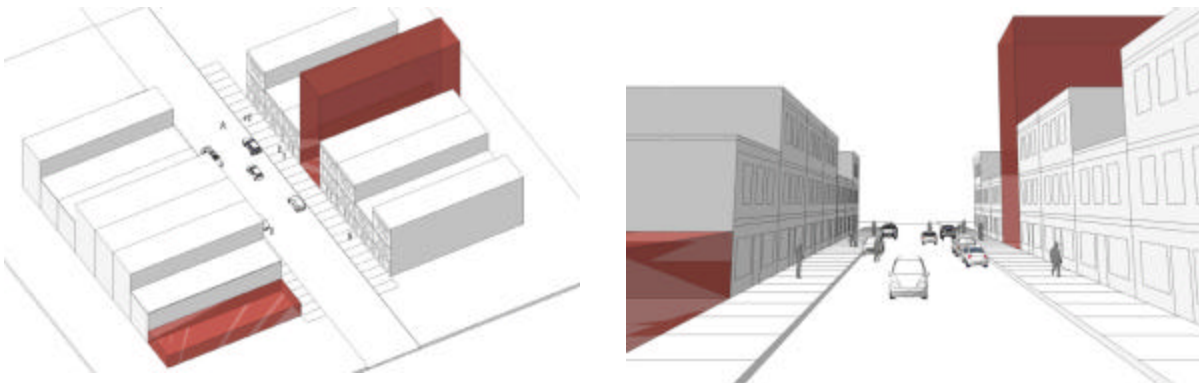


Fig. 2: Inappropriate Building Massing

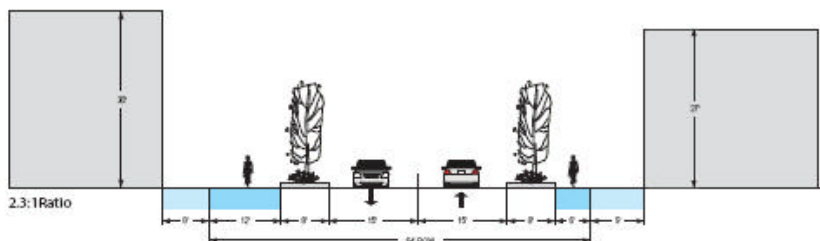


Fig. 3: Sense of enclosure



- ✓ Primary facades should be located near the property line. The urban quality of the street and the pedestrian experience are enhanced by buildings located at the street edge.
- ✓ Buildings should extend and establish a continual street wall.
- ✓ Parking lots are discouraged as they eliminate the street wall. Plazas and outdoor cafes are encouraged as they continue street walls.



Fig. 4: Example of strong street wall



Fig. 5: Major gap in street wall should be avoided.

# SECTION 4 - BUILDING DESIGN – GENERAL

In general, individual buildings should have a distinctive and aesthetically pleasing architecture. Although the Village does not have a distinct style in the Downtown, individual buildings should have a single architectural style.

Although the Village is not seeking to exclude materials, buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials. A maximum of three materials is strongly encouraged. A variety of finishes within the same material is acceptable.



Fig. 6: Examples of appropriate use of materials .

## SECTION 5 - BUILDING BASE

Attractive storefronts can draw the attention of window shoppers, boost economic activities, enhance the image of the business and assist in marketing the goods and services of the business. To create attractive storefronts, certain design features can be used to create good storefronts:

### Windows

- ✓ Windows should be designed to encourage retail uses. Generally, a majority of the first floor should be windows because they enliven streets and provide interest and activity at the street.
- ✓ Knee walls are encouraged to provide a strong base. Knee walls should be between 12 and 30 inches tall.
- ✓ Windows should be transparent, not opaque.



Fig. 7: Encouraged: knee walls and windows which make up a majority of the storefront



Fig. 8: Encouraged: knee walls and windows which make up a majority of the storefront



Fig. 9: Storefronts without a knee wall or base should be avoided.



Fig. 10: Opaque windows and windows which do not make up the majority of the storefront are discouraged and should be avoided.

## Entry Features

- ✓ Entries should be prominent features of the base. Entries should be different from the standard building bay through articulation, elaboration and materials.



Fig. 11: Encouraged: articulated entry through corner piers and signage



Fig. 12: Encouraged: articulated design and material details



Fig. 13: Entries should be prominent features. Entries with lack of detail and elements that are out of proportion with the building should be avoided.



Fig. 14: Entries without detail and definition are unattractive and do not invite customers into the establishment. If entries are setback, extra care should be given to the detailing as in Figure 11.

## Building Materials

- ✓ Base materials should be consistent and new materials should compliment existing materials.
- ✓ Repair and restoration of original features and materials such as brick and stucco, etc., is encouraged. Covering original features and materials is discouraged.

- ✓ A horizontal expression should establish the ground level of the building from the rest of the building. The expression should compliment adjacent buildings and reinforce the street as a pedestrian friendly space.
- ✓ Building materials such as brick, stone, manufactured stone, terra cotta accents, metal accents and wood are encouraged as they provide visual interest and assist in creating a pedestrian friendly corridor.
- ✓ Building materials such as utility brick, concrete masonry units, and Exterior Insulating Finishing Systems (EIFS) are discouraged as they are perceived as cold and uninviting while do not create a pedestrian friendly scale.
- ✓ Materials should be used to differentiate between the importance of building features, and provide visual separations between material functions.



Fig. 15: Encouraged: brick and stone with horizontal expression of first floor



Fig. 16: Encouraged: brick, stone, and textured stone, quoins, projecting lights



Fig. 17: Materials such as EIFS can be used effectively as an accent. However, it is discouraged as a primary material

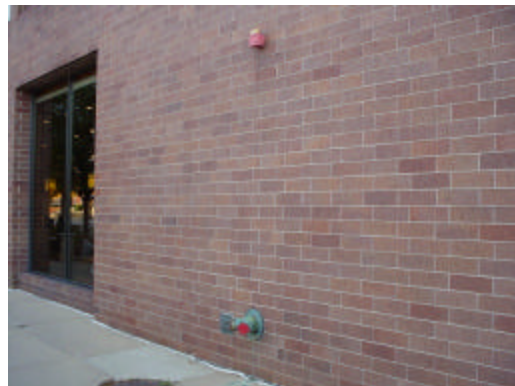


Fig. 18: Avoid blank facades with little detail and inappropriate materials such as utility brick

## Façade Elements

Features which extend out from the building façade can contribute to the character, scale and visual interest of the street. These elements add value and are encouraged:

- ✓ Awnings create visual interest, shield pedestrians from weather and should be compatible in material and style with adjacent properties. Awning can be used to advertise goods or provide visual cues to the location of an entrance.



Fig. 19: Encouraged: awnings



Fig. 20: Avoid using materials that do not compliment the building and surrounding buildings. Awnings should be in scale with the other façade elements and with neighboring buildings.

- ✓ Outdoor cafes can create active streets. Cafes should be clearly defined and provide adequate space for the existing sidewalk to function.
- ✓ Protruding light fixtures also add visual interest while highlighting building details.
- ✓ Landscaping can create pedestrian friendly sidewalks by separating vehicles from pedestrians.
- ✓ Benches adjacent to landscape areas assist in creating pedestrian friendly areas.

- ✓ Balconies within the middle section of the building assist in providing the desired solid and void which are important to the middle sections of buildings. Additionally, balconies add visual interest to the street wall.
- ✓ Projecting signs create visual interest and can assist businesses in advertising.



Fig. 21: Encouraged: appropriately scaled and located signage



Fig. 22: Encouraged: awnings and flower box



Fig. 23: Encouraged: outdoor cafe



Fig. 24: Encouraged: landscaping and benches



Fig. 25: Encouraged: projecting light

## SECTION 6 - BUILDING MIDDLE

The middle section of a building should be designed to tie the building base to the roof while creating visual interest. The middle of a building should be a series of solid and voids. Design features which compliment the base and roof are listed below:

### Windows

- ✓ Windows should be in rhythm with the base level.
- ✓ Visual interest should be created through sills, lintels, divided lights and style. Double-hung windows provide more visual interest than casement windows.
- ✓ Replacement windows should fill the entire historic window opening. If historic window openings require closing, the opening should be a different material or texture to maintain the rhythm of the wall.



Fig. 26: Encouraged: double-hung windows, divided lights, lintels and sills



Fig. 27: Encouraged: replacement windows that fill the entire window opening



Fig. 28 Windows should be in scale with the other façade elements. Avoid windows which do not maintain rhythm of the wall as in this example



Fig. 29 Replacement windows should fill the entire historic opening. Avoid replacing windows where the window opening is not filled



## Building Facade

- ✓ Facades should reflect proportionate shapes and patterns. Unarticulated walls create poor visual appearance, do not relate to the base nor the roof and are not allowed.
- ✓ Facades should be visually appealing through detailing, openings and materials.
- ✓ Corner buildings are exposed on two streets. As such, corners of these building should be articulated and elaborated to reflect this importance.



Fig. 30: Encouraged: detailing, window openings and material changes



Fig. 31: Encouraged: corner articulation



Fig. 32: Blank façades with no variation, windows or detailing should be avoided



Fig. 33: Façades with no detailing, as in this example, should be avoided

## Building Materials

- ✓ New materials should be complimentary.
- ✓ Building materials such as brick, stone, manufactured stone, terra cotta accents, metal accents, stucco and wood are encouraged as they provide visual interest.



Fig. 34: Encouraged: brick and stone materials



Fig. 35: Encouraged: complimentary materials



Fig. 36: Vinyl and aluminum siding are discouraged materials and should not be used to cover historic building materials

## SECTION 7 - BUILDING TOP

The building top should be an expression of form, ornament and detail as it meets the sky. The roof should give distinction to the entire building. To create an attractive roof, certain design features can be used to create good storefronts:

### Roofs

- ✓ Distinctive corners and cornices can create visual interest.
- ✓ Per the Downers Grove Zoning Ordinance, mechanical equipment must be screened from street level view.



Fig. 37: Encouraged: cornice detailing



Fig. 38: Encouraged: stone cornice detailing



Fig. 39: Cornices should have detailing and should be in scale with the rest of the building. New cornices should not cover original features.



Fig. 40: It is important to provide details at the top of buildings. In this example, the parapet does not have any detail or cornice. Buildings without detail at the top should be avoided

## Section 8 – Definitions

Concrete masonry unit (cmu) – A precast masonry unit, typically measuring 8” D x 8” H x 16” L, made mainly of portland cement, gravel, sand and water molded into various shapes.

Cornice – A continuous projection that crowns a wall or other construction, or divides it horizontally for compositional purposes.

Divided lights – A window with a number of smaller panes of glass separated and held in place by muntins or a single pane of glass with muntins placed on the surface of the glass to give the appearance of many smaller panes of glass.

Exterior Insulating Finishing Systems (EIFS) – A multi-layered exterior finish system that provide exterior walls with an insulated finish surface and waterproofing in an integrated composite material system.

Knee wall – A short wall upon which a window may sit.

Lintel – A horizontal member above a window opening

Massing – The three-dimensional bulk of a building: height, width and depth.

Pattern Book – The Village of Downers Grove Pattern Book is a document that contains the different patterns and components that create the fabric and context of Downtown Downers Grove and identifies the elements necessary for retaining and enhancing its character as new development, improvements, and changes are considered.

Sill – A horizontal member beneath a window opening.

Streetwall – A continuous built form of buildings at or near the front property line, with no or very small side yards.

Utility Brick – A brick which is larger in size than a standard brick. A standard brick measures 3 1/2” D x 2 1/2” H x 8” L.