Appendix A-3
Eastern Gateway Area 1 Design Standards
Applicable within the Eastern Gateway Area 1

Intent:

The Eastern Gateway District of downtown Des Moines was a thriving, active downtown neighborhood and business district in the late 1800s to about 1950. In the past fifty years, the buildings in this area deteriorated due to age and economic obsolescence with greatly diminished retail and housing uses. Many buildings and storefronts were vacant or underutilized when the City undertook several public-private projects in the area, starting in 2000, to improve the area for commercial and residential uses. As part of its efforts to reestablish the Eastern Gateway District as an active and thriving downtown neighborhood, the City is committed to supporting the continued revitalization of the Eastern Gateway Area 1 through the provision of tax abatement for the rehabilitation of historically contributing buildings, and for the construction of new buildings with appropriate design features and uses that strengthen this emerging mixed-use neighborhood.

A subset of the larger Eastern Gateway District, identified in Map 8 and designated as Eastern Gateway Area 1, has special architectural and historical importance. This subarea is bounded by Des Moines Street on the north, the railroad tracks south of Court Avenue on the south, the east bank of the Des Moines River on the west, and E. 7th Street on the east. The Eastern Gateway Area 1, has the greatest potential within the Eastern Gateway District to become a pedestrian commercial district.

New buildings should be designed to be integrated into the unique and specific commercial style brick character of the Eastern Gateway District. New projects should not imitate the classically inspired architecture of the Civic Center Historic District along the east and west sides of the Des Moines River.

Projects in the Eastern Gateway Area 1 should have street level uses that are predominantly retail/commercial, civic/cultural or entertainment in nature. To build on the early 1900’s context and pedestrian-scale of the district, buildings and uses that add street life and green spaces are encouraged. It is also recommended that “people places” be created between buildings. Surface parking lots are strongly discouraged.

Except where otherwise noted, if the improvements to multiple-family residential property or to commercial or industrial property include a new building, a building addition over 50% of the existing building area, or renovations to a building that have an estimated cost for building permit purposes that exceeds 50% of the assessed value of the existing building, then the property must also conform with the design standards set forth in this article to qualify for a partial exemption from taxation under the Restated Plan.

Compliance with the standards will be reviewed by the Community Development Director or the Director’s designee for recommendation to the City Council. An application for tax abatement
must be approved by the City Council before it may be forwarded to the Polk or Warren County Assessor to allow the abatement.

**New Construction Requirements**

1. **Uses:**
   Any new building constructed within the Eastern Gateway Area 1 shall be designed and constructed in a manner intended to accommodate retail, consumer services, civic, cultural or entertainment uses along more than 75% of the building frontage on public streets.

2. **Exterior Materials**
   a. A minimum of 75% of the building façade facing any street shall be brick. A traditional brick size is required (about 8 inches long and 4 inches wide) for street-facing facades. A minimum of 50% of all other building facades shall be brick to continue the predominance of brick as a primary building material in the Eastern Gateway Area 1 while allowing for the introduction of contemporary building materials. The area of each façade devoted to windows and doors shall be disregarded in determining this percentage.
   
   b. Exterior materials shall be durable and long lasting. Exterior insulation finishing systems (EIFS) while permitted for use above the first floor, are not encouraged.
   
   c. Brick color is preferred in the range of the red, rust and buff family of colors to compliment the existing palette of brick already found within the district.
   
   d. Other materials such as stone, glass, and metals may be used in a manner that is compatible with the use of brick and enhance the historic precedence for brick as an exterior building material.

3. **Exterior Building Details**
   a. Various design measures must be taken to subdivide the façade and add visual richness to the area to achieve a scale of new construction similar to the scale of the existing historic building pattern in this area. Belt courses, vertical subdivision into bays, cornices, changes in patterns of masonry openings, fluctuation in height and other interruptions to monotonous repetitions must be implemented to break up the façade into segments not more than 20 feet wide.
   
   b. New construction shall have a street level ceiling height of at least 11 feet above the finished floor to carry out the typical pattern or architectural emphasis of the street level. A ceiling height of 12 to 18 feet in height is encouraged to support ground level retail development.
   
   c. Window patterns, types and sizes should be addressed in a manner that offers continuity and compatibility to the existing character of this area that historically offered a significant amount of street level retail, window displays and views into and out of buildings. Upper floor residential windows should be predominantly a 2:1 proportion of height to width. Operable residential windows are preferred. Commercial windows should be clear, non-reflective glazing and designed with large
4. **Lot Coverage, Setbacks and Height**
   a. New buildings shall be at least 36 feet or three stories in height, unless any adjoining buildings are less than three stories, in which case the new building shall be at least two stories or 24 feet in height.

   b. Maximum building heights are established by the Capitol Dominance Overlay District standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. Those standards limit any structure in Capitol Dominance Overlay District "A" to a maximum building height of 75 feet. Those standards limit any structure in Capitol Dominance Overlay District "B" to a maximum building height of 55 feet, provided however, that if the portion of the structure over 55 feet in height is devoted entirely to a residential use, the maximum building height is limited to 75 feet.

   c. New buildings shall have frontage on the principal adjoining street of not less than 70 percent of the lot to encourage appropriate levels of development intensity and achieve compatibility with existing historic structures within the district.

   d. A minimum of 70% of the linear frontage of the street façade of any new construction must be set within 1 foot of the street right-of-way line to maintain the concept of a “street wall” and the historical pattern of building street frontage up to the property line.
Eastern Gateway District Area 1

Date: 11/29/2011

Building Footprint
Eastern Gateway District
Parcel Property

1 inch = 300 feet