

AIA NEI 2025 Design Awards Application

3. Project Information

Project Name

Is this project a resubmission or has it been submitted in the previous 5 years to another AIA program? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the year submitted and any recognition received.

What is the gross conditioned floor area (sq. ft.) of the project?

What is the primary use/category of the project?

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Commercial (Retail/Restaurant) | Healthcare |
| Institutional – Educational, K -12, Higher Education | Institutional – Civic, Municipal |
| Interior Architecture | Preservation/Renovation |
| Residential – Single Family | Residential – Multi-Family |
| Religious | Student Work |
| Unbuilt | |

Was a design charrette or sustainability workshop conducted with owner and team? Yes No

Which of the following levels of community engagement were used during the design process?
(Select all that apply.)

No community engagement practices were applied for this project.

Inform: Potential stakeholders were informed about the project.

Consult: Stakeholders were provided with opportunities to provide input at pre-designed points in the process.

Involve: Stakeholders were involved throughout most of the process.

Collaborate: A partnership is formed with stakeholders to share in the decision-making process including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.

Empower: Stakeholders were provided with opportunities to make decisions for the project.

Unknown

Not applicable (please explain)

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4. Project – Ecosystem

Submissions will be reviewed and awarded based on the successful integration of the [AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#)

What percent of site area supported vegetation (landscape or green roof) pre-development?

What percent of site area supported vegetation (landscape or green roof) post-development?

What percent of site area is covered by native plants that support native or migratory species or pollinators?

Which of the following intentional design strategies were used to promote design for ecosystem? (select all that apply.)

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Biodiversity | Dark skies | Bird safety |
| Soil conservation | Habitat conservation, flora/fauna | |
| Abatement of specific regional environmental concerns | | |
| None of the above | Unknown | Not applicable |

5. Project - Water

Is potable water used for irrigation?	Yes	No	NA
Is potable water used for cooling?	Yes	No	NA
Is grey/blackwater re-used on-site?	Yes	No	NA
Is rainwater collected on-site?	Yes	No	NA

What percentage of stormwater is managed on-site?

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6. Project - Cost

Unless otherwise noted, AIA NEI and the jury will keep financial information confidential. AIA NEI will only describe financial information in public narratives with prior consent from the submitter.

What is the cost per square foot for this project?

How does the cost to construct this project compare to similar buildings in the region?

7. Project - Energy

Using ZeroTool, what is the 2030 Commitment baseline EUI (in kBtu/sf/yr) for the project?

What was the predicted EUI (in kBtu/sf/yr) of the project, including on-site renewables? (Note: carbon offsets should not be counted.)

What was the percentage reduction from the benchmark? (To calculate, first subtract predicted EUI from baseline, then divide by baseline.)

Is the project all-electric? Yes No

8. Project – Well-being

What level of air filters are installed?

Do greater than 90% of occupied spaces have a direct view to the outdoors? Yes No

Was a 'chemicals of concern' listed used to inform material selection? Yes No

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9. Project – Resources

Were embodied carbon emissions estimated for this project? Yes No

What is the estimated embodied carbon emissions (in kgCO₂e/m²/yr) associated with the project, including the extraction and manufacturing of materials used for construction?

10. Project – Change

What is the estimated service life of the project? (in years)?

Which of the following risk assessment and resilience services were provided? (select all that apply.)

Hazard identification	Climate Change Risk	Building vulnerability assessment
Hazard mitigation strategies above code	None of the above	
Unknown	Not applicable	

11. Project – Discovery

Has a post-occupancy evaluation been conducted? Yes No

Which of the following building performance transparency steps have been taken?
(select all that apply.)

Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned in the office

Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned to the profession

Present the design, outcomes, and/or lessons learned to the public

Publish post-occupancy data from the project

Publish lessons learned from the design, construction, and/or occupancy

None of the above

Unknown

Not applicable (please explain)



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Please describe your project emphasizing elements of design achievement including project intentions, programming requirements, cost data and the distinguishing aspects of your resolution (limit 500 words).

Please provide a timeline and summary on how the project came to be including the client's perspective from the start and what impact the project has made on the client and community (limit 500 words).

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Please describe your project emphasizing elements of design achievement including project intentions, programming requirements, cost data and the distinguishing aspects of your resolution (limit 500 words).

The Downers Grove Civic Center (DGCC) realizes this community's bold vision for a vibrant shared facility that houses its Village Hall, Police Department, and School District 58 administration. Instantly recognizable as a center of local government, the DGCC design achieves three critical goals:

- Celebrating community heritage and pride;
- Providing a warm, welcoming environment that enhances productivity;
- Demonstrating the community's commitment to sustainability.

Located on a transformed 6.5-acre site, the DGCC is a gateway to Downers Grove's revitalized downtown district. Two outdoor plazas complement the building design. The northwest plaza connects commuters to regional train service and is also a well-used pedestrian pathway. The Blackburn Civil Rights Plaza honors the legacy of Israel Blackburn, a formerly enslaved person and one of Downers Grove's original founders.

DGCC's exterior design balances tradition with progress. Timeless brick and stone materials combine with a wealth of glazing, canopies and overhangs to provide both natural light and critical shading. The space design of the three-level facility (including the basement) provides safe and functional workflows that enhance productivity and a positive experience for building visitors.

The DGCC's most prominent interior space is the two-story, light-filled atrium which connects most public spaces including the Council Chambers, used for Village meetings, trainings and community gatherings. The chamber's flexible layout features an operable partition that can divide the space. The first floor also contains secure transaction windows for Village services and key police department functions.

DGCC's second floor houses Village departments, police functions and school district staff in dedicated areas. Within departments, individual workspaces are designed for comfort and productivity with high-quality, durable materials. Large perimeter windows ensure abundant natural light, while automatic shades, linked to programmable lighting controls, offer flexibility in managing light levels. Customized audio-visual systems further support a range of activities, including broadcasting, training, and virtual or hybrid meetings. A prominent feature of the second floor is the shared staff hub, a centrally located zone for shared meeting rooms, break areas, a kitchen area, wellness room and outdoor green deck.

The DGCC is a visible manifestation of the Village's commitment to sustainability. The design team reviewed a range of sustainability options including maintainability, first cost, long term operating cost, and carbon footprint. Site enhancements include permeable pavers, rain gardens, and bioswales to support best practices in stormwater management. Design enhancements include an efficient building envelope, laminated glazing units for both acoustic and solar performance, and photovoltaic panels on the carport structures.

Significantly more efficient than the buildings it replaced, the DGCC's system has an EUI of 54.6, a 60% EUI savings over the old buildings' EUI of 137. The new building also achieves a 31% EUI savings over the CBECS 2003 baseline. Annual energy costs are expected to be 61% less in this single new structure compared to the previous 3 buildings – saving approximately \$168K annually. Carbon dioxide (CO2) savings are estimated at more than 37%.

The DGCC cost was \$60 million including \$52 million for construction and \$8 million for soft costs.

Please provide a timeline and summary on how the project came to be, including the client's perspective from the start and what impact the project has made on the client and community (limit 500 words).

The new, 81,180 sf DGCC is located on a transformed site that previously housed the Village Hall and Police Department in separate, outmoded facilities. A 2012 Facility Condition Assessment concluded that the age and condition of both facilities were drivers of operational deficiencies and inefficient service delivery. In 2016, the Village approved a Facilities Sustainability Plan that envisioned the expansion and renovation of the police station and minimal improvements to Village Hall. Later that year, the Village Council formally expressed support for the redevelopment of the Civic Center site as part of a new Downtown Focus Area Plan.

Since 2019, the design team has been working with the Village on this complex, phased redevelopment project which resulted in the creation of the DGCC, bringing together Village, police and school district staff. Throughout the process, the Village and design team engaged the community through public hearings, meetings and other interactions with stakeholders.

The design team's initial planning studies explored five different development options with a goal of combining the Village Hall, police and school district under one roof. The concepts included significant site improvements. For each option, our team developed site plans and narratives that were then priced and evaluated.

Once the final design concept was agreed upon, this visionary redevelopment project took approximately two years to complete. Phasing was implemented to minimize disruption of Village services and allow for the continued use of existing facilities during construction. The initial phase included construction of the DGCC on a previous parking lot while the current Police Station and Village Hall remained fully operational in their old facilities. Once completed, staff moved into their new joint facility. Additional phases included demolition of the old buildings to allow completion of the remaining sitework, including new parking and the Blackburn Civil Rights Plaza. The final phase of the project will include redevelopment of the eastern 1.3-acre portion of the site by a private developer for a multifamily housing complex.

The entire Downers Grove community celebrates this landmark facility, which honors its history and serves as a beacon of continued progress in the future. The shared amenities spaces have drawn particular praise from building occupants. As testimony, Nora King (Building Division Manager/Community Development) offered these thoughts: "While we all work in the same building, most of our work occurs in each department's designated area. The break room and terrace is unique in that it's really the spot where we all merge, laugh, and share..."

The DGCC is a model of innovative environmental design with the inclusion of sustainable site enhancements and building design elements. The new building is significantly more efficient than the buildings it replaced. The DGCC received the Construction Industry Service Corporation's 2024 CISCO Project of the Year award, honored for its exceptional design, innovative construction techniques, and community impact.