

## East Peoria offering architects blank canvas for Downtown 2010 site

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EAST PEORIA — It's a landscape architect's paradise.

Develop a streetscape design concept for the Downtown 2010 site, which in its current state resembles a wasteland of dirt and pulverized concrete.

"This is a unique opportunity," said Ty Livingston, East Peoria's director of planning and community development on Monday. "When you look at a lot of these (streetscape) projects, usually you are trying to retain a certain character, but this is different.

"It's a blank slate. There's an opportunity to build something new and exciting."

Most of the 89-acre site was home to the first manufacturing plants of Caterpillar Inc. City officials want to transform the space between West Washington and Camp streets into a retail and commercial center by introducing new shops, restaurants, offices, civic buildings and more.

As detailed on its Web site, [cityofeastpeoria.com](http://cityofeastpeoria.com), East Peoria is soliciting design proposals from landscape architects to come up with a theme for the space. Design plans are due by March 19, with interviews of selected proposals set for later in the month.

Requirements for the streetscape design include signage, traffic calming, parking area definition, benches, lighting, landscaping and providing sidewalk space to accommodate pedestrian traffic, sidewalk cafes and pushcart food vendors.

"A street without streetscape is pretty dull and bland," said Livingston. "It has no character.

"Streetscape is the wow factor - it really ties everything together. It's something that really defines the place, like the French Quarter in New Orleans. You know it when you're there. That's what we're trying to come away with."

Livingston said there's been a lot of interest by design groups - both big and small - to fashion a trademark for the site. There's also the opportunity for the design to filter through the entire community.

"I've received a lot of calls," he said. "We're anticipating some really exciting and creative designs."

The city has not decided how much to spend on the streetscape project.

"We will have to wait and see what the range is when the proposals come in," said City Administrator Tom Brimberry, adding funding would come from the West Washington Street tax-increment financing district.

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