

# City of Geneva Special Financing District Study

City Council Findings

Monday, November 17, 2025



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# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Scope of Work/Study Area
- Special Service Area (SSA) No. 1
- Economic Development Toolbox
- Assets and Constraints for Future Development
- Downtown Development Financing & Infrastructure Needs
- Geneva Metra Ridership, Commuter Parking and Local Parking
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Best Practices & Recommendations
- Next Steps/Questions/Discussion



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# Scope of Work

- **Steering Committee Oversight**
- **Existing Conditions and Data Collection**
- **Assessment of SSA # 1**
- **Public Engagement**
  - Stakeholder Interviews
  - Public Survey
- **Draft Recommendations and Implementation Strategy for Financing District(s)**
- **Final Study Report and Implementation Guide**
- **Council Interaction and Financing District Conversation**
  - Presentation of Findings to City Council (11/17/25)

# Study Area – SSA #1 & Downtown Geneva



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# Special Service Area 1

## How Special Service Area #1 has been used...

### SSA Services

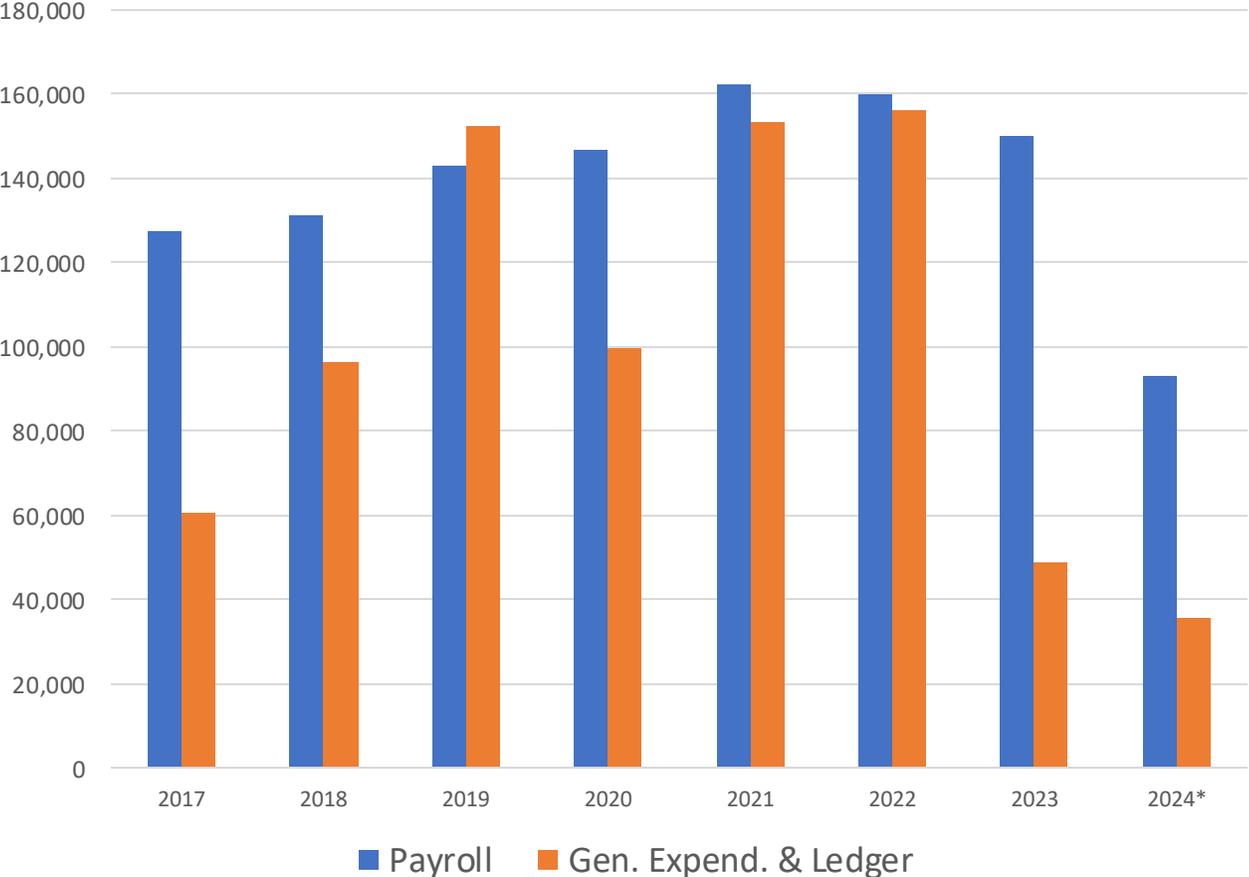
- Off-Street Parking Lot maintenance and repair
- On-Street Parking maintenance and repair
- Acquisition for parking purposes
- Landscaping, public seating and other public realm improvements.

### Financing

- 0.7% levy on property value, ~\$375k in 2024
- \$5M bond authority for larger public realm improvements

# Special Service Area #1

## Expenditures by Category over time



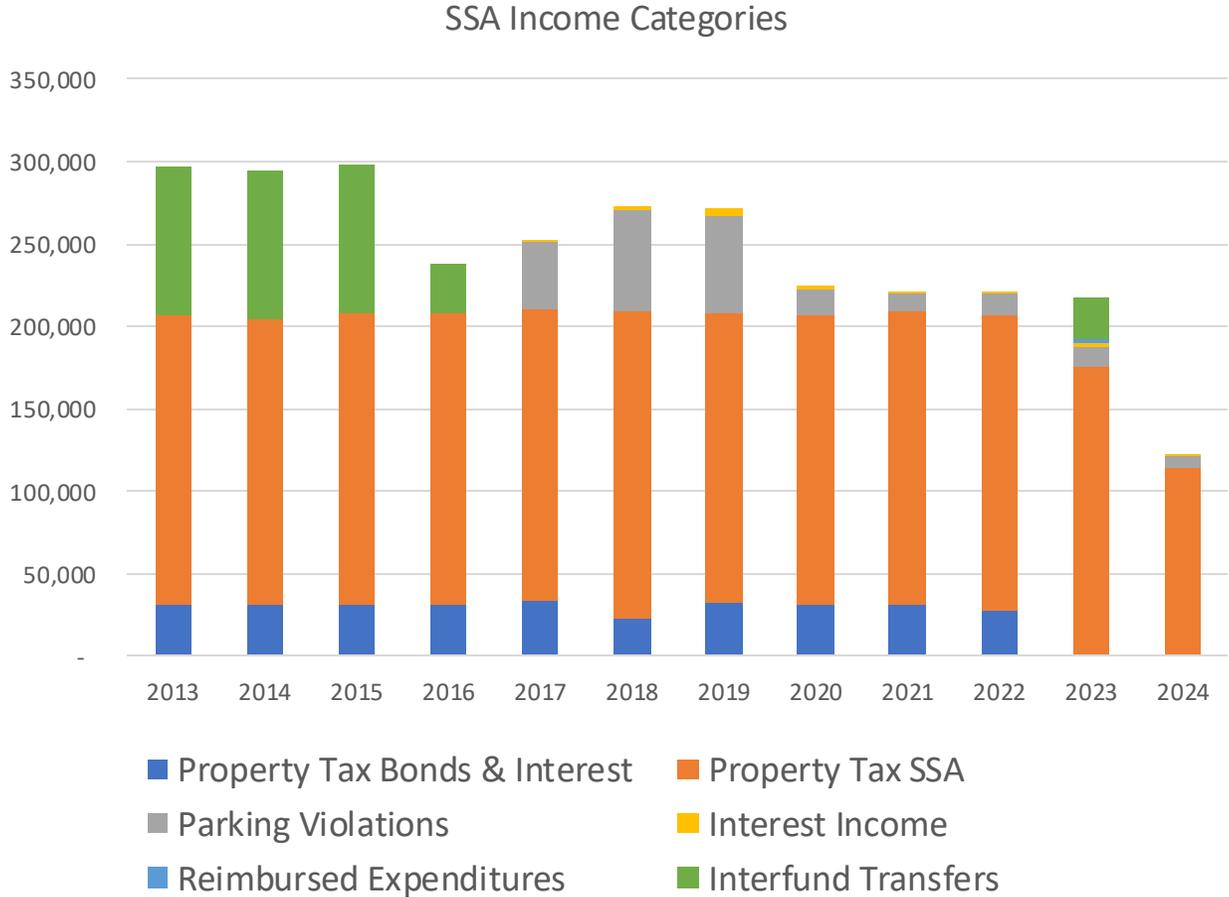
## Expenditures

- Historically, SSA bond repayments before being retired in 2022 had annual debt service payments of ~\$30,000.
- Payroll for City staff to perform ongoing maintenance and state of good repair work has slowly climbed.
- Two largest cost categories
  - *Service Charges* (trash and street sweeping); and
  - *Maintenance Services* and plowing and snow removal services.



# Special Service Area #1

## Income over time for the SSA #1 Fund



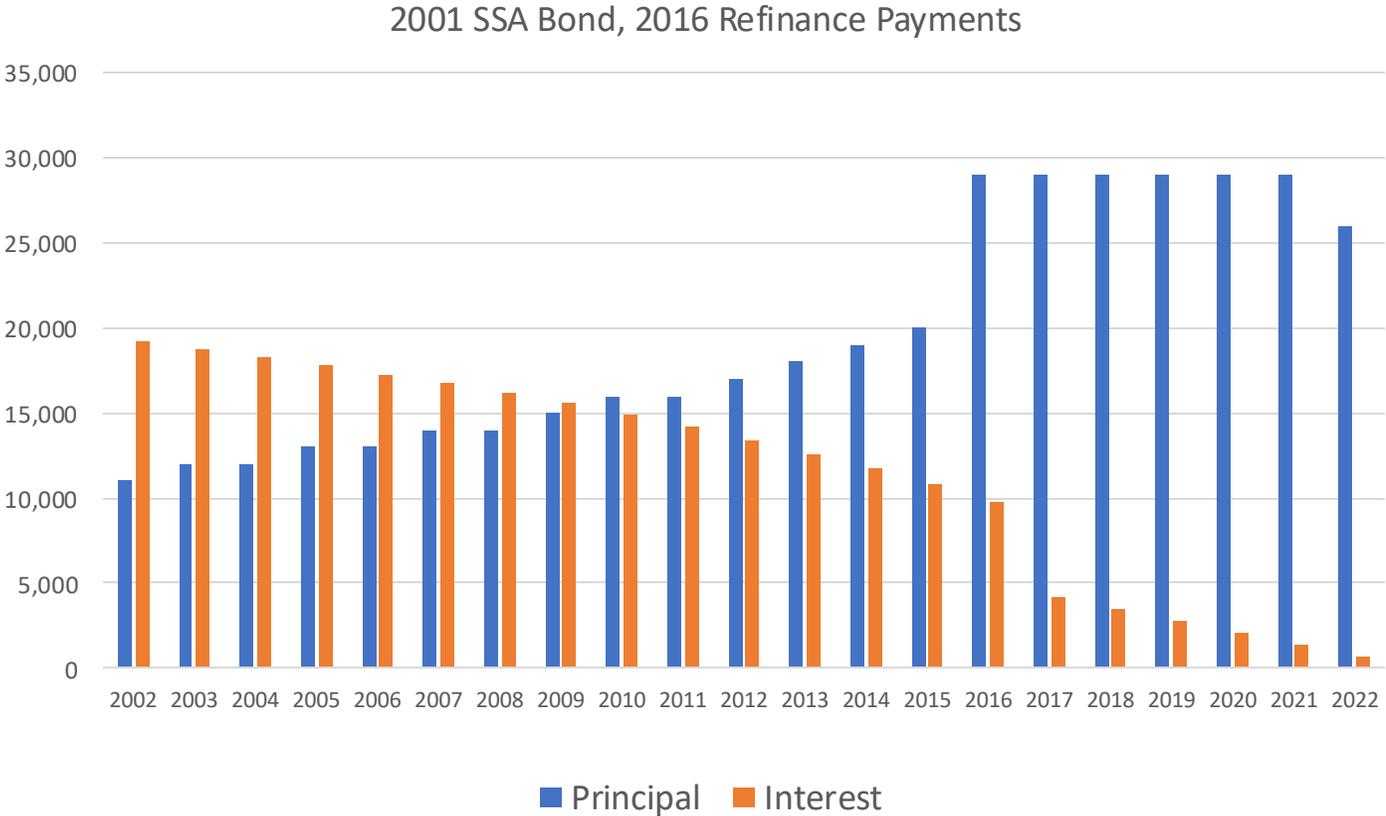
### Revenues

- Stable property values means tax revenues are not keeping up with growth in expenses.
- Property tax levy is constrained in the absence of new commercial development or increase in the levy rate.
- Supplemental revenue sources have been needed for well over a decade and these sources are inconsistent over time (see parking violation revenues).
- The Bond & Interest category reflects property taxes directly levied to retire the outstanding debt.
- Parking violations were a valuable but variable revenue source in the late 2010s with minimal value today.



# Special Service Area #1

## Bond payments over time



- SSA bond issued in 2001; refinanced in 2016 with significantly lower interest rate (2.42%)
- \$400,000 in proceeds and paid \$643,500 in principal and interest over 20 years.
- Maintaining annual P&I payment of \$30k, even following refinancing was a good financial move.



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# Special Service Area 1

## What were the key findings?

- An effective tool to maintain the character of downtown and provide for basic services and infrastructure improvements.
- Over time, the limited new development Downtown coupled with slowly inflating costs of services has meant that the SSA has been squeezed on the level of service that can be provided to the businesses it supports.
- Unless changes are made to the SSA levy, ongoing support from other revenues sources will be required to maintain the current level of service.
- Future bond issuances should seek to match the term of the bond with the useful life of the capital investment.

# Assets and Constraints for Future Development

## Assets:

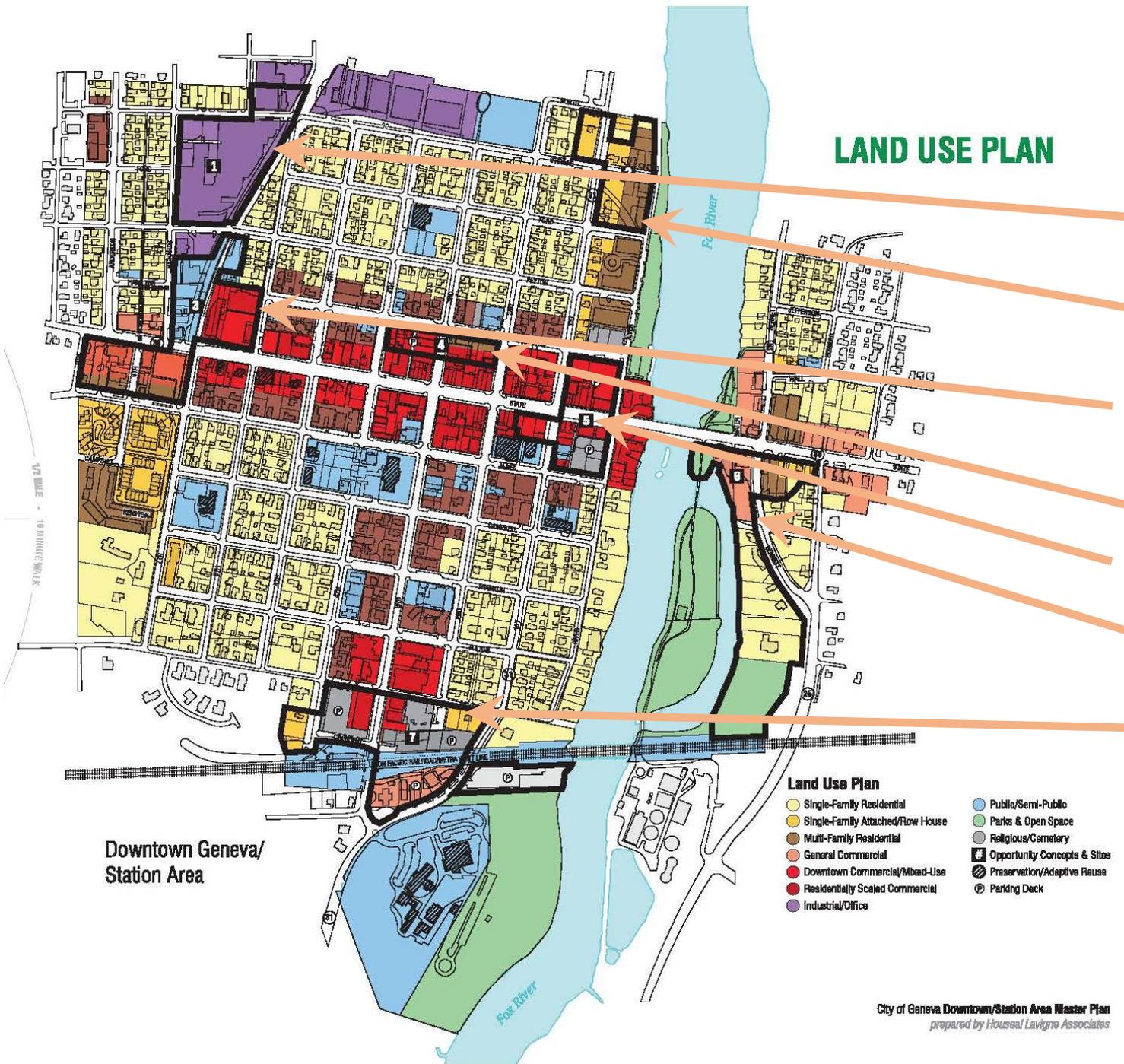
- Active downtown
- Strong residential demand
- Opportunity sites include municipally owned parcels and vacant/parking lots where new value could be added
- Regionally known commercial downtown
- Key western suburb commuter station for Metra UP-W
- Active and engaged community through festivals and annual events

## Constraints:

- Potentially high base EAV on target opportunity sites, limiting net new EAV for SSA #1, TIF 3, or a newly created TIF.
- Conflicting opinions on the use of financial incentive tools through Business Districts and TIFs.
- Qualification of a larger downtown conservation TIF district would be complicated.
- Post-pandemic changes to shopping, commuting and visitor patterns

# Downtown Development Financing & Infrastructure Needs

A Summary of the Downtown Opportunity Sites



**LAND USE PLAN**

Opportunity Site	Desired Uses
1 <b>Burgess Norton</b>	Redevelopment of the Burgess Norton Industrial Properties, 7th St Reconnection
2 <b>West Shoreline MF</b>	Multifamily buildings with adjacent rowhouses
3 <b>7th &amp; State</b>	Reconfiguration of existing State Street commercial blocks; 7th Street Reconnection
4 <b>Hamilton &amp; 3rd</b>	Mixed-Use pair of buildings
5 <b>1st/State/River</b>	Rehab/adaptive reuse of public buildings and municipal parking lots
6 <b>East Shoreline</b>	Mill Race Inn Restoration & New Residential
7 <b>Metra Station</b>	Mixed-use with replacement Metra Parking; Roundabout, Pedestrian Overpass and Bus Turn-in.

**Downtown Geneva/  
Station Area**

- Land Use Plan**
- Single-Family Residential
  - Public/Semi-Public
  - Single-Family Attached/Row House
  - Parks & Open Space
  - Multi-Family Residential
  - Religious/Cemetery
  - General Commercial
  - Opportunity Concepts & Sites
  - Downtown Commercial/Mixed-Use
  - Preservation/Adaptive Reuse
  - Residentially Scaled Commercial
  - Parking Deck
  - Industrial/Office

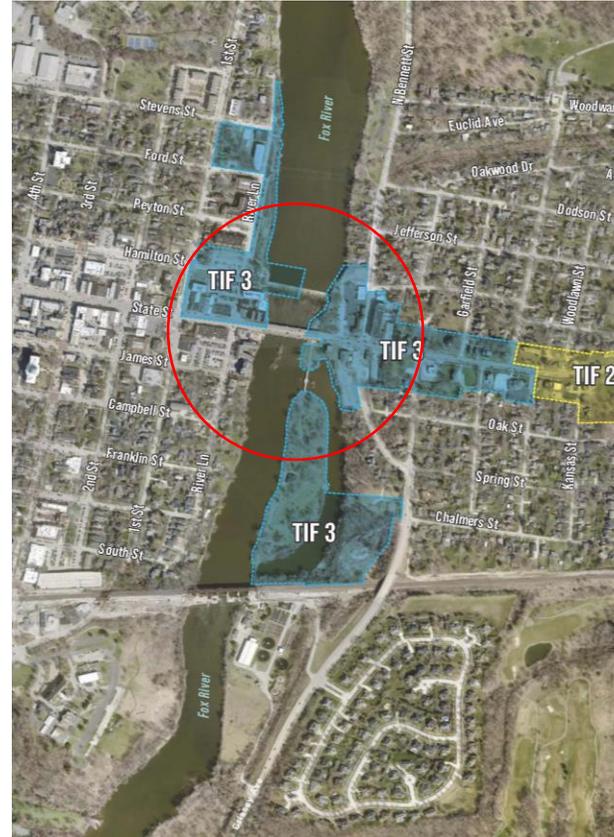
Source: Downtown Geneva Adopted Plan



# The Economic Development “Tool Box”

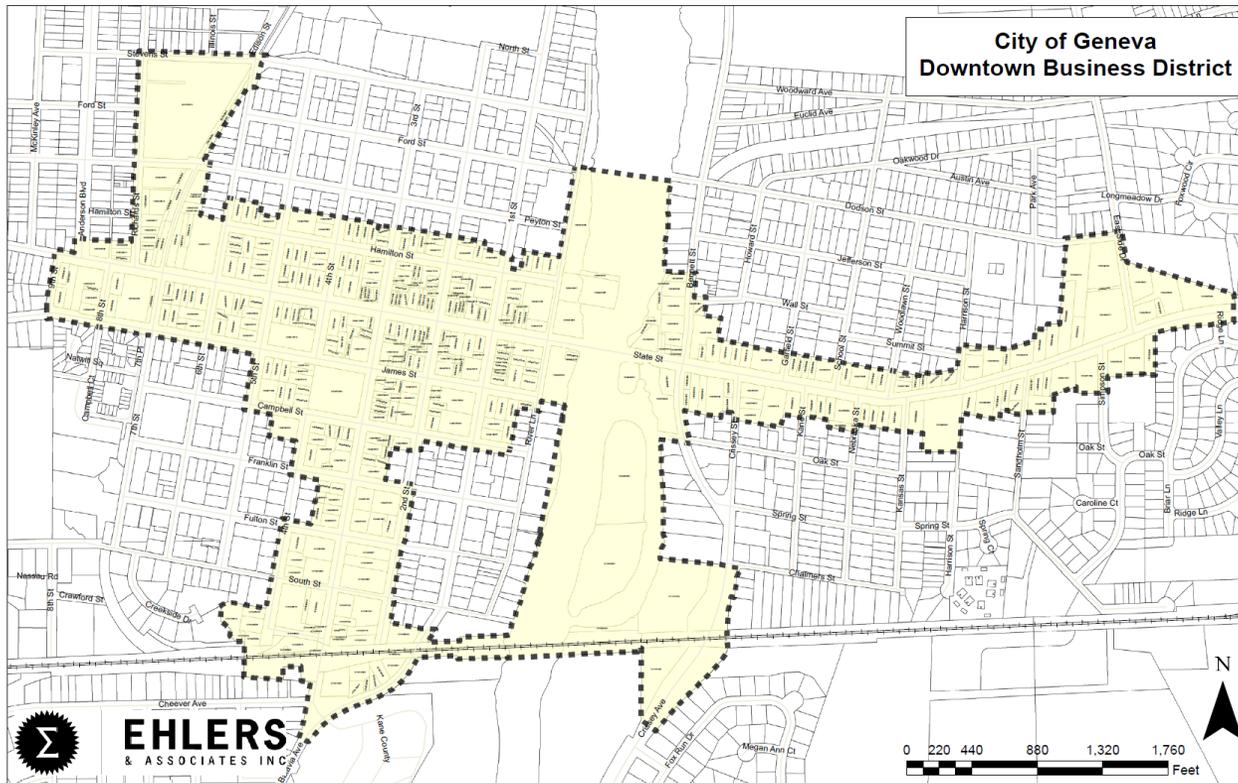
Tool	Mechanism	Designation Authority
Tax Increment Financing	Value Capture of Property Tax Growth	Municipal
Business District	Add'l Sales/Hotel Tax	Municipal
Economic Incentive Agreement	Sales Tax Rebate	Municipal
Special Service Area	Add'l Property Tax Levy	Municipal

# Tax Increment Financing



- SSA #1 overlaps TIF 3 at the Fox River.
- Active redevelopment of Mill Race Inn and multifamily projects.
- Tax-exempt municipal parking lots on west are advantageous for TIF increment generation.

# A Downtown Geneva Business District



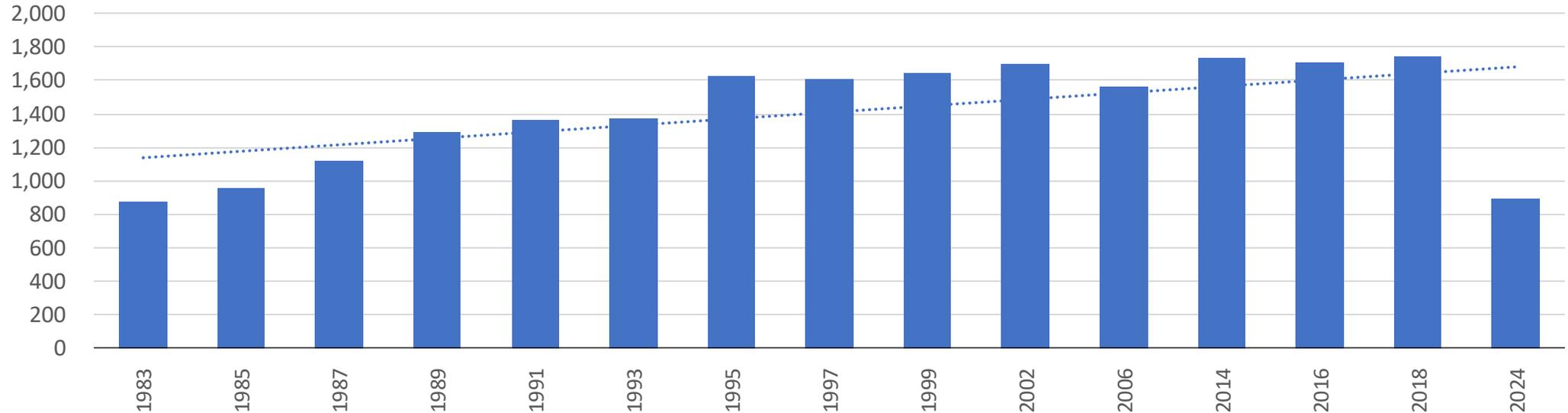
- SSAs and BDs are complementary tools for funding both capital improvements and services.
- In 2013, Geneva proposed a Business District and went through the administrative and legislative process, but was ultimately not adopted, following pushback.
- In conversations during this study, several businesses indicated interest in restarting the conversation as a means to support the SSA and additional downtown needs.

# Geneva Metra Ridership, Commuter Parking and Local Parking

A Tale of Two Realities and Public Perceptions

# Metra Ridership Trends

Geneva - Weekday Boardings Over Time

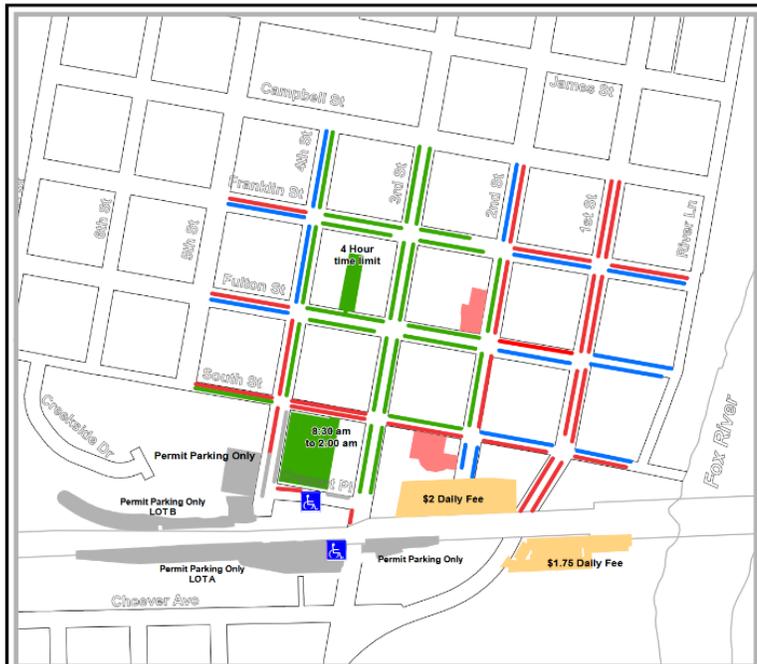


## Ridership Trends

- Equal levels of morning inbound and evening outbound
- Pre-pandemic average of 1,700 boardings stable since early 2000s
- Post-pandemic ridership dropped -51% to early 1980's boarding levels
- Importance of Geneva to the UP-W ridership remains



# Parking (Commuters vs. Local Parking)



## GENEVA METRA COMMUTERS PARKING GUIDE

### LEGEND

- Handicap parking
- Permit parking
- Paid parking
- Free parking with time restriction
- Private parking
- Parking along street**
  - Permit parking
  - 3 Hour time limit parking
  - Residential parking area/No parking 2:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m. without a permit
  - No parking anytime



Not to Scale



City of Geneva, Illinois  
Engineering Division  
ILL. August 2017

This map is intended for use as a reference only. The data is subject to change without notice. Original data requires a non-exclusive agreement with Kane County GIS Technology. Reproduction without permission from the City of Geneva is prohibited.

## Local Parking Findings

- Public Perception - local parking should never require payment; broad survey consensus (**79.3% would not pay to park** in a garage).
- Parking for Employees – acute issue due to 4-hour restrictions.

## Commuter Parking Findings

- Historic utilization averaged 95%, but effective utilization was much lower.
- Nearly 500 commuter spaces removed from circulation due to Metra construction, masking low utilization on remote lots.
- No Impact from reduced parking availability due to Metra track construction; coincides with reduced ridership
- Metra is reviewing commuter parking needs and open to exploring rightsizing and redevelopment of some commuter lots.

# Outreach: Interviews and Community Survey

## Steering Committee & Stakeholders



**PUBLIC BATHROOMS**



**EMPLOYEE PARKING**



**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AMENITIES**



**SSA SERVICES**

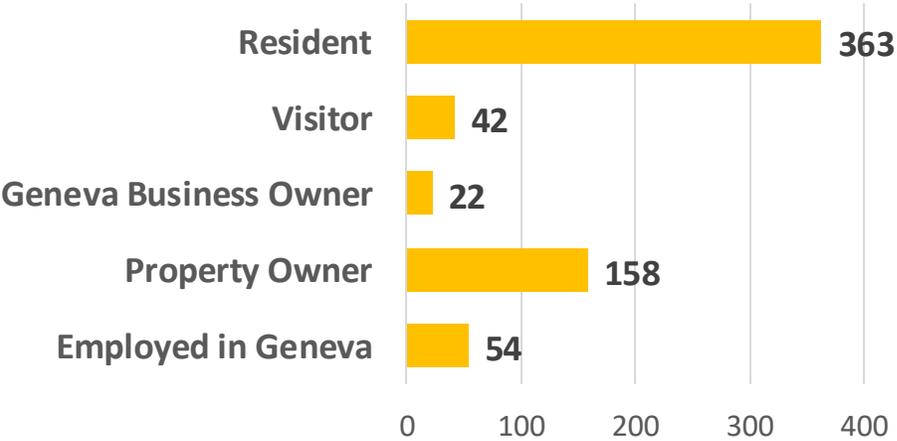


**WAYFINDING IMPROVEMENTS**



**FESTIVALS**

## Community Survey



### Topics:

- Public Improvements
- Downtown Parking
- Metra Usage
- Safety



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# Community Survey: Key Findings

## Local Parking

- 57.9% - visitor parking is adequate
- 75.3% - sufficient parking near business
- 97% - felt safe walking to their destination
- 79.3% - would not pay for visitor parking
- If a public parking were constructed, survey respondents felt it should be free

## Public Improvements

- Top 3 Priorities:
  1. Pedestrian Safety on State Street (25%)
  2. Public Washrooms (21%)
  3. Parking (21%)
- Seating and pedestrian amenities among desired improvements
- Bike lanes are loved and hated

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# Best Practices & Recommendations

## Best Practices

1. Limited use of SSA Bonds
2. Annual Reporting on SSA Activity
3. Use Complementary Financing Tools
4. Downtown Capital Planning & Financing Strategy
5. High Value of Exempt Development Sites

## Recommendations

1. Special Service Area Funding/Levy Review
2. Strengthen City Staff and Chamber of Commerce coordination
3. Implementation of a Downtown Business District
4. Implementation of a TIF District around the Metra Station
5. Comprehensive Long-term Measurement and Evaluation of Commuter Parking Demand Around the Metra Station

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# Questions and Discussion