

## Intelligent Design...

Design means getting a Main Street Community into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets - such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets - is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about commercial districts and what those districts have to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in commercial districts, enhancing the physical appearance of commercial districts by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.



The Emporia Main Street Design Committee consists of active, extremely knowledgeable people interested in creating a better community through design. Recently, the Design Committee initiated an "Adopt-A-Garden" project, which has resulted in the adoption of 38 downtown gardens in an attempt to improve the "look" of an important commercial corridor. We still have eight primary "orphan" gardens looking for a home, but we are extremely excited about the citizens of the Emporia Area stepping up to showcase their gardening talents for the enjoyment of the community. We just finished the placement of garden plaques in each adopted garden to recognize the groups, businesses, families and individuals that have so generously donated their time and effort to make Emporia a more beautiful place.

The Design Committee promotes historic preservation through Historic Preservation Month activities, participates in "Design Projects" that show easy and inexpensive ways to improve the aesthetics of property and they coordinate downtown clean up activities. Through our partners at the Kansas State Main Street Office in the Department of Commerce, Emporia Main Street has secured design assistance funding for several buildings throughout Emporia (including the new Granada Lofts). Preservation, design projects, clean-ups and design assistance are just a few of the ways the Emporia Main Street Design Committee has a tangible positive impact on the Emporia Area.

Through education, the Design Committee continues to work towards disseminating accurate information about good design and sustainable development practices. By emphasizing the need to take care of our existing corridors, property and businesses, the Design Committee seeks a sustainable community. By educating the public on the negative effects of sprawl (increased taxes, blight creation, decreased entrepreneurship, corroding infrastructure, unsustainable local economies, etc.) we hope to create a unique Emporia with citizens who are proud of our heritage and seek to differentiate our community from the surrounding area. Design also seeks to encourage appropriate infill development that helps to address market leakage without overwhelming existing businesses. By focusing on historic preservation, the Design Committee works to engage the local community in developing bonds between our past and present, while using the history of our community to project a future that we can all be proud of.

If you are interested in making Emporia a more beautiful and functional place to live, work and play, and you are willing to dedicate some time and effort, please join our Design Committee. Contact the Emporia Main Street office for more information, and check out some of our upcoming events at [www.emporiainstreet.com](http://www.emporiainstreet.com).

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