

## In Depth...

Often times, "development" is synonymous with building on the outskirts of a town in a field. What if "development" could also include revitalizing different existing areas of a community. What if we could figure out an areas strengths, and create a development plan that created a better environment for existing businesses, created new businesses and added additional housing? What if we asked the community what they wanted, found out which of those ideas were profitable and then solicited adaptive reuse or new development to improve an area? When those questions were asked, Emporia Main Street began the Community Initiated Development process.



[Community Initiated Development](#)... What does that mean? Well, beyond the obvious "a development plan initiated by the community", [Community Initiated Development \(CID\)](#) creates an overlay district that allows for unique development in an area. The reason for this is simple: different areas in Emporia have different strengths, weaknesses, wants and needs. Instead of taking a "one size fits all" approach to development, it is in the best interest of taxpayers, developers and general business people to utilize development that makes sense for specific areas over the long term.

The first two phases of the [CID](#) plan were funded by a grant and independent fundraising efforts by Emporia Main Street. The phases included several community input sessions identifying the wants and needs of the community. When coupled with demographic data, infrastructure assessments and market information concerning the feasibility of different types of projects, a [CID](#) can lead to more adaptive reuse of buildings, new infill development and more businesses to combat market leakage and improve our community without overwhelming existing entities. This type of community reinvestment is at the heart of our Main Street core mission. For every public dollar invested in the Emporia Main Street program throughout our history, the public has seen a return of thirty three dollars in additional development, and we strive to continually give the taxpayers a great return on their investment by creating the environment necessary to consistently improve our tax base, our building inventory and our businesses.

Phase Three of the [CID](#) plan is closely reaching a starting point. During this phase, we will identify potential obstacles to redevelopment (lacking infrastructure, market issues, lack of appropriately sized incentives, traditional funding exclusions, etc.) and we will use that information to both "fix" problems for our existing businesses, while soliciting local and regional development to compliment our community. Some of that development may look untraditional. When we talk about development, utilizing existing upper stories of buildings, adaptively reusing buildings and creating mixed-use facilities may not be as flashy as a new 200,000 square foot facility, but they will have a more positive lasting impact on the local property tax base while allowing local developers and building owners a way to produce extra income. The newly gained ability of businesses to sell an upper story as part of a condominium agreement allows Main Street to help solve a stated housing problem while creating density, improving aesthetics and building a more vibrant community. Infill developments, like the Granada Lofts project, may allow Emporia to realize some of the intermediate size goals the community has set, while improving both commercial and residential square footage available to consumers and businesses.

In the near future, you will hear more about Phase Three of the [CID](#) plan. Until that time, you can check out the Phase 2 [CID](#) document on the links page of [www.emporiainmainstreet.com](http://www.emporiainmainstreet.com) . Even in a difficult national economy, Emporia Main Street is working hard to improve business, the tax base and our community on a local level. [CID](#) is an action plan that allows us to move forward intelligently in one area of the community. We hope to see this plan through to fruition, and then take the lessons learned and apply this development strategy in other pre-existing areas of the community to build a better Emporia for everyone. Interested in hearing more, or getting involved? [Contact Emporia Main Street](#).

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