

Bringing Life to Old Town

By 1996, Marketplace Properties developed the first mixed-use residential project in Old Town—a three-story warehouse, now known as Mosley Street Place. It was followed by approximately 40 high-end condominiums and more than 160 apartment conversions, 84 of which are available at below-market rental rates—providing housing opportunities for families of various sizes and incomes levels.



In 1997, the historic Keen Kutter building was redeveloped into what is now The Hotel At Old Town. By 2003, the \$7 million construction of the Old Town Warren Theatre began in the Old Town Square Addition. Old Town Square features mixed-use buildings with retail shops, offices, apartments and a powerful green public space with a splash park, a 500-car public parking garage and the CityArts gallery.

In 2004, the 33-acre Warehouse and Jobbers Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, containing more 60 historic warehouse and industrial buildings in Old Town. Two of the most recent redevelopment projects include a mechanic shop that was converted into a bar and grill called the Pumphouse and a historic printing and publishing building that was transformed into the Courtyard by Marriott at Old Town.



Mayor Carl Brewer's Vision for the Future

Old Town is a model local success story, a premiere destination spot boasting retailers, restaurants and desirable residences. It shows what we can do as a community when we have common goals and a shared purpose. Old Town demonstrates that public-private partnerships work and that government, business and community leaders can work together for the betterment of the area. The City, County, School District, private developers, Old Town businesses and all downtown supporters have worked hard to make Old Town great. The APA's designation is further proof that we have succeeded. The success of Old Town should unite us and inspire us to move forward on the next phase of downtown redevelopment.

For More Information

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OLD TOWN
WICHITA, KANSAS



Wichita's Old Town

as one of 10

**Great Neighborhoods
in America!**

National Recognition for Wichita!



www.wichita.gov

≡ Old Town — A Great Neighborhood in America



On October 8, 2008, Wichita's very own Old Town was designated one of ten Great Neighborhoods in America by the American Planning Association

(APA). Old Town was singled out for the City's bold vision, astute planning, collaborative partnerships and innovative practices that transformed a derelict warehouse and light industrial district into a bustling and successful mixed-use quarter.

APA's Great Places in America program celebrates places of exemplary character, quality, and planning. Places are selected annually that represent the gold standard in terms of having a true sense of place, culture, historic interest, community involvement and vision for tomorrow. The designation will bring national attention to Old Town. Last year's recipients had more than 40 million people view information about their Great Neighborhood.

You can learn more about Old Town's Great Neighborhood in America Designation and watch a video on the City of Wichita's website www.wichita.gov and on the American Planning Association's website at www.planning.org.



How Old Town Became a Great Neighborhood in America

In 1911, Wichita was the nation's second-largest distribution point for agricultural implements, but as the country's transportation industry shifted from rail to interstate trucking, new warehouses were built at the City's edges. By the late 1970's, many of Old Town's historic buildings were boarded up and vacancy rates reached 70 percent.



Bringing back Old Town as a successful mixed-use district was neither easy nor quick. Community leaders, business groups and citizens, including the Old Town Association, began meeting and discussing plans to revitalize Old Town in the

1970s. Their efforts culminated with the *Old Town Development Plan* in 1983. Comprehensive in scope, the plan addressed urban design, opportunity sites, marketing, parking and funding.

Getting Redevelopment Started

Five years later, the City selected Marketplace Properties as the preferred developer to begin redeveloping Old Town.

The next important step came in 1991, when Wichita adopted the Old Town Overlay District, which permits residential uses within the underlying Limited Industrial zoning. It also established design criteria, which allows modern high-density, mixed-use development to occur within the historic character of Old Town.

Innovative Approaches to Groundwater Contamination

The same year, routine tests found groundwater contamination in a six-square-mile area that included Old Town. Rather than seek assistance through the federal Superfund program, Wichita took financial responsibility for the cleanup by creating an environmental Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. Until then, no U.S. city had used this approach, which earned Wichita the 1992 Innovations in American Governments Award, by the Government Innovators Network at Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.

Redevelopment Moves Forward

After the cleanup, several new restaurants and businesses opened in Old Town. By 1993, Wichita created a separate TIF district specifically for Old Town improvements. The City and Sedgwick County contributed \$4 million to start street improvements, pedestrian-level lighting, sidewalks, parking facilities and rehabilitation of the building that houses the Museum of World Treasures. The plaza in front is now used on weekends for the Farm and Art Market.



Some of these improvements included paving streets with brick to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and creating a parking district to promote shared parking. Two large public plazas were designed to host specialty events, festivals and concerts and to serve as informal gathering places to relax and play.