



MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET DESIGN

Session 1: 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

“Design Strategies for Activating your Downtown”

Presenters: Leah Kemp, AIA, and Fran Pharis, AIA

At the heart of every prosperous Main Street community is an active downtown district. Join design experts from the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center at Mississippi State University as they share design strategies for stimulating activity in your downtown. Architects Leah Kemp and Fran Pharis will discuss how to creatively maximize limited budgets while rethinking overlooked or undervalued spaces...and even making them Instagram worthy!



***Leah Kemp** is the director of the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center, a community design center at Mississippi State University that advocates for meaningful design for small towns. She is a registered architect who collaborates with MSU School of Architecture faculty, staff, and students to help small towns in many different capacities. Leah earned a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Virginia Tech and a Master of Architecture from Tulane University. Leah has practiced in Washington, DC, Nashville, TN, New Orleans, LA, and across the state of Mississippi.*



***Fran Pharis** is a project architect for the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center at Mississippi State University. She is a registered architect and manages a variety of problem-solving and design projects for small towns. She also teaches a design studio for first year architecture students in Mississippi State’s School of Architecture. Fran earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Mississippi State and has since worked in Jackson, MS, Raleigh, NC, Huntsville, AL, and Mississippi small towns.*



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Session 2: 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

“What’s Zoning Got To Do With It?”

Presenter: Thomas Gregory, AICP

Did you know that your local zoning ordinance plays a critical role in fostering good design and creating a quality sense of place in your downtown? This session will arm Main Street leaders with the tools they need to better understand zoning in a downtown context and to effectively advocate for sensible zoning reform in their communities. Using examples from a new publication by AARP and the Congress for the New Urbanism, this session will illustrate how incremental zoning improvements can radically improve the design of your downtown.



Thomas Gregory is a certified city planner with over 15 years of experience in planning and downtown revitalization. A member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Thomas has worked as a community planner for the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center at Mississippi State University and as the chief administrative officer for the City of Greenwood, Mississippi. Thomas currently serves as the state coordinator for the Mississippi Main Street Association, where he leads the organization’s administrative, advocacy, and development efforts. He received a Master of City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina and both a BBA and an MBA from Mississippi State University. Thomas is the past president of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Planning Association and has been a participant in the Sustainable Cities Design Academy and the Public Interest Design Institute.



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Session 3: 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

“The Principles of Design for Main Street”

Presenter: Belinda Stewart, FAIA

Learn from Mississippi’s premier preservation architect as she guides Main Street leaders in understanding basic design principles in our historic downtowns. Belinda Stewart will use historic photographs to help us understand local vernacular architecture and how to use those learned principles when making decisions and recommendations about building repairs in the downtown. This is the perfect session for those not technically trained in design and will be presented through a series of case studies.



Belinda Stewart is the founding principal of Belinda Stewart Architects, a predominately female architectural firm based in Eupora, Mississippi. Over the past 30 years, the firm has provided architectural and preservation services for projects representing over \$550 million in construction throughout the southeast. Their projects have encompassed either historic preservation/rehabilitation, expansions or contextually inspired new design and construction. Their projects have received over 100 awards for excellence in design and preservation. Belinda is a longtime supporter of the Mississippi Main Street Association.



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Session 4: 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Historic Tax Credit Panel

Panelists: Katherine Anderson, Chris Chain, Belinda Stewart, and Lori Tucker

Facilitated by: Jennifer Prather

Join MMSA for a panel discussion about historic tax credits and how they can be used to foster preservation in our downtowns. Panelists will discuss historic preservation from the perspectives of an architect, a developer, a Main Street director, and a preservation specialist.



Katherine Anderson is the Tax Incentives Coordinator and Landmarks Administrator at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. She reviews tax credit and Mississippi Landmark projects and advises applicants and property owners on appropriate treatments that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and promote the long-term preservation of historic buildings. She holds a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.



Chris Chain is the President of Renovations of Mississippi, Inc. in Columbus, Miss., which he started in 1996. Chris is a licensed general contractor with extensive experience in obtaining Historic Tax Credits. Chris has developed more than 100 buildings in Mississippi and has received numerous awards for his downtown restoration projects. He is president-elect of the Mississippi Main Street Association Board of Directors and a past board president of Main Street Columbus.



Lori Tucker is the Director of Tourism, Marketing and Community Development and Director of the Booneville Main Street Association. She served as director of the Baldwin Main Street Chamber from 2008 to 2020. Lori helped spur downtown revitalization in Baldwin by securing grants for historic preservation and helping promote the area for new businesses. Lori was awarded the Charles Beasley Outstanding Main Street Director of the Year by Mississippi Main Street in 2016.