

# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgements

- Project Funders ..... AK-1
- Technical Advisory Committee ..... AK-1
- Mid America Regional Council Staff ..... AK-2
- Project Consultants ..... AK-2

## Introduction

- Trails City USA ..... 1-1
- Trails West ..... 1-2
- The Kessler Connection ..... 1-2
- A New Vision ..... 1-3
- A Regional Greenprint ..... 1-4

## Benefits of MetroGreen

- Transportation Benefits ..... 2-1
- Economic Benefits ..... 2-2
- Health and Recreation Benefits ..... 2-2
- Cultural Benefits ..... 2-3
- Security and Safety Benefits ..... 2-3
- Water Quality and Water Quantity Benefits ..... 2-4
- Air Quality Benefits ..... 2-5
- Plant and Animal Habitat Benefits ..... 2-5

## Community Involvement and Support for MetroGreen

- Local Government Involvement ..... 3-1
- Citizen Involvement ..... 3-1
- Meetings with Other Stakeholders ..... 3-2
- Technical Advisory Committee ..... 3-2
- Civic Alliance ..... 3-2
- Citizen Survey Results ..... 3-3

## MetroGreen System

- Framework ..... 4-1
- Protecting Land ..... 4-2
- Protecting Water Quality ..... 4-3
- Connecting People to the Land ..... 4-4



MetroGreen System Map .....	4-5
Corridors and Facilities .....	4-6
Five Types of Trails .....	4-7
Prioritizing Trail Development .....	4-9

## Regional System by County

MetroGreen Action Plan Checklist for All Local Communi- ties within the Seven-County Region .....	4-10
For the Mid-America Regional Council .....	4-12
Johnson County .....	4-14
Wyandotte County .....	4-16
Leavenworth County .....	4-18
Platte County .....	4-20
Clay County .....	4-22
Jackson County .....	4-24
Cass County .....	4-26

## Governance of MetroGreen

Possible Roles and Responsibilities for a MetroGreen Organization .....	5-1
Recommendation .....	5-2
Organizational Framework .....	5-2
Possible Organizational Structure .....	5-3
Organizational Structure .....	5-4
Duties and Activities .....	5-5

## Financing MetroGreen

Weaving a Financial Quilt .....	6-1
Key Financing Options .....	6-2



# *MetroGreen*

## **Introduction**

*MetroGreen is a regional greenway system for the Kansas City metropolitan area. It is principally comprised of linear corridors of land found along streams, roadways and within abandoned rail corridors. The purpose of MetroGreen is to establish an interconnected system of trails that will link the seven-county metropolitan region. MetroGreen is a natural extension of the Kansas City area's trails heritage.*

### **Trails City USA**

The Kansas City region has always been trail-wise. From the early 1800s when a restless population of immigrants thrust west across the American continent, all trails led to Kansas City. Near the end of the 19th century, a brilliant landscape designer and engineer named George Kessler turned the area's trails vision inward, creating a network of corridors that defined the Kansas City landscape and guided its urban destiny. Kessler's hundred-year plan provided the city with a unique identity that linked function with beauty.



Throughout the 1900s, farsighted city leaders fine-tuned the Kessler open-space plan. In 1991, approaching the millennium, the local chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) created a new vision that enlarged upon the concepts Kessler introduced. The ASLA's vision plan connected communities in the greater Kansas City region by a system of trails, open space and parklands. That vision in turn became a core concept in the creation of a broader and more ambitious greenprint for the Kansas City region, called MetroGreen.

## Trails West

From the beginning, Kansas City embraced diversity. French fur trappers packed precious pelts and trekked Missouri's Boonslick Trail west to the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas rivers where trade among Indian tribes and European merchants flourished. Pioneers from the east left Virginia for Kentucky where they booked passage on river craft and eventually washed up on the banks of the river city. In 1804, explorers Lewis and Clark, dispatched by President Thomas Jefferson to find a trade route over water to the Pacific, camped in Platte County and found the prospect of woodland, water and rolling prairie rich with wildlife and ripe with promise. Near the junction of the great rivers the Santa Fe trail branched southeast, the California Trail wended west and the Oregon Trail ventured north. Rivers and trails created a teeming crossroads society, the bedrock of a great American city.

Throughout the 19th century Kansas City bustled. Steamships plied the rivers bringing goods for market and necessities for householders. River traffic and trailways disgorged a steady stream of pioneers. Thousands moved onward over trails west, but those who stayed produced a thriving mercantile economy. Farmers found what the Kansa and Osage Indians had long known, that rich riverbottom land is among the world's most highly productive, and they planted America's agricultural heartland in the wide river valleys.

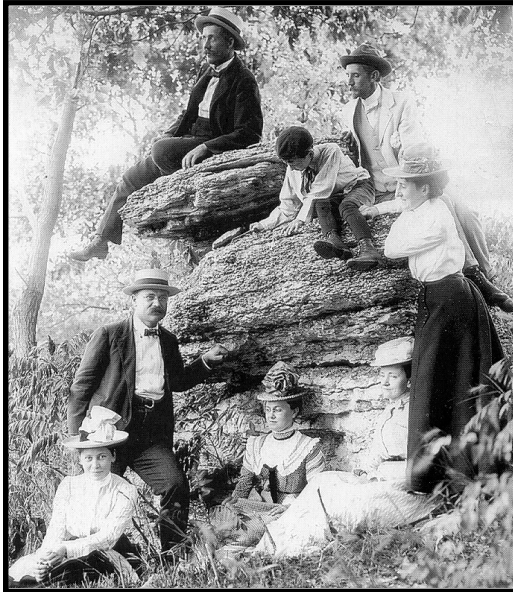
Settlers found the promised land at the crossroads and put down roots. By the end of the 19th century, "Trails City USA" had begun to turn its vision inward, to make efforts to connect riverfront and city, isolated communities and inner-city neighborhoods in a network of boulevards, trails and parkland that would create a unique environment among American metropolitan areas.

## The Kessler Connection

Kansas City was primed for progress when in 1892 a young German landscape architect and engineer named George Kessler authored a corridor plan that had its roots in the City Beautiful movement sweeping America. Kessler envisioned interconnected parks and boulevards that married aesthetics to function. A disciple of the great landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, Kessler presented his plan to the city's Parks and Recreation Commission. In 1893, the city approved the plan and began its implementation. Kessler had brought together the disciplines of architecture, planning, landscape architecture and urban design to produce a greenprint that would guide the city's growth and development for the next 100 years.

For landscape architect George Kessler, the ideal city in the late 19th century depended on creating an urban social order that solved "the civic problems of the community; with a consciousness awakened to community service . . . not just the tangible things of wood and stone, but to civic beautification and the recreational as well."

Kansas City built upon and enhanced Kessler's plan through a 20th century interrupted by two world wars and a Great Depression. In the 1920s, former U. S. President Harry Truman, a native of the Kansas City area then serving as Jackson County's presiding commissioner, was a member of the Greater Kansas City Plan Association. The Kessler plan continued to guide the city through the rampant growth and progress following World War II.



*Landscape architect George Kessler (lower left) developed a visionary plan of "parks, parkways and boulevards" that became the foundation for Kansas City's parks system.*

## A New Vision

In 1991 the ASLA was invited to hold its annual meeting in Kansas City. The resulting Community Assistance Team Project produced by the society's local Prairie Gateway chapter was presented to the community and became a guide for metropolitan greenway development over the next 10 years. It became MetroGreen.

The Mid America Regional Council served as steward and supporter of the MetroGreen vision during the past decade and local communities began to implement elements of the plan. With growing community interest in trails and increased concerns about stormwater and water quality, MARC launched an effort in 2001 to expand the 1991 vision plan.

As an expansion of the 1991 ASLA plan, MetroGreen promotes a comprehensive and extensive system of greenways, trails and open spaces. MetroGreen 2001 defines the critical relationship between environmental stewardship and urban growth management. The plan also articulates a future development strategy that will be based on the cooperative efforts of the seven counties and the municipal governments included within the plan..

MetroGreen proposes auto-alternative travel for area residents commuting from home to work or school; it heightens awareness of recreation facilities throughout the region and improves access to them; it unifies the seven counties in the metropolis; and it connects economic, cultural and historic destinations throughout the region.

MetroGreen enlarges upon George Kessler's greenprint and the 1991 ASLA vision, adding connections leading from existing city boulevards, trails and greenways to trails, parks, and historic, cultural and recreational centers. The result will be a system of corridors and open space that will enhance the environment, offer alternative modes of travel and by connecting communities, promote their cohesive interaction.

## A Regional Greenprint

This MetroGreen Action Plan provides a greenprint for a metropolitan system joining urban and rural green corridors throughout the seven-county Kansas City region. The plan is designed to protect and improve water quality in the region for the next 100 years, and to protect and enhance the region's existing natural elements, and the quality of life area residents cherish.

- MetroGreen will preserve and protect stream corridors in the seven-county Kansas City area by helping to use floodplain lands to absorb floodwaters, thus reducing economic loss. A clean water initiative, MetroGreen is designed to support the biological diversity of streams, rivers and lakes. The plan specifies waterways to be used for recreational purposes; offers watershed strategies for flood control and for protecting natural stream corridors; recommends local adoption of streamside buffer zones; and restores native habitats for indigenous plants and animals.
- MetroGreen will link destinations including home/school and home/work. Green corridors available for walking and biking enhance other public health initiatives by broadening opportunities for area residents to lead healthy lifestyles. The orderly expansion of trail corridors will increase transport options and serve citizens' recreational needs.
- MetroGreen is designed to provide off-road corridors that are linked to form an alternative transportation network connecting the seven-county region. MetroGreen will promote non-motorized travel options and expand non-motorized routes.
- MetroGreen will make it possible for residents throughout the seven-county region to experience the beauty of natural landscapes. The plan envisages outdoor classrooms to promote environmental education in the areas of urban geography, social studies and environmental management. In addition,



*Kansas City's heritage as "Trails City USA" is reinforced by the vision and goals of MetroGreen 2001.*

MetroGreen proposes interpretive programs that celebrate cultural facilities located within its corridors. MARC will provide a web site that will offer area residents with updated information on MetroGreen's progress.

Frederick Law Olmstead, designer of New York's Central Park, said busy city dwellers need the refreshing influences of parklands. "The much confined, stimulated, and overworked inhabitants of large towns . . . need to find conditions favorable to recreation," he wrote in his Architect's Report to the Board of Commissioners of the Newark Park in October 1867.

component of a healthy and vibrant regional economy. MetroGreen will identify partnership opportunities with private sector businesses, civic organizations, associations and individuals to spread the cost of implementing and managing greenways, and will concentrate on cost savings associated with greenway development.

MetroGreen's energetic, visionary greenprint will propel the Kansas City region into the vanguard of America's forward-looking, environmentally aware metropolitan areas.

- In addition, MetroGreen will support ways to protect and restore native habitats for indigenous plants and animals.
- MetroGreen will encourage the development of public/private partnerships to make practical decisions concerning the construction and maintenance of future greenways. Among MetroGreen's primary goals is to identify specific economic strategies that will define the plan as a prime

# Benefits of MetroGreen

*MetroGreen is designed to address and resolve community issues that affect the future environmental and economic health of the Kansas City metropolitan area.*

Greenways have been implemented by communities throughout the United States to provide recreation and alternative transportation, control flooding, improve water quality, protect wetlands, conserve habitat for wildlife and buffer adjacent land uses. Greenways typically incorporate varying types and intensities of human use, including trails for recreation and travel and passive and active park facilities, including open playing fields. Greenways increase the value of adjacent private properties as an amenity to residential and commercial developments. These and other benefits of the MetroGreen network are described in the following pages.

## Transportation Benefits

In past years, American communities have grown in a sprawling, suburban form as a result of dependence upon the automobile as the sole means of transportation. As automobile use has increased, traditional forms of transportation (such as passenger train service) have become less available and communities have been slow to offer alternatives such as bicycle and pedestrian networks, bus systems and local rail service. In order to provide relief from automobile congestion on the streets and highways in the Kansas City metro area, future transportation planning and development must be concentrated on providing residents with choices in modes of travel. These choices should be appealing and should offer the same benefits currently provided by the automobile: efficiency, safety, comfort, reliability and flexibility.

MetroGreen corridors are designed to serve as extensions of road networks, offering realistic and viable connections between origins and destinations such as work, schools, libraries, parks, shopping areas, historical and cultural sites and tourist attractions. Greenway-based bikeways and walkways are most effective for certain travel distances. National surveys by the Federal Highway

MetroGreen corridors are designed to serve as extensions of road networks, offering viable connections between origins and destinations such as work, schools, libraries, parks, shopping areas, historical and cultural sites, and tourist attractions.

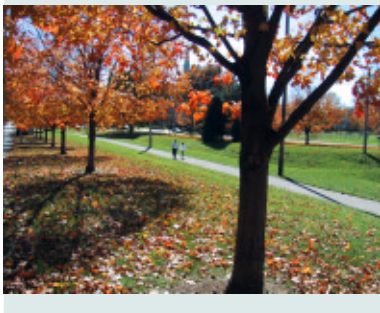






*“Greenspace is the hot product today. Now, you open up the new home guides (in Kansas City) and everyone is talking about green space. There is a sizeable portion of the (housing) market to whom trees and land are important, and they’re willing to pay for it.”*

*David Gale, President  
Gale Communities  
Lee’s Summit, MO*



Administration have shown that Americans are willing to walk as far as two miles to a destination and bike as far as five miles. Destinations can be linked to multiple origins throughout the Kansas City area with a combination of off-road trails and on-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## **Economic Benefits**

MetroGreen offers numerous economic benefits, including higher real property values, increased tourism and recreation-related revenues, and cost savings for public services. Greenways have been shown to raise the value of adjacent properties by as much as five to 20 percent. For example, in a new development in Raleigh, North Carolina, new lots situated on a greenway were priced \$5,000 higher than comparable lots off the greenway. Many home buyers and corporations are looking for real estate that provides direct access to public and private greenway systems. Greenways are viewed as amenities by residential, commercial and office park developers who realize higher rental values and profits from when they locate next to greenways. Additionally, greenways can save local tax dollars by utilizing resource-based strategies for hazard mitigation and managing community stormwater, thus placing into productive use landscapes that would not normally be considered for conventional development.

Greenways enhance the role tourism plays in the economy. Tourism is ranked as the number one economic force in the world. In several states, regional areas and localities throughout the nation, greenways have been specifically created to capture the tourism potential of a regional landscape or cultural destination. The state of Missouri, for example, spent \$6 million to create the 200-mile KATY Trail, which, in its first full-year of operation, generated travel and tourism expenditures of more than \$6 million.

## **Health and Recreation Benefits**

Studies have shown that as little as 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity exercise (such as bicycling, walking, in-line skating or cross-country skiing) can significantly improve mental and physical health and prevent certain diseases. Greenways contribute to public health by encouraging more people to walk or bike to short-distance destinations. Providing opportunities for participation in these outdoor activities, close to where people live and work, is an important component of promoting healthy lifestyles.

In 1987, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors released a report that profiled the modern pursuit of leisure and defined the quality of life for many Americans. Limited access to outdoor resources was cited as a growing problem throughout the nation. The commission recommended that a national system of greenways could provide all Americans with access to linear open-space resources.

The MetroGreen system will complement the community's existing parks and open-space system. MetroGreen will serve as a primary recreation and fitness resource. Additionally, MetroGreen will help meet the passive recreation needs for a growing population of older residents.

## Cultural Benefits

Greenway systems like MetroGreen enhance the culture of their regions and protect historic resources in metropolitan areas. Successful greenway projects across the United States have served as new "main streets," where neighbors meet, children play and community groups gather to celebrate. For cities and towns large and small, greenways have become cultural assets and focal points for community activities. Some communities sponsor "greenway days" to celebrate the outdoors and local traditions. Various walking and running events are held on greenways to support charity events or extend traditional sporting events. Many civic groups adopt segments of greenways for cleanup, litter removal and environmental awareness programs. Some greenways, like San Antonio's Riverwalk, are the focal point not only for community activities, but also for economic development.

The richness and diversity of area historic and cultural resources are represented by locally or nationally significant historic sites and districts. The interpretation of historic and archeological sites along greenways can serve to increase the awareness and appreciation of the area's rich history. Greenways can also serve as vehicles to provide controlled public access to important cultural sites in a manner that promotes preservation and enhances interpretive opportunities.

## Security and Safety Benefits

Most Americans are concerned about crime. Safe neighborhoods are of prime concern and priority to metro area residents. Some of the most successful deterrents to criminal activity involve increasing neighborhood awareness by citizens and participation in community watch programs. Greenways have proven to be an



*Increased access to open space has been linked to better physical fitness leading to decreased public health care costs, reduced social service and police/justice costs; as well as reduced self-destructive and anti-social behavior.*

*U. S. National Park Service  
The Economic Benefits of  
Protecting Rivers, Trails and  
Greenway Corridors*





*As a water supply protection measure, MetroGreen corridors will buffer streams and lakes with vegetation to absorb pollution from runoff.*

*As a flood control measure, MetroGreen corridors will serve as primary storage zones during periods of heavy rainfall. The protected floodplain can also be used during non-flood periods for recreation and alternative transportation.*



effective tool to encourage local residents to participate in neighborhood programs. Some greenways have been developed as part of efforts to deter criminal activity in a neighborhood. Crime statistics and reports from law enforcement officials have shown that parks and greenways are typically land uses with the lowest incidence of reported criminal activity.

As a recreation resource, alternative transportation corridor or area where fitness activities take place, most greenways provide a safer and more user-friendly resource than other linear corridors, such as local roads. Greenways typically attract local residents who use the facilities frequently, creating an environment that is virtually self-policing. Additionally, greenways -- whether publicly or privately owned -- are dedicated for multiple use and are normally designed to meet federal, state and local standards for public safety and use.

## **Water Quality and Water Quantity Benefits**

Greenways preserve wooded open spaces along creeks and streams which absorb flood waters and filter pollutants from stormwater. Historically, flooding has been a significant problem in the Kansas City area. In some cases buildings and other land uses have encroached into flood-prone areas. By designating floodplains as greenways, encroachments can be managed, and sometimes replaced with linear open space, an amenity to residents and businesses occupying adjacent property.

As a flood-control measure, MetroGreen corridors serve as primary storage zones during periods of heavy rainfall. The protected floodplain can also be used during non-flood periods for recreation and alternative transportation. In conjunction with existing stormwater management policies and programs in the region, greenway lands can be set aside as development occurs.

Greenway corridors also serve to improve the surface water quality of local rivers and creeks. The floodplain forests and wetlands contained within greenway corridors filter pollutants from stormwater. These pollutants are not removed if stormwater is collected in pipes and discharged directly into local streams and rivers. Improving surface water quality in streams benefits both local residents and numerous forms of wildlife that depend on streams for their habitat.

## Air Quality Benefits

Greenways as alternative transportation corridors serve to reduce traffic congestion, thus helping to improve air quality. Since the majority of automobile trips are less than two miles in length, offering alternative transportation choices through greenways would encourage people to bicycle or walk these short distances more often, thereby reducing traffic congestion and automobile emissions.

## Plant and Animal Habitat Benefits

MetroGreen corridors can serve as viable habitat for many species of plants and wildlife. Greenway corridors provide essential food sources and, most importantly, access to water that is required by all wildlife. Greenways in the Kansas City area could become primary migratory routes for terrestrial wildlife, serving to help maintain the integrity of many plant and animal gene pools. Some wildlife biologists have extolled greenways as future “gene-ways” because these migration routes are essential to maintaining healthy wildlife populations.

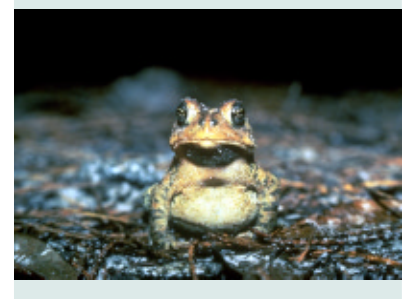
Greenways can also serve as “gene-ways” for plant species that migrate with changes in climate and habitat. These “gene-ways” often follow river and stream corridors that have long served as transportation routes for animals and humans.

MetroGreen promotes local programs to protect valuable existing forested and wetland areas and to reclaim and restore streams to support higher quality habitat.



*“Concern for our environment and access to parks and open space is not frivolous or peripheral, rather, it is central to the welfare of people, body, mind and spirit.”*

*Laurence Rockefeller  
American Capitalist and  
Philanthropist*



## Community Involvement and Support for MetroGreen

*Area residents and local officials attended workshops and meetings during 2001 to participate in the planning for MetroGreen. Workshop participants viewed maps and displays and contributed ideas and recommendations that led to the preparation of this action plan. Additionally, a scientific survey of metro residents was conducted to gain a better understanding of public attitudes and identify funding preferences.*

### Local Government Involvement

In early 2001, MARC collected local trail and greenway plan and facility information from area communities throughout the Kansas City region. The information was entered into a regional geographic information system database, and used as a basis for defining the regional MetroGreen system. Meetings were held with city and county representatives over a period of several months to review information and identify MetroGreen corridor segments for which funding had been secured or identified.

### Citizen Involvement

Residents of metropolitan Kansas City participated in the three rounds of MetroGreen public workshops held in April, June and October 2001, at locations around the region. In the first round of meetings, workshop participants viewed a short video that explained the concept of greenways, the different forms greenways take and the many functions they perform. They also viewed displays produced by area communities highlighting local and regional trails systems, proposed and existing.

Those who attended workshops viewed regional and county maps, wrote comments and sketched their ideas on the maps. They located areas they felt needed bicycle or pedestrian connections.



*Active participation by the public in the MetroGreen planning process helped to define the specific routes, locations and strategies for the implementation of the system.*

Participants were encouraged to examine regional and county maps produced especially for the workshops and to write their comments and sketch their ideas for a regional trails system on the maps. Workshop attendees located areas that they felt needed bicycle and/or pedestrian connections.

In the second round of meetings, participants were asked to react to a draft metropolitan system of greenways and trails. Display maps were enlarged according to specific areas of the seven county metro region. Participants helped refine the locations of specific corridors. In the final round of meetings, participants were invited to view a final draft of the MetroGreen system and offer additional suggestions and advice.

## **Meetings with Other Stakeholders**

In addition to the public meetings and sessions with local government planners, MARC staff and consultants met with numerous groups to present the MetroGreen concept and solicit input. A special meeting was held with the Prairie Gateway Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the designers of the original 1991 MetroGreen vision plan. Other meetings included the Northland Chamber of Commerce Parks Committee, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Environment Committee, the Kansas City District Council of the Urban Land Institute, the Metropolitan Kansas City section of the American Planning Association, MARC's Total Transportation Policy and Water Resources Advisory Committees, Cass County officials, the MARC Board of Directors, and US Army Corps of Engineers' staff and representatives from area levee districts.

## **Technical Advisory Committee**

The work of the MARC staff and the consultants was supported with technical advice from an advisory committee. These local planners and public works officials met six times during the planning process and provided valuable advice and direction for the project.

## **Civic Alliance**

During the planning process, MARC invited area business and civic leaders to three meetings to hear about the MetroGreen plan and offer their suggestions on the plan's development.

## Citizen Survey Results

The Mid-America Regional Council conducted a random sample survey of residents in the seven-county Kansas City metro area as part of the overall planning process for Metro Green. The survey was administered by ETC Institute. A total of 1,247 surveys were completed in the seven counties, with a minimum of 100 surveys being completed in each of the counties. Of the total surveys 47 percent were completed by males and 53 percent by females. Results from the survey have a 95 percent level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 2.8 percent.

### Most Important Issues in Metropolitan Kansas City

*Preserving water quality and safety from crime in neighborhoods are the most important issues to survey respondents out of 14 potential choices.* In ALL seven counties, preserving water quality was the most important issue. Thirty percent of respondents picked it as their number one most important issue, and 52 percent picked it as one of their three most important issues. Safety from crime in neighborhoods was the second most important issue in ALL seven counties. Other important issues were quality of K-12 education, quality of life for children and families, and maintaining property values.

*“Preserving water quality and safety from crime in neighborhoods are the most important issues to survey respondents out of 14 potential choices.”*

*MetroGreen Survey 2001*



*“Protecting water quality by establishing buffers along rivers and streams is overwhelming the most important goal for Metro Green to accomplish.”*

*MetroGreen Survey 2001*

## **Support for MetroGreen for Projects such as Trails**

*More than 80 percent of respondents are either very supportive (57 percent) or somewhat supportive (27 percent) of using the 1,000 mile Metro Green greenway system for projects such as walking and biking trails, creating transportation linkages between neighborhoods, and habitats for animals, when they were informed that three-fourths of the Metro Green system was in a flood plain that could not be used for permanent developments. In ALL seven counties, at least 69 percent of household respondents were very supportive or somewhat support of using Metro Green for these projects.*

## **Most Important Goals for MetroGreen to Accomplish**

*Protecting water quality by establishing buffers along rivers and streams is the most important goal for Metro Green to accomplish.* Out of 10 potential goals, fully 47 percent of survey respondents indicated protecting water quality as their number one most important goal and 69 percent indicated it was one of their three most important goals. Protecting water quality by establishing buffers along rivers and streams was the most important goal in ALL seven counties.

*Other important goals (based on a sum of respondent’s top three choices) included:* provide habitats for wildlife, birds, and plant life (46 percent); provide outdoor park space for passive activities such as picnicking and other leisure activities (25 percent); increase property values of homes and businesses along trails and greenways (24 percent); provide education programs related to nature and the environment (23 percent); provide recreational usages for flood plain areas that cannot be developed (22 percent) and promote personal fitness and health (21 percent).

## **Importance of Greenways in Protecting Water Quality and Mitigating Impacts from Flooding**

*More than two-thirds (70 percent) of respondents indicated that understanding how Greenways can be used to help protect water quality and protect against flooding would either greatly increase (36 percent) or somewhat increase (34 percent) their support for the development of Metro Green.* In ALL seven counties, at least 66 percent of respondents indicated this knowledge would increase their support.



## Current and Potential Use of Trails

*One-third of respondents indicated that they currently use off-road trails, with 66 percent indicating they don't use such trails.* Current usage is highest in Johnson County (52 percent). Males (36 percent) and females (32 percent) have very similar current usage of trails.

*More than three quarters of respondents indicated they would like to see more places to walk and bike in their communities.* In ALL seven counties, at least 68 percent of respondents would like to see more places to walk and bike in their communities. More than 80 percent of survey respondents indicated they would use a trails system at least once per month if it had the amenities they wanted, with 36 percent indicating they would use it at least once a week. Clay County had the highest once a week potential usage (44 percent).

## Public Support for Financing Trails and Greenways

*Forty percent of respondents selected the bi-state sales tax* as one of their top three choices to support from a listing of nine potential tax based funding sources to help fund purchasing, restoring, and maintaining areas for trails and greenways in their communities. Based on their top three choices, the next most supported tax sources were: county sales tax for parks and trails (37 percent); city sales tax for parks and trails (27 percent); county sales tax for storm water (23 percent); county property tax for parks and trails (21 percent) and city sales tax for storm water (19 percent).

*Compared to other community issues, seventy nine percent of respondents indicated that developing new trails should be a very high (10 percent), high (31 percent), or medium (38 percent) priority.* In ALL seven counties, at least 64 percent of respondents indicated it should be a medium priority or higher.

*“78 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see more places to walk and bike in their communities.”*

*MetroGreen Survey 2001*



## MetroGreen System

*The MetroGreen System defined in this plan has been developed from four primary sources of information: the ASLA MetroGreen Vision of 1991, the Geographic Information System (or GIS) resources of local governments, public involvement and input from municipal and county officials.*

### Framework

MetroGreen is a visionary, large-scale system of interconnected landscape corridors that will span more than 1,000 miles linking city to countryside, suburb to urban center, and regional residents to the landscapes they cherish. To achieve the vision articulated in 1991 by the ASLA Prairie Gateway Chapter, MetroGreen will become more than a system of trails and bike paths. MetroGreen will seek to conserve the unique native landscapes of the Kansas City region, and will help resolve the relationship between land development and land stewardship, defining a greenprint for the future.

The concept of MetroGreen is simple, link together corridors of land to the landscapes and destinations that people value. Where appropriate, build pathways that people can travel by foot, bicycle, rollerblade or on horseback. And make the corridors wide enough so that they will help to protect water courses, preserve historic landscapes, and beautify area roadways.

Implementation of MetroGreen will be complex. Full build-out of the system envisioned in this Action Plan will require a coordinated effort by the local governments, private interests and residents of the seven-county region.

This plan responds to concerns that were expressed in the citizen survey conducted by MARC in 2001, and promotes a systematic, thorough and highly implementable set of strategies for shaping the future of the Kansas City region through the 21st Century. Once this is achieved, the work begun by George Kessler in 1892, and further articulated by ASLA in 1991, will be fully evident to future residents of the Kansas City region in 2102.



*“We are charged with the duty of developing a plan that shall not only meet present, but future wants. To undertake important work in a half-hearted manner is the poorest economy, it is far better to plan comprehensively and broadly and proceed with actual construction leisurely than to attempt economy in original plans.”*

*George Kessler, Landscape Architect (circa 1892)*

*“The distribution of open space must respond to natural processes . . . the problem lies not in absolute area but in distribution. We seek a concept that can provide an interfusion of open space and population.”*

*Ian McHarg, Author,  
Environmental Planner,  
Landscape Architect  
Design with Nature*

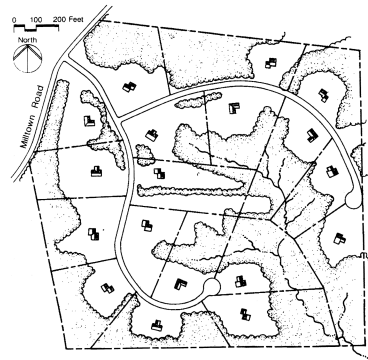
*In the Traditional subdivision an 18 lot yield is possible under current zoning laws. With the Conservation subdivision, it is possible to increase the yield to 24 lots, and protect 60 percent of the property as common open space. Most of the open space is along stream corridors, some of which could become a component of MetroGreen.*

## Protecting Land

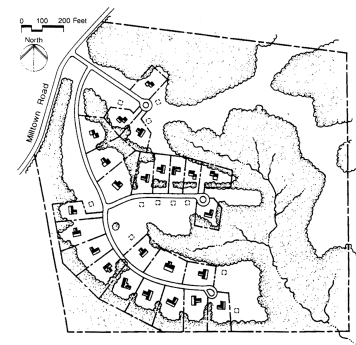
One of the continuing challenges for the Kansas City region is balancing future growth and land development with conservation of the landscapes that serve to attract people to the region. MetroGreen can be used as a tool to achieve this balance. This plan strongly recommends that all seven counties in the region consider adopting new land development principles and practices that promote conservation during the land development process. This can take several forms, including educating agency and development organizations about the need for conservation, supporting local land trust organizations, utilizing state and federal programs that encourage the donation of land, and updating development regulations. The primary effort should be to foster growth that results in new development patterns that are walkable, bikeable and support a diversity of land uses.

One land development practice that counties and municipalities might give further consideration to is the concept of Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD). Using CSD, the yield of a particular property slated for development would be similar to that of a conventional subdivision design (see below). However, instead of parceling out all of the land into private lots, conservation subdivision design arranges houses and buildings on a site so that natural landscape features remain open, undeveloped and in common ownership.

Additionally, counties and municipalities should encourage growth near existing urban centers, towns and villages. Building traditional neighborhoods, office parks, shopping centers and schools in close proximity to built landscapes will help to protect the rural character of the Kansas City region.



**Traditional**



**Conservation**

## Conservation Subdivision Design Concept

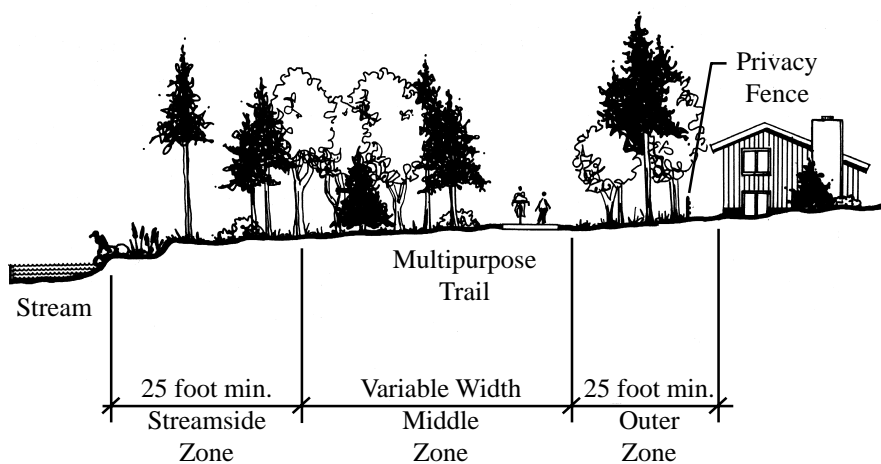
Source: Growing Greener, Randall Arendt

## Protecting Water Quality

As identified in the citizens survey, one of the most important objectives of MetroGreen is the protection of water courses throughout the region. This can be achieved by establishing riparian buffers along streams within the seven-county region. National studies have shown that riparian buffers can reduce flooding, protect stream health, stabilize stream banks, support fish and wildlife, maintain proper stream temperature, and promote ecological functions necessary to naturally clean water of pollutants. This strategy can be implemented immediately by local governments.

This Action Plan recommends that local governments establish a “variable width” riparian buffer for all streams. The exact width for buffers will be determined by each local government’s stormwater management agency. Currently, MARC is working in partnership with local governments to determine criteria that will be used to define application of the variable width buffer strategy.

Johnson County, Kansas, is in the process of adopting stream protection guidelines and may serve as a model for other counties in the region. Once in place, the variable width buffer strategy has the potential to protect an estimated 120,000 acres of riparian lands along 4,000 stream miles throughout the region. This protection strategy will enhance water quality in the Kansas City region for many years to come.



### Riparian Buffer Concept

Source: EPA Region 7

*“Land use planning is an absolute necessity in watershed management. Too often, land use, water quality, and water supply policies and programs are narrowly focused or conflicting. The solution must be a holistic approach to watershed management, one recognizing that most of the resources in a watershed are interrelated and dependent on each other.”*

*The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman, secretary, United States Environmental Protection Agency and former governor of New Jersey*

*“Just as we wouldn’t consider building our home without a blueprint, we should not continue to grow and develop our communities without a greenprint.”*

*MetroGreen will provide the communities of the Kansas City region with a greenprint for future growth.”*

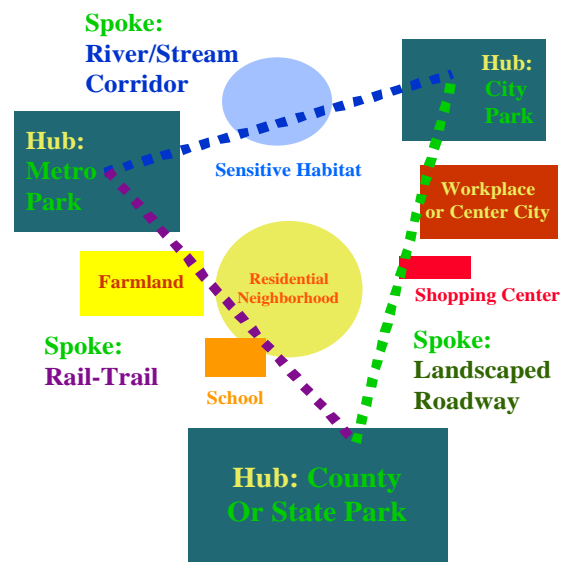
Charles A. Flink, ASLA,  
President  
Greenways Incorporated

## Connecting People to the Land

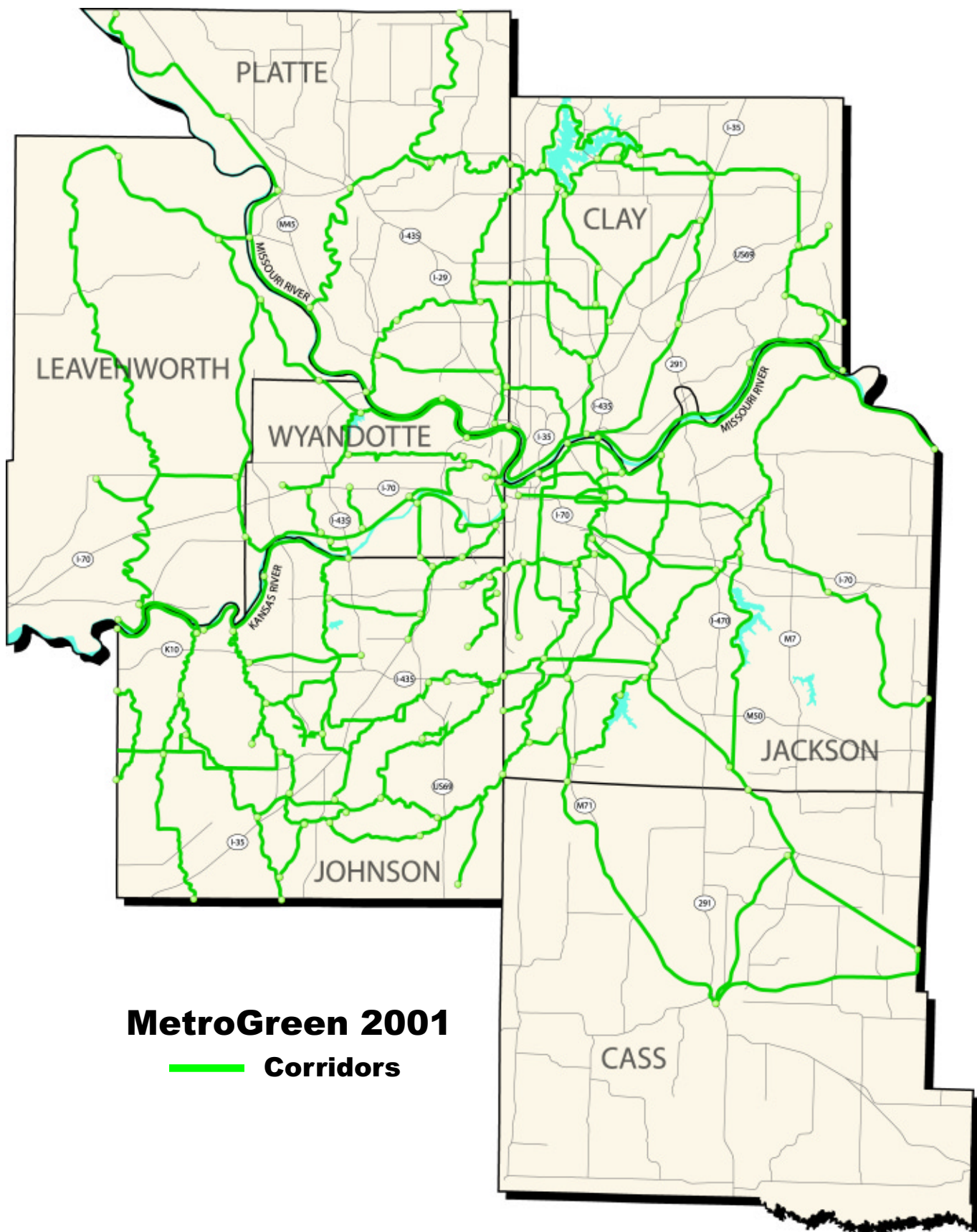
Connections are the most tangible product of MetroGreen. The physical framework of MetroGreen is based on a popular national concept known as “Hubs and Spokes.” Under this concept, residential, commercial and business landscapes are linked to parks, preserves and open spaces via MetroGreen corridors. For residents of the region, this will mean improved access to the outdoors for recreation, auto-alternative transportation, and participation in activities that can improve health, fitness and quality of life.

Health and fitness are among the top concerns in the Kansas City region. One of the principal goals of the MetroGreen system is to provide a trail within two miles of 90 percent of the region’s current population. Two miles was chosen because surveys indicate it is the average distance that Americans are willing to bicycle to a destination. Comparatively, a half-mile is the average distance Americans will choose to walk.

MetroGreen trails will be aligned along roadways with ample rights-of-way that can accommodate bicycle/pedestrian trails, along the edges of streams or within existing utility or railroad rights-of-way. The trail corridors identified in this plan comprise a regional trail system and should accommodate bicycles, in-line skaters, joggers and pedestrians. Additional features such as nature trails or trails with alternative surfaces for horseback riding, jogging or mountain biking are considered secondary in the overall trail plans. In addition to the MetroGreen corridors, local trails provide connections to the regional system or serve a particular destination or population.



**The Hub and Spokes Concept**



**MetroGreen 2001**  
—— **Corridors**

## Corridors and Facilities

MetroGreen will be physically comprised of three types of corridors throughout its 1030 mile length: a) stream and river corridors, b) roadway corridors and c) abandoned rail corridors. Within these corridors a variety of facilities can and should be constructed, including trails, signage systems, and places where people can gather, sit and relax. The design of these facilities is further articulated by a detailed set of MetroGreen Design Guidelines, which is available from MARC in a separate publication.



### Stream and River Corridors

The dominant corridor type found within the MetroGreen system is located adjacent to streams and rivers throughout the region. Stream and river corridors will comprise 65 percent (654 miles) of the entire MetroGreen system. These corridors will serve multiple functions, including the conservation of riparian (stream-related) habitat, stabilization of stream banks, preservation of historic landscapes, protection of water quality, and the provision of suitable land for trail

development.

### Roadway Corridors

Another dominant corridor type will be designated roadways throughout the region. These corridors will comprise 25 percent (270 miles) of MetroGreen. The principal function of these corridors will be related to transportation and recreation. However, other attributes are possible including scenic and historic preservation and water quality protection. Many of these corridors have the potential to be enhanced through landscape plantings to become aesthetic assets for the region.



### Abandoned Rail Corridors

The final corridor type is abandoned railroad corridors. These comprise 10 percent (105 miles) of the MetroGreen system. These are very important corridors for the future of the region. With the existing right-of-ways intact, they are valued linear corridors that provide continuous access

across parts of the region that lack other corridor types. Their flat to gentle grades make them ideal for future trails. Historically and economically, rails-to-trails are a proven success throughout Missouri and Kansas. One of the most promising future projects is the extension of the KATY Trail into the heart of Kansas City. This would complete a cross-state trail through Missouri and link the Kansas City region to St. Louis.

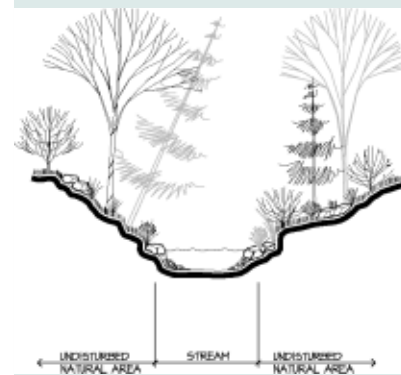


## Five Types of Trails

The MetroGreen will provide a full range of trail types to meet the needs of users. There are five different types of trails that will be found within the system. MetroGreen corridors may contain more than one type of trail. The selection of a trail type is not currently defined for MetroGreen corridors and will normally be determined after further evaluation of the physical and future use characteristics for each corridor. The five trail types are defined and described below. More specific information can also be found in the design guidelines report available from MARC.

### Type 1: No Facility Development

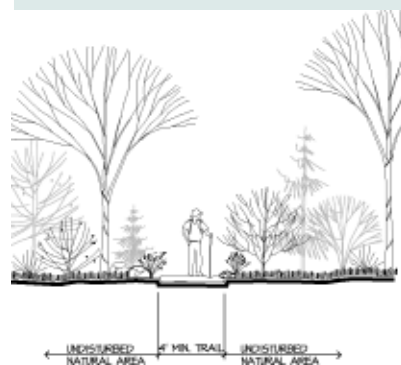
For corridors that are environmentally sensitive and contain steep slopes, wetlands, or rare habitat, a no-facility development type is recommended under MetroGreen. It is anticipated that many corridors defined for water quality, habitat protection, and floodplain management purposes would also fit under this category. Typically, these corridors would remain in a natural undeveloped condition.



*Type 1: No Facility Development*

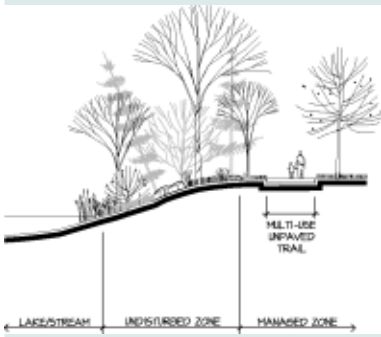
### Type 2: Limited Development, Low-Impact Uses

The second type of trail would be found within corridors that are environmentally sensitive but can also support limited trail development. These corridors would support bare earth, wood chip, or boardwalk trails. Typically, uses would be limited to pedestrian only.

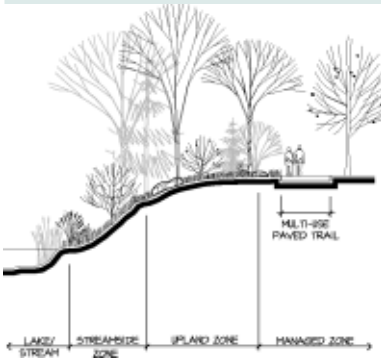


*Type 2: Limited Development*

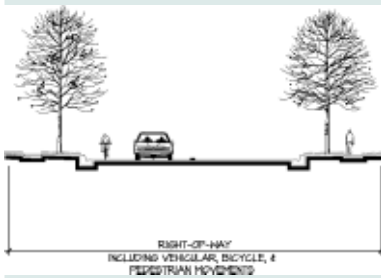




Type 3: UnPaved Trails



Type 4: Paved Trails



Type 5: Roadway Trails

### Type 3: Multi-Use Unpaved Trail Development

This designation would apply to corridors that are capable of supporting a broader range of uses. Trail development, if it occurs along a stream, would be located outside of the floodway. A variety of surface materials could be used, but crushed gravel is viewed as the most likely. These trails can be used by pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and persons with disabilities.

### Type 4: Multi-Use Paved Trail Development

Multi-use paved trails may become one of the most common types of off-road trails in the entire MetroGreen system. These trails will support the greatest diversity of users, and can be used year round. They will be more expensive than other types to construct, but their benefit will serve the needs of most users. These trails can be constructed within floodprone landscapes as well as upland corridors.

### Type 5: Bike & Pedestrian Facilities in Rights-of-Way

Type 5 trails are generally located within the rights-of-way of roadways throughout the metropolitan area. One of the primary purposes for this trail type is to serve as a connector to the off-road network of MetroGreen. Sidewalks, bike routes, bike lanes and wide multi-purpose side paths are envisioned as the constructed facilities.

## Prioritizing Trail Development

The implementation of a greenway system as large and complex as MetroGreen cannot be accomplished immediately. The system will take years to build, giving full consideration to the way each segment is designed, surveying the miles and securing adequate funding. As this Action Plan was formulated, segments of the 1,030-mile system were prioritized into four distinct phases.

- **Existing** - Segments of 13 trails are already built. Currently, an estimated 75 miles of MetroGreen corridors and trails are in place and being used by residents in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

- **Priority 1** - These segments will be the first trails added to the system. Their identification as Priority 1 indicates that there is funding available to begin land acquisition, design and/or construction. Designating these segments as Priority 1 encourages trail developers/planners to continue raising funds, heightens public awareness of these projects and shows support for the completion of trails that will contribute to MetroGreen. Priority 1 segments most likely will be constructed over the next three to five years. Approximately 103.76 miles of the MetroGreen system have been designated as Priority 1.

- **Priority 2** - These segments are not yet funded. However, their completion has been ranked as high priority based on public comment and input from government officials. It is expected that Priority 2 segments will be constructed over the next five to 15 years. Approximately 280.35 miles of the MetroGreen system have been designated as Priority 2.

- **Priority 3** - These are the segments needed to complete the system. They represent the long-term strategy. Priority 3 segments will be constructed over the next 15 to 25 years. Approximately 567.48 miles of the system are designated as Priority 3.

*Currently an estimated 75 miles of MetroGreen corridors and trails are in place and being used by residents in the Kansas City metropolitan area.*

## Regional System by County

Implementing the region-wide concept of MetroGreen will take place at the county and municipal government level. This is not to suggest that local governments alone are to bear the entire burden of implementation. This plan envisions an active role for the Mid America Regional Council and a partnership effort between the public and private sector to implement the MetroGreen vision.

The following pages highlight the individual MetroGreen plans for each of the participating seven counties. A brief description of the MetroGreen system within each county is accompanied by a corresponding map. The following action plan requires all seven counties and numerous cities to successfully implement MetroGreen.

### MetroGreen Action Plan Checklist for All Local Communities within the Seven-County Region

The following actions and activities should be completed by all county and municipal governments within the seven county region of Kansas City in support of the implementation of MetroGreen.

#### Policy Development

- Take action in support of the MetroGreen Action Plan.
- Designate a lead agency/department to work with the Mid-America Regional Council and the newly established MetroGreen Inc. to implement the Action Plan.
- For Leavenworth and Cass counties, consider establishment of a county parks and recreation department, with initial focus on streamway/trail development.
- Integrate the MetroGreen plan and any local trails/greenways plans into the community's parks and open space, land use and transportation plans.
- Adopt a stream buffer ordinance that protects stream corridors.
- Adopt a park/open space dedication requirement to support the acquisition of land and development of MetroGreen and a local trail system.
- Incorporate MetroGreen objectives into the development of the community's stormwater program, including consideration of

*It is the goal of this plan to provide a trail within two miles of 90 percent of the region's population. Two miles was chosen because it is the average distance that Americans are willing to bicycle. A half-mile is the average distance Americans choose to walk.*

how adoption of local stormwater utility fees could assist in implementing MetroGreen.

## Planning

- Develop a local trails/greenways plan, or if one exists, ensure that it is consistent with MetroGreen.
- Conduct a Natural Resources Inventory as part of the comprehensive or land use planning process to identify important resources to protect and preserve and to determine appropriate stream setback provisions.
- Identify land ownership for each MetroGreen segment within each community, and determine how acquisition or access will be accomplished.
- Determine the facility type for each MetroGreen segment.
- Identify partners from the public and private sectors that can help implement MetroGreen segments.
- Continue to assist MARC in building a regional GIS inventory of natural resources including open space, parks and trails.
- Evaluate the potential for area highways, including K-5 and US 73, to be designated as state or federal scenic byways.

## Programming

- Refine priorities for MetroGreen facility construction.
- Identify and program local funding sources for the highest priority MetroGreen segments and seek grants and other funds to supplement local resources.
- Evaluate how new funding sources could support the development of MetroGreen trail segments. In particular, Clay County should determine how the recently enacted use tax could support implementation of MetroGreen and the Northland Trails Vision Plan; and Jackson County should seek federal and/or state grant funds to complete the trail system along the Little Blue River and along the Blue River from the state line to Swope Park.
- Build public awareness and support for greenways and trails, and promote system use.
- Support efforts to establish MetroGreen, Inc., and as appropriate, work with local citizen groups.

## Operation/Maintenance

- Adopt the MetroGreen design guidelines for MetroGreen and local system greenways and trails.
- Adopt the MetroGreen logo into the county or city's signage for its trail system, using one of the proposed design concepts.

- Determine how and by whom each segment of MetroGreen will be operated and maintained.
- Develop maintenance standards for MetroGreen and local trails.

## For the Mid-America Regional Council

### Policy Development

- Adopt the MetroGreen Plan as a regional framework for a metropolitan system of trails and greenways in the Kansas City area.
- Encourage local communities to respond to the MetroGreen Action Plan checklist.
- Provide local communities with model stream buffer ordinances and encourage their adoption.
- Encourage local communities to adopt a park/open space dedication requirement to support the acquisition of land and development of MetroGreen and a local trail system.
- Work with local communities and MetroGreen, Inc. to promote discussion of new public funding sources to support the development and on-going maintenance of the regional greenway/trail system.

### Planning

- Further enhance the regional Geographic Information System (GIS) with local trails data and natural resources inventories.
- Continue to refine the MetroGreen plan by evaluating trail and greenway segments and identifying potential partners and funding sources.
- Encourage local communities to develop local trail and greenway plans consistent with MetroGreen.
- Evaluate state highways and other transportation corridors in the metro area for designation as state or federal scenic byways.
- Continue to work with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to connect the KATY Trail to the Kansas City region.
- Encourage the US Army Corps of Engineers and area levee districts to explore public access and trail opportunities along Missouri and Kansas River levees.

### Programming

- Work with local communities and other possible project sponsors to refine priorities for MetroGreen facility construction.
- Pursue federal, state and private grants and resources to assist local communities in implementing MetroGreen.

- Provide technical assistance and other support to local communities to advance high priority MetroGreen corridors for trail development.
- Build public awareness and support for greenways and trails, and promote system use.
- Establish MetroGreen, Inc. to build citizen support throughout the metro area.

### **Operation/Maintenance**

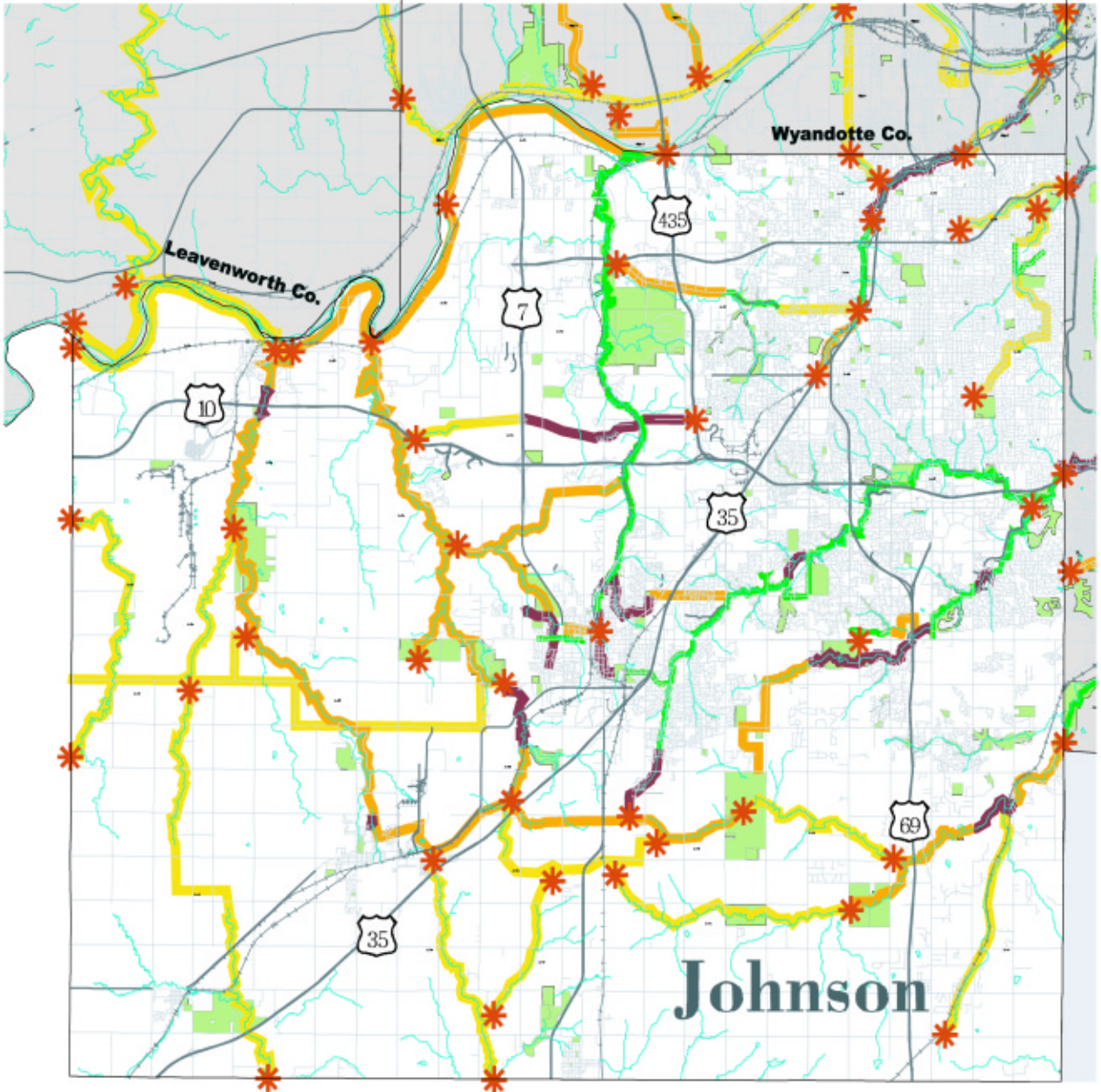
- Promote the adoption of the MetroGreen design guidelines and MetroGreen logo into county or city signage.
- Encourage use of native vegetation along trails and stream corridors.

*MetroGreen envisions a system of greenways and trails that would total more than 230 miles in Johnson County.*










## Johnson County MetroGreen Segments

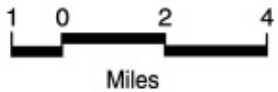
Johnson County has been aggressive in its trail building efforts and has nearly 50 miles of trails already in use. The Mill Creek greenway is considered a great success not only as an impressive recreation amenity but also for its ability to hold stormwaters and reduce flooding. As a part of the MetroGreen Plan, the Mill Creek Trail will be connected to the Indian Creek Trail, thus creating over 30 miles of continuous trail facilities that connect the Kansas River to the state line via the middle of Johnson County.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
2	Jo01	Turkey Creek 1	3.09
2	Jo04	Turkey Creek 3	2.02
2	Jo17	Little Cedar Creek	4.8
2	Jo21	Kaw River 1	7.06
2	Jo22	Kaw River 2	3.96
2	Jo23	Cedar Creek 2	13.71
2	Jo25	Kaw River 3	4.08
2	Jo27	Kill Creek 2	10.97
3	Jo02	Switzer	1.21
3	Jo05	Shawnee Mission Pky	3.11
3	Jo10	Coffey Creek 1	5.51
3	Jo11	Camp Branch Creek	5.6
3	Jo12	Coffey Creek 2	6.43
3	Jo13	Wolf Creek	7.27
3	Jo18	175th	6.12
3	Jo19	Bain Creek	4.2
3	Jo20	Little Bull Creek	6.56
3	Jo28	Kaw River 4	7.25
3	Jo29	Spoon Creek	4.65
3	Jo30	135th	14.13
3	Jo31	Big Bull Creek	12.31
3	Jo32	Captain Creek	8.2
1/2	Jo09	Blue River	7.46
1/2	Jo24	Cedar Creek 1	5.39
1/2	Jo26	Kill Creek 1	7.9
1/3	Jo16	Prairie Star	7.55
3/E	Jo06	Tomahawk	6.21
E	Jo03	Turkey Creek 2	1.37
E/1	Jo07	Indian Creek	17.39
E/1	Jo14	Mill Creek	17
E/1/2	Jo08	Tomahawk Creek	11.68
E/2/3	Jo15	Midland	6.21
<b>Johnson Total Mileage</b>			<b>230.4</b>



### Legend

-  Break Points
-  Existing Greenways
-  Priority 1
-  Priority 2
-  Priority 3
-  Parks
-  Streams
-  Roads
-  Rails



This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.





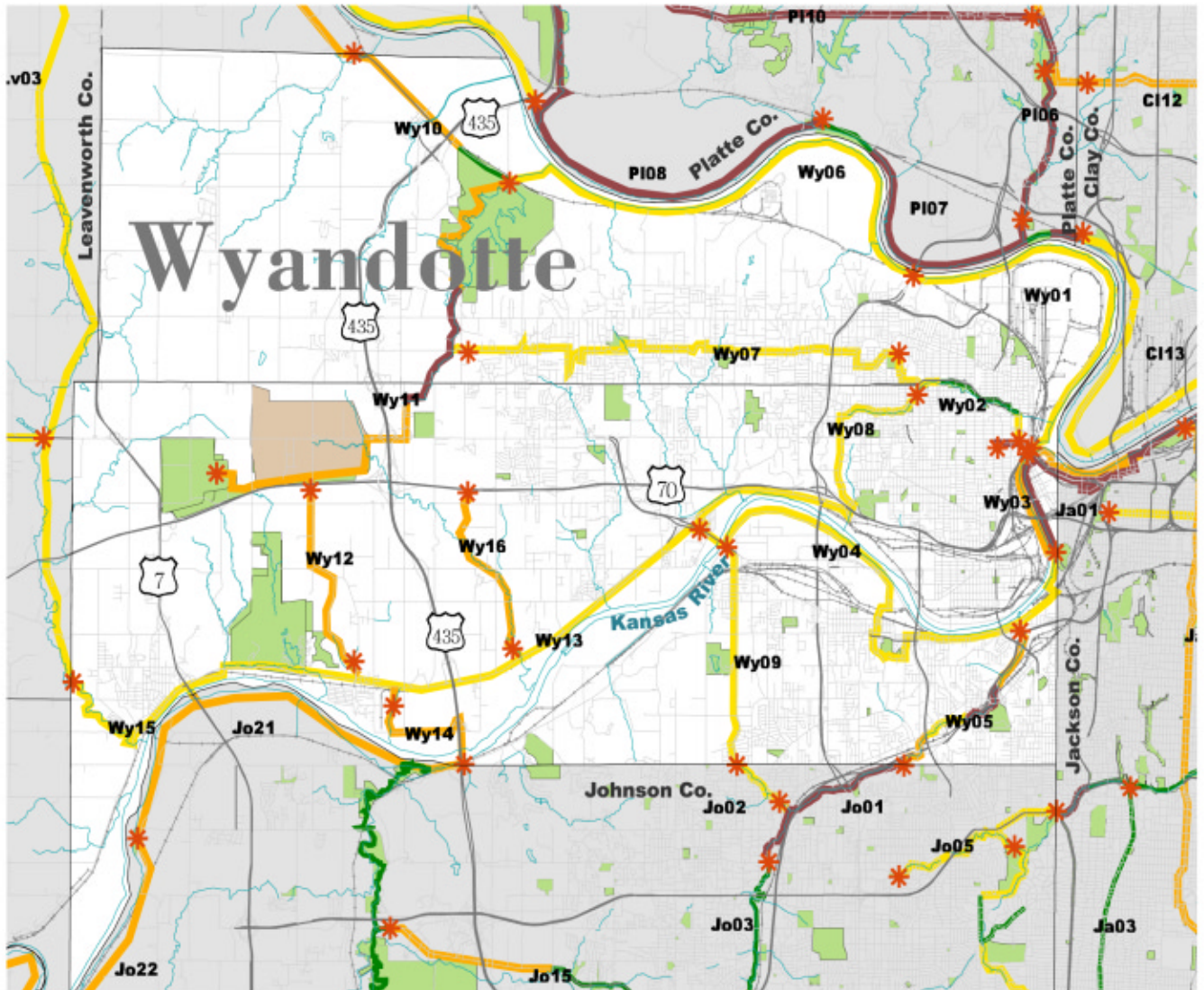
*Within Wyandotte County, MetroGreen will provide 85 miles of greenway corridors, some of them along the Missouri and Kansas Rivers.*

## Wyandotte County MetroGreen Segments

Plans are already underway for the construction of the Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail that will connect Kansas City, Kansas, to Kansas City, Missouri. Eventually, MetroGreen facilities will extend west from the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers to popular facilities such as Wyandotte County Lake, the new Kansas Speedway, and Sandstone Amphitheater. Opportunities to build trails along the Kansas and Missouri rivers will allow the enjoyment of these natural resources and improved levee maintenance operations.

MetroGreen corridors planned for Wyandotte County include stream preservation and restoration efforts along Turkey Creek, Little Turkey Creek and Marshall Creek. These segments will allow for stormwater management, and habitat and riparian area protection.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
2	Wy03	Kaw River 1	1.85
2	Wy11	Marshall Creek Basin	9.55
2	Wy12	110th Corridor Combo	3.55
2	Wy16	Little Turkey Creek	3.07
3	Wy01	Missouri River	6.7
3	Wy04	Kaw River 2	8.89
3	Wy06	Missouri River	8.66
3	Wy07	Georgia Street	9.02
3	Wy08	Parallel Pkwy-Kaw River	6.2
3	Wy09	55th Corridor	3.47
3	Wy13	Levee Trail	6.22
3	Wy14	Kaw River 3	2.67
3	Wy15	Kaw River 4	5.8
1/2/3	Wy05	Turkey Creek	3.55
E/2	Wy10	Hwy 5	3.32
E/3	Wy02	Parallel Parkway	3.08
<b>Wyandotte Total Mileage</b>			<b>85.6</b>



**Legend**

- Break Points
- Existing Greenways
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Parks
- Streams
- Roads
- Rails

1 0 2 4  
Miles

This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.

*MetroGreen segments have been built in the city of Leavenworth. Eventually more than 104 miles of trails will criss-cross the county.*

## Leavenworth County MetroGreen Segments

The city of Leavenworth has already begun developing plans to extend the Leavenworth Landing Park Trail along Three Mile Creek in the city of Leavenworth. MetroGreen goals for Leavenworth County include adapting out-of-use rail lines to serve as bike and pedestrian trails, on-road bike facilities, and streamside greenways to preserve wildlife habitat, manage stormwater and protect water quality.

Two highways offer big opportunity as scenic byways -- U.S. 73 to Atchison and K-5, allowing the preservation of picturesque landscapes in the region.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
E	LV07	Leavenworth Landing Park	.75
1	LV07	Three Mile Creek	.57
2	Lv01	U.S. 73	11.11
3	Lv02	Hwy 5	7.27
3	Lv03	Rail Corridor	20.73
3	Lv04	State Street Corridor	10.94
3	Lv05	Kaw River	4.61
3	Lv06	Stranger Creek	47.86

**Leavenworth Total Mileage 103.84**



**Legend**

- Break Points
- Existing Greenways
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Parks
- Streams
- Roads
- Rails

1 0 2 4  
Miles

This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.



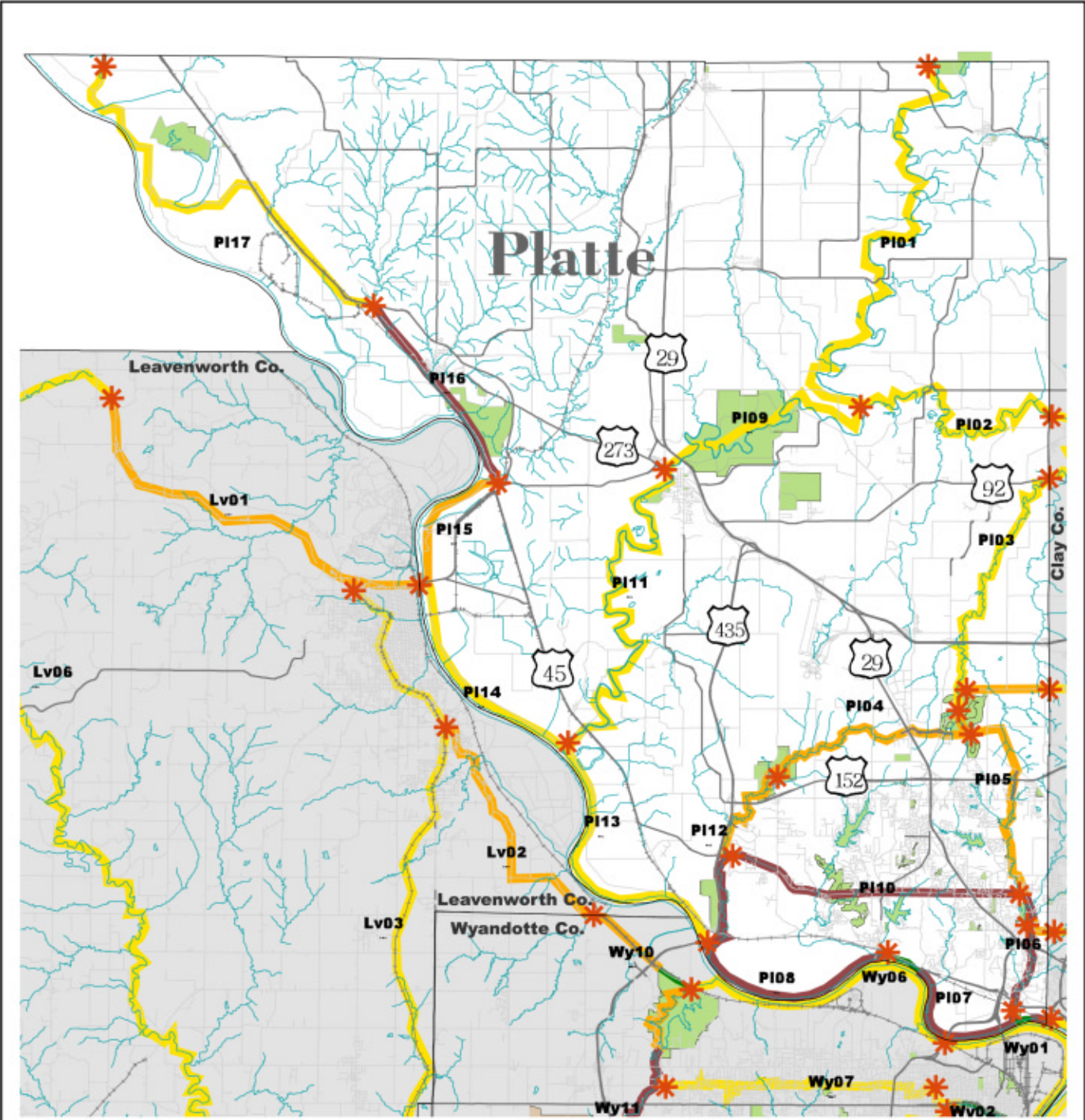
*MetroGreen builds on the previously completed Northland Trails Plan, and designates more than 129 miles of corridors as part of the regional system of trails and greenways.*

## Platte County MetroGreen Segments

Platte County will build upon the success of Parkville’s English Landing Park trail. First steps include extending this trail northwest and southeast along the banks of the Missouri River, turning north along Brush Creek (to the west) and Line Creek (to the east) before completing an approximately 25-mile loop (along Highway 45). The completion of the Bluff Road trail near Weston will offer scenic hiking and biking opportunities for residents and visitors.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
1	PI04	Tiffany Spring Pkwy	6.87
1	PI05	Line Creek Pkwy	7.02
1	PI06	Line Creek	2.8
1	PI07	Missouri River 1	5.58
1	PI08	Missouri River 2	5.62
1	PI12	Brush Creek	6.28
1	PI16	Bluff Road (Weston)	5.96
2	PI02	Little Platte River	8.19
2	PI09	Platte River 2	6.61
2	PI13	Missouri River 3	8.02
2	PI14	Missouri River 4	6.15
2	PI15	Missouri River 5	3.67
3	PI01	Platte River 3	14.34
3	PI03	Second Creek	8.08
3	PI11	Platte River 1	13.66
3	PI17	Missouri River 6	12.18
1/2	PI10	45 Hwy	7.98

**Platte Total Mileage 129.01**



**Legend**

- Break Points
- Existing Greenways
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Parks
- Streams
- Roads
- Rails

1 0 2 4  
Miles

This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.

*Clay County's proposed MetroGreen segments, totalling more than 167 miles, will include connections to the Shoal Creek Greenway, Smithville Lake and Centennial Parkway.*

## Clay County MetroGreen Segments

Clay County will soon host one of the area's newest public equestrian trail facilities near Smithville Lake. The MetroGreen system in Clay County will connect recreation amenities such as Smithville Lake to historic Excelsior Springs and the Missouri River. Existing local facilities, such as those in Liberty, will be able to connect with trails around Clay County and throughout the Kansas City region.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
2	CI01	Smithville Lake 1	14.53
2	CI02	162/164/166th Streets	23.27
2	CI03	Old Quarry Road	4.55
2	CI04	100th Street	6.01
3	CI05	Shoal Creek Greenway 2	9.72
3	CI06	Smithville Lake 3	3.54
3	CI07	Clear Creek Trail	5.88
3	CI08	Rail-Trail Corridor	9.98
3	CI09	Shoal Creek Loop	14.09
3	CI10	Birmingham Road	9.36
3	CI11	Searcy Creek Parkway	5.07
2	CI12	Centennial Parkway	6.97
3	CI13	Missouri River 1	10.54
3	CI14	Missouri River 2	13.11
3	CI15	North Woodland	7.29
3	CI16	Mt. Olivet Road	5.87
3	CI17	Missouri River 3	7.34
3	CI18	Reinking Rd	2.81
3	CI22	Ridge Road	4.24
3	CI23	Cooley Lake	2.89

**Clay Total Mileage 167.06**





*Among top priorities in Jackson County are the 11-mile Heritage Riverfront Trail system, and the completion of trails along Indian Creek, Blue River, and Brush Creek.*

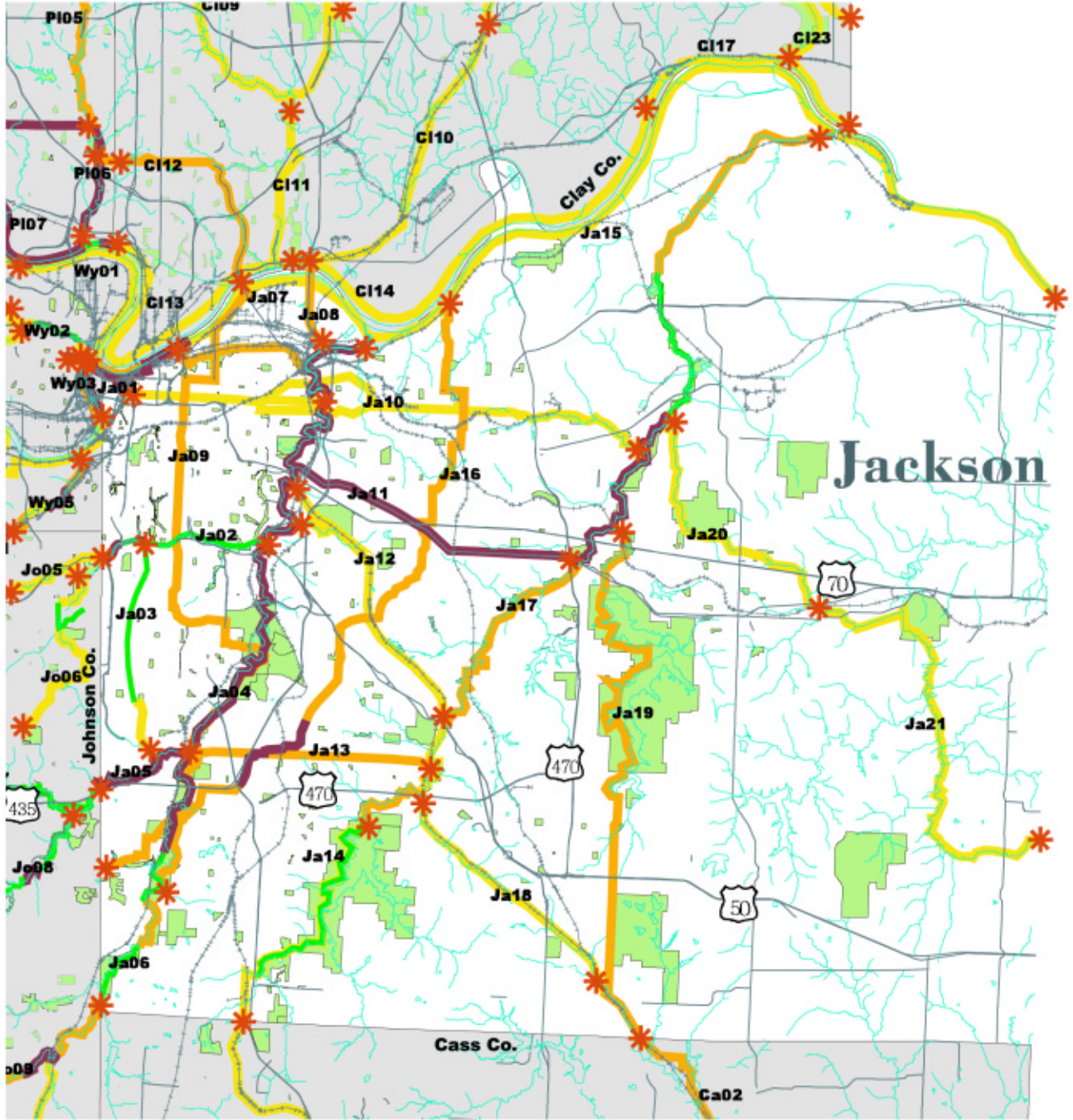
## Jackson County MetroGreen Segments

Among top priorities in Jackson County is an 11-mile MetroGreen segment connecting the Berkley Esplanade to Kansas City, Kansas. The Brush Creek greenway through the Country Club Plaza will be expanded west to the state line and east to the Blue River. The Trolley Track Trail along Brookside Boulevard is one of the most used trails in the Kansas City area. Trails along the Blue River and the Little Blue River are already in use and will be extended. Citizen groups are doing exciting work to see that a trail is built to preserve the historic alignment of the Santa Fe Trail in south Kansas City.










Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
1	Ja01	Heritage Riverfront Trail	11
1	Ja05	Indian Creek	3.46
1	Ja11	40 Highway Corridor	8.89
2	Ja08	Connector	2.58
2	Ja09	Centennial Parkway	19.46
2	Ja13	87th Street Corridor	7.08
2	Ja19	James A. Reed	19.33
3	Ja07	Missouri River 1	9.49
3	Ja10	12th St. Via/Truman Rd	21.87
3	Ja12	Rock Island Corridor 1	8.13
3	Ja14	Longview Lake	9.09
3	Ja15	Missouri River 2	24.09
3	Ja18	Rock Island Corridor 2	9.16
3	Ja20	Blue Branch	8.27
3	Ja21	Sni-a-Bar	13.47
1/2	Ja16	Trailside Travellers	23.66
E/1	Ja02	Brush Creek Corridor	5.45
E/1/2	Ja04	Blue River 2	22.4
E/1/2	Ja17	Little Blue River	30.06
E/2	Ja06	Blue River 1	9.35
E/3	Ja03	Trolley Track Trail	7

**Jackson Total Mileage 273.29**

# Jackson County



## Legend

-  Break Points
-  Existing Greenways
-  Priority 1
-  Priority 2
-  Priority 3
-  Parks
-  Streams
-  Roads
-  Rails



This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.



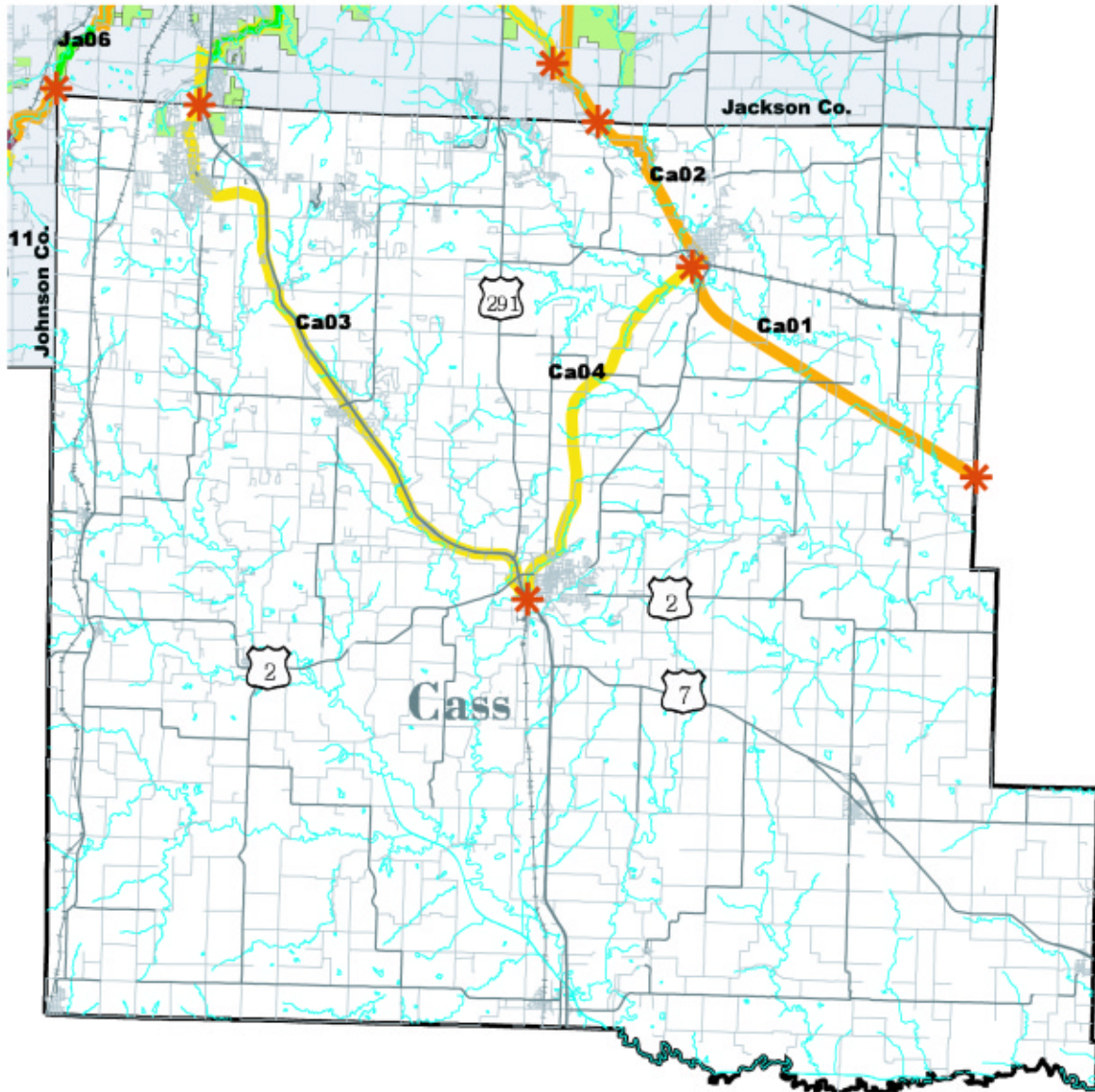
*Cass County's 40-plus miles of MetroGreen corridors will link with Missouri's highly profitable and nationally renowned KATY Trail.*

## Cass County MetroGreen Segments

MetroGreen will make use of abandoned rail lines by creating trails that connect the towns of Belton, Peculiar, Harrisonville, and Pleasant Hill. Perhaps, the greatest benefit to developing greenways in Cass County will be connecting to the nationally recognized KATY Trail. Someday Kansas Citians will have a continuous trail across Missouri that connects them to St. Louis and many towns along the way.

Priority	Map ID	Corridor Segment	Mileage
2	Ca01	KATY Trail 1	8
2	Ca02	KATY Trail 2	4.42
3	Ca03	Frisco Corridor	17.25
3	Ca04	Roadway Corridor	11.27

**Cass Total Mileage 40.94**



**Legend**

- Break Points
- Existing Greenways
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Parks
- Streams
- Roads
- Rails

1 0 2 4  
Miles

This map represents a vision for greenway development. It was developed through public input.



# Governance of MetroGreen

*The MetroGreen Action Plan includes the establishment of one organization with two divisions: A 501(c)3 organization, MetroGreen, Inc., with a leadership board to oversee implementation and a subset group, Friends of MetroGreen, to program public events, educate the community and help raise funds for the MetroGreen system.*

## Possible Roles and Responsibilities for a MetroGreen Organization

The Mid-America Regional Council has taken responsibility for updating and refining the MetroGreen plan, building support among local government leaders and building community awareness. As a voluntary association of city and county governments and metropolitan planning organization, MARC views the MetroGreen planning function as an appropriate role for the agency. This role has been viewed as appropriate by member local governments and other MetroGreen stakeholders.

The implementation of the MetroGreen plan will require one or more organizations with the ability to:

- Advocate, promote, and encourage development of MetroGreen.
- Engage and educate citizens as to benefits of MetroGreen.
- Assist in raising money for implementation.
- Help to organize volunteers to assist with implementation and management.
- Sponsor or co-sponsor MetroGreen events.
- Serve as champion for the MetroGreen Action Plan.
- Advise local governments on specific segments of MetroGreen Plan.
- Facilitate cooperation among jurisdictions for implementation of MetroGreen.
- Promote use of uniform design guidelines for MetroGreen facilities.

*Since 1991, the element missing from the implementation of MetroGreen has been leadership. A lead organization needs to be established to carry the MetroGreen vision forward. This Action Plan calls for the formation of MetroGreen, Inc. to champion the long term vision of this Plan.*



*Of prime importance in the Kansas City metro area, as in communities throughout the nation that have successfully implemented greenway plans, is establishment of an organization whose sole function is to support the MetroGreen Plan.*

## Recommendation

Historically, one of the most important elements missing from the MetroGreen concept was lack of leadership to carry out the vision, goals and objectives established in 1991. Most successful regional efforts of this type have succeeded in part due to the establishment of a leadership group.

For example, Chicago's 1,000 mile regional greenway system has been guided by the OpenLands Project since 1969, Denver has been supported in its regional efforts by the South Suburban Park Foundation, Minneapolis has established a Metro Greenprint for its regional system and St. Louis used its 2004 planning initiative to create two regional park authorities in both Illinois and Missouri. MetroGreen needs an organization that is dedicated to the vision, mission, goals and objectives of this Plan in order to be successful in the long run.

Currently, there is no leadership organization, other than the Mid-America Regional Council, that is capable of championing the vision for MetroGreen. There are no organizations in the Kansas City metro region that plan for and support regional natural resource issues other than MARC. In the near term, the Mid-America Regional Council will absorb the immediate planning and implementation efforts of MetroGreen under its existing organizational structure. This is viewed as a short-term solution to the issue of leadership. MARC will work with partners throughout the metro region to define a long-term organizational structure for MetroGreen. The following defines one possible model for how this organization could be established, staffed and funded.

## Organizational Framework

Based on similar organizations that are in place and active in other parts of the United States, it is recommended that a new organization would be established, called *MetroGreen, Incorporated*. It would be established as a non-profit, 501 (c)3 organization. Under the name MetroGreen, Inc., the organization would be governed by a Board of Directors and have its own administrative staff. The chart on the opposite page defines the structure of the organization.

Possible Organizational Structure

Representation from:

Representation from:



*MetroGreen Inc. would ideally be governed by a board of directors comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors. The organization would employ three staff members and produce an annual report to keep the public apprised of its progress.*

Under this scenario, MetroGreen, Inc. could have the following divisions. One would be administrative and oriented toward implementation, the other, a “friends” group, would be oriented toward advocacy, promotion and fund raising.

### **MetroGreen, Inc. (Leadership Board)**

- Champion the MetroGreen Action Plan
- Advise local governments on development of MetroGreen Plan
- Facilitate cooperation among jurisdictions for implementation of MetroGreen
- Define and recommend sources of funding for MetroGreen
- Implement uniform design guidelines for MetroGreen facilities
- Coordinate efforts to create a unified MetroGreen system

### **Friends of MetroGreen**

- Subset of MetroGreen Inc.
- Membership organization
- Advocate, promote, encourage development of MetroGreen
- Educate citizens as to benefits of MetroGreen
- Assist MetroGreen in raising money for implementation
- Help to organize volunteers to assist with implementation and management
- Sponsor or co-sponsor MetroGreen events

### **Organizational Structure**

MetroGreen, Inc. could have a board of directors comprised of representatives from each of the seven counties and one representative from MARC. Representatives would come from both the public and private sectors. Nominations would be based on the person’s knowledge or experience, ability to serve and interest in the activities of MetroGreen. Assuming two members per county, the 15-member board should be appointed by each governing body and would have staggered terms. A chair and vice-chair would be elected from within the organization. Standing committees would also be established and would focus on Finance and Fund Raising, Planning and Project Development, and Promotion and Marketing.

Ideally, and based on a review of other model organizations around the nation, MetroGreen, Inc. would have a minimum of three staff: an executive director, an assistant director for development and a administrative assistant. Funding for staff would initially come from grants from philanthropic organizations and some public support from local and/or state governments.



Friends of MetroGreen would be a subset of MetroGreen Inc. and would be staffed by MetroGreen Inc. staff. The Friends subgroup would be governed by a subcommittee of the board.

## Duties and Activities

The principal activities and duties of MetroGreen, Inc. would be to champion the full development of this plan. To accomplish this, MetroGreen, Inc. would need to assist the counties in completing the individual work plans outlined in the systems section of this plan. In some cases, this may result in MetroGreen, Inc. assisting local governments in raising funds, coordinating efforts between local governments or with other public or private sector groups, or assisting with development activities where appropriate. MetroGreen, Inc. could publish an annual report that provides the community with an update of its progress. MetroGreen, Inc. should launch and maintain a web site that provides up-to-date information about the MetroGreen system, as well as a library of completed projects.

The activities and duties of Friends of MetroGreen would be principally oriented toward communication, event programming and outreach/education. Friends should, at a minimum, host an annual meeting of its membership and this event should be held at a MetroGreen facility/project. MetroGreen, Inc staff would publish a newsletter and distribute this to the membership. Friends should sponsor events and programs such as a speaker's bureau, education, outreach and technical programs for landowners, businesses and educators. Friends should also help fund raise for MetroGreen facility development.

*Friends of MetroGreen would be oriented toward communication, event programming and outreach/education, holding annual meetings and publishing and distributing a newsletter among its members.*

## Financing MetroGreen

*A variety of methods is available to finance the MetroGreen Plan. Choosing among them is an essential step in the process of implementing the vision.*

Counties and municipalities in the Kansas City metro area are currently using a variety of techniques to finance trail and greenway projects. These range in size and scope from the bequest of a land gift by a developer to the passage of a voter-approved parks/trails sales tax measure. The MetroGreen Plan has explored the range of financing options, illustrating successful approaches within the region and outlining potential new opportunities.

### Weaving a Financial Quilt

Achieving the vision of MetroGreen may take one of several approaches, ranging from a wholesale regional funding initiative — such as the St. Louis Confluence Greenway, a regional effort in Missouri and Illinois — to a series of independent (yet, ideally interconnecting) local efforts reflecting the goals, financing capacity and political landscape of a county or municipality.

Local governments have a wide range of funding sources to consider and can look to other funding partners such as state and federal programs. Local governments may also emulate the successful efforts of several other metro-area governments that have combined funding sources into a so-called “funding quilt.” For example, the city of Lee’s Summit relies on several sources to fund its comprehensive greenway plan: voters have approved a dedicated parks/trails sales tax; federal and state grant money has been secured and park planners work closely with developers to encourage donations of park land, trails, and green spaces.

In another instance, the city of Lenexa uses a variety of funding sources to implement its “Rain into Recreation” program. These include a 1/8-cent sales tax for storm water/recreation



“Too often we hear that communities cannot afford to grow smart by conserving open space. But accumulating evidence indicates that open space conservation is not an expense but an investment that produces important economic benefits. Open space protection doesn’t cost -- it pays!”

*Will Rogers, President, The Trust for Public Land*

*The primary funding source for MetroGreen will be individual local governments. State and federal funds, as well as private sources, should be looked upon as providing incentives or as supplemental funds.*

improvements, a stormwater utility charge on residential, commercial, and industrial users and a capital fee on new development. These funds are supplemented with revenue from existing sources such as the county Stormwater Management Program.

Regardless of the combination of funding sources used, the primary funding source for MetroGreen will be individual local governments. State and federal funds (as well as private sources) can serve as incentives or as supplements, but relying upon them as primary funding sources will limit the ability to achieve the vision of Metro Green.

## Key Financing Options

The financing options utilized by a community will depend on such factors as taxing capacity, budgetary resources, voter preferences and the political will of the governing body of a jurisdiction. Funding for trails and greenways can come from federal and state grants; the creation of regional special districts; county and municipal taxing/borrowing options; and local non-taxing sources such as impact fees, storm water utilities, and negotiated donations by landowners.

The ability of local governments to establish dedicated funding sources for trails and greenways (and more generally parks and land conservation) depends upon state enabling authority. Both Kansas and Missouri have given local governments a broad and varied range of options to fund trails and greenways such as taxes, borrowing, impact fees, etc.

These funding options, explored in detail for this plan vary in how difficult each is to implement and yield significantly different sums of money. For instance, sales tax measures are fairly popular and can generate considerable funds. They do, however, require voter approval and are limited by a jurisdiction's taxing capacity. Some local planners are successfully encouraging developers to donate land during the planning process — an approach with a simpler implementation process, yet one that will likely yield fewer conservation resources. Whatever approach is chosen, it is important that a community carefully assesses its options and designs a program that reflects local needs, maximizes local resources and leverages outside funding.

## Federal & State Sources

At the federal level, local communities in Missouri and Kansas are taking advantage of increased grant dollars from programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Recreational Trails Program (TEA-21). These federal sources typically require a local funding commitment and are competitively awarded. Since these resources are not sufficient to fully fund local trails projects, it is recommended that federal grants be used to supplement a locally funded trails program.

Both Kansas and Missouri have state programs that provide matching grants to local governments for land conservation, including trails and greenways. Missouri has a dedicated funding source — a portion of the sales tax — while Kansas does not. However, both Missouri's Landmark Local Parks Program and Kansas' Local Government/Outdoor Recreation Grant Program are subject to annual legislative appropriation. In the current fiscal year, no state appropriations were made to these programs in either state.

## Local Options: Sales Tax

Dedicated sales taxes can generate considerable sums of money for conservation/trails. For example, Platte County's sales tax is expected to generate some \$60 million over 10 years, about \$9 million of which will be used to fund the county's portion of the proposed Northland trails system. In the city of Olathe, voters approved a 1/8-cent sales tax in November 1999. Portions of the revenues are being used to fund trails and greenways and to leverage federal TEA-21 funds. The sales tax is a common source of county and municipal funds in the metro region, supporting such projects as parks, recreation, stormwater and other capital improvements. Objections to the sales tax generally revolve around the regressive nature of the tax.

## Local Options: Property Tax

In general, property taxes can provide a steady source of revenue while broadly distributing the tax burden. However, there is stiff competition for these funds for other public purposes and a high level of concern among taxpayers about raising these taxes. In Johnson County, residents have supported several major park and trail funding measures in recent years, including a 1986 tax levy that established the Streamways Parks System, a county-wide network of trails and parks along eight major streams.

*Both Kansas and Missouri have state programs that provide matching grants to local governments for land conservation, including trails and greenways. However, no state appropriations were made to these programs in either state in 2001.*

*“Americans are supporting new funding for land conservation. Why? The simple reason is that people care about parks, open space, agriculture, water quality, historic preservation, and setting aside lands for economic growth and community character. They care enough to reach into their own pockets to fund bond measures or special taxes.”*

*Will Rogers, President, The Trust for Public Land*

### Local Options: Borrowing

Borrowing funds can provide a community with substantial revenue up-front to purchase land while it is available, while spreading costs into the future to be borne by current and future beneficiaries. On the downside, financing charges are accrued and voter approval is required in many cases (a super-majority is required in Missouri). In Leawood, voters passed a \$12.5 million general obligation bond — the largest bond in the city’s history — to add parkland and improve existing parks. The implementation process and voter approval requirements for property tax levies and general obligation bonds vary in Missouri and Kansas

### Local Options: Impact Fees/Developer Dedications

Impact fees, park excise taxes and developer dedication requirements are among the more common techniques used to fund trails and greenways. In the city of Kearney, developers are required to dedicate open space or parklands upon which trails can be developed or donate money in lieu of land in the amount of \$150 per new home. In addition, the city is incorporating sidewalk trails into its road-widening projects, which will connect to the main trail networks and neighborhood schools. Cities and counties that have adopted local trail plans should require fees or dedications when developments are proposed along trail corridors.

### Local Options: Storm Water Utility Fees

Storm water utility fees are helping the city of Lenexa fund its “Rain-into-Recreation” program, a series of natural park-like detention basins connected by greenways and trails. These fees and the innovative, multi-funding approach being used by Lenexa, could become a model for other metro communities.

### Regional Options

The potential for a regional financing program also should be explored. The options include a modification of the bi-state tax (the current enabling legislation is limited to cultural and sports facilities and activities), and regional recreation and transportation districts in Missouri.

### Considering Election Trends

An analysis of election trends is helpful in understanding voter behavior and levels of public support for fiscal measures within a community and a region. This plan’s election analysis involves a review of all fiscal and environmental measures at the state, county, municipal, and special district levels over a period of roughly five years. Examining how these measures have fared and

at which elections (special, primary, general, mail ballot), can help local decision-makers assess next steps.

In the Kansas City metro area, voters have shown a strong willingness to support public financing measures, including taxing and borrowing for parks, trails, and greenways. Support varies among jurisdictions and spending measures, but public support is generally strong and many communities have approved land conservation finance measures in recent years.

In Johnson County alone, voters have supported a number of major park and trail funding measures in recent years, including a county-wide tax levy in 1986 to fund Streamways Parks System, a countywide \$6 million general obligation bond in 1998 to acquire land for Big Bull Creek Regional Park and a 1/8-cent parks sales tax in the city of Olathe in 1999.

Careful consideration should be given to the implementation of financing techniques that require voter approval and those that do not. To implement most voter-approved taxing/borrowing options, a three-step approach is recommended: feasibility research, public opinion polling and measure design. First, research is conducted into a jurisdiction's financing capacity and the potential revenues that could be raised via different options. This type of research is provided at the county level in this MetroGreen Plan. This research will help inform local leaders about the funding options available, how much revenue these options would raise, and what the impact might be on residents.

To assess voter preferences, their willingness to fund trails and greenways (in relation to other public needs) and how much they are willing to spend. As part of this MetroGreen Plan, a scientific public opinion survey was conducted in September 2001. Area residents expressed some support for various regional and local tax measures; however residents indicated that more information on MetroGreen and its benefits could increase public support.

As local communities continue efforts to implement MetroGreen or local trail plans, additional public polling should be conducted.

## Acknowledgements

The Mid-America Regional Council appreciates the financial contributions of the following foundations toward the preparation of the MetroGreen Action Plan.

Hall Family Foundation  
William T. Kemper Foundation  
Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Grace Harris  
Philanthropic Fund

MARC appreciates the considerable in-kind support provided by area city and county governments with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other plan information, and personnel time to provide advice and feedback on the plan's development. In particular, we want to acknowledge the efforts of our Technical Advisory Committee:

Stephen Abbott, ASLA, Kansas City, Missouri  
Parks and Recreation  
Vincent J. Bilardo, Jr., Kansas City, Missouri  
Brownfields Office  
Tim Colon, Economic Development Commission  
of Kansas City, MO  
Dale Crawford, ASLA, City of Olathe Parks Department  
Neil Davidson, Platte Land Trust  
Vanessa Eickhoff, Kansas City, Missouri  
Brownfields Office  
Tom Garland, City of Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation  
John Hartman, Clay County Parks and Recreation  
Karin Jacoby, P.E., Kansas City, MO Public Works  
Thomas Kimes, P.E., Kansas City, MO Public Works  
Randy Knight, Johnson County Parks and  
Recreation District  
Margie Maasen, Platte County Parks and Recreation Board  
William Maasen, Johnson County Parks and  
Recreation District  
Brian Nowotny, Platte County Parks and Recreation  
Foster Paulette, City of Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation  
Roscoe Righter, Blue Springs Parks and Recreation  
Laura Turnbull, ASLA, City of Lenexa Public Works,  
Prairie Gateway Chapter, American Society of  
Landscape Architects  
Bruce Wilke, Jackson County Parks and Recreation



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, American Anthropologist

## Mid America Regional Council Staff

MARC staff led the effort to secure funding, coordinate the planning process and partner with the project consultants to produce this Action Plan.

David Warm, Executive Director  
Marlene Nagel, Director, Community Development  
Jody Ladd Craig, Public Affairs Manager  
Barbara Hensley, Public Affairs Specialist  
Danny Rotert, Public Affairs Specialist  
Frank Lenk, Director of Research Services  
Scott Paszkiewicz, Environmental Planner  
Aaron Bartlett, Bicycle/Pedestrian Planner

## Project Consultants

The consultants employed by MARC to assist in the preparation of this MetroGreen Action Plan would also like to extend their appreciation to the project funders, MARC staff and all those who volunteered their time in the preparation of this Action Plan.

### **Greenways Incorporated**

Charles A. Flink, ASLA, President  
Don Stier, AASLA, Project Manager  
Dave Josephus, AASLA, Project Planner  
Jonathan Parsons, AASLA, Project Planner  
Bob Heuer, GIS Specialist  
Haley Blakeman, AASLA, Project Planner  
Marjorie Strauss Flink, Administrative Assistant  
Bob Searns, AICP, Consultant, Urban Edges  
Jeff Olson, AIA, Consultant, Trailblazer

### **Patti Banks and Associates**

Patti Banks, ASLA, Principal  
Steve Rhoades, ASLA, Project Planner

### **ETC/Leisure Vision**

Elaine Tatham, Ph.D, President  
Ronald Vine, Vice President

### **The Trust for Public Land**

Cynthia Whiteford, Regional Director  
Matt Zeiper, National Research Director  
Kim Hopper, Senior Associate, Marketing & Research