



**metrogreen**

Preserving the Possibilities

# What is MetroGreen?

MetroGreen is an interconnected system of public and private natural areas, greenways and trails linking together communities throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. At heart, MetroGreen:

- protects natural resources;
- restores high-value natural areas; and
- connects people to these resources and to each other.

Benefits of MetroGreen include cost-effective improvement of air and water quality; stabilization of streams; reduction of flood risks; protection of wildlife habitat; opportunities for biking, hiking and walking; and ultimately, the formation of a framework around which more sustainable urban development patterns can occur.

The MetroGreen vision emerged in 1991 from a plan developed by the Prairie Gateway Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In 2001, Mid-America Regional Council oversaw efforts to refine the plan and has continued to coordinate implementation efforts by local communities. Current work attempts to build upon previous successes and accelerate conservation and restoration of MetroGreen lands.

## What is...

**a greenway?** Greenways are linear corridors connecting people and natural areas, which may include parks, trails, cultural sites and wildlands.

**conservation?** Conservation encompasses long-term protection of natural areas for wildlife habitat, for human uses such as recreation, and for the protection of natural functions, including water filtration and floodwater absorption.

**restoration?** Restoration re-establishes native plant and animal species and their natural ecosystems at sites and corridors where they have ceased to exist, or are substantially impaired.

**a streamway?** Streamways consist of a stream and its adjacent riparian forests and wetlands, trails, and natural areas.

**a priority corridor?** Priority corridors are MetroGreen greenways selected for short-term protection, due to high natural resource value and/or high public support.



## What if?

What if you could walk or ride your bike along a stream buffered by beautiful trees and wildflowers?

What if the water in the stream was clean — clean enough for wading and fishing?

What if your children could see and learn about wildlife?

What if you or your children could use stream corridors for recreation or exercise?

What if your children could watch birds, find turtles, and learn about local ecology?

What if you would walk or bike to work from one city to the next along a healthy stream corridor?

What if this were all possible right here in the Kansas City region?

## Why Not Now?

Greenway protection efforts around the Kansas City region are comprehensively planned within a system called MetroGreen. Today, MetroGreen consists of more than 150 linear miles of protected natural areas. But, community plans developed since 1991 call for nearly 1,000 additional linear greenway miles.

These plans have the enthusiastic support of residents and local governments alike. However, to realize the potential benefits of an interconnected regional greenway system, considerable work remains to be done. With focus and action, these regional and local conservation goals are clearly attainable.



# Preserving the Possibilities

As the pace of development and reinvestment in our region continues, clear opportunities exist to proactively balance environmental protection with economic development. MetroGreen continues a long tradition of valuing green space in the Kansas City area by extending the “parkways and boulevards” concept of the 1894 Kessler Plan for Kansas City, Missouri. MetroGreen extends and enhances this commitment through the identification of a network of greenways connecting many of the region’s most valuable natural, recreational and cultural assets.

Given community interest in implementing MetroGreen to its fullest extent, community leaders are strategically formulating a near-term, action-oriented plan to figure out how to protect over one-half of all MetroGreen corridors in the next five to 10 years. The MetroGreen Action Plan creates newly focused strategies, priorities and action steps developed with the help of a regional natural resource inventory, local plans, and broad-scale community participation.

Regional and local protection strategies include land acquisition, incentives for property owners, environmental regulation, and other conservation tools. The plan identifies opportunities to conserve, restore and connect the region’s most significant natural areas.

# Restoring Lost Assets

Many opportunities exist for ecosystem restoration in our region. Restoration of woodlands, grasslands, rivers and wetlands can effectively reconstitute the region’s green infrastructure. High quality restoration locations are identified in the MetroGreen plan, including important Kansas City wild lands. Restoration offers ecological opportunities to improve air and water quality at a landscape level.



# Connecting People

MetroGreen connects people to their natural, cultural and historic heritage and connects people to other people and places in the region. These connections are truly greater than the sum of their parts.

## Connecting People to Nature

According to author Richard Louv, we are raising a generation of children with “nature deficit disorder.” Without a concerted effort to preserve natural resources and provide opportunities for people to be in nature, our children may grow up without an understanding of our earth’s natural systems and a connection to the natural world. Creating a high quality of life in the region involves protection, restoration and connection to nature and our region’s special places. Bringing people in contact with wildlife, history and cultural resources give us a deeper understanding of and appreciation for their value.

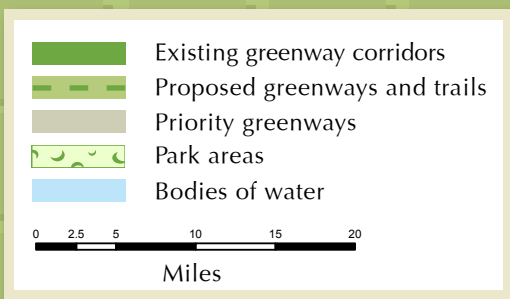
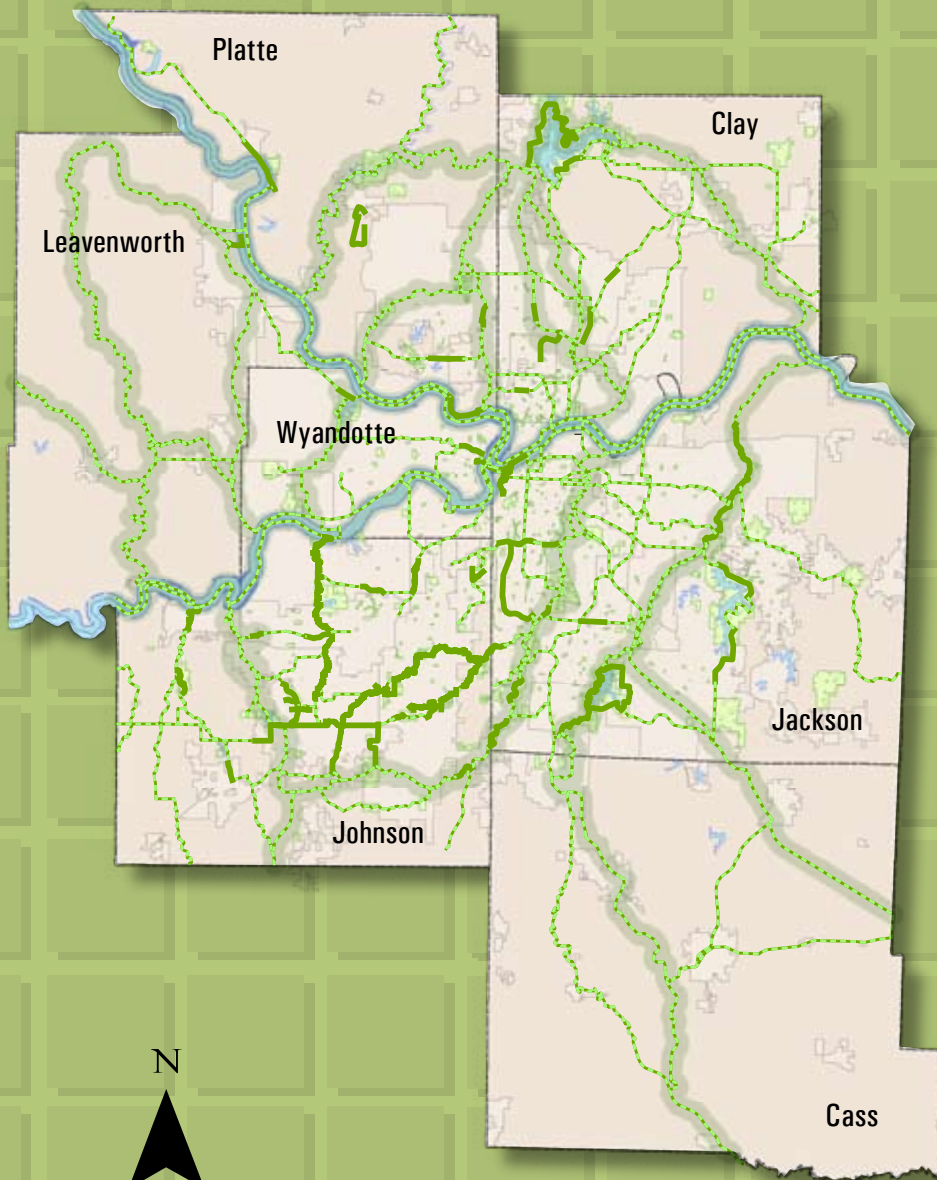
## Connecting Land and People

Greenways create a strong sense of place, community and multi-cultural appreciation by connecting land and communities. Connecting these corridors and open space enhances the environment, offers alternative modes of travel and connects communities promoting their cohesive interaction.

# Call to Action

Local officials, civic leaders and the general public continue to express strong support for MetroGreen. The action plan provides a number of involvement opportunities.

- The involvement of local officials is necessary to define specific action steps for each priority greenway corridor, and to work on greenway conservation and restoration.
- Civic and business leaders and the public need to continue to express their interest in and support for MetroGreen—both in general and for specific corridors.




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