Summary of Existing Greenway System

Most cities and towns of the Midwest and the Great Plains were founded alongside rivers or near the great overland transport routes. In this sense, the setting that gave rise to Kansas City and its surrounding towns is not unusual. What makes this area extraordinary, however, is its geographical position in relation to the rest of the United States. Its central location near the confluence of two important rivers that drain the vast and open plains has made the Kansas City area a strategic and pivotal gateway from its very beginning.

The place that today we call the Kansas City metropolitan area occupies a large region that encircles the confluence of the Missouri River and its smaller tributary, the Kansas (or Kaw) River. Those who have lived here long enough think of the confluence area as split into three sections by these two rivers. The Missouri sweeps down from the Northwest and bends to the East leaving a vast piece of the region north of its course. The Kansas River flows in from the West-southwest and joins the Missouri at its eastward turn. This confluence creates the other two pieces - a smaller area to the West that falls between both rivers and remains entirely in Kansas, and a wide stretch of land that lies south of the Kansas and the Missouri Rivers and runs from Kansas into Missouri.

Dozens of tributary rivers, creeks and streams flow into these two muddy waterways and each of their channels cuts back into the woodland bluffs that edge the broad river flood plains. Many of these tributaries extend farther back from the rivers and drain the open, rolling prairie and tree-covered and eroded hills that are scattered across the upland landscapes. Throughout this region of open upland and wooded stream courses, rich soils support a fairly thick and low vegetation cover that in turn serves as habitat for a broad range of wildlife.

The ecological relationships that bind the area’s natural environment changed little until the last 200 years. Before that the confluence region served as territorial base to the Kansa, Osage and other peoples who hunted, foraged, and cultivated subsistence crops in the rich bottomlands. Intrusions by trappers and traders brought the market/resource demands of a global commercial economy and, at the same time, made the Kan-
sas-Missouri confluence a strategic break point in the North American network of rivers and trails.

Anglo movements into the area increased in the first half of the nineteenth century and slowly, as trading posts were planted and way stations were built, the district surrounding the junction of the rivers became a general switch point for the east-west traffic, a gateway through which passed people and manufactured goods headed to the far West and Northern New Spain and in return passed the furs, gold, and harvested resources of the Louisiana Territory.

As the dominant transportation technology switched from steamship and overland wagon to railroad, the gateway status of the towns in the confluence region grew. Settlers poured into the Kansas City area, its commercial economy expanded and the hinterland that surrounded and supported the city evolved into one of the most productive farming regions in the world.

Today, more than 1.7 million people live in the cities and towns, suburbs and villages that fill the confluence area. Split by a state line and grouped into seven counties, five of which are well urbanized, the residents of the metropolitan area have all of the problems and pleasures of others who live in or near the great cities of North America. Many people commute daily to work in an older urban core. Others have remained in the center of the metropolitan area and are busy restoring and revitalizing the beautiful neighborhoods that are flourishing once again. Still others have settled the exurban fringes and have brought new life to many of the older country towns that declined as railroad traffic dwindled.

The Kansas City region bears a landscape transformed by 200 years of traffic and trade, of civilization and settlement. It still supports a rich variety of plants and animals that live off its streams and soils but the environment that once sustained the Kansa, Osage, and other native peoples must now serve the needs of a significantly larger and more demanding population. To make things work in the confluence area, we must carefully plan how we will inhabit, use, and sustain the region’s resources in the years to come.

The 1,144 mile, seven-county MetroGreen system is an ambitious plan for our community. Yet, recent efforts suggest growing interest in realizing this vision. There is growing interest in greenways and trails by citizens, political leaders, and parks and public works officials. Many communities have completed extensive plans for greenway systems. Some communities have asked voters to approve dedicated taxes. Many cities and counties are seeking available federal and state grants to support trail construction. Currently, segments of 13 MetroGreen trails with over 85 miles exist in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Trail systems are increasingly popular in private development. Developers have already begun designing new office park and neighborhood projects with greenways and trails as focal points.
Berkley Park Esplanade

Greenway Description:

Terminal points: Currently, the trail is contained within R.L. Berkley Park, but it will be expanded soon.

Length: 0.5 mile

Surface type: Concrete

Handicap accessible: Yes

Pets permitted: Yes

Dedicated parking: Yes

Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset

For more information: Kansas City Parks & Recreation Dept.
4600 E. 63rd Street
Kansas City, MO 64130
816-513-7500

The Berkley Park Esplanade is the northeastern-most point of the soon-to-be-constructed Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail. Soon, direct connections will be made to the Kemper Arena and across the Kansas River to Wyandotte County. This urban trail is conveniently located near the vibrant and exciting Kansas City River Market Area. From Berkley Park, visitors enjoy commanding views of the Kansas City skyline and the Missouri River.
The Brush Creek Corridor is a premier cultural and recreational amenity. The corridor was designed to hold stormwater and reduce flooding damage while simultaneously providing an east-west pedestrian connection. The greenway passes through the Country Club Plaza (Kansas City’s premier shopping district) as well as providing access to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Volker Park, Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center and Brush Creek Park. The greenway has spurred considerable reinvestment in the corridor east of Troost. Plans are underway to extend the greenway west to State Line Road and east to the Blue River.

Greenway Description:

- West terminus: Belleview Street
- East terminus: Blue River
- Length: 5.5 miles
- Surface type: Concrete
- Handicap accessible: Yes
- Pets permitted: Yes
- Dedicated parking: No
- Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
- For more information: Kansas City Parks & Recreation Dept.
  4600 E. 63rd Street
  Kansas City, MO 64130
  816-513-7500
English Landing Park Trail

Greenway Description:

Terminal points: Currently, the trail is contained within English Landing Park, but there are opportunities to expand the trail along the Missouri River.

Length: 3 miles

Surface type: Limestone screenings

Handicap accessible: Yes

Pets permitted: Yes

Dedicated parking: Yes

Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset

For more information: City of Parkville
1201 East Street
Parkville, MO
816-741-7676

English Landing Park is located in Parkville along the banks of the Missouri River. It features one of the few trails along the Missouri River in the Kansas City region, and offers several recreational opportunities, which include playgrounds, a volleyball court, picnic shelters, a boat ramp, softball and soccer fields. The historic Waddell A-frame Bridge is located within the park. The Parkville City Market is located at the entrance to the park.
Indian Creek Trail

Greenway Description:

West terminus: 151st Street, west of Mur-Len Road
East terminus: Locust Street in KCMO
Length: 24 miles
Surface type: Asphalt/Concrete
Handicap accessible: Yes
Pets permitted: Yes
Dedicated parking: Yes
Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset

The Indian Creek Trail Greenway passes through four metro cities: Leawood, Overland Park, Olathe, and Kansas City, Missouri. It connects with Tomahawk Creek Trail, Pinehurst Park, Foxhill South Park, the Corporate Woods Business Park, Stoll Park, the Overland Park Golf Course and Water Works Park in Olathe. It includes several amenities such as ball fields, shelters, playgrounds and tennis courts. It is close to several retail and commercial centers.

For more information:

City of Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Dept. 4600 East 63rd Street Kansas City, MO 64130 816-513-7500

City of Overland Park Parks and Recreation 6300 West 87th Overland Park, KS 66212 913-327-6630

City of Olathe Parks Department 200 West Sante Fe Olathe, KS 66061 913-393-6038

City of Leawood Parks and Greenways 4800 Town Center Drive Leawood, KS 66211 913-339-6700
Greenway Description:

West terminus: 18th Street
East terminus: 5th Street
Length: 1.8 miles
Surface type: Asphalt
Handicap accessible: No
Pets permitted: Yes
Dedicated parking: No
Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
For more information: Unified Government of Wyandotte County / Kansas City, Kansas Parks and Recreation Kansas City, KS 66109 913-596-7077

Jersey Creek Trail in Kansas City, Kansas, connects neighborhoods from 4th Street to 18th Street. This trail is mostly paved with one gravel section along an abandoned rail line. Benches and lookouts on the trail provide resting points along the creek. Heathwood Park located on the west end adds a playground and ball fields to the recreational aspects of the trail.
Leavenworth Landing Trail is located along the Missouri River next to the Historic Railroad Station, now the Leavenworth Community Center. The trail includes interpretive signs, sculptures, benches, a small dock, a trellis and picnic tables. The trail offers many outstanding views of the Missouri River and Three Mile Creek.

Greenway Description:

- West terminus: North end of the park
- East terminus: Three Mile Creek
- Length: 1/2 mile
- Surface type: Concrete
- Handicap accessible: Yes
- Pets permitted: Yes
- Dedicated parking: Yes
- Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
- For more information: Leavenworth Parks and Recreation
  123 South Esplanade
  Leavenworth, KS 66048
  913-651-2203
Little Blue Trace

Greenway Description:

North terminus: Blue Mills Road
South terminus: I-70
Length: 11 miles
Surface type: Limestone screenings
Handicap accessible: Yes
Pets permitted: Yes
Dedicated parking: Yes
Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
For more information: Jackson County Parks and Recreation
22807 Woods Chapel Road
Blue Springs, MO 64105
816-795-8200

The existing trail is located in the center of Jackson County along the Little Blue River. The trail is multipurpose. There are currently five access points: Blue Mills Rd., Ripley Junction, Bunshu Rd, M-78 Hwy, and R.D. Mize Rd. There is a picnic shelter at each access except R.D. Mize Rd. A future access point is planned in the Hartman Heritage Center west of Little Blue Parkway. The city of Independence bicycle trail system connects at Little Blue Pkwy. There is a historical connection at Ripley Junction - the site of a Civil War skirmish.
Greenway Description:

North terminus: Longview Lake Dam
South terminus: South end of lake
Length: 6 miles
Surface type: Asphalt
Handicap accessible: Yes
Pets permitted: Yes
Dedicated parking: Yes
Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
For more information: Jackson County Parks and Recreation
22807 Woods Chapel Road
Blue Springs, MO 64105
816-795-8200

The Longview Lake Trail runs along the western edge of Longview Lake from O'Donnell Park to Longview Shelter. The asphalt trail meanders through wooded areas and open prairie and connects the marina, swimming beach and several shelters.
The Mill Creek Biking and Hiking Trail is one of the longest greenways in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Trail users enjoy the streamside solitude, wildlife watching, and the gallery forest that features oaks, sycamores, and cottonwoods. A public phone is available at the Nelson Island terminus.

Contact the Johnson County Park & Recreation District for a more detailed map of the trail.
Tomahawk Creek Trail Greenway runs through both Leawood and Overland Park, Kansas. It connects Indian Creek Trail, Leawood Park, Tomahawk Park, Deer Creek Golf Course, Overland Park Community Park and St. Andrews Golf Course. Future plans provide connections to Black Bob Park and Heritage Park Golf Course. Shelters and picnicking facilities are located along the trail. A bridle path is also located along some portions of the trail.
Trolley Track Trail

Greenway Description:

North terminus: Volker Boulevard
South terminus: 85th Street
Length: 6 miles
Surface type: Limestone screenings
Handicap accessible: Yes
Pets permitted: Yes
Dedicated parking: No
Hours of operation: Sunrise to sunset
For more information: Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
1200 E. 18th Street
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-346-0200

The Trolley Track Trail is, as the name implies, routed along a former trolley rail line. The trail was constructed in 1997 and is very popular with the residents in this urban/suburban corridor. Soon the trail will be extended east to Prospect Avenue. The Trolley Track Trail provides access to: Brookside, Waldo, the Country Club Plaza, Brookside Park and UMKC.
MetroGreen provides a regional framework for green corridors connecting communities throughout the metro area. MetroGreen identifies those segments of local plans that support longer-range regional trips and link users to important regional destinations. Currently, numerous local municipalities have bike and pedestrian trails (with plans for more!). Some of these facilities, however, were not designed to connect to neighboring plans, because their primary focus is to support short-range trips - not regional trips.

The strength of a regional system is its ability to support short-range trips as well as long-distance use, and connect local greenway systems, other modes of transportation and regional destinations. The success of a regional system will be evident by the cooperation and coordination of transportation officials, planners, and developers throughout the Kansas City region.

By serving as a regional bicycle and pedestrian system, MetroGreen will:
- Be publicly accessible;
- Provide links between communities;
- Develop the identity of a connected Kansas City region;
- Provide connections to regional destinations such as parks, lakes, rivers, cultural, historic, and economic centers;
- Support existing, planned, or proposed local bicycle and pedestrian systems;
- Identify major travel corridors;
- Accommodate different modes of travel.

The previous pages present information specific to each of the existing MetroGreen segments. These successful trails are precursors of the more comprehensive MetroGreen system. The information presented is intended to help area residents locate and enjoy these outstanding facilities.

The focus of the Kansas City MetroGreen effort is to produce an umbrella system that unifies and enhances plans from area communities. It is anticipated that many of the existing and future local systems will link to the MetroGreen System, thus leveraging the investment in local facilities and providing area residents with greater transportation and recreation options.

Typically, local systems are designed to serve local populations and, when combined, local systems improve access to resources throughout the region.
Local systems are designed to:
• Accommodate travel within a jurisdiction or neighborhood;
• Provide community connections to schools, churches, parks, and civic centers;
• Feed into regional systems for access to longer distance destinations.

By developing MetroGreen, the Kansas City area will have a comprehensive greenway system. Local trail systems will benefit by providing local residents access to key destinations around Kansas City.