Implementation Program

The implementation of a greenway system as large and complex as MetroGreen cannot be accomplished at one time. It will take many years to build the MetroGreen system, giving full consideration to the way each part of the system is designed, surveying the miles and developing adequate funding. This master plan will serve as an organizing framework and to ensure that connectivity is maintained between the many jurisdictions. For this reason, as the plan was being developed, priorities were identified for all MetroGreen segments.

The segments of the MetroGreen system have been defined by four distinct phases. They are as follows:

- **Existing** - segments are already built. Today approximately 85 miles are on the ground and being used by residents in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

- **Priority 1** - segments will be the first trails added to the system. Their identification as Priority 1 indicates that there is local commitment for the project and some funding has been identified to begin land acquisition, design and/or construction. Designating these segments as Priority 1 is intended to encourage the trail developers/planners to continue raising funds, heighten public awareness of these active projects and show support for the completion of trails that will contribute to MetroGreen. It is expected that Priority 1 segments will be constructed over the next three-to-five years. Approximately, 141 miles of the MetroGreen system have been designated as Priority 1.

- **Priority 2** - segments are not yet funded. However, completing these segments has been determined to be a 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, 316 miles of the MetroGreen system have been designated as Priority 2.
• Priority 3 - segments are needed to complete the system. They represent the long-term strategy. It is expected that Priority 3 segments will be constructed over the next 15-25 years. Approximately, 602 miles of the MetroGreen system have been designated as Priority 3.

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 Regional Greenway Initiative.
• Advise local governments on specific segments of the MetroGreen plan.
• Facilitate cooperation among jurisdictions for implementation of MetroGreen.
• Promote use of uniform design guidelines for MetroGreen facilities.

Overview

The following text provides an overview of the different forms of governance considered. It was important to select an organization style that will effectively champion the MetroGreen Regional Greenway Initiative. Included here are a review of typical organizational models for greenway governance and an overview of other regional greenway and open space organizations from throughout the United States. Following these summaries is the consultant’s recommendation for establishing an organizational structure for MetroGreen.

Typically, greenway governance involves designating or creating an organization or agency that will be responsible for implementation of a community-wide or region-wide greenway system. Often what is needed is an organization or agency that serves as “champion,” coordinator or facilitator of the community greenway program. The challenge in selecting or designating such a champion is to determine the organization or agency that can best satisfy fiscal, operational and management objectives associated with the greenway program in the Kansas City region.
A Review of Organizational Models
Several types of organizational structures are currently operating throughout the United States governing various greenway initiatives. Listed below are examples of some of the most successful models by type.

The Single Agency Model
The Single Agency Greenway Organization is developed around the leadership of a local, regional or state government agency. Oftentimes this will be a parks and recreation or planning department whose interests and operating mission are naturally aligned with the goals for greenways. The Raleigh, NC, Capital Area Greenway Program is an example of a single agency greenway model with the Parks and Recreation Department as lead agency.

The Multi-Agency Model
The Multi-Agency Model offers the same organizational foundation as the Single Agency Model, however, in this example, two or more agencies have decided to pool their talent and divide the responsibilities in order to resolve the complex issues for greenway implementation. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, NC Greenway Program is an example of a dual agency program with Parks and Recreation as lead and County Stormwater Services, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities and other agencies in supporting roles.

The Public-Private Model
There are two public-private partnership models for greenways. The first is a strong-side public sector, which in essence means that local government partners support the bulk of its efforts. The private sector may support this partnership through fund-raising, promotion and programming. The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission is a good example of a regional public-private greenway organization.

The Private-Public Model
Under this scenario, the private sector is the strong side, which means that private organizations shoulder more of the burden for planning, design, implementation and management of greenways. Public sector partners are asked to support the greenway effort in the areas of management, promotion, and programming. The Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation is an example of a private sector organization developed with the support of public sector leadership. Chicago Openlands is a very good example of a private-public greenway organization. The Southeast Michigan Greenways Initiative led by the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan is another example of a private sector leadership with public sector partners.

The Private Sector Model
The Private Sector Model places the establishment and operations of the greenway program totally within the realm of private organizations, without any direct influence from local, regional or state governments. The
private sector completes all work on greenways through its own means. The South Suburban Park Foundation of Denver, Colorado is a good example of a private sector organization that is exerting leadership in greenway development. Additionally, the Peninsula Open Space Trust in San Francisco is a private sector organization that is protecting land and implementing a variety of greenway objectives in the Bay Area region.

Examples of Other Organizations

**Chicago Openlands Project, Chicago, Illinois**

Since 1963, the Chicago Openlands Project has been working diligently to protect open space in the Chicago metropolitan area. To date the organization has preserved more than 21,000 acres of land that are now enjoyed by local residents as parks, forest preserves, bicycle trails, urban gardens and places to observe nature. Chicago Openlands was created by corporate executives who were concerned with the pace of rapid urbanization in the early 1960’s. As a private-sector-led land conservancy organization, the original goals were simple - take steps necessary to protect and preserve the unique natural resources of northeastern Illinois to ensure the quality of life for future generations. Chicago Openlands has always been concerned with the important interrelationship between natural resources and community expansion.

The organization is structured as a private, nonprofit advisory group - the guiding philosophy could be summed up as “no power is all power.” As an advisor, the group is free from political influence and is able to carry out its mission and objectives. Currently, the organization crafts policy and programs which are then implemented through a variety of partnerships both public and private. The 260 municipalities of the Chicago metropolitan area are the primary implementors of the Openlands strategies. Additionally, Openlands contracts work to local governments and private sector organizations to help it achieve results. This has enabled Openlands to remain a modest organization with an essential, highly trained and educated staff.

The primary strategy of Openlands since the late 1980’s has been to implement a 1,600-mile multi-objective greenway system. The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenway Plan was created through a partnership between the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) and Openlands in September 1992 as the guiding document for this ambitious system. The plan physically defines on-road and off-road corridors throughout the metro area as linkages to the already well-established Forest Preserves. Local and regional parks, parkways, canals and historic trails are all essential elements of the greenway strategy. The heart of the plan lies in the designation of 900 miles of streamways as multipurpose greenway corridors.

One of the functions of Openlands is the acquisition of property that is located within the proposed greenway system. CorLands, a real estate affiliate of Openlands, is the agent for this acquisition. Since 1988,
CorLands has acquired 4,500 acres. CorLands uses a variety of land-acquisition strategies to preserve and protect vital open space within the metro area.

**Peninsula Open Space Trust, San Francisco, California**
The Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to preserving the beauty, character and diversity of the San Francisco Peninsula. Since its founding, POST has protected more than 40,000 acres of San Francisco Peninsula Open Space. POST partners with many organizations in the Bay Area to protect land, principal among them the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District. The district was established in 1972 to create a regional greenbelt of open-space lands linking district preserves with other parklands. The district also participates in cooperative efforts such as the Bay Trail, Ridge Trail and Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. The district encompasses 16 cities and three counties.

POST works to buy and preserve land. POST utilizes a combination of public and private funds to support its activities. POST sells land to local, state and federal government agencies for management purposes as public monies become available for the transactions. One of POST’s recent campaigns was to raise $33.5 million in private-sector funds to protect more than 12,500 acres of land in the Bay Area.

POST is governed by a 15-member board of directors. Directors come from some of the most influential private sector and philanthropic organizations in the Bay Area. A 34-member Advisory Council that is comprised of private-sector representatives supports the board in its work. POST employs a four-person staff consisting of a president, two vice-presidents and one Director of Stewardship.

A seven-member board of directors that is determined by seven geographic wards governs the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District. Each member serves a four-year term and is chosen through district elections. Sixty employees, the majority of whom are responsible for resource management, staff the district. They patrol and maintain a 250-mile network of trails. The district is funded from an annual property tax of 1.7 cents per $100 value. This generates an annual fund of $10 million. Other revenue is derived from federal and state grants, interest and rental income and donations or gifts.

**The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, Roanoke, Virginia**
The Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission is a government-appointed advisory board that serves to advocate the development of a regional greenway system. Established by an intergovernmental agreement on April 19, 1997, the commission represents the interests of citizens from the four valley governmental units.

The purpose of the commission is to advise the four governments on greenway opportunities and citizen interests in greenways, facilitate cooperation among jurisdictions in greenway planning and development,
recommend sources of funding for greenway construction, develop uniform standards for greenway design and construction, pursue public/private partnerships, and coordinate efforts to create a valley-wide greenway system.

A non-profit corporation known as Pathfinders for Greenways aids the commission in carrying out its duties. Pathfinders’ purpose is to promote and encourage development of a greenway network, educate citizens and officials on the benefits of greenways, raise and receive gifts, donations and grants for greenways, organize volunteers to assist with greenway development and sponsor greenway promotional events.

The commission consists of 13 appointed members. Twelve members come from four local governments. Roanoke City, Roanoke County, the Town of Salem and the Town of Vinton are each allotted three appointees. The Metropolitan Planning Organization appoints one member. Ten ex-officio members come from planning, parks and recreation and other local, state and federal agencies, and from two non-profit organizations.

The South Suburban Park Foundation, Denver, Colorado
The South Suburban Park Foundation, Inc. was formed in 1979 with the mission of enriching the environment and improving open space and recreational opportunities for residents of the south suburban communities of metropolitan Denver. A private sector, nonprofit organization, South Suburban Park Foundation (SSPF) is an advocacy group that has served as master planner and builder of several significant greenway projects, including the award-winning Arapahoe Greenway and 10,000 Trees, a stream bank revitalization and reforestation project.

The intent of SSPF is to leave a legacy of greenways, trails and open space in the south Denver metro area. The trustees and supporters are committed to realizing this objective through partnerships between the foundation and private citizens, government agencies, corporations or philanthropic institutions. The Foundation offers a means for these individuals and groups to contribute funds, goods or volunteer efforts toward shared community objectives. The foundation has received numerous awards for its outstanding work.

The South Suburban Park Foundation is a membership organization that accepts and encourages grants, donations and contributions from public and private sources. The Foundation is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit corporation. SSPF is structured with an 11-member Board of Directors, and has employed through contracts an Executive Director and technical consultants during its 17-year history. The organization partners with local government agencies to plan and implement most of its projects. It also partners with other private-sector groups, including corporations, to implement activities.
Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, St. Paul, Minnesota

The Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation has been empowered by the community of St. Paul to serve as the lead organization for the implementation of the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework. The Riverfront Corporation has recently expanded in order to fulfill this role and has committed itself to a multi-year effort to make the vision real.

The Riverfront Corporation achieves this mission through the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center, public outreach and fund-raising. As part of its Design Center function, the Riverfront Corporation works to enhance the quality of life in St. Paul through high-quality urban design based on the principles and the goals of the Development Framework. Through its fund-raising efforts, the Riverfront Corporation works to align public and private resources that often accelerate the completion of projects that contribute to the overall vision. The Riverfront Corporation maintains an aggressive public-outreach program to educate, inspire and inform the community. Its goal is to form the partnerships that are necessary to realize the vision of a system of interconnected urban villages nestled in the lush green of a reforested river valley.

One result of this partnership between the Riverfront Corporation and the community is the Renaissance Project - a system of parks, trails and open spaces that will create connections from the downtown core to the Mississippi River and surrounding neighborhoods. The Renaissance Project is a strategy to implement the Development Framework that will build on current projects as well as create new ones. It will result in 92 acres of new or improved parks, five miles of new trails, eight miles of improved streetscapes, thousands of new trees and plants and other strategic investments.

The Riverfront Corporation is a private, nonprofit organization that is governed by a Board of Directors and a Finance Committee. Representatives from the Board of Directors and the Finance Committee are nominated by an internal committee that maintains balanced representation in the diverse community the Corporation serves. There are 30 directors, a seven-person Executive Committee, an Executive Director and six specialized staff members.

The Southeastern Michigan GreenWays Initiative, Michigan

The Southeastern Michigan GreenWays Initiative is a five-year program of the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan. The fundamental goal of the Initiative is to demonstrate the importance and benefits of building a greenway system within a seven-county region. This program is a comprehensive effort aimed at expanding and enhancing the region’s natural landscape. The program is oriented toward linking communities, leveraging vision, resources and people, and collaborating to promote and protect public health and well-being of Southeastern Michigan residents.
The GreenWays Initiative was developed through a partnership of 70 organizations, agencies and community leaders. The Foundation's five-year program focuses on public outreach and education, capacity building programs in the form of technical assistance and funding through philanthropic grants.

The Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan was established in 1984 and is a permanent community endowment built by gifts from individuals and organizations. The foundation works to improve the quality of life for residents in Southeast Michigan by supporting a wide variety of activities. A 50-member board of directors, comprised of community leaders, governs the foundation. The GreenWays Initiative has been supported by the Kresge Foundation, the MacGregor Fund, The Carls Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Matilda R. Wilson Fund, the Whitney Fund, The Americana Foundation and the Frey Foundation.

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 next page defines the structure of the organization.

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 Regional Greenway Initiative
- 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 local communities 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.

Funding
MetroGreen Incorporated will need some initial seed money for start-up. It will also need to generate long-term financial support for its future operations. The consultant recommends that a one-time initial funding formula be created to establish MetroGreen Incorporated. Each county, major cities, MARC, and private-sector organizations, would contribute to create an initial budget to employ staff and launch the programs of MetroGreen.

During its first year, the staff of MetroGreen would be asked to raise additional funds to support the annual operating budget of MetroGreen Inc.

A Regional System
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.
MetroGreen Regional Greenway Initiative Checklist

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 Regional Greenway Initiative.
- Designate a lead agency/department to work with the Mid-America Regional Council and the newly established MetroGreen, Inc., to implement the Regional Greenway Initiative.
- 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 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 Regional Greenway Initiative 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 Regional Greenway Initiative 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.