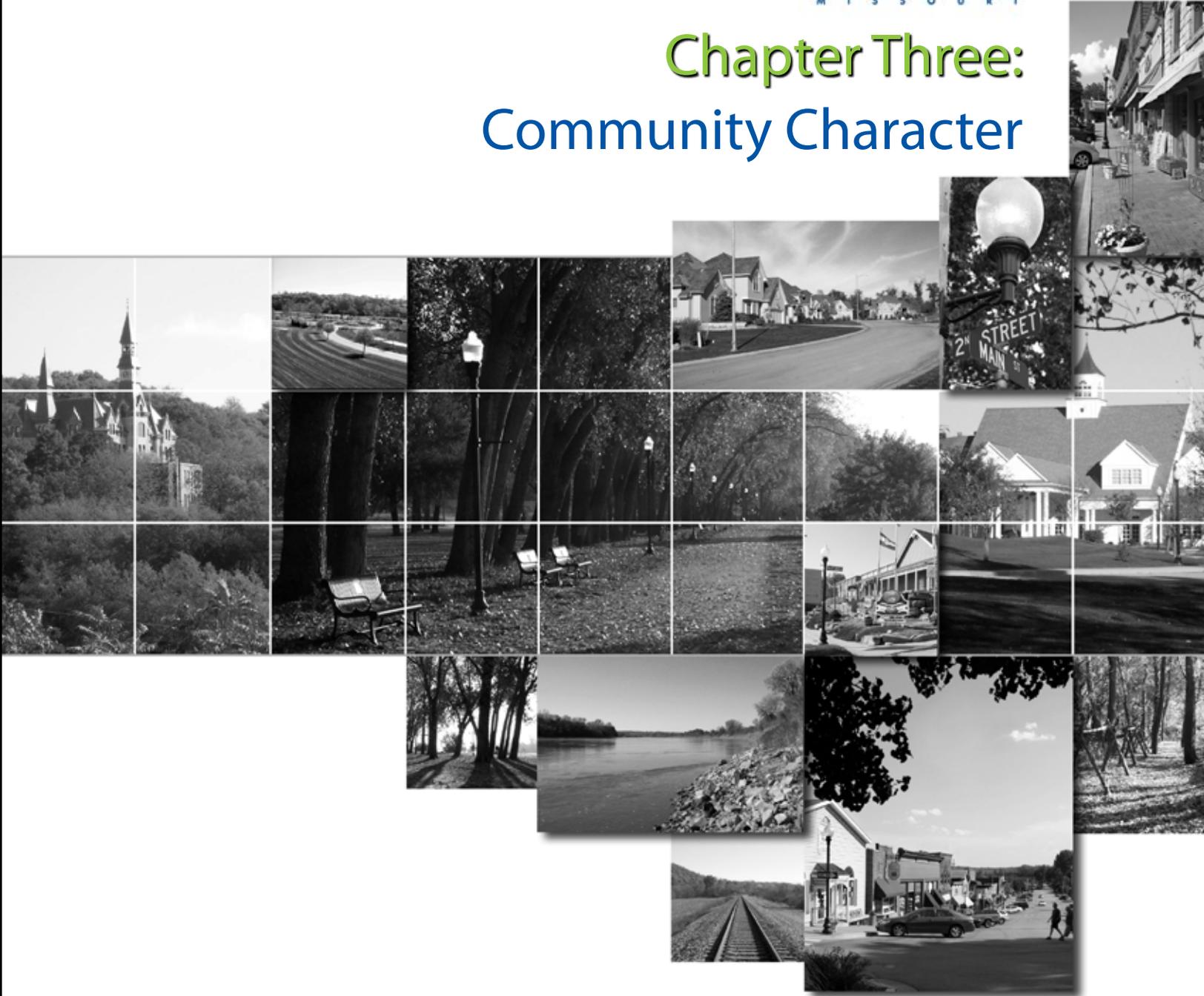




Chapter Three: Community Character





“One of the ten coolest small towns in America”

— Budget Travel Magazine, September 2007

Introduction

Parkville is recognized for its “cool” small town ambiance, rich history, civic pride, close-knit community, regional attractions and picturesque landmarks. Protecting and enhancing these unique characteristics is among the community’s top priorities and a key strategy for long-term economic sustainability. Much of Parkville’s current economic viability is based on its community charm and appeal to visitors. Specialized shopping destinations, bed and breakfast, unique restaurants and special community events throughout the year attract visitors to Parkville who in turn support local businesses.

Throughout the planning process, residents emphasized the importance of the following:

- preserving and enhancing the Downtown – Old Town area (with its mix of commercial and residential uses);
- highlighting the community’s history;
- protecting the community’s unique topography, wooded areas, access to the riverfront, and other natural features;
- creating a positive first image; and
- requiring new development to include features and characteristics that make Parkville “cool” and unique.

A guiding principle of the Master Plan is the need to preserve and emphasize these characteristics while creating new attractions and amenities that reinforce Parkville’s unique small town ambiance. **Chapter 6, Land Use** further addresses expected character of new development and includes **Development Design Expectations**.



Historic Preservation

Much of Parkville's visual character is derived from the many antebellum and turn-of-the-century residential, commercial and institutional structures. Like many communities of similar age, many of Parkville's "historic" structures have long since been modified to the extent they have lost many of their original architectural features. However, their age, charming qualities, and concentrated numbers in and around the downtown area create a historic setting that establishes much of Parkville's recognizable character. Preserving this character and rich history is a top priority of the community.

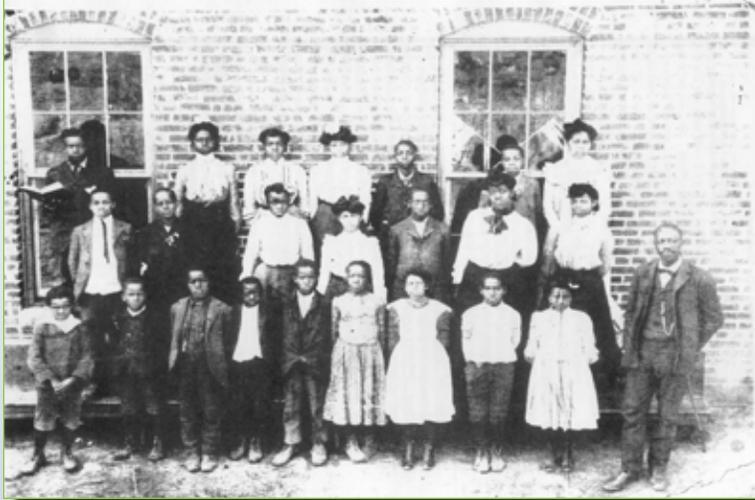
Historic preservation priorities include:

- maintaining an active historic preservation committee to assist with documenting Parkville's history and preserving its historic character;
- preserving structures on the National Register of Historic Places including the Benjamin Banneker School, MacKay Hall, Waddell "A" Truss Bridge, and Washington Chapel C.M.E. Church;
- creating and implementing standards that require new development and major redevelopment in and around historic downtown to blend with and enhance the area's historic character;
- preparing a Downtown Parkville Master Plan that includes strategies for building preservation and restoration; and
- adopting a planned zoning district or overlay district to preserve the character of the residential area in and around downtown to coincide with a similar planned zoning/overlay district for the commercial Old Town District.



Historic MacKay Hall on the Park University campus is one of Parkville's most recognized landmarks and adds to the picturesque setting of the campus and downtown Parkville.

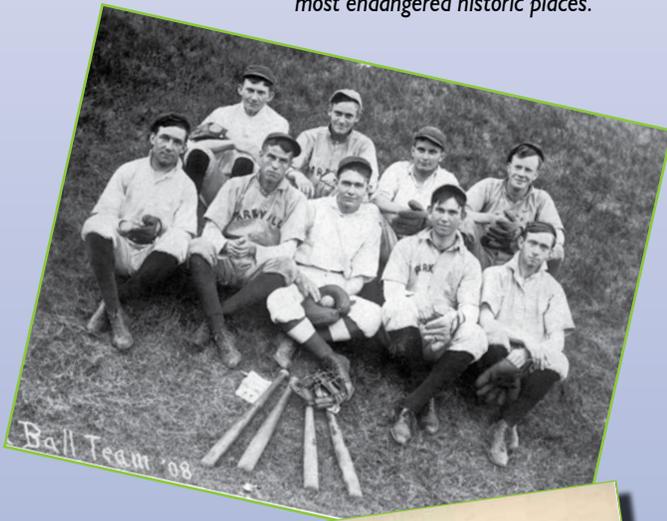
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The Benjamin Banneker School, a one-room schoolhouse was built in 1885 for African American children. The school is a rare example of a first-generation African American school, and is now recognized as one of the state's top 10 most endangered historic places.



Residents and visitors alike have enjoyed the scenic beauty of Parkville and its rich history.



Gateways

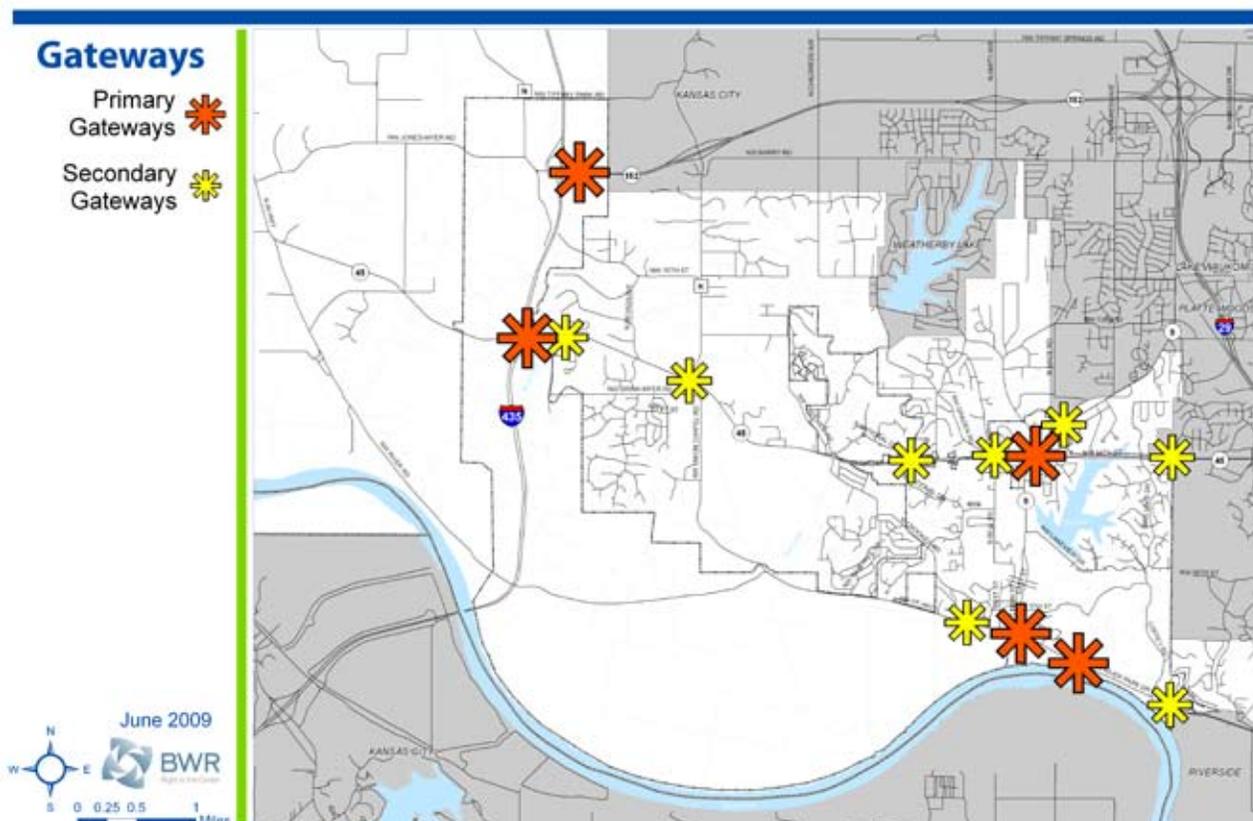
First impressions are important to a positive community character. “Gateways” are key locations throughout the community where these impressions can best be established and reinforced. Gateways provide a focal point and a visual “announcement” to Parkville by communicating the unique character and identity of Parkville and visually distinguishing the City from its neighbors. Enhancing gateway areas should be a cooperative investment and should be reinforced through higher private development design and public infrastructure standards.

Primary Gateways

Primary gateways are focal points typically located around highway intersections / interchanges, major entrances to Parkville or primary entrances to key destinations such as the Old Town District. These gateways are the highest priority for improvements.

Private development around these areas should create a distinctive image and be held to the highest design and aesthetic standards. Aesthetic improvements in these areas should incorporate elements that enhance the community image with:

- features that are distinctive and recognizable;
- enhanced landscaping in the public right-of-way and on private property; and
- public streetscape and aesthetic elements such as decorative street lighting, public art, unique signage and decorative paving.



Primary Gateways



Improvements to bridges and highway interchanges should provide safe crossings and distinctive bridge enhancements



Public streetscape can serve as a distinctive entry to Parkville. Plans for such areas could incorporate attractive street lighting, median plantings, and monument features.

Secondary Gateways

Public art and entrance features will help identify focal points.



The 45 Hwy roundabout at National Drive is distinctly recognizable and serves as a focal point for the area.

Secondary Gateways

Similar to primary gateways, these gateway areas serve as focal points around major street intersections and entrances into Parkville. These areas should project a positive community image, and private development around these areas should be held to the highest design and aesthetic standards which create a distinctive image for Parkville.

Aesthetic improvements in these areas should:

- reinforce the community's unique character through compatible streetscape enhancements, monuments and public art;
- be distinctive and recognizable when approaching from a distance; and
- have enhanced public streetscape improvements and enhanced landscape design on private property.

Neighborhood / District Gateways

These gateways highlight particular neighborhoods and business districts. They are typically located at major entrances that help announce a development and transition from the public setting of major corridors to the more private setting of a neighborhood or business district. Unlike primary and secondary gateways, these improvements are largely the responsibility of private property owners.

Amenities include well-designed entry monuments, private art, unique landscaping and other elements that further establish the Parkville character while announcing the neighborhood or development. Although not a primary focus, public infrastructure in these areas is expected to meet enhanced standards for appearance and general maintenance.

Neighborhood/District Gateways



Enhancements such as monument signs and landscaping inform motorists and pedestrians that they are entering a new neighborhood or district..



These gateway features anchor prominent locations and can represent an architectural or landscape theme throughout the development area.



Gateway features near major entrances to neighborhoods help establish the Parkville character, such as this privately maintained entrance feature to Thousand Oaks.

Scenic Natural Beauty

Parkville is no doubt one of the region's most scenic cities. Rolling hills, mature street trees and woodlands, riverfront overlooks, and a network of scenic creeks and streams are among the natural features that add to the scenic beauty of the community. As Parkville continues to grow, a key challenge will be balancing new development with preservation of the natural resources that give Parkville much of its character.

Top community priorities include:

- preserving the river bottoms and views to the Missouri River;
- preserving large tracts of woodland and open space for public enjoyment;
- additional landscaping at gateways and along key corridors like 45 Highway; and
- preserving vegetation in new development to the greatest extent possible and where not possible re-vegetating developed areas.

City programs and requirements such as open space preservation, stream corridor setbacks and floodplain preservation have multiple benefits including protecting natural settings. Although all are positive steps, additional comprehensive strategies are needed including development of a river bottoms master plan, tree preservation regulations, and regional watershed management plans.



Views from public lands to the Missouri River and Riss Lake must be preserved.



Wildlife is abundant in Parkville's many natural landscapes.



Picturesque views of the wooded hillsides and other natural features add value to area properties.



Citizens value the connection to the waterfront.



Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

Goal: Preserve and enhance Parkville’s small town ambiance.

Policy: Establish quality public spaces that encourage social interaction, foster a distinct “sense of place” and reinforce the character of the community.

Policy: Promote a built environment through building form, scale, placement and architectural design that provides a sense of place and reinforces the street as civic space.

Policy: Integrate distinct features throughout the community that create value, identity and pride.

Policy: Balance new development with preservation of the natural resources that give Parkville much of its character.

Policy: Improve gateway areas to create focal points and a visual “announcement” to the community.

Implementation Actions:

- Prepare a Downtown Area Master Plan.
- Adopt a planned zoning district or overlay district to preserve the character of the residential area in and around downtown.
- Form a historic preservation committee.
- Create and implement standards for new development and major redevelopment in and around historic downtown to blend with and enhance the area’s historic character.
- Adopt design guidelines for new development and redevelopment projects.
- Design and implement gateway and streetscape enhancements to be implemented as planned capital improvement projects or constructed in phases as opportunities arise.
- Prepare tree preservation regulations.
- Continue implementing Tree City USA program guidelines. ■



Creative civic programs can provide a significant benefit to Parkville’s community character. A program such as the Village of Long Grove, Illinois annual free bulb giveaway beautifies public corridors and serves as a regional attraction when bulbs are in bloom. The program provides residents with free bulbs to plant in the public right-of-way and other public spaces.



Themed programs such as the “Plant the Town Red” campaign in Memphis, TN can positively impact on the community’s image and build fellowship and civic pride. The program encourages residents, schools, businesses and neighborhoods to plant red flowers, flowering shrubs and trees,