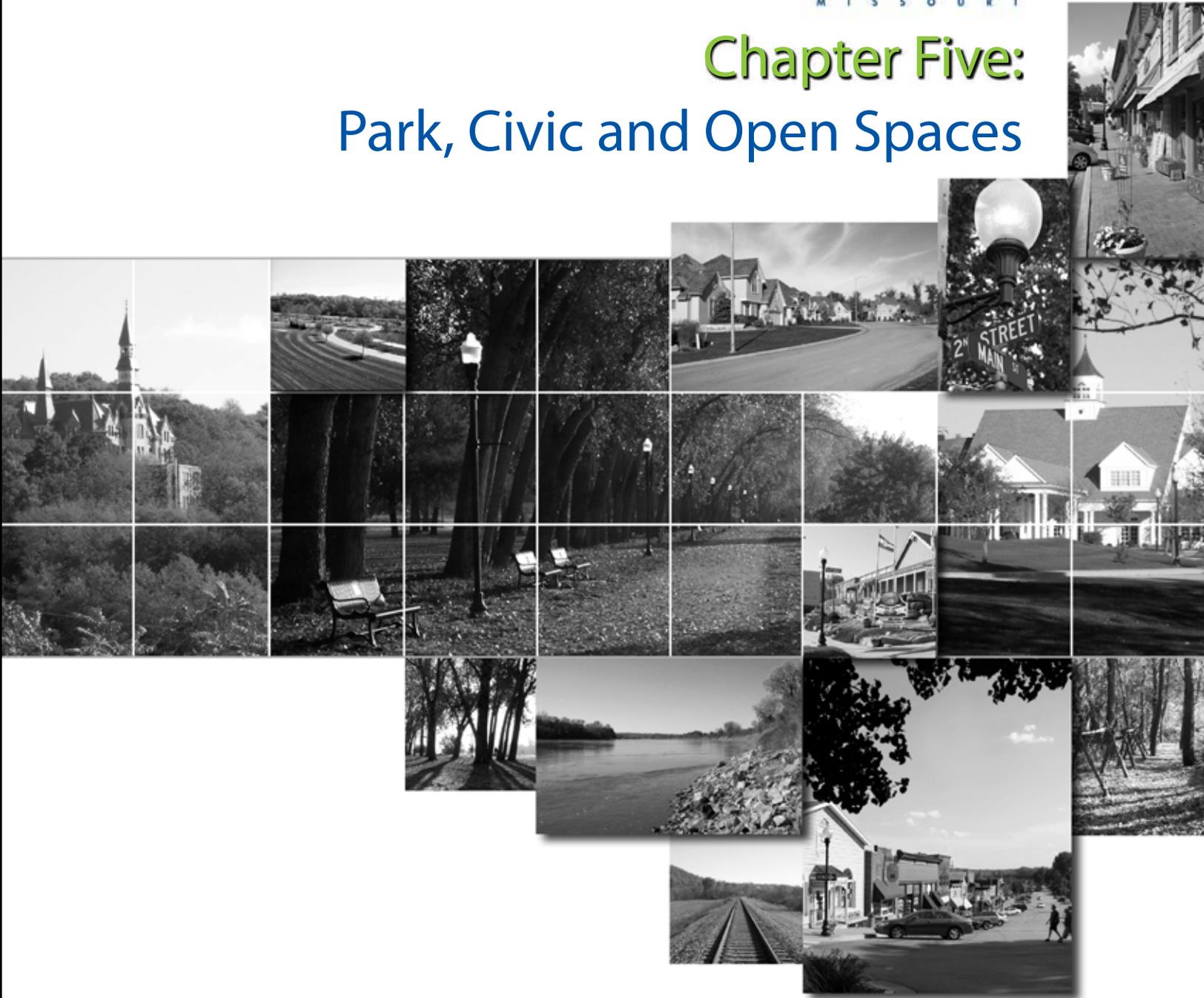




# Chapter Five: Park, Civic and Open Spaces



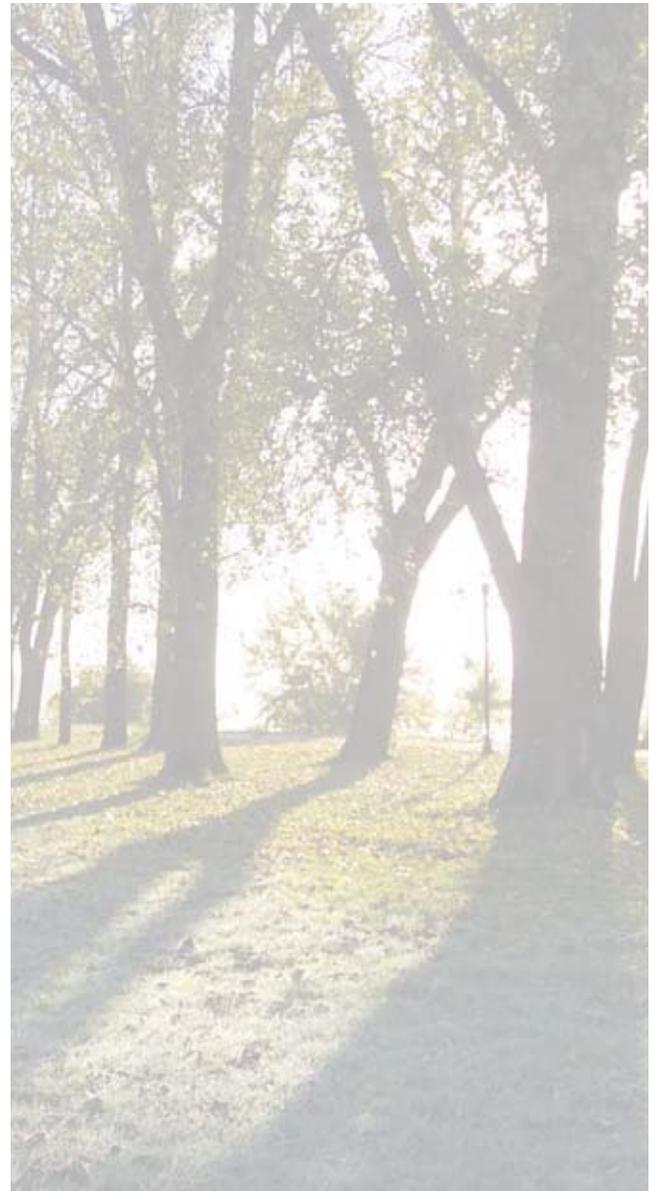


## Introduction

Park, civic and open spaces enhance the quality of life in Parkville and are central to the community's economic development strategy. These features help attract visitor activities to the community, as well as new residents and businesses.

Throughout the planning process, residents indicated future land planning efforts should incorporate the following quality places principles for parks, open space and natural resources:

- link neighborhoods to surrounding areas, and when possible, share commercial spaces and open space resources;
- locate public green spaces, ranging from small playgrounds within easy walking distance from homes to neighborhood parks, within easy access of residents in a quality neighborhood;
- layout streets in a pedestrian-friendly, interconnected network, attractively landscaped to encourage walking;
- provide public spaces that encourage social interaction, foster a distinct sense of place, are memorable, reinforce the character and include amenities that provide comfort and relaxation in all seasons;
- preserve major natural features in a neighborhood (streams, slopes, wetlands, floodplains and natural habitats) as open space and link those resources to public places by trails and pathways; and
- incorporate features and amenities that minimize environmental impacts on water quality caused by storm water runoff and erosion, and on air quality caused by motor vehicle traffic.





## Maintain Natural Open Space

New development should respect the natural environment and be designed to integrate existing natural features. Protecting the Missouri River, drainageways, creeks, floodplains and vegetation in rural and urbanizing areas serves a dual purpose of preserving environmental systems and providing recreational amenities.

- Vegetation should be preserved along natural water systems.
- Development setbacks and buffers along natural drainageway systems should be used to protect the health of the streamway and to reduce erosion, runoff, and pollution.
- Engineering techniques should not force-fit development into the environment, such as designs requiring significant amounts of cut and fill to maximize the development area at the expense of the environment.



### Create Intimate Spaces in the Built Environment

The quality of the “public realm” in Parkville is just as important as the design of homes in neighborhoods and buildings in retail areas. The community at large has a shared responsibility to design and maintain a quality public realm, including public and private spaces and facilities. A successful public or private place can be identified when it is a popular routine gathering place for diverse groups of people; when occupants interact casually there and have spontaneous conversations; when occupants feel safe and comfortable; when people want to linger rather than quickly pass through; when parents walk leisurely with their children; and when people-watching in the space is a wonderful way to pass time.

Intimate spaces give the community vibrancy. They are the formal and informal gathering spaces where we want to be, where we make memories and we miss when we can't enjoy them. In Parkville, they range from the benches along the Missouri River to the deck at Café des Amis. Quality public and private spaces should be included in new development and civic projects.

Quality spaces in the built environment should be:

- located in a manner to serve as prominent amenities;
- designed to encourage social interaction and to foster a distinct “sense of place” that is memorable and reinforces the character of the community; and
- embedded in the pattern of streets, blocks, and buildings to serve as an amenity that creates value.



*Unique places for people, such as plaza areas between buildings, should be provided in new developments.*



*Common areas should be accessible, well lit, and be visible from adjacent streets.*

## Expand the Parks and Recreation System

Parkville's park and recreation opportunities are key elements that make the community a desirable place to live, work and play. English Landing Park along the Missouri riverfront, trails through natural areas and recreation facilities nestled near Parkville's wooded bluffs provide a scenic backdrop that attracts both residents and visitors alike.

Not surprisingly, expanding parks and recreation amenities are top community priorities. Parkville's recreation amenities are greatly concentrated in English Landing Park which meets most community-wide and regional recreation needs. Neighborhood recreation needs are primarily met by private facilities. Maintaining and expanding English Landing Park and requiring private development to meet neighborhood recreational needs are key plan strategies.

Expanding the trail system to better connect to English Landing Park and other local and regional destinations is another top community priority. An extensive network of regional trails are identified in the Parkville planning area, including trails along the Missouri River, FF Highway, 45 Highway, I-435, Crooked Road and a portion of 9 Highway near Riss Lake and NW Eastside Drive. In addition to regional trails, there are many opportunities to provide trail connections to local destinations and parks throughout Parkville. Planning for new development areas provides the opportunity to implement an extensive local system of trail connections to the future regional network.



*City shelters and gazebos are booked for public and private events year round.*



*Playground equipment and facilities in English Landing Park are heavily used.*



*Park users enjoy views along the Missouri River.*



### Parks Expansion

During the planning process two major parks themes emerged: take care of what you have and expand along the Missouri River. English Landing Park is the existing cornerstone of the Parkville parks system. A 2008 County survey found English Landing Park is the single most popular recreational facility in the County, visited by approximately 52% of all respondents (the community centers ranked second with only 39% of the respondents visiting, and all other facilities ranked 35% or less). English Landing houses the City's major parks facilities including walking trails, shelters, ball fields, restrooms, playgrounds and many other amenities.

Expanding English Landing Park and new facilities along the Missouri River are top community priorities. The recently adopted Parkville Parks Master Plan (P3) calls for the maintenance of existing English Landing facilities with expansion of new facilities to the west of Main Street on City and County owned lands totaling approximately 140 acres (nearly three times the size of the existing English Landing Park). Although a detailed development plan has not been completed, improvements discussed include a new boat ramp, soccer fields, bark parks, ball fields, walking trails, and natural conservation areas. Both P3 and the Platte County Parks System Master Plan call for development of a master development plan before proceeding.

Parks and public open space projections are shown on the Parks and Trails Map on the following pages. Other major parks and recreation priorities and objectives are identified in "Major Investment Areas" on the following pages, and the adopted Parkville Parks Master Plan (P3).

### Trails Expansion

Expansion of the local and regional trail system is also a primary focus of P3, the Platte County Parks System Master Plan, Northland Trails Vision Plan and the Kansas City Area Metro Green Master Plan. The importance of trails was confirmed in an April 2009 County survey which found that 75% of Platte County residents were either "very supportive" (45%) or "somewhat supportive" (30%) of developing new walking and biking trails.

The Parks and Trails map identifies major regional and local trail corridors that are projected to interconnect existing and future facilities and major community destinations. The top regional trail priorities are the continuation of the Missouri Riverfront Trail (MRT) connecting Riverside through English Landing Park along the Missouri River bottoms and the Brush Creek trail connecting the river bottoms to Tiffany Springs Park along Brush Creek. The 2009 County survey identified paths along our waterways as our greatest opportunity with 73% of residents being either "very supportive" (44%) or "somewhat supportive" (29%) of the county acquiring up to 500 acres of open space for parks and trails. Other top regional priorities include expanding the Southern Platte Pass, a trail along 45 Highway, west to I-435 to the future Brush Creek trail.

The top local trail priority is connecting English Landing Park and downtown to neighborhoods and local destinations to the north. Currently, there is no improved connection between the two. The sidewalk system is incomplete and major road facilities like 9 Highway and Bell Road lack sidewalks or adequate shoulder room for pedestrians. Correcting the lack of community connectivity and incomplete sidewalk and trail systems were major objectives of prior "Walkability" and "Safe Route to School" studies completed for Parkville.

## System Development and Maintenance Responsibilities

Future improvements to the parks and recreation system will include a partnership between the City, Platte County, neighboring communities, private development and regional partners like Mid-America Regional Council, the Army Corp of Engineers and the Platte Land Trust. Primarily the construction and maintenance of neighborhood facilities will be the responsibility of private development, while the City and County focus will be maintenance and expansion of regional facilities.

Responsibility expectations are as followings:

- Subdivisions and private development will be responsible to meet their local needs for recreation, open space, parks, and trail and sidewalk connections to the citywide and regional system. Maintenance of these private systems should be established in perpetuity through sustainable funding and oversight. Additionally, contributions to the citywide parks and open space are expected to help offset a proportional impact to the citywide needs.
- The City will be responsible for citywide facilities intended for access and use by the public at-large, including community parks and local citywide trails and sidewalks. To ensure ongoing maintenance, operations plans should be established and sustainable funding sources identified at the time of development or expansion.
- Partnerships between the City, County and other regional partners will provide for the development and long-term maintenance of regional facilities, such as major expansion of recreational facilities along the Missouri River and expansion and maintenance of regional greenways and trails.



*Participants desired to locate new amenities like soccer fields in new parkland along the river.*



*Private courtyards and playgrounds like these at The National Golf Club serve neighborhood recreation needs.*

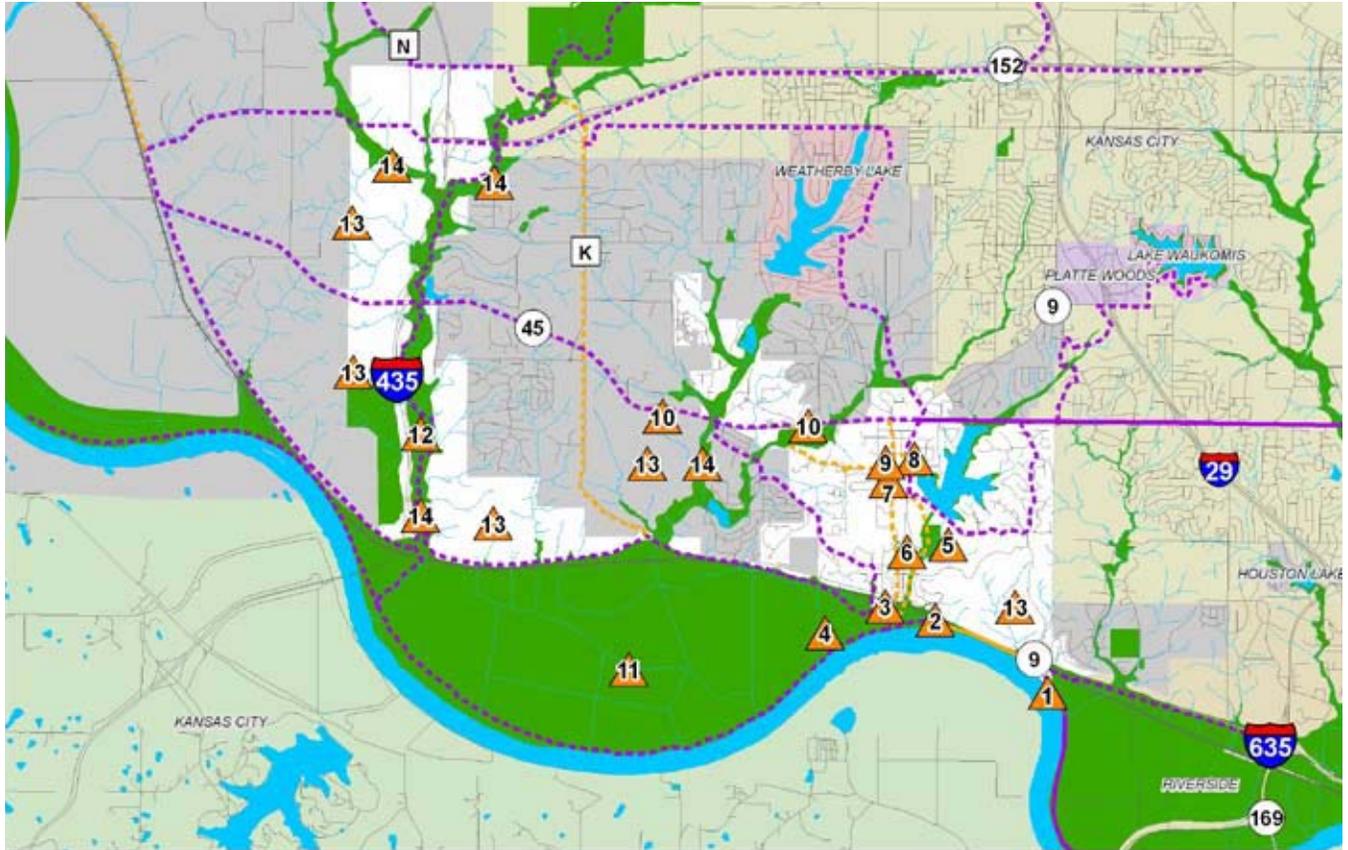


*Sidewalks, trails and scenic views such as this outlook in Riss Lake provide passive recreation opportunities.*





## Major Objective Areas



Throughout the development of the Master Plan, participants consistently identified parks and trail expansions and open space preservation among the community's most important objectives. Community objectives range in scale from major land acquisition along the Missouri River to much smaller scale projects like development of local trail segments. Regardless of scale, local and regional partnerships will be necessary to develop and maintain improvements.

The following is a brief background and summary of expectations for specific parks and open space objectives.

### Objective (1) – Connect the Missouri River Front Trail to English Landing Trail

Complete the approximately ½ mile connection between the Missouri Riverfront Trail in Riverside and the English Landing Park trail system. This will increase access to both trails and greatly expand the access to English Landing Park. This improvement is identified as the County's number one trail expansion priority.



## Objective (2) – Maintain and improve English Landing Park

The primary focus for English Landing Park is to maintain and improve on the existing facilities. Preserving the openness of the Park is valued above overcrowding by continuing to add new attractions and activities. Top new amenities include restrooms, improved drainage and additions like ball field lights.

## Objective (3) – Improve Sullivan Nature Sanctuary

Primary objectives for the recently opened Sullivan Nature Sanctuary are improvement of trails, addition of pedestrian bridges crossing Rush Creek, improvement of scenic and educational viewing areas and improved signage. It is anticipated that the sanctuary will be expanded as additional parkland is developed to the south and west. Parking, trailhead, restroom and other parks amenities on abutting parkland are also expected to greatly benefit the sanctuary.

## Objective (4) – Improve and conserve 140 acres site

Approximately 140 acres of land south and west of Sullivan Nature Sanctuary has been purchased for recreation, open space and conservation along the Missouri River. The land is predominantly owned by Platte County who envisions improvement and maintenance in coordination with the City. Development of a master plan is the first priority. Desired amenities include additional walking/biking trails, wildlife watching, conservation, flood capacity improvements, soccer and ball fields, trailheads, new boat ramp, restrooms, and parking.

## Objective (5) – Improve Parkville Nature Sanctuary

The Parkville Nature Sanctuary and abutting State conservation lands contain minimal improvements so as to retain the natural setting. Maintenance and new improvements are projected to follow this minimalist approach. Improvements envisioned include, improved trail surfaces, preservation of existing structures and improved educational signage.

## Objective (6) – Develop trails connecting to English Landing Park

Trail connections from the City's existing neighborhoods and major destinations like the Parkville Connections and the Platte County Community Center is a top community priority. A network of trails and sidewalks are projected to be necessary to create the primary connection paralleling 9 Highway.

## Objective (7) – Improve Bell Road property with surrounding development

Approximately two acres of land along Bell Road was donated to the City for use as parkland. The land is currently maintained as unimproved open space due to limited access. This land is not planned to be developed as a stand alone park but rather as part of development/ redevelopment of the land to the south and east, and may be traded for more accessible and scenic land as part of a master development plan for the area.

## Objective (8) – Improve Gateway Park

Approximately 1.25 acres of open space was donated to the City at the southeast corner of 9 Highway and 62nd Street. The parcel is projected to be landscaped and developed as a scenic amenity for passive use. No active recreation is envisioned for the site.

## Objective (9) – Expand the Platte County Community Center

According to a Platte County survey and attendance records, the community centers/aquatics facilities located at Parkville and Platte City have been used by approximately 40% of the residents in the County. The survey also found that 76% of residents were either "very supportive" (43%) or "somewhat supportive" (33%) of expanding the existing centers and studying the development of a third center to address increased growth in Platte County.

Since the Parkville center is landlocked, the first step is to study the feasibility of expansion and further improvement.

### Objective (10) – Develop pedestrian access along 45 Highway

Preliminary plans for the widening of 45 Highway include a walking/ biking trail along 45 Highway. This improvement would connect to Platte Purchase Pass to the east. With similar improvements to the west, the 45 Highway corridor will serve as a major east-west pedestrian corridor.

### Objective (11) – Acquire and preserve the Missouri River bottoms

Limited access and location in the floodplain and floodway make the Missouri River bottoms undesirable for development. Overwhelming community sentiment was to preserve the flood capacity of the bottoms, preserve opens space, wetlands and woodlands, and develop regional trails and recreational amenities. The resulting parkland, conservation land and open space is envisioned to be among the regions largest recreation attractions and to play a significant role in Parkville's economic sustainability.

### Objective (12) – Develop a Brush Creek Trail

Develop a trail paralleling Brush Creek connecting the Missouri River bottoms to Tiffany Springs Park along a scenic creek greenway. Connections along the corridor would provide regional recreation access to local neighborhoods and development in the area.

### Objective (13) – Improve new development with local parks and open space amenities

New and existing development is expected to meet localized demand for parks and recreation amenities like playgrounds, neighborhood pools and local trails. These improvements are required to meeting neighborhood and development district needs while the City focuses on communitywide needs.

### Objective (14) – Preserve greenways along creek and stream corridors

Preservation along creeks and streams is envisioned to serve multiple private and public purposes including storm water management and development of local greenway and trail corridors.



*A top priority identified by residents during the planning process is the need to improve connections to the Missouri River, including the desire for a new boat ramp.*

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

**Goal:** Provide parks, open space, recreation uses and unique intimate spaces to enhance public health and safety and for the visual enjoyment of residents and visitors.

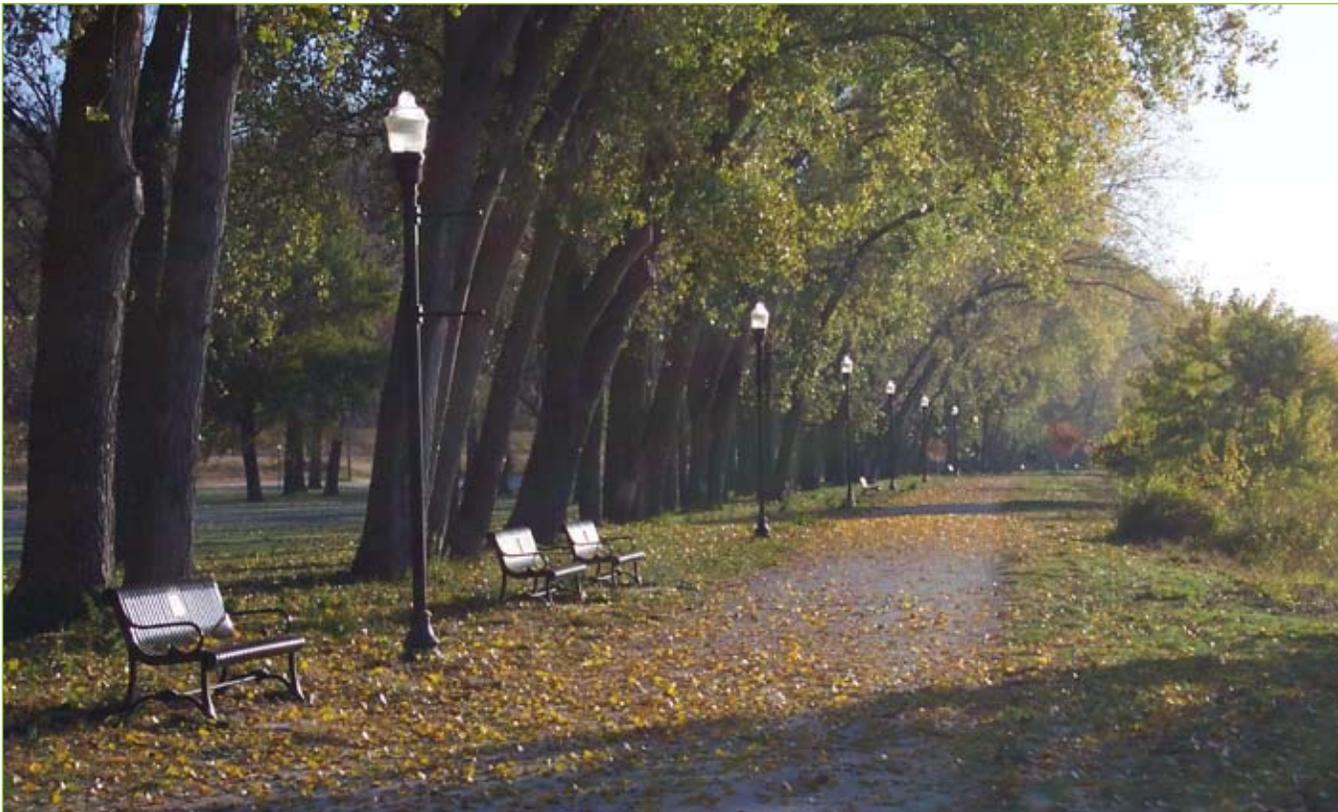
**Policy:** Expand and enhance parks, recreation and open spaces throughout Parkville.

**Policy:** Provide quality public spaces to encourage social interaction and to foster a distinct “sense of place” that is memorable and reinforces the character of the community.

**Policy:** Provide amenities such as walkways, plazas, seating, recreational facilities, gazebos or other similar shelters, pedestrian scale lighting or other similar features for the use and enjoyment of residents, employees, visitors and the community at large.

### Implementation Actions:

- Expand the parks and open space system along the Missouri River corridor.
- Implement sidewalk and trail improvements throughout the city including implementation of the **Parkville Parks Master Plan (P3)**, **Platte County Parks System Master Plan**, **Northland Trails Vision Plan**, and the **MetroGreen Plan** as they apply to Parkville.
- Partner with Platte County to acquire, construct and maintain new parks, open space and trails.
- Update the City development regulations to create standards for developed and natural parks and open space areas in new developments.
- Incorporate pedestrian and civic amenities in design guidelines and new development projects.



*Parks and civic spaces should be both visible and accessible to all residents. These areas should not be secluded behind development.*

## Open Space Design Expectations

**Intent:** The Open Space policies relate to any public or private land reserved for active and passive parklands, trails, recreation uses, environmentally sensitive areas, natural resources, or any other lands reserved for permanent open space purposes.



*Site amenities may include public plazas with seating, water features, public art features and other pedestrian amenities.*



*Site amenities such as public courtyards or landscaped gathering places should generally be provided in neighborhoods and retail developments*



Neighborhood greens and open spaces should be visible and accessible to the public.

## Design Expectations:

The design expectations act as guidelines and provide direction as to how the goals and policy statements may be achieved. Expectations use the term “should” to denote that they are considered pertinent to achieving the stated intent but allow discretion based on site and project conditions.



- A neighborhood “green”/park/plaza should be a focal point within a development.
- Community spaces should be surrounded predominantly by public streets, rather than located behind buildings or on secluded remnant tracts of land.
- Where permitted, higher density uses should be clustered around common open spaces. Open space should be provided with a similar approach to serve as gathering places in lower density residential areas.
- Provide a neighborhood “green”/park in neighborhoods if located more than a quarter-mile walking distance from an existing or planned park area.
- Incorporate amenities such as walkways, plazas, seating, recreational facilities, gazebos or other similar shelters, pedestrian scale lighting or other similar features for the use and enjoyment of residents. ■