



7 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Gardner’s residents and businesses benefit from a robust system of community facilities and services. The planning process identified assets and issues related to the responsible organizations and City departments, which are highlighted in this chapter. The capacity, quality, and reliability of these facilities and services influence the identity of the City and supports opportunities for future business and residential growth.

The Community Facilities and Services Plan provides recommendations for existing and future facilities, services, and infrastructure in the Gardner planning area. As many of the service providers are not under the purview of the City, the Plan stresses collaboration and intergovernmental coordination in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals that will ensure citizens continue to be well served as demand for public services evolves.



DEVELOPMENT, PERMITTING & LICENSING PROCESSES

The Community Development Department is responsible for creating plans, administering subdivision, zoning, and property maintenance regulations, the review and issuance of construction and building permits, and coordination among City departments and outside organizations involved in the development and permitting process. The City Clerk issues liquor and cereal malt beverage licenses, while some business activities may be subject to laws administered by Johnson County and the State of Kansas. The City's multiple departments and roles can make for a complex permitting and licensing process for residents, businesses, and developers. To provide more easily navigable city services and deliver high quality customer service, the City should implement the following actions:

- Assist applicants with navigation of the licensing and development approval processes
- Coordinate all departments to provide consistent information and a high level of customer service
- Modify zoning and subdivision regulations and procedures to support physical development that reflect the vision of the community
- Regularly engage citizens to provide greater transparency and interaction with residents and businesses

FIRE & POLICE PROTECTION

GARDNER POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Gardner Police Department provides patrol operations, investigation services, and animal control for the City of Gardner. In 2012, the Department employed 25 officers and 3 civilians. According to FBI Statistics, the City of Gardner has an average of 9 fewer officers than a city of a comparable size. Nevertheless, Gardner is a safe place to work and live with a 2012 crime rate 52% lower than the State average. The Department continues to maintain a high level of service, despite the need for a new facility. The current facility, located on Main Street, has become functionally obsolete, and does not meet the needs of the Department.

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Johnson County Fire District #1 provides fire prevention, suppression and emergency services for Gardner, Edgerton, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. The District has four stations; two within Gardner, one in New Century, and one in Edgerton. These stations serve an area of approximately 100 square miles including 13 miles of I-35. In 2012, the District responded to more than 2,100 calls. This is up 2% from the previous year and up more than 240% over the past decade. Officials report that the Gardner water supply is adequate for firefighting operations.

An Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating indicates how well a community is protected in the event of a fire on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest possible score. The District has an ISO rating of 4. The District's rating is similar to neighboring fire departments. The 234 E. Park Station, in Gardner, was being remodeled in 2014 and the District plans on purchasing two new fire engines in the near future. In 3-10 years, the District plans to open a new station in the northwestern part of the district and hire additional personnel.

PUBLIC SAFETY POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare a Police Department Facilities Plan that assesses facility space needs and potential locations for a new Police Station, considering a variety of factors including response time to existing and future development areas, property cost, infrastructure improvements to support communication and responsiveness, etc, and identifies local funding options and potential grants that would pay for the new facility
- Coordinate with the local fire protection agency to locate future service facilities in areas that provide a high level of responsiveness and coverage based on anticipated future land uses and residential and employment populations
- Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they adequately address connectivity and access for emergency vehicles, and continue to involve Police Department and Fire District officials in development review and approval



EDUCATION

GARDNER-EDGERTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Gardner Edgerton School District includes a total of 11 schools, of which all but one are located in Gardner. Over the past two years, USD 231 has grown in size with the construction of two new schools—Grand Star Elementary and Trail Ridge Middle schools—and the addition of the Multipurpose Activities Center to the Gardner Edgerton High School. These new facilities were made possible by a voter-approved, 2012 Bond Issue. USD 231 continues to achieve superior state testing scores as well as consistency receiving regional and statewide recognition for excellence in education. USD 231 is committed to providing the best possible learning tools and opportunities for each and every student so greater educational success can be achieved.

In order to support the School District and maintain a high level of public education, the City should implement the following policies:

- Coordinate with the School District regarding new growth and development to ensure existing and future facilities are responsive to local demand in terms of capacity (through shared demographic projections), location (through coordinated land use planning), and access by car, bus, bicycle, and walking
- Work with the School District to develop marketing materials that highlight recent improvements in local education in order to demonstrate the positive impacts of taxpayer investment and attract new families to the community
- Work with the School District and local businesses to develop classroom or experience-based curriculum with local industries and employers
- Assist the School District with joint grant funding pursuits that meet multiple community objectives

JOHNSON COUNTY LIBRARY

Gardner is served by the Gardner Branch of the Johnson County Library. The facility has been at its current location since 2001, and received nearly 166,000 visitors in 2010. However, the Library does not plan to expand its Gardner facility. Because of its proximity to two schools, the library receives a great deal of youth traffic, especially in the afternoon. The Library serves as an important educational and community resource. Therefore, the City should support Johnson County Library through the following policies:

- Encourage coordinated after-school tutoring and technology-based programming between Johnson County Library and the Gardner-Edgerton School District
- Support the use of the library and municipal spaces for programs and services
- Coordinate with the Library to identify locational and infrastructure needs based on anticipated development and changes in demographics for various age cohorts
- Coordinate with the Library to provide a one-stop resource for residents that includes information regarding Library resources, community events, school-based programs, etc.
- Pursue joint grant funding opportunities that achieve goals for both the Library and Gardner community as a whole



LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

Early childhood education coupled with a strong public school system, serves as an attraction for young families looking to invest in Gardner. While the City does not have any institutes of higher education, Johnson County Community College is located 15 miles northeast of the City in Overland Park, and offers GED, ESL, and other adult services through its Johnson County Adult Education (JCAE) program. Mid America Nazarene University, which offers undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs, is located 10 miles from Gardner in Olathe, and the University of Kansas, located in Lawrence, is a 45-minute drive to the west. In order to create an environment that promotes life-long education and learning, the City should implement the following strategies:

- Partner with local higher educational institutions to provide satellite courses within Gardner
- Coordinate educational and technical training curriculum between local schools and local industries to prepare a skilled, job-ready work force
- Support a mentorship program that provides professional experience to students

JOHNSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

The Johnson County Fair brings thousands of visitors to Gardner every year. The week-long summer event features agricultural exhibits and contests, amusement rides, and live entertainment. The fairgrounds, which are controlled by the Johnson County Free Fair Association, include more than 26 acres, and is located just north of Downtown.

Although the annual county fair is a boon to local businesses, the fairgrounds are generally vacant for most of the year. The fairgrounds are considered a great asset to Gardner. However, its current location presents challenges in terms of site capacity, access, and impacts on surrounding uses that have developed more recently. In order to maximize the benefits that the county fair offers to the Gardner community, the City should implement the following actions:

- Improve access to the fairgrounds via bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that connects it to surrounding neighborhoods and Downtown Gardner

- Work with the Johnson County Fair Association to identify opportunities for uses of the fairgrounds that would make them more active throughout the year
- Collaborate with the Johnson County Fair Association to identify potential locations for a new fairground within the Gardner community
- As part of a potential relocation strategy, work with the Johnson County Fair Association to identify municipal funding, incentives, publicly-owned properties, outside grants, and complementary year-round uses to help offset the costs of land acquisition and fairgrounds development
- Should relocation be viewed as a viable alternative, work with the Johnson County Fair Association to create a redevelopment plan for the current fairground property, and consider marketing the property to developers through a Request For Proposals (RFP) process

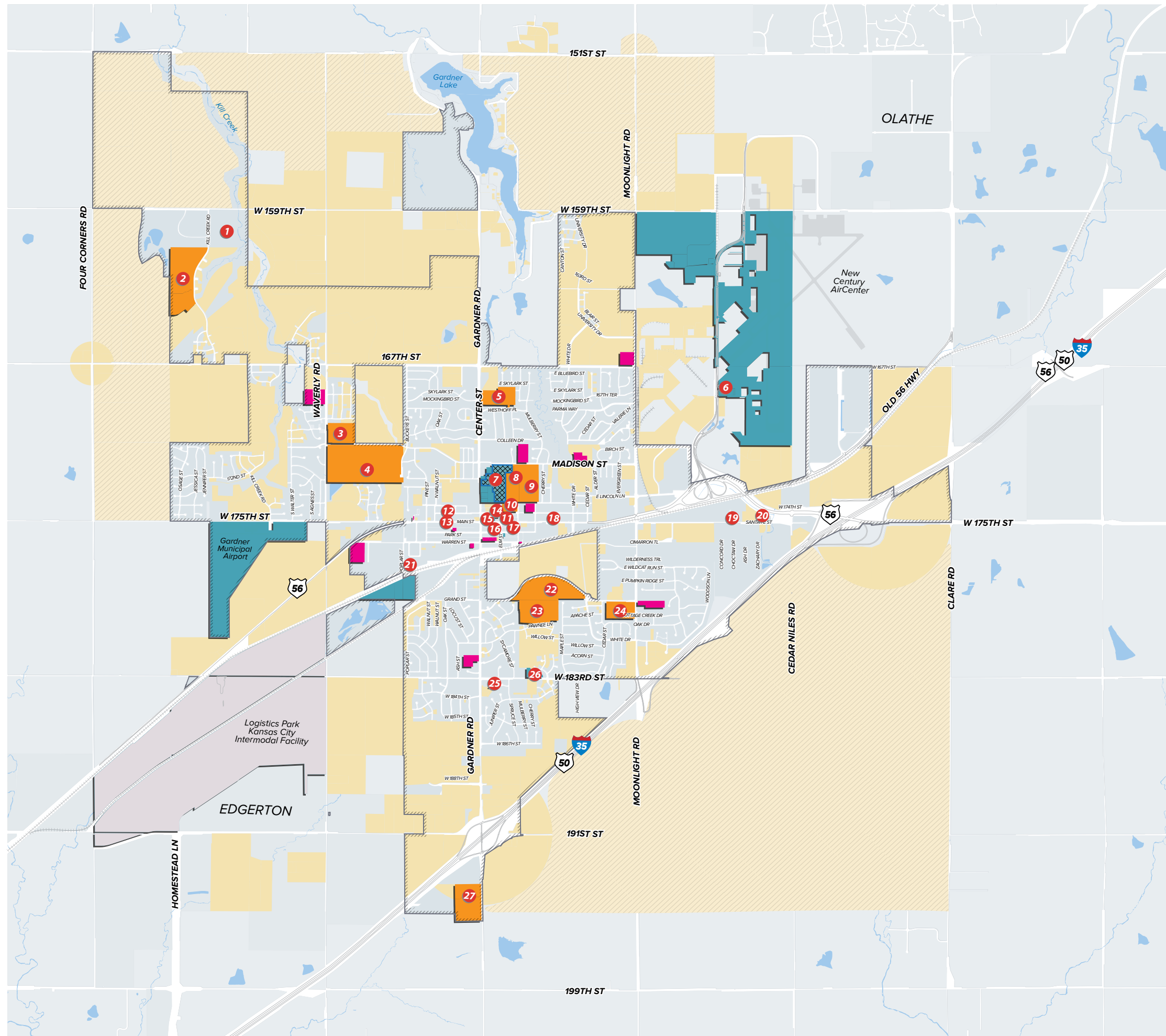
CITY OF GARDNER COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

- Public/Semi-Public
- Consider the Future of Fairgrounds
- Schools
- Religious
- Short-term Infrastructure Improvement Area
- Long-term Infrastructure Improvement Area

Key Facilities

- 1 Kill Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant
- 2 Pioneer Ridge Middle School
- 3 Madison Elementary
- 4 Gardner Edgerton High School
- 5 Sunflower Elementary
- 6 Johnson County Fire Station #121
- 7 Johnson County Fair Grounds
- 8 Gardner-Edgerton School District Office
- 9 Wheatridge Middle School
- 10 Gardner Elementary
- 11 Parks and Recreation Department Maintenance Building
- 12 Bray House
- 13 Gardner Historical Museum
- 14 Johnson County Library
- 15 City Hall
- 16 Gardner Senior Center
- 17 Johnson County Fire Station #123
- 18 Gardner Police Department (to be rebuilt or relocated)
- 19 Gardner Electric Generation
- 20 Gardner Electric Distribution
- 21 Public Works Maintenance Building
- 22 Trail Ridge Middle School
- 23 Grand Star Elementary
- 24 Moonlight Elementary
- 25 Gardner Post Office
- 26 Johnson County Fire Station #122
- 27 Nike Elementary

*Please refer to the Parks & Recreation Plan within Chapter 8: Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features for all park facilities.





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INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Gardner is responsible for street construction and maintenance, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, and stormwater management. To a limited extent, Johnson County Rural Water District No. 7, Johnson County Water District No. 1, and Johnson County Wastewater, serve incorporated and unincorporated areas with the Gardner Planning Area. This section describes the infrastructure components that the City maintains, and includes recommendations to guide future investment in accordance with the community's vision.

STREETS

The City of Gardner maintains all of Gardner's local streets. See Chapter 6: Transportation and Mobility for recommendations related to specific roadway improvement projects. In addition to these improvement projects, the City should continue to operate under a maintenance program that ensures patching, resurfacing, and reconstruction of municipal streets on a regular basis.

WATER & SEWER

The City of Gardner provides water and sewer services to most residents and businesses within City limits. Johnson County Wastewater provides wastewater services to a small portion of the east side of the community. Drinking water is pumped from Hillsdale Lake, approximately 8 miles south of the Gardner. The City's water treatment plant treats an average of 1.8 million gallons per day for use by residents and businesses, though the total capacity for the plant is 4.0 million gallons per day. The City's Kill Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant was built in 2002 and has a treatment capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day but can be expanded to treat 7.5 million gallons per day as demand increases. The facility has extra capacity to accommodate future growth in Gardner.

Wastewater infrastructure and operations are guided by the City's 2009 Wastewater Master Plan. This master plan provides recommendations regarding the replacement or upgrading of existing lines, as well as the development of new sewer infrastructure to accommodate new growth.



The following describe ways the Master Plan recommendations can best align with the recommendations and vision of this Comprehensive Plan:

- **Short-term Priority:** Invest in improving the condition and increasing the capacity of existing sewer lines. Public Works is responsible for maintaining approximately 95 miles of sewer mains and 3,500 manholes. Generally, the life expectancy for sewer lines is 50 years. However, many lines, especially in and around the traditional center of the City, are significantly older. At the same time, several lines that extend north are adequate for current capacity, but will not be able to accommodate the demand created by new growth as illustrated in the Chapter 5: Land Use Plan. Ensuring that the existing system can support existing development and more immediate growth opportunities should be the first priority for the City.
- **Mid-term Priority:** Use infrastructure investment to guide development to infill opportunities and new growth areas in the northern and western portions of the community. North of Main Street, there are several areas where community development can close a gap between existing neighborhoods, or where new development can easily tie into existing infrastructure. The City has recently invested in infrastructure in the northwestern portion of the planning area, and upgrades to existing lines as described in the Wastewater Master Plan will strengthen the feasibility of local development. These infill and new growth areas represent the greatest opportunities to generate return on municipal infrastructure investment.
- **Long-term Priority:** Consider the feasibility of infrastructure expansion to the south and east of the I-35 corridor. Long-term growth areas south and east of I-35 represent the opportunity for large-scale development on land with few constraints. However, as described in Chapter 5: Land Use Plan, the development potential of this area has yet to be determined given advantages in other portions of the community, and the market for specific types of uses is unknown at this point in time. Therefore, prior to making substantial investments in infrastructure and services to this area, the City should consider its market potential for development and prepare an analysis weighing the costs of additional infrastructure against future revenue potential and other community benefits.