



8 PARKS, OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Parks and open space areas that feature recreational and environmental amenities are a key contributor to the high quality of life in Gardner. The City's well-maintained park system provides recreational activities throughout Gardner, while the Gardner Greenway and KCPL Wetland Park give residents an opportunity to interact with nature. A robust network of parks, open space areas, and natural areas is one of the key components for the overall vision of Gardner.

The Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features Plan includes recommendations aimed at achieving the local vision while building upon the City's existing plans. These plans include the 2009 Park System Master Plan Update, Quail Meadows Neighborhood Park Concept Plan, Kill Creek Trail Master Plan, and Regional Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for 2013-2018. Although new recommendations and policies are established as part of this Comprehensive Plan, previously adopted plans should be referenced for additional detail regarding specific capital projects, programming, and implementation strategies.



GARDNER PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 22 facilities including community parks, neighborhood parks, multi-use trails, and greenways. The Department also maintains joint-use agreements with local schools which allows for expanded recreational programming.

2009 PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

The 2009 Park System Master Plan presents seven goals that aim to increase the amount of parkland and trails. Since the adoption of the plan, the City has extended its bicycle/pedestrian path network to include parts of Moonlight Road, 183rd Street, and Grand Street as side paths. The plan also provides a matrix of priority projects, which includes initial cost estimates.

Key Park System Master Plan Recommendations

Park Service Standards

In its 2009 Park System Master Plan update, the Department recommends a park acreage level of service (LOS) of 12 acres per 1000 residents. Based on the Plan's 2020 population estimates, the City would need to develop an average of 20.5 acres per year to meet projected parkland needs.



Neighborhood & Community Park Standards

Gardner currently has 6 neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks have a service area of ¼ to ½ mile. While current neighborhood parks range in size, the 2009 Park System Master Plan recommends future parks to be approximately 5 acres in size. Community parks are larger than neighborhoods parks, having a 1-mile service area. The 2009 Park System Master Plan recommends them to be between 20 and 50 acres, with an additional 40 acres for parks that include a sports complex.

Greenways & Trails

Gardner has several miles of greenways and shared use paths throughout the City that represent consistent progress in fulfilling the vision of the 2009 Park System Master Plan. The Plan includes Trail System Design Guidelines that are intended to establish safe and consistent trail design for pedestrian, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

Community Center

While the City of Gardner has a Senior Citizen's Building that hosts a variety of senior activities, it does not have a facility that meets the needs of the general community. The Master Plan recommends a feasibility study to analyze the best location, amenities, funding, and maintenance and operational costs for a new facility. The Master Plan estimates that a new community center would require at least 90,000 square feet at a cost of \$17-25 million.



Master Plan Implementation & Update Recommendations

The 2009 Park System Master Plan is a powerful tool to advance the City's vision of a community sprinkled with parks and connected by a network of greenways and trails. In order to further the goals of the Park System Master Plan, the City should consider the following actions:

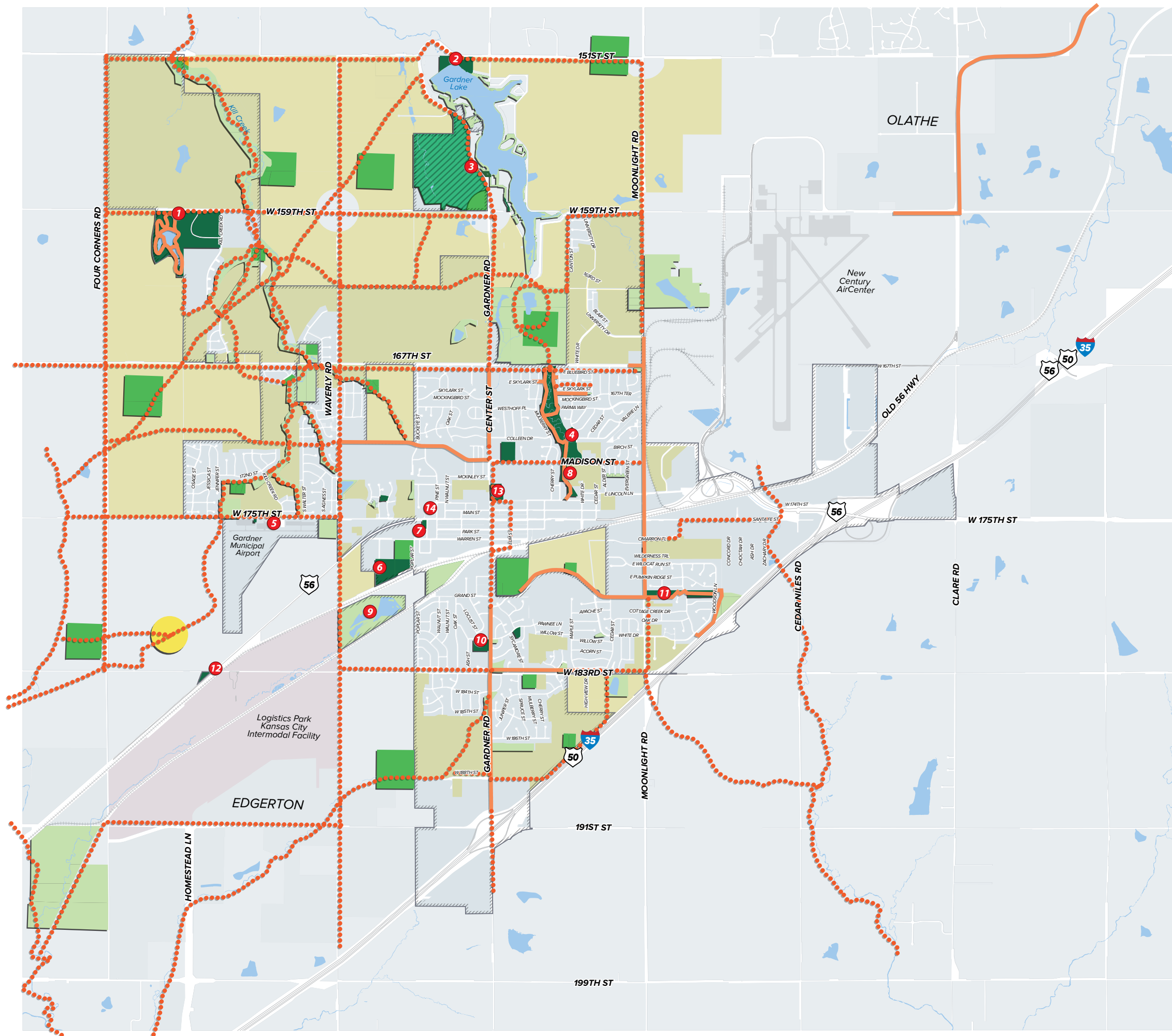
- Continue to implement the 2009 Park System Master Plan, acquiring additional parkland and installing new recreational facilities wherever feasible
- Update the 2009 Park System Master Plan to reflect its accomplishments and adjust the parkland service needs to reflect more recent population growth trends
- Identify funding sources for future park expansion, maintenance, and operations
- Budget within its CIP for the acquisition and construction of new greenway rights-of-way; this includes utilizing the right-of-way as outlined in the Park System Master Plan and prioritizing segments that link parks and civic facilities
- Create a strategy to address the Gardner Golf Course, the operating lease of which expires in 2018; the course is dated and may have the potential for other uses when the operating agreement ends
- Ensure that all residential areas are adequately served by neighborhood and community parks through easements or subdivision regulations that require dedicated and attractive open spaces
- Maintain the joint use agreements with the Gardner-Edgerton School District to provide additional recreational facilities for residents
- Include contingencies for flood clean up and remediation within the Parks and Recreation Department operations and maintenance budget, as many existing and future parks are developed within flood plains

CITY OF GARDNER PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

- Potential Park Locations
- Parks & Recreation
- Open Space
- Golf Course Future Unknown
- Potential Historic Site/Park
- New Residential Growth Areas
- Future Trail
- Existing Trail

Key Facilities

- 1 Celebration Park
- 2 Gardner Lake Park
- 3 Gardner Golf Course
- 4 Winwood Park
- 5 Gardner Municipal Airport Park
- 6 Westside Park
- 7 Meadowbrook Park
- 8 Brookside Park
- 9 KCP&L Wetland Park
- 10 Veterans Park
- 11 Stone Creek Park
- 12 Gardner Junction Park
- 13 Cornerstone Park & Gardner Aquatic Center
- 14 Circle Park





ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

In addition to its many parks and recreational amenities, the City of Gardner has several natural areas that provide biological diversity, local character, and educational opportunities. Areas such as Gardner Lake, Kill Creek, and Big Bull Creek contribute to the health and wellness of the community. The Comprehensive Plan stresses the importance of preserving and improving the City's environmental features, ensuring they are available to the community for years to come.

GARDNER LAKE

Gardner Lake is a 125-acre lake located in the northern portion of the City that provides opportunities for boating and fishing. While the City of Gardner owns the Lake, the majority of the surrounding land consists of privately-owned residential property in unincorporated Johnson County. The public can access the lake via Gardner Lake Park, located at the north end of the lake. In order to take full advantage of this public amenity, the City should implement the following strategies:

- Work with property owners to establish and preserve view corridors and periodic public look-out points
- To the extent possible, utilize publicly-owned rights-of-way and properties to enhance multi-modal access to the Gardner Lake area through trails, open spaces, and other amenities

TREE COVER

Trees play a significant role in the character of Gardner and its planning area. The importance of trees is evident in the City's logo, which shows seven trees lining a dividing trail. Gardner's older neighborhoods enjoy mature trees that provide ample shade and reinforce the City's identity as a place with a connection to the natural environment. Newer residential neighborhoods have trees that are growing into maturity, while the Landscape Ordinance ensures that additional trees will be planted in future developments. In order to preserve and increase the tree canopy, the City should implement the following actions:

- Continue to enforce the Gardner Landscape Ordinance to require property owners to maintain and replace trees
- Amend local landscape regulations to allow for or require tree species that are resilient to anticipated climate change
- Encourage cluster development in new growth areas that preserves tree stands as part of a development proposal
- As development and redevelopment occurs, incrementally bury overhead utility lines to avoid potential conflicts with trees as they grow and mature



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & FLOOD MITIGATION

Effective stormwater management techniques improve water quality and mitigate flood hazards that can result in loss of property and life. This is especially important given Gardner's history, as flooding, excessive rain, and high winds in 2010 resulted in a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for Johnson County, and severe storms and 1998 flood event resulted in a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Flood Hazards & Mitigation

In 2012, three counties, including Johnson County, produced the Regional L Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2013-2018. The plan assessed the flood risks of each county and determined that Johnson County is highly likely to experience a flood event of critical severity, with the potential to shutdown critical facilities and cause damage to 25-50% of property. General flood mitigation recommendations include acquiring and/or demolishing flood prone properties, eliminating low-water crossings, and assuming more restrictive floodplain requirements than mandated by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Actions specific to Gardner include conducting a Storm Watershed Master Plan Study by 2019, completion of flood control projects, and continued regulatory compliance of NFIP requirements.

Water Quality

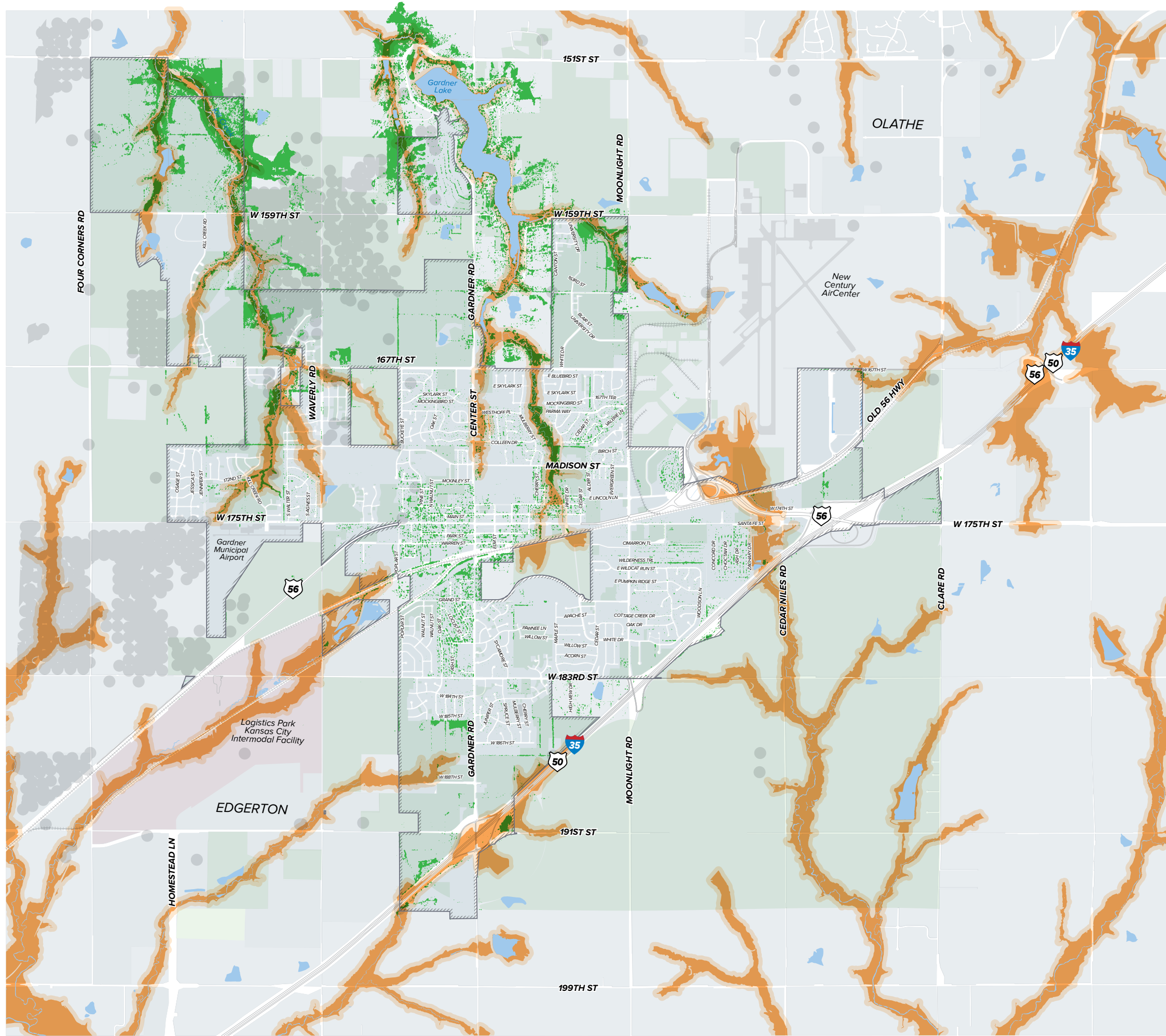
The quality of the water system in and around Gardner greatly affects the natural environment and public health. The City has taken steps to increase water quality as a Phase II National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) City. This classification, designated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, seeks to comply with the National Drinking Water Regulations of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act by requiring cities to set maximum contaminant levels and treatment techniques for 69 contaminants, as well as regularly and consistently monitor levels of each contaminant.

Even with the NPDES designation, the City's streams, ponds, Gardner Lake, and the Hillsdale Reservoir, which supplies water for the City, are all impacted by potential pollutants from stormwater runoff and erosion. While areas like the KCPL Wetland Park contribute to improved water quality, additional protective measures can be taken throughout the City. In addition, the use of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) not only serves to improve water quality, but also decreases flooding risks by increasing the amount of permeable area and allow for increased groundwater filtration.






Stormwater & Flood Mitigation Recommendations

In order to provide effective stormwater management and flood mitigation, as well as maintain and improve water quality in and around Gardner, the City should implement the following action and strategies:

- Expand current buffer requirements for riparian streams to include all bodies of water, and review minimum buffering requirements to ensure water resources are adequately protected from runoff and pollution
- Require on-site stormwater detention and management to reduce the amount of potentially contaminated runoff through increased permeability and filtration
- Work with property owners and developers to integrate BMPs and green infrastructure strategies, including green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and rainwater harvesting and re-use
- Encourage or require the integration of conservation design principles for new development in order to minimize development on portions of a site with critical natural resources or waterways
- Require the preservation of greenway corridors that follow Kill Creek and other floodways, and serve as natural flood mitigation infrastructure and ecological corridors



CITY OF GARDNER ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES PLAN

-  Floodplain
-  Potential Greenway/Floodplain Protection Zone
-  Oil Wells (Active & Planned)
-  Tree Canopy
-  Future Development Areas