



BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN & TRANSIT MOBILITY

Bicycle, pedestrian and transit mobility are important components to Gardner's transportation network. They expand local and regional mobility for younger residents, and provide opportunities for active transportation and recreation. This section includes a series of recommendations and strategies aimed at creating as safe and efficient system of transportation alternatives.

COMPLETE STREETS

"Complete Streets" are roadways designed to provide access and mobility for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation, regardless of age or ability. A complete streets policy formalizes a community's intent to plan, design, operate, and maintain roadways so they safely accommodate all users. Complete streets elements vary based on the surrounding context, but may include sidewalks, bicycle facilities, accessibility improvements, safe and convenient pedestrian crossings, transit enhancements, and more.

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

The Johnson County Transit Department operates the "JO," a bus system with service that connects Gardner to other communities throughout the county. Route 670 serves Gardner, providing connections from New Century to the Olathe Great Mall, Oak Park Mall, Downtown Kansas City, and Crown Center/Union Station. The City of Gardner currently offers no local transit service.

Between 2013 and 2018, Gardner's median age is expected to increase by 5%, faster than the expected rate in Johnson County of 3%. In many communities throughout the United States, aging residents are seeking alternatives to large single family homes and reliance on private transportation. At the same time, Gardner is seeking greater visibility for events and employment. While public transit is not currently a significant part of the transportation landscape in Gardner, there are several actions the City can take to prepare for these emerging trends.

Specific recommendations include:

- Coordinate with local industry to assess the viability of, and implement a local employer-subsidized transit circulator that would provide an alternative for staff
- Coordinate with the Johnson County Transit department to implement special transit services for the Johnson County Fair and other events and festivals in Gardner that may attract visitors from other portions of the county or region
- As senior housing is developed, coordinate with facility managers to implement resident shuttle services that would provide access to local goods and services, community facilities, and special events
- Encourage major commercial and employment centers to provide designated shuttle drop-off and loading areas that could be used in the interim as landscape areas, plazas, or other on-site amenities



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Gardner has established the foundation of community-wide trail network through investment in multi-use facilities on several corridors, including Moonlight Road, Madison Street, Center Street, Grand Street, and 183rd Street. Off street paths, such as the Gardner Greenway, utilize floodplains as trail corridors and create links to surrounding neighborhoods, schools and parks. Generally, sidewalks are provided throughout the community, though traditional neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown do not have pedestrian infrastructure.

Newer subdivisions provide sidewalks that connect to sidewalks or trails along collectors and arterials. However, the most significant barrier to pedestrian mobility in Gardner is the lack of safe opportunities to cross collectors and arterials. In some instances, crosswalks are provided approximately every ½-mile, resulting in significant detours that often encourage jaywalking.

The 2009 Gardner Park System Master Plan recommends several new miles of multi-use trails. These trails include dedicated off-street facilities and were recommended based on their ability to enhance connectivity between parks, neighborhoods, schools, and commercial centers. The recommendations of the Master Plan are reflected in this Comprehensive Plan, and should continue to guide investment in future trails.






Safe Routes to School

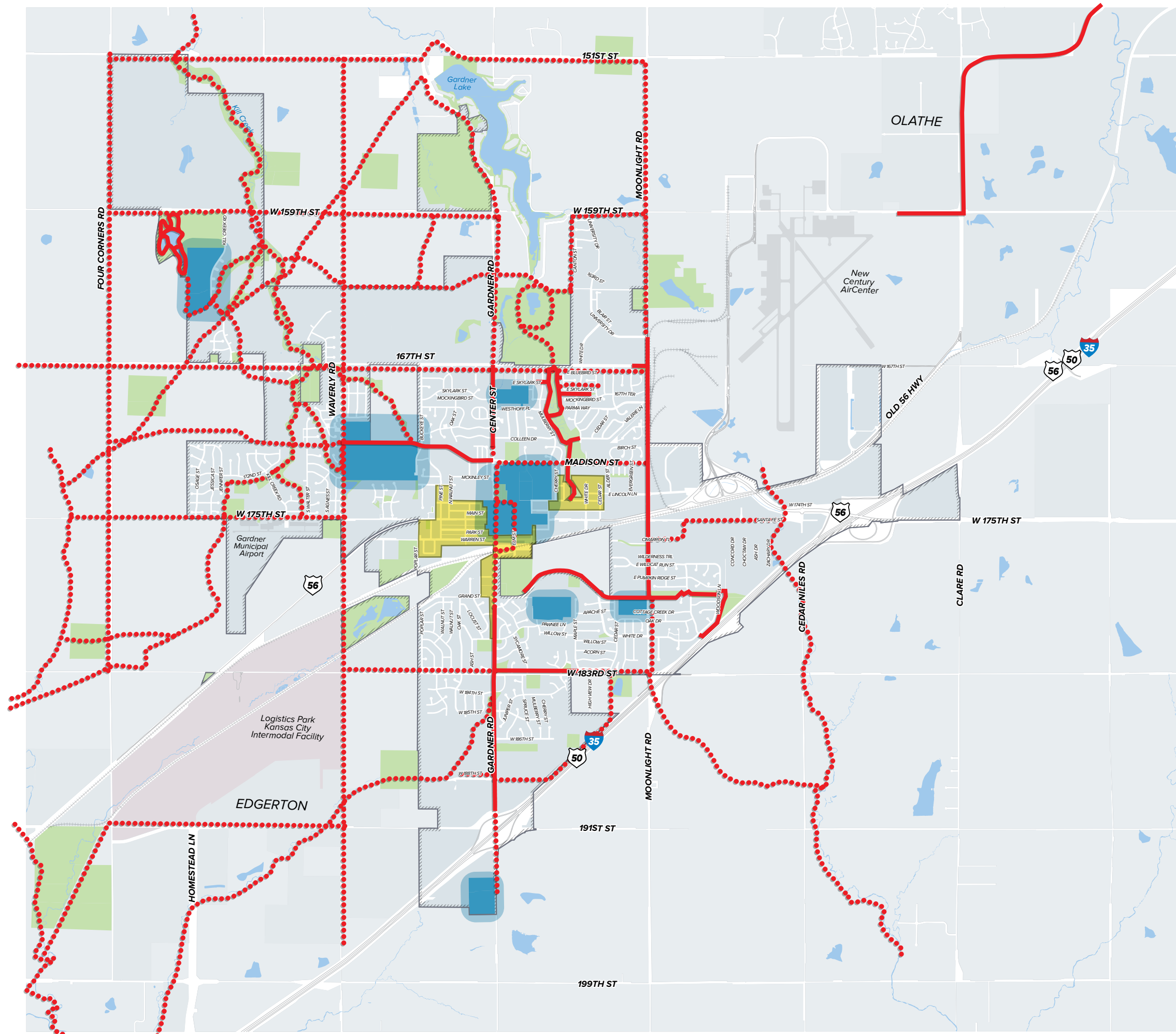
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs seek to promote the health and well-being of children by walking and bicycling to school. SRTS programs involve a combination of education, planning, and infrastructure improvements to provide safe walking and bicycling conditions around neighborhood schools.

The following recommendations should be implemented by the City in order to support the development of a comprehensive trail and pedestrian network as envisioned by the Park System Master Plan, and ensure that Gardner citizens enjoy a high level safety, comfort, and fully-accessible mobility:

- Adopt a local Complete Streets policy that highlights the importance of multi-modal transportation corridors and establishes standards for the integration of bicycle lanes, trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, and other techniques into the design of roadways
- Perform a sidewalk inventory that determines areas where no sidewalks exist, where improvements are needed to maintain the integrity of the system, and where crossings are unsafe or not accessible
- Establish a bicycle and pedestrian capital improvement program that identifies a series of anticipated projects, prioritizes improvements based on their ability to enhance community-wide connectivity and access to important community destinations, strengthens regional trail connections, and identifies potential funding sources for recommended improvements
- Work with KDOT and City departments to increase the frequency of designated crosswalks on arterial and collector streets

CITY OF GARDNER BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN

-  Future Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Sidewalk Infill Area
-  Pedestrian Area Improvements
-  Open Space, Recreation & Open Space





- Upgrade pedestrian crossings and signalization to include highly-visible roadway markings and, where appropriate, pedestrian countdown signals, vehicular warning signs, and other safety systems
- Coordinate with the Gardner-Edgerton School District to establish a Safe Routes to School program in order to enhance youth pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods
- Amend zoning regulations to require well-marked on-site pedestrian connections between the public sidewalk and building access for non-residential development
- Amend zoning regulations to require on-site bicycle parking as a percentage of the overall on-site parking requirement for non-residential development
- Continue to require trail connections through residential areas and floodplains as a component of new neighborhood development
- Utilize subdivision regulations and development agreements to require developers to install sidewalks on a block-by-block basis and within a reasonable period of time after the beginning of development, rather than on a lot-by-lot basis as incremental development occurs

AIR & RAIL MOBILITY

Gardner benefits from regional and interstate rail and air access provided by the Gardner Municipal Airport, New Century AirCenter, and Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) rail corridor. The Gardner Municipal Airport is owned and operated by the City. The facility is used primarily for small private aircraft, and lacks any real potential as an anchor for significant economic development. The New Century AirCenter is operated by the Johnson County Airport Commission, and is the centerpiece of industrial development immediately west of the airport. The BNSF rail corridor bisects the community and provides access to the Logistics Park Kansas City Intermodal Facility.

Other sections in this Comprehensive Plan describe ways to capitalize on these facilities through economic development, infrastructure investment and land use policy. The following recommendations should be implemented by the City in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts of these assets:

- Coordinate with KDOT and BNSF to ensure that all at-grade rail crossings are properly signed and gated
- As development occurs on the edge of the community, monitor the need for and viability of a new grade-separated rail crossing in order to provide timely emergency responsiveness and access to the I-35 corridor
- Work with the Johnson County Airport Commission to coordinate regarding planned airport runway or facility improvements, and assess the potential for spin-off development and its impact on municipal infrastructure and services



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

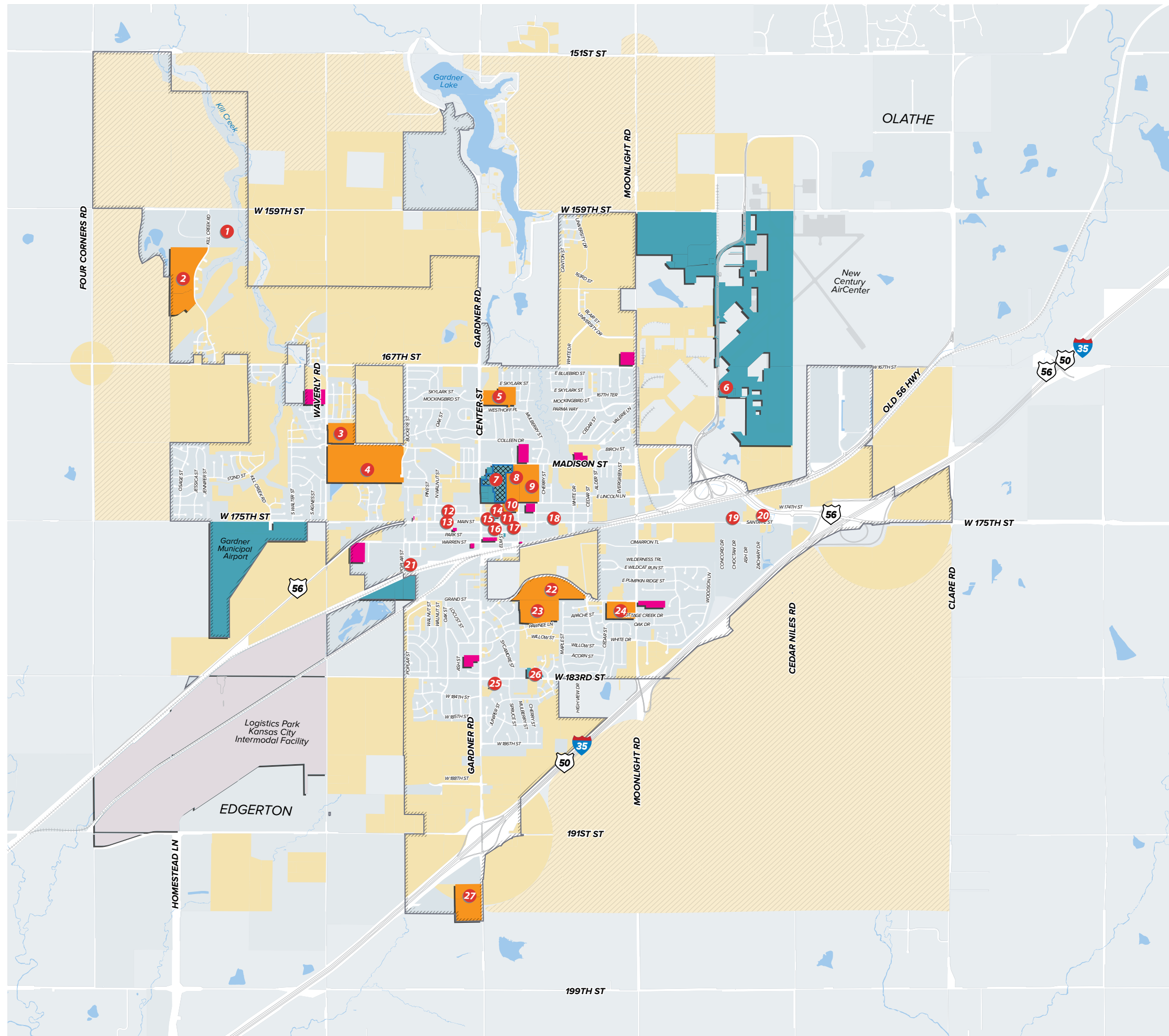
CITY OF GARDNER COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

- 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.





Mark, Flickr

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.



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:

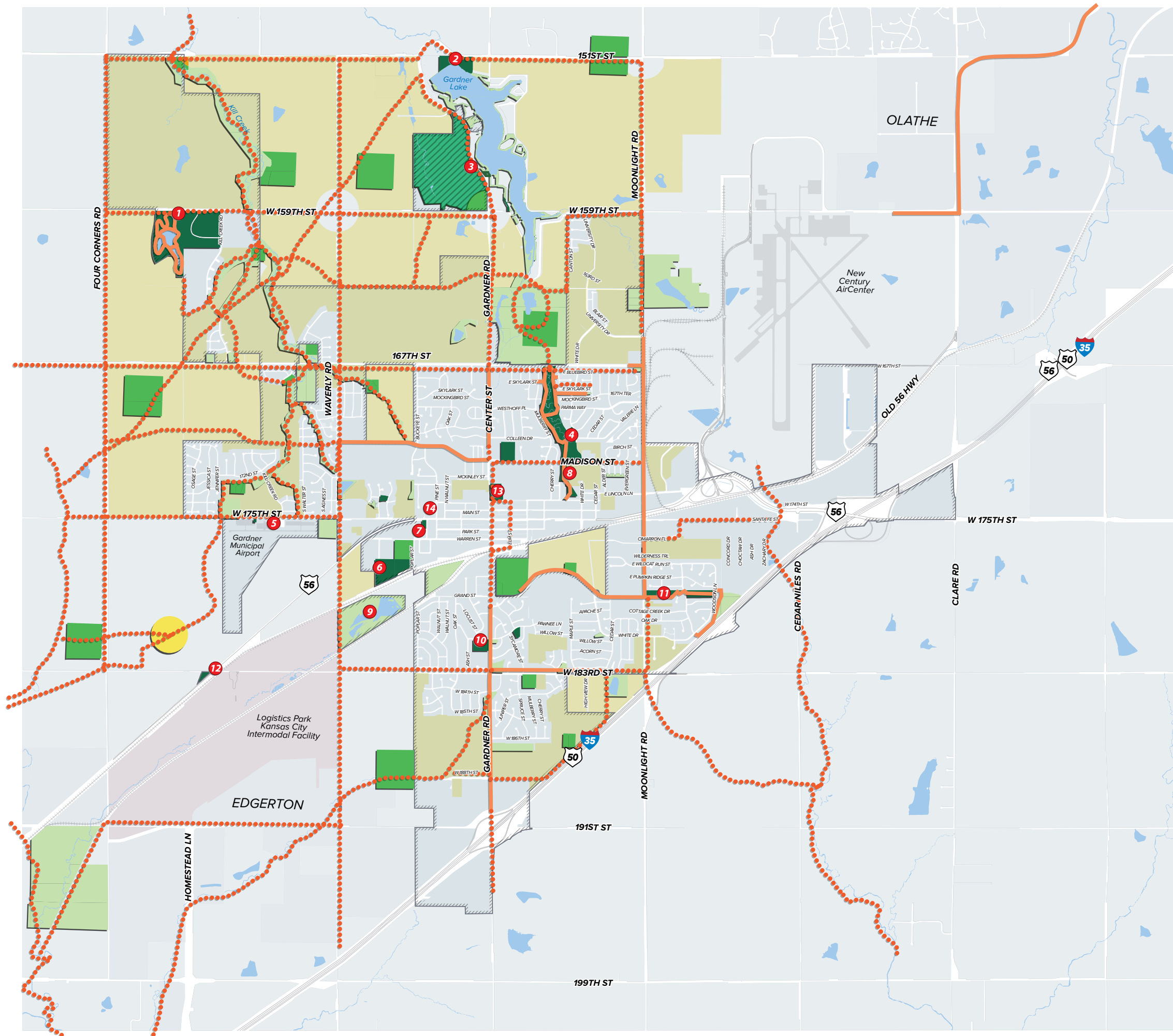
- Continue to implement the 2009 Park System Master Plan, acquiring additional parkland and installing new recreational facilities wherever feasible
- Update the 2009 Park System Master Plan to reflect its accomplishments and adjust the parkland service needs to reflect more recent population growth 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

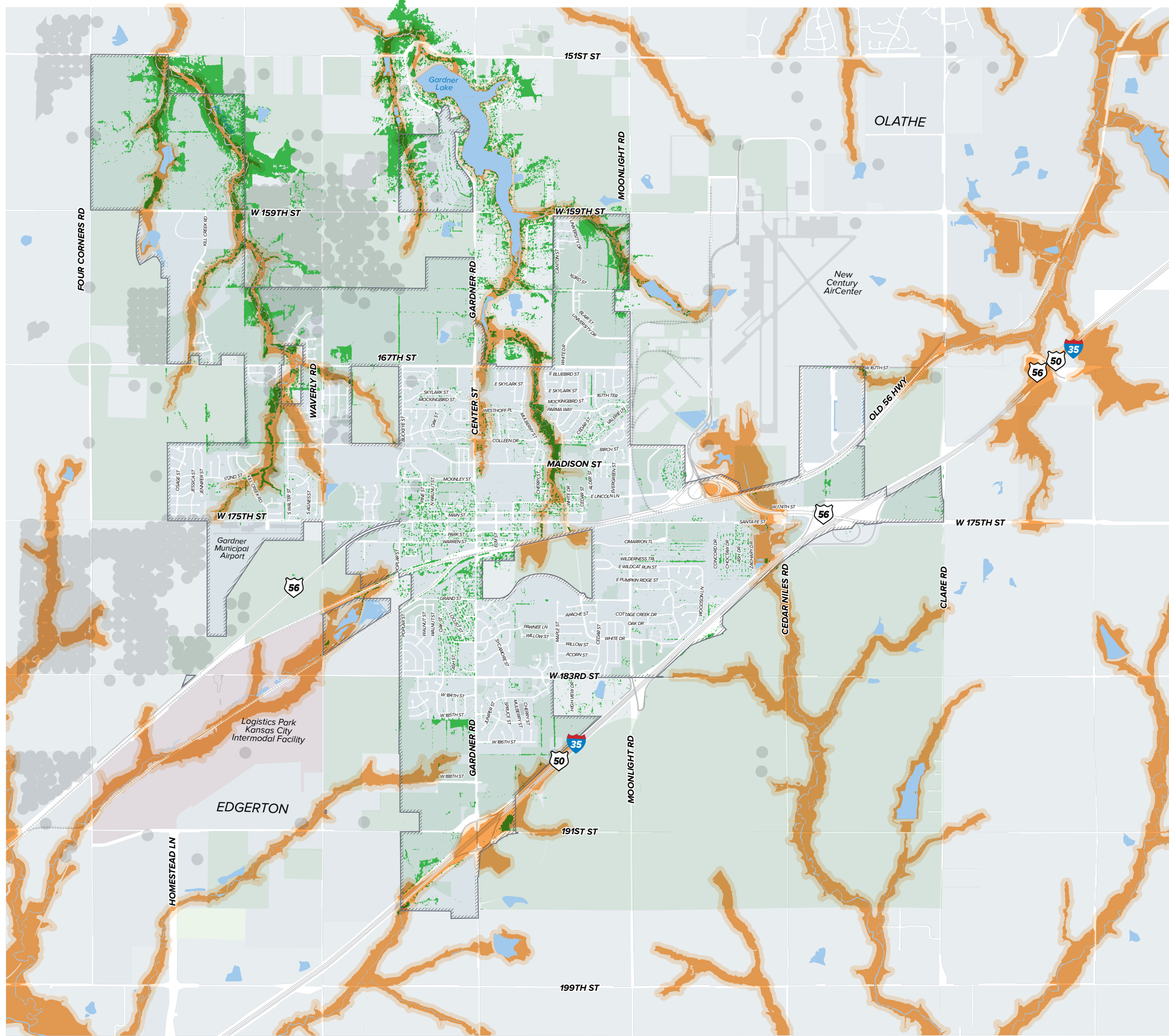
The quality of the water system in and around Gardner greatly affects the natural environment and public health. The City has taken steps to increase water quality as a Phase II National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) City. This classification, designated by the Kansas Department of Health 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



IMAGE & IDENTITY

The long-term success of Gardner will be dependent upon the quality of life that it provides for residents and businesses. Local image and identity play a significant role in this by projecting a reputation to the rest of the region that will encourage people to invest in the community, supporting a local aesthetic that is attractive and unique to Gardner, and instilling pride for citizens that fosters a high level of maintenance. Creating this sense of image and identity is a responsibility that falls on City government, residents, businesses, and all local stakeholders. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations that aim to strengthen and celebrate the image of the City.



COMMUNITY CULTURE & HISTORY

Gardner's culture, defined by beliefs, customs, and history contributes to the overall identity of the City. Throughout the Comprehensive Plan process, a noted asset of Gardner is its family-oriented community feel. This is due largely to its history and strong faith-based community as well as through local events, art, and entertainment that demonstrate the community's connection to its past.

GARDNER HISTORICAL MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Located along Main Street in Downtown, the Gardner Historical Museum provides a glimpse into the City's past. Visitors can visit the Museum for free, view monthly rotating exhibits and learn about the founding of Gardner along the confluence of the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. The Museum also owns the historical Bray House, which it uses as an administrative, archive, and research facility. In order to take advantage of Gardner's history and integrate it into the City's identity, the City should work with the Gardner Historical Society to implement the following:

- Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to create a community open space and/or a prominent place marker that designates the point at which the Santa Fe Trail divides
- Install trail markers and informational placards throughout the City that delineate the original path of the Santa Fe Trail
- Commission public art installations that follow the theme "Where the Trails Divide"

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

Gardner's religious institutions serve as vital community resources, providing neighborhood gathering space, social networks, and support. Several churches have expressed interest in increasing their impact on the community through social service assistance. In order to support the culture of faith and community service, the City should consider the following actions:

- Engage church leaders as a valuable resource to inform the City about public issues and concerns
- Support collaboration among religious institutions and other local service providers in terms of shared facilities, programs, and activities



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The availability of visual and performing arts and entertainment venues not only provide all-age activities, but also serve as a reflection of a City's culture, enhancing the development of creativity and interpretive thinking. Gardner, although well-served with community amenities, is lacking in cultural arts facilities and entertainment options. The City should consider implementing the following actions to expand the arts and entertainment culture in Gardner:

- Use City Hall and other public facilities as visual art galleries and performance venues
- Assess the viability of integrating a performing arts center within a future Parks and Recreation Department community center
- Identify opportunities to support public art through public/private partnerships, including installations as a part of new development, donations or grants for the purchase of art, and sponsored rotating collections
- Partner with the Gardner-Edgerton School District to display student art throughout the community

STREETSCAPE & BUILT FORM

There are several portions of Gardner where the character of the built environment reflects the traditional heritage of the community. This is the result of efforts to preserve important structures and invest in the public realm through streetscape and civic spaces. The design of private development – building placement, materials, architectural massing and detail, landscaping, and signage – can be used to create a sense of enclosure for the public realm, and can create an attractive and inviting environment. Streetscape elements such as lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and sidewalk design can be used to create a unique sense of place. In order to maximize the benefits of investment in private development and public spaces, the City should implement the following actions:

- Continue to implement the Gardner Design Standards through development review and approval
- Establish a comprehensive streetscape master plan that identifies priority streetscape corridors, illustrates desired streetscape elements, includes standards for design and installation, and considers opportunities to collaborate with private development to extend the streetscape beyond the public realm. This streetscape master plan should include recommendations and illustrations related to typical streetscape elements that are appropriate for various environments, civic spaces, gateways, and wayfinding

- Install gateways at prominent entry points to Gardner. The I-35 interchanges and several at-grade streets represent the primary means of entry into Gardner. The City should commission the design and installation of substantial gateway markers and entry points from US 56 and Gardner Road, while more modest gateway elements could announce entry
- Use streetscape design as a way to call attention to Gardner's varying commercial environments. Gardner's commercial areas vary in terms of function, level of visibility, and intended character. For example, the US-56/I-35 interchange area is auto-oriented and could include large areas of landscaping and decorative detention. However, the Downtown is pedestrian-oriented and would benefit from safe sidewalk zones, buffers from vehicular traffic, sidewalk café seating and street furniture that encourages strolling and staying. The City should utilize streetscape to call attention to and differentiate these important areas. Contrasting lighting elements, landscaping, signage, and hardscape can create this effect
- Place attractive wayfinding signs in commercial areas and along major corridors. Signs should be located in key commercial locations in the City, such as Main Street, as well as along arterial corridors to direct motorists and pedestrians to destinations such as City Hall, the Johnson County Fairgrounds, and Celebration Park. The scale of the signs should be appropriately sized based on location, but all should have a similar design to unify and define the City's brand and identity



EVENTS & PROMOTION

BRANDING & MARKETING

A strong and identifiable brand will be the basis for the successful promotion of Gardner. The City's logo and motto, "Where the trails divide," distinguishes it from surrounding communities. In addition to the overall Gardner brand, specific areas throughout the City can benefit from having a unique identity. Through strategic marketing efforts and partnerships, the City's brand can be used to capture local and regional audiences, as well as more specific target markets.

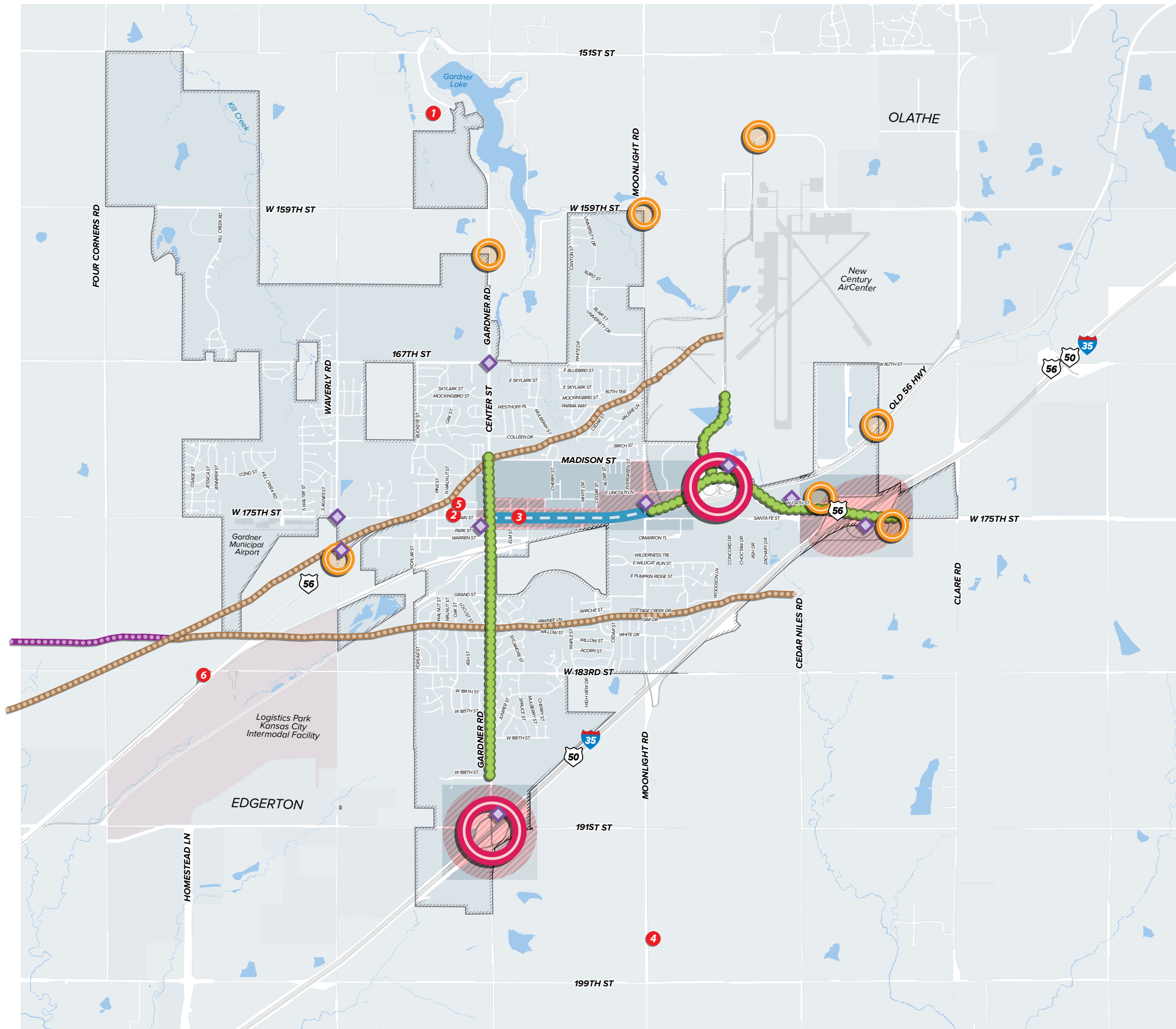
In order to promote Gardner and its unique commercial areas, industrial districts, and neighborhoods, the City should implement the following actions:

- Incorporate the Gardner logo and motto in all City-related media, promotional material, and signage to further strengthen the City's brand, making it highly recognizable and strongly tied to the City
- Work with the Gardner Area Chamber of Commerce and the Southwest Johnson County Economic Development Corporation to promote Gardner through a multi-faceted marketing strategy
- Promote Downtown Gardner businesses through a unique marketing and branding strategy
- Utilize the Johnson County Fair and other events that attract a regional audience as a way to create exposure for local history, commerce, housing, and other characteristics that may encourage future investment

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Festivals and events provide unique activities for residents and visitors while simultaneously instilling local pride. These events also strengthen the image of the City as well provide economic benefits to local businesses. Existing events include the Johnson County Fair, Festival on the Trails, and various programs through the Parks and Recreation Department and other community groups. To ensure the success of existing and future events and foster local pride in Gardner, the City should implement the following actions:

- Work with the Johnson County Fair Association to simultaneously promote the annual fair as well as the City of Gardner
- Continue to host and support community-wide events, ensuring they have adequate health and safety staff and facilities to accommodate all attendees
- Utilize existing community networks such as neighborhood associations, faith-based congregations, schools, and others to encourage unique festivals or events that celebrate Gardner's local heritage and culture
- Create a master calendar that details events throughout the community, which can be viewed online and at public facilities
- Facilitate neighborhood-based events, such as block parties
- Utilize public facilities as event venues



CITY OF GARDNER COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Streetscape Corridors
- Main Street Reconfiguration
- Character Commercial Areas
- Primary Gateway
- Secondary Gateway
- Wayfinding
- Santa Fe Trail
- Oregon Trail

Cultural & Historic Places

- 1 WPA Beach House at Gardner Lake
- 2 Herman D. Foster House/Gardner Historical Museum
- 3 William C. Harkey House
- 4 Turner Barn
- 5 Bray House
- 6 Junction Park



The term “sustainability” can have several meanings depending on local context and priorities. Generally, sustainability includes consideration of three important elements in urban development; local ecology, economic well-being, and social equity. In Gardner, the balance among these three elements is influenced by oil drilling, intermodal distribution and logistics, traditional and contemporary neighborhood development, bicycle trails and greenways, access to basic goods and services, and many other factors. As these urban development issues evolve, the City is also subject to changing climate conditions that will continue to test local infrastructure, energy systems, and consumer behavior.

This chapter highlights recommendations throughout the Comprehensive Plan that reflect sustainable practices, and introduces additional strategies aimed at ensuring Gardner’s long-term viability and attractiveness.



SUSTAINABILITY IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Throughout Chapters 4-9 of this Comprehensive Plan, there are several recommendations related to specific topics that reflect sustainable practices or policies. In fact, one of the Plan's guiding principles,—Managed Growth—speaks to several components of sustainability as it implies development that preserves the natural environment, reduces infrastructure costs, allows for non-motorized connections throughout the community, and enhances access to critical goods and services for residents. The following summary highlights sustainable practices or concepts discussed in previous chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

LAND USE

- Focus new development in areas easily served by existing infrastructure systems
- Manage new growth through the use of concentrated development patterns and conservation of natural areas
- Use cluster development and conservation design techniques to conserve natural and open space areas for passive recreation and stormwater management
- Encourage local commercial development in new growth areas that minimizes the distance between residents and day-to-day needs
- Strengthen Downtown Gardner in order to support local businesses and reuse important buildings and infrastructure
- Utilize stormwater detention basins as landscaping features
- Ensure oil extraction processes follow applicable state and federal regulations to protect the health of the natural environment

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- Provide safe and efficient non-motorized networks that reduce reliance on automobiles and increase physical activity
- Improve the safety and efficiency of transportation networks in order to reduce accidents
- Manage the development of transportation infrastructure in order to minimize cost
- Integrate green design techniques into transportation infrastructure design
- Encourage and support regional transit as an alternative for trips to communities throughout Johnson County



PARKS, OPEN SPACE & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

- Preserve and enhance the City's natural assets such as greenways, wooded areas, Gardner Lake, and the KCPL Prairie Wetland
- Enforce the Gardner Landscape Ordinance to require property owners to maintain and replace trees in order to preserve the City's tree canopy
- Encourage cluster development in order to preserve tree stands within a development site
- Require lake buffers in addition to stream corridor development minimums to allow for natural filtration of runoff before reaching bodies of water

- 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
- Prioritize land acquisition and construction of greenway corridors that follow Kill Creek and other floodways to serve as natural flood mitigation infrastructure and ecological corridors

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Ensure all residents have access to critical public services
- Maximize the efficiency of local government in order to reduce costs without compromising the quality of services
- Provide events and facilities that enable citizens to interact with one another
- Support transparent local government and opportunities for community engagement in policy making
- Ensure the safety of residents and businesses through quality police and fire protection
- Maximize the use of public properties for uses that support the local sense of community
- Ensure the on-going maintenance of existing infrastructure systems
- Expand infrastructure in a logical and cost-effective way
- Integrate green infrastructure techniques into existing and new systems



ADDITIONAL SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

As described previously, sustainable practices are included throughout the previous chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. However, there are additional topics that were raised during the planning process that are more specific, or do not fit appropriately into the discussion of one topic. The following sections include additional sustainability-related recommendation that should be implemented by the City.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Gardner has a rich agricultural heritage and is encircled by thriving farmland. This connection to local food production is an opportunity to strengthen the local economy and support healthy lifestyles. The following recommendations describe ways the City can capitalize on this characteristic of the community to create a more sustainable urban environment:

- Encourage local schools, restaurants and grocers to offer locally grown foods for purchase or consumption
- Collaborate with local farmers to reestablish a weekly Gardner Farmers Market that offers fresh local produce to residents
- Continue to support the Gardner Community Garden as a resource for education and community building opportunities
- Amend zoning regulations and work with the owners of undeveloped lots to allow neighborhood-supported urban gardens as an interim use, especially in areas surrounded by residential development or in partially built-out subdivisions.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Residential and commercial buildings account for more than 40% of all energy use in the United States. As a center for industry and distribution, Gardner has several large developments that could offer a significant environmental and cost benefit by integrating private alternative energy systems. The following recommendations describe ways the City can support local energy production in Gardner:

- Integrate alternative energy systems including solar, wind, and geothermal, into all City-owned facilities, wherever feasible, as retrofits to existing structures or as part of new construction
- Amend zoning regulations to allow appropriate solar or wind energy installations for commercial and residential development, considering potential impacts related to noise and aesthetics
- Provide information to property owners regarding the benefits of alternative energy, and maintain a list of local contractors who specialize in alternative energy installations
- Work with industrial property owners and tenants to identify grant funding for the installation of large-scale private alternative energy systems



The City of Gardner Comprehensive Plan sets the course for growth and development for the next 15 to 20 years. This chapter provides the framework for implementing the vision set forth in the Plan. It outlines the next steps to the successful execution and application of the Plan's goals, objectives, and policy recommendations, and identifies potential funding sources to assist in implementation.

This chapter is arranged in subsections that aim to help staff and leaders to prioritize actions that will raise the likelihood of long-term implementation. The subsections include:

- Ongoing tasks
- Short-term tasks (0-3 years)
- Medium-term tasks (3-5 years)
- Long-term tasks (5+ years)

Recommendations have been placed into these categories based on several factors, including anticipated level of effort, capital resources required, coordination or collaboration required, the need for a recommendation to be completed to enable other things to be implemented, and others. While the actual time of implementation may vary depending on available funding, opportunities for improvement or redevelopment, etc., this chapter should be used as a general guide when establishing local priorities.



ONGOING TASKS

Ongoing tasks include those that do not have a set-time frame, but should be implemented on a continuous basis. They are generally low-cost, and administrative in nature. More importantly, they are critical to the sustained advancement of other actions, policies, and strategies within the Comprehensive Plan.

USE THE PLAN DAILY

The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the official policy guide for land use and development, and be used on a day-to-day basis to inform everyday decision making. The Plan should be adopted and hard copies and digital formats should be made available and accessible. It should be referenced by City staff, boards, and City Council to evaluate all proposals and projects. Finally, the Community Development Department should meet with all department heads for a debriefing of the Plan, highlighting the significance of its contents and its application.

REVIEW THE PLAN ON A REGULAR BASIS

Cities are dynamic environments and are constantly changing and evolving. As such, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and updated as needed on a regular basis to reflect the changing needs of the community. While annual updates can provide a base for systematic reviews and are required per Kansas statute (§12-747(d)), the City should initiate a comprehensive review of the Plan every three to five years. Yearly reviews and updates should coincide with the preparation of the Capital Improvement Program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year.

COORDINATE THE PLAN WITH THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Some recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan may require capital investment. To support implementation of these recommendations, the City should coordinate and align the Plan's recommendations with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Through this process, all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates are prepared, and potential funding sources are identified. The CIP should consider investments related to complete streets transportation, infrastructure, parks, and public streetscape.

MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION

The public engagement processes that shaped the Comprehensive Plan should continue well into its implementation. Consistent dialogue with residents and businesses is essential for the successful implementation of the Plan. The City should make copies of the Plan available online and at City Hall as well as provide assistance in explaining the role of the Plan, its policies, and its relationship to public and private development. The community should be kept informed of all planning developments through the City's website, a newsletter, and communication through civic and church leaders.

PROMOTE COOPERATION

For the Comprehensive Plan to be successful, there must be strong leadership from the City of Gardner and firm partnerships between other public agencies, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. The City should assume a leadership role to cooperate and coordinate with the Gardner-Edgerton School District, public safety providers, the Johnson County Library, utility providers, and the Kansas Department of Transportation, among others. In addition, the City should actively work with and encourage builders, developers, and the business community to undertake improvements that conform to the Comprehensive Plan and improve the quality and character of Gardner.



SHORT-TERM TASKS (0-3 YEARS)

Short-term tasks set the stage for the advancement of the recommendations within the Gardner Comprehensive Plan. Tasks are primarily administrative, consisting of regulatory changes, policy updates, or strategic partnerships with limited outside funding required. These are actions that require internal staff time, are generally easier to implement, and represent the highest priority tasks. They should be initiated after the adoption of the Plan, and implemented within 1-3 years.

ESTABLISH BOUNDARY AGREEMENTS & ANNEXATION AGREEMENTS

Establishing Gardner's long-term limits through annexation and boundary agreements will assist local officials and staff in prioritizing improvements and formulating appropriate policies. Gardner currently has a boundary agreement with the City of Olathe and City of DeSoto. However, it does not have a boundary agreement with City of Edgerton or City of Spring Hill. This has resulted in the growth of the Edgerton boundary to capture areas around the multi-modal facility. At the same time, there are several pockets of unincorporated areas entirely or nearly surrounded by the City boundary. The City should annex and/or establish annexation agreements with the property owners of these areas in order to manage growth and infrastructure development, and capitalize on property tax revenues generated by future uses.

CREATE AN IMPLEMENTATION ACTION AGENDA

The Comprehensive Plan provides more than 200 policy and program recommendations. In order to address the myriad of strategies presented within the plan, the City should prepare an "Action Agenda," to highlight the projects and activities to be undertaken within the next few years. The action agenda should be developed in conjunction with the City's CIP, and should involve all relevant City departments. To remain current, the action agenda should be updated once a year. The action agenda may consist of:

- A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
- The priority of each project or activity;
- An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
- Potential funding sources and assistance programs that might be available for implementing each project or activity.



DEVELOP SPECIFIC PLANS FOR PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Comprehensive Plan provides several recommendations for the creation of more specific and detailed plans throughout Gardner. The City should initiate the process to further study and create plans for the following areas:

- Downtown
- Johnson County Fairgrounds
- I-35 Interchange Areas
- 191st Street Corridor
- Main Street Corridor
- Southeast Quadrant Market-Determined Area

UPDATE THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies regarding the location and uses of land within Gardner and establishes guidelines for the quality, character, and intensity of new development in the years ahead. As such, the City's zoning, subdivision regulations, property maintenance, and other related codes and ordinances, should be reviewed and updated to ensure that all are consistent with and complementary to the Comprehensive Plan.

DEVELOP BENCHMARKS & INDICATORS

Benchmarks and indicators can provide the City with methods to measure the successful implementation and overall effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan. Identified below are data that can be tracked and benchmarked to serve as indicators to gauge trends and change within the City. Many of those identified use existing data available to City staff, however some may require voluntary cooperation, data collection, and monitoring from other entities and taxing bodies, including the Chamber of Commerce, and individual businesses.

After adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a baseline should be established for all indicators and benchmarks desired to ensure consistent tracking of progress. Each of the following benchmarks should be evaluated on an annual basis.

Building Permits. Tracking the number and location of building permits (by type) issued within the City and Johnson County will provide an indicator of new development, including permit activity for new residential, new commercial, tenant space build-out and remodeling, new construction projects, and more. Within Downtown, tracking building permit applications also provides detailed information on proposed modifications to buildings.

Variations. Tracking requests for variances within Downtown and other areas of the City may provide an indication as to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Gardner Zoning Ordinance. A trend of increasing number of variances may serve as an indication that zoning regulations are becoming inadequate or antiquated, and may need to be amended.

Certificates of Occupancy and Tenant Change. Tracking the number of Certificates of Occupancy will assist in tracking business openings, closings, and relocations.

Code Violations. Tracking the number, location, and type of maintenance code violations, prosecution summary, and corrective action taken will provide an indication of how well individual properties are being maintained.

Tree Survey. Maintaining up-to-date tree data provides quantitative information on the type, size, number and location of mature trees which contribute greatly to the distinctive character of Gardner.



MEDIUM-TERM TASKS (3-5 YEARS)

Medium-term tasks are important actions that may require outside consulting services assistance or relatively minor investments in infrastructure or project development. They have some level of significant cost and should be implemented within 3-5 years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITIZE INFILL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for the City's growth and development, ensuring that future development and annexation is well-managed and occurs incrementally. As growth occurs, the City should prioritize infill development, ensuring that residential subdivisions are completed and have the necessary infrastructure and services, and vacant residential and commercial parcels are built out. Keeping with the core themes of the Plan, near-term development should occur in areas that are already served by City services and infrastructure, with a focus on building out the New Growth Areas as identified in the Residential Land Use Plan.

UPDATE & IMPLEMENT MASTER PLANS

The Comprehensive Plan references several City and regional plans, including the 2009 Transportation Master Plan, 2009 Park System Master Plan, and Wastewater Master Plan, among others. These plans provide detailed recommendations regarding roadways, parks, and infrastructure. As such, they should be updated to reflect the Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations and action items within the plans should be integrated as part of the Comprehensive Plan action agenda to prioritize needs and identify potential areas for projects and actions that can be implemented in conjunction with one another.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

In addition to the aforementioned actions, the Plan provides recommendations for several medium-term tasks. These include:

- Conduct a sidewalk gap analysis
- Conduct a Gardner Golf Course reuse and study plan
- Adopt a Safe Routes to School Program
- Adopt Complete Streets policy
- Create a Downtown-specific plan that addresses detailed land use, revitalization, and streetscape improvements
- Work with the Johnson County Fair Association to identify potential locations for a new facility within the Gardner community



LONG-TERM TASKS (5+ YEARS)

Long-term implementation tasks include those that may require additional studies and/or funding in order to be fully realized. They often require significant amounts of funding that must be planned for over time. Long-term tasks require intensive planning, engineering, and/or design, and significant investment in infrastructure or project development.

RECONFIGURE MAIN STREET

The redesign and streetscape improvements of Main Street/US-56 to create a pedestrian and business-friendly environment is paramount to the revitalization of Downtown. It will require additional studies and design concepts and the potential transfer of roadway jurisdiction from the Kansas Department of Transportation to the City of Gardner.

ACQUIRE LAND FOR PARKS & TRAILS

The Park System Master Plan recommends increasing the total acreage of parkland within the City to meet current and future population needs. Further, constructing the recommended trails and greenways will provide increased non-motorized transportation and fitness options. Both tasks require land acquisition and/or easements, as well as funding for design and construction.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

The Plan provides additional recommendations for actions that are dependent upon future population growth and development. These include:

- Improve City roadways, including arterial widening and new roadways
- Expand City infrastructure and services to the north, west, and into the Southeast Market Determined Growth Area



POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Many of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or traditionally funded programs. However, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance. The City should explore a wide range of local, state, and federal programs that may be available for use and regularly identify new opportunities as they become available. The funding sources identified below provide a range of potential sources to implement the Comprehensive Plan, however, they are not inclusive and should be closely scrutinized to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOURCES

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The purpose of TIF funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF dollars can typically be used for infrastructure, streetscape, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development. TIF utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize further reinvestment. As the assessed value of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established, is reinvested in that area. Cities within Kansas may establish a TIF district, or redevelopment area in areas that are deemed blighted, at risk of blight, are within an enterprise zone, intermodal transportation areas, or major tourism or commercial entertainment area.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The Community Development Block Grant program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to general units of local governments and states. A grantee must develop and follow a detailed plan that provides for, and encourages citizen participation. This process emphasizes participation by persons of low- or moderate- income, particularly residents of low-income and moderate-income neighborhoods, and blighted areas.



Business Improvement District (BID)

Business Improvement Districts can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated service area. Within the State of Kansas, a city may set up and establish a boundary of a BID by ordinance. It may then assign fees to properties within the identified service area and the revenue received is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. A BID can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. BID funds can be used for such things as streetscape improvements, district marketing, special services and events.

Foundation & Specialized Grants

The successful implementation of the Plan requires the completion of projects that range in scale and scope. A funding source that becomes increasingly significant when issue-specific projects or programs (tourism, public art, historic preservation, small business assistance, etc.) are considered is the foundation grant. The City should dedicate resources to monitoring and exploring foundation grants as a funding tool.

Other Economic Development Sources

Kansas statutes provide for a variety of funding sources for Kansas cities for the retention and attraction of businesses and other economic measures. Sources include Constitutional Tax Abatements, Industrial Revenue Bonds, tax rebates associated with Revitalization and Redevelopment Districts, Special Assessment Districts, Sales Tax and Revenue Bonds (STAR Bonds) for tourism related facilities, Transportation Development Districts, and Community Improvement Districts. The funding sources can provide important incentives to stimulate private investment and can serve as an effective source for public infrastructure projects. Before using these tools, cities may adopt guidelines that address which sources align with City objectives and under what circumstances each of the sources will be most appropriate.



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Funding for the City's many transportation needs presents several challenges. However, there continue to be opportunities to acquire capital funds through the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Johnson County, KDOT, and the Federal government. By being prepared with transportation projects that are "shovel ready", Gardner can maximize its share of those limited outside funds. Gardner must also be ready to match local, state and federal funds when they do become available. Partnerships with other local agencies such as the school district or Johnson County Transit present other important opportunities. Finally, it is worthwhile for Gardner to continue to explore other ways of raising funds for transportation – both for maintenance and new construction. This could include funds from private sources, districts, or other means.

MAP-21

In July 2012, the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21) bill was signed into law. The goal of the two-year transportation reauthorization bill is to modernize and reform the current transportation system to help create jobs, accelerate economic recovery, and build a foundation for long-term prosperity. The following discussion summarizes grant programs covered under MAP-21 that could be utilized by the City to make enhancements to local transportation infrastructure, including roads, highways, sidewalks, and trails.

Surface Transportation Program

Funds from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) may be used by local governments on a variety of roadway projects on federal-aid highways. Funds are administered through the Kansas (STP)/Bridge Priority Committee and allocated to the local Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). Local governments may apply for funding through MARC's call for projects.

KDOT Economic Development Program

The objective of the Economic Development Program is to use transportation investments to recruit, retain, and grow businesses. The grant requires a 25% match, and eligible projects may include road, transit, and rail improvements. However, the program is not intended to fund improvements for the sole recruitment of business, rather projects must be shown to support job growth.

KDOT Transportation Economic Development Loan Program

Similar to the Economic Development Program, the Transportation Economic Development Loan Program seeks to create new jobs and encourage capital investment through partnerships with local government and the private sector. The reimbursement loan program uses incremental revenue from private investment that was spurred by the development of transportation infrastructure to pay off the bonds used to finance the transportation project. Only roadway project are eligible for the program and would require a three-party agreement between KDOT, the City of Gardner, and a private sector business.



Transportation Revolving Fund

The Kansas Transportation Revolving Fund (TRF) provides loan funding to local government for eligible transportation projects. Loans may be repaid through innovative transportation funding solutions such as revenues from highway fund allocations or locally raised revenue. The Kansas Department of Transportation accepts applications on an annual basis. Eligible projects include bridge, culvert, road, street, and highway projects.

Transportation Enhancement

Administered by KDOT, the Transportation Enhancement program provides funding for the construction of non-traditional transportation projects. This includes bicycle and pedestrian trails and landscaping and beautification related to streetscape projects. Projects require a minimum 20% local funding match, must be consistent with local plans, and have local support.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The SRTS program provides funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school. Administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation using Federal Highway Administration funding, infrastructure projects may include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements, on- and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. Eligible programs may also include non-infrastructure-related projects such as public safety and awareness campaigns, traffic education and enforcement, bicycle and pedestrian safety training, and funding for training volunteers and staff.

Additional Programs Through KDOT

In addition to the programs listed above, KDOT provides several other partnership opportunities for local government to help finance transportation-related projects. The programs use state and federal funding through reimbursable grants and local matches. Transportation projects may include roadway resurfacing, intersection improvements, safety projects, corridor management, and public transit.

CARS Program

The County Assistance Road System (CARS) program provides transportation funding through Johnson County. The County provides a 50% match to projects that consist of constructing and maintaining the County's major corridors. To apply for funding, each city must submit a 5-year road improvement plan, which the County scores and allocates funding accordingly.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE FUNDING

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism administers federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for outdoor recreation projects. Funds may be used for the development and/or acquisition of outdoor public recreation facilities. Eligible projects require a 50% match and must meet needs identified in the 2009 Kansas Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. These include shared-use paved trails, playground equipment, upgrades to existing amenities, and additional park acreage, among others.

Recreational Trails Grants

The Recreational Trails Grant, a program through the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, provides funding for recreational trails and trail-related projects. Funds are distributed using an 80% match. Trail projects may be motorized, non-motorized, or diversified recreation trails or projects. The aim of the grant is to spearhead construction and application of trail projects, rather than fund administration.