



This page intentionally left blank

# Acknowledgements

## Adopting Task Force

---

### **Mayor**

David C. Drovetta

### **City Council Members**

John Shepherd, President  
Todd Winters, Vice President  
Steve Hale  
Mary Peters  
Dan Thompson

## Planning Steering Committee

---

### **Mayor**

Carol Lehman

### **City Council Members**

Dennis Pugh

### **Planning Commission Members**

Greg Godwin, Chairman  
Karin Livella

### **City Staff**

Stewart Fairburn, City Administrator  
Jeff Stewart, Parks and Recreation Director  
Sean Swartz, Park Maintenance Supervisor  
Matt McClure, Recreation Supervisor  
Jason Bruce, Recreation Supervisor  
Celia Duran, City Engineer  
Jennifer Dady, City Planner

### **Johnson Couty Park District**

Cliff Middleton, Planning and Devp. Mgr.

### **School District USD 231**

Bill Miller, Operations Director

### **Citizen Committee Members**

Tim Brady  
Kristy Cayot  
Cherlyn White-Conklin  
Joe Oldham  
Russ Lane  
Brent Bays  
Russ Koelzer  
Eli Korthanke  
Stephanie Scalzi

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
Introduction.....	5
Planning Process Summary .....	5
2009 Master Plan Update - Recommendations.....	6
Opinion of Probable Costs.....	9
Concluding Statements.....	9
A. Gardner Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Summary of Previous Plans and Updates.....	11
2009 Plan Update .....	13
Population Projections for 2020 .....	13
Planning Process.....	14
Findings of the 2009 Update .....	15
Parks and Recreation Accomplishments since 2004/2005 Update .....	15
Parks and Recreation Goals Yet to be Accomplished.....	16
Current and Future Deficiencies.....	17
Park Acreage Level of Service (LOS) Comparison Table .....	18
Park Land Needs Summary Table .....	18
Goals and Accomplishments Matrix.....	19
Field and Facilities Needs Summary Table.....	21
Opportunities to Reduce Maintenance, Increase Safety and Other Improvements at Existing Parks.....	23
Redefined Park and Facility Classifications .....	24
Existing Parks and Facilities Matrix.....	25
Revised Goals for Gardner Parks and Recreation .....	29
Current Priorities for Gardner .....	29
Community Center Priorities Table.....	30
MAP: Existing Neighborhood Parks and 1/4-1/2 Mile Service Area .....	33
MAP: Potential Future Neighborhood Park .....	35
MAP: Existing Community Parks and 1-Mile Service Area.....	37
MAP: Potential Future Community Parks .....	39
MAP: Parks and Recreation Master Plan .....	41
Associated Costs of Recommended Improvements .....	43
B. Gardner Trail System Design Guidelines.....	51
Introduction.....	51
Goals.....	51
Reference Design Standards.....	52
Construction Drawings and Details .....	52

General Path Requirements .....	53
Trail Hierarchy.....	53
Trail Location Criteria.....	53
Trail Access Points.....	54
<i>MAP</i> : Existing Trail Locations .....	55
<i>MAP</i> : Potential Future Trail Locations .....	57
Trail Design .....	59
Cross Slope .....	59
Clear Zone.....	59
Shoulders.....	59
Design Speed .....	60
Horizontal .....	60
Stopping Sight Distance .....	60
Vertical.....	60
Pavement and Surfacing.....	60
Important Trail Considerations .....	63
Retaining Walls and Railings .....	63
Drainage .....	63
Structures .....	64
Intersections .....	65
Signing .....	66
Trail Furnishings.....	67
Environmental Conservation .....	69
Trailhead Design .....	69
Trail Land Acquisition .....	71
Incorporation of Trails into Site Design.....	71
Land Acquisition Process .....	71
C. Gardner Landscape Guidelines.....	85
Street Tree Planting Requirements.....	85
Planting Specifications .....	86
Plant Guarantee and Maintenance Requirements .....	88
Finding the Root Flare .....	89
Testing for Compacted Soil .....	89
D. Appendix .....	91
2007 Gardner, Kansas DirectionFinder® Survey .....	93
Comparison of Benchmark Communities.....	94
Athletics Participation Benchmarking .....	97
2008 Field Needs Matrix .....	99
2020 Field Needs Matrix .....	101
Community Center Comparison .....	103
Parks and Recreation Department List of Approved Street Trees .....	107

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This 2009 Update to the Park System Master Plan follows previous plans completed in 2002, 2003, and 2004/05. The strategic initiatives included in each Plan advanced the parks, trails, and open space system to where it is today. The emphasis in this Plan is on:

- Possible location and amenities for a Community Center
- Expansion of the existing greenway and trail system
- Acquisition of parkland
- Planned improvements and maintenance level of existing parks and facilities
- Development of new parks and facilities to meet the demand of a rapidly growing population
- Adoption of Trail System Design Guidelines
- Adoption of Landscape Guidelines

## Planning Process Summary

This master plan was developed in full consideration of the input from others. As shown below, the input from others included the following:

1. A Steering Committee composed of Gardner City Councilors, Planning Commission Members, City Staff, representatives from the Johnson County Park and Recreation District, Gardner-Edgerton USD 231, and Gardner Citizens
2. A citizen survey (DirectionFinder®) with statistically reliable results
3. A Benchmarking Study of other similar communities in the Kansas City metro area

4. Previously completed master plans in Gardner that are representative of citizen preferences since 2002
5. The Johnson County Park and Recreation District MAP 2020 Master Plan

Detailed below is the summary of the key findings from these sources of data:

- Steering Committee
  - » Highest priority is for a contemporary community center to possibly include a senior center.
- 2009 Citizen Satisfaction and DirectionFinder® Survey
  - » The Department has improved its level of service in all categories that were measured since the 2007 survey, including park maintenance, the number of parks, number of trails, the number of athletic fields, ease of registering for programs, and the Gardner Aquatics Center.
- Benchmark Study
  - » *Recreation Centers* - All benchmarked communities have at least one recreation center. Gardner has one senior center but not a recreation center for all age groups.
  - » *Developed Park Acres* - Gardner has an average number of developed park acres per 1,000 population at 11.4 compared to its peers (not including golf course acreage).
  - » *Playgrounds* - Gardner has the second highest ratio of playgrounds per 1,000 at 0.67. By 2020, the City will need to add 6 playgrounds to meet its level of service.
  - » *Trails* – Gardner has the most miles of improved trails per 1,000 population at 0.45. By 2020, an additional 15 miles of trails will be needed to meet the demand.
  - » *Athletic Fields* – No fields are needed at this time; however by 2020, there is a deficiency projected of 15 additional softball/baseball fields, 4 soccer/flag football fields, and 11 sport courts (indoor/outdoor basketball and volleyball), provided participation rates remain the same and population projections are met
- Previously completed master plans
  - » Incomplete projects from previously adopted master plans dating back to 2002 include greenways, trails, upgrades to existing parks and facilities, a community center (possibly to include a senior center), land acquisition for parks and trails, and a park maintenance facility.
- Johnson County Park and Recreation District MAP 2020 Master Plan
  - » Establishes 12 acres of park land per 1,000 population as the goal for communities within the County to augment what the County provides at 22 acres per 1,000 and the State of Kansas provides at 6 acres per 1,000 population. (Johnson County Park and Recreation District’s definition of park land includes golf course acreage.)

## 2009 Master Plan Update - Recommendations

Seven goals have been identified in the Master Plan to target the efforts needed to maintain the existing system and meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.

Listed below are the goals that are detailed in the body of the Master Plan:

### ***Goal #1 – To conduct a Community Center Feasibility Study***

To accomplish this goal, the Feasibility Study will:

- Evaluate citizen support for a Community Center. If there is support for a Center, the following will be analyzed:
  - » the best location
  - » the amenities that should be included; e.g. gymnasium, an elevated indoor track, weight and cardio room, 25-yard competitive pool for diving and races, recreational pool
  - » a funding source
  - » maintenance and operational costs

### ***Goal #2 – To expand the Greenway and Trail System***

To accomplish this goal, the City will:

- Work with developers to complete subdivision extensions where needed.
- Link open space corridors with parks, housing, schools, and services where appropriate.
- Complete the Greenway:
  - » from the Santa Fe Trail to Brookside Park to future MetroGreen Corridor
  - » segment from Moonlight elementary School to Bull Creek Watershed
  - » corridor from Gardner to Edgerton along U.S. 56 or Bull Creek
  - » construction as follows the Gardner Trail Master Plan Map
- Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan
- Coordinate acquisition and development of greenways/ streamways with Johnson County
  - » Continue to acquire land for and construct the Kill Creek Trail

### ***Goal #3 – To acquire additional park land***

To accomplish this goal, the City will:

- Acquire an average of 20.5 acres of land per year between 2009 and 2020 for a total of 205 acres to meet 12 acres/1000 population standards.

### ***Goal #4 – To improve and maintain existing facilities***

To accomplish this goal, the City will pursue these selected recommendations from a lengthy list in the Master Plan:

- Reduce maintenance by planting natives at stream edges, detention areas, and around drain inlets, as needed
- Upgrade playground equipment, and/or, landing surfaces at specified parks
- Reduce erosion at specified parks by planting swales with native vegetation

***Goal #5 – To develop new facilities and amenities to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population***

To accomplish this goal, the City will continue to work with the citizens and community partners to provide new facilities and amenities as population and demand dictates.

***Goal #6 – To adopt and enforce Trail System Design Guidelines***

To accomplish this goal, the City will adopt guidelines included in this report which:

- Provide a safe and functional environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized modes of travel
- Establish a trail design which results in a consistent appearance and effective long-term maintenance
- Enhance the image of the adjacent neighborhoods and roadway
- Preserve existing features such as existing plant material and rock croppings to reflect the inherent natural environment
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas for the future
- Use simple, classical furnishings made of durable materials to insure longevity

***Goal #7 – To adopt and enforce Landscape Guidelines***

To accomplish this goal, the City will adopt guidelines included in this report which:

- Specify that no tree may be planted without review and approval from the Parks and Recreation Department
- Determine planting locations
- Specify approved trees
- Specify tree diversity
- Specify size of tree
- Provide guidelines for the protection of existing plants
- Provide plant specifications
- Specify the type of mulch to be used
- Specify setting and backfilling
- Specify a plant guarantee and maintenance requirements
- Provides details about finding the root flare
- Provides details for testing for compacted soil

# Opinion of Probable Costs

This Master Plan recommends several improvements to existing parks, trails, and facilities in addition to new projects that are required to meet the demands of a community that is growing very rapidly.

Planned improvements and an opinion of their development costs are shown summarized in Table ES-1.

Table ES-1: Summary of Costs

<i>Priorities to 2020</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable Cost</i>
Community Center	\$17-25 million
Skate Park	\$275,000
Land Acquisition	\$3.65 million
Park Development (New Parks)	\$16.7 million
Trail Construction	\$4.4 million
Park Maintenance Facility	\$3.7 million (1/2 cost share)
Park Upgrades (Existing Parks)	\$4.3 million
Baseball Fields (8)	\$2.8 million

# Concluding Statements

1. This Master Plan Update identifies the land acquisition, trail/greenway, and new facilities, that when developed, achieve the level of parks and services needed by the City.
2. Existing facilities will deteriorate, thus a need to continue a strong investment program in them. Citizens have recognized the quality of the existing park system and an expectation has been set that their quality will be maintained at a high level.
3. Funding for the maintenance of existing facilities and the development of new facilities will depend on citizen support, thus the need to continuously involve citizens in the planning process so that they “see themselves” in the projects that are included in referendum.