



Open Space Plan

INTRODUCTION

Protection of natural resources is a Guiding Principle of this master plan and fully supported by citizens in Platte County. It is the intention of the strategies in this plan to achieve balanced and sustainable growth by the actions that are recommended.

Vision

The future of the Platte County Open Space System is envisioned as a series of natural, interconnected landscapes that protect environmental resources that are critical to the well-being of county residents and most importantly the creeks and rivers that supply fresh water. The Plan establishes four important and inter-related activities for open space conservation:

- identify key parcels of land and corridors that should be acquired and protected as open space
- recommend, and/or, recognize regulatory programs that improve the protection of resources that safeguard public health, safety and welfare
- establish a land stewardship program to manage open space resources

Goal

One goal of the plan is to eventually protect areas within the **“locations of importance”** and the **“priority opportunities”** as defined below. To accomplish this target, the County will need to partner with cities and the State of Missouri to reach agreement on its importance, intent, and cooperation as a basis upon which a consolidated county-wide open space plan will knit together the resources of each partner to form an interconnected greenprint.

Conservation Strategies

A **first step** in the approach to this conservation strategy is to prioritize land for acquisition. Using Platte County’s Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) and previously completed work done by the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), it is possible to identify the most highly desired open space lands in the County. Criteria used to prioritize land acquisition includes areas that protect water supply, limit exposure to flooding, support water contact recreation, improve access to outdoor resources, and protect wetlands and unique species of plants and animals native to the County.

A important second step is already in place in Platte County. Managed by the Planning & Zoning Department, there is a Land Use Policy which was adopted to protect land that is already subject to flooding from rainstorm events. Using data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), it is possible to regulate future development and building within these flood prone lands. This action would conserve more important natural resource areas as protected open space in Platte County.

*“The good Lord
is makin’ more
people, but He
aint makin’ no
more land.”*

– Will Rogers



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PROTECTED OPEN SPACE TARGET

As the County and its partners embrace this Open Space Strategy, the target will be achieved by the accumulation of land in several categories as detailed in the table below.

Table: Existing and Future, Public and Private Platte County System of Protected Open Space

Open Space Category	Existing Acreage	Future Acreage (40-50 year plan)
Platte County owned parks and open space areas	1,293	1,000 (min)
Other Public Parks and Conservation Areas (city/state)	MDC – 4,861 MDNR – 1,133 KCMO – 1,724 Other Cities - 225	To Be Determined by Partners, but likely very limited
Stream Buffers/Open Space protected through private development	242	9,333
Parklands protected through private development	255	288
Sub-total	9,733	10,621
Total Platte County Acreage		273,188
Percentage of Total Acreage	3.57%	7.5% (combined)

Source: Platte County Planning and Zoning Department

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

Identified as areas of importance to the protection of natural resources are:

- Floodplain of the Missouri River and tributaries
- Areas identified by municipalities or MARC for trails and open space corridors
- Woodland dominated land

PRIORITY OPPORTUNITIES

Current opportunities that should be explored to advance the Open Space Plan have been identified below. In many of these instances, the preferred scenario would be for partners to acquire land while the County implements its Open Space Plan with outcomes that are detailed in this chapter; e.g. trails, development of passive parks to protect natural resources and habitat for wildlife.



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- The Line Creek Corridor with the City of Kansas City, MO
- The Highway 45 corridor with land acquisition assistance from MODOT
- In Parkville, privately owned land Brush Creek that parallels I-435
- The Tiffany Springs Corridor with assistance needed from the Kansas City Aviation Department
- The Platte River and Missouri River west of Parkville
- The Missouri River floodplain on the south side of Parkville from the English Landing Park to I-435
- The Prairie Creek Corridor
- The Bee Creek Corridor

DEFINITIONS

As resources are applied through 2020 and beyond to the land acquisition component of the Open Space Plan, it is important to recognize and define the uniqueness of Platte County's Open Space Vision. Detailed below are definitions that are applicable to the intentions of this planning document:

- **Greenways** are corridors of linear open space managed for conservation, recreation, and alternative transportation. They follow linear landscape features such as rivers, streams, canals, railroads, utility easements or country roads. The purpose of a greenway is to link parks, nature preserves, cultural features, historic sites and other known destination attractions with each other and with communities, while improving air and water quality. Furthermore, it is to link these places or destinations together through a system of trails at both a local and regional scale, when possible.
- **Trails** are paths used for walking, bicycling, rollerblading, horseback riding or alternative transportation. Greenways often include trails, pathways, boardwalks, bicycle paths and bicycle lanes from rural to urban areas. As a greenway transitions from the suburbs to the town it may change from a dirt path to an asphalt trail to a bike lane that is part of existing roadway. All of these can be segments of the same greenway.
- **Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Conservation** - The conservation of natural resources is of great importance to the people of Platte County. Development in parks that are set aside for the protection of natural resources should be minimal with at least *two thirds* of the land designated as conservation areas. Preserving this land will protect riparian habitats and may possibly ensure survival of several vulnerable species of plants and animals.
- **Active Parks** are intended to either be a special use park such as a sports complex like the one at Platte Ridge Park; or, an Active Park may be **20% to 30% of a passive park/environmental conservation area**. Typical amenities in an active park, other than an athletic complex, might be a *trail, small or large pavilion, playground, and sprayground*.
- **Passive Parks** will be synonymous in this master plan with Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Conservation Areas. It is the intention that **none of these parks will be developed more than 70% for active purposes** as described above in the definition of Active Parks. An acceptable amenity in land adjacent to a passive park is a *Dog Park*.



