Chapter 9: An Active Community Recognized for its Quality of Life and Strong Sense of Place

Background and Intent

The Manhattan Urban Area’s unique natural setting, high quality built environment, historic and cultural resources, parks and recreational facilities, and other assets enrich the lives of residents and appeal to visitors. The City and Counties recognize the role these amenities play in the quality of life of residents and the community’s ability to maintain a strong sense of place as it grows. An emphasis will be placed on the protection and enhancement of these resources to meet the needs of both current and future residents.

Retaining the Manhattan Urban Area’s quality of life and strong sense of place and promoting an active community is based on the following guiding principles:

- A variety of high-quality recreational opportunities in the form of interconnected parks, trails, recreation facilities, public spaces, and natural areas to serve existing development and planned growth;
- Significant historic and cultural resources that contribute to the community’s identity and history; and
- A distinctive built and natural environment that promotes a sense of place.

The goals and policies in this chapter, in conjunction with the supporting policy documents identified at the end of this chapter and other goals and policies contained in this Plan, should be used to guide the provision and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities, the protection of historic and cultural resources, and the development of standards and guidelines for new development within the Manhattan Urban Area.

For related guiding principles, goals, and policies, refer to: Chapter 3: A Coordinated and Efficient Pattern of Growth; Chapter 4: Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources and Promote Resiliency; Chapter 8: Healthy, Livable Neighborhoods Offering a Variety of Lifestyle Options; Chapter 10: A Strong, Diversified Economic Base.
Guiding Principles, Goals, and Policies (QL)

Guiding Principle QL-1: A variety of high-quality recreational opportunities in the form of interconnected parks, trails, recreation facilities, public spaces, and natural areas to serve existing development and planned growth

GOAL QL-1.1: STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND A VIBRANT SYSTEM OF PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND NATURAL AREAS TO SATISFY THE COMMUNITY’S NEEDS AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

QL-1.1A: Parks and Recreation Guidelines

Ensure that park and recreation facilities provide an adequate range of recreational opportunities based on guidelines from the National Recreation and Park Association (or others developed as part of a comprehensive park planning process). Design facilities in a manner that responds to the needs of the intended users.

QL-1.1B: Park Types/Level of Service Targets

Provide a hierarchy of park types to satisfy the diverse needs of our changing community. Seek to achieve and/or maintain level of service targets established by the City’s Parks and Recreation Strategic Facility Improvement Plan (to be completed early 2015) and other plans as adopted for different types of parks and recreational facilities as the community grows over time.

QL-1.1C: Distribution of Facilities

Maintain and enhance an efficient and accessible distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community by encouraging development of new parks and walkable/bikeable linkages from existing parks to surrounding neighborhoods in areas experiencing high growth, targeted for future growth, or identified as having a deficiency in park facilities.

QL-1.1D: Coordinated Planning and Development

Coordinate planning and development of park improvements with other City or County Plans and public improvement projects to maximize public benefit.

QL-1.1E: Parkland Dedication

Provide for adequate open space and recreational parks, using the Parks and Recreation Service Areas Map as a guide.

QL-1.1F: Advisory Boards

Continue to support the work of the City’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Douglass Center Advisory Board, and the Cemetery Board in their efforts to consider and recommend improvements to parks and recreation facilities, lands, and programs; the Douglass Center; and Sunrise and Sunset.
Cemeteries, respectively, and to make recommendations on these items to the City Commission.

**Guiding Principle QL-2: Significant historic and cultural resources that contribute to the community's identity and history**

**GOAL QL-2.1: ENCOURAGE THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**QL-2.1A: Historic Preservation/Conservation Tools**

Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of such buildings, districts, and sites by the private sector with tools such as incentive programs, designation of landmark buildings and conservation districts, design review, public improvements, local environs reviews, and other tools. Tailor specific tools that address historic preservation objectives to the unique needs of specific areas. For example, conservation districts, easements, and other tools may be applied in areas that may not qualify as local historic districts due to a loss of integrity, but that retain features that contribute to the quality of the neighborhood and community or have the potential for providing significant cultural or historic information.

**QL-2.1B: Barriers and Incentives**

Identify and reduce barriers to historic preservation through the pursuit of financial, recognition, and related incentives to provide support and encouragement for landowners to protect, improve, and designate historically significant structures. Evaluate municipal codes in such areas as building, fire, and zoning to support historic preservation opportunities through adaptive reuse.

**QL-2.1C: Resource Inventory**

Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of buildings, districts, and sites of historical, archaeological, architectural, or cultural significance within the Manhattan Urban Area. Continue to identify and encourage designation of historically significant elements of the built and natural environment associated with important people and events, using the National Criteria for Evaluation of Historic Sites.
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**QL-2.1D: Historic Resources Board**

Continue to support the work of the City’s Historic Resources Board related to the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic properties in the City of Manhattan through the designation of Historic Sites, Structures, and Districts. Consider the recommendations of the Board on matters related to historic preservation and review projects that may affect designated historic properties.

**QL-2.1E: Designated Historic Sites and Districts**

Continue to protect and monitor the City’s Downtown Historic District, Houston & Pierre Streets Residential Historic District, and other designated historic sites or cultural resources through the actions of the Historic Resources Board, the landmarks and historic districts designations process, and the application of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**GOAL QL-2.2: EXPAND COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**QL-2.2A: Arts and Humanities Advisory Board**

Continue to support the work of the City’s Arts and Humanities Advisory Board in its efforts to promote and support arts and humanities in the community through recommendations to the City Commission to incorporate arts and humanities elements into Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects or related activities, programs, and collaborations. Consider the recommendations of the Board with regard to the development of guidelines related to the selection and placement of public art and potential incentives to encourage the incorporation of public art as part of private development projects.

**QL-2.2B: Resource Inventory**

Develop and maintain a database of public and other significant humanities elements on publicly-owned lands within the Manhattan Urban Area, working in conjunction with the Arts and Humanities Advisory Board. Incorporate other surveys as applicable, including the Manhattan Archaeological Survey (completed by Kansas State University in 2009) and the City’s survey of Manhattan’s African-American cultural resources.
QL-2.2C: Arts and Cultural Facilities and Amenities

Support the many public and private arts and cultural offerings and facilities within the Manhattan Urban Area, including the Community House, Douglass Center, City Auditorium, Flint Hills Discovery Center, Sunset Zoo, Union Pacific Depot, Manhattan Arts Center, and others.

QL-2.2D: Educational and Interpretive Programs

Encourage community education efforts to facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation for local arts and cultural resources. Solicit participation from community volunteers on research, interpretation, and other activities.

Guiding Principle QL-3: A distinctive built and natural environment that promotes a sense of place

GOAL QL-3.1: GUIDE THE APPEARANCE, SCALE, AND LOCATION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND PROTECT THE SCENIC NATURAL LANDSCAPE

QL-3.1A: Community Gateways

Encourage design within the gateway corridors of the community that creates an attractive, welcoming entrance. Enhance primary community gateways into Manhattan, such as Seth Child Road and Tuttle Creek Boulevard (US-24) from the North, K-177 from the southeast, and Fort Riley Boulevard (K-18) from the southwest, through such approaches as landscape treatments, screening, coordinated signage and lighting, exterior building materials, placement of parking, and development of community gateway design features in order to emphasize and preserve the attractive setting and appearance of the community. Discourage future strip commercial development along these corridors. Work with the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce to develop coordinated corridor branding.
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QL-3.1B: Ridgelines and View Sheds

Ensure that development is carried out in a manner that avoids degrading identified view sheds and ridgeline vistas characteristic of the Manhattan Urban Area and of the surrounding Flint Hills. Take particular care to be sensitive to views of ridgelines from major roadways and community gateways.

GOAL QL-3.2: GUIDE THE QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT WITH BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES AS APPROPRIATE

QL-3.2A: Promote Development Quality

Require a high level of development quality for all new multi-family residential and non-residential development and redevelopment. Develop design standards to address issues for particular subareas of the community, where additional guidance is needed or to support the implementation of subarea plans, and the Land Use Policies contained in Chapter 3: A Coordinated and Efficient Pattern of Growth. Standards may include, but not be limited to exterior materials; building design and character; site layout, building scale, mass, and height; landscaping and screening; parking location and layout; lighting; and other factors.

QL-3.2B: Development Process / Regulatory Environment

Balance the community’s desire for quality and compatible design, with private property rights and individual creative expression by ensuring the development review process is fair and predictable and facilitates the construction of affordable housing. Ensure zoning and subdivision regulations are aligned with the Future Land Use map and that design guidelines and standards are clear in their intent and applicability, yet allow for some flexibility in their execution. Ensure all guidelines and regulations are consistently applied and enforced.

QL-3.2C: Encourage Innovative Design

Encourage innovative design practices that employ the creative use of sustainable building materials and construction techniques.

Parks and Trails Map

The Parks and Trails map identifies existing and planned parks, trails, sidewalks, bike routes, and sidewalks within the Planning Area. Refer to Appendix D: Trends and Forces Report for an inventory of existing facilities.
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Parks and Recreation Service Areas Map

The Parks and Recreation Service Areas Map identify service areas for the following types of facilities:

- Urban Parks
- Open Space – Pocket Park
- Neighborhood/Community Park
- School Grounds (Neighborhood Park)
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Parks & Recreation Service Areas

Includes Trails, Urban Parks, Undeveloped Open Space, Neighborhood Parks, & Community Parks. Service areas were assigned per NRPA standards where applicable. A network dataset was created using sidewalks & trails. Where sidewalks were missing, streets (KDOT function classes Local & Minor Collector only) were used as fillers. Intersections with pedestrian signals were used as crossing points along major roads.

Approximate Number of Residences within Recreational Service Area (Out of 27,170* total residences).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trails</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Open Space</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,865</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>3,811**</td>
<td>16,979**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including Residences in the Comprehensive Plan Boundary
** Including Trails, Urban Parks, Open Space, Neighborhood Parks, & Community Parks. Community Parks are assigned a 1/2 mile service area.

Future Residential*
Non-Residential

Recreational Amenity in Service Area**

City Boundary
* Excludes Rural Residences per KDOT Land Use Map.

Future Residential
* Excludes Rural Residences per KDOT Land Use Map.

** Includes Trails, Urban Parks, Open Space, Neighborhood Parks, & Community Parks. Community Parks are assigned a 1/2 mile service area.

Graphical representation of service areas with various amenities such as urban parks, open space, and neighborhood/community parks.
Related Plans and Policy Documents

The following previously developed documents may or may not have been formally adopted as a part of the Comprehensive Plan; however they provide important background information and policy direction with regard to parks, historic preservation, development quality, and other quality of life considerations. Refer to Appendix B: Related Plans and Policy Documents for additional information on each plan and links to the full documents.

- Parks and Recreation Strategic Facility Improvement Plan (In Progress)
- Riley County Community Needs Assessment (2014)
- African American Cultural Resources Survey (2012)
- Manhattan Archaeological Survey: Phases I and II (2009)
- National Register Multiple Property Documentation Forms: Late 19th and Early 20th Century Residential Resources; Late 19th Century Vernacular Stone Houses (2006)
- Strategic Park Plan (1999)
- Linear Park Master Plan, Phase II (1998)
- Fairmont Park Master Plan (1997)
- Comprehensive Parks Master Plan (1992)
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Systems Plan (2020)
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