The Trailhead Committee

In the spring of 1997, Mayor Darwin Hindman appointed a citizens committee, the MKT Trailhead Committee, to work with the Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Departments to assist in the planning and development of Flat Branch Park. In July of 1997, the Committee held an architectural design charette to generate possible ideas for development of the site. In February of 1998, Chinn and Associates Architects, was hired to assist the Committee in development of detailed construction plans for the park. The committee organized regular "Flat Branch Creek Walks" to increase citizen awareness as to the importance of preserving the natural landscape in the heart of an urban area and to solicit ideas on how the trail and creek could be improved. The committee has also played an extraordinary role in fund raising, securing over $160,000 in private donations for the park project. The City sincerely appreciates the time and effort generously given to this project by the Trailhead Committee members.

The Flat Branch Area

The park is located at the original site of Columbia's Market Square, which since its establishment in the 1820's, has been a favorite spot for community gatherings and a hub for commerce.

At the turn of the last century, a railway depot known as Katy Station was built in the Flat Branch area and it became a focal point of industry and transportation, with trains chugging in and out of the station along the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad. When the railroad right-of-way was abandoned in the late 1970's, the City decided to convert the abandoned right-of-way to a multi-use hiking, biking, and fitness trail. This trail is now the 8.3 mile City/County MKT Trail that begins at 4th & Cherry and extends to the State-wide KATY Trail, south of Columbia.

The development of the Flat Branch Park is one of the many steps being undertaken in the revitalization of this area of our community.

Columbia Parks and Recreation

Flat Branch Park

Dedication

November 15, 2001

Columbia, Missouri

Flat Branch Park History

Flat Branch Park, located at Fourth and Cherry Streets will serve as the trailhead to the MKT trail. It is a green haven where people can enjoy a beautifully landscaped creek in the hustle and bustle of the city and will serve as an inviting gateway into downtown Columbia. The park also preserves and revitalizes an area that is an integral part of the city's history and early commerce.

In 1997, the planning for the development of the park began when the City received a $40,000 grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for the construction of the park.

In October of 1997, a deteriorated warehouse located on the site was torn down and soil contamination was found. Construction was put on hold until clean-up was completed. On June 11, 1998, a groundbreaking was held in conjunction with the Market Square Historic Site Dedication when the site was designated a Boone County Historic Site.

Completion of the extensive cleanup made way for the park construction. On May 16, 2000, a second groundbreaking was held in conjunction with the American Discovery Trail Opening Ceremony which designated the Katy Trail as an American Discovery Trail and the MKT Trail as a National Millennium Trail.

The park is bordered by the Flat Branch Creek and will feature a gazebo, benches, tables, sidewalks, landscaping, historic markers, and green space. Total budget for the development of the project was $511,744. Funding sources include: Recreational Trails Grant ($40,000); Stormwater Grant ($90,000); Donations and contributions ($161,595); and City Capital Improvement Sales Tax ($220,149). Further plans for the Flat Branch area include the expansion of the greenbelt/park to the city-owned property located south of the existing park between Locust and Elm Streets.

Program

I. Welcome & Introductions - Director of Parks & Recreation, Mike Hood

II. Remarks - City Manager, Ray Beck

III. Remarks - Mayor Darwin Hindman

IV. Remarks - Mayor's Trailhead Committee
John Ott & Jack Waters

V. Ribbon Cutting

City Council

Darwin Hindman, Mayor

1st Ward - Almeta Crayton, 2nd Ward - Christopher Janku,
3rd Ward - Bob Hutton, 4th Ward - Jim Loveless,
5th Ward - John John, 6th Ward - John Coffman

Raymond A. Beck, City Manager
Michael Hood, Parks and Recreation Director

Parks and Recreation Commission

Kory Kaufman, Dennis Knudson, Dan Devine,
Ann Gowans, Larry Hine, Terry Kloeppel, Julia Grus

Architect: Pon Chinn, Chinn & Associates
Creek Restoration Contractor: Remsel, Corporation
Park Construction: Parks & Recreation,
Planning and Development

Flat Branch Park is presented to the Columbia City Council and the Citizens of Columbia from the City of Columbia and the Parks and Recreation Staff and Commission in appreciation for making this possible.