

TRAIL ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Acquisition Priorities

Determination of Priorities

The Columbia Parks and Recreation Department is committed to acquiring green space for the construction and preservation of trails, greenways, and greenbelts. These areas will provide quality and diverse recreational opportunities for an ever-growing population. As an added benefit, these green spaces can also help provide areas for storm water control, utility corridors, and wildlife habitat.



Hinkson Creek Trail

For the *2002 Facility Needs Update*, a priority ranking of the targeted acquisitions was prepared. Four factors were used to determine this ranking:

- The part the trail section plays in the overall goal to complete a “loop trail” around Columbia.
- Areas currently or soon to be under development. Properties may become unavailable or prohibitively expensive, if not acquired soon.
- The need to serve areas of expanding residential population.
- Current feasibility of acquisition.

As mentioned earlier, the addition of the GetAbout Columbia funds has shifted some of the focus from trails that primarily serve recreational use to trails that provide users with an alternative active mode of transportation. Thus, the development of shorter connector trails that allow residents to bike or walk to a major trail or pedway has become a higher priority. With the passing of various City Council legislation to help protect streams, greenbelts and watersheds, further emphasis should be placed on trails that may utilize greenbelts and greenways. This allows the protection of these corridors, while also allowing for passive recreational use of the property. Finally, consideration should be given to trail routes that utilize existing public owned land and/or utility easements, combining two uses into one corridor.

For the 2010 Trails Plan, the priority for a connectivity component was added to the factors that determine acquisition and development priorities:

- Connecting existing or developing neighborhoods to major multi-use trails and pedways. Non-motorized transportation, wellness, and healthy lifestyles are becoming more important to citizens and trails that connect neighborhoods help promote outdoor recreation opportunities.
- The part the trail section plays in the overall goal to complete a “loop trail” around Columbia. Since large portions of the loop trail are located in stream corridors, acquisition and protection may be viewed as a higher priority, while the actual trail construction may be secondary.

- Areas currently or soon to be under development. If developed, properties may become unavailable or prohibitively expensive.
- Utilization of the greenbelt plan to provide a system of links between parks, University of Missouri recreational facilities, and other open spaces. Priority targets may include greenbelt acquisition projects that protect key areas of open space and sensitive watersheds.
- Feasibility of acquisition, including willingness of property owners, purchase prices and cost of future development (bridges, topography, etc.). This includes areas that allow for the potential for a combination sewer utility and trail easement acquisition.

Trail Acquisition Priorities

The proposed acquisition targets are not limited to a ten-year plan. These acquisition targets fit into the overall trail network goal for Columbia. Hence, the proposed trail acquisitions are prioritized into three categories:

Primary Acquisition Targets

The primary targets represent important pieces of the overall trail system with an emphasis on those that connect and provide access to the highest number of citizens and/or connect to key destination areas. Primary targets also include routes that are or may come under threat of development where the opportunity to acquire may be limited or non-existent if not acted upon. These targets also include those routes that are located in greenbelt areas where acquisition may provide environmental protection. Development priorities include those trails that are on land that is currently owned by the City of Columbia or represent properties that may have willing sellers.

Secondary Acquisition Targets

The secondary targets are under less development pressure than the primary targets. While critical to the overall plan, there may be additional time available for acquisition. There may also be access to alternate routes that allow these secondary acquisition targets to be delayed. However, it is important that these linkages eventually become integrated into the trail system.

Tertiary Acquisition Targets

These properties are either under little development pressure or not feasible to purchase at this time. Factors such as opposition by neighbors and residents and construction difficulty may influence the timing of acquisition. It is important to monitor the status of these linkages and more actively pursue them as they become available or threatened by development. Projects may also be deemed tertiary acquisition targets because they serve a small part of Columbia's population.

The Parks and Recreation Department has presented a draft version of the 2013 Trails Plan to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Their recommendations were taken under consideration in preparing the 2013 Trails Plan and the Recommended Acquisition List that are included in this chapter.