

Glossary of Terms

The following is a glossary of selected terms referenced in the Master Plan document.

Activity Centers: Areas with a concentration of attractions and activities, which may include any combination of offices, manufacturing facilities, retail stores, residences, institutions, entertainment and recreation.

Bioretention: A water quality practice that utilizes landscaping and soils to treat storm water runoff by collecting it in shallow depressions and then filtering it through a planting soil.

Board of Commissioners: This is a ten member board that is the legislative branch of the Unified Government. The Board of Commissioners has policy-making authority for the Unified Government, and is committed to fulfill its mission to provide policy guidance and direction in providing quality services to citizens. Through strategic planning, the Board sets goals and objectives that address issues within the organization and throughout the community. The Mayor/CEO presides over the Board of Commissioners, has veto power, and serves as the eleventh member of the Commission, casting a vote only in the case of a tie or as otherwise required.

Boulevards/Parkways: Within more developed or “urban” areas, this roadway type typically has a wide right-of-way to accommodate a median and/or extensive landscape which separates the roadway from an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connection. Outside of urban areas, this roadway type will have a more rural character with a narrower right-of-way and may include an engineered ditch or swale with natural landscape and plantings.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): This transit system uses buses or specialized vehicles on roadways or dedicated lanes to quickly and efficiently transport passengers to their destinations, while offering the flexibility to meet transit demand.

City Planning Commission: An eleven member commission appointed by the Board of Commissioners to oversee the planning and development of the city. The Commission’s role and function is to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners concerning planning and zoning matters. On rezoning cases, subdivisions, area or neighborhood plans, and most planning activities, the Commission must hold public hearings and submit a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners on development cases.

Cistern: A receptacle for catching and holding rain water.

Class A Thoroughfare: These are the major streets providing the north-south and east-west connections within the City. The proposed right-of-way of a Class A thoroughfare is one hundred twenty (120) feet. These are thoroughfares having up to six (6) lanes with a traffic handling capacity of up to forty thousand (40,000) vehicles per day. These streets may selectively be developed as parkways.



Class B Thoroughfare: This is the next category in the Major Street Plan. Proposed right-of-way of a Class B thoroughfare is one hundred (100) feet. These are thoroughfares having up to four (4) lanes. Medians may be required and such streets may include on-street parking in the older commercial areas of the city.

Class C Thoroughfare: The proposed right-of-way of a Class C thoroughfare is eighty (80) feet. These are thoroughfares having up to four (4) lanes.

Cluster Development: Is a concept where a landowner/developer has the option to build at higher densities within a defined area in exchange for preservation of open space and/or environmentally constrained areas such as riparian corridors, view sheds, etc.

Community Policing: Program linking police with neighborhoods and social service agencies in an effort to increase positive and preventive citizen-police contact and interaction, reduce crime and increase visibility and service.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): A multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts.

Design Guidelines: A set of policy statements used to direct or guide the external features of a development, as well as the relationships within the development site and between the development and adjacent uses, in order to promote quality places.

Development Pattern: Configuration or organization of the built environment.

Energy Star: An international standard for energy efficient consumer products. Energy Star buildings use at least 15% less energy than standard homes. They usually include properly installed insulation, high performance windows, tight construction and ducts, energy efficient cooling and heating systems, as well as Energy Star appliances, lighting, and water heaters.

Floodplain: Areas that are flooded periodically by the lateral overflow of rivers, streams and creeks.

Gateway: Major point of entry into the Plan Area, or particular part of the Plan Area, such as a business district or neighborhood.

Incentive: Inducement provided by government to encourage development of a certain type or in a certain area. Examples include tax abatement, tax reduction, power to condemn and acquire property, density bonuses, etc.

Infill Development: Development of vacant or under utilized properties within predominantly built up areas.



Infrastructure: The basic facilities and equipment necessary for the effective functioning of a city, such as the means of providing water service, sewage disposal, telephone service, electric and gas connections, and the street network.

International Energy Conservation Code (IECC): A building code created by the International Code Council in 2006. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency.

Land Use: A description and classification of how land is occupied or utilized, e.g., residential, office, parks, industrial, commercial, etc.

Land Use Regulations: Ordinances and laws which govern and direct development of land in a city. Examples include Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED): Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), provides a suite of standards for environmentally sustainable construction. LEED has a scoring system based upon a set of required prerequisites and a variety of credits. The four levels of classification (lowest to highest) are certified, silver, gold and platinum.

LEED for Homes: A rating system that promotes the design and construction of high-performance green homes. A green home uses less energy, water and natural resources; creates less waste; and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants. Benefits of a LEED home include lower energy and water bills; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and less exposure to mold, mildew and other indoor toxins.

Light Rail Transit (LRT): A high capacity public transit solution that can significantly improve urban mobility. This transit system uses rail cars on a fixed guide way to quickly and efficiently transport passengers to their destinations.

MetroGreen®: A proposed 1,144-mile interconnected system of public and private open spaces, greenways and trails designed to link seven counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The plan covers Leavenworth, Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties in Missouri. MetroGreen® continues a tradition of valuing green space in the Kansas City area by extending the “parkways and boulevards” concept of the 1894 Kessler Plan for Kansas City, Mo. MetroGreen® extends and enhances this commitment by identifying more than 75 separate corridors to form a regional network of greenways that connects many of the areas most valuable natural assets.

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB): A national trade association with a mission to enhance the climate for housing and the building industry.



National Green Building Standard: Developed by the NAHB research center, this standard provides criteria for rating the environmental impact of construction practices to achieve conformance with specified performance levels for green residential buildings. This Standard establishes practices for the design and construction of green residential buildings. This Standard is intended to provide flexibility to permit the use of innovative approaches and techniques. This Standard is not intended to abridge safety, health or environmental requirements contained in other applicable laws, codes, or ordinances.

Major Street Plan: Official public document outlining the network of existing and proposed roads required to support the current and future development.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): The eleven-county metropolitan statistical area defined by the US Census Bureau to describe a broader metropolitan area for analysis and reporting. The Kansas City MSA counties included are: Wyandotte, Leavenworth, Johnson and Miami in Kansas and Jackson, Clay, Platte, Cass, Ray, Clinton and Lafayette in Missouri.

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC): MARC serves as the association of city and county governments and the metropolitan planning organization for the bi-state Kansas City region. MARC seeks to build a stronger regional community through cooperation, leadership and planning. Through MARC's leadership, area jurisdictions and diverse community interests sit down together to address the region's problems and identify the opportunities for cooperative solutions. These efforts, in turn, enhance the effectiveness of local government.

Mixed-Use: A land use type which recognizes that many uses and activities are compatible and can be co-mingled to promote physical development at a human scale. Mixed-use allows the integration of commercial, retail, office, and housing.

Multi-Modal Transportation: A transportation system using a variety of travel modes to transport people and goods. Components of this system include vehicular roadways, transit (bus, rail), bike-ways, pedestrian paths (sidewalks, trails), freight railways and airplanes.

Native Plant: A plant that naturally occurs in an area.

Pedestrian-Oriented Development: Development which provides facilities for walking and encourages pedestrian use, designed to make movement on foot attractive and comfortable and to reduce the dependence on motorized vehicles for short trips.

Rain Garden: A small depression planted with native wetland and prairie vegetation.

Revitalization: An approach of improving an existing, declining neighborhood or district through public and private reinvestment.



Rezoning: Process by which the authorized use of a property is changed or modified. The Board of Commissioners, upon recommendation by the City Planning Commission, is authorized to change the zoning of any property within the city as long as the action is justified by public necessity, convenience or general welfare.

Sense of Place: The sum of attributes of a locality, neighborhood or property that give it a unique and distinctive character.

Septic System: An on-site system designed to treat and dispose of domestic sewage. A typical septic system consists of a tank (septic tank) and a system of tile lines or a pit for disposal of the liquid effluent (sludge) that remains after decomposition of the solids by bacteria in the tank. A septic system must be pumped out periodically.

Shadow Plat: A conceptual development plan, submitted during the preliminary plat process and approved by the Planning Commission, that guides the future development of land at full suburban densities for which partial development is sought in the short-term. Shadow plats show the lots, blocks, streets, and utility corridors/easements necessary to attain future suburban residential development at suburban densities while allowing the placement of buildings and access in the interim.

Signage: Display boards or surfaces used for directions, identification, instructions, or advertising; usually consists of lettering, pictures, diagrams, decoration, etc., often in combination, on a contrasting background surface.

Streetscape: The environment along a street in an urbanized area, typically within the public right-of-way. Streetscape elements include the roadway, medians and associated landscaping, fountains, sculptures, sidewalks, on-street parking, street lighting, pedestrian lighting, traffic signals, signage, benches, trash containers, newspaper and other vending machines, bus shelters and other features within the area of the right-of-way.

Storm Water Best Management Practices or BMPs: Innovative strategies and techniques for achieving a desired storm water benefit, such as infiltration or improved water quality.

Subdivision: Land, vacant or improved, which is divided or proposed to be divided into two or more lots, parcels, sites, units, plots for the purpose of sale, lease or development.

Sustainability: An approach to design, development and management of community, which does not compromise the environment or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND): A planning concept based on traditional small towns and city neighborhoods. The variety of uses permits educational facilities, civic buildings and commercial establishments to be located within walking distance of private homes. A TND is served by a network of paths, streets and lanes designed for pedestrians as well as vehicles. Public and private spaces have equal importance, creating a balanced community that serves a wide range of home and business owners.

Transit: Term used in reference to public transportation, including buses, light rail, commuter rail and others.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Development and land uses which support and encourage public transportation. Buildings may provide minimum areas for parking; ancillary support uses for transit, such as a waiting area or ticket purchase station; pedestrian friendly streetscape and street furniture; and multiple uses within a building.

U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC): A non-profit trade organization that promotes sustainability in how buildings are designed, built and operated. The USGBC is best known for the development of the LEED rating system and Greenbuild, a green building conference that promotes the green building industry, including environmentally responsible materials, sustainable architecture techniques and public policy.

Wyandotte County Economic Development Corporation (WCEDC): A private, not-for-profit corporation serving as Wyandotte County's primary economic development organization. This umbrella organization, with several affiliate organizations, works to promote economic development, facilitate redevelopment and provide business retention services for Kansas City.

Zoning: Mechanism through which cities regulate the location, size and use of properties and buildings. These regulations are designed to promote the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the community; to lessen congestion in streets; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; and to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewer, schools, parks and other public requirements.

