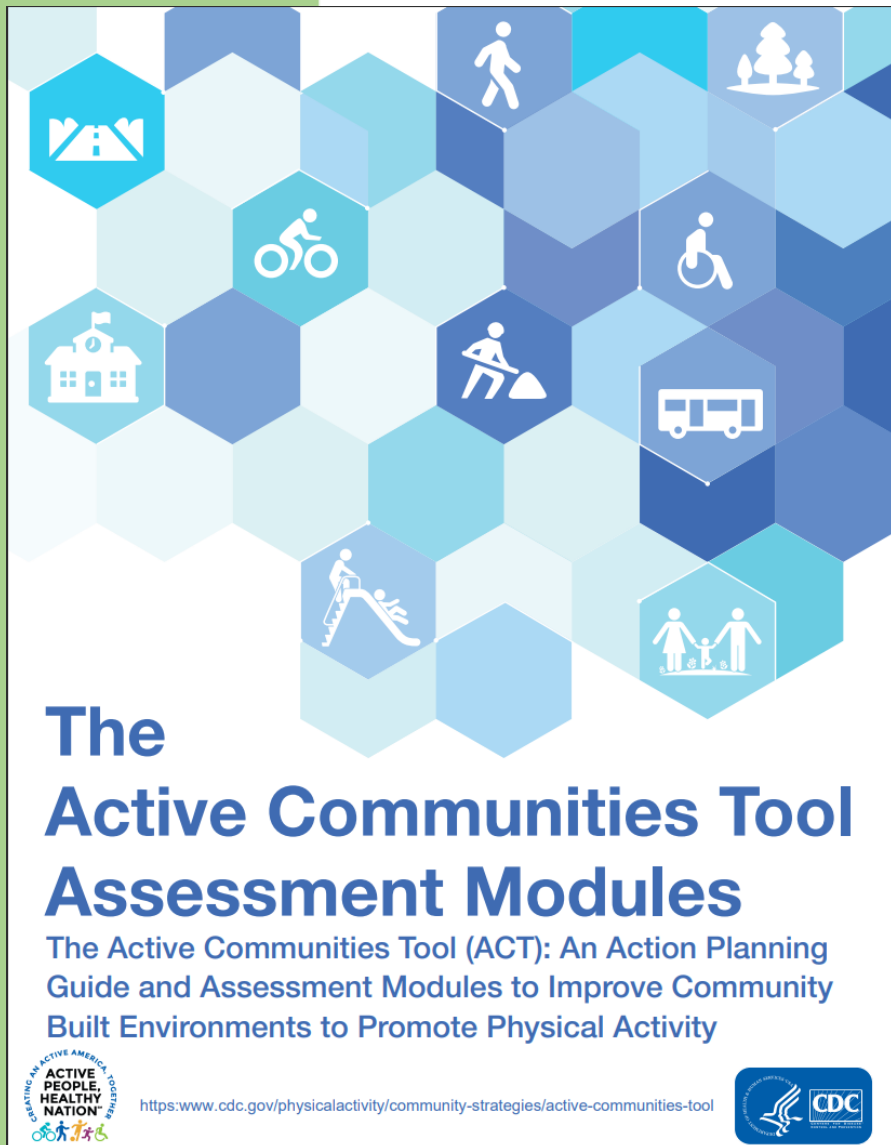


ACT Assessment: Opportunities for Physical Activity in Kansas City, Missouri



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Executive Summary

Street Connectivity and Infrastructure

Kansas City, Missouri, adopted its Major Street Plan in 2011, which has been amended eight times since, with the latest amendment in 2023. This plan outlines the design and future development of street infrastructure, including considerations for public transportation and bicycle infrastructure. However, it does not contain goals or strategies related to street connectivity, and it is rarely consulted by key individuals, such as elected officials, city planners, and developers, when making relevant decisions. Kansas City also has a Complete Streets policy, for which it annually receives \$500,000; however, none of the funding is allocated specifically for connectivity. The city also lacks performance metrics for connectivity. The Major Street Plan also does not identify high- and low-stress streets. Zoning and residential/commercial regulations encourage built environment features that promote connectivity, such as alleyways, greenways, and stub-outs. Subdivision regulations suggest, but do not require, connectivity between neighborhoods. Streets are required in both residential and commercial developments.

Kansas City has the foundational components in place to improve street connectivity and infrastructure, including plans, regulations, and funding. This foundation can be strengthened by incorporating clear connectivity goals, along with a plan for enforcement, performance metrics, and alignment between policy and practice.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Despite Missouri's lack of statewide guidance for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure planning, Kansas City has independently adopted Vision Zero (a resolution), in conjunction with their Complete Streets policy. Both aim to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries while promoting alternative modes of transportation to motor vehicles. The Complete Streets policy requires private developers to comply, it requires interagency collaboration, it requires pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders to be considered when repaving roads, and it requires all types of construction projects to account for all transportation modes and road users. However, the Complete Streets policy only suggests that performance measures should be used, and that equity and inclusion should be considered. The Complete Streets policy also lacks enforcement and implementation. Several components, such as integration with land use and zoning, the use of state-of-the-practice design standards, and requirements for routine maintenance, could strengthen the policy framework.

Pedestrian safety is a concern in Kansas City. Kansas City has 153 linear miles of shared-use paths; however, there is no current plan or policy that addresses linking existing and planned shared-use paths. A publicly available map of Kansas City's shared-use paths reveals that most of the paths lack essential safety features, including pedestrian-oriented lighting and emergency call boxes. Maintenance occurs at the citizen's request, rather than on a schedule based on routine inspection. Other policy gaps hinder Kansas City's active transportation system, limiting the city's ability to achieve its goal of reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities. Some of these policy gaps include the absence of a policy that restricts "right on red," a lack of policy that allows for variation in street width depending on the area, and the absence of a speed reduction policy. The city has a process for adding traffic calming measures that is routinely used; however, it does not consistently produce the desired safety outcomes. Other quality-of-life policies exist, such as leash laws, that are inconsistently enforced, and national best practices for design (e.g., NACTO guidance) are rarely followed.

Financially, Kansas City requires developers of new residential (and redevelopment projects that are residential) to include parks, open spaces, etc., within their projects. If a developer does not want to include a green space within their project, they will be charged a fee of \$20,000 per acre in lieu of doing so. Kansas City has also identified resources to support pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. However, none of the federal transportation funding that the city receives is prioritized for pedestrian, bicycle, or other multimodal projects.

There are inconsistencies between the stated goals and their implementation. Kansas City has expressed an intention to support active transportation and reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities; however, there are minimal policies, prioritized funding, and inconsistent enforcement in place to achieve these goals.

Pedestrian Infrastructure and Resources

Kansas City has a plan that aims to connect existing and planned sidewalk networks, with the intention of reducing pedestrian fatalities and injuries. The plan was adopted over 10 years ago, it is rarely referenced in relevant decision-making, and it lacks a goal to increase walking. No pedestrian-oriented goals were achieved in the last year, and no policy supports linking existing and planned sidewalk networks, despite having a plan that does so. Neighborhood association feedback is incorporated into planning processes; however, there was no specific engagement with those facing greater health challenges.

The city requires sidewalks to be built on both sides of the street in residential, commercial, and redevelopment projects. Sidewalk width standards meet minimum criteria. There are no standards for separating sidewalks from roadways, nor are there any policies that promote safety features such as traffic islands and medians. The total number of sidewalk miles is unknown.

Citizens can request maintenance on sidewalks, and maintenance is not based on scheduled processes or routine inspections. Crosswalks are regularly repainted; however, keeping sidewalks clean and clear is not a priority. There is also a lack of pedestrian-oriented street lighting on all road types (arterial, collector, and local). The city collects data on pedestrian injuries and fatalities, as well as sidewalk presence, but does not routinely count pedestrian activity. Data is not used to address health equity and reduce disparities.

Kansas City has identified funding to improve infrastructure to accommodate walking and to maintain and repair sidewalks. There is also a full-time staff person responsible for implementing pedestrian-related policies. However, there is no advisory group for pedestrian-related projects. The amount of local transportation funding spent on pedestrian projects in the last year is unknown.

Bicycle Infrastructure and Resources

Kansas City has a plan that addresses linking existing and planned bicycle networks, which was adopted less than 5 years ago. This plan has not, to date, elicited any supportive policies from the city. The city has a goal to decrease bicycle fatalities and injuries, but does not have a goal to increase bicycle use. Current bicycle infrastructure in Kansas City includes 6 miles of buffered lanes, 30 miles of conventional lanes, 16 miles of protected lanes, in addition to the 153 miles of shared-use paths. There is also signage such as "Share the Road", bicycle parking, bicycle share program, and opportunities for bicyclist training in the community.

A strong policy framework does not support bicycling. Safety could be improved with supportive policies for bicycle boulevards (e.g., manage motor vehicle speeds), conventional/buffered bicycle lanes (e.g., reduce curbside conflicts with other vehicles), or protected bicycle lanes (e.g., retrofit travel lanes into protected lanes), to encourage more of these features to be built the community in addition to the existing bike lanes. The identified funding to maintain and repair bicycle facilities is deployed to maintain bicycle infrastructure and facilities at citizens' requests, rather than on a routine inspection schedule. Data are collected on bicycle infrastructure, bicycle injuries, 3-1-1 requested bicycle routes, and prevalence data from Children's Mercy regarding youth walking or biking to school. The city does not collect data on bicyclist behavior, and bicyclists are not routinely counted on roadways and bicycle lanes. Data are not used to address health equity and disparities.

Kansas City has identified funding to improve its infrastructure to accommodate bicycling and has made progress in plans and policy work to achieve this goal. The amount of local transportation funding spent on bicycle projects in the last year is unknown.

Park Facilities and Infrastructure

Kansas City has proactively worked to enhance its park system through strategic planning, effective partnerships, and targeted funding. The KC Parks Master Plan provides guidance for park development, maintenance, and improvements to park facilities. The plan has a goal that all residents live within 1 mile of a park. Kansas City has assessed the quality of park facilities within the last year and integrates the quality assessment findings in decision-making. Some parks (e.g.,

Swope, Kessler) have individual master plans. Kansas City has partnered with local businesses (e.g., Urban Trails Co.) and nonprofits (e.g., Roanoke Conservancy) to continue to improve parks and increase their usage.

Other strengths of the park system include: routine maintenance backed by identified funding; collaboration with state, regional and local entities for planning assistance and funding guidance; the Quality of Life District (QLID) focuses on historically underserved parks in the urban core to address equity through routine inspections and regular assessment cycles; intentional integration of parks into the larger active transportation network; the community is actively involved in the maintenance and safety of parks through active conservancies and neighborhood groups; residential developments are required to include park/open space or pay a fee (currently \$20,000/acre); data collected is being utilized to address disparities and prioritize improvements; there is currently an interactive park map in development.

There are opportunities for improvement to strengthen the parks system further. One opportunity is to find ways to engage other community members that are harder to reach, such as renters and underserved residents, as homeowners and specific groups represent the bulk of community involvement. Another approach is to formalize maintenance and safety protocols to ensure more consistent practice across parks. Residential developments are required to include/support park land, but commercial developments are not expected to do so, limiting opportunities for green spaces. Another opportunity that could support many others is to diversify the Parks Board to include representation from other areas of expertise, such as public health and transportation experts.

Overall, Kansas City's Park System has strong planning and commitment and could benefit significantly from more inclusive engagement (both from a broader range of community members and those that serve on the Parks Board), and expanded policy coverage to strengthen equity, safety, and connectivity to the broader active transportation system.

Potential changes to policies or systems:

- Formalize policies for park maintenance
- Formalize policies for park safety, including safety protocols
- Engage renters and underserved residents in park planning processes
- Expand the policy framework surrounding Complete Streets
- Create a plan or policy that addresses connecting existing and planned shared-use paths
- Create a policy that restricts "Right on Red" signals
- Create a policy that allows for variations in the width of streets depending on the character of the area, projected traffic volume, and desired speed of traffic
- Reevaluate the process and implementation of adding traffic calming measures to streets
- Increase the frequency of the enforcement of unleashed dogs
- Create a speed reduction policy
- Increase the frequency of following best practices for design
- Create a schedule process, and routine inspections for shared-use paths
- Routinely count users on shared-use paths
- Consider prioritizing federal transportation funds for modes of transportation other than motor vehicles
- Require commercial developments to include park land/green space
- Leverage development policies to fund and expand public green spaces
- Strengthen the representation of the Parks Board to include residents who face greater obstacles to health, a public health representative, and a planning/transportation representative
- Expand the collection of broader park use data beyond trail counts
- Establish community policies for bicycle boulevards
- Establish community policies for conventional and/or buffered bicycle lanes
- Establish community policies for protected bicycle lanes
- Consider free bike helmets

- Establish a schedule, process, and routine inspection process for bicycle infrastructure in the community's maintenance program
- Incorporate additional elements in the community maintenance program to improve bicycle infrastructure
- Collect data on bicyclist behavior
- Routinely count bicyclists on roadways and bicycle lanes
- Use data collected to address health equity and reduce health disparities
- Establish a group tasked with advising on bicycle-related policies and plans
- Create a new plan or update the current plan that addresses linking existing and planned sidewalk networks
- Create a policy that addresses linking existing and planned sidewalk networks
- Create a goal to increase pedestrian travel
- Create a new plan or update the current plan that focuses specifically on pedestrians
- Reevaluate pedestrian goals and priorities
- Consider a policy that requires or suggests that commercial developments, including worksites, incorporate amenities that encourage walking on sidewalks or paths
- Identify performance measures for street connectivity
- Establishing connectivity index standards
- Discourage cul-de-sacs
 - Require or suggest cul-de-sacs to connect to other destinations via multi-use paths or other pedestrian/bicycle easements
- Change subdivision regulations from suggesting connectivity to requiring connectivity
- Use data collected to improve equity
- Identify the total percent of local annual transportation funding that was invested in pedestrian projects in the last 12 months

Potential changes to the built environment:

- Expand the connectivity of green spaces, trails, and shared-use paths to support active transportation
- Add safety features to shared-use paths, such as pedestrian-friendly lighting and emergency call boxes
- Creating low-speed shared streets
- Establish standards for the separation of bicycle lanes from motorized vehicle lanes
- Establish standards for the separation of sidewalks from vehicles
- Establish standards that address the installation of traffic islands/medians on newly constructed and rebuilt streets
- Update the maintenance program to include a scheduled process and routine inspections of sidewalk networks
- Prioritize keeping sidewalks clean and clear
- Install pedestrian-oriented lighting on arterial, collector, and local roads

Background

The purpose of this document is to synthesize information from the CDC's Active Communities Tool Modules (1, 2, and 5) to highlight strengths and opportunities for improving policies and the built environment in Kansas City, thereby supporting active living.

The **CDC Active Communities Tool (ACT)** was developed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of community plans, policies, and resources for improving the built environment for physical activity. The tool can help communities identify areas for improvement and develop action plans to enhance the built environment. Staff and faculty at UMKC, Children's Mercy, BikeWalkKC, and other affiliated parties completed the ACT modules as part of a larger CDC REACH project. The full results from the assessment can be found in Appendices A, B, and C of this document.

The focus of the assessment covered three areas:

- Street Design and Connectivity,
- Infrastructure to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicyclists, and
- Parks and Recreation Facilities

As mentioned, **the purpose of this document is not to provide recommendations but rather to highlight where information from each source aligns, which could inform priority setting, planning, or decision-making as it relates to increasing opportunities for physical activity in Kansas City.**

Summary of Assessments- Opportunities to Increase Physical Activity

Street Connectivity and Infrastructure

Kansas City, Missouri, has a Major Street Plan that was adopted in 2011. The plan has been amended eight times since its initial adoption in 2011, with the most recent amendment being added in 2023. The Major Street Plan describes existing and future streets constructed by the community and through future developments. **The Major Street Plan is rarely consulted** by groups of individuals (e.g., elected officials, the planning department, or local developers) when making relevant decisions for streets. **The Major Street Plan does not have street connectivity goals.** The Major Street Plan considers other modes of transportation, in addition to automobiles, including public transit (map of transit corridors) and various topologies for areas with bicycle lanes.

There are currently no plans, including the Major Street Plan, that:

- Identify high and low stress streets
 - There is a high-injury network
- Prioritizes higher street connectivity in neighborhoods with high-stress streets

The community's residential regulations, commercial regulations, and zoning codes currently **establish maximum block lengths and size requirements, require stub-outs for connectivity to future developments, encourage alleyways, and promote greenways and paths alongside creeks and utility easements.**

The community's subdivision regulations **regulate cul-de-sac length and size and suggest pedestrian and street connectivity between neighborhoods. They also suggest that residential developments connect by sidewalks or pathways to other neighborhoods and suggest that residential developments connect by sidewalks to different neighborhoods.** Kansas City's subdivision regulations require streets in residential and commercial areas.

Other policy opportunities include:

- Identify performance measures for street connectivity
- Establishing connectivity index standards
- Discourage cul-de-sacs
- Require or suggest cul-de-sacs to connect to other destinations via multi-use paths or other pedestrian/bicycle easements
- Change subdivision regulations from suggesting connectivity to requiring connectivity

In terms of resources, Kansas City annually receives \$500,000 for Complete Streets. **However, despite having a Complete Streets policy and receiving this funding, none of it directly supports connectivity.**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

The ACT assessment identified strengths and opportunities for pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure. This section will focus on both pedestrians and bicyclists. Missouri does not have any planning or policy guidance or requirements that

affect local or regional products related to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Regardless, **Kansas City has a Vision Zero resolution that addresses reducing traffic-related deaths and injuries through a comprehensive plan.** Kansas City also has a Complete Streets policy, which is addressed through a comprehensive plan. Kansas City's Complete Streets policy:

- Requires private development projects to comply
- Requires interagency coordination among agencies such as public health, housing, and planning.
- Requires pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders to be considered when repaving roads
- Requires new construction and reconstruction projects to account for the needs of all transportation modes and users of the road network
- Suggests prioritizing populations with the greatest need, considering equity and inclusion
- Suggests having performance measures
- Does not require or suggest adopting state-of-the-practice design guidance
- Does not require or suggest that new or revised land use policies, plans, or zoning ordinances specify how they will support and be supported by Complete Streets
- Does not require or suggest that decision criteria should encourage prioritizing Complete Streets implementation
- Does not require or suggest that implementing agencies modify administrative guidance to accommodate Complete Streets implementation
- Does not require or suggest that maintenance projects and ongoing operations (e.g., resurfacing, repaving, etc.) and other changes to the transportation system account for the needs of all transportation modes and users of the road network

Kansas City currently **does not** address linking existing and planned shared-use paths through a plan or policy. Additionally, there is **no policy presently that restricts "right on red" signals. Nor is there a policy that allows for variation in the width of paved streets** depending on the area. There is a process for adding traffic calming measures to streets that is routinely used; however, it does not consistently produce the desired results. Similarly, there is a policy regarding unleashed dogs, but it is not routinely enforced. Kansas City also does not have a speed reduction policy. Sources such as the National Association of City/Transportation Officials (NACTO) best practices for design are used; however, Kansas City only follows these best practices for design sometimes.

Currently, Kansas City has 153 linear miles of shared-use paths available, along with a map that shows all public shared-use paths. Citizens can request maintenance on shared-use paths. Most shared-use paths in Kansas City **do not** have lighting or emergency call boxes for pedestrians and bicyclists. Maintenance of shared-use paths **does not** have a scheduled process or routine inspections. The community **does not** routinely count users on shared-use paths.

Kansas City requires developers to include green space within their projects and allows developers to pay a fee instead of incorporating green spaces. The current fee is \$20,000 per acre. Additionally, Kansas City has identified resources to redevelop roads to accommodate walking and biking, invest in other types of pedestrian and bicycle projects, maintain and repair shared-use paths, acquire land for new connections, and construct new shared-use paths. **However, federal transportation funding is not prioritized for pedestrian, bicycle, or multimodal facilities, and the percentage of the community's local annual transportation funding invested in pedestrian and bicycle projects over the last 12 months is unknown.**

In summary, opportunities identified by the ACT assessment for pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure include:

- Expand the policy framework surrounding Complete Streets
- Create a plan or policy that addresses connecting existing and planned shared-use paths
- Create a policy that restricts "right on red" signals

- Create a policy that allows for variations in the width of the paved streets depending on the character of the area, projected traffic volume, and desired speed of traffic
- Reevaluate the process and implementation of adding traffic calming measures to streets
- Increase the frequency of the enforcement of unleashed dogs
- Create a speed reduction policy
- Increase the frequency of following best practices for design for people who walk, bike, or use transit from the NACTO or another organization
- Add safety features to shared-use paths, such as pedestrian-friendly lighting and emergency call boxes
- Create a scheduled process and routine inspections for shared-use paths
- Routinely count users on shared-use paths
- Consider prioritizing federal transportation funding for pedestrian, bicycle, or multimodal facilities
- Determine what percent of the community's local annual transportation funding was invested in pedestrian and bicycle projects in the last 12 months

Pedestrian Infrastructure and Resources

This section will focus on just pedestrian infrastructure. Kansas City has a plan that addresses linking existing and planned sidewalk networks; however, it was adopted more than 10 years ago. **The plan has goals to reduce pedestrian fatalities, but not to increase walking.** The plan is rarely consulted when making relevant decisions, and **no pedestrian-oriented goals were accomplished in the last year.** There is no policy that supports linking existing and planned sidewalk networks. Engaging pedestrians and those facing greater health obstacles in the community is facilitated through neighborhood associations.

In terms of development, Kansas City has policies that **require sidewalks on both sides of the street in residential developments, commercial developments, and any redevelopment.** There are established standards in the community for sidewalk widths that meet minimum criteria. Kansas City **does not** have established standards for separating sidewalks from motorized vehicle lanes, **nor are there** any policies that address the installation of traffic islands or medians to enhance pedestrian safety.

Currently, the number of linear miles of sidewalks available in Kansas City is **unknown.** **Maintenance of sidewalks is reactive, based on citizens' requests,** as there is no scheduled process or routine inspection currently in place. Kansas City **does routinely repaint crosswalks;** however, **regularly keeping sidewalks clean and clear is not a priority.** Additionally, there is **no pedestrian-oriented street lighting on any road type** (arterial, collector, or local), which reduces pedestrian safety.

Kansas City collects data related to walking, including pedestrian injuries, fatalities, and the presence of sidewalks. Sidewalk users are not routinely counted. The data collected is not used to improve equity among populations experiencing disparities.

Funding has been identified to improve infrastructure to accommodate walking and to maintain and repair sidewalks. There is also a full-time staff responsible for implementing pedestrian-related policies and plans, but there is no advisory group tasked with developing pedestrian-related policies and plans. The total percentage of the community's local annual transportation funding invested in pedestrian projects over the last 12 months is unknown.

In summary, opportunities identified by the ACT assessment for pedestrian infrastructure include:

- Create a new plan or update the current plan that addresses linking existing and planned sidewalk networks
- Create a policy that addresses linking existing and planned sidewalk networks
- Create a goal to increase pedestrian travel
- Create a new plan or update the current plan that focuses specifically on pedestrians
- Reevaluate pedestrian goals and priorities

- Consider a policy that requires or suggests that commercial developments, including worksites, incorporate amenities that encourage walking on sidewalks or paths
- Establish standards for sidewalk separation from vehicles
- Establish standards that address the installation of traffic islands/medians on newly built and reconstructed streets
- Update the maintenance program to include a scheduled process and routine inspections of sidewalk networks
- Prioritize keeping sidewalks clean and clear in the community's maintenance program
- Routinely count users on sidewalks
- Use data collected to improve equity
- Install pedestrian-oriented street lighting on arterial, collector, and local roads
- Identify the total percent of local annual transportation funding that was invested in pedestrian projects in the last 12 months

Bicycle Infrastructure and Resources

This section will focus on just bicyclist infrastructure. Kansas City has a plan to connect existing and future bicycle networks, which was adopted less than five years ago and has been updated within the same timeframe. **However, no plan focuses specifically on bicyclists.** The community **does not have a goal to increase bicycle travel; however, it does have a goal to reduce bicycle fatalities and injuries.** The community attempts to engage individuals facing greater health obstacles or who may be difficult to contact through neighborhood associations during the planning process. Despite having a plan that addresses linking existing and planned bicycle networks, there are currently no policies that do so.

When designing new roads or updating existing ones in the community:

- Considers bicycle fatalities
- Sometimes, consider the speed limit on the road
- Sometimes, consider the average daily traffic count on roads
- Sometimes consider the number of lanes of the road

The community considers neighborhood concerns, the high-injury network, resurfacing schedules, connections with other facilities, and political will when making decisions regarding bicycle facilities, whether new roads are being built or existing ones are updated.

In summary, the opportunities for bicycle-related plans and policies include:

- Consider pedestrians when designing new roads or updating existing ones
- Create a plan explicitly focused on bicyclists
- Create a goal to increase bicycle travel
- Create a policy that addresses linking existing and planned bicycle networks

Kansas City has made notable progress by incorporating bicycle boulevards, conventional or buffered bicycle lanes, and protected bicycle lanes into its transportation network. While these facilities are in place, there are opportunities to further strengthen them through the development of policies to guide their implementation.

For bicycle boulevards, policies could be enhanced by clearly defining desired traffic conditions, such as specific targets for peak-hour volume and off-peak speeds. Additionally, adopting measures to manage vehicle speeds (e.g., speed humps or traffic circles) and strategies to reduce motor vehicle volumes could help reinforce the low-stress intent of bicycle boulevards. Also, using time-of-day analyses could better align usage patterns and regulations.

Conventional and buffered bicycle lanes could benefit from policies that actively promote low-speed, low-volume environments, such as setting speed limits at or below 25 mph and discouraging motor vehicle through movements.

Additionally, focusing on reducing curbside and intersection conflicts, as well as adjusting buffer widths, could improve rider comfort and safety.

Protected bicycle lanes could be further supported by policies that require their installation where vehicle speeds exceed 25 mph and guide the management of curbside and intersection conflicts. Emphasizing retrofitting strategies (e.g., converting existing travel lanes or upgrading buffered lanes) along with requiring vertical separation where parking is not present could reinforce the city's investment in high-quality, protected cycling infrastructure.

Additionally, **there are currently standards for established bicycle lane widths that meet minimum criteria.** The community also has **policies that require developers to incorporate bicycle parking**, both short and long-term, based on criteria. **There are strengths in the built environment that include:**

- Buffered bicycle lanes – 6 linear miles
- Conventional bicycle lanes – 30 linear miles
- Protected bicycle lanes – 16 linear miles
- Shared-use paths – 153 linear miles
- Signage such as "Share the Road"
- Bicycle parking
- Bicycle share program
- Community-produced map of bicycle infrastructure and amenities
- Opportunities for bicyclist training within the community

Maintenance for the community's on-street bicycle infrastructure **does not include scheduled or routine inspections; only reactive maintenance is performed in response to** citizen requests. The community's maintenance program **prioritizes keeping bicycle infrastructure clear of debris, snow, and vegetation, as well as routinely repainting bicycle lanes and maintaining protected bicycle lanes** (e.g., replacing downed plastic posts). Other elements the community's maintenance program currently **does not** have but could consider to improve bicycle infrastructure include:

- Ensuring sewer and storm grates are bicycle-friendly
- Ensuring street shoulders, transition areas between streets and bridges, areas around grates, and surfaces between streets and gutters are free of potholes

Within the last five years, the community has removed one bicycle facility, Truman Road. In terms of data collection, **the community collects data on bicycle infrastructure and bicycle injuries.** They also collect data on bicycling from 311 requested bicycle routes, and Children's Mercy collects prevalence data of youth walking and biking to school. During the planning and implementation process, the community considers high-injury network data. The community **does not** collect data on bicyclist behavior, and bicyclists are not routinely counted on roadways and bicycle lanes. **None of the data collected by the community is used to improve health equity and reduce health disparities.**

One of the most significant resources that Kansas City can continue to strengthen the bicycle network is through identified funding sources that can be used to:

- Improve infrastructure to accommodate bicycling
- Maintain and repair bicycle facilities
- Provide bicycle parking to local businesses

In summary, opportunities identified in the ACT assessment for bicyclist infrastructure include:

- Creating low-speed shared streets
- Establish community policies for bicycle boulevards
- Establish community policies for conventional and/or buffered bicycle lanes

- Establish community policies for protected bicycle lanes
- Establish standards for the separation of bicycle lanes from motorized vehicle lanes
- Consider free bicycle helmets
- Establish a schedule, process, and routine inspection process for bicycle infrastructure in the community's maintenance program
- Incorporate additional elements in the community maintenance program to improve bicycle infrastructure
- Collect data on bicyclist behavior
- Routinely count bicyclists on roadways and bicycle lanes
- Use data collected to address health equity and reduce health disparities
- Establish a group tasked with advising on bicycle-related policies and plans

These opportunities can support the community's goal of reducing bicycle fatalities and injuries.

Park Facilities and Infrastructure

Over the past year, Kansas City has evaluated the quality of its park facilities, and the results of the assessment are currently being used to enhance the quality of the parks. Kansas City has also partnered with local businesses (e.g., Urban Trails Co.) and nonprofits (e.g., Roanoke Conservancy) to continue improving parks and increasing their usage. Additionally, Kansas City has the **KC Parks Master Plan (2022-2032)**, which guides the development and upgrades of parks and recreation facilities. **Some parks (e.g., Swope, Kessler) have individual master plans.** Under the KC Parks Master Plan (2022-2032), there are strengths such as:

- The development of new parks is routinely enforced under the master plan.
- The repair, maintenance, and upgrade of existing park facilities are facilitated through the master plan
- There is a policy in the master plan whose goal is that all residents live within 1 mile of a park
- The master plan includes the most recent assessment of the quality of parks and recreation facilities
- The master plan includes tools such as quality assessments

Additionally, **other identified strengths of the park system include:**

- There are state entities (e.g., Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources), regional entities (e.g., MARC), and local resources (e.g., KC Spirit Playbook) that provide guidance or planning assistance to parks and recreation facilities
 - The entities that provide guidance and planning can also be sources of funding, or guides for how to acquire funding
- There is identified funding for maintaining and repairing existing parks, and funding to develop new parks
- There is strong policy and plan support for preserving open spaces, green spaces, and infrastructure, with each area of the city having a plan to do so
- There are routine inspections, scheduled maintenance, and community-driven requests that occur – most are handled through PIAC requests
- Park siting considers existing and planned shared-use paths, trails, and sidewalks to enhance connectivity
- Parks and Recreation regularly takes green spaces from developers to connect them to the trail system
- Residential developments are required to include park land or pay a fee (\$20,000/acre)
- There are active conservancy groups (e.g., Roanoke, Loose Park) and some neighborhood groups (e.g., Marlboro) that contribute to maintenance and safety
- The exact percentage of homes located within a 0.25-mile radius is currently unknown. The Trust for Public Land estimates that 69% of residents in Kansas City live within a 10-minute walk of a park
- Data collected are being utilized to address disparities and to prioritize improvements

- The QLID (Quality of Life District) assesses and maintains historically underserved parks in the urban core to address equity
 - This includes feedback loops that involve conducting regular assessments, bi-weekly visual inspections, and community feedback
- There is currently an interactive parks map website feature in development to increase access to park information
- An Adopt-a-Park program exists; however, there is little information available about the extent of the program's utilization

Additional **opportunities for improvement** were identified by the ACT Assessment, including but not limited to:

- Formalize policies for park maintenance to guide repairs
- Formalize policies for park safety, including safety protocols
- Expand connectivity of green spaces, trails, and shared-use paths to support walkability and cycling
- Engage renters and underserved residents in park planning processes
- Require commercial developments to include park land or green spaces
- Require redevelopments (not just residential redevelopments) to include park land or green spaces
- Leverage development policies to fund and expand public green spaces
- Strengthen the representation of the Parks Board to include residents who face greater obstacles to health, a public health representative, and a planning/transportation representative
- Expand the collection of broader parks use data beyond trail counts

In Summary

Kansas City, Missouri, has several plans and policies aimed at improving pedestrian, bicycle, and park infrastructure; however, these plans and policies are often underutilized, outdated, or lack strong enforcement. Kansas City has made some progress, especially with Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and the KC Parks Master Plan; however, gaps in the implementation of these plans and policies hinder the ability to achieve their respective goals. For example, Kansas City has goals to reduce both pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities. However, the policy frameworks that would support these goals do not exist (i.e., Kansas City does not have a policy that restricts "right on red", nor are there any speed limit reduction policies).

Potential changes to policies or systems:

- Update outdated plans (i.e., sidewalks, pedestrian)
- Create a plan specifically for bicyclists
- Establish connectivity requirements – not just suggestions
- Require linking existing and planned sidewalk and bicycle networks in planning and policy documents
- Add high-stress street mapping and connectivity into official plans
- Formalize maintenance schedules and processes for parks, bicycle networks, and pedestrian networks
- Create policies restricting "right on red" and allowing for street width variation
- Create a speed reduction policy
- Adopt/create stronger bicycle lane policies
- Create advisory committees for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Increase engagement with underserved communities
- Use collected data to address equity
- Expand representation on the Parks Board (e.g., public health, transportation experts, etc.)
- Establish performance metrics for street connectivity, bicycle networks, and pedestrian networks
- Track and report annual pedestrian and bicycle funding used towards their respective projects

- Prioritize using federal funding for transportation projects that are not focused on motor vehicles

Potential changes to the built environment:

- Create the ability to retrofit cul-de-sacs, and conventional/buffered bicycle lanes
- Expand sidewalk and bicycle networks
- Connect green spaces, trails, and parks with the broader pedestrian and bicycle network
- Improve user safety by installing pedestrian-oriented lighting across all road types
- Improve user safety by installing emergency call boxes
- Ensure bicycle-friendly designs on sewer/storm grates and in transition areas between road features
- Expand access to QLID areas to ensure that underserved areas meet park proximity goals
- Require parks or green spaces in all development types, not just residential
- Expand the use of wayfinding signage
- Utilize vertical separation between bicycle lanes and motor traffic
- Create low-speed shared streets
- Build traffic calming measures that achieve the desired results

Reflection Questions:

1. What additional data or information is needed? (e.g., street level audits, quality of infrastructure and facilities)
2. What opportunities may exist for improvement?
3. Where could the biggest improvement be made?
4. What actions are likely to get political support?
5. What actions are likely to get community support?
6. What opportunities may exist to address health equity?
7. What actions are feasible?
8. What actions best align with addressing community needs and preferences?

Appendix A- ACT Module 1: Street Design and Connectivity

Street Design and Connectivity - Plans

Strengths	Opportunities
	The community currently does not have a plan to identify high and low stress streets
	The community currently does not have a plan that prioritizes higher street connectivity in neighborhoods with high-stress streets
The community has a major and collector street plan, called the Major Street Plan, that describes existing and future streets constructed by the community through future developments. • The plan is 10 years or older • It was adopted in 2011 • It was last amended on June 15, 2023 The Major Street Plan considers other modes of transportation other than automobiles	The Major Street Plan was rarely consulted by groups or individuals (e.g., elected officials, planning department, local developers, etc.) when making relevant decisions Connectivity goals are not a significant part of the Major Street Plan

Street Design and Connectivity - Policies (e.g., commercial regulations or zoning codes)

Strengths	Opportunities
The community's residential or commercial regulations or zoning codes: • Set maximum block lengths and block size requirements • Require stub-outs to ensure connectivity to future developments • Encourage alleyways • Allow for or encourage greenways or paths alongside creeks/streams • Allow for or encourage greenways or paths alongside utility easements	The community residential or commercial regulations or zoning codes do not: • Set connectivity standards
The community subdivision regulations or zoning codes regulate cul-de-sac length and size	The community subdivision regulations or zoning codes do not discourage cul-de-sacs
The community subdivision regulations or zoning codes suggest: • Pedestrian and street connectivity between neighborhoods • Residential developments connect by sidewalks or pathways to other neighborhoods • Residential developments connect by sidewalks or pathways to schools or other community destinations ○ The city cannot require this; it can only suggest it	The community subdivision regulations or zoning codes do not suggest or require: • Cul-de-sacs to connect to other destinations via multi-use paths or other pedestrian/bicycle easements
The community's subdivision regulations	The community does not have performance measures for

require or suggest that all newly constructed or redeveloped streets connect to adjacent neighborhoods and community amenities via: • Require – Streets in residential areas • Require – Streets in commercial areas • Suggest – Sidewalks or shared-use paths in residential areas • Suggest – Sidewalks or shared-use paths in commercial areas	street connectivity
Street Design and Connectivity - Resources	
Strengths	Opportunities
	The community currently does not actively invest in transportation funding to improve street connectivity

Section A - Plans and Policies for Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure

Strengths	Opportunities
There is a plan that uses Vision Zero to address reducing traffic deaths and injuries. This is a resolution	There are no state planning or policy guidance/requirements that affect local or regional products or processes related to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
There is a plan that addresses Complete Streets. - This is a policy The policy/ordinance of Complete Streets: - Requires private development projects to comply - Requires interagency coordination - Requires pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders to be considered when repaving roads - Requires new construction and reconstruction projects to account for all transportation modes and users of the road network - Suggests prioritizing populations with the greatest need - Suggests performance measures	There are opportunities to improve the Complete Streets policy/ordinance: - Could require the adoption of state-of-the-practice design guidance or the development/revision of internal design policies or guides - Could require new or revised land use policies, plans, or zoning ordinances to specify how they will support and be supported by Complete Streets - Could require decision criteria to encourage prioritization for Complete Streets implementation - Could require implementing agencies to modify administrative guidance to accommodate Complete Streets implementation - Could require maintenance projects and ongoing operations, or other types of changes to the transportation system to account for the needs of all transportation modes and users of the road network
	Create a policy restricting "right on red" signals
	Create a policy allowing for variation in widths of paved streets depending on the character of the area, projected traffic volume, and desired speed of traffic
The community has a process to add traffic calming measures to the streets, and it is routinely used; however, it does not produce the desired results	Identify ways to improve the process of adding traffic calming measures
There is a policy regarding unleashed dogs; however, it is not routinely enforced	
The community's zoning regulations/local ordinances: - Require planting street trees in residential developments - Require planting street trees in commercial developments - Require planting street trees in any redevelopment	
	Create a speed limit reduction policy

The community uses the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) best practices for design for people who walk, bike, or use transit	Increase the frequency of following best practices for design for people who walk, bike, or use transit from NACTO or another organization
Section A - Environment for Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community has 153 linear miles of shared-use paths currently available	Implement safety amenities on shared-use paths for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as: • Lighting • Emergency call boxes
There is a map of the community's shared-use paths available to the public	
Maintenance on shared-use paths occurs at citizens' requests	Expand maintenance on shared-use paths to include: • Regular maintenance • Routine inspections
	Consider routinely counting users on shared-use paths
Section A - Resources for Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community asks developers to pay a fee (\$20,000/acre) to help with expenses for new parks, open spaces, and paths elsewhere in the community as a substitute for requiring developers to include in their residential projects	Require commercial developments to include open or green spaces, or pay the structured fee
The community has identified resources to: • Redevelop roads to accommodate walking and biking • Spend on other types of pedestrian and bike projects • Maintain and repair shared-use paths • Acquire land for new connections and build new shared-use paths	Consider prioritizing federal transportation funding for pedestrian, bike, or multimodal facilities over vehicle-only facilities
	The percentage of the community's local annual transportation funding that was invested in pedestrian and bicycle projects in the last 12 months is currently unknown
Section B - Plans and Policies for Pedestrian Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community has a plan that addresses linking or connecting existing and planned sidewalk networks • The plan was adopted more than 10 years ago	Create a policy that addresses linking or connecting existing and planned sidewalk networks
The community has a goal to lower pedestrian fatalities and injuries	Create a community goal to increase pedestrian travel
The community has a plan explicitly focused on pedestrians • The plan was adopted more than 10 years ago	In the past year, none of the pedestrian-oriented goals or priorities in the plan were accomplished

	Consider consulting the pedestrian-focused plan more than 'rarely' when making relevant decisions
During the planning process for pedestrian facilities, the local government and its consultants try to engage with individuals experiencing greater obstacles to health and those who are harder to contact through neighborhood associations	
There is a policy that requires sidewalks to be on both sides in: - Residential developments - Commercial developments - Any redevelopment	Consider a policy that requires or suggests that commercial developments, including worksites, incorporate amenities that encourage walking on the sidewalks or paths
The community's established standards for sidewalk widths meet minimum criteria	Consider establishing standards for the separation of sidewalks from motorized vehicle lanes
	Consider a policy to address the installation of traffic islands or medians on newly built or reconstructed streets
Section B - Environment for Pedestrian Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
	The number of linear miles of sidewalks available in the community is currently unknown
Maintenance on sidewalks happens in the community through citizens' requests	Consider maintaining sidewalks in the community with: - A scheduled process - Routine inspections
The community's maintenance program includes a schedule that prioritizes routinely repainting sidewalks	Consider prioritizing keeping sidewalks clean and clear within the community's maintenance program
The community collects data on pedestrian injuries/fatalities and the presence of sidewalks	Consider routinely counting users on sidewalks
The community uses the data collected for planning and implementation purposes to improve the presence/quality of sidewalks	Consider using the data collected to improve equity among populations experiencing disparities
	Consider the following safety amenities for pedestrians: - Pedestrian-oriented street lighting on most arterial roads - Pedestrian-oriented street lighting on most collector roads - Pedestrian-oriented street lighting on most local roads
Section B - Resources for Pedestrian Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community has identified funding to: - Improve infrastructure to accommodate walking - Maintain and repair sidewalks	
The community has a dedicated, full-time staff person responsible for implementing pedestrian-related policies and plans	Consider having a group tasked with advising on pedestrian-related policies and/or plans

Section C – Plans and Policies for Bicyclist Infrastructure

Strengths	Opportunities
The community has a plan that addresses linking or connecting existing and planned bicycling networks • The plan was adopted less than 5 years ago • It was last updated 1-5 years ago	Consider creating a plan explicitly focused on bicyclists
The community has a goal to lower bicycling injuries and fatalities	Consider a goal to increase bicycle travel
During the planning process for bicycle fatalities, the local government and its consultants try to engage individuals experiencing greater obstacles to health or who may be hard to contact through neighborhood associations	
	Consider a policy that addresses linking and connecting existing and planned bicycling networks
Bicycle fatalities are considered when designing new roads and updating existing roads When new roads are built or existing roads are updated, the following are considered, sometimes*: • Speed limit on the road • Average daily traffic count on the road • Number of lanes of the road	Consider pedestrian usage when making decisions regarding bicycle fatalities when new roads are built or existing ones are updated
The community also considers the following when making decisions regarding bicycle facilities: • Neighborhood concern • High injury network • Resurfacing schedule • Connection with other facilities • Political will	Consider low-speed shared streets that allow bicyclists to use the roadway comfortably
The community has bicycle boulevards	The community's policies for bicycle boulevards: • Do not specify both peak-hour volume and off-peak speed • Do not set a target speed at or below 25mph for vehicles • Do not manage motor vehicle speeds (such as speed humps, traffic circles, etc.) • Do not reduce motor vehicle volume • Do not use time-of-day analysis to match regulations to demand
The community has both conventional and buffered bicycle lanes	The community's policies for conventional and buffered bicycle lanes: • Do not set target speeds at or below 25mph • Do not discourage motor vehicle through-movement to reduce volumes • Do not reduce curbside conflicts with other vehicles • Address intersection conflicts with other vehicles • Increase buffer distance when appropriate

The community has protected bike lanes	The community's policies for protected bike lanes: • Do not say to build protected bike lanes where motor vehicle speeds consistently exceed 25mph • Do not manage intersection and curbside conflicts with other vehicles • Do not reduce speeds through operational strategies (e.g., speed reduction, signalization, proactive curbside management) • Do not retrofit a travel lane to a protected bicycle lane on streets with multiple lanes in both directions • Do not reverse the position of the parking and bicycle lane to create physical separation between the bicycle and motor vehicle traffic on streets with parking, with appropriate buffers for opening car doors • Do not add vertical separation elements/protection on streets without parking • Do not retrofit conventional or buffered lanes to protected lanes
The community's established standards for bicycle lane widths meet minimum criteria	Consider establishing standards for the separation of bicycle lanes from motorized vehicle lanes, such as those based on vehicle speeds and traffic volume
The community has policies that incentivize developers to incorporate bicycle amenities on site, including: • Requiring bike parking • Both short-term and long-term are based on criteria	
Section C – Environment for Bicyclist Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The following bicycle infrastructure/amenities are currently available in the community: • Buffered bicycle lanes – 6 linear miles • Conventional bicycle lanes – 30 linear miles • Protected bicycle lanes – 16 linear miles • Shared-use paths – 153 linear miles • Signage such as "Share the Road" • Bicycle parking • Bicycle share program • Community-produced map of bicycle infrastructure and amenities	The following bicycle infrastructure/amenities are currently not available in the community: • Low-speed shared streets • Bicycle boulevards – 0 linear miles • Free helmets • Signed bicycle routes
On-street bicycle infrastructure is maintained through citizens' requests	Consider maintaining bicycle infrastructure through: • A scheduled process • Routine inspections
The community's maintenance program includes a schedule that prioritizes the following work for on-street bicycle infrastructure over vehicle infrastructure:	The community's maintenance program currently does not include a schedule that prioritizes the following work for on-street bicycle infrastructure over vehicle infrastructure:

- Keep bicycle infrastructure clean and clear of debris, snow, vegetation, and other obstructions. - Routinely repaint bicycle lanes - Maintaining protected bicycle lanes	- Ensure sewer/storm grates are bicycle-friendly (e.g., metal surfaces are roughened to prevent skidding, ensuring bicycle wheels do not get caught in the grates) - Ensure street shoulders, transition areas between streets and bridges, areas around grates, and surfaces between streets and gutters are free of potholes
There are trainings for bicyclists (e.g., youth bike education, adult bike education) provided by community organizations/government agencies	In the last 5 years, has the community removed a bicycle facility – Truman Road
The community collects the following data related to biking: - Bicycle infrastructure - Bicycle injuries The community also collects data related to biking from: 311 requested bicycle routes - Children's Mercy collects the prevalence of biking/walking to school	The community currently does not collect the following data related to biking: Bicyclist behavior Consider routinely counting bicyclists on the roadway and bicycle lanes
The community uses the data collected for planning and implementation purposes – namely, the high injury network data	Consider using the data collected to improve health equity and reduce health disparities
Section C – Resources for Bicyclist Infrastructure	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community has identified funding sources to: - Improve infrastructure to accommodate bicycling - Maintain and repair bicycle facilities - Provide bicycle parking to local businesses	
The community does have a dedicated staff person to implement bicycle-related policies and plans The staff person is part-time/shares with other job duties	Consider a group tasked with advising on bicycle-related policies and plans

Appendix C- ACT Module 5: Parks and Recreation Facilities

Kansas City Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Strengths	Opportunities
Depending on the project, guidance or planning can be provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Department of Natural Resources, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), and the KC Spirit Playbook.	
Many entities offering guidance or planning for parks and recreation can also serve as sources of funding or provide guidance on what parks and recreation need to do to secure funding.	
Maintenance, repair, and upgrade of existing parks and recreation facilities are facilitated through the KC Parks Master Plan, which was updated within the last year to be a 10-year plan through 2032. This plan was adopted within the previous 5 years.	
Maintenance, repair, and upgrade of existing parks is updated as needed or at PIAC request	There is no policy guiding the maintenance, repair, and upgrade of existing parks and recreation facilities.
The development of new parks is facilitated through the 10-year KC Parks Master Plan. - Some parks have their own Master Plans (Blue Valley Park, Swope Park, Kessler Park) - The development of parks is routinely enforced per the Master Plan	
There is guidance in the Master Plan for aspects such as landscaping to ensure that hedges aren't installed directly adjacent to parking areas. Safety officers have made recommendations for plans at certain parks that have them	The safety of parks is not guaranteed through a plan; there are numerous caveats. The plan does not regulate the Park Police (they work with police departments for illegal activity)
	A policy does not facilitate safety in parks. Best practices are in place that are already being done
Open space and protected green infrastructure preservation are facilitated through a plan (KC Spirit Playbook). - There are area plans from each part of the city for preserving green space - The zoning ordinance talks about preserving open space	
Open space and protected green infrastructure preservation are facilitated through a policy. - The policy is routinely enforced - Parks and recreation regularly take on green spaces from developers to connect to the trail system	

Kansas City Parks and Recreation Facilities - Plans	
Strengths	Opportunities
The Master Plan was consulted on within the last year when making relevant decisions. Sometimes, funding source requirements needed to be followed instead	
The new parks and recreation plan was adopted within the last six months, which includes goals and priorities to be accomplished. - Individual parks are being utilized to accomplish goals (i.e., Kessler Park is in the process of using the Master Plan to implement infrastructure improvements) - Aquatics Plan – neighborhood group(s) will apply for PIAC funding to get a splash pad put in that aligns with the Aquatics Master Plan	
During the planning process for parks and recreation facilities, the local government and its consultants strive to engage with individuals who face greater health challenges or are more difficult to reach. Part of the process is going out into neighborhoods and sending their neighborhood leaders out into the community to get feedback	It is challenging to engage renters in the planning process for parks and recreation facilities.
Kansas City Parks and Recreation Facilities - Policies	
Strengths	Opportunities
There is a policy in the Master Plan that all publicly accessible parks be within a certain distance of all residents. The goal is to have a public park within 1 mile of all residents	
Parks Systems and Land Assessment has a section for infrastructure and park location connectivity. Recently, the parks board has become more interested in buying new property and has purchased a property within the last year	
Existing or planned shared-use paths, trails, and sidewalks enhance connectivity to parks and other recreational areas.	
There is a policy that requires or suggests building parks, open spaces, paths, and connectors: In residential developments. The Park Land Dedication requirement is fully enforced. Any new residential development is required to provide a certain amount of public green space. They can make it a private park and maintain it themselves.	- Commercial developments are not required to include parks, open spaces, paths, and connectors. - Redevelopments are not required to include parks, open spaces, paths, and connectors, unless they are redeveloping for residential use.
The community maintains parks through a scheduled process. Regular maintenance of parks, including	

trimming trees, cutting grass, etc. If it is an infrastructure-related incident it can be address through the PIAC process. • There are routine inspections of parks • Citizens can request park maintenance	
Kansas City Parks and Recreation Facilities – Environment	
Strengths	Opportunities
The community has 222 parks.	Within the last 5 years, Kansas City has permanently closed one park, Belvidere Park. Ordinance #240691 was passed on August 15, 2024, and the land was sold to the Missouri Department of Mental Health for redevelopment as a new Missouri State Behavioral Health Facility, in partnership with University Health.
	The number of acres of public park land owned by the community is currently unknown
The usability of parks is assessed in the community through neighborhood feedback and routine checks on park status by park staff. • There are also conservancy groups for individual parks	
For the usability of parks, the criteria for assessing the usability of park facilities include: • Parks are not locked during daylight hours	For the usability of parks, the criteria for assessing the usability currently do not include: • Entrances on all sides of the parks. The community looks for the easiest path to the park, or entrances of highest need at individual parks • Entrances that accommodate pedestrians and bicycles • Sidewalks in and around the parks are well-maintained For the criteria of parks not being locked during daylight hours: • Parks should not be locked during daylight hours. Some parks have locks that are not being locked. There is a general policy for having parks open for a certain time in the day. However, there are not enough park rangers to enforce or inspect each park. If there is a locked fence area it would either be a park ranger or an agreement with a neighborhood organization to lock (i.e., Loose Park Splash Pad is locked up by Friends of Loose Park Program).
	The percentage of parks in the community that are considered usable is currently unknown The percentage of dwellings in the community that are located within 0.25 miles of a public park is unknown
	The usability assessment(s) are not used to improve park facilities.

Kansas City itself does not close streets to allow residents to use roadways for walking, biking, etc. However, there is a process for requesting them to be closed as needed for things like festivals. • It a frequent, at request process, rather than a scheduled one	
An interactive map website feature is currently in development.	
In the last year, the quality of park facilities was assessed within the community: • The assessment is included in the Master Plan • Neighborhoods do routine assessments • The assessment is currently being used to improve the quality of park facilities in the community	
The community collects data on park use through the trail count program.	
The community collects data to improve equity among populations experiencing disparities. • Special assessments are currently being conducted for individual parks. They identify what is in disrepair and what needs to be fixed. This program was implemented after community members officially complained that parks in certain parts of the city were not being equally maintained. • The Quality of Life Investment District (QLID) is evaluating specific parks in the urban core to identify what is lacking to bring them up to the same level as other parks. Parks are compared in bi-weekly meetings with visual assessments (of equipment, amenities, etc.) and feedback from residents. QLID has its own maintenance district and has its funding to sustain it.	
Kansas City Parks and Recreation Facilities – Resources	
Strengths	Opportunities
There is a policy that requires new residential developments to include parks, open spaces, and paths.	
If a developer does not want to include new parks, open spaces, paths, etc., in their new residential developments, the community allows them to pay a fee instead. • The fee is based on the rate of the last 5 years of purchased property with parks and the number of acres of land, as per zoning and development code 88-408. • Currently, this fee is approximately \$20,000	
There are incentives for developers and landowners to conserve non-regulated land.	

• Payment is allowed in lieu of land and land dedication. • There is also a tree preservation ordinance. ○ Developers use a formula based on how many acres they have to determine the amount of trees they need to preserve to get a credit.	
There are identified funding resources to both maintain and repair existing parks and recreation facilities, as well as to develop new ones.	
There is an Adopt-A-Park or similar program that supports resident participation in maintaining parks and promoting safety.	The activity level of the Adopt-A-Park program is currently unknown
Some parks have conservancy groups. The groups actively participate in maintaining the parks, utilizing the Master Plan as a guide. • Parks with conservancy groups include Roanoke Park, Loose Park, Kessler Park, and Penn Valley Park • The Marlboro neighborhood is a very active neighborhood group	The exact proportion of parks in the community that have an active resident group that participates in maintaining parks or promoting safety is unknown.
Over the last year, the Roanoke Conservancy and Urban Trails Co. partnered with parks and recreation to enhance the parks and increase their usage.	
There is a Parks Board tasked with advising on parks and open spaces. The Parks Board must obtain approval for any improvements made by the department. The Parks Board currently: • Parks Board meets quarterly • Paid staff support/coordinate the meetings • Unsure if the budget is separate from the regular parks budget • Conduct assessments of parks and recreation facilities in the community • Intentionally address equity (i.e., QLID assessment of urban core) • Has a long-term strategic plan • Conducts an evaluation to assess progress towards meeting goals/objectives	The Parks Board currently does not: • Have a public health representative • Have a planning and/or transportation representative (There are advisors, but they are not full board members) • Include elected officials (The Mayor appoints commissioners) • Have representation by residents with greater obstacles to health in the community

ACT Assessment: Opportunities for Physical Activity in Kansas City, Missouri



The Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules

The Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity



<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/community-strategies/active-communities-tool>



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Executive Summary

Plans

The current planning landscape is largely informal and reactive, rather than structured and policy driven. While there has been meaningful engagement and momentum around new school construction (especially following a recent bond), the absence of a current adopted Plan, especially around Safe Routes to School (SRTS), is a major gap. Planning efforts happen in silos and lack system-wide coordination, particularly around transportation and land-use around existing schools.

Policies

Policies to promote physical activity within Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) are fragmented, informal, and inconsistent. There are current practices with KCPS that align with best practices (e.g., shared use of facilities, safety improvements, etc.), however they are not codified into enforceable, standardized policies.

Built Environment

The built environment shows incremental progress but lacks coordination and data-driven planning. Improvements are happening, but without a clear framework, tracking system, or integration with planning and policy. This limits the ability to evaluate effectiveness or ensure equitable distribution of infrastructure improvements.

Resources

Resources exist but are loosely organized and heavily dependent on external partners. There is no central coordination, dedicated staffing, or sustained funding streams. While programs and support mechanisms (like crossing guards and BikeWalkKC initiatives) are valuable, the lack of institutional structure limits scalability and long-term sustainability.

Strengths identified in Module 6:

- Strong community engagement in new school planning
- Open access to school facilities
- Existing partnerships and encouragement programs
- Emerging safety-focused policy changes

Opportunities identified in Module 6:

- Developing a Safe Routes to School Plan
- Developing formal policies to guide siting, staffing, and coordination of physical activity measures
- Identify data, tracking, and evaluation systems
- Reduce siloing and increase coordination across departments and stakeholders

Term	Definition
Comprehensive Plan	The adopted official statement of a governing body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction and that includes a unified physical design for the public and private development of land.
Full life cycle cost	An economic method of assessing the total cost of facility ownership. This includes costs related to owning, constructing, operating, maintaining, and disposing of the facility.
Safe Routes to School	Also referred to as active travel to school. The intervention to encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to/from school must include one or more of the following: engineering, education, encouragement, and enforcement. The intervention may also include evaluation.
School siting	The process of selecting locations in the community for new schools that takes into account community land use patterns, infrastructure needs, environmental hazards, and other issues.

Background

The purpose of this document is to synthesize information from the CDC's Active Communities Tool Module 6 to highlight strengths and opportunities for improving policies, Plans, and the built environment in Kansas City, Missouri, thereby supporting active living.

The **CDC Active Communities Tool (ACT)** was developed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of community Plans, policies, and resources for improving the built environment for physical activity. The tool can help communities identify areas for improvement and develop action Plans to enhance the built environment. Staff and faculty at UMKC, Children's Mercy, BikeWalkKC, and other affiliated parties completed the ACT modules as part of a larger CDC REACH project. The full results from the assessment can be found in Appendix A of this document.

The focus of Module 6 is schools, and assess the areas of:

- Plans
- Policies
- The built environment
- Resources

As mentioned, **the purpose of this document is not to provide recommendations but rather to highlight where information from each source aligns, which could inform priority setting, planning, or decision-making as it relates to increasing opportunities for physical activity** in Kansas City, Missouri.

Summary of Assessments- Opportunities to Increase Physical Activity

Plans

Within the context of the ACT Assessment Module 6, Plans are defined as those written and adopted by a local authority (e.g., school district). Plans can stand alone (e.g., Safe Routes to School Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Plan) or be part of a Comprehensive Plan (e.g., Master Plan, General Plan). "Plan" is capitalized to indicate that it is a document adopted by a local authority. This section focuses on identified strengths and opportunities for physical activity within Kansas City Public Schools through Plans.

Currently there are limited references to an outdated Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS), but it is not strictly followed. Planning processes are limited, however there is strong engagement with the community, but it is not structured.

Some key findings include:

- There is no active adopted Plan supporting walking and biking
- Some informal planning practices exist, especially around new school construction
- There is strong public engagement around the new school design processes
- There are no formal processes to evaluate transportation or land use needs
- Efforts to engage hard to reach populations are informal and inconsistent, often through partnerships with the city

In addition to the key findings, which show gaps and strengths, from Module 6 there were identified opportunities to promote physical activity in KCPS through Plans. Some potential opportunities include:

- Update and adopt a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan
- Integrate physical activity measures into existing planning processes
- Formalize a standard transportation and land use evaluation Plan
- Identify opportunities for structured engagement with the community around physical activity

The biggest opportunities exist around moving from informal planning process to a structured planning process that is adopted, that embeds physical activity as a core outcome.

Policies

Within the context of the ACT Assessment Module 6, policies are defined as those written and adopted by a local authority, including the school district. Policies include local ordinances (including zoning regulations, subdivision

ordinances, street design guidelines, etc.) which are passed by local governing authorities, such as a city council or board of commissioners. This section will focus on identified strengths and opportunities for physical activity within Kansas City Public Schools through policies.

Currently policies are mostly absent or informal, and physical activity measures are not embedded in wellness or siting policies. Some key findings include:

- There is currently no wellness policy to support active travel
- No schools prohibit walking/biking, but there is no policy actively promoting it
- There is no dedicated funding policy for pedestrian or bike infrastructure near schools (only advocacy and limited measures like signage)
- School siting criteria lacks a formal policy structure, although factors are considered informally
- Transportation considerations are often deprioritized in siting decisions
- Shared-use agreements exist in practice, specifically:
 - Informal or site-specific agreements
 - Open access to playgrounds
 - Community use of facilities
- There has been a newly adopted “no right on red” in school zone policy

In addition to the key findings, which show gaps and strengths, from Module 6 there were identified opportunities to promote physical activity in KCPS through policies. Some potential opportunities include:

- Update the wellness policy to include active travel
- Create formal school siting policies that prioritize physical activity
- Establish funding policies for active infrastructure
- Formalize shared-use agreements
- Build on existing safety policies

There could be potential to explore opportunities to formalize physical activity through enforceable policies, rather than relying on informal practices.

Built Environment

Within the context of the ACT Assessment Module 6, the built environment is community infrastructure. This section will focus on identified strengths and opportunities for physical activity through the built environment.

Currently there have been instances of progress in the built environment, but it lacks coordination and is not data driven. Improvements have occurred, but there is no clear framework, tracking system, or integration with planning and policies. Some key findings include:

- There have been recent infrastructure improvements
- No current systemic tracking or documentation of improvements
- There is uncertainty around the use of Safe Routes to School assessments
- Built environment improvements appear reactive rather than strategic

In addition to key findings, which show gaps and strengths, from Module 6 there were identified opportunities to promote physical activity through the built environment. Some potential opportunities include:

- Partner with groups like BikeWalkKC to conduct walk/bike audits
- Incorporate designs in new schools that support physical activity
- Conduct Safe Routes to School assessments to update and create a Safe Routes to School Plan
- Incorporate tracking and map infrastructure improvements

Key opportunities are to re-engage Safe Routes to School assessments and Safe Routes to School Plans, which can be done in partnership with community organizations like BikeWalkKC.

Resources

Within the context of the ACT Assessment Module 6, resources are intended to support plans, policies, and built environments that impact walking and bicycling to/from school.

Currently resources exist but are loosely organized and heavily dependent on external partners. Some key findings include:

- Crossing guards are funded through the community/taxpayers, but it is not a line item on KCPS budget
- Funding for walking or biking initiatives is uncertain and inconsistent
- There are active encouragement programs that exist through community partners like BikeWalkKC (e.g., Bike to School Day)
- There is not a Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- There is no formal coalition, advisory board, or partnership structure
- Collaboration is a known challenge due to siloing across organizations

In addition to the key findings, some potential opportunities were identified:

- Establishing a Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- Creating a formal coalition, ideally cross-sector
- Identifying and secure funding for physical activity
- Expand and encourage programs such as Bike to School Day or Walking School Buses
- Strengthen data and evaluation capacities

In Summary

There currently is a foundation within KCPS and the City of Kansas City to support and promote physical activity, but the system is fragmented. The potential opportunities that could have the greatest impact are:

- Formalizing and adopting Plans and policies that promote physical activity
- Coordinating to break down silos with a central coordinator and/or coalition
- Investing or finding funding opportunities to improve infrastructure and physical activity programs
- Measuring participation in physical activity (e.g., counts of students walking to/from school) to guide decision-making

Reflection Questions

1. What additional data or information is needed (e.g., street-level audits, quality of infrastructure and facilities, etc.)?
2. What opportunities may exist for improvement?
3. Where could the biggest improvement(s) be made?
4. What actions are likely to garner political support?
5. What actions are likely to garner community support?
6. What opportunities may exist to address health equity?
7. What actions are feasible?
8. What actions best align with addressing community needs and preferences?

General Information (6.1 – 6.6)

- The state of Missouri does not have planning or policy guidance and/or requirements related to school design
- Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) currently have:
 - 21 elementary schools
 - 3 middle schools
 - 6 high schools
 - 2 early care and education schools
 - 2 alternative schools
 - 1 college technical school
- For the 2025-2026 school year KCPS has approximately 15,196 students enrolled
- The KCPS school district does not currently conduct counts of students walking and biking to and from schools
 - It is unknown what percentage of students walk or bike to school

Plans (6.7 – 6.13)

- There is not a current Plan that contains specific provisions to increase opportunities for children to walk or bike to/from school
 - There are references to the Safe Routes to School Plan, but it is not currently being followed, and that Plan is outdated
- There is no formal process, but KCPS has worked with the City of Kansas City, Missouri and its consultants to try and engage individuals who are otherwise hard to reach in the planning process to increase walking and biking opportunities
 - KCPS does allow access to their schools to engage with students and family
 - Occasionally there are tabling events

Policies (6.14 – 6.18)

- There have been attempts in the past to include a physical activity measurement in the school district's wellness policy, however leadership has stated it cannot be added.
 - The reason leadership has cited for not including a physical activity measurement in the school district's wellness policy is because it is

not done at other schools within the county

- There are opportunities to include physical activity measures within school policies during the school day – but not specific to active travel

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Built Environment (6.19 – 6.20)

- There have been recent infrastructure improvements in the community, although the individual that completed Module 6 was unable to provide specific examples.
- KCPS has participated in the Safe Routes to School process in the past, but the individual who completed Module 6 was unsure when in the past this was conducted, or what occurred.

Resources (6.21 – 6.26)

- In the past there has been funding from organizations such as the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), but it is inconsistent when they receive funding, how much, and from whom
- Crossing guards exist and are paid through taxpayers and KCPS hires crossing guards. However, KCPS does not include a line item for crossing guards in their budget
- There is not currently a Safe Routes to School coordinator
- There is not currently a coalition, advisory board, or partnership structure that is involved in decision-making on physical activity around schools