Colorado Park (Historic Court House Square)
Master Plan

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FINAL PLAN
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This master plan for Colorado Park (Historic Court House Square) is inspired by the 2001 Master Plan, a 2012 concept plan, details of the historic jail, and analysis of historic aerial photography. The proposed concept seeks to capitalize on ideas proposed in these earlier plans and design elements that were once a major part of the site to re-establish a similar environment while accommodating current needs.

The 2001 Master Plan, prepared by Brent Bowman and Associates, was developed based on a site assessment and public meetings. The 2001 plan proposed a passive, tree-enclosed garden in the northeast quadrant and a large open playfield on the west half of the site. The 2012 concept plan retained the large play field, but proposed a simplified garden space with a small seating plaza surrounded by perennial plantings. Because of a cathodic protection system installed in 2005 on the east part of the site, aspects of previous plans cannot come to fruition.

The historic jailhouse, constructed in 1939, contributes to the character of the site. Architectural details in the building’s stonework provided inspiration for the layout of seating areas in the proposed design. Examination of aerial photography from 1950 shows street trees on the perimeter of the square and a large bosque of trees in the west and center part of the square. By 1962, many of these trees were gone. These trees may have been lost due to the Great Flood of 1951 or were possibly removed to create an open space for recreation following construction of the Seven Dolors Grade School in 1955. Students from this school are still frequent users of the site.

Aerial Photograph 1950 (left) and 1962 (right). Images courtesy of K-State Research and Extension through the Kansas Aerial Photography Initiative.
Current Site Uses

The current uses of the site include:

- Municipal Court
- Manhattan Catholic Schools
  - Gym classes
  - 8-man Football practice
  - Track and Field practice
  - Parking for "Button & Bows," a craft event in the Fall
- Boys & Girls Club
  - Outdoor activities and recreation
- Community drop-in recreation

Proposed Design Concept

The design proposal calls for reconstruction of existing brick sidewalks and portions of the concrete sidewalks on the perimeter of the public square. Existing bricks are to be salvaged and reinstalled in a herringbone pattern on a sand base. The City has a stockpile of similar bricks that can be used to replace broken pavers.

New pathways and trees are also proposed in the center portion of the site. New trees, planted on a grid, are proposed to re-create the tree canopy that existed in the 1950 photograph. The placement of new trees and paths creates a shaded core while preserving the large open space to the west and creating a smaller open space on the northeast corner to accommodate multiple park activities. New paths and seating areas are to be located amidst the trees. The layout of the proposed pathways are based on an octagonal geometry, inspired by octagonal elements on the facade of the historic jail. Benches and picnic tables would be placed in this space to provide shaded seating with views to the open spaces. A short gravel path that meanders through the tree grid provides an opportunity to view an historical marker.

Octagonal geometry is also used to realign a segment of brick sidewalk on the southwest corner of the square. The existing sidewalk passes between several mature trees. Reconstructing the brick sidewalk in its current location would severely impact these trees. The pathway is proposed to shift to the north around the trees and additional trees planted between the sidewalk and existing curb on Colorado Street. New benches are proposed along the path to provide views across the central open space. Overall, the concept acknowledges the historic character of the site while providing for current needs.
On April 25, 2016 the proposed design concept was presented to the Historic Resources Board. The Board expressed support for the conceptual improvements to the Historic Courthouse Square as presented. During the discussion, the current condition of the Historic Jailhouse was mentioned. In 2001, potential renovations that would make the building suitable for re-use, as well as razing the building, were considered. Both options were cost prohibitive at the time. Since then the building has been used by Municipal Court and several City departments for storage. The Board encouraged the City to consider ways to make the building more visually appealing if and until an alternate use is identified.

After the presentation to the Historic Resources Board, the proposed design concept was presented to stakeholders that utilize the space. On April 28, 2016 the concept was shown to Manhattan Catholic School Principal, Scott Hulshoff. Mr. Hulshoff was supportive of improvements to the square, particularly modifications to the intersection of Juliette of Pierre Streets that would improve safety for the school and church. On April 29 the concept was presented to Junnae Campbell and her staff at the Boys and Girls Club. The staff was particularly excited about the shaded seating areas and the two defined open spaces. On May 19 the concept was presented to the Southeast Neighborhood Association. Members asked if drainage could be improved at the northwest corner and echoed the desire to make the Historic Jail more visually appealing. On May 23 the concept was shared with Jennifer Holmes, Court Administrator and with Laurie Cammel, Court Services Officer on May 28. They agreed that work should be done to the exterior of the jail. Overall, all stakeholder groups interviewed were in support of the proposed design concept.

On June 6, 2016 the proposed design concept was presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Board members supported the project to improve the perimeter sidewalks and expressed a
desire to improve the quality of turf as well, to increase playability and visual appeal of the green space. It was mentioned that occasional parking occurs on the turf and that should be taken into consideration when looking to improve the surface. Signage was also discussed and the Board recommended that signage be placed on site in order to communicate to the public that the space can be used by the community for drop-in activities. Overall, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board was supportive of the proposed concept plan.

In mid-June the Parks and Recreation Department worked with the City's Building Maintenance division to make improvements to the Jailhouse to address concerns that the City’s Code Office had identified. The improvements included removal of unused electrical wiring and conduits and removal of two broken radio antennae from the roof. Removal of rotted plywood window coverings and installation of new metal coverings with period “window” decals on all exterior window openings is planned for September 2016. These exterior enhancements respond directly to the public feedback received during this planning effort.

**2016 Master Plan with phasing**

Based on the feedback received from the stakeholders, a final Master Plan was developed. The next five images show that plan and the recommended phasing to implement the improvements over time.
The 2016 Master Plan illustrates a complete vision for the space. The plan is split into three phases. The first phase shows what is to be constructed during the CD1516 Public Square Sidewalk Replacement Project. Phase 1 will primarily be funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The second phase is highlighted by the construction of pathways and seating areas in the interior core of the park. The second phase also includes turf irrigation, tree plantings, and the construction of bulb-outs on the southwest, northwest, and northeast corners of the site. Phase 3 includes the development of the space to the east - southeast of the Historic Jail. The plan illustrates a bocce ball court, seating areas, and tree plantings. These elements are representative of improvements that could activate this corner and better integrate the existing structures with the park-like atmosphere on the site. Specific amenities and design of the space should be determined through additional engagement with the neighborhood and nearby organizations when funds become available and/or when alternative uses for the Historic Jail are considered.

On June 24, 2016 the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) determined that the proposed improvements at the Historic Court House Public Square (Colorado Park) meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the project will not adversely affect the park or the surrounding Houston-Pierre Streets Historic District.

At the June 27, 2016 meeting of the Historic Resources Board (HRB), the master plan was evaluated in accordance with an agreement between the City of Manhattan and the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office that allows the HRB to review projects under the State preservation statute, KSA 75-2724, and make a final determination on their historic compatibility. The Board unanimously (4-0) found that the proposed improvements at the Historic Courthouse Public Square (Colorado Park) shown in the master plan meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the project will not adversely affect the park or the surrounding Houston-Pierre Streets Historic District. Phases one through three of the master plan were approved by the HRB.

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board reviewed the Master Plan on August 1, 2016. The Board accepted the plan (5-0), acknowledging that the master plan should remain flexible to benefit the neighborhood and community in the future. The Board was interested in ensuring improvements to the central open space would accommodate Manhattan Catholic School sports activities. As funding sources are identified, the Board suggested that the Parks and Recreation Department continue to work with community stakeholders to ensure the improvements meet the needs of park users. Future development plans should also be brought back to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for review.
Cost Estimates

Budget estimates have been prepared for each phase based on 2016 construction costs. An additional 20% contingency has been added to Phases 2 and 3 to account for changes that may occur during design or construction of those improvements.

Phase 1: $81,500*
   * Cost based on bid amount for project CD1516. The value of trees to be planted by the Forestry Division are not included.

Phase 2: ±$140,000
   - Pathways: $20,000
   - Bulb-outs: $21,000
   - Storm drainage: $8,000
   - Site furnishings: $25,000
   - Irrigation: $35,000
   - Trees: $8,000.00
   - Contingency of 20%: $23,000

Phase 3: ±$60,000
   - Pathways: $6,000
   - Activity area (with associated seating): $17,000
   - Seating area: $7,500
   - Concrete removal: $6,000
   - Irrigation: $8,500
   - Trees: $5,000.00
   - Contingency of 20%: $10,000