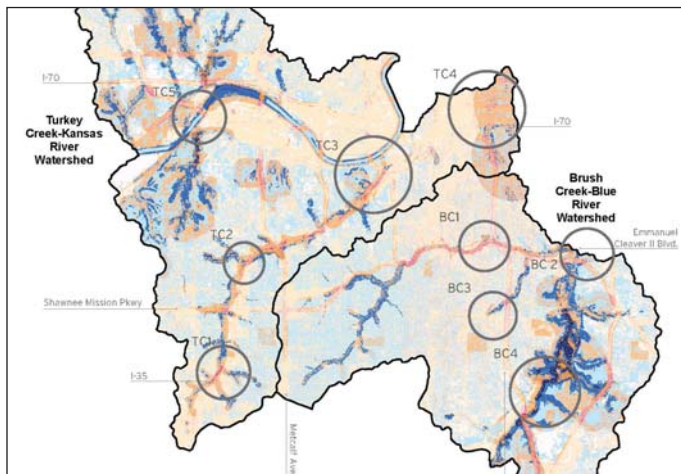


# MARC Green Infrastructure Framework

Kansas City, Missouri



*from top: Mapping ecological values with impacts and needs; Stakeholder meeting*

Across the country, communities are seeing the potential to connect natural systems to communities as a key way to address environmental, economic, and social challenges. In the greater Kansas City area, the Mid-America Regional Council recognizes green infrastructure planning as a way to improve human health and well-being by increasing access to green space, reducing susceptibility to flooding, and improving habitat, air, and water quality.

To create a regional green infrastructure planning framework, Biohabitats worked with

*Community needs and ecosystem health are integrated in a regional planning effort that prioritizes opportunity areas and strategies for implementation building on momentum and partners.*

BNIM to establish ecological health and processes at the heart of the region's cultural and economic fabric. To do this, Biohabitats conducted a system inventory and synthesized existing resource data into a single overlay map of high value natural resources. A prioritization model was then developed that integrated the high value resources with areas of pressure and community needs. The resulting "heat maps" were shared with community stakeholders to identify other potential catalysts for implementation. These factors included proximity to trails, schools, or other recreation amenities, accessibility, and momentum where projects were planned or started or partners are in place.

The resulting Phase 1 Green Infrastructure Framework, completed in January 2017, has a three-tiered structure.

At the highest level is a series of regional-scale maps called the Atlas, which highlights priority areas based on values and needs. The next tier zooms into the watershed-scale, and presents a playbook for implementation. Within the playbook, examples of opportunity areas are highlighted to show the places with the greatest potential for an integrated green infrastructure approach as well as example strategies for connection, partnerships, benefits, and metrics. As part of the process, the consulting team also researched policy examples and regional solutions that offered lessons learned and recommended tools to build political support and context for successful outcomes.

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