INDEPENDENCE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ADOPTED MAY 2024

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-PC001

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN / COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO UPDATE FIGURE 2.9 – ZONING COMPATIBILITY MATRIX.

WHEREAS, the City of Independence, Kansas, has a duly constituted Planning Commission as provided by K.S.A. 12-744; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Independence, Kansas, held a duly noticed public hearing on September 2, 2025, to consider an amendment to the Independence Community Development Plan to update Figure 2.9 – Zoning Compatibility Matrix, found on page 35 in Chapter 02: Future Land Use; and

WHEREAS, at such hearing, the Planning Commission received public comment and reviewed the proposed amendment in accordance with K.S.A. 12-747; and

WHEREAS, following the hearing, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the amendment to the Governing Body; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of K.S.A. 12-747 were followed and addressed; and,

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Planning Commission to confirm and ratify its prior recommendation in compliance with state law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS, THAT:

1.   The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Governing Body of the City of Independence, Kansas, adopt the amendment to the Independence Community Development Plan to update Figure 2.9 – Zoning Compatibility Matrix, as presented in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

2.   This resolution shall be transmitted to the Governing Body together with the proposed amendment for consideration and adoption by ordinance.

3.   This resolution shall be in full force and effect after its adoption by the Planning Commission of the City of Independence, Kansas.

ADOPTED this **7th** day of **October 2025.**

(signature)

Chair of the Planning Commission

ATTEST:

(signature)

~~Secretary~~ of the Planning Commission
Vice Chair

Exhibit A

Updated Figure 2.9 – Zoning Compatibility Matrix (as prepared by staff)

ORDINANCE NO. 4496

AN ORDINANCE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS AMENDING THE INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / COMPREHENISVE PLAN TO UPDATE FIGURE 2.9 – ZONING COMPATIBILITY MATRIX

WHEREAS, the City of Independence, Kansas, has a duly constituted Planning Commission as provided by K.S.A. 12-744; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747(b), the Planning Commission is authorized to make recommendations to the Governing Body of the City relating to the adoption and amendment of a Comprehensive Plan by a single resolution or by successive resolutions and is further authorized to adopt or amend parts of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Independence; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Independence, Kansas adopted the *Independence Community Development Plan* on May 23, 2024, by Ordinance No. 4454; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on September 2, 2025, to consider the amendment to the Independence Community Development Plan to update Figure 2.9 – Zoning Compatibility Matrix, and on October 7, 2025, adopted Resolution No. 2025-PC001 recommending approval of the amendment to the Governing Body.

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission approved said amendment on September 2, 2025, and has transmitted its recommendation to the Governing Body pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747.

WHEREAS, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747(b), upon receipt of the Planning Commission's recommendation to adopt the new Comprehensive Plan, the Governing Body of the City of Independence, Kansas, has considered the Planning Commission's recommendation and does hereby take the following action upon such recommendation;
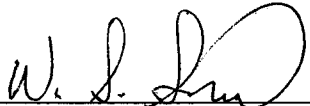
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS:

SECTION 1.   **Adoption of Amendment.** The Independence Community Development Plan is hereby amended to replace Figure 2.9 – Zoning Compatibility Matrix, as set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2.   **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the official city newspaper.

SECTION 3. **Repeal of Conflicting Provisions.** Any prior provisions of the Independence Community Development Plan in conflict with this amendment are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

ADOPTED by the Governing Body of the City of Independence, Kansas, on the **22nd day of October 2025**.

W. Scott Smith, Mayor
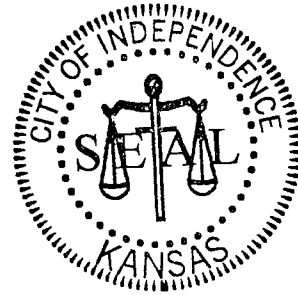
ATTEST:

David W. Schwenker, City Clerk

table of contents

acknowledgments

A sincere thank you to the residents of Independence for their time and effort in assisting with the Independence Community Development Plan. The people listed below were integral to the planning process and ensuring the plan reflects the community's ideas and visions for the future of Independence.

2024 Planning Commission

- Rachel Lyon, Chair
- Lisa Richard, Vice Chair
- Kym Kays, Secretary
- Tim Haynes
- Michelle Avery
- Mary Jo Dancer
- Butch Holum
- Rita Ortolani
- Gary Hogsett

City Commission

- Tim Emert, Mayor
- Scott Smith, Vice Mayor
- Dean Hayse

City Staff

- Kelly Passauer, City Manager
- David Cowan, Assistant City Manager
- April Nutt, Housing Authority Director
- John Garris, City Engineer
- Lacey Lies, Finance Director

Consultant Team

CONFLUENCE

- Abbey Eckberg
- Christopher Shires
- Jane Reasoner

Steering Committee

- Adam Hogsett, Local Business
- Andy McLenon, 2023 Planning Commission Representative
- Anita Chappuie, Park Board + ICC Representative
- Breanne Sanford, Independence Daily Reporter + IHPRC
- Carolyn Torrance, Long-Time Resident, Teacher + Library Board
- Charles Barker, Long-Time Resident, Pastor + Diversity Task Force Representative
- Chris Mitchell, Community Access Center + Home Sweet Home Ministries
- Chuck Goad, Economic Development Advisory Board Chair
- Cindy White, Realtor + Housing Authority Representative
- Jason Elmore, Downtown Business Owner
- Jason McAffee, USD 446 Superintendent
- Jeri Hammerschmidt, Long-Time Resident, Independence Land Bank + ICC Trustee
- Jim Kelly, Banker, Long-Time Resident, Economic Development Advisory Board Representative + Former Mayor
- Joseph Housel, Sheriff Deputy + Independence Recreation Commission Representative
- Ken Brown, Local Historian + Long-Time Resident
- Leslie Fox, Tree Board Chair, ISTC Director + 2024 Planning Commission Vice Chair
- Lisa Wilson, Chamber of Commerce Director + Long-Time Resident
- Lisa Richard, Planning Commission + Independence Land Bank
- Lori Kelley, Long-Time Resident, Retired Banker + Economic Development Advisory Board Representative
- Louis Ysusi, Former City Commission Member + 2023 Mayor
- Rachel Lyon, 2024 Planning Commission Chair + Realtor
- Rita Ortolani, Long-Time Resident, Housing Authority Representative + 2024 Planning Commission Representative
- Tabatha Snodgrass, Main Street Director
- Tim Haynes, 2023 Planning Commission Chair
- Vincent Bowhay, ICC President

CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

plan overview

Legal Basis for Future Land Use Plans

The Independence Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance to the authority granted by the State of Kansas under Kansas Statutes, Chapter 12-Cities and Municipalities, Article 7-Planning and Zoning (K.S.A. 12-741 through 12-775).

This statute enables a city to adopt a comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making. The plan also serves as a support document for all rezoning requests within the planning boundary. All requests for rezonings should be reviewed for conformity to the adopted comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Plan.

It is recommended the Planning Commission reviews the comprehensive plan annually to ensure it is still supporting the vision of the community.

Planning Boundary

The map shown in Figure 1.1 illustrates the planning boundary identified for the Future Land Use Plan. This boundary intentionally extends past the existing city limits so that the Future Land Use Plan may account for needed infrastructure improvements, annexations, and maintain city limit continuity. More insight into what a planning boundary is and is not is provided in the following pages.

The planning boundary intentionally extends past the existing city limits to plan for future growth and development.

ELK CITY LAKE

ELK CITY STATE PARK

5200 Rd

5000 Rd

4600 Rd

Pennsylvania Ave

N 10th St

4500 Rd

W Main St

E Main St

Highway 160

Highway 160

Highway 75

4200 Rd

4200 Rd

Fruitland

College Ave

3800 Rd

Wingard Rd

3600 Rd

LEGEND

Planning Boundary
City Limits
100-Year Floodplain
Floodway
500-Year Floodplain
Waterbody
Open Space
Airport

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi   N

FIGURE 1.1 // PLANNING BOUNDARY MAP

Chapter 01: Introduction
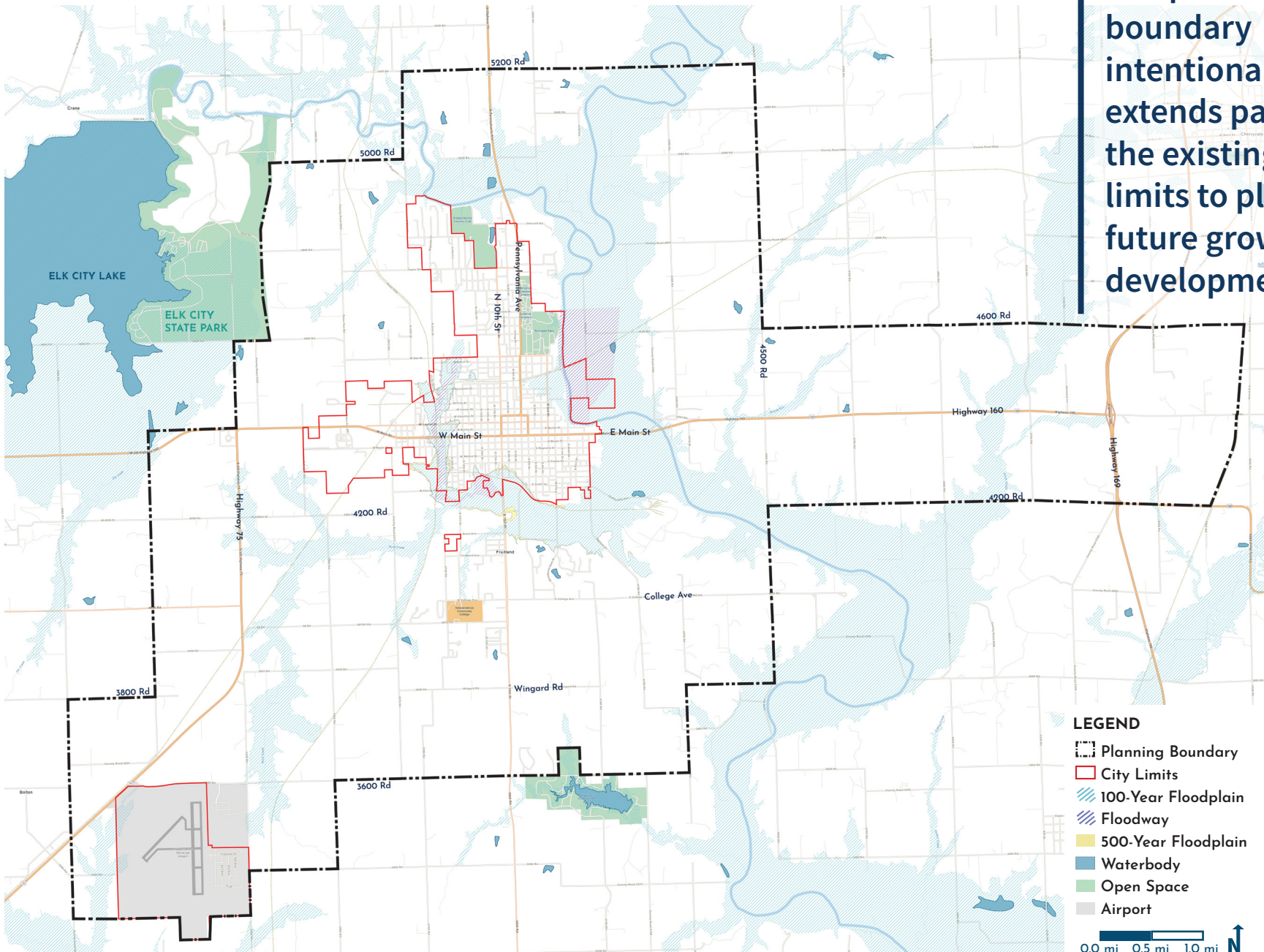
3

plan
process

The Independence Comprehensive Plan was completed in four phases:

PHASE 1 RESEARCH + ANALYSIS: Kicked off the project with data investigation and consideration to previous planning efforts. The Steering Committee was formed and the consultant team introduced the planning process and preliminary data analysis to the group.

PHASE 2 VISION, INPUT + DIRECTION: The community was invited to share their thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways. Stakeholder interviews were held virtually, a Public Workshop was hosted at the Civic Center, and an interactive engagement website was made available to share additional ideas.

PHASE 3 DRAFT PLAN + EVALUATION: Combining the data from Phase 1 with the input from Phase 2, the draft plan is the culmination of discussions, ideas, and thoughtful consideration for Independence's future. An Open House was hosted to share the plan with the community for comment before proceeding to Phase 4.

PHASE 4 FINAL DRAFT PLAN + ADOPTION: Following the Open House and comment period, a public hearing was held with the Planning Commission, and a final meeting with the City Commission, to proceed with adopting the Independence Comprehensive Plan.
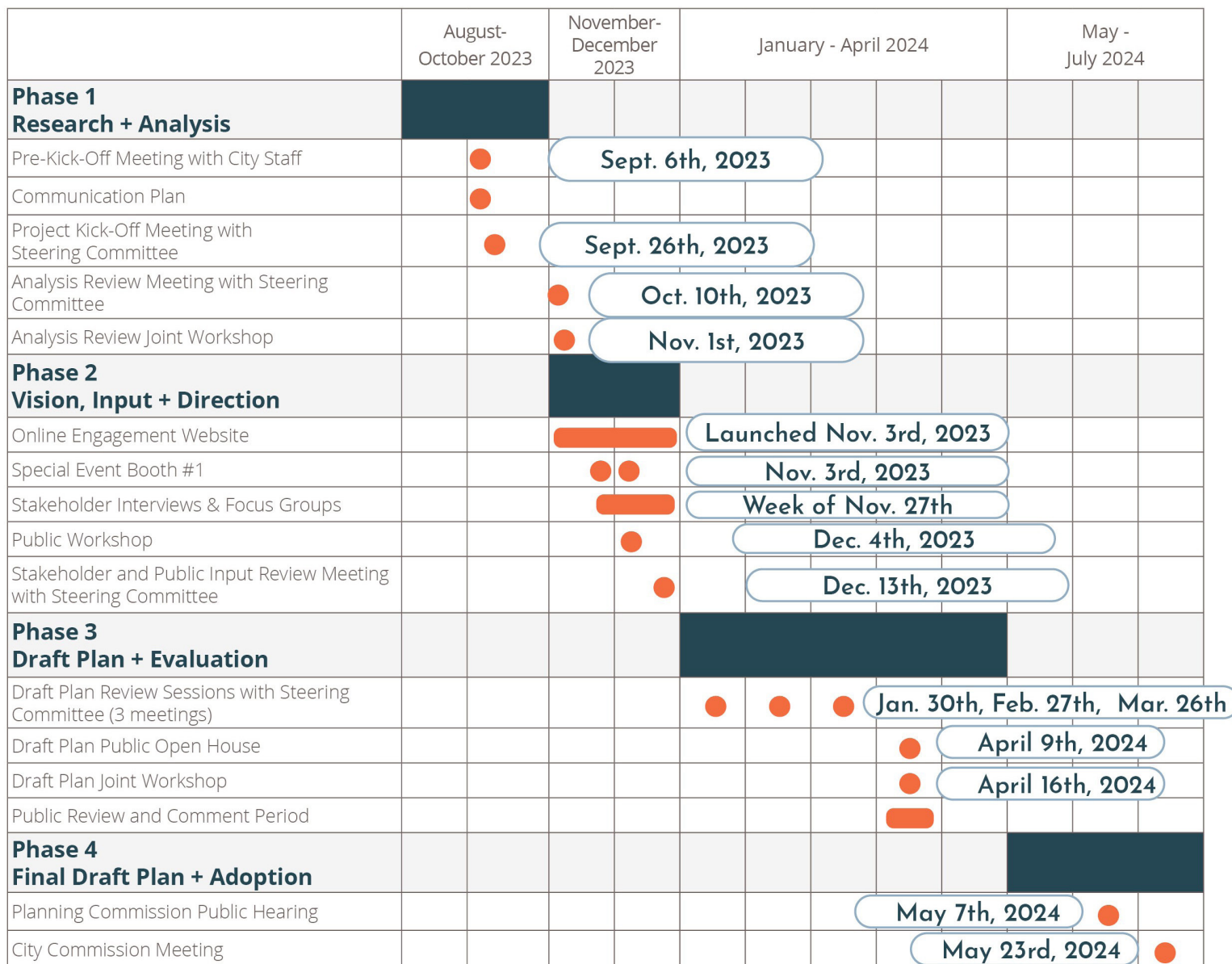
	August-October 2023	November-December 2023	January - April 2024			May - July 2024
Phase 1 Research + Analysis	■					
Pre-Kick-Off Meeting with City Staff	● Sept. 6th, 2023					
Communication Plan	●					
Project Kick-Off Meeting with Steering Committee	● Sept. 26th, 2023					
Analysis Review Meeting with Steering Committee	● Oct. 10th, 2023					
Analysis Review Joint Workshop	● Nov. 1st, 2023					
Phase 2 Vision, Input + Direction		■				
Online Engagement Website	━ Launched Nov. 3rd, 2023					
Special Event Booth #1	● ● Nov. 3rd, 2023					
Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups	━ Week of Nov. 27th					
Public Workshop	● Dec. 4th, 2023					
Stakeholder and Public Input Review Meeting with Steering Committee	● Dec. 13th, 2023					
Phase 3 Draft Plan + Evaluation			■			
Draft Plan Review Sessions with Steering Committee (3 meetings)			● ● ● Jan. 30th, Feb. 27th, Mar. 26th			
Draft Plan Public Open House			● April 9th, 2024			
Draft Plan Joint Workshop			● April 16th, 2024			
Public Review and Comment Period			━			
Phase 4 Final Draft Plan + Adoption						■
Planning Commission Public Hearing			May 7th, 2024 ●			
City Commission Meeting			May 23rd, 2024 ●			

FIGURE 1.2 // PROJECT SCHEDULE

plan outline + content

Main Report

The Independence Comprehensive Plan is comprised of eight body chapters that assist in guiding decision-making for the next thirty years.

The intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to guide the type and location of development as Independence continues to grow. The plan is discussed in further detail in the Future Land Use chapter.

Supplemental Reports

During Phase 1 of the comprehensive planning process, a deep dive into a variety of datasets was completed. A supplemental *Existing Conditions Report* is provided to summarize these key data points discussing demographics, economics, housing and household characteristics, and more.

Phase 2 included all the public input received from the community. A supplemental *Public Input Summary Report* is included as an appendix to highlight the key themes and ideas for the future of Independence.

plan outline

01. introduction

02. future land use

03. housing + neighborhoods

04. parks + recreation

05. transportation + infrastructure

06. economic development

07. community character

08. implementation

FIGURE 1.3 // PLAN OUTLINE

CHAPTER 02:
FUTURE LAND USE

chapter overview

Legal Basis for Future Land Use Plans

The intent of the Future Land Use Chapter is to provide a guide for land uses within Independence. Decisions over the future land uses throughout Independence should take into consideration factors relating to the existing land use composition of the community, the location of natural features, the ability to provide adequate water and sanitary services to an area, the proposed alignment of future streets, and the desired character of the community. The Future Land Use Plan in this chapter presents a future vision for Independence through the year 2050 and beyond. Land uses have been proposed for more area than is needed to create numerous options and provide flexibility for the City and development community. Land uses have been laid out to avoid conflict and promote a harmonious layout in the community.

The Planning Boundary is not a mass annexation plan.

PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING BOUNDARY

Kansas State statutes allow cities to plan for their future and adopt a Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making related to infrastructure investments and future growth and development. This Plan also serves as an important resource to guide zoning code regulations and for future rezoning requests.

WHAT IT IS

The Future Land Use Plan identifies a potential, long-term development plan for land within the planning boundary. The planning boundary intentionally extends past city limits to identify potential growth and plan for their potential infrastructure needs. This is a guiding document for the Commissions to base decisions upon for land development, rezonings, and more. It is meant to be flexible and amended as the community needs.

WHAT IT IS NOT

This Future Land Use Plan, and corresponding planning boundary, is not an annexation plan. Land outside of city limits is accounted for in this Plan so the City is able to ensure infrastructure is available to serve the properties should the landowners wish to develop and annex to obtain city services.
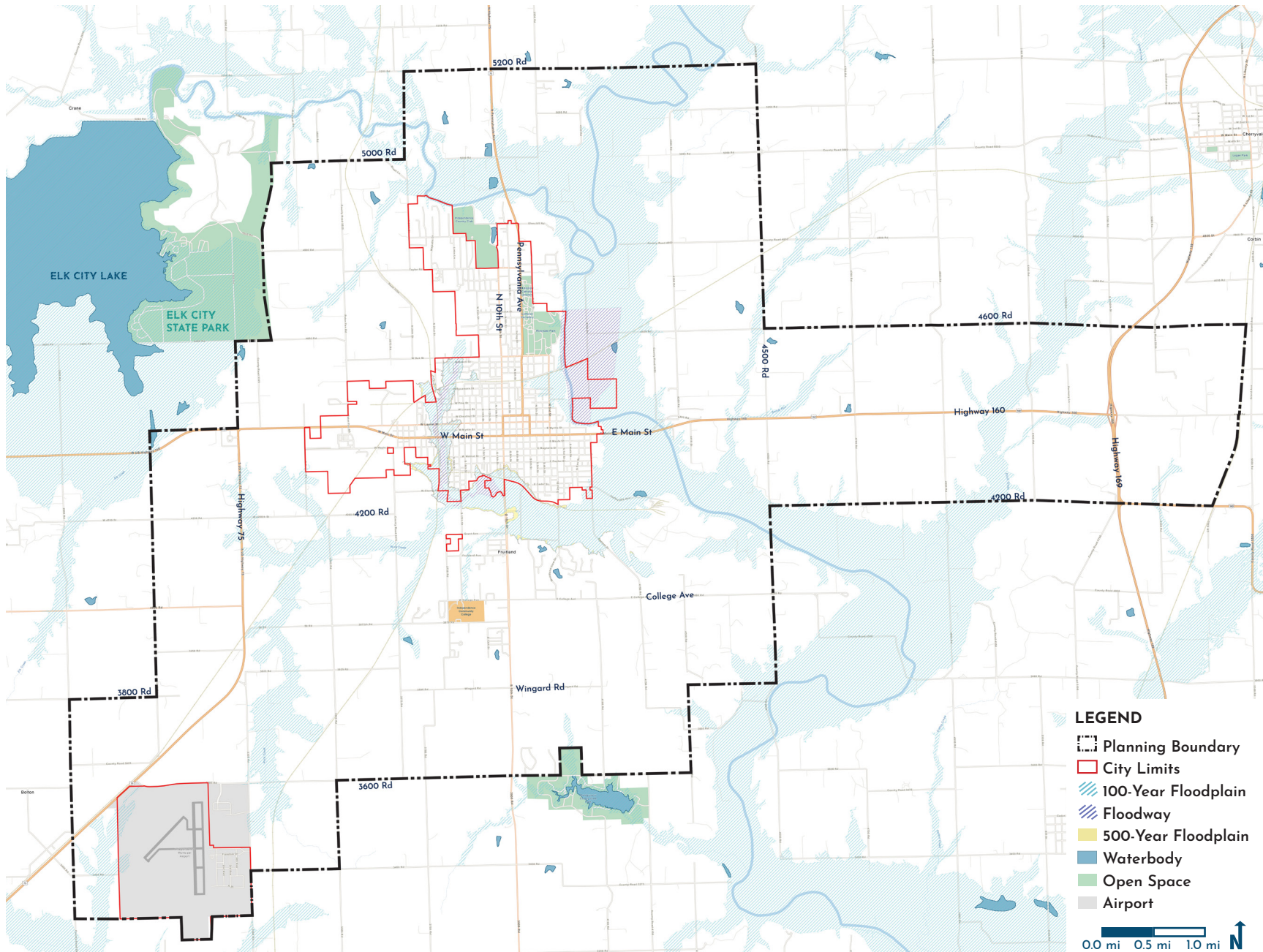
ELK CITY LAKE

ELK CITY
STATE PARK

5200 Rd

5000 Rd

Pennsylvania Ave

N 10th St

4600 Rd

4500 Rd

Highway 160

W Main St

E Main St

Highway 75

4200 Rd

4200 Rd

Highway 160

Fruitland

College Ave

Wingard Rd

3800 Rd

3600 Rd

Bolton

LEGEND

- ☐ Planning Boundary
- ☐ City Limits
- ▨ 100-Year Floodplain
- ▨ Floodway
- ☐ 500-Year Floodplain
- ☐ Waterbody
- ☐ Open Space
- ☐ Airport

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi   N

FIGURE 2.1 // PLANNING BOUNDARY MAP

THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN

existing land uses

Existing Land Uses

The map shown in Figure 2.3 presents the existing land uses identified in Independence today. Agriculture + Open Space (29.9%), Light Industrial/Industrial (26.2%), and Low-Density Residential (25.8%) are the three most dominant land use types in the community today.

The existing land uses follow typical development patterns:

- Commercial along heavy-trafficked roads
- Dense commercial core
- Residential stemming out from activity centers
- Parks + Open Space spread throughout the community

LAND USE FUN FACT:
Due to being the Montgomery County seat, Independence does have a healthy share of public/ semi-public land that supports these services.
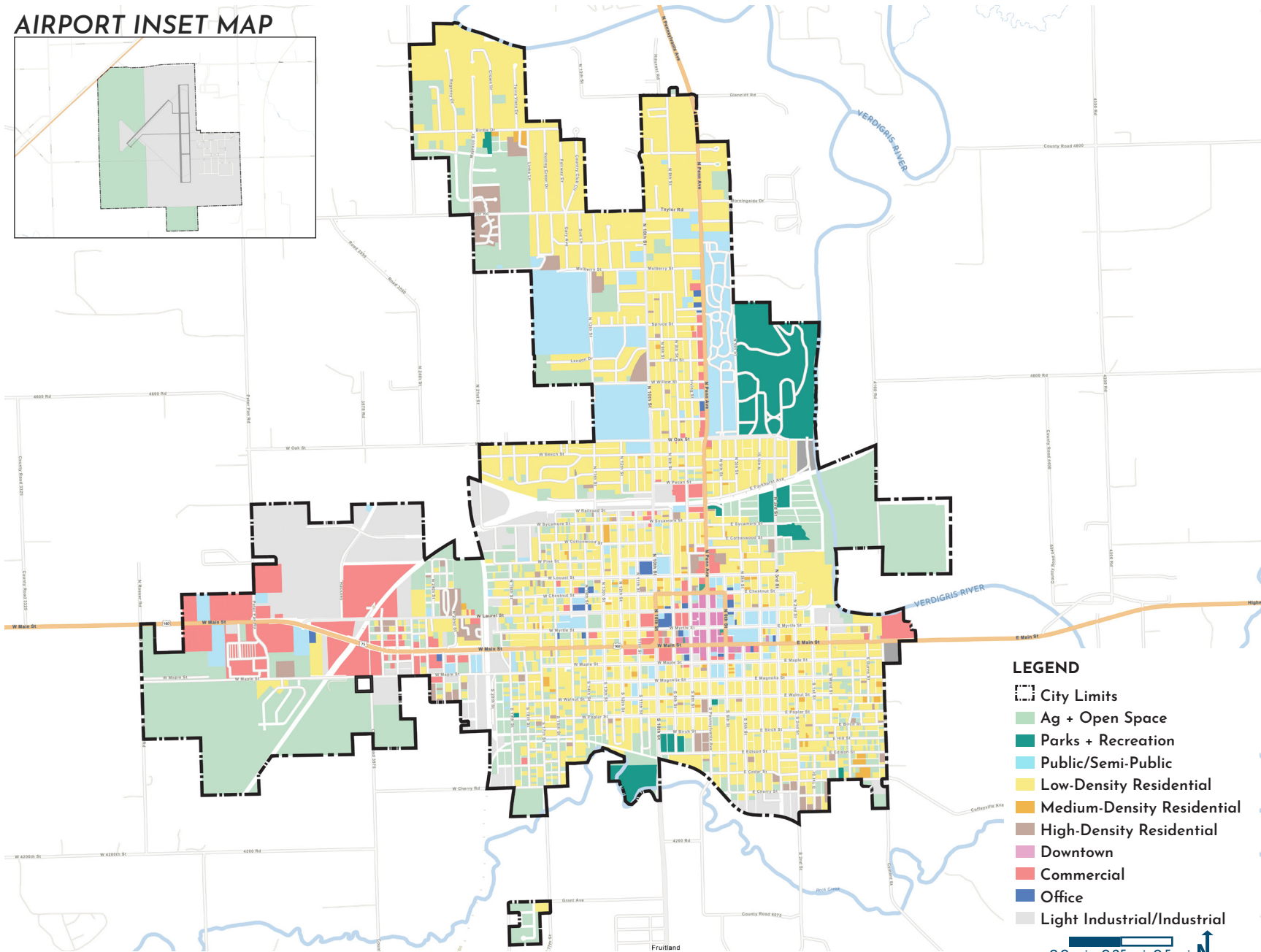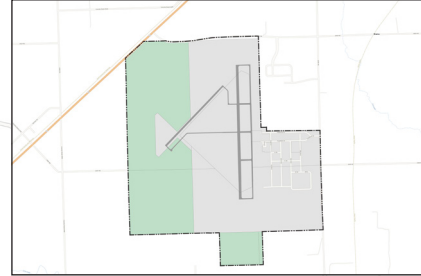
6.5%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

30.5%
AGRICULTURE + OPEN SPACE

25.9%
LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

25.9%
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/INDUSTRIAL
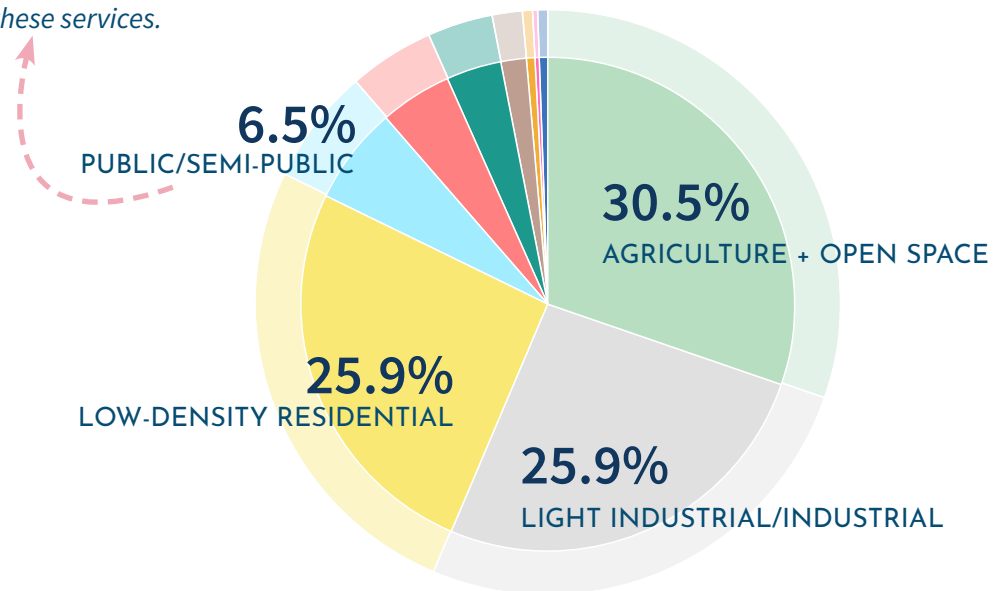
FIGURE 2.2 // EXISTING LAND USE SHARES

AIRPORT INSET MAP

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Ag + Open Space
- Parks + Recreation
- Public/Semi-Public
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Downtown
- Commercial
- Office
- Light Industrial/Industrial

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N

| Chapter 02: Future Land Use

key considerations

Floodplain

Independence has an extensive amount of floodplain within and surrounding its existing city limits. In 2007, the community experienced heavy flooding in these areas and subsequent buy-outs occurred to ensure the safety of homes and structures throughout the community.

It is recommended and considered within this Future Land Use Plan that no development take place within the floodplain. Structures already existing within the floodplain are shown as Agriculture + Open Space to demonstrate its ideal use as undeveloped land for the health, safety, and welfare of those inhabiting the area. Areas within the floodplain may be viable options for greenways, parks, trails, and other non-structural recreational amenities.

Major Highways

There are two major highways that split Independence into roughly four quadrants. Highway 75 runs north/south and Highway 160 runs east/west. Highway 169 is east of city limits by approximately 10 miles and intersects with Highway 160. These three major roadways support greater industry development and commercial activity for residents and tourists.

Infrastructure Capacity

Before any development can take place, infrastructure must be installed to support efficient and smart land development. Primary areas of consideration include transportation, sanitary sewer, and water infrastructure. Water capacity and availability is critical within this region and must be top priority at the onset of any development discussion. These items are covered in greater detail in the Transportation + Infrastructure Chapter.

Growth Zones + Industry

Later in this chapter, a Growth Themes Map is presented to demonstrate the thought behind the Future Land Use Plan. Conversations with the public and Steering Committee highlighted a need to be forward-thinking with industry expansion and for this to be a priority throughout the Plan. Current developments, such as Bartlett and the Airport, are more supportive of similar industry growth, and reflect this within the Plan.

These current and future employees will need housing at a variety of scale and price points, as well as additional activity centers and amenities. These growth themes are also identified and accounted for in the Future Land Use Plan.

population projections

Population Estimates

Population projections were completed as part of this planning process to estimate the total number of residents in Independence by 2050. These projections are based on historic population trends, where Independence has experienced steady loss for over three decades. The current estimated population for Independence is 8,584 residents. The average trend line from the projections estimates Independence will have 7,309 residents. There are many factors that will truly impact the reality of population growth or decline in the next twenty-five years. These include:

- Job and industry growth within the community

- Housing rehabilitation and new construction

- Quality of life maintenance and improvements

While these are estimates, we do anticipate these numbers to be low estimations when considering the projected job growth coming to Independence and new housing construction. It is recommended that a fresh set of projections be completed in the next five to ten years to better capture progress made.

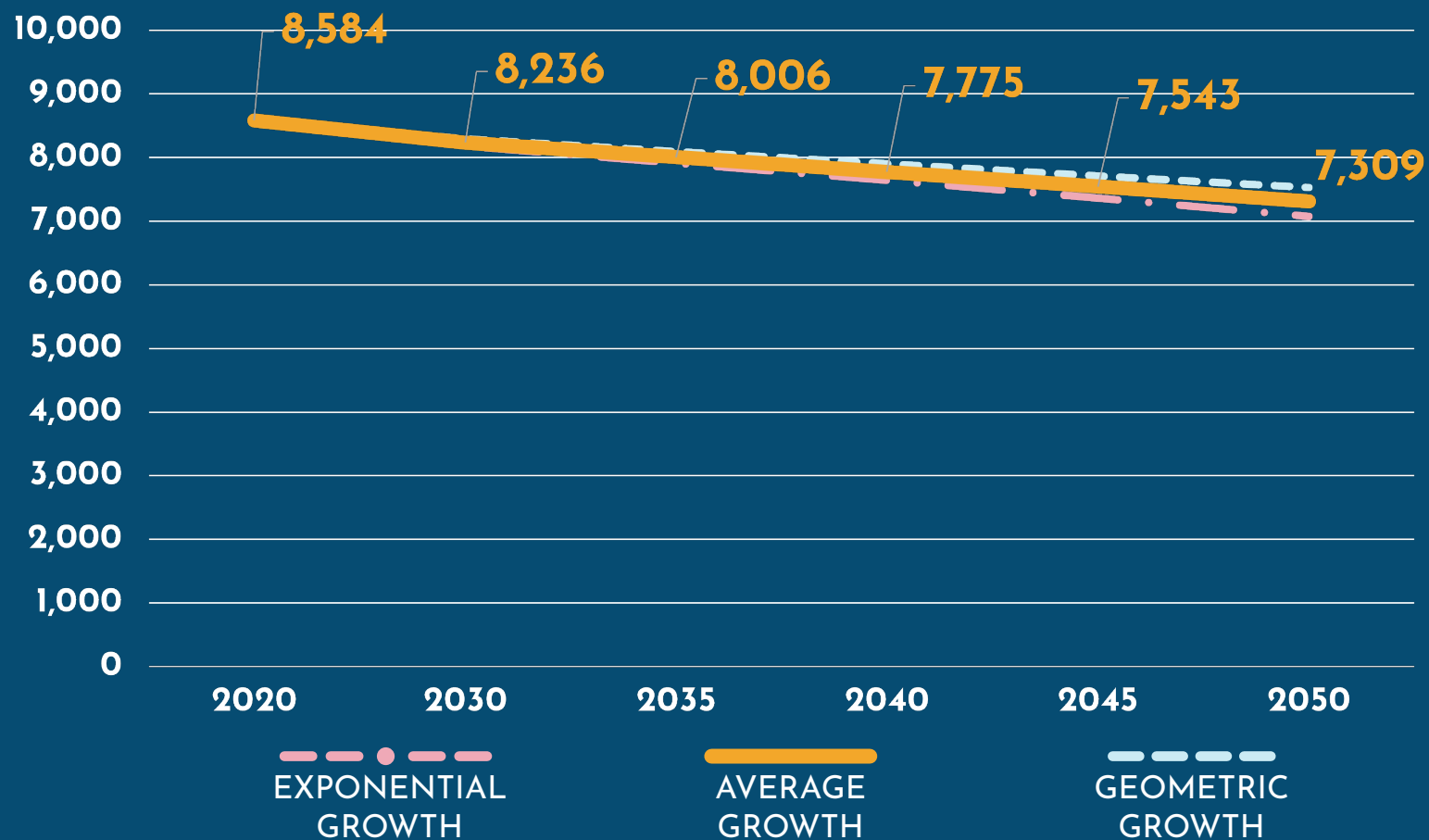# what is the estimated population by 2050?

8,584 (2020)
8,236 (2030)
8,006 (2035)
7,775 (2040)
7,543 (2045)
7,309 (2050)

Y-axis: 10,000 / 9,000 / 8,000 / 7,000 / 6,000 / 5,000 / 4,000 / 3,000 / 2,000 / 1,000 / 0

X-axis: 2020 / 2030 / 2035 / 2040 / 2045 / 2050

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH — AVERAGE GROWTH — GEOMETRIC GROWTH

FIGURE 2.4 // POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2020-2050

residential target mix

What is a Target Mix?

Residential composition highlights the current mix of residential typologies within a community today. The current residential mix in Independence today is dominated by low-density residential at 92.6%. This is typical for communities of Independence's size, location, and history; however, it is healthier for a housing stock to have diversity and range in choice for current and future residents.

A target mix helps provide guidance to the Future Land Use Plan to account for a healthy mix of residential uses in the future. The proposed target mix compared to the current mix are shown in Figure 2.5. These are utilized more within the Future Land Use Plan's counts and projections in the following pages.

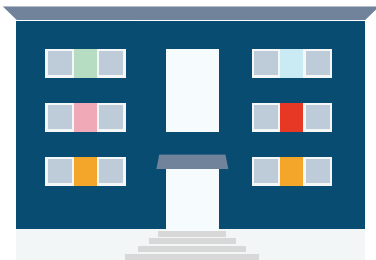**Detached Single-Family**

CURRENT MIX: **92.6%**

TARGET MIX: **80%**

Attached Single-Family

CURRENT MIX: **1.8%**

TARGET MIX: **12%**

Multi-Family

CURRENT MIX: **5.7%**

TARGET MIX: **8%**

FIGURE 2.5 // RESIDENTIAL TARGET MIX ESTIMATIONS

importance of housing choice

LIFE CYCLE HOUSING

Life cycle housing means that there are units readily available for current and prospective residents at every level- everything from renters, entry-level homebuyers and move-up housing, to one-level ranches and assisted living facilities. The more housing choice a community has, the more it supports the longevity of tenure in the community.

future land use categories

Future Land Use Categories

The Future Land Use Plan utilizes several land use categories to define density, character, and use within the planning boundary. The following pages outline each of the land use categories and their respective definitions.

Later in this chapter, there is information on how these land use categories relate to zoning and their compatibility in application. Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, there will be an additional process to update the zoning code.

Agriculture + Open Space

The Agriculture + Open Space land use category is set aside for agricultural land, undeveloped land, RV camp sites, floodplain, and significant tree cover. Independence has significant floodplain coverage in and around the city limits that should be preserved in open space or productive farmland. Some of the land in this category, excluding the floodplain, may be suitable for future development and the Future Land Use plan should be amended to accurately reflect these changes.

Stream buffers around type 1 and 2 streams as well as floodplain are part of this category

Active agricultural land uses will be the dominant land cover in this land use category
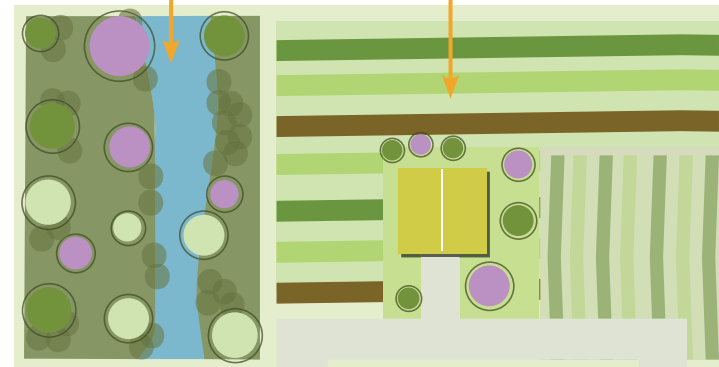
Parks + Recreation

The Parks and Recreation land use category is set aside for public, private and semi-private recreational land such as parks, trails, golf courses, greenways, and recreational fields.

Parks + recreation may include both public, private and semi-private recreation facilities - access will vary depending on the time of year, day, and ongoing activities
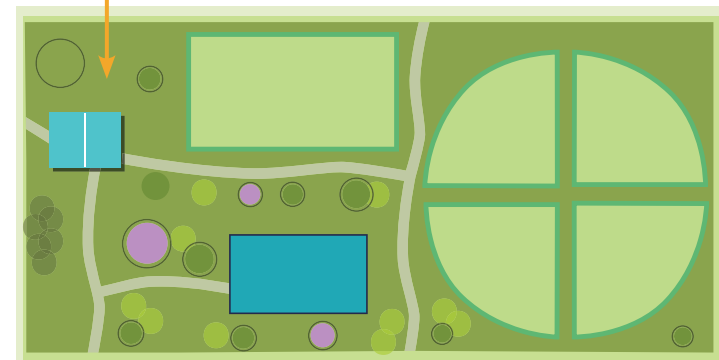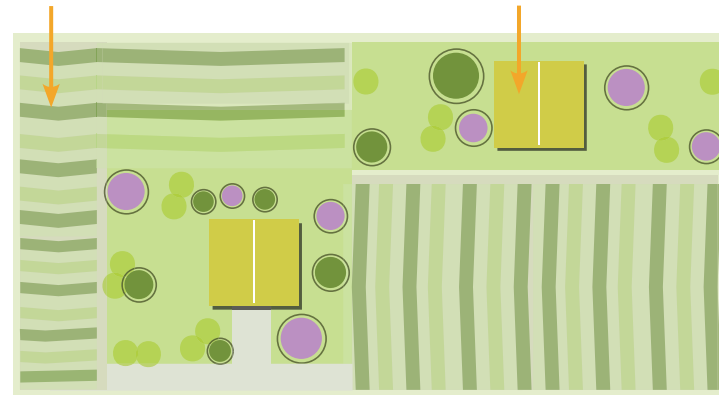
Rural Residential

The Rural Residential land use category includes low density, large lot residential developments. The typical density level of this land use category is no more than 1 dwelling unit per acre. These developments may be located in areas with steep slopes or significant tree cover that could be an obstacle to other residential developments.

Often agricultural land will surround rural residential dwelling units

Rural residential lots will typically include single-family detached homes on a minimum 1-acre lot
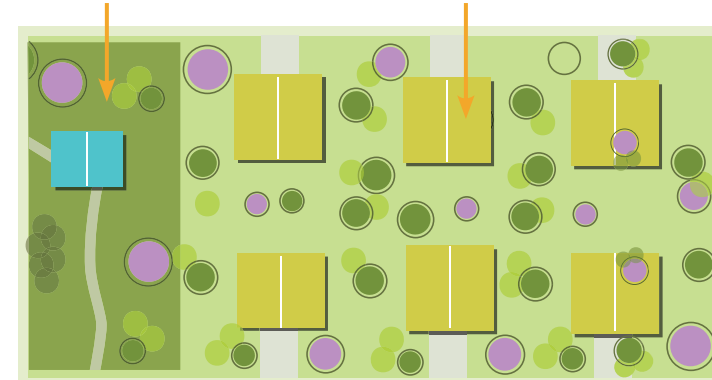
Low-Density Residential

The Low-Density Residential land use category is designated for areas with traditional low-density, single-family with lot sizes ranging from 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre. This land use will be predominantly single-family detached homes with some duplexes and single-family homes with accessory dwelling units. Developments within this category may also include religious, educational, institutional uses, child daycare centers, and public and private recreational areas.
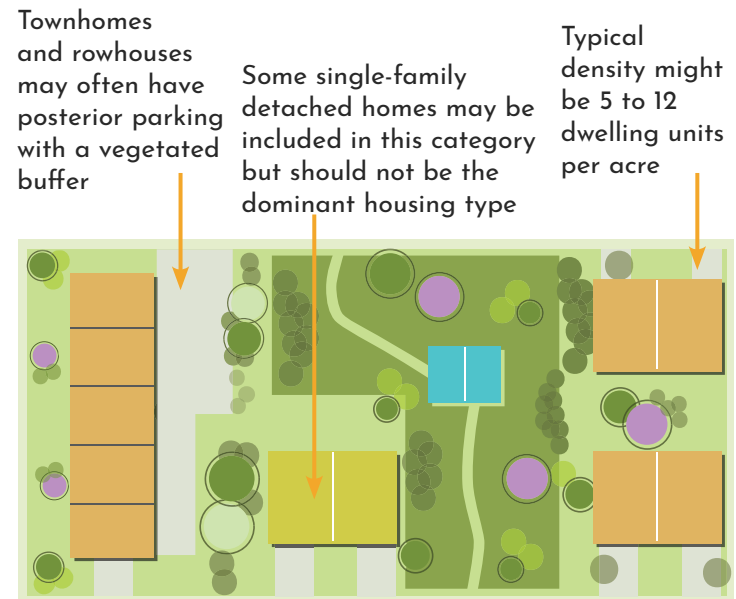
Parks, religious, educational, institutional, child daycare, or recreation may also be scattered throughout this land use

Single-family detached homes will dominate this land use category at densities of between 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre
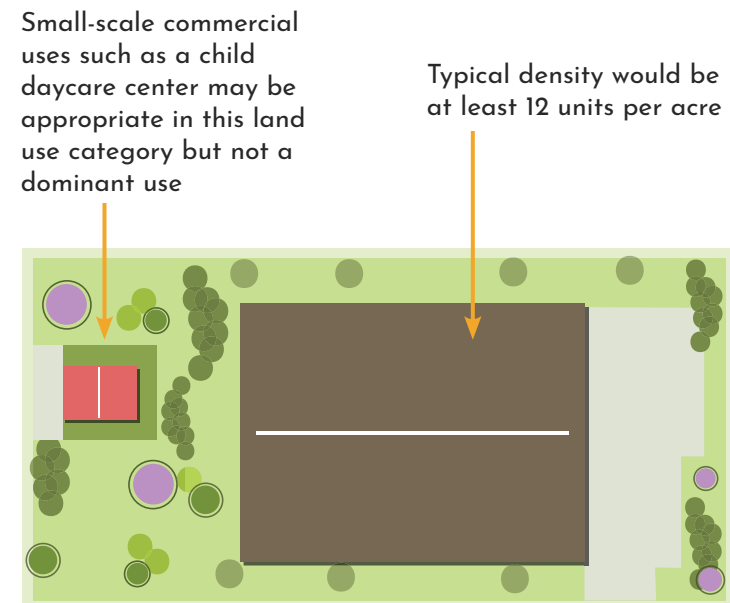
Medium-Density Residential

The Medium-Density Residential land use category is designated for townhomes, rowhouses, and cottage home developments. Occasionally, single-family homes will be included in this land use category. Medium-Density Residential densities range from 5 to 12 dwelling units per acre. Development within this category may also include religious, educational, institutional uses, child daycare centers, and public and private recreational areas. This land use can serve as a transitional land use from low-density residential to more intense uses such as commercial or industrial.

Townhomes and rowhouses may often have posterior parking with a vegetated buffer

Some single-family detached homes may be included in this category but should not be the dominant housing type

Typical density might be 5 to 12 dwelling units per acre

High-Density Residential

The High-Density Residential land use category is set aside for areas with densities of 12 or more dwelling units per acre. The category includes apartments and condominiums as the primary development, with some townhomes or rowhouses where appropriate. This housing type provides alternatives to residents of all ages and life stages. Development within the category may also include religious, educational, institutional uses, manufactured housing developments, child daycare centers, senior/assisted living facilities, and public and private recreational areas.

Small-scale commercial uses such as a child daycare center may be appropriate in this land use category but not a dominant use

Typical density would be at least 12 units per acre

Residential Infill Overlay

The Residential Infill Overlay is intended to identify and support pockets of residential neighborhoods that are viable areas for infill residential redevelopment. These may take shape in parcel-by-parcel redevelopments or entire block redevelopments but should encourage low- to medium-density development types. This overlay zone should have a separate set of design standards to ensure the redevelopment type matches or compliments the pre-existing neighborhood character and is of suitable scale.

An overlay is not a true land use in nature but reserves the land within the overlay for specific consideration for residential infill

Infill redevelopment can be parcel-by-parcel or full block redevelopment. Low-to-medium densities are encouraged.
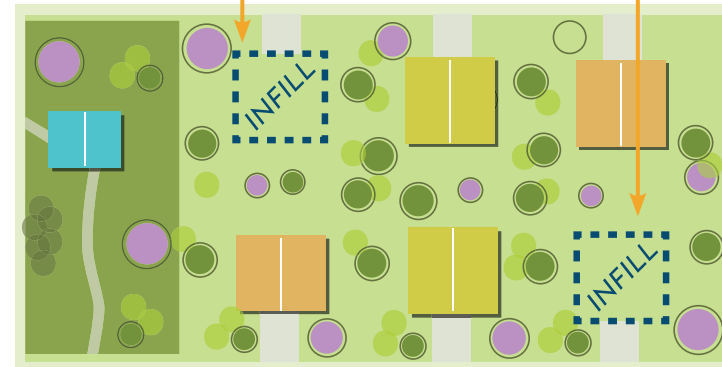
Downtown Commercial

The Downtown Commercial land use category is set aside for mixed-use developments in and around the historic businesses along Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street. The uses should consist of multi-story buildings with the first floor reserved for retail and a limited amount of office uses to encourage all-day activity. The upper floors of these buildings should contain residential or office uses.

Pedestrian activity should be a focus of the Downtown Commercial land use category

First-floor retail, restaurant, or similarly activated uses should be the preference for this area. Upperstory uses could be residential or office uses.
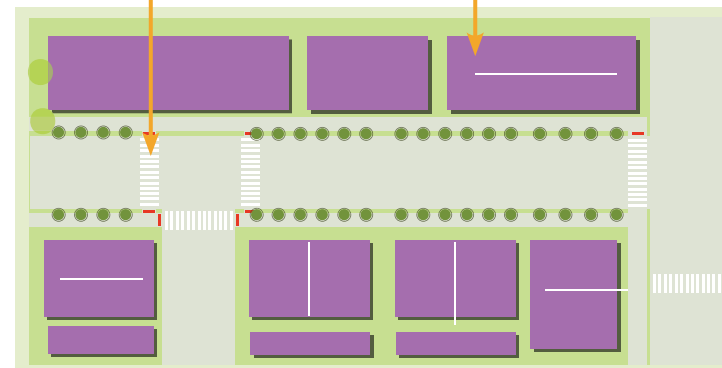
Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category includes a combination of small retail, office spaces, and medical uses for readily accessible services to residents and the traveling public. This category is located at major nodes throughout the planning boundary. Typical land uses include daycares, assisted living facilities, small office, convenience stores, small grocery and hardware stores, and other neighborhood-serving uses. Building Design Standards should be included to ensure this type of development does not interfere with the adjacent neighborhood, is built at a suitable scale, and does not unnecessarily increase noise, light, or vehicular pollution. Sites are generally 1 to 10 acres and should accommodate pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

Neighborhood commercial will typically be near or adjacent to lower-density neighborhoods

Neighborhood commercial uses will typically be found along collector or minor arterial roadways
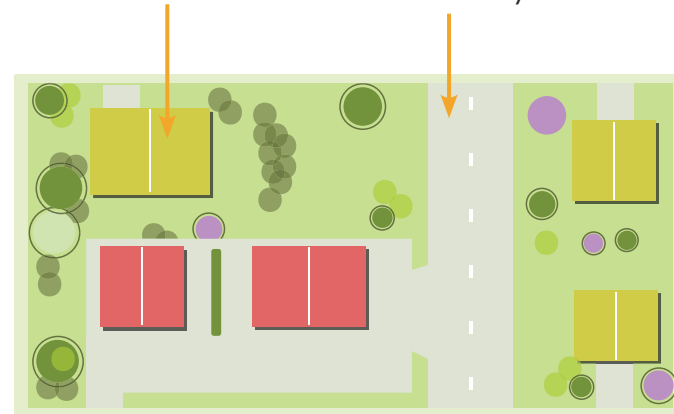
Commercial

The Commercial category is designed to include a variety of retail, office and commercial services at a variety of scales. These uses can include daycares, small office, convenience stores, car washes, car dealerships, hotels, banks, and auto repair stores. In its application, the commercial land use should be built at a suitable scale so as not to negatively impact surrounding land uses.

Proper landscaped buffering and site design should occur to minimize the impact of the commercial use on nearby residential

Commercial will typically be found along minor and major arterial roadways as well as near highways
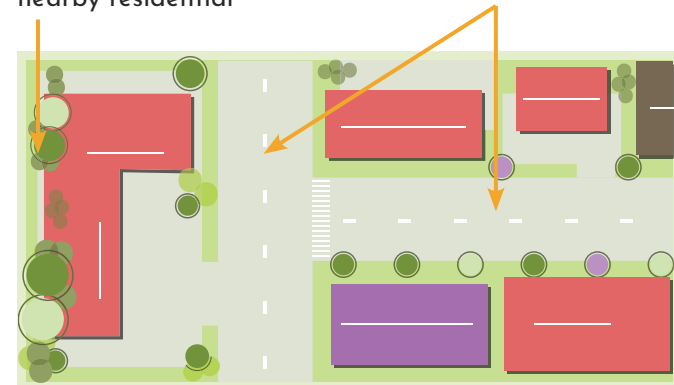
Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public land use category includes land owned or operated by a public or semi-public entity or institution. This could include city-owned properties such as city hall, the police department, library, or public works storage. It also includes similarly held land from the county. This land use category also covers any land owned by the school district. Lastly, the institutional land uses include colleges/universities, schools, libraries, landfills, communication and utility facilities, water/ sanitary sewer plants, cemeteries, post offices, hospitals, government offices and civic centers.

Low-density residential is often an appropriate neighbor for most public/semi-public uses

Public / semi-public uses such as a school may require a larger parking lot that should be appropriately designed and buffered to limit any negative impacts on nearby uses
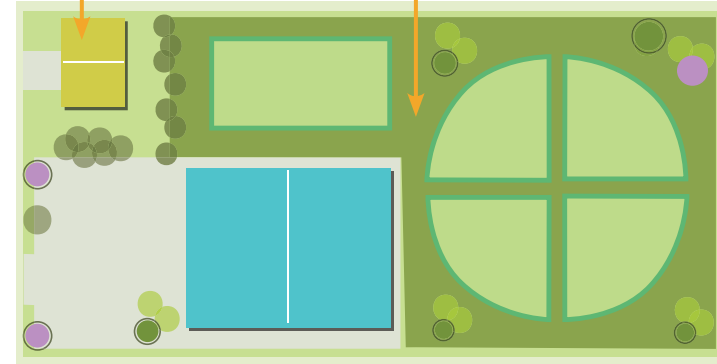
Business Park

The Business Park land use category is set aside to include business park office complexes and very light industrial uses. Business Park developments include larger office complexes and corporate campuses. Light industrial uses include warehouse and distribution facilities and activities such as testing, fabrication, manufacturing, and limited assembly of materials. All activities are contained within the buildings with no outdoor storage. Limited support retail or commercial activities would be allowed including gas stations, convenience stores, or coffee shops.

Typically, business park uses should be located along arterial roads with easy access to the highway

Proper landscaped buffering and site design should occur to minimize the impact of the business park uses on other nearby uses
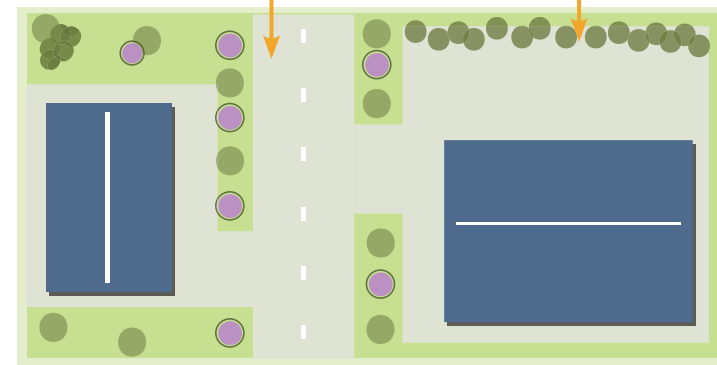
Industrial

The Industrial land use category is set aside to include industrial uses such as manufacturing and assembly, shipping, distribution, wholesale operations, and may include outdoor storage. Sensitive land uses should be buffered from this land use category.

Outdoor storage is often a defining characteristic of industrial land - proper buffering helps ensure views of these externalities are obscured

Industrial uses are the most intense manufacturing and assembling types and should be appropriately placed and buffered
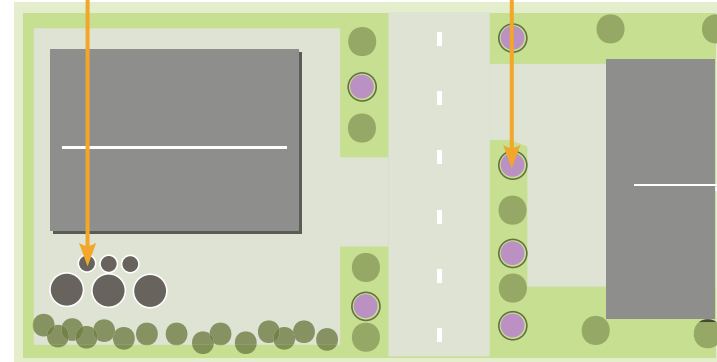
Airport

The Airport land use category is designed to support aeronautical commercial and manufacturing related services. The Airport land use category is similar to Business Parks in design and operation and should be complimentary in operation.

Business park uses are supportive neighboring developments to the airport land use

Preservation of the Runway Protection Zone is key for safety and development within the airport land use category
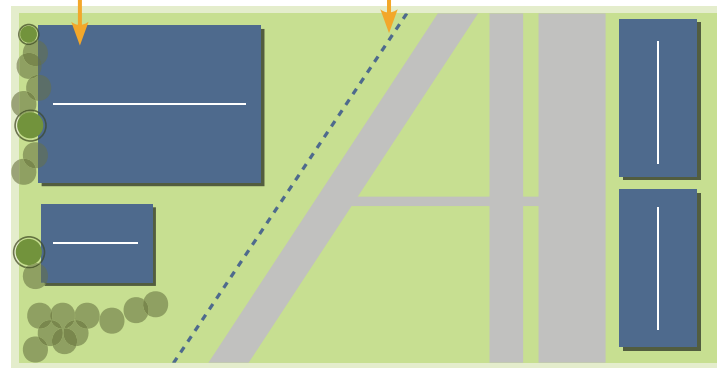
proposed growth themes

Growth Themes within the Planning Boundary

FLOODPLAIN PRESERVATION is land held for open space to protect and preserve the extensive floodplain and agriculture land. Unless mitigation measures are applied, development should generally not occur here.

INDUSTRY GROWTH is primarily focused near Bartlett and the airport. These two areas are the most supportive of expansion from a land use and infrastructure perspective and should see business park and industrial development types.

COMMERCIAL uses along W Main Street should see more highway-centric uses due to heavier truck traffic in this area. More local, amenity service types should be focused Downtown. Neighborhood-scale commercial should be located near residential uses.

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH is concentrated to the northwestern and central quadrants of the planning boundary due to viability of development and building off existing neighborhoods. A variety of densities should be constructed to support housing choice.

RESIDENTIAL INFILL encourages parcel or full block residential infill redevelopment. This reduces impacts of sprawl and maintains the concentration of residential uses throughout the core of the community.

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

COMMERCIAL

RESIDENTIAL INFILL

FLOODPLAIN PRESERVATION

INDUSTRY GROWTH

FLOODPLAIN PRESERVATION

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

INDUSTRY GROWTH

A series of themes were created to categorize and highlight pockets of growth and preservation in the Future Land Use Plan.
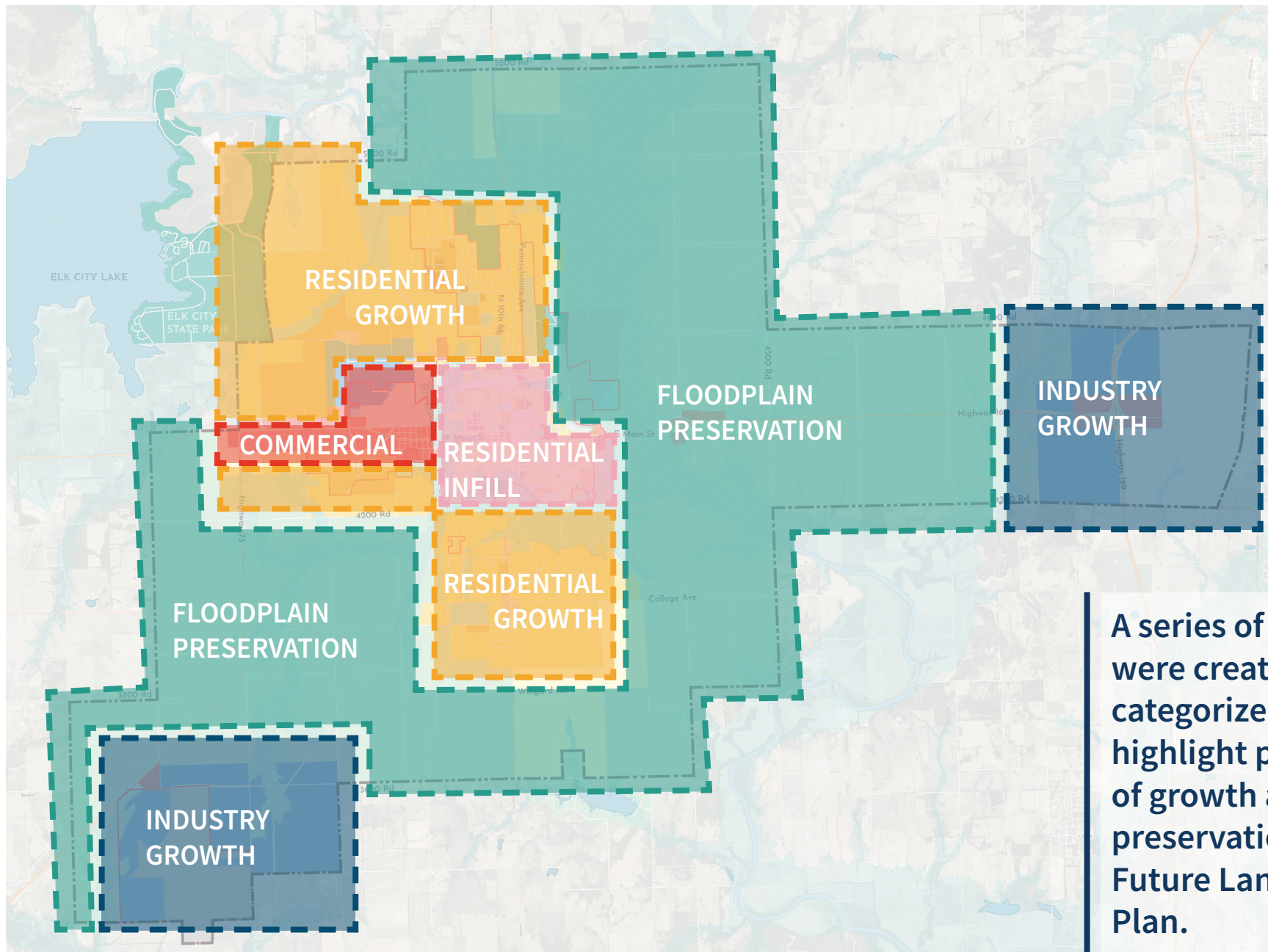
FIGURE 2.6 // PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP GROWTH THEMES

THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN

proposed future land use plan

Overview

Figure 2.6 presents the proposed Future Land Use Plan for Independence. Table 2.1 presents the total acres and shared by future land use category. The following pages present the estimates of the Plan in greater detail.

The land use patterns presented in Figure 2.6 are ideal development patterns. As development occurs, the Plan will need amended to reflect updated land patterns and desired build-out.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	TOTAL ACRES	TOTAL SHARE
Agriculture + Open Space	24,278.0	62.7%
Parks + Recreation	276.1	0.7%
Rural Residential	1,867.1	4.8%
Low-Density Residential	4,574.9	11.8%
Medium-Density Residential	1,080.5	2.8%
High-Density Residential	55.0	0.1%
Downtown Commercial	33.4	0.1%
Neighborhood Commercial	83.2	0.2%
Commercial	837.6	2.2%
Public/Semi-Public	299.1	0.8%
Business Park	2,878.4	7.4%
Industrial	1,632.7	4.2%
Airport	810.1	2.1%
TOTAL	**38,705.6**	**100.0%**

TABLE 2.1 // FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES ACRES AND SHARES

ELK CITY LAKE

ELK CITY STATE PARK

5200 Rd

5000 Rd

4600 Rd

4500 Rd

Pennsylvania Ave

N 10th St

Highway 160

W Main St E Main St

Highway 75

4200 Rd

4200 Rd

College Ave

3800 Rd

Wingard Rd

3600 Rd

Highway 169

LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- City Limits
- Parcels
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Waterbody
- Ag + Open Space
- Parks + Recreation
- Public/Semi-Public
- Residential Infill Overlay
- Rural Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Downtown Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Airport
- Business Park

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi   N

FIGURE 2.7 // PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

future land use plan by the numbers

Shares of Developable Land

Agriculture + Open Space dominates the land development scheme as a measure to preserve and protect the floodplain and agriculture activity in the area as noted in Figure 2.6. The graph below presents the shares of proposed developable land use types. Low-Density Residential is the dominant land use type at 32.7%, followed by Business Park (17.1%), Rural Residential (13.1%), and Industrial (11.4%). The diversity and shares of land uses supports a healthy mix of living and working for the future of Independence.

These percentages consider development shares for all proposed land uses except Agriculture + Open Space.
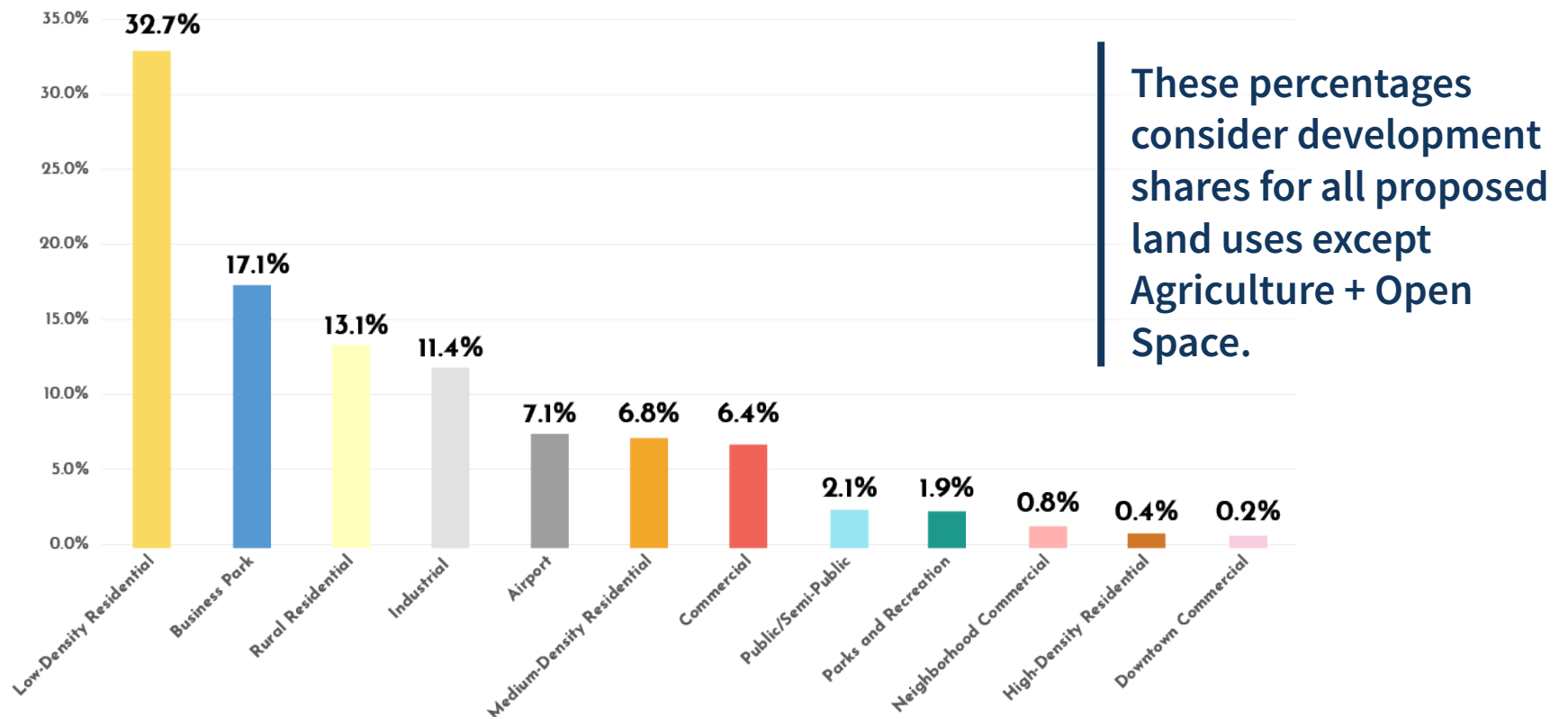
FIGURE 2.8 // DEVELOPABLE LAND USE SHARES

Potential Growth in Independence by 2050

Infrastructure

Independence is well-positioned for future growth due to infrastructure improvements that have opened up development potential of land throughout the planning boundary. The water main currently under construction, called the "Big Straw", extends out to the Highway 160/169 interchange and will provide water to the Bartlett facility and other potential developments along the highway.

The airport also has infrastructure in place to support additional industry and employment expansion. Two certified sites are located here and would be ideal as Business Park uses.

Residential

The Jefferson Subdivision is in the planning process and will bring 20 single-family units on the market. These will be a mix of market rate and affordable units that will provide much needed housing for current residents.

Additional housing is best suited in the northwestern quadrant of the community and should refer to the residential target mixes to provide a variety of housing for current and future residents as they age throughout Independence.

relationship to zoning

Zoning Compatibility Matrix

The zoning compatibility matrix shows the relationship between the future land use categories and the City of Independence's zoning districts. Zoning districts have been listed as either compatible ("Y") or partially compatible ("M") within each of the corresponding land use categories.

This matrix serves as a tool to determine appropriate zoning district(s) for land that is newly annexed into the City or as a property is being considered for a rezoning. If the rezoning desired for the given property is incompatible with its land use designation, the designation on the Future Land Use Plan should be first amended accordingly. In certain cases, an update or amendment to this matrix may be warranted to address changes in development patterns or revisions to the City's zoning code regulations.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

ZONING DISTRICTS	Agricultural + Open Space	Rural Residential	Low-Density Residential	Medium-Density Residential	High-Density Residential	Downtown Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial	Business Park	Industrial	Airport	Public/Semi-Public	Park + Recreations
A-1 Agricultural	Y	Y	M									Y	Y
R-1 Large Lot Single-Family Residential	Y	Y	Y	M								M	M
R-2 Single-Family Dwelling	M	Y	Y	Y	M								
R-3 Low-Density Multifamily Dwelling			M	Y	Y								
R-4 Medium-Density Multifamily Dwelling				Y	Y								
R-5 High-Density Multifamily Dwelling					Y								
O&P Office and Professional							Y	Y	M				
C-1 Neighborhood Business						M	Y	Y					
C-2 Commercial Services								Y	M				
C-3 Central Business						Y	M	Y					
C-4 Highway Commercial								Y	Y	Y			
M-1 Light Industrial									Y	Y	Y		
M-2 Heavy Industrial									M	Y	Y		
PUD Planned Unit Development	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

FIGURE 2.9 // ZONING COMPATIBILITY MATRIX

rezoning process flow chart

Process for Rezonings

The process for a rezoning is detailed in a flow chart in Figure 2.10. This chart serves as a reference guide for steps that need to be taken with a rezoning based on the Future Land Use Plan.

The State of Kansas has Golden Factors that are also taken into consideration for land use and zoning decisions as a result of the Golden vs. City of Overland Park court ruling. The Golden Factors include:

- The character of the neighborhood
- The zoning of uses on nearby properties
- The suitability of the property for the uses to which it is restricted
- The extent to which the change will detrimentally affect nearby property
- The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned
- The gain to the public health, safety, and welfare by the possible diminution in value of the developer's property as compared to the hardship imposed on the individual landowners
- The recommendations of a permanent or professional planning staff
- The conformance of the requested change to the City's comprehensive plan

REZONING APPLICATION RECEIVED

Is the application consistent with the Future Land Use Plan policies and map?

NO → Proceed with the public hearing process for review and consideration of an **amendment** to the Future Land Use Plan

YES

Was the Future Land Use Plan amendment approved?

Does it comply with the Golden Factors?

NO

PROCEED WITH THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE REZONING REQUEST

PROCEED WITH THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR DENIAL OF THE REZONING REQUEST

FIGURE 2.10 // REZONING APPLICATION FLOW CHART

goals + strategies for implementation

Implementation

To help implement the Future Land Use Plan and the recommendations in the chapter, a series of goals, metrics, and strategies have been created.

Table 2.2 presents the format and definition for each of these categories.

GOAL 1	METRIC 1
A goal is a broad theme or objective the City should strive for.	A metric is a way to measure successful implementation of the strategies toward its respective goal.
STRATEGIES	
Strategies are specific steps or policies the City should take to advance or complete a goal.	
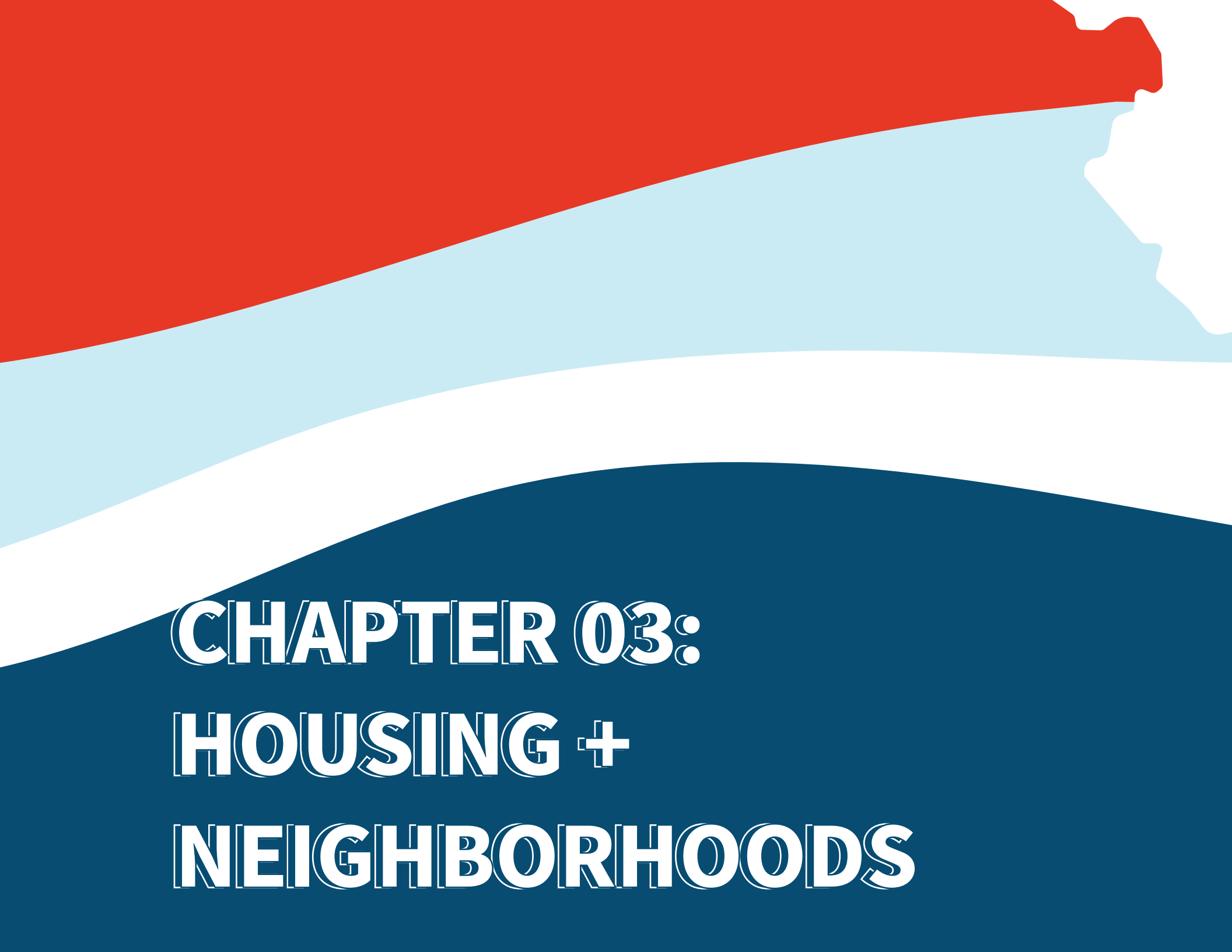
TABLE 2.2 // EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
GROW EFFICIENTLY AND PROMOTE A HEALTHY MIX OF LAND USES	Fewer developments disconnected from the built environment	Completion of infill redevelopment projects	Consistency with the Growth Themes Map
STRATEGIES			

Encourage a mix of development types as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Promote a mix of residential uses for increased housing choice.

Reduce occurrences of leapfrog development.

Identify and install infrastructure updates to support development.

Leverage Future Land Use Plan for economic development.

Preserve and protect sensitive natural features.

Use transition zones, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, to gradually change densities and intensities of uses.

Preserve right-of-way and easement corridors for utilities and future streets.

Maintain land availability for shovel-ready and certified sites.

Schedule an annual review between the City and Planning Commissions to review and amend the Future Land Use Plan to reflect changes in the community and development patterns.

Support historic preservation initiatives throughout the planning boundary to maintain the historic character of Independence.

Update population projections in the next ten to fifteen years to better prepare for the next decade of change.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
PROMOTE STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS AND RESIDENTIAL DIVERSITY	Increased housing choice	Improve neighborhood mobility and safety	Enhance the overall visual and physical quality of the neighborhood
STRATEGIES			
Promote residential development as proposed in the Future Land Use Plan.			
Support the development of medium- and high-density residential uses.			
Encourage residential infill in the Residential Infill Overlay districts.			
Discourage cul-de-sacs for improved thru connections throughout neighborhoods.			
Implement transitional land uses or physical buffers between residential densities.			
Improve sidewalk conditions throughout the community to support walkability.			
Enhance neighborhood aesthetics through street trees, plantings, and signage.			
Promote residential rehabilitation to preserve the historic character of neighborhoods and quality of the existing housing stock.			

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CHAPTER 03: HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOODS

chapter overview

Housing In Independence

The Housing + Neighborhoods Chapter provides an overview of the existing housing stock and household characteristics and concludes with recommendations and strategies for new housing within the community.

Population projections, housing demand estimates, and pipeline projects are all considered within this chapter to produce actionable development strategies for the community.

Independence Housing Authority

The Independence Housing Authority (IHA) completed a Housing Needs Assessment in 2021 that meets the State of Kansas' requirements to qualify for the RHID program. In this report, items such as household characteristics, incomes, development history, and existing programs are detailed to identify the needs for housing and related efforts within the community.
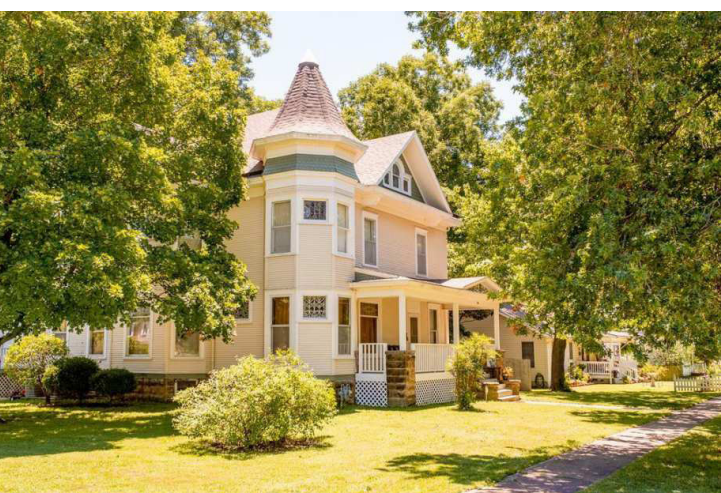
independence housing authority

The Role of the Independence Housing Authority in the Community

Established by resolution in May of 1972, the Independence Housing Authority (IHA) operates as an agency within the City of Independence to assist in housing development and administer housing programs for low-to-moderate incomes. Tenant Based Rental Assistance, Downtown Upperstory Housing Grant, Independence Land Bank, and general grant and financial support are just some of the programs the IHA is responsible for in the community. The IHA has been involved with the construction of the following projects:

DEVELOPMENT NAME	YEAR BUILT	UNIT COUNT	HOUSING TYPE	QUALIFYING RESIDENTS
Penn Terrace Apartments	1978	99	Apartments	Seniors, Low-Income
Earl Street Project	2005	2	Single-Family	Low-Income
Eisenhower Subdivision	2007-2017	28	Single-Family	Low-to-Moderate Income
McKinley Housing	2010	28	Mix	Low-Income
Martin Estates	2012	18	Single-Family	Low-Income
Martin Estates Phase II	2013	6	Single-Family	Moderate-Income
Jefferson Subdivision*	2024	20	Single-Family	Moderate-Income + Market Rate

*THE JEFFERSON SUBDIVISION BEGAN CONSTRUCTION AT THE TIME THIS PLAN WAS WRITTEN.
SOURCE: INDEPENDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

timeline of housing + programs from IHA

1972
Independence Housing Authority is established

1978
Penn Terrace Apartments come online with 99 units for low-income seniors

1980-2000

2005
Earl Street homes are constructed

2007
Intense flooding destroys 100+ homes

Eisenhower Subdivision is made possible from SB417 funds and 28 units are constructed over the next decade

2010-2013
McKinley Housing + Martin Estates projects are completed

2015
Downtown Upperstory Housing Grant begins

2016-2021
72 homes are removed due to being dangerous or dilapidated

2020
IHA purchases land that will be the Jefferson Subdivision, utilizing the Reinvestment Housing Incentive District program

2021
Independence Land Bank is established with IHA backing

The City and IHA establish the Neighborhood Exterior Grant Program

2024
Construction for the Jefferson Subdivision begins

PRESENT

Establishment of Program/Group

Loss of Housing

Gain of Housing

qualifying for housing incentives

Overview

The State of Kansas Secretary of Commerce offers the Reinvestment Housing Incentive District (RHID) program to help support residential development in communities smaller than 60,000 residents. The RHID program "captures the incremental increase in real property taxes created by a housing development project for up to 25 years. The revenue can be used for reimbursement for incurred costs or to pay debt service or bonds" (Kansas Department of Commerce). To qualify for RHID funding, a city or county must demonstrate **1)** that there is a shortage of quality housing within the city/county **2)** that the shortage of housing is expected to persist **3)** that the shortage of housing is a substantial deterrent to future economic growth in the city/county **4)** that the future economic well-being of the city/county depends on the governing body providing additional incentives for the construction or renovation of quality housing in city/county

To demonstrate the need for housing within Independence, the following icons will be used to denote a response to one of the qualifying questions needed to be eligible for the RHID program.
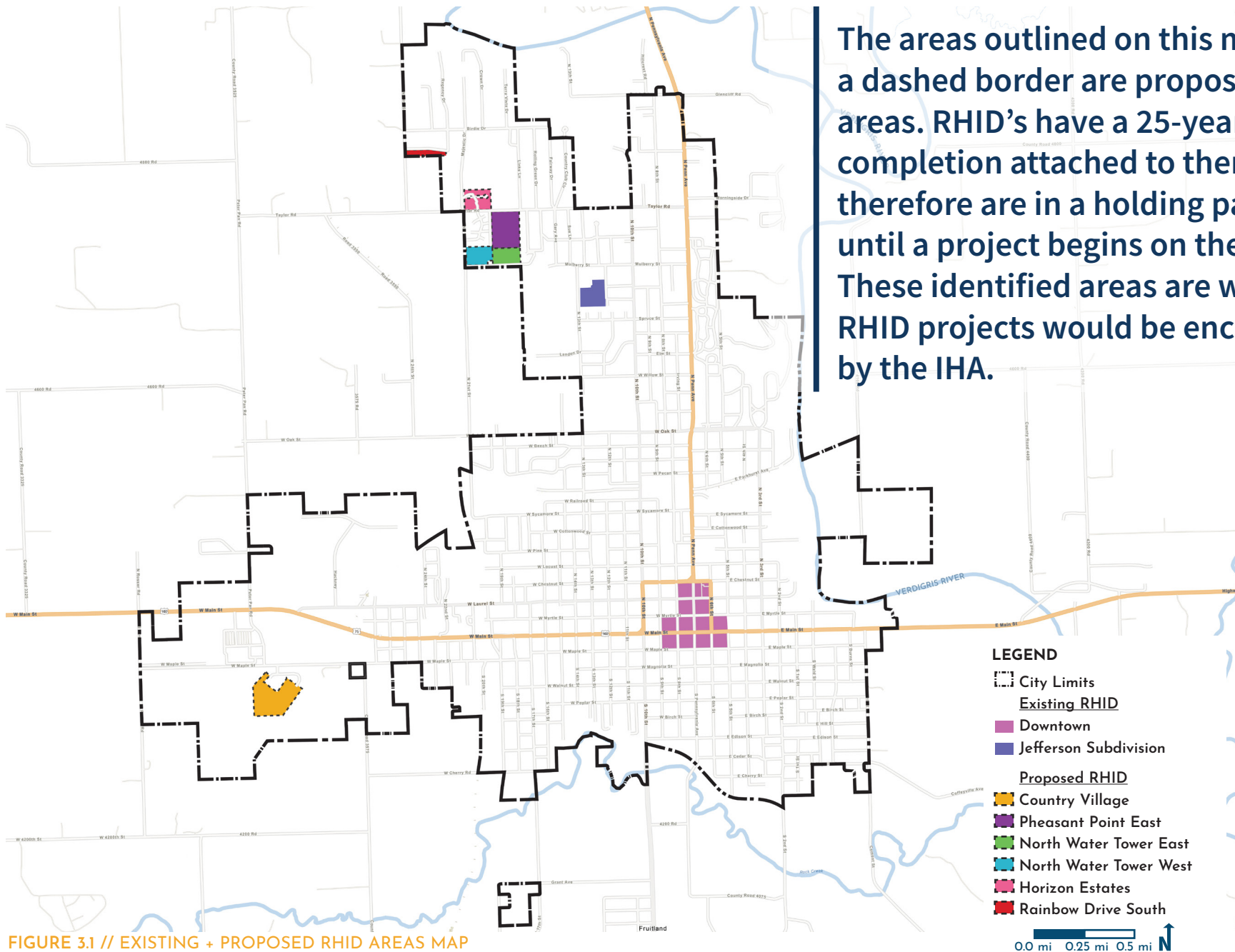
The areas outlined on this map with a dashed border are proposed RHID areas. RHID's have a 25-year limit for completion attached to them and therefore are in a holding pattern until a project begins on the site. These identified areas are where RHID projects would be encouraged by the IHA.

LEGEND

◻ City Limits

Existing RHID

■ Downtown
■ Jefferson Subdivision

Proposed RHID

■ Country Village
■ Pheasant Point East
■ North Water Tower East
■ North Water Tower West
■ Horizon Estates
■ Rainbow Drive South

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N

FIGURE 3.1 // EXISTING + PROPOSED RHID AREAS MAP

household characteristics

Overview

Figure 3.2 summarizes a few key household characteristics for Independence. In the first column, average household sizes are categorized from an overall average, as well as owner-occupied and renter-occupied averages. These averages begin to form some assumptions:

- There are more families in owner-occupied households than renter-occupied households.

- There is potential that the current stock of renter-occupied housing is not supportive of larger family sizes.

- There are possibly more young professionals, seniors, and students that occupy the rentals today.

Median household incomes in Independence are fairly low when compared to Montgomery County and other counties in the state. Montgomery County's median household income is $51,513 and ranks #12 in lowest household incomes compared to the rest of the state. These income ranges are relevant to this housing discussion due to its implications on how many households are potentially housing cost-burdened within Independence. Additionally, median mortgage costs and gross rents are currently outside of what residents can afford at median incomes per HUD's 30% affordable range. Ensuring there are ample affordable units within the appropriate income ranges will be a key priority for development.

**INDEPENDENCE AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD SIZE**
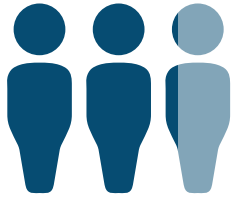
2.24 PERSONS

**INDEPENDENCE MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

$48,514

**INDEPENDENCE MEDIAN
HOME VALUE**

$85,100

**HOMEOWNER AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD SIZE**
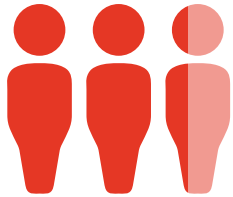
2.38 PERSONS

**HOMEOWNER MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

$59,960

**HOMEOWNER MEDIAN
MORTGAGE COST**

$1,139

**RENTER AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD SIZE**
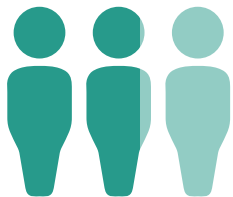
1.90 PERSONS

**RENTER MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

$28,287

**RENTER MEDIAN
GROSS RENT**

$743

FIGURE 3.2 // HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2022 ESTIMATES

housing stock characteristics

there are an estimated
3,732
occupied households in Independence today.

57.0%
households are occupied by families.
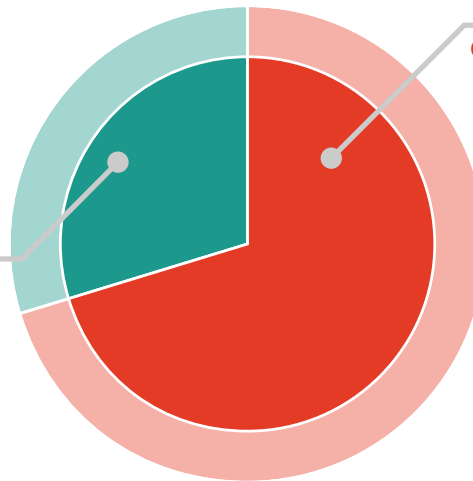
70.5%
owner-occupied

29.5%
renter-occupied

There are an estimated 3,732 occupied residential units in Independence today. Occupancy is skewed heavily toward ownership at a rate slightly higher than the State estimates.

There are an estimated **4,595** total households in Independence today.

Of these, roughly 3,732 are occupied units

While the remaining 863 units, or **18.8%** of the residential stock is vacant

There are roughly 4,595 total households in Independence. Approximately 18.8% of the residential stock sits vacant today. Montgomery County has an equally high vacancy stock at 18.8%. These estimates are quite high, especially when compared to the state vacancy share of 9.1%. The quality of these vacant units is unknown and a more thorough analysis should be completed to better weigh options for rehabilitation vs. redevelopment.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2022 ESTIMATES

existing housing stock characteristics

Nearly 40% of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1939. The next highest peaks in development came in 1950-1959 (+499 units) and 1970-1979 (+690 units).
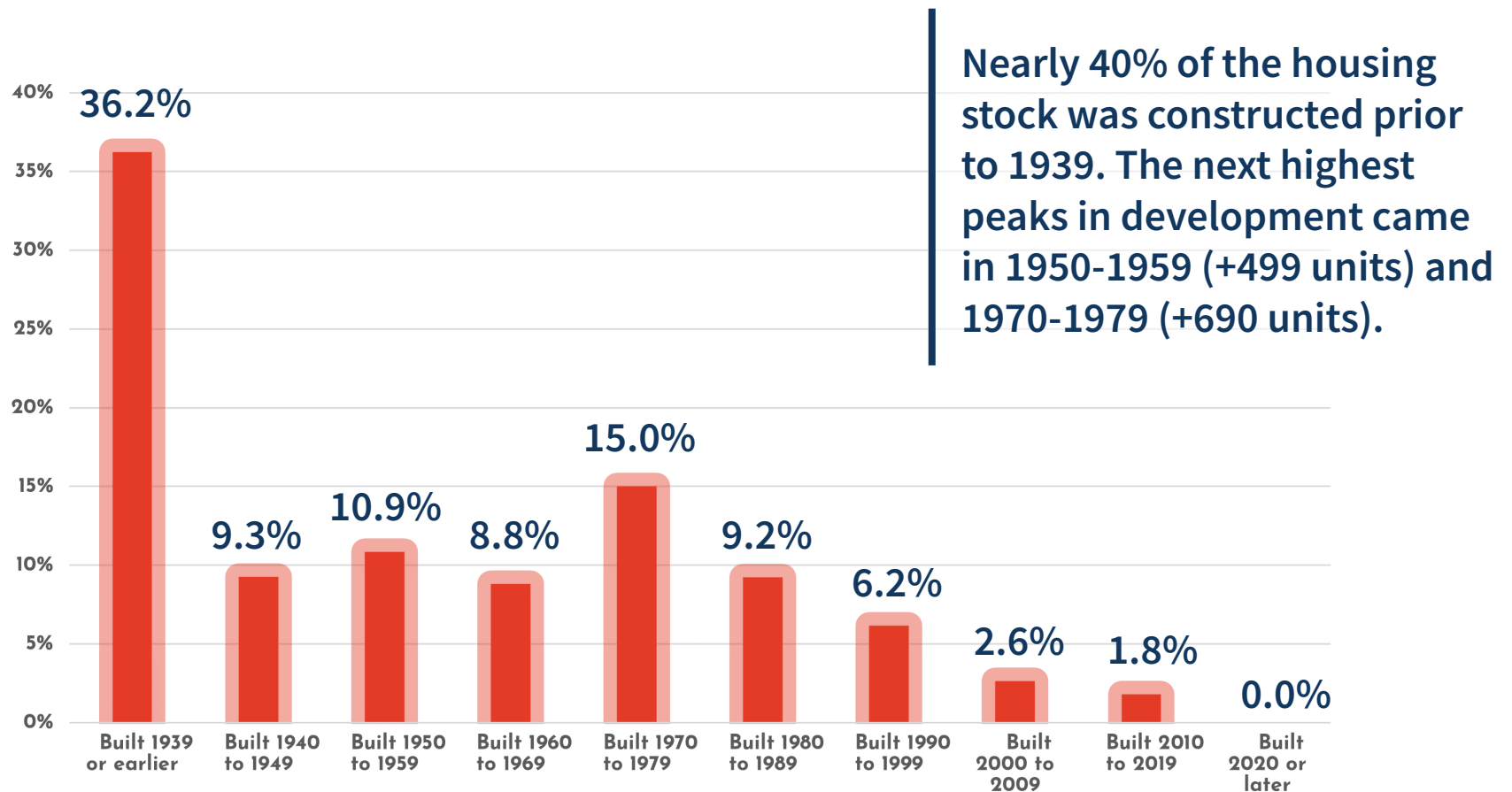
FIGURE 3.3 RESIDENTIAL YEAR BUILT BAR GRAPH
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2022 ESTIMATES

Housing Mismatch Analysis

A Housing Mismatch Analysis serves as an additional method for measuring gaps and surpluses within the existing housing market.

This analysis follows HUD's definition of affordability and examines what homes (rentals and owner-occupied units) exist within the community today that are within 30% of the household income ranges provided.

The graphic below highlights what each color and bar represents.

Household Incomes: Categories are broken into ranges to understand the availability of homes/rentals within their price range.

Surplus: Shown in blue, this identifies a surplus in the stock that meets more than existing need.

Households with Income $25,000-$49,999

Homes: $60,000-$124,999
Rentals: $500-$999

Households with Income $50,000-$74,999

Homes: $125,000-$199,999
Rentals: $1,000-$1,499

Gap: Shown in red, this identifies a gap in the stock not meeting existing need.

Rentals: Show the existing affordable rentals within the given income range.

Homes: Show the existing affordable homes within the given income range.

FIGURE 3.4 EXAMPLE MISMATCH ANALYSIS + DEFINITIONS
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2021 ESTIMATES

Households with Income $0-$24,999

Homes: $0-$59,999
Rentals: $0-$499

Households with Income $25,000-$49,999

Homes: $60,000-$124,999
Rentals: $500-$999

Households with Income $50,000-$74,999

Homes: $125,000-$199,999
Rentals: $1,000-$1,499

Households with Income $75,000-$99,999

Homes: $200,000-$249,999
Rentals: $1,500-$1,999

Households with Income $100,000-$149,999

Homes: $250,000-$399,999
Rentals: $2,000-$2,999

Households with Income More Than $150,000

Homes: $400,000+
Rentals: $3,000+

INCOMES SURPLUS GAPS HOMES RENTALS

FIGURE 3.5 INDEPENDENCE HOUSING MISMATCH ANALYSIS
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2021 ESTIMATES

Based on home values and household incomes, there is a surplus in residential units priced at $0-124,999 for owner-occupied units and rentals $999.

The units within the $25,000-$49,999 income range have a significantly higher presence than other income ranges. This is a benefit for housing mobility to some degree; however, it does pose an issue for competition within the market that higher incomes are potentially purchasing down in price and reducing the true number of units available to those within these income ranges.

There is a significant gap in homes available for households earning more than $75,000. This greatly limits move-up housing opportunities for residents.

housing cost burdened households

Defining Cost Burden Households

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends that households spend no more than 30% of their gross income on rent, including utilities. Households spending more than 30% are defined as housing cost-burdened, whereas those spending more than 50% are defined as extremely housing cost-burdened. The graphs presented in Figure 3.6-3.7 showcase the findings for owner-occupied units with their mortgage as percent of income and gross rent as percent of income for renter-occupied units.

MORTGAGE AS PERCENT OF INCOME

Category	Percent
Less than 20%	60.3%
20%-24.9%	12.2%
25%-29.9%	13.1%
30%-34.9%	1.8%
35% or more	12.6%
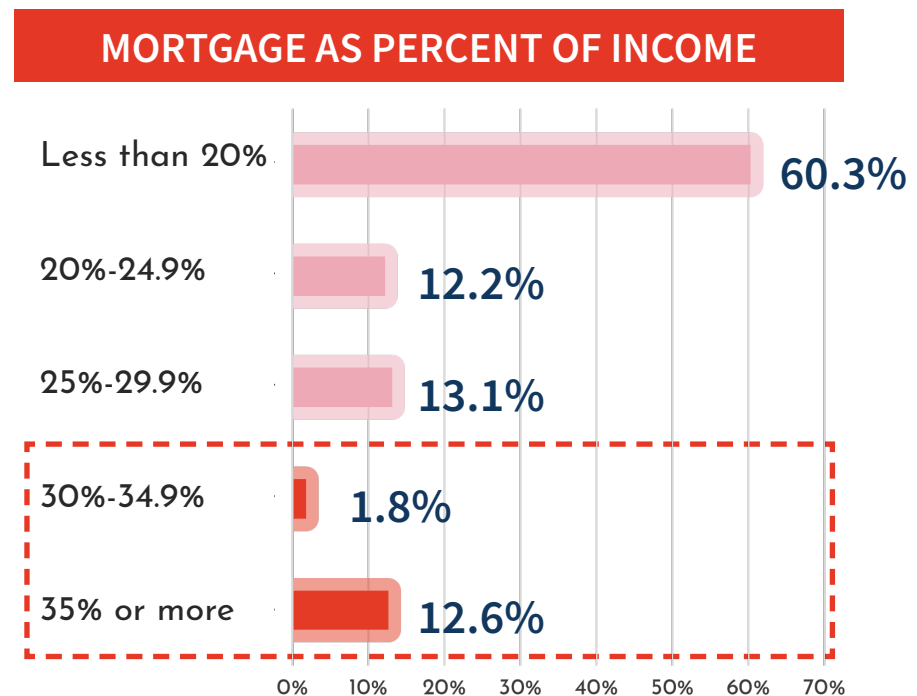
FIGURE 3.6 MORTGAGE AS PERCENT OF INCOME, HOUSING COST BURDENED
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2022 ESTIMATES

GROSS RENT AS PERCENT OF INCOME

Less than 20%	**22.4%**
20%-24.9%	**18.1%**
25%-29.9%	**15.8%**
30%-34.9%	**5.9%**
35% or more	**37.8%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
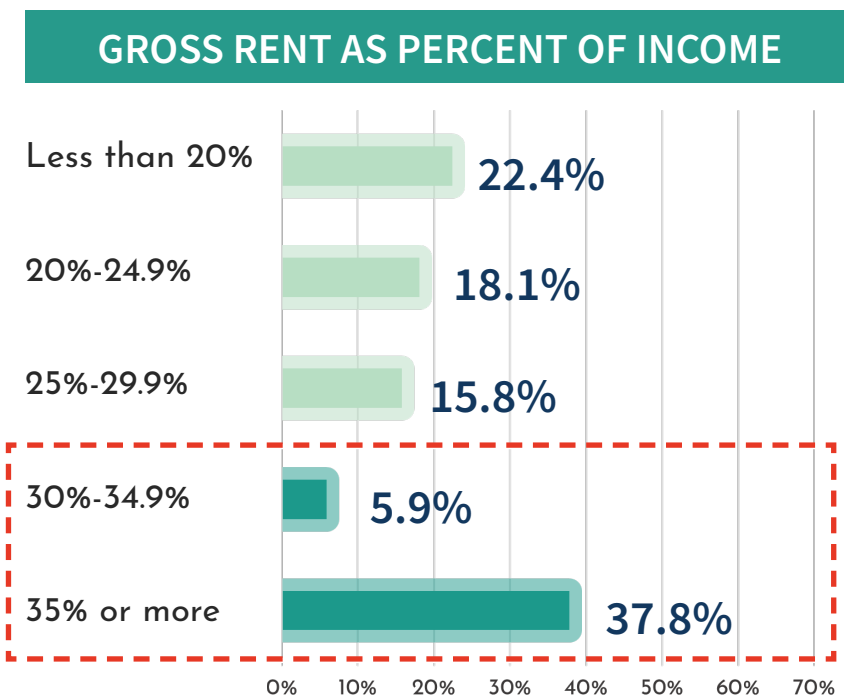
FIGURE 3.7 GROSS RENT AS PERCENT OF INCOME, HOUSING COST BURDENED
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ACS 5-YR 2022 ESTIMATES

No matter if a unit is owner or renter-occupied, there are cost-burdened households in Independence. Owner-occupied units have a lower share at 14.4%, though those spending 35% or more on housing has the highest share at 12.6%. Renters in Independence are at a higher risk of being cost-burdened with an estimated 43.7% of renters being cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. As new developments are proposed, consideration for the level of affordability of the units should be given and creative solutions, such as tax incentives, should be identified as a mechanism to support housing affordability within the community.

out of reach 2023 summary

National Low Income Housing Coalition

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) is a 501(c)(3) that produces highly-detailed reports on low-income renter populations across the country and recommends policy to address the housing crisis. The NLIHC produces reports titled "Out of Reach" to highlight the gap between wages and affordable fair market rental units throughout the United States.

The information detailed in the tables to the right highlight the Out of Reach details for Montgomery County, Kansas. The minimum wage in the State of Kansas, coupled with the lack of affordable fair market rental units within the area, presents an even further need for an expanded housing stock.

Current vs. Necessary Wages to Afford Rent

The tables to the right show the datasets for Montgomery County with the state minimum wage, what a two-bedroom Fair Market Rent* (FMR) is in 2023, and how many full-time jobs** it would take to afford this rent at 30% of gross income. This is then compared to the necessary hourly wage and annual income needed to afford the same two-bedroom FMR unit at one full-time job.

The results of the data comparison showcase an ever-growing gap between what current minimum wages are versus what is needed to comfortably afford a 2-bedroom FMR unit.

Area Median Income + Affordable Rates in Montgomery County

Table 3.3 presents the annual and 30% area median incomes (AMI) for Montgomery County. The 30% AMI category is significant as this is the "extremely low-income" range for all HUD and low-income funding sources. Affordable rents in these income thresholds range from $508-$1,693.

STATE MINIMUM WAGE	2 BED FMR*	FULL-TIME JOBS** NEEDED TO AFFORD
$7.25/hour	$788	2.1

TABLE 3.1 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, KS CURRENT WAGES + RENTS + FULL-TIME JOBS
SOURCE: NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, 2023

NECESSARY HOURLY WAGE	2 BED FMR	FULL-TIME JOBS** NEEDED TO AFFORD
$15.15/hour // $31,520 (annually)	$788	1

TABLE 3.2 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, KS NECESSARY WAGES + RENTS + FULL-TIME JOBS
SOURCE: NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, 2023
FMR = Fiscal Year 2023 Fair Market Rent
**Full-time job = 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year*

ANNUAL AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)	AFFORDABLE MONTHLY RENT AT AMI	30% AMI	AFFORDABLE MONTHLY RENT AT 30% AMI
$67,700	$1,693	$20,310	$508

TABLE 3.3 MONTGOMERY COUNTY, KS AREA MEDIAN INCOME RANGES
SOURCE: NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, 2023

existing residential composition

Current Housing Stock

Figure 3.8 highlights the existing residential stock by density and type found throughout Independence today. Low-density residential is the dominant residential land use, comprised of traditional, single-family homes. This is to be expected with Independence's historic development trends and geographic location. There is a healthy presence of nursing home facilities in the community that provide a much needed resource for care and services.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	TOTAL SHARE
Low-Density Residential	1,042.4	91.2%
Medium-Density Residential	20.1	1.8%
High-Density Residential	63.8	5.6%
Nursing Home Facilities	16.6	1.5%
TOTAL	**1,142.9**	**100.0%**

TABLE 3.4 EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BREAKDOWN IN INDEPENDENCE
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

LEGEND

⬜ City Limits
⬜ Parcels
🟨 Low-Density Residential
🟧 Medium-Density Residential
🟫 High-Density Residential
🟪 Nursing Home Facilities

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N
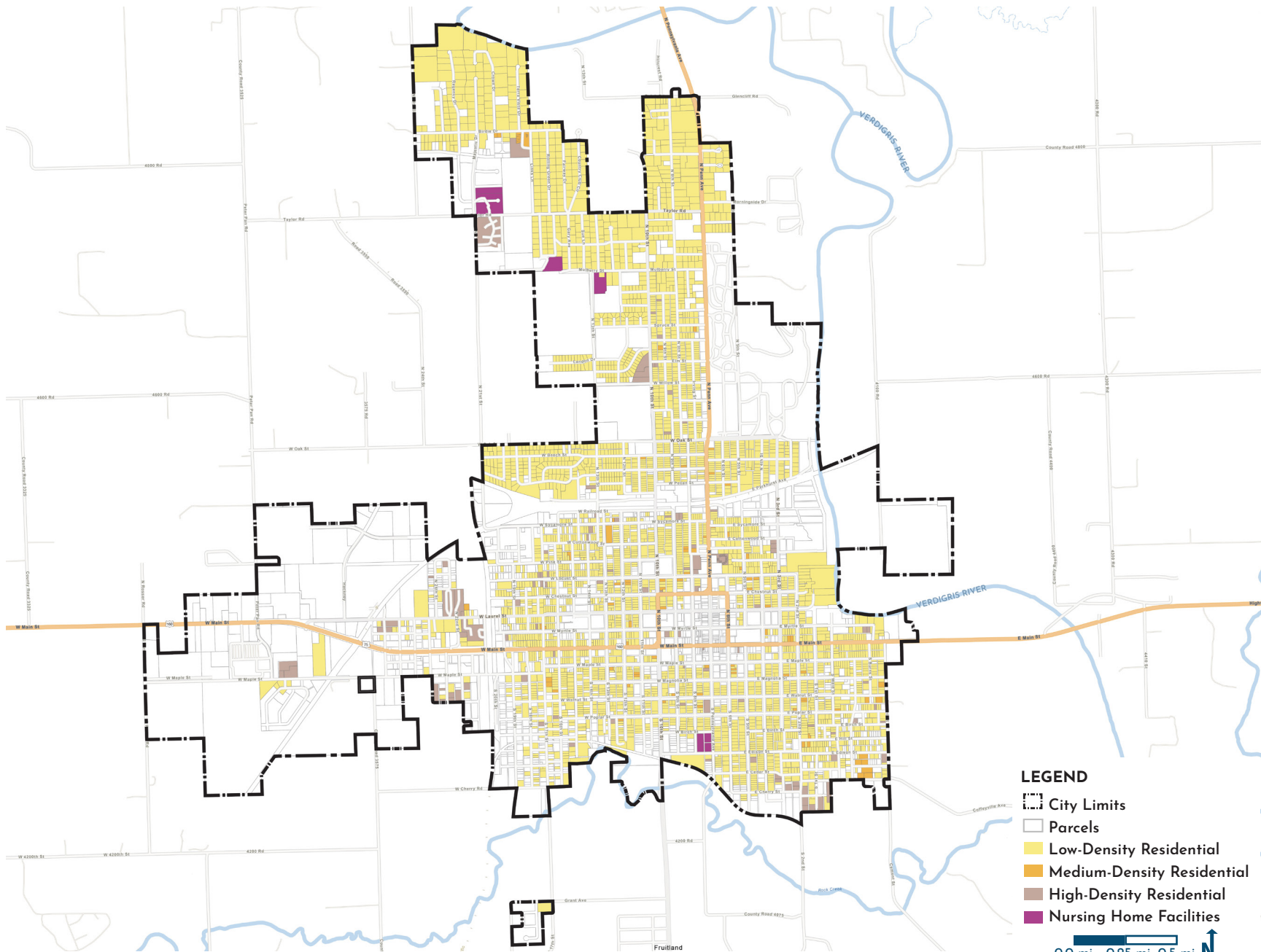
FIGURE 3.8 // EXISTING RESIDENTIAL LAND USE MAP

| **Chapter 03: Housing + Neighborhoods**

residential total value by parcel

Total Value by Parcel

Figure 3.9 illustrates the parcel-by-parcel breakdown of residential total values throughout the community. The patterns shown follow development patterns by year built data and highlight the historic core of Independence as the more affordable, entry-level housing location and the newer developments to the north as the more expensive housing.

	TOTAL VALUE RANGE	PARCEL COUNT	TOTAL SHARE
	Less than $50K	2,159	57.9%
	$50K-$100K	934	25.0%
	$100K-$150K	390	10.5%
	$150K-$200K	146	3.9%
	$200K-$250K	49	1.3%
	$250K-$300K	27	0.7%
	$300K or more	26	0.7%
	TOTAL	**3,731**	**100.0%**

TABLE 3.5 RESIDENTIAL TOTAL VALUES BY PARCEL BREAKDOWN
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

LEGEND

- ⌐⌐ City Limits
- ☐ Parcels
- Less than $50K
- $50K-$100K
- $100K-$150K
- $150K-$200K
- $200K-$250K
- $250K-$300K
- $300K or more

0.0 mi 0.25 mi 0.5 mi N
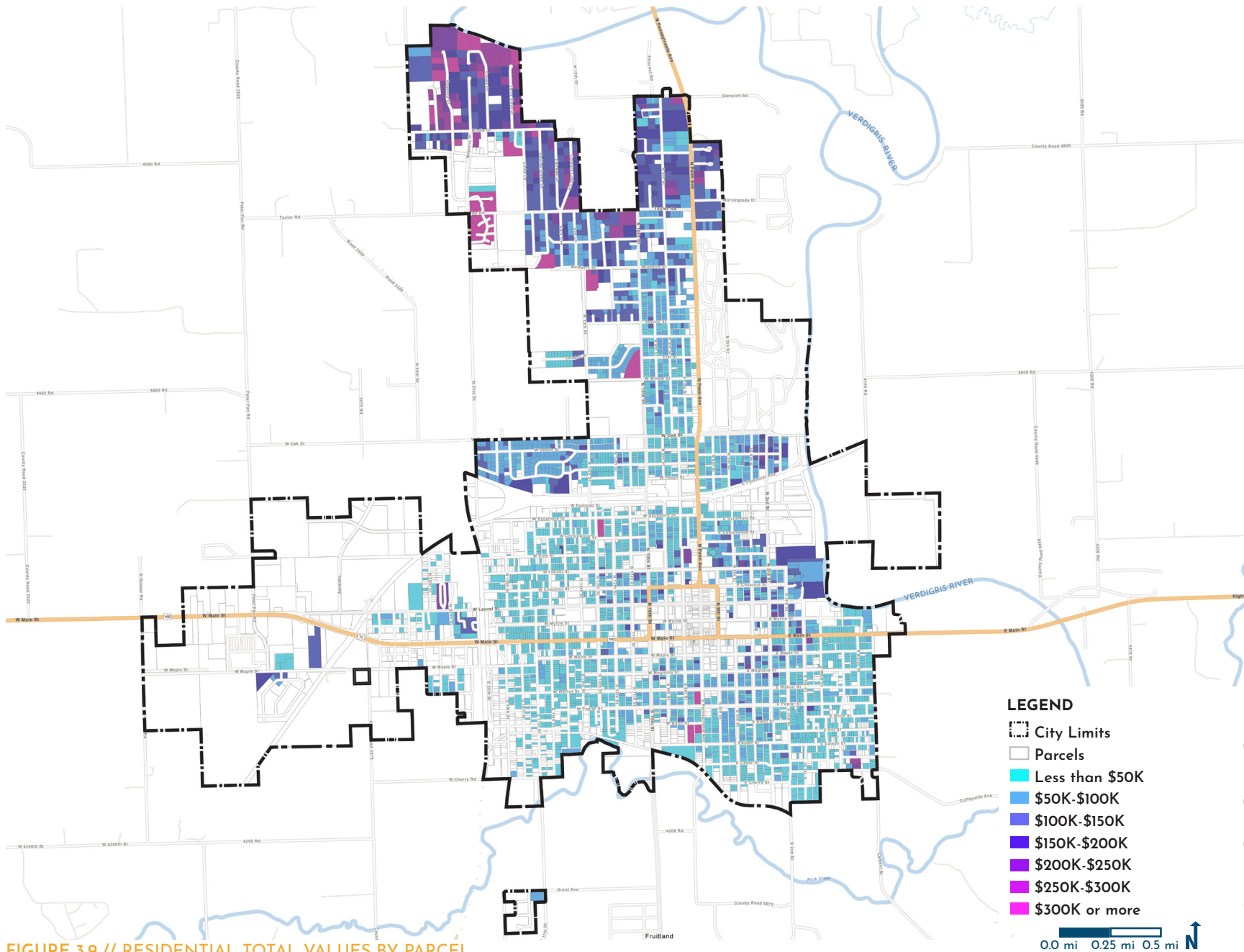
FIGURE 3.9 // RESIDENTIAL TOTAL VALUES BY PARCEL
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

housing-related public input

Throughout the public engagement process, there was a consistent theme that the housing stock in Independence needs improvement in order for the community to reach its potential.

The following pages contain input from the community regarding the current need for improvements in housing from stakeholder interviews, the public workshop, and online engagement website.

1st — Increased housing choice

2nd — Expansion of industry and/or technical job opportunities

3rd — Commercial/retail attraction

4th — Road improvements

5th — Downtown streetscaping and facade improvements

6th — Sidewalk and trail expansion
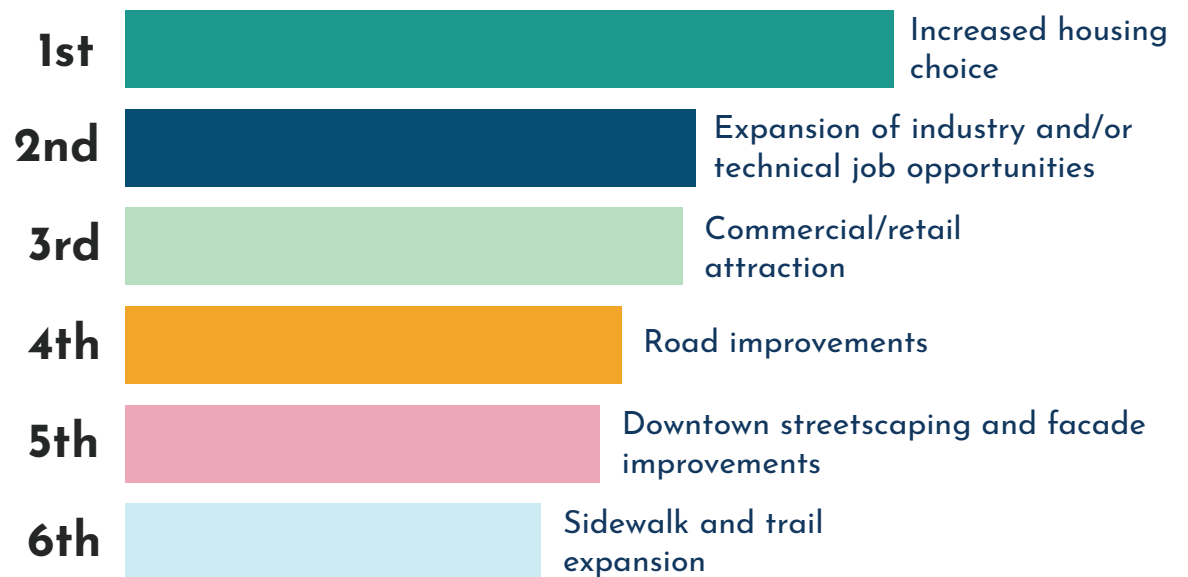
The graph above illustrates polling results from the in-person public workshop. Participants ranked the need for increased housing as the highest priority of improvements needed in Independence.

What we heard from stakeholder interviews

The information to the right represents key themes from interviews that the consultant team held with community stakeholders related to housing needs in Independence.

Many of the sentiments communicated by stakeholders support the ideas gathered during the public workshop and through the online engagement website that ***Independence should prioritize improving and diversifying the current housing stock.***

- If prospective residents are not able to find a home to meet their needs, the community often loses out on ever bringing them back to the community.

- There is a need for all ranges of housing. Infill opportunities and entire block redevelopment areas should be identified.

- Many are excited for the Jefferson Subdivision Development to be completed.

- The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is an asset for the community. Residents would like to see this expanded for a wider scale of application.

- Desire for some duplexes/quadplexes for senior housing.

- Northwest area of town is likely to be the growth zone for residential development.

- New rental options are needed for all ranges of residents (students, seniors, young families)

How would you rank the following improvements by level of need?

1. Expansion of industry and/or technical job opportunities
2. *Increased housing choice*
3. Road improvements
4. Commercial/retail attraction
5. Sidewalk and trail expansion
6. Downtown streetscaping and facade improvements

Online Engagement

Many in the community opted to provide their input through the online engagement website rather than through the in-person public workshop.

In this setting, their sentiments were similar to those heard during the public workshop and stakeholder interviews, consistently ranking improvements in housing as some of the most important for Independence.

Results from the online survey regarding housing are listed to the right.

Please rank these amenities as to their impact on Independence's quality of life.

1. Local Business and Industry
2. *Housing Availability and Stock*
3. School District and College Availability
4. Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo
5. Local Events and Gathering
6. Historic Charm and Built Character

Please rate your level of agreement.
(1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Independence has a sufficient amount of housing today that supports inward mobility and prospective residents can easily move to town.

Average
1.96

During the public workshop and through the online engagement website, participants were asked to rate various residential forms. Below is a selection of the top-rated forms from both of these opportunities.

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
SMALLER LOT

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
SMALLER LOT

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
MEDIUM LOT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION/REHAB OF
EXISTING HOMES

LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
COTTAGE STYLE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
CENTRAL GREEN DEVELOPMENT

estimating housing demand

Population Projections Through 2050

As discussed in Chapter 2: Future Land Use, a set of population projections were completed for this planning effort. Due to historic trends of steady population decline, these forecasts reflect a similar downward trend over the next twenty-five years. However, pipeline projects, general housing demand, and draw to the community indicate that these projections are likely to be low. Furthermore, since the 2007 flood and general housing demolition for safety reasons (as noted on page 47), new housing construction has not recouped this loss of housing. Therefore, there is still strong demand for housing construction within the community today.

Housing construction and rehabilitation should be a priority to support inward housing mobility, opportunities for new resident capture, and diversification of housing types to support a variety of residents and lifestyles.
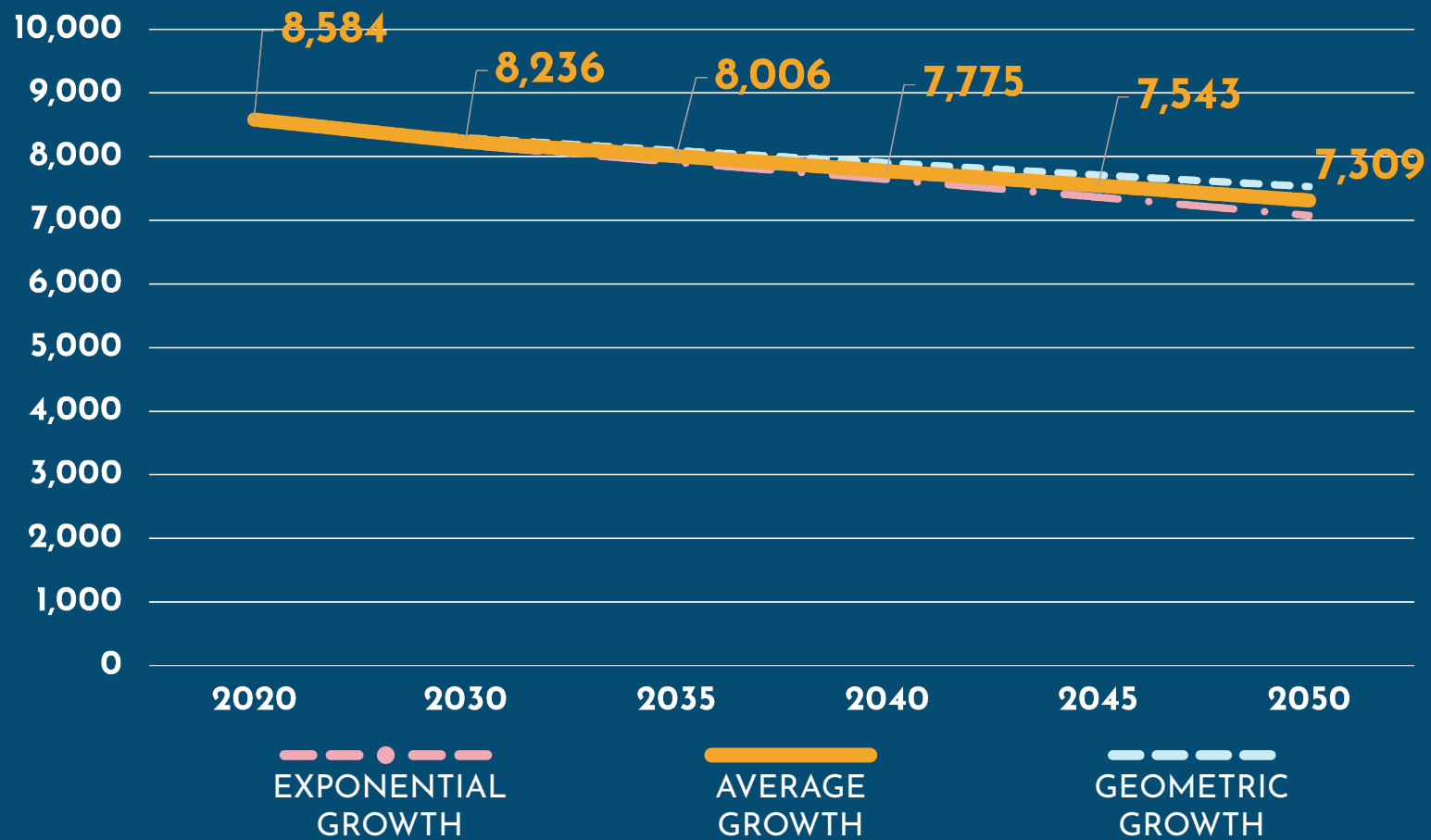
FIGURE 3.10 // POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2020-2050

planning for future residential growth

Residential Growth in the Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide growth in the most ideal locations for a variety of land uses. Figure 3.11 presents the proposed locations for all residential land uses within the planning boundary.

Due to the high concentration of floodplain along the eastern perimeter of city limits and preexisting residential development, there are three key growth areas proposed in the plan. These growth areas include:

- The northwest quadrant of the planning boundary, near Elk City Lake and extending from pre-existing residential development.

- South of W Main Street and the commercial uses that are street-fronted.

- Land around Independence Community College, where there are pre-existing, unincorporated residential uses.

The floodplain can serve as a benefit to the overall community for greenbelt and trail opportunities but should be left untouched for hardscape development, such as residential and commercial uses. Following the 2007 flood, there are many residential areas that have vacant pockets due to buy-out properties.
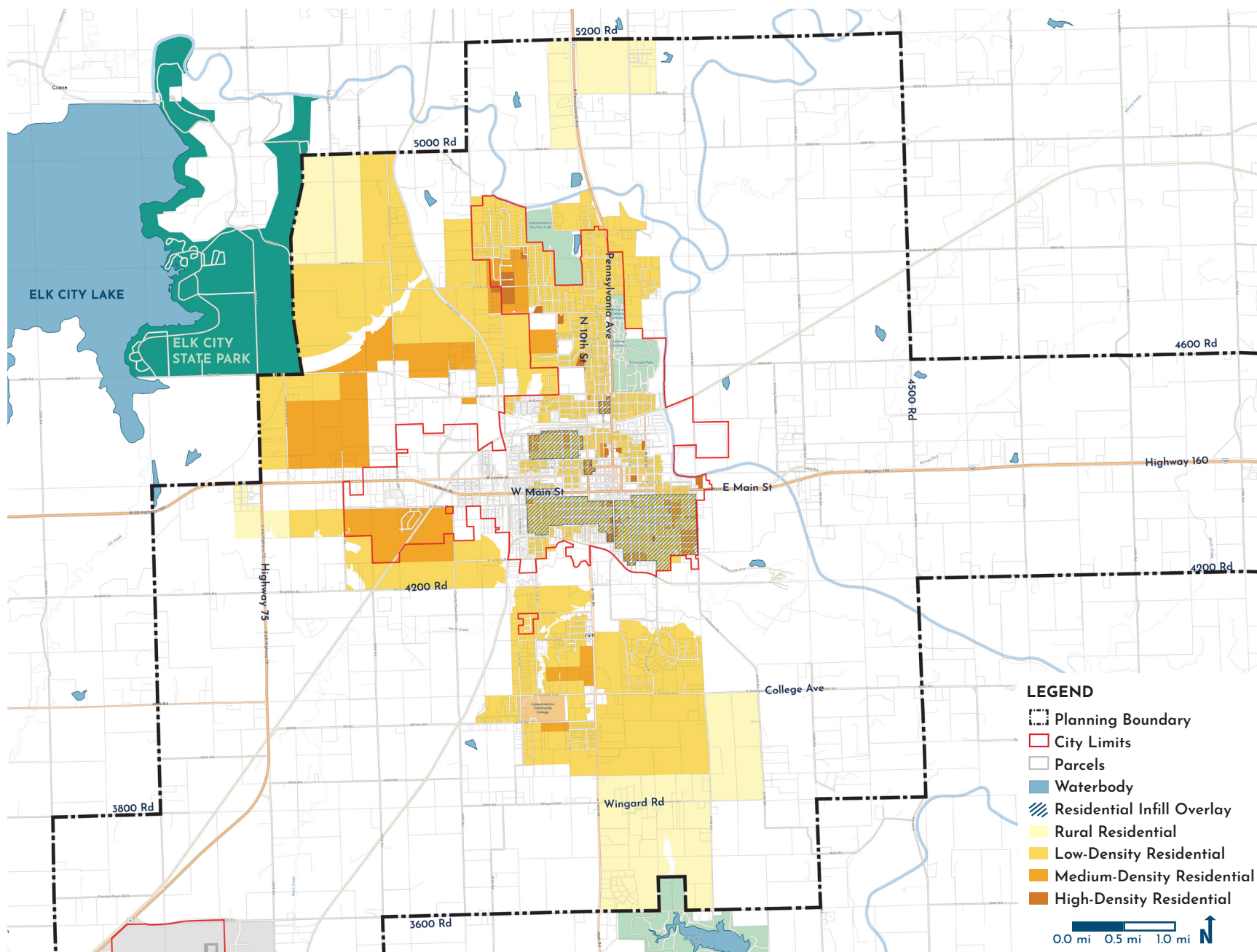
FIGURE3.11 // PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP - RESIDENTIAL LAND ONLY   *THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN*

LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- City Limits
- Parcels
- Waterbody
- Residential Infill Overlay
- Rural Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi   N

what is limiting residential growth in independence today?

current housing stock

Independence's current housing stock has greatly limited a resident's ability to promote inward housing mobility, draw in prospective employees and families, preserve historic character due to severe dilapidation, and much more.

Independence has a strong historic past that both compliments the current quality of life in the community, while simultaneously working against its best efforts to attract new residents. Some of these historic homes are in such great need of repair and updates that they create barriers to entry for potential homebuyers. Additionally, the high vacancy rate of the current housing stock is of great concern and sheds light on the quality of the existing stock. Regarding turn-key properties, there has been very limited new residential construction in recent years which further strains the opportunities for buying a home in Independence. The Jefferson Subdivision that is set to begin construction in February 2024 is the first large-scale development in almost a decade with 20 units being brought online. This section will identify strategies to support housing efforts in the community and consider the housing stock issue from a variety of angles.

resources

The cost to construct housing, as well as finding contractors, is becoming increasingly difficult to produce new units in communities. Difficulty finding contractors in the area was a sentiment often-noted by the public and stakeholders in Phase 2. Many communities have to stack grants, funding, and other incentives to bring development to town.

This section will examine existing housing programs, incentives, and other potential solutions to limiting the barriers to bringing development to Independence.

catalysts

Often times, a lack of economic activity is what limits the growth potential of communities. This has not been the case of Independence in recent years with numerous businesses opening their doors. However, with these new businesses, the challenge for new employees to find housing within the community is growing, resulting in them choosing to live in nearby communities or Oklahoma.

Identifying strategies to maintain the community's competitive standing in attracting new businesses and residents will be considered in this section.

Preserve the historic character of Independence's existing housing stock

Historic Character in Independence

Considering Independence's incorporation in 1870, boom town rise in the early 1900s, and historic draw to the area, it is no surprise that there is a large pool of beautiful, architecturally-rich homes still standing today. Many describe Independence to be reminiscent of Mayberry- boasting the quintessential downtown, historic homes, and vibrant community character. These homes play a crucial role in maintaining the community's charm and should be preserved.

There are two homes in Independence today that are on the State or National Register of Historic Places. The home on the state registry is the home of Alfred "Alf" Landon, a Governor of Kansas from 1932-1936. This home hails from the Queen Anne architectural style and was relocated to its current site to maintain its presence in the housing stock. The national register home is the boyhood home of William Inge, a local play-write known for plays like "Picnic" and "Bus Stop." This home also is built in the Queen Anne style, with a wraparound porch and two chimneys.

The Kansas Historic Society has an interactive mapping tool that identifies national and state registry places that are contributing, non-contributing, and not listed places. Contributing parcels are defined as adding to the historic and/or architectural importance of a district and retain the majority of its characteristics from that era, whereas non-contributing could mean the parcel is later than the period of significance, has been altered far beyond its original form, or has deteriorated too much.

The parcels identified as national register contributing or non-contributing are found within the Downtown Historic District.

There are more homes in the not listed category in Independence than on the national or state register. These homes are still significant to the historic character of the community and should be preserved as much as possible.

Historic Tax Credits are often used to help fund historic preservation efforts. Preservation projects are often quite costly due to the needed materials, fixtures, etc not being of modern construction trends. There are state and national levels of tax credits available. To qualify for the credits, a property must be listed on the national or state register (dependent upon which tax credits the project is pursuing) and qualify as one of the eligible rehabilitation projects listed on their respective websites.

Preserve the historic character of Independence's existing housing stock

Residential Infill Overlay

The Future Land Use Plan identifies a Residential Infill Overlay (RIO) in an effort to encourage and support infill redevelopment projects. The areas identified within this overlay are primarily the historic residential core of Independence. The intent of this overlay is to guide character, design, and densities that resemble and/or complement the existing neighborhood.

Homes in these neighborhoods are defined by the Queen Anne, Craftsman, Dutch Colonial Revival, and other architectural styles they are built in. Column capitals, vibrant colors, wraparound and street-facing porches, stone and masonry, and many other intricate facade details help create distinct and unique homes throughout Independence's historic core.

As infill redevelopment occurs within the overlay, homes should:

- Either be low or medium-densities

- Support alley-loaded access

- Have varying colors and design characteristics

- Have front porches

Benefits of Infill Redevelopment

There are many benefits to Infill redevelopment. It serves as an efficient reuse for existing infrastructure, reduces sprawl and maintains organic growth patterns, and is a great opportunity to preserve the character of the community.

For the RIO in Independence, infill may take form in parcel-by-parcel or full-block redevelopments. In either case, special consideration should be given to the pre-existing homes and their character.

LEGEND
City Limits
Parcels
Residential Infill Overlay
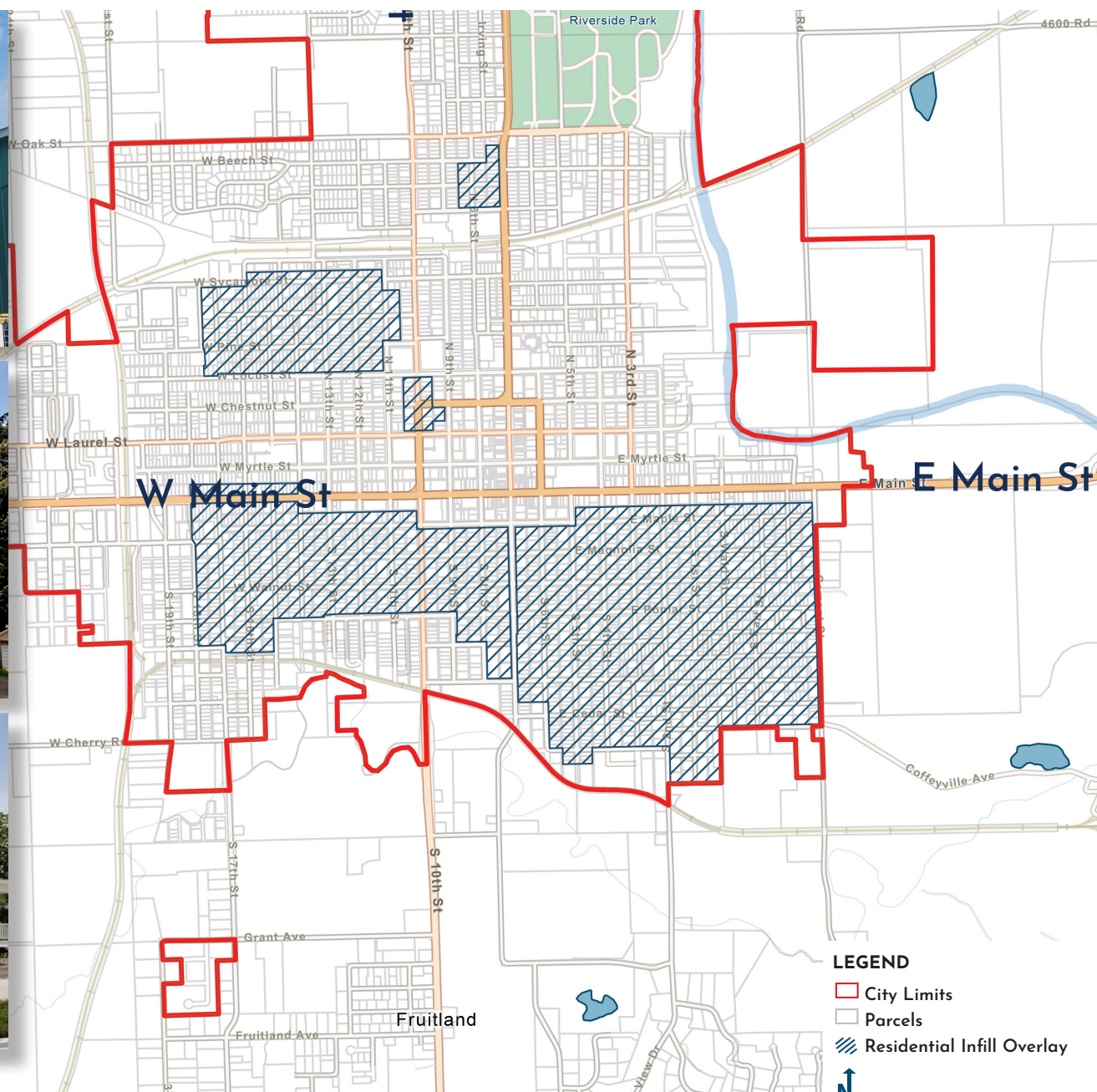
FIGURE 3.12 // PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INFILL OVERLAY AREA

Preserve the historic character of Independence's existing housing stock

Pre-Approved Plans to Support Infill Redevelopment

Pre-approved residential design plans and catalogs are an emerging methodology to make high-quality design accessible and streamline construction processes. In this process, the City would adopt a set of pre-approved residential designs that align with the characteristics and types of housing they are hoping to see built. There would be a guidebook that details the housing types, where they are allowed within zoning districts, lot dimensions, and other related requirements. The case study on the following page details the catalog adopted by South Bend, Indiana and the process they follow.

The benefits of this approach includes reintroducing Missing Middle housing types, producing high-quality designs for small scale developers, and reducing regulatory barriers and issues for residential developments.

STEP 1:
SITE PLANNING
Select the desired building type, confirm it is allowed in the zoning district and fit your property, contact the city, complete a survey and site plan.

STEP 2:
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
Select the desired design option and facade details, consider any design deviations, identify your general contractor, and complete a cost estimate.

STEP 3:
SUBMITTAL
Submit your site plan, application, and associated fees to the City, the City will then review the documents and provide any feedback. Following any tweaks, construction can begin.

SOURCE: CITY OF SOUTH BEND, INFILL CATALOG

CASE STUDY

WHERE:
South Bend, Indiana

WHAT:
Pre-Approved Residential Designs for Infill Redevelopment

DESCRIPTION:
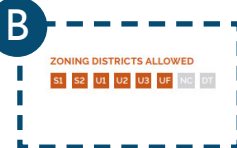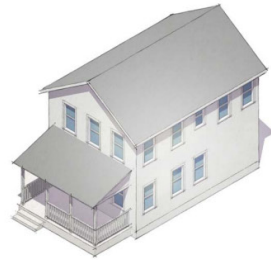The City of South Bend has adopted a catalog of pre-approved residential designs that streamline development and supports their efforts for infill redevelopment. These plans account for character, typology and density, building dimensions, needed lot widths, zoning compatibility, and more.

The Narrow House I
The 2-bedroom Narrow House provides an efficient, yet comfortable detached, fee-simple option that allows development of the city's most skinny infill lots. The massing and elevation options reflect a simple vernacular character present throughout South Bend's neighborhoods.

Option A   Option B   Option C

ZONING DISTRICTS ALLOWED
S1 S2 U1 U2 U3 UF NC D7

Floor Plans

KITCHEN 10'-10" X 9'-0"
DINING / LIVING 15'-0" X 18'-0"
Ground Floor
20'-0"

BEDROOM 11'-4" X 9'-10"
BATH
BEDROOM 11'-4" X 10'-10"
Second Floor
20'-0"

Building Type Overview

Building Dimensions	
Building Height	2 story
Building Width	20'
Building Depth (incl. porch)	36'
Program	
Unit Configuration	2 bed / 1.5 bath
Unit Size (finished gross)	1,120 sq. ft.
Basement (unfinished)	560 sq. ft.
Porch (unconditioned)	136 sq. ft.
1st Floor	560 sq. ft.
2nd Floor	560 sq. ft.
Lot Standards	
Lot Width (min.)	30'
Lot Width (max.)	60'
Cost Assumptions	
Preliminary Construction Estimates *	$200,000 - $250,000
Financing Options	30-yr mortgage

Numbers shown are for basic estimation purposes only. Pricing is based on Fall 2021 cost assumptions and are subject to future market variation.

A The catalog outlines the exterior character design options, typically providing 3 variations, to promote variety of design. There should be stipulations that require distance between designs that reduce overuse of a single design throughout the neighborhood.

B Identification of which zoning districts the given typology is compatible in is provided for reference.

C Schematics of the floor plans on the ground floor and/or second floor are provided. These can be amended by the builder as needed.

D A summary of the building dimensions, programming, lot standards, and cost assumptions are provided for the design.

Introduce a broader mix of residential typologies throughout the community

In an effort to propose a broader mix of residential housing types and styles, images were used to identify what the public might support. Historic preservation and rehabilitation of existing homes and cottage court developments with low- and medium-density housing types were the top-voted creative solutions. Furthermore, the 2019 IHA Plan identified tiny home communities as an opportunity supported by the public, that has resulted in a zoning code amendment to allow for this typology.

Within the Future Land Use Plan, it is encouraged that the City and development community consider creative housing types as noted above for construction within the community.
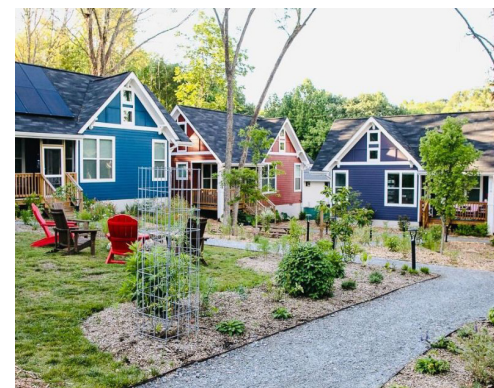
Promote organic growth and best practices for residential development

The Future Land Use Plan identifies three key areas for residential development near Elk City State Park, Independence Community College, and land south of W Main Street. Following the 2007, many flood buy-outs and demolition projects resulted in a loss of housing units that has yet to be reconciled. As development occurs, best practices, such as limiting any development within the floodplain and broadened housing types, should be implemented.

Priority residential growth zones
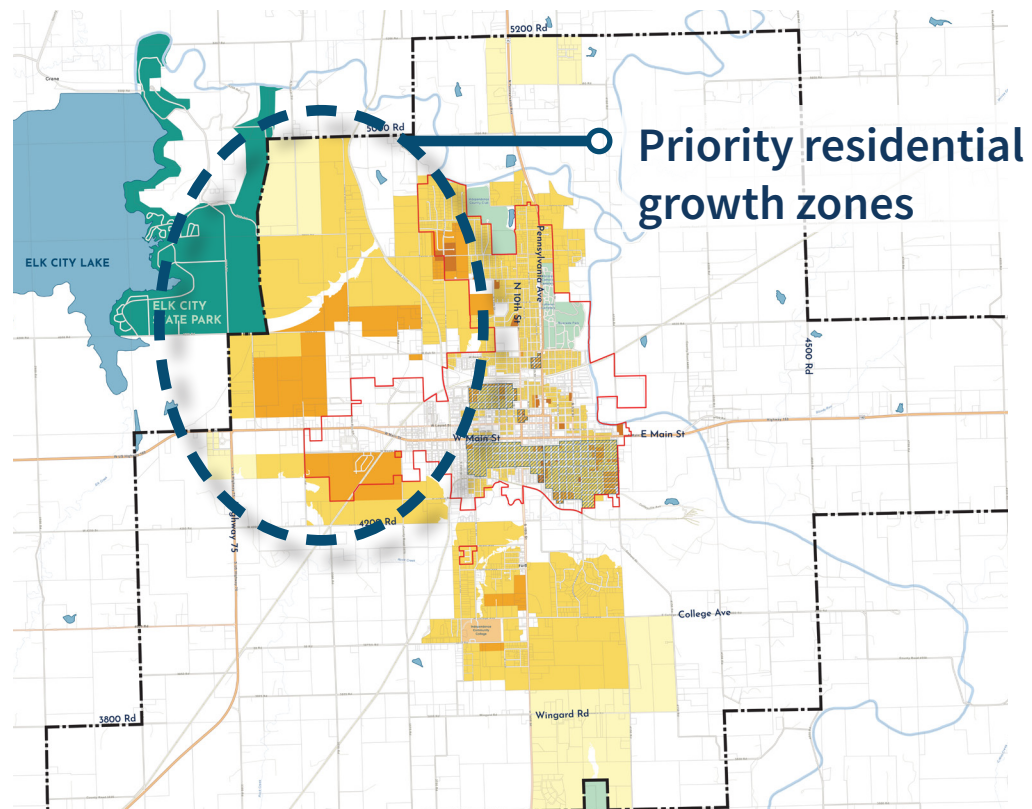
Reduce barriers for rehabilitation or construction in the zoning code

Zoning Code Updates + Flexibility in Application

Following the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the City will be updating its zoning code to better fit its needs, operations, and vision for the future. Many of the ideas and recommendations within this section will be addressed in the code update.

Modern zoning codes often work against planning efforts, resulting in multiple variances and straying from the uniformity of the code.

Some areas that should be considered for updates include:

- Reducing the rights-of-way to minimize street widths and calm neighborhood traffic

- Support in the code for alley-loaded developments

- Parking requirements either being more flexible or greatly reduced

- Flexibility of side, rear, and front yard setbacks

- Update to the code to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in single-family zones

These topics, and more, will be addressed in the zoning code update to support vibrant neighborhoods.

REDUCE STREET
RIGHT-OF-WAY

BE FLEXIBLE WITH FRONT,
SIDE, AND REAR SETBACKS

SUPPORT ALLEY-LOADED
RESIDENTIAL ACCESS

REDUCE PARKING
REQUIREMENTS FOR MULTI-
FAMILY DEVELOPMENTS

UPDATE THE ZONING CODE TO
SUPPORT ACCESSORY DWELLING
UNITS IN SINGLE-FAMILY ZONES

FIGURE 3.13 // EXAMPLE OF POTENTIAL ZONING CODE UPDATE TOPICS

Consider additional incentives and processes to support residential development

Waive Permitting + Administrative Fees

In an effort to encourage development, some cities waive permitting or administrative fees for residential projects; however, many of these cities rely on permitting fees to support essential services. Specific to Independence, this recommendation could be supported in the areas identified in Figure 3.11 as the primary growth zones from the Future Land Use Plan or include all residential permits for a period of time.

Expedite Processing Times

When projects meet certain criteria (affordability, unit types, location, etc) expedited processing times can be used to swiftly move projects along. Faster processing can reduce risk and stabilize financial costs for developers. This time savings on the side of the developer often encourages projects and long-term relationships.

Consider an Online Permitting Platform

Implementing an online permitting process can be equally beneficial to a City and developer. Online permitting platforms:

- Simplify the overall process;
- Increase internal efficiency; and
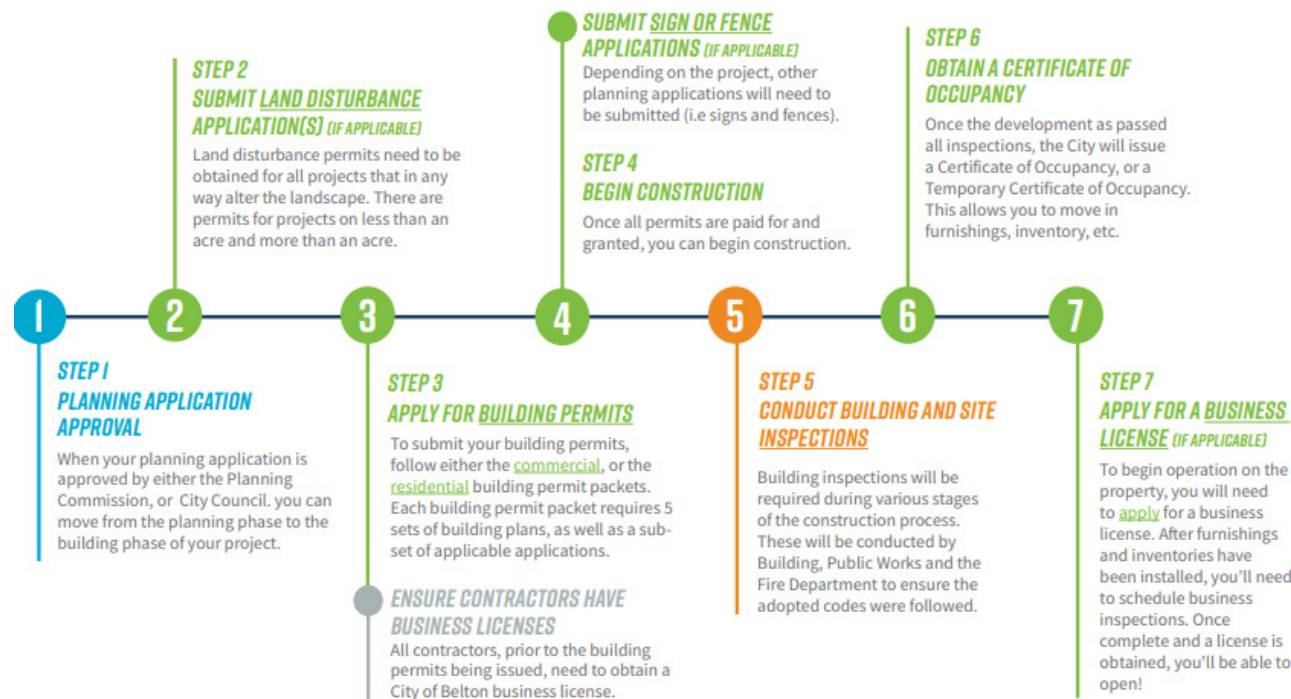- Issue permits faster.

STEP 2
SUBMIT LAND DISTURBANCE APPLICATION(S) (IF APPLICABLE)

Land disturbance permits need to be obtained for all projects that in any way alter the landscape. There are permits for projects on less than an acre and more than an acre.

SUBMIT SIGN OR FENCE APPLICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

Depending on the project, other planning applications will need to be submitted (i.e signs and fences).

STEP 4
BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

Once all permits are paid for and granted, you can begin construction.

STEP 6
OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

Once the development as passed all inspections, the City will issue a Certificate of Occupancy, or a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. This allows you to move in furnishings, inventory, etc.

STEP 1
PLANNING APPLICATION APPROVAL

When your planning application is approved by either the Planning Commission, or City Council. you can move from the planning phase to the building phase of your project.

STEP 3
APPLY FOR BUILDING PERMITS

To submit your building permits, follow either the commercial, or the residential building permit packets. Each building permit packet requires 5 sets of building plans, as well as a sub-set of applicable applications.

ENSURE CONTRACTORS HAVE BUSINESS LICENSES

All contractors, prior to the building permits being issued, need to obtain a City of Belton business license.

STEP 5
CONDUCT BUILDING AND SITE INSPECTIONS

Building inspections will be required during various stages of the construction process. These will be conducted by Building, Public Works and the Fire Department to ensure the adopted codes were followed.

STEP 7
APPLY FOR A BUSINESS LICENSE (IF APPLICABLE)

To begin operation on the property, you will need to apply for a business license. After furnishings and inventories have been installed, you'll need to schedule business inspections. Once complete and a license is obtained, you'll be able to open!

FIGURE 3.14 // EXAMPLE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE TIMELINE

Highlight Opportunities for Demolition Cost Coverage for Infill Projects

To gain traction for infill redevelopment projects, the City should highlight and advertise the current program that offers 100% demolition cost coverage for low-income residential developments, and 50% for all other projects. This will ultimately reduce initial barriers for development and prime the lots for parcel or full-block redevelopment.

Create a Development Guidebook

The City should create and deploy a Development Guidebook to explain the timelines and steps needed for approval for residential developments. The guidebook should detail the planning/platting review process, permitting, and occupancy or licensing requirements for all developers or individual homebuilders on the City's website. An example guidebook is shown from the City of Belton, MO in Figure 3.14.

Expand funding and education for existing housing programs

Upperstory Housing Grant

In 2015, IHA established a grant program to encourage the rehabilitation of upperstory units into apartments. The program currently supports a reimbursement of up to 25% of eligible costs not to exceed $15,000. Consideration for program expansion could include a tax rebate for these renovated properties, as the 2019 IHA Plan identified building owners encountering significant property tax increases following the completion of the project. In addition to the Upperstory Housing Grant, the RHID and Neighborhood Exterior Grant Programs offer forms of tax relief to property owners. Further examination of what is working today or could be improved should be conducted through conversations with business owners, City Commission, and the IHA.

Neighborhood Exterior Grant Program

The City of Independence and the IHA established this program in 2021 in an effort to help homeowners reinvest in their properties and improve neighborhoods. The City has budgeted $100,000 in 2024 to the program, an increase from the $50,000 historically committed. To qualify, the property must 1) be located within one of the qualifying districts; or 2) be valued at or below $100,000; or 3) have an average minus or lower rating from Montgomery County. This is a joint venture between a minimum of two property owners, with a minimum investment of $1,000 and maximum reimbursement of $5,000. Eligible projects range from facade restoration and window and door repair/replacement to tree removal and driveway repair or installation.

This program was frequently mentioned throughout the public input phase and should be prioritized for expansion. The public noted frequently that the program dollars run out quick, therefore funding expansion should be considered.

Independence Land Bank

The IHA manages the Independence Land Bank (ILB) that was established by the City in 2021. The intent of this program is to obtain ownership of homes or vacant lots that have been abandoned or neglected by property owners and return those back to operation in the market. The IHA will sell these back to developers or property owners to support local investors in rehabilitating homes for rent or sale, allow a single individual or investor to rehabilitate a home for their personal residence, or allow the IHA to annually rehabilitate homes for the purpose of low-income homeownership.

This project is still in its infancy and will take time to become fully operational within the community. It is recommended the IHA and City market this opportunity more on the City's website and sharing insight into the benefits and functionality of the program.

Enhance employee attraction and community integration

Engaging New Residents

As new businesses come to Independence, excitement stirs with the prospect of growth and added population; however, the challenge of producing plenty of available units and encouraging new employees becomes the next challenge.

It is recommended the City leads the conversation on establishing a Welcome Wagon of sorts to highlight life in Independence from a variety of perspectives. Partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, USD 446, and many others would be encouraged to highlight opportunities to get involved in the community.

WELCOME HOME

Consider creative and innovative solutions to housing issues in Independence

Creative Housing Solutions

The cost of constructing conventional housing can often be a road block in getting a project off the ground. Creative solutions should be considered when proposed, with flexibility in the zoning code being applied when necessary. Some ideas for viable projects in Independence could be: 3D printed homes, ag-communities, new urbanist master planned sites, shipping containers, and historic revival neighborhoods.

Each of these ideas blend existing housing and neighborhood characteristics with innovative approaches to put Independence on the map for housing creativity.

Support a public-private partnership for a master planned site

Overview

Master planned sites are often used to gain momentum for initiatives in communities. By coordinating efforts and funding via a public-private partnership, it alleviates some of the risks involved in land development and helps the project take root. The process would include the establishment of the partnership, land assembly for the desired site, and completion of the master plan.

How Does a Master Plan Differ From a Future Land Use Plan?

A Future Land Use Plan is often broad, covering large areas of land. A master plan is typically a specific site that has undergone parcel-specific planning and full-block planning. These types of plans are a nice follow-up to a Future Land Use Plan after broadly identifying the type of development encouraged in an area, and then dive deeper into specific sites seeking development.

The case study presented on the opposite page highlights a similar process the City of Knoxville, Iowa underwent to complete a detailed master plan for 160-acres of land. The community had seen very limited residential development in recent years and this effort helped spur activity and encourage diversity in housing types.
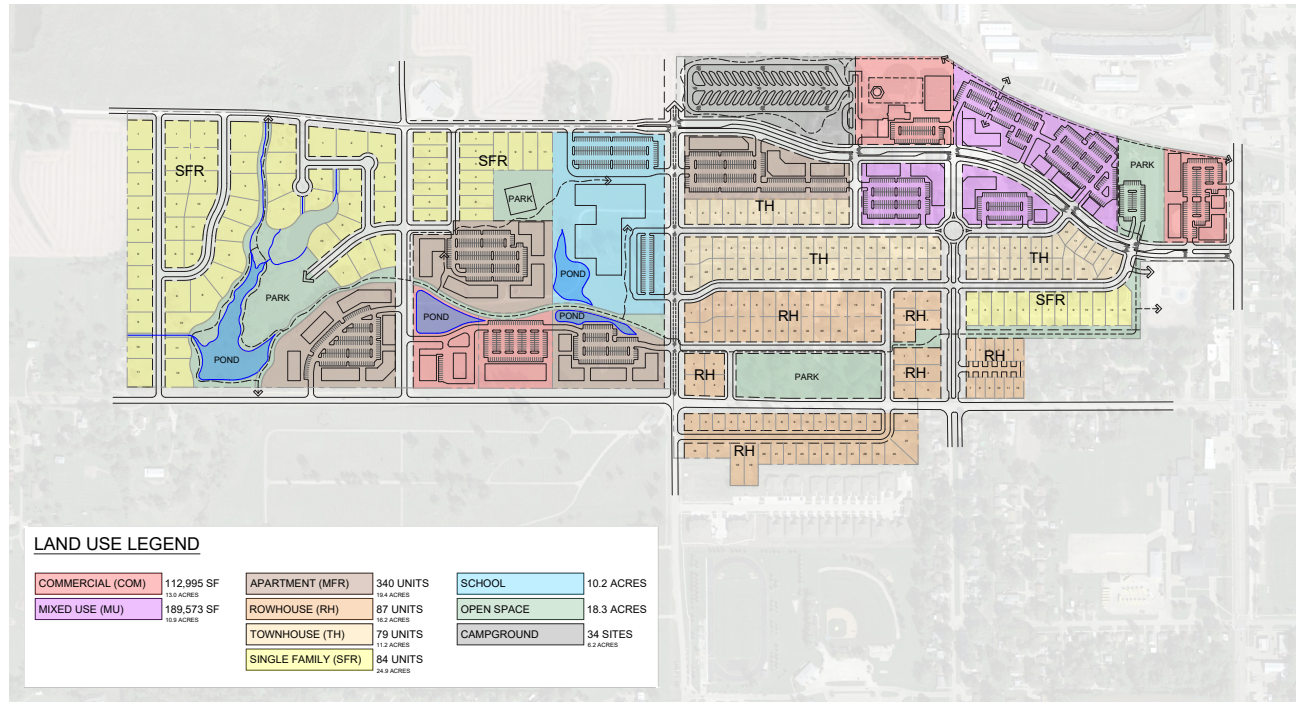
CASE STUDY

WHERE:
Knoxville, Iowa

WHAT:
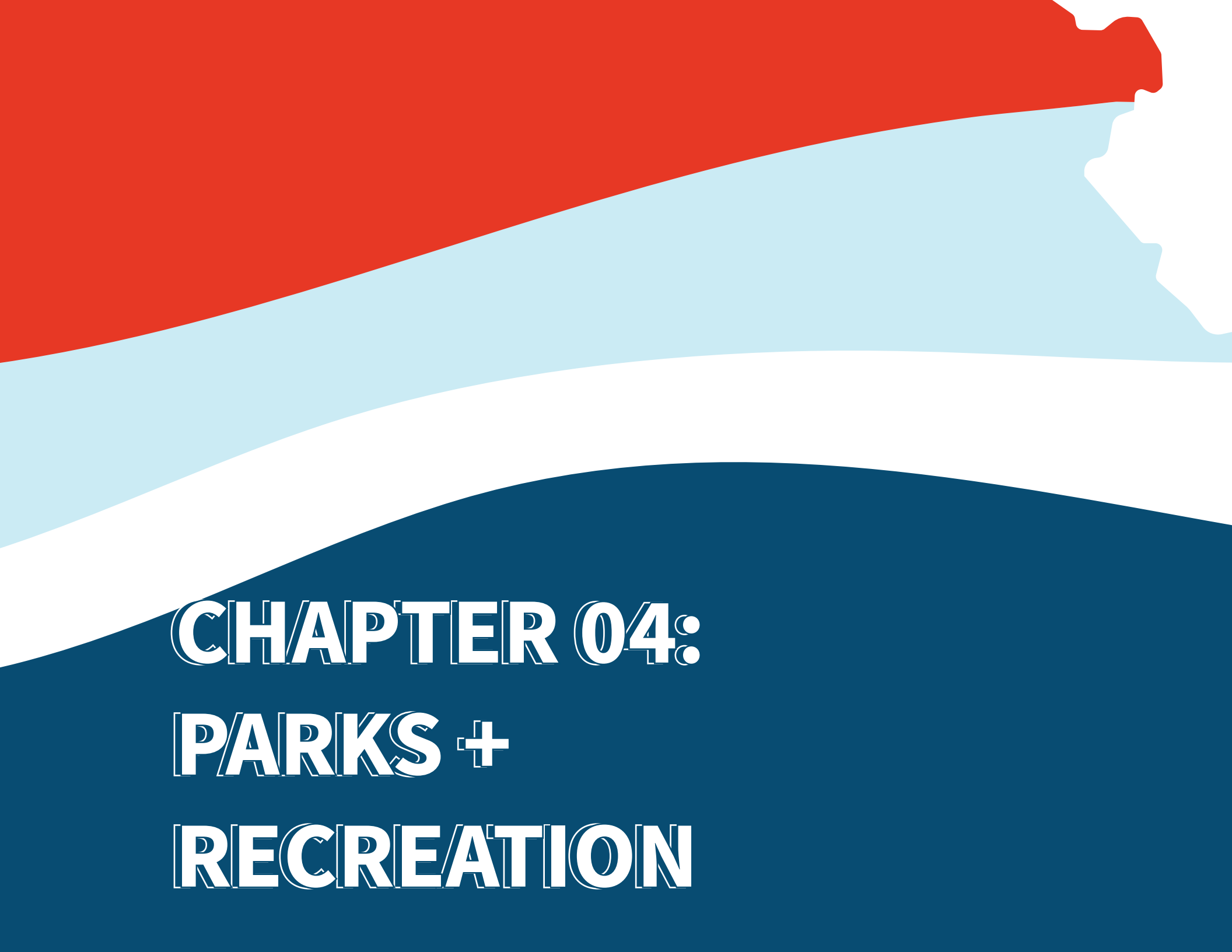City-owned master planned site with a mix of housing types

DESCRIPTION:
Set on the old Veterans Affairs Hospital, this city-county partnership was an effort to clear dilapidated structures and assemble land for needed residential development. The City then completed a master planning effort to help define where and what types of housing they wanted.

LAND USE LEGEND

COMMERCIAL (COM)	112,995 SF 13.0 ACRES	APARTMENT (MFR)	340 UNITS 19.4 ACRES
MIXED USE (MU)	189,573 SF 10.9 ACRES	ROWHOUSE (RH)	87 UNITS 16.2 ACRES
		TOWNHOUSE (TH)	79 UNITS 11.2 ACRES
		SINGLE FAMILY (SFR)	84 UNITS 24.9 ACRES
SCHOOL	10.2 ACRES
OPEN SPACE	18.3 ACRES
CAMPGROUND	34 SITES 6.2 ACRES

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
EXPAND + MAINTAIN HOUSING TYPES + AVAILABILITY IN INDEPENDENCE	New development improves shares towards the residential target mix	Renter and owner-occupied unit counts increase	Residential permit activity increases	Preserve historically significant homes
STRATEGIES				
Encourage medium- and high-density developments in the identified areas from the Future Land Use Plan.				
Support unique and creative housing developments, such as cottage courts and New Urbanist neighborhoods, that expand housing choice.				
Consider expanding development incentive packages to encourage residential development.				
Meet with businesses in Independence to identify housing types that would support current and future employees.				
Pursue a public-private partnership to implement a master planned development with strategic housing composition.				
Seek out projects that meet price points and typologies that support household compositions in Independence.				
Establish and support infill redevelopment projects within the Residential Infill Overlay.				
Maintain historic character of existing homes and nodes that have been identified by the local historic register.				

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
REDUCE BARRIERS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	Update the zoning code's residential guidelines	Increase housing development	Reduce the number of variances granted for residential projects
STRATEGIES			
Update the zoning code, with a special focus of the residential sections to incorporate the recommendations outlined within this chapter.			
Update the residential sections of the zoning code to support alternative housing solutions, such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and other items including parking requirements, setbacks, driveways, and more.			
Establish standards and guidelines for the Residential Infill Overlay areas.			
Support and adopt a catalog and guidelines for Pre-Approved Residential Designs.			
Research and adopt a set of residential designs for the Pre-Approved Residential Plans, with potential for two sets of designs for the Residential Infill Overlay area and neighborhoods outside of the historic core.			
Review and amend the code to support varied housing types and styles, such as cottage courts and historic-style neighborhoods.			

CHAPTER 04:
PARKS +
RECREATION

chapter overview

Parks + Recreation in Independence

Independence has a proud history of providing high quality parks and recreation offerings. The crown jewel of Independence's parks is Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo, which provides a wonderfully unique asset for a town of Independence's size. In total, there are just over 150 acres of parkland within the community. Independence's park space is supplemented by five school playgrounds and the Ash Youth Center

that is a recreation facility with programming ran by Independence Recreation Commission, whose board is made up of two appointees by the City Commission, two appointees by the School Board, and one member at large. Residents also can recreate at the Elk City Lake and State Park west of the city limits, as well as a State fishing lake, located on south of city limits. The Verdigris River and its accompanying floodplain have brought unique challenges through flood events; however, the river provides a tranquil

area of open space and tree cover along the eastern edge of the community. This chapter lays out a vision to expand park access as new residential development occurs, overviews planned improvements throughout the parks system, as well as identifies a Future Trails Plan to help enhance mobility and connectivity throughout the community.

History of Parks

The largest park in Independence is Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo. Riverside Park was founded in 1914 and designed by famous landscape architect, George Kessler. Several different amenities have been added over time including Ralph Mitchell Zoo, which was added in 1925. There are several exhibits in the zoo including Monkey Island, added in 1932, which was made famous as being the birthplace of Miss Abel, one of the first monkeys to successfully travel to space. Later, the 86-acre cemetery was added adjacent to the park. Collectively, this large open space is a treasured asset to locals and a regional draw for tourists alike.

There are currently seven other parks in Independence for residences to utilize. This includes neighborhood parks such as Wald Street Park or Robert Wesley Park, as well as special use parks, including sports complexes, a dog park, and a skate park.

Parks Operations

The Parks, Zoo, and Cemetery Department oversees parks in Independence. The mission of the department is "…to enhance the quality of life in our community by providing quality open spaces, facilities, and programs that promote citizen involvement and a strong sense of community."

existing parks systems

Existing Parks

There are eight parks located in Independence today that provide a variety of services and amenities to residents and visitors. The typical park classification types are: community park, neighborhood park, and special use parks.

Neighborhood parks are generally smaller than 5-acres and have limited amenities. They provide quick access to park space for residential areas. Community parks are much larger, typically anything greater than 5 acres, and have more programmed space and activities. Special use parks often serve one unique purpose, such as a dog park or skate park and vary in size.

Figure 4.1 highlights the current parks and their locations in Independence today. Birdie Drive Park is a proposed future park that will serve as a neighborhood park for the country club-adjacent neighborhoods.

Existing Trails

Trails within the city limits of Independence are limited to natural paths near the Dog Park. Elk City Lake has mountain bike trails available that are a regional attraction for leisure and competitive biking.

A Future Trails Plan will be discussed in greater length within the following pages to identify recommended routes and destinations for areas in Independence via trail routes.
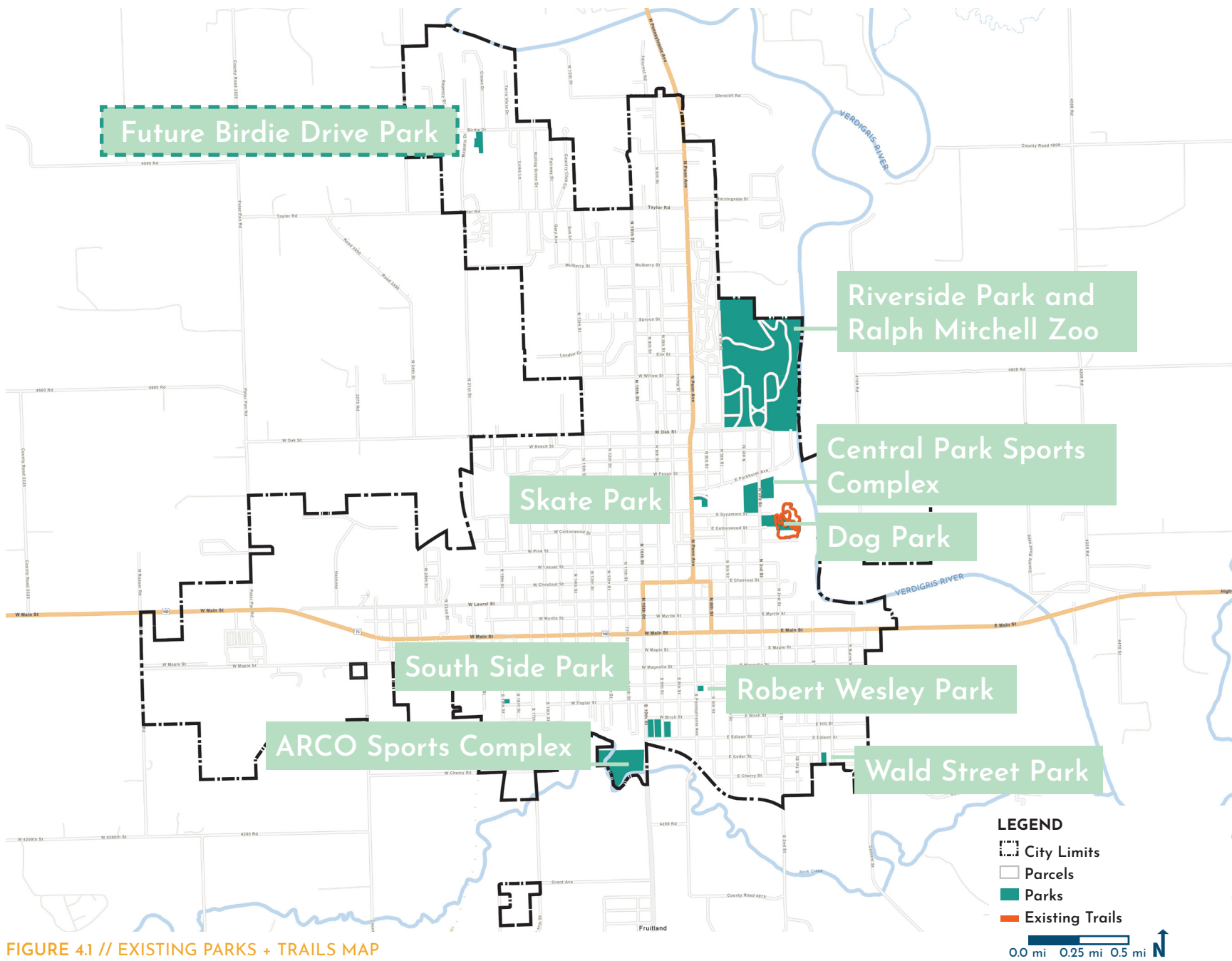
Future Birdie Drive Park

Riverside Park and
Ralph Mitchell Zoo

Central Park Sports
Complex

Skate Park

Dog Park

South Side Park

Robert Wesley Park

ARCO Sports Complex

Wald Street Park

VERDIGRIS RIVER

VERDIGRIS RIVER

LEGEND

City Limits

Parcels

Parks

Existing Trails

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N

FIGURE 4.1 // EXISTING PARKS + TRAILS MAP

| **Chapter 04. Parks + Recreation**

level of service analysis

Level of Service Analysis

To better understand how well the community is currently being served by parkland and trails, a level of service analysis (LOS) was completed. This type of analysis can take the form of park acres per thousand residents, trail miles per two-thousand residents, a walk-time analysis, and park service areas.

Park Acres Per 1,000 Residents

The National Recreation and Park Association

(NRPA) sets a national standard for 10.5 total park acres per 1,000 residents. Independence's parks LOS is currently estimated to be 20.9 acres per 1,000 residents. This is significantly higher and serves as a further testament to the community's prioritization of quality of life factors, such as parks.

The current trails LOS is estimated to be 2.42 miles per two-thousand residents. This is also higher than the recommended standard of 1 mile per 2,000 residents.

However, the Elk City Lake Trail is not maintained by the City of Independence and further city-centric expansions should be considered in tandem with road and park expansions to improve trail mileage and routes in and around Independence.

As the community grows, it will be important to monitor this level of service metric for parks to ensure the same quality is being provided long-term and that the expanded trails are keeping up with growth trends.

PARK NAME	ACRES	PARK TYPE
ARCO Sports Complex	14.7	Special Use
Central Park Sports Complex	38.0	Community
Independence Dog Park	4.6	Special Use
Independence Skate Park	1.2	Special Use
Riverside Park	50.9	Community
Ralph Mitchell Zoo	64.6	Special Use
Robert Wesley Park	0.4	Neighborhood
South Side Park	4.1	Community
Wald Street Park	0.7	Neighborhood
19th & Poplar Park	0.3	Neighborhood
EXISTING TOTAL ACRES	**179.5**	-
EXISTING POPULATION	**8,584**	
EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE	**20.9**	
PLANNED PARKS		
Birdie Drive Park	1.9	Neighborhood
TOTAL PARK ACRES	**181.4**	
POTENTIAL LEVEL OF SERVICE	**21.1**	

TABLE4.1 // EXISTING PARKS LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

TRAIL NAME	MILES
EXISTING TRAILS WITHIN CITY LIMITS	
Eagle Loop Trail	1.0
Verdigris Vista Trail	1.2
EXISTING TOTAL MILES	**2.2**
EXISTING POPULATION	**8,584**
RECOMMENDED LOS	**1 MI/2,000 RESIDENTS**
EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE	**0.54**
EXISTING TRAILS OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	
Elk City Lake Trails	9.54
EXISTING TOTAL MILES	**11.74**
EXISTING POPULATION	**8,584**
REGIONAL LEVEL OF SERVICE	**2.73**

TABLE 4.2 // EXISTING TRAILS LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE + EAGLE ROCK SHREDDERS WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

demand estimates for parks

Independence has experienced an extended period of gradual population decline. However, one of the goals of this plan is to identify new opportunities and strategies to reverse population loss through the attraction of jobs and housing. If and when population rates reverse, Independence has enough parkland within their current system to continue to meet an exceptional level of service for current and future residents.

One caveat to this would be that as new residential areas are developed and the footprint of Independence expands, more neighborhood parks would be needed to provide a park within a reasonable walk time of new residential neighborhoods. These parks could be smaller (2-5 acres) with a few key amenities such as playground equipment, a picnic table, and/or shelter, for example. Figure 4.3 highlights possible new residential growth areas that may require a future neighborhood park based on the Future Land Use Plan (see Chapter 02. Future Land Use).
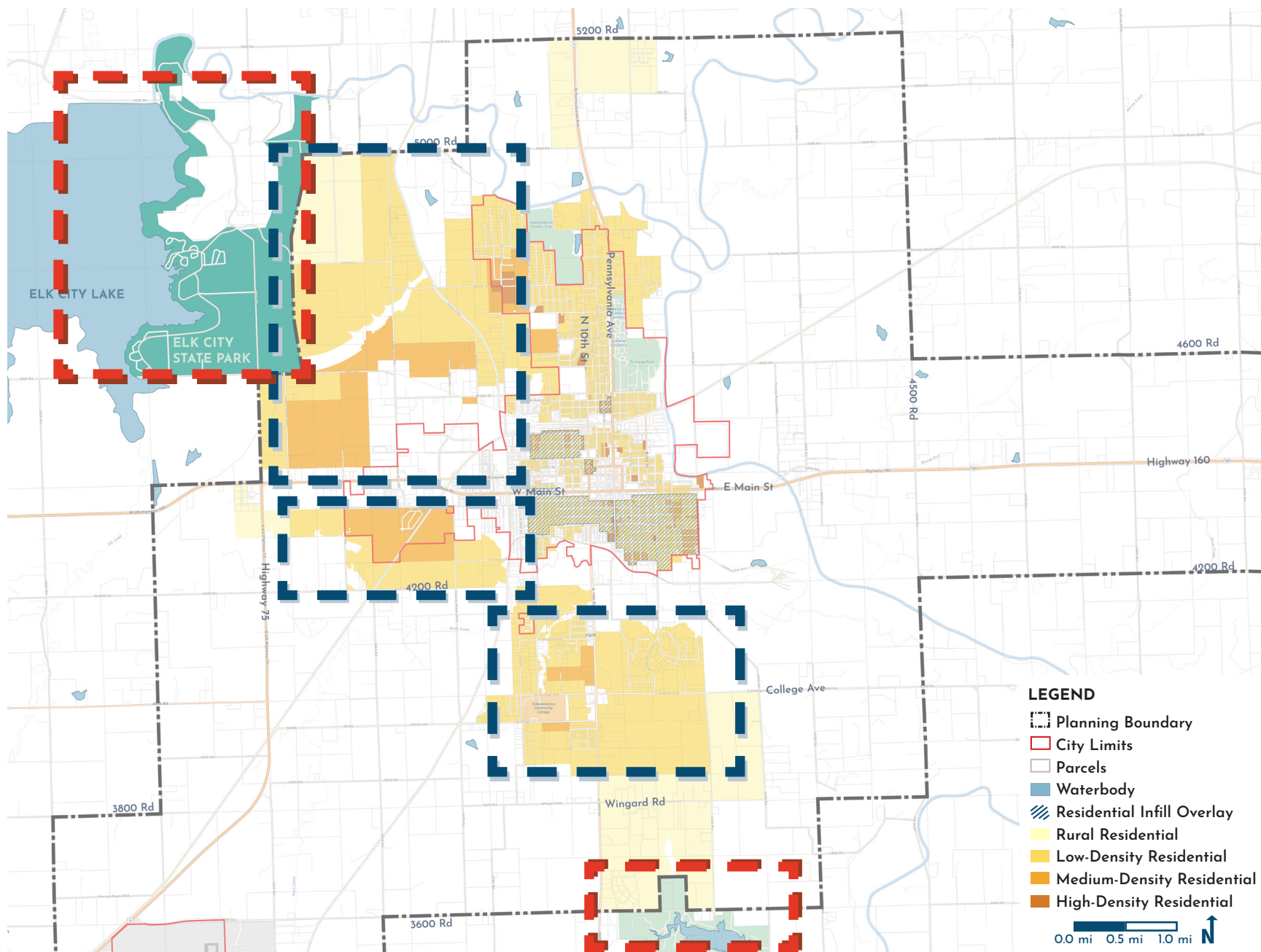
LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- City Limits
- Parcels
- Waterbody
- Residential Infill Overlay
- Rural Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi   N

FIGURE 4.3 // PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP - RESIDENTIAL LAND ONLY   *THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN*

overview of trail types

Independence has a strong mountain biking community, many of whom associate with the Eagle Rock Shredders, a local mountain biking group. This interest has supported the creation of amenities such as the Indy Trails. The Indy Trails includes a natural path trail that can be used by bicyclists and pedestrians alike. The trailhead is located at 884 N. Park Boulevard and opened in June 2023. The Eagle Rock Shredders also work to maintain and promote the eight mountain bike trails located at Eagle Rock Mountain just north of the dam at Elk City Lake outside of Independence.

Independence generally has good sidewalk connectivity throughout the community with some inconsistent gaps that could lead to pedestrians using the street or crossing in non-designated areas. The width and overall condition of sidewalks in the community does vary, which can create uneven pedestrian experiences. The Future Trails Plan will identify key pedestrian corridors that should be considered a high priority for sidewalk improvements including widening as appropriate.

Future Trails Plan

To help promote enhanced mobility and connectivity to and from key community facilities in Independence, a Future Trails Plan has been created. Several trail types are included within the plan as shown in Figure 4.4.

SIDE PATH

- Bidirectional shared use path located immediately adjacent and parallel to a roadway
- High priority sidewalk corridors for connectivity
- Designated route through the community
- Wider than 3'

SHARED USE PATH

- Path designed to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists together, separated from roads
- Also, includes major pedestrian corridors that warrant special pedestrian crossings and wide (10 ft+) paths

ON-STREET BIKE LANE

- Portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signing, or pavement parking for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

NATURAL PATH

- A path through a forest, field, stream bank, etc., that is used for hiking and seeing plants and animals.
- Typically designed with a permeable surface material such as natural earth, wood chips, or crushed stone.

SHARROW/SHARE THE ROAD

- A road marking that indicates which part of a road should be used by cyclists when the roadway is shared with motor vehicles

FACILITY PATH

- Includes existing paths located in key facilities throughout the community that help provide direct access to different amenities including the high school, zoo, etc.

proposed trails in independence

Future Trails Plan Overview

Figure 4.4 on the opposite page shows the Future Trails Plan for Independence. The goal of the Future Trails Plan was to create an ambitious but realistic long-term strategy to enhance connectivity in Independence. Major community assets such as Downtown, Riverside Park/Ralph Mitchell Zoo, Elk City State Park, k-12 schools, and the Independence Community College (ICC) were all priorities for safe access.

In-town pedestrian/bicycle connectivity is provided mainly by side paths along key corridors such as Penn Avenue, Laurel Street, Oak Street, and others. This includes a mix of existing sidewalk that should be prioritized for improvement/ widening as well as new side paths.

A shared-use path out to Elk City Lake is shown along abandoned rail right-of-way, which will connect residents to the park as well as several existing mountain bike trails.

Sharrows were proposed along S 17th Street, Montgomery County Road 4000, and Cement Street to mark a path for bicyclists to reach ICC and circle back near the Heartland quarry area, which has been identified as a long-term big idea redevelopment site later in this chapter.

Existing facility trails, nature paths, and on-street bike lanes are also shown to help create the long-term vision for mobility in the community.
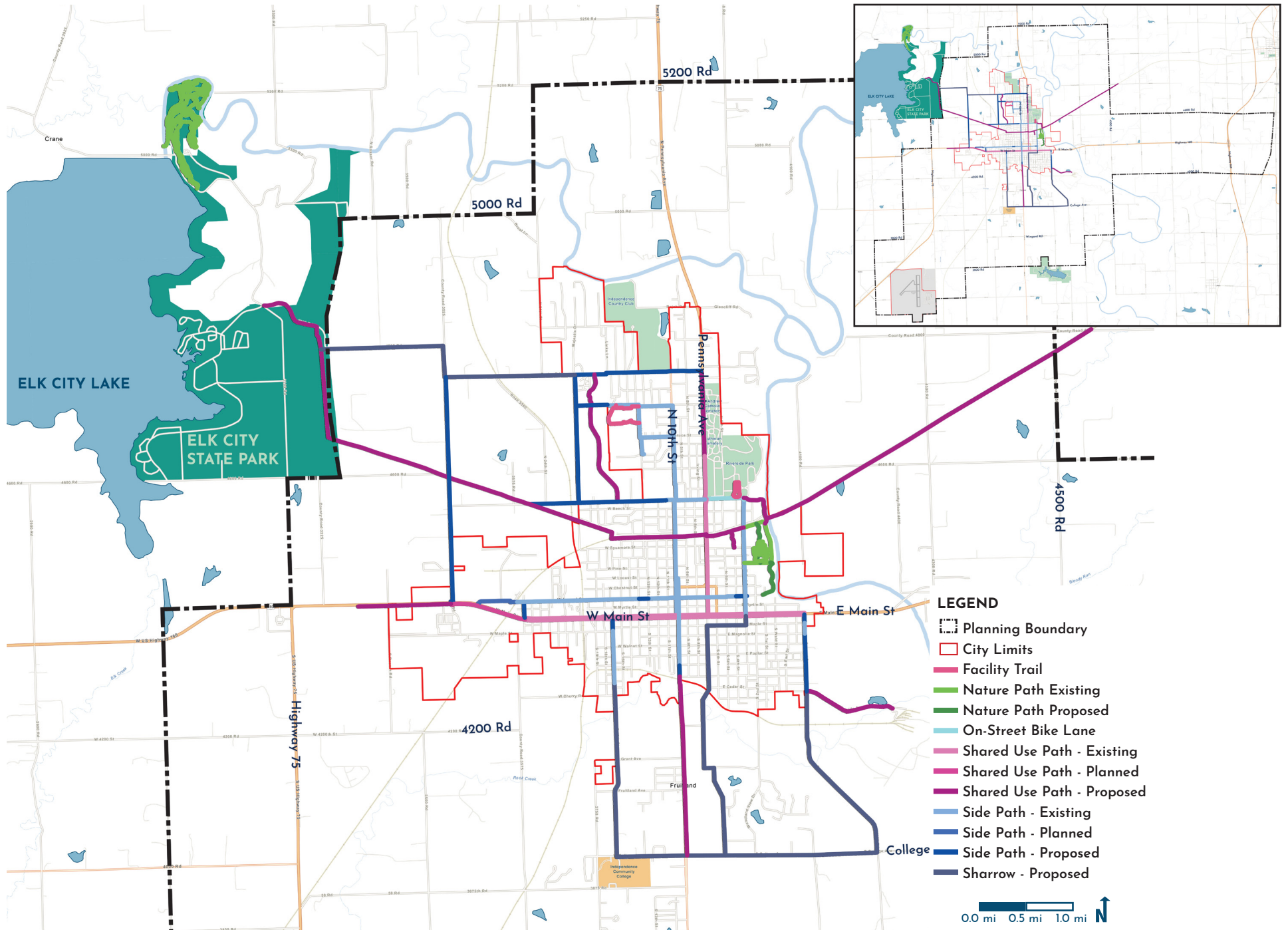
LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- City Limits
- Facility Trail
- Nature Path Existing
- Nature Path Proposed
- On-Street Bike Lane
- Shared Use Path - Existing
- Shared Use Path - Planned
- Shared Use Path - Proposed
- Side Path - Existing
- Side Path - Planned
- Side Path - Proposed
- Sharrow - Proposed

0.0 mi 0.5 mi 1.0 mi

ELK CITY LAKE

ELK CITY STATE PARK

5200 Rd

5000 Rd

4500 Rd

4200 Rd

Highway 75

W Main St

E Main St

College

FIGURE 4.4 // PROPOSED FUTURE TRAILS PLAN

THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN

recreation in independence

Independence has robust youth and adult recreation programming available for residents. The Independence Recreation Commission (IRC) is responsible for organizing and managing recreation programming in Independence.

Youth Recreation:

- Basketball
- Baseball
- Blastball
- Football
- Soccer
- Softball
- Tennis
- Volleyball

Adult Recreation:

- Basketball
- Football
- Soccer
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Buddy Ball
- Pickleball

Ash Youth Center

A key recreation amenity in Independence is the Ash Youth Center. The Ash Youth Center is a shared partnership between the City of Independence, Unified School District 446 and the Independence-USD 446 Recreation Commission. The facility offers a variety of amenities that range from swimming, after-school activities, and recreation programs for adults and children.

As the facility ages, it is recommended the City and USD 446 consider updates and renovations to maintain this facility long-term. Identifying needed services and resources could be completed through a systems and facility analysis.

Riverside Beach Family Aquatic Center

Independence is very fortunate to have an aquatic center already established within their community. In addition to free play in warmer months, the aquatic center hosts water aerobics and offers swimming lessons to residents.

The Riverside Beach Family Aquatic Center is a regional draw for many communities in southeast Kansas and northeast Oklahoma. Maintaining this draw and the facilities within the aquatic center will continue to be a strength of the community to bring people to Independence for recreation experiences year round.
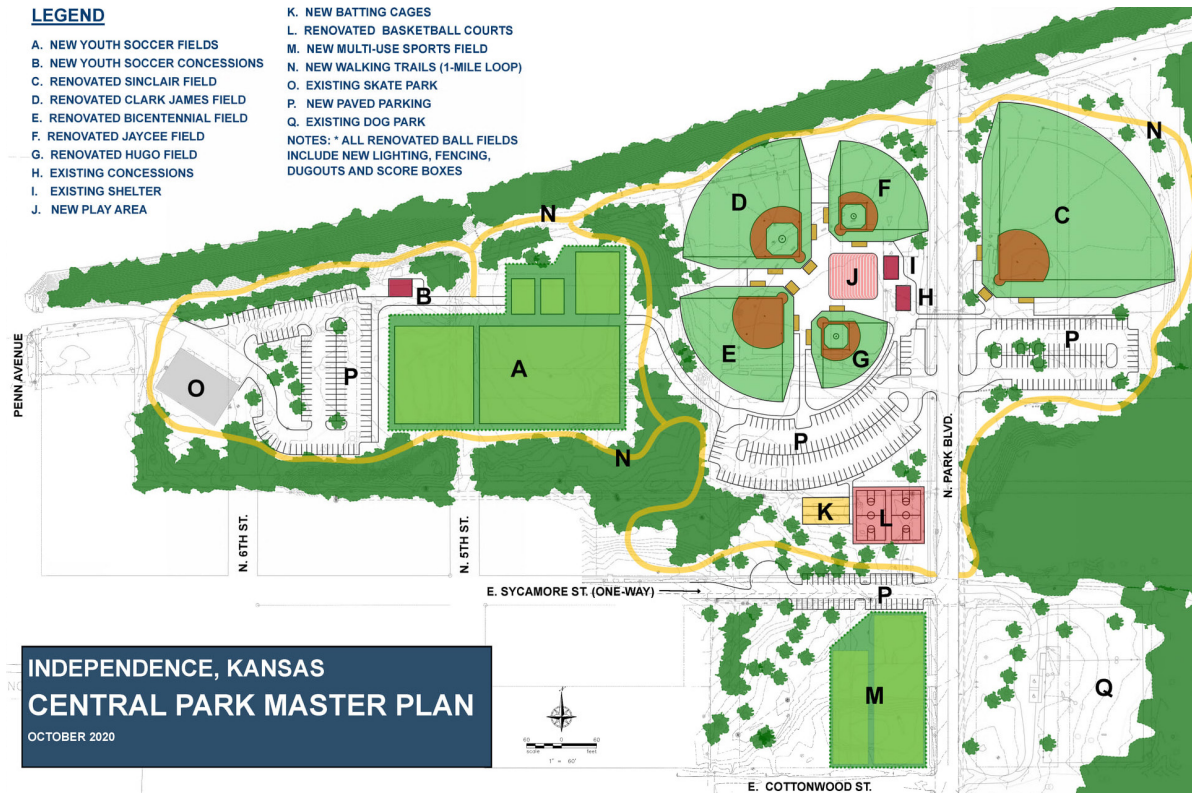
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS
CENTRAL PARK MASTER PLAN
OCTOBER 2020

Central Park Sports Complex Master Plan

The City has recently adopted a Central Park Sports Complex Master Plan for the park spaces along N Park Boulevard. The master plan provides new playing fields for baseball, softball, and soccer, pickleball and fitness courts, multi-use trails, new concession and restroom facilities, and improved parking for all. Construction has began on the multi-phased projects, with some facilities being ready for play as early as Summer 2024. The above and above right images highlights the full build-out vision for the area. The bottom right photo shows the fitness court that was recently completed via partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas as part of their National Fitness Campaign. Independence is one of 8 counties in the state to have received this 'outdoor wellness infrastructure'.

big ideas + trends in parks + recreation

In this section, big ideas and trends are outlined for some potential opportunities for the future of parks in Independence. The graphic to the right highlights the topics to be discussed.

BIG IDEAS + TRENDS

- BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT
- QUARRY-TO-PARK RETROFIT
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- TECHNOLOGY + PARKS
- PICKLEBALL

brownfields redevelopment

WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD?

According to the EPA, "a brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

(Brownfield Overview and Definition, 2024)

EXAMPLE BROWNFIELDS SITE

BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

PHASE 1:

In this phase of the Environmental Assessment, the site is examined for background and historic use investigation, preliminary site inspection, and asbestos and lead-based paint surveys.

PHASE 2:

This secondary Environmental Assessment may occur concurrently with Phase 1 and takes samples of the site to evaluate potential environmental impacts.

NEXT STEPS:

Following the formal reporting, plans for redevelopment, design aspirations, and funding options may begin.

SOURCE: KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

brownfields redevelopment

Benefits and Roadblocks to Brownfields

Benefits of brownfield redevelopments can include improving general human health by removing the site contaminants, restoring underutilized and/or vacant property to productive uses, and potential for increasing the tax base. Brownfields also tend to be located within a city's core and make for good infill opportunities as well. Some potential roadblocks to brownfield redevelopment projects include the unknown environmental conditions of the site, which highlights the importance of the Phase I and II reports, a lack of funding for the assessment and cleanup, and liability. There are a variety of resources, including the Kansas Brownfields Program and Technical Assistance to Brownfields through Kansas State University, to help support these brownfield redevelopment efforts.

Brownfields in Independence

Independence has experience with assessing and remediating brownfields throughout the community. In 2004, the Independence Skate Park was a brownfields project that turned a vacant parcel into an active recreation site. The Central Park Sports Complex is an active project under the City of Independence's leadership that was once a brownfield site. Through assessment, remediation, and extensive planning, this site will be transformed to better serve the community and sporting events. The Independence Municipal Airport has two active brownfield sites available for examination that could help bring additional industry to this area of the community.

Consideration for Future Brownfield Redevelopments

Often times, brownfield redevelopment projects explore how to bring vacant and underused land back into an active use and identify parks and recreation spaces as some of the most viable solutions. There are additional brownfield sites located within Independence today that should be examined and ranked for prioritization to consider whether they are suitable or not for parkland. Community input on desired amenities, services, and features should be gathered to ensure the potential new park meets the community's needs and desires.

quarry-to-park retrofit

The Heartland Cement Company, which does business as Buzzi Unicem USA, is a 1,184 acre site located just southeast of the city limits. Production of cement ceased in 2008, and today, it operates as a fly ash distribution site. In 1989, Heartland received a Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) permit for storage and blending of hazardous waste into a fuel stock. Heartland ceased hazardous waste management in 2001 and completed closure of the hazardous waste management facilities and equipment in 2002. Starting in 2008, Heartland began dismantling equipment, structures and other items at the facility. The corrective actions required under the RCRA permit were completed in 2021. Part of the remedy for site clean-up included a requirement that residential uses not occur on the site. However, parks and recreation activities are often suitable for future use for former contaminated sites such as the old cement plant.

Independence should explore brownfield grants to help plan, study, and fund the redevelopment of the Heartland property to a large park/natural area for residents and visitors to enjoy. Brownfields are property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollution, or contaminant. According to the EPA, RCRA-regulated brownfields can have just as negative an effect on a community as other types of brownfields. Brownfield grants can be used to promote economic development or enable the creation, preservation, or addition to parks, greenways, undeveloped property, other recreation property, or other property for non-profit purposes. By retrofitting this site, long-term, to create a vibrant natural open space, the city could turn the location into a net positive for the community. A first step in this process would be to determine the feasibility of such a project and inquire with the nearest regional EPA office as to next steps.

green infrastructure

Green infrastructure can be defined as an individual or a system of strategies that use or mimic natural processes, such as infiltration or evaporation, to manage stormwater runoff on site. There are many appropriate applications for green infrastructure, including within parks and other public spaces. Green infrastructure typically provides stormwater management benefits while also providing an attractive greenspace feature that enhances the sense of place and aesthetics of parks and public spaces.

The most common types of green infrastructure solutions include:

- Downspout Disconnection

- Rainwater Harvesting

- Rain Gardens

- Planter Boxes

- Bioswales

- Permeable Pavements

- Ribbon Driveways + Turf Pavers
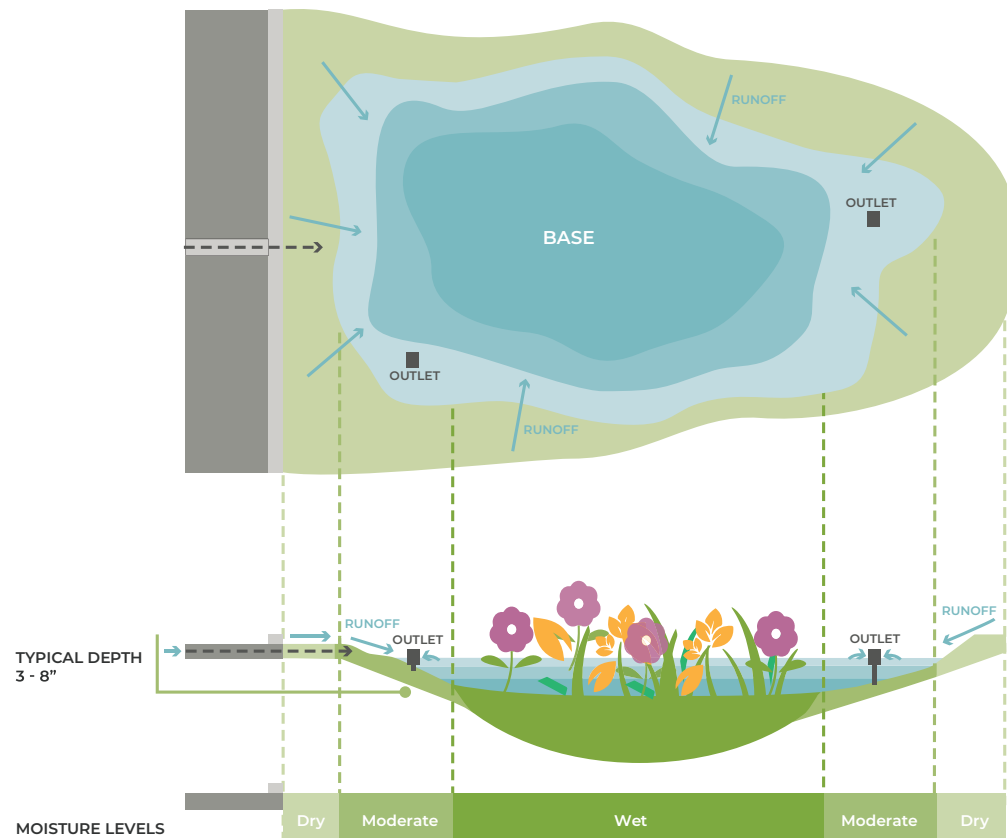
- Green Streets and Alleys

- Green Parking

FIGURE 4.5 // RAIN GARDEN EXAMPLE

technology + parks

Independence should continue to adapt to current and future changes to the integration of technology into parks and recreation. There are numerous examples of how technology is being integrated including:

- Adding QR codes along trails and within parks that bring up history of the location, connections into other pathways, or more information about local flora/fauna, for example

- Adding park equipment with interactive technology included such as Yalp Interactive that encourages youth engagement with outdoor activities

- Exploring adding virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology into Independence parks. This could include opportunities such as AR game zones that use AR glasses for treasure hunts or searching for virtual objects or VR wayfinding.

Independence should continue to try and stay cutting edge with technology to remain relevant and adjust to new expectations from residents over time.

youth sports

Recent studies have found a sharp decline in youth participation in recreation and sports. This has youth sports organizations and child health experts concerned as concerns over sedentary lifestyles and childhood obesity linger. Similar concerns can also be seen in adult recreation and engagement. Participation in sports and recreation have long-lasting physical, social, and mental benefits for residents of all ages. Independence should continue to support and encourage participation in their recreation programs. Some communities have tried to combat lagging participation by providing options such as sports sampling programs, where youth can try a wide variety of sport activities to see which ones they would most prefer to participate. Additionally, Independence should continue to survey residents on desired new options or activities such as the rise of activities in mountain biking or pickleball.

pickleball

Pickleball has emerged in recent years as one of the fastest growing and most popular sports in America. There are an estimated 4 million annual players that range from youth to seniors. Given the strong tennis presence in the community, pickleball could be an easily integrated amenity to expand accessibility to this rapidly growing sport. Some modifications to existing tennis courts have taken place at the Country Club, but a public facility would be a strong next step in expanding services. Independence should continue to accommodate, plan for, and react to growing trends such as the rise of pickleball in their recreation and facility programming.

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY PARK + RECREATION SYSTEM THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS	Updated equipment in neighborhood parks	High community satisfaction with parks from community surveying	Increased attendance at Riverside Park + Ralph Mitchell Zoo	Increased youth and adult recreation program attendance
STRATEGIES				
Continue to perform routine maintenance of facilities throughout the park system, especially neighborhood parks.				
Continue to survey residents on community satisfaction and desired amenities related to parks and recreation.				
Plan upgrades around identified lifecycles of facilities and equipment.				
Complete master plans for the long-term success of facilities, such as the Ash Youth Center and Riverside Beach Family Aquatic Center.				
Continue to implement the goals outlined in the Riverside Park + Ralph Mitchell Zoo Master Plan.				

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
EXPAND SAFE AND EFFICIENT PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY	Implement new trail segments and increase level of service	Complete sidewalk improvements and reduce network gaps	Receive high community satisfaction level with trails and sidewalks from the community survey

STRATEGIES

Implement the Future Trails Plan by expanding shared-use paths, widening or improving side paths, adding sharrows, installing nature paths, and maintaining facility trails and on-street bike lanes.

Consider new program solutions, such as cost sharing, to help with the maintenance and improvement of sidewalks throughout neighborhoods.

Expand wayfinding and directional signage to connect key community assets, especially along corridors identified on the Future Trails Plan.

GOAL 3	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
REMAIN ADAPTABLE AND FUTURE-ORIENTED TO CHANGING TRENDS IN PARK PLANNING TO SERVE ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS	Adopt new technologies throughout the parks system	Study feasibility of the Heartland Park Retrofit Project	Amend park or facility programming based on new trends	Add green infrastructure to parks and public spaces
STRATEGIES				
Be proactive in adopting new trends or technology such as integrating technology into park design through playground equipment, QR codes, VR/AR technology, and any other new technology.				
Inventory existing brownfields within city limits to identify opportunities for redevelopment. Rank or prioritize the identified brownfields to determine where focus should go in pursuit of funding and partnerships.				
Consider performing a feasibility study on retrofitting the Heartland cement property into a future park or open space, pursuing Brownfield Grants and other funding sources.				
Install green infrastructure systems in parks, along trails, and in other public spaces.				

CHAPTER 05:
TRANSPORTATION + INFRASTRUCTURE

chapter overview

Transportation Overview

This chapter examines the existing transportation network, existing programs, mobility opportunities, and considers the Future Land Use Plan to make recommendations on future road upgrades and improvements.

Transportation and mobility can look different for every resident. Those with cars are likely to drive to their destinations; however, those without access to a car need to be accounted for within the network as well, whether

that be through bicycle infrastructure or walkability.

Figure 5.1 highlights the existing transportation network in Independence today at a high level. Highways and railroads split the city into various quadrants with different built identities to surround. The local street network extends from the highways to provide immediate access to neighborhoods and commercial nodes.
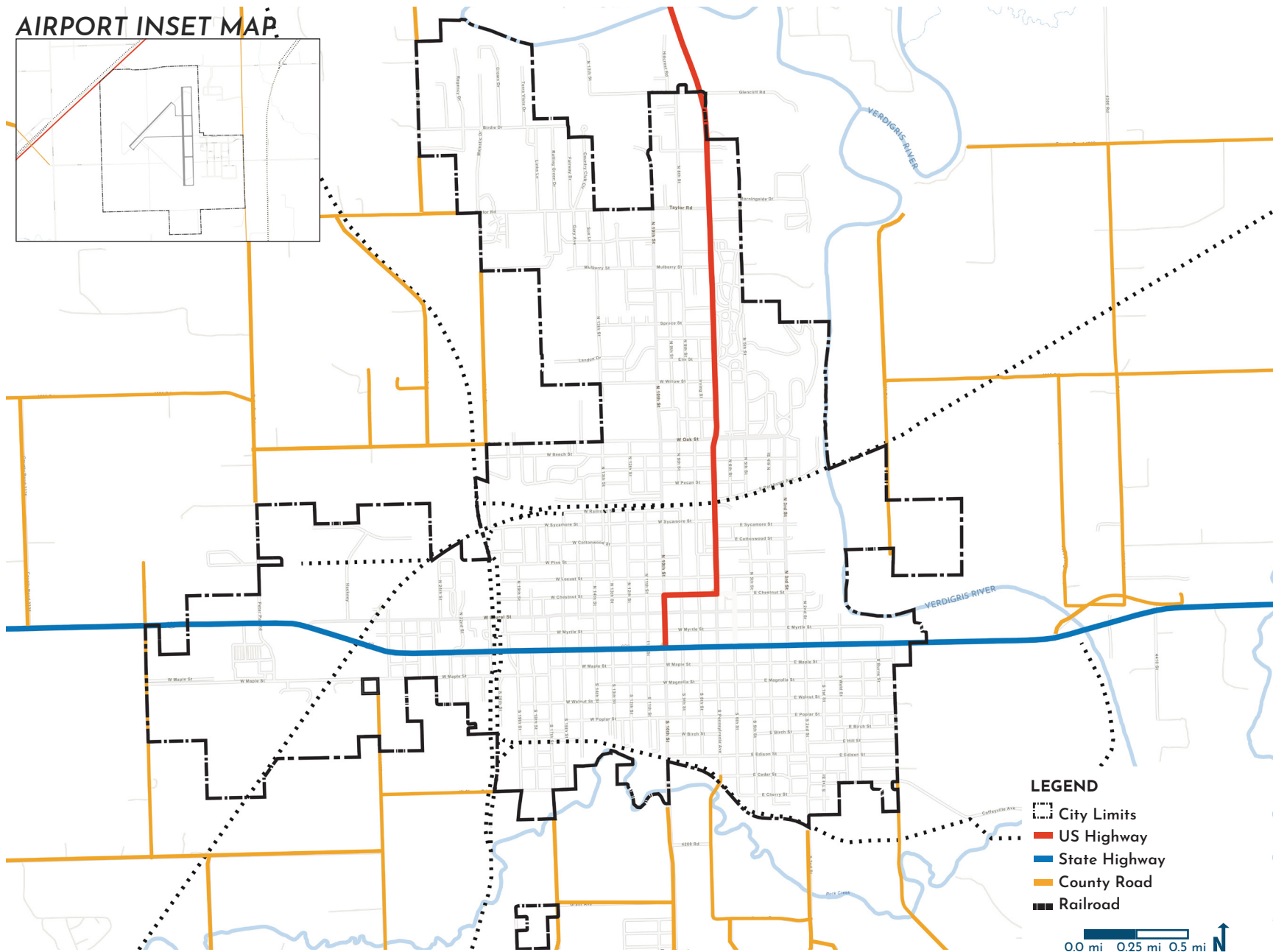
AIRPORT INSET MAP

LEGEND
City Limits
US Highway
State Highway
County Road
Railroad

VERDIGRIS RIVER

VERDIGRIS RIVER

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N

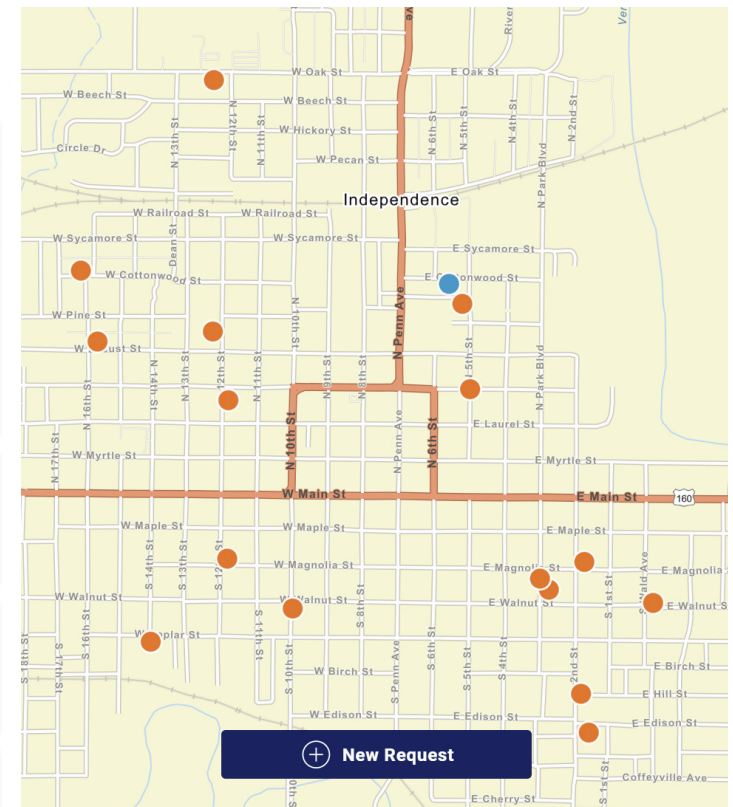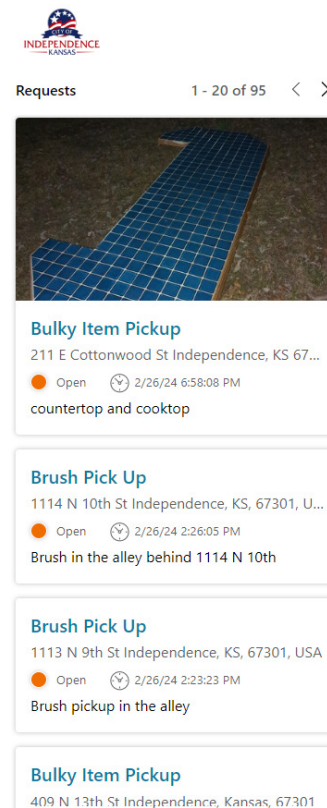**FIGURE 5.1 // EXISTING TRANSPORTATION MAP**
SOURCE: STATE OF KANSAS WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

existing programs + best practices

Existing Programs

The City utilizes a reporting software called SeeClickFix, Inc. to allow residents to report needed roadway repairs, as well as bulky item and brush pick ups. This software geo-locates the report and notifies the City of its posting. The City strives to have all reports addressed and identified within 72 business-hours. This initiative is a productive and proactive approach for a city to take and it is encouraged the City of Independence maintains this software for residents to use.

One recommendation would be to make the software more known on the City's website to spread awareness of the reporting software.

INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Requests	1 - 20 of 95

Bulky Item Pickup
211 E Cottonwood St Independence, KS 67...
● Open   2/26/24 6:58:08 PM
countertop and cooktop

Brush Pick Up
1114 N 10th St Independence, KS, 67301, U...
● Open   2/26/24 2:26:05 PM
Brush in the alley behind 1114 N 10th

Brush Pick Up
1113 N 9th St Independence, KS, 67301, USA
● Open   2/26/24 2:23:23 PM
Brush pickup in the alley

Bulky Item Pickup
409 N 13th St Independence, Kansas, 67301

New Request

best practices

The public input from Phase 2 indicated a desire for improved sidewalk networks, bicycle facilities, and general streetscaping. There are several ways to integrate these amenities into streetscapes and best practices for roadway improvements. Two primary ways would be to integrate complete street elements and traffic calming measures.

Complete Streets

In order to accommodate various modes of travel, today's transportation network must support pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Complete streets provide safe mobility via right-sized roadways, trails, on and off-street bike lanes, and transit where applicable. Consideration for a complete streets policy would be a viable next step for the City to take for long-term improvements to the mobility network.
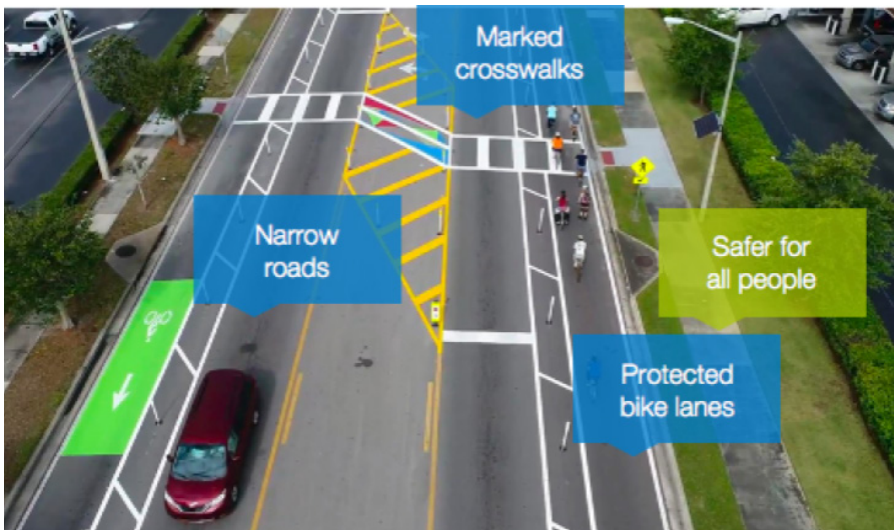
Traffic Calming

Curvilinear roads, narrower road widths, chicanes, street trees, raised cross walks, and varying road textures are all examples of traffic calming installations. These features aim to slow the speed of traffic and also assist in providing beautification to the streetscape. To trial these installations, cities often trial them in temporary installations to test if they are the proper solution before making them permanent. This could be an additional consideration for next steps for the City of Independence.

local road safety plan

Plan Summary

The City of Independence completed a Local Road Safety Plan in 2022 that outlined the Safe System Approach, high injury network routes that exist today, and recommendations for improvements. The plan's intent is outlined to the right.

The map in Figure 5.2 illustrates the roads identified in the high injury network where crashes at varying levels of severity have occurred. Primary truck routes and corridors, such as N Pennsylvania Ave, N 10th, Hwy 160, and W Laurel St comprise large extents of the high injury network. The strategies and actions are broken into various categories of safe roads, safe road users, safe speeds, post-crash care, and safe vehicles. These implementation metrics will likely occur over an extended period of time but should remain a priority for guiding transportation improvements within Independence.

INTENT OF THE LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN:

1. Achieve a significant reduction of traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roadways in the city.

2. Leverage partnerships and resources to maximize implementation of this plan.

3. Complement efforts to develop and implement transportation plans and other plans and studies.

4. Identify strategies and action items based on data analysis and crash trends.

5. Prioritize needed roadway improvements.

6. Increase awareness of road safety and risks through education and enforcement.

7. Develop support for funding applications.

8. Support implementation of the Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

FAIRWAY DR

N 10TH ST

N PENNSYLVANIA AVE

E OAK ST

N 3RD ST

W SYCAMORE ST

E LOCUST ST
E CHESTNUT ST

N 11TH ST

W LAUREL ST

W MYRTLE ST

HWY 160

E MAPLE ST

E MAGNOLIA ST
E WALNUT ST
E POPLAR ST

LEGEND

City Limits

Park
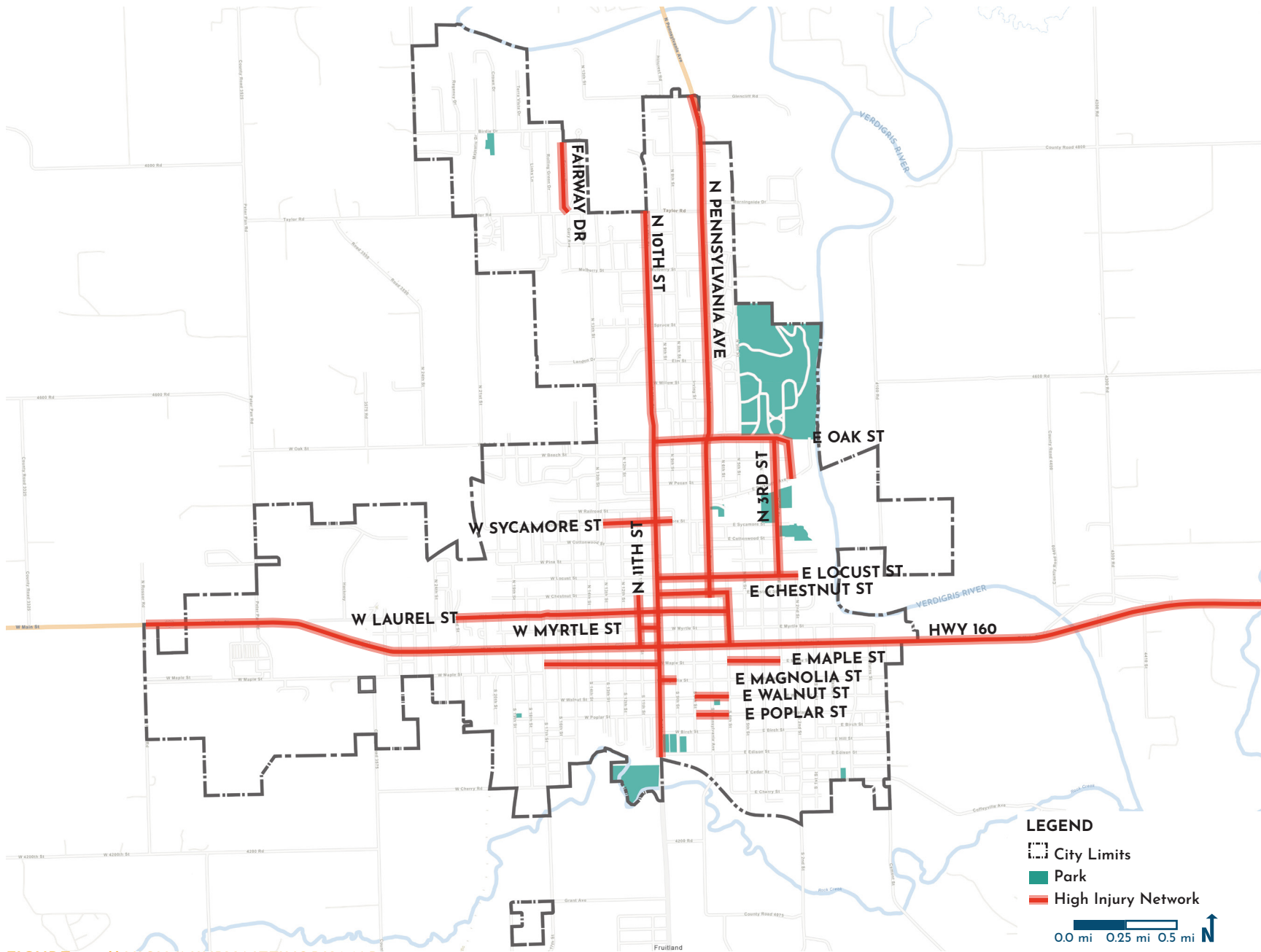
High Injury Network

0.0 mi   0.25 mi   0.5 mi   N

FIGURE 5.2 // HIGH INJURY NETWORK MAP
SOURCE: LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN, CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

Chapter 05: Transportation + Infrastructure

131

future streets plan

Street Typologies

Due to the increased road activity that would likely follow any type of any development, considerations for roadway upgrades and reclassifications must take place. The Future Streets Plan is designed to respond to the proposed land uses identified in the Future Land Use Plan and leverages the Kansas Department of Transportation Future Streets Plan for Independence published in 2023. The proposed roadways range from minor and major collectors, minor and major arterials, and highways/interstates. It should be expected that local roadways will be constructed in addition to these typologies as the internal network needs.

Table 5.1 highlights pipeline projects the City has identified for improvements within the next decade. These projects will provide much needed roadway improvements throughout the community and enhance new and proposed connections.

COLLECTOR STREETS

Collector streets serve the purpose of bringing a regional volume of traffic together often in coordination with land uses such as commercial, office, and industrial. Collector streets exist with a larger footprint, reduced access points, and at higher speeds. Collector streets provide the buffer between local roads and arterial roads.

ARTERIAL STREETS
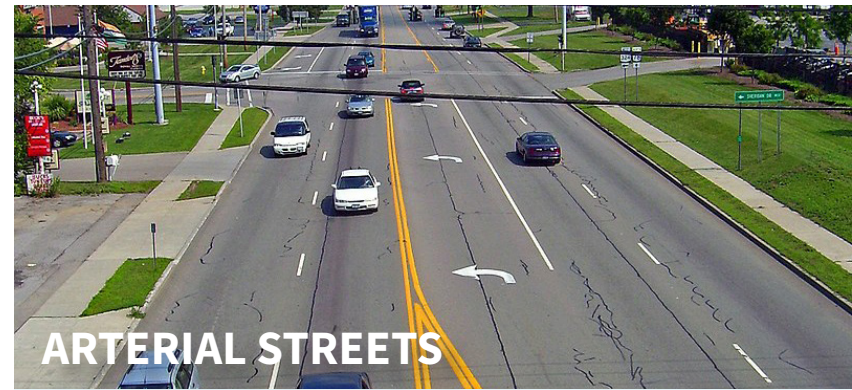
Arterial roads provide the means for regional connectivity within the roadway system. These are the main travel routes within the network, and the focus of the arterial roadway is to move traffic from one network to another. Arterial roadways should include the largest footprint, higher speeds, and access is limited to intersections with other arterial roads and collector streets.
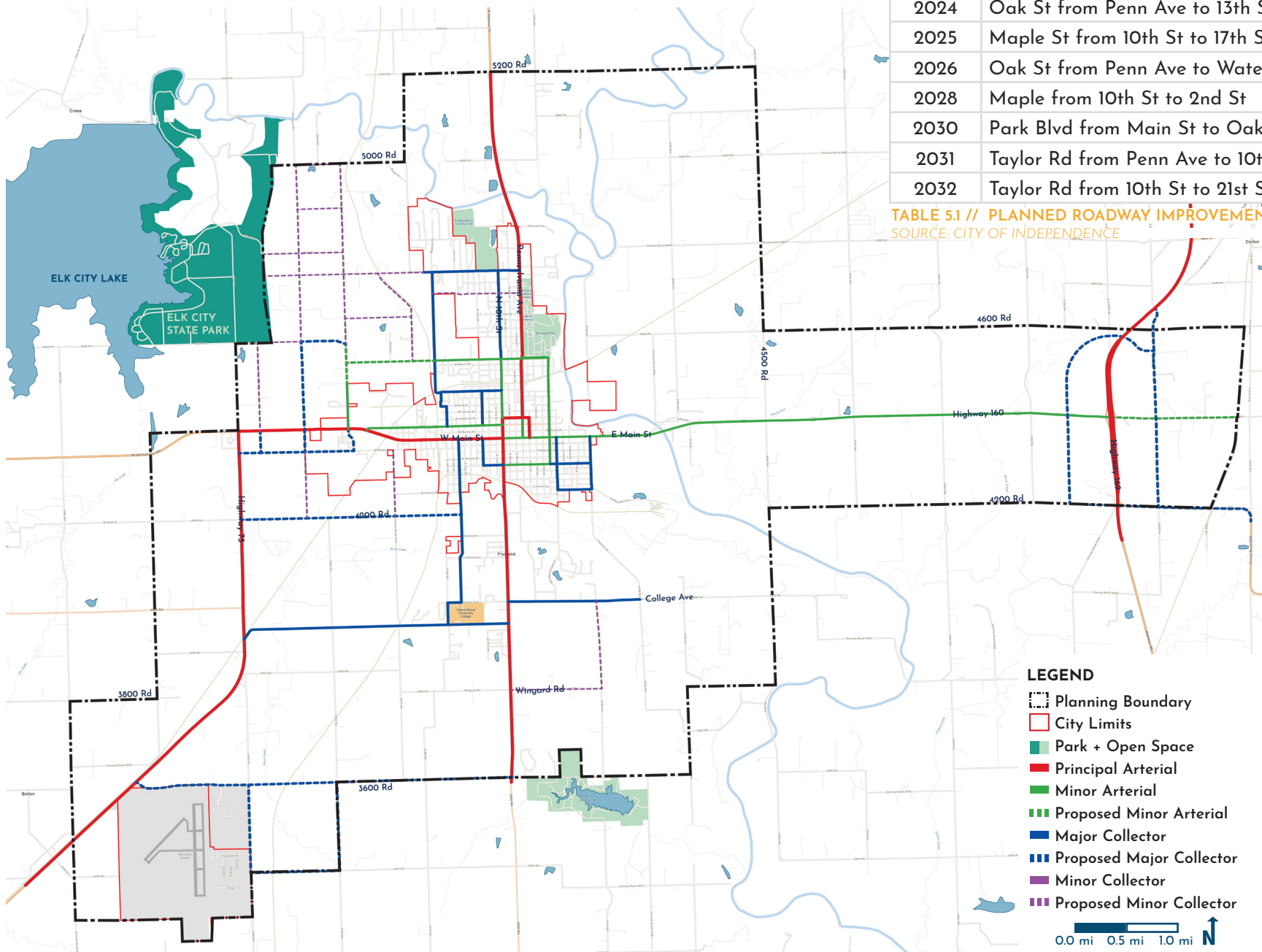
YEAR	STREET
2024	Oak St from Penn Ave to 13th St
2025	Maple St from 10th St to 17th St
2026	Oak St from Penn Ave to Water Treatment Plan
2028	Maple from 10th St to 2nd St
2030	Park Blvd from Main St to Oak St
2031	Taylor Rd from Penn Ave to 10th St
2032	Taylor Rd from 10th St to 21st St

TABLE 5.1 // PLANNED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

LEGEND
- Planning Boundary
- City Limits
- Park + Open Space
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Proposed Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Proposed Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Proposed Minor Collector

0.0 mi   0.5 mi   1.0 mi

FIGURE 5.3 // FUTURE STREETS MAP
SOURCE: KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

THE PLANNING BOUNDARY IS NOT A MASS ANNEXATION PLAN

Chapter 05: Transportation + Infrastructure

existing water infrastructure

Summary of Existing Water Infrastructure

Figure 5.4 illustrates the water infrastructure currently serving the community. There is consistent routing and supply throughout the community today with varying main diameters, depending on location and service need. The Water Treatment Plant is located adjacent to Riverside Park and treats the water serving the community.

Over time, the modernization of the system will be crucial to maintain flow rates, support growth, and enhance the general health of the infrastructure.

New projects, such as the "Big Straw" have expanded the water infrastructure capacity by providing service east to Bartlett, a new industry provider in Montgomery County. The large capital projects are necessary to propel the long-term health of the economy in Independence and the greater region. The Bartlett facility is not within city limits, so there is coordination in the sale of water to Rural Water District 6, that then sells it to Bartlett for water services. Continued investment and cooperation between Rural Water Districts will be pivotal to the growth of Independence from a variety of scales.
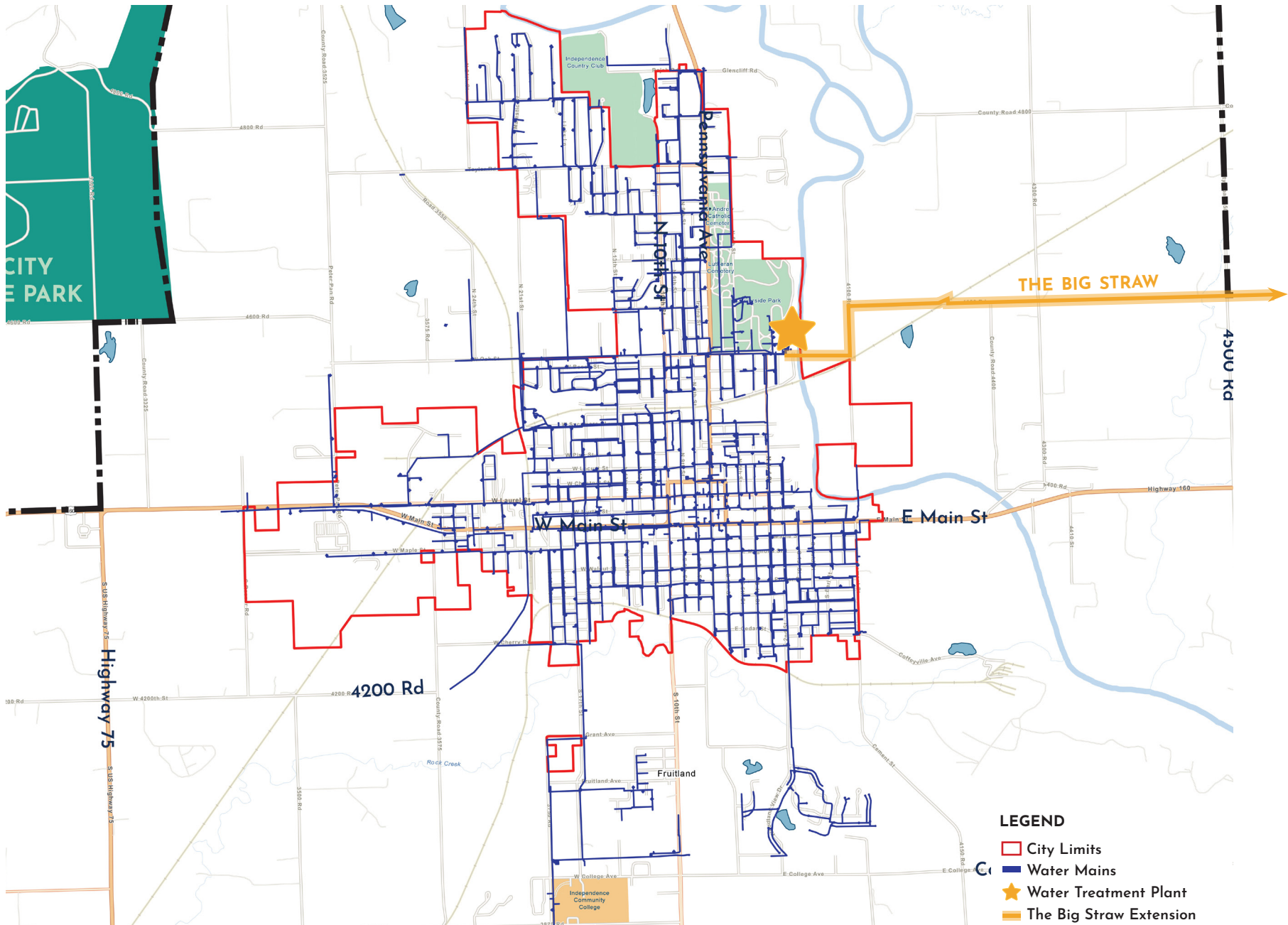
THE BIG STRAW

LEGEND

- ☐ City Limits
- ▬ Water Mains
- ★ Water Treatment Plant
- ▬ The Big Straw Extension

FIGURE 5.4 // EXISTING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE
SOURCE: CITY OF INDEPENDENCE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

Chapter 05: Transportation + Infrastructure

135

existing sanitary sewer infrastructure

Summary of Existing Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure

Figure 5.5 identifies the sanitary sewer infrastructure in Independence. The blue star highlights the location of the City's waste water treatment plant that is regulated by State and Federal guidelines to the quality of water that is being discharged back into the Verdigris River. The City's website highlights these standards and how the waste water treatment plant exceeds these regulations consistently. The plant currently treats roughly 2 million gallons per day.

Similar to the water mains and respective infrastructure, there is consistency in the current facilities but there is a need for minor improvements, upgrades, and extensions to service the community and potential growth zones identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
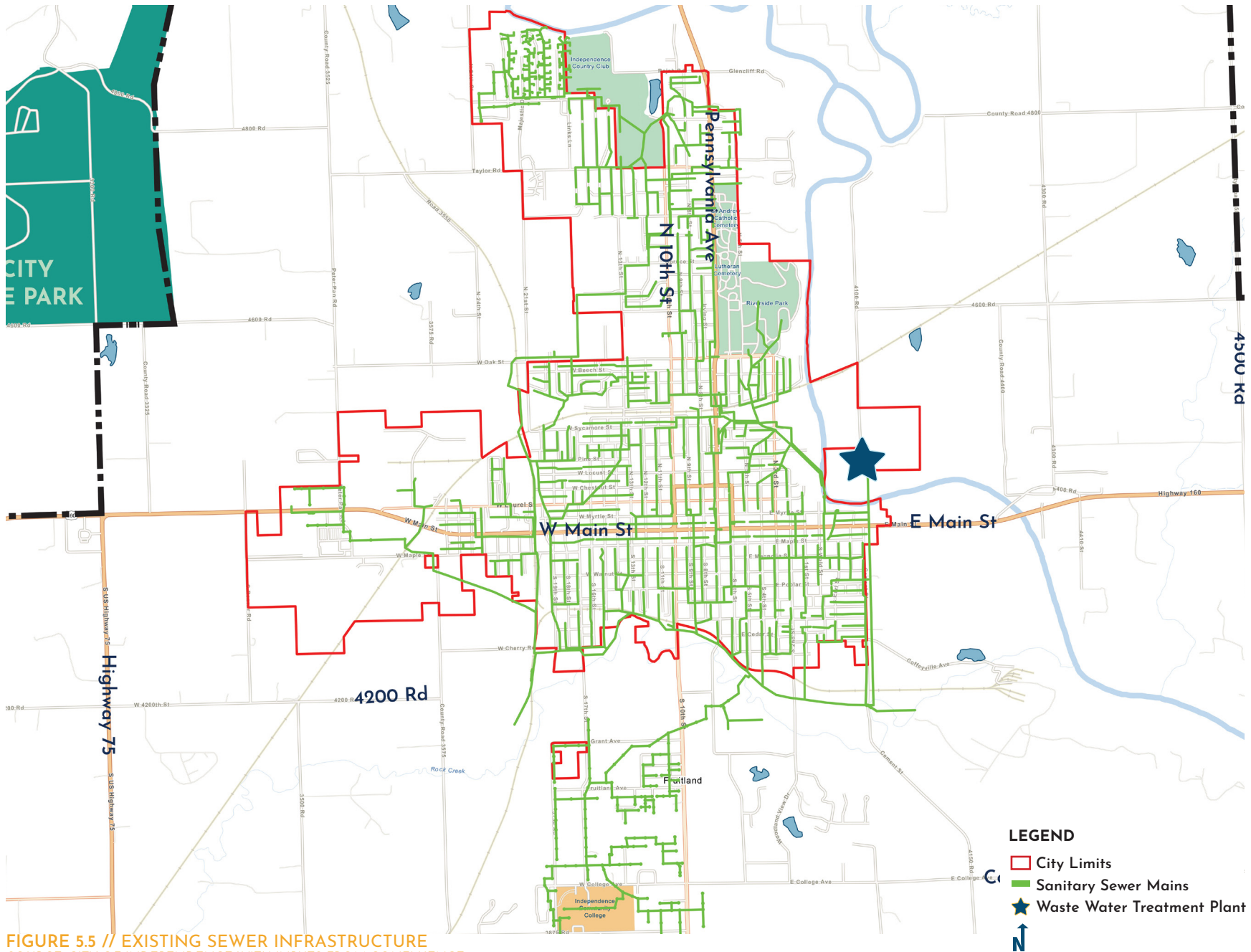
LEGEND

☐ City Limits

━━ Sanitary Sewer Mains

★ Waste Water Treatment Plant

N

stormwater infrastructure

Stormwater Infrastructure in Action

As identified throughout the maps within this plan, there is quite a bit of land that is within the 100-year floodplain, and even floodway. These areas are natural resources and assets that should be preserved to the greatest extent. The relationship between the floodplain and stormwater infrastructure is defined by storm runoff and the movement of water areas away from the built environment. Some solutions for stormwater improvements can take shape in structural and non-structural installations. Some of these methodologies are highlighted and summarized on the opposite page. Generally, structural stormwater improvements are facilities that are constructed to provide control of stormwater. Non-structural stormwater improvements focus on the prevention of stormwater generation and reducing volume as a means of improving stormwater risks.

STRUCTURAL STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS
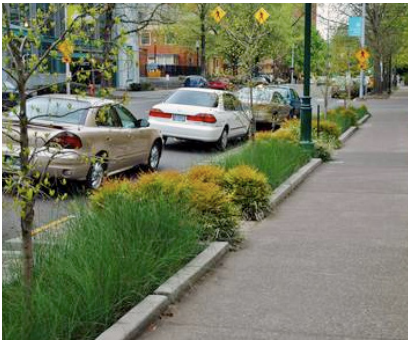
Green Infrastructure

While this is a broad item, the incorporation of green infrastructure practices in Independence's built environment will have a positive impact on stormwater runoff.

Pervious Pavement

Porous pavement, pavers or concrete help increase infiltration of water into the ground. These practices help manage the volume of water entering the stormwater system.

Runoff Capture and Reuse

This practice simply implies the capture, storage, and reuse of stormwater to reduce volume, improve water quality and groundwater recharge.

Landscape Restoration

Landscape restoration is the intentional use of native plants in re-vegetation/reforestation initiatives, with limited to no pesticides or herbicides being used.

NON-STRUCTURAL STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS

Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer includes the waterbody and the vegetation that stabilizes the land adjacent to the waterbody. This area is important in reducing slope erosion, providing shade and food to fish and wildlife, and filtering air and water pollution.

Smart Growth

This planning technique is an approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses. The preservation of open space and waterbodies helps reduce environmental impacts of development.

Re-vegetation + Reforestation

Areas that have been disturbed should be re-vegetated and/or reforested with native plants, grasses, shrubs, and trees. These plants help reduce runoff volumes and improve water quality.

Natural Pathways

There are existing natural flow pathways the water runoff uses in order to provide relief to the site. These areas should be preserved for dedicated runoff as development occurs around it.

SOURCE: SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION WATER RESOURCE CENTER, 2020

emergency planning + preparedness

Current Planning

Being located in the Midwest comes with an added risk of severe storms and potential for tornadoes. Due to this, additional emergency planning for severe storms is needed to ensure the safety of residents. The National Weather Service recently updated the Tornado Warning polygon used for reporting storms for Independence so that it is now more accurate in deploying warnings for the community. This polygon update then resulted in an update to the City's storm siren policy.

FEMA has set standards for structural ratings for storm shelters to assess levels of integrity in the midst of a storm. The City of Independence currently does not have any structures that are FEMA IC-500 rated to provide shelter to the public.

Opportunities for Planning

FEMA offers a number of grants that would be potential opportunities for the City to pursue for the construction of a storm shelter. The case study on the opposite page highlights the Building Resilient Infrastructure + Communities (BRIC) Grant that takes a proactive approach to helping fund the construction of storm-ready infrastructure.

Additionally, through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant dollars, the State of Kansas offers a lottery rebate for homeowners to construct safe rooms with a maximum $3,500 reimbursement under the Residential Safe Room Rebate Program.

CASE STUDY

WHERE:
Lamberton, MN

WHAT:
BRIC Grant Application
and Project

DESCRIPTION:
FEMA awarded the City
of Lamberton (1,450
residents) a $3.48 million
grant to construct a safe
room through the BRIC
program. The safe room will
be approx. 10,608 sq. ft. in
size and connected to the
Red Rock Central School as
a multi-purpose gym for the
school district.
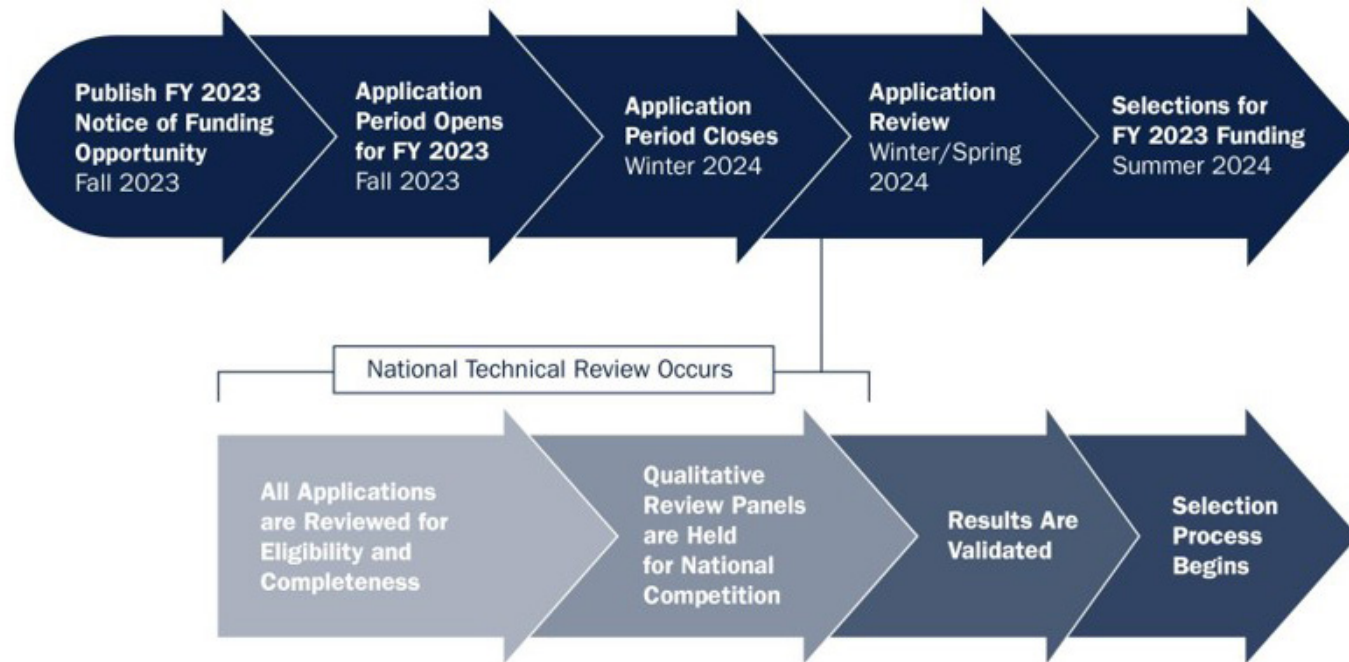
The above graphic
highlights the process for
application and grant
completion per FEMA's
website for the 2023-2024
application cycle.

facility + growth programming

Overview

The numbers and projections provided on the following pages are drawn from existing staffing levels and facility spaces under the City of Independence with inputs from the Planner's Estimating Guide. The Planner's Estimating Guide provides recommendations on level of service standards, staff counts per 1,000 residents, and estimates on needed facility space based on the community's size. These standards were applied to Independence specific to Police and Fire/EMS staffing and general facility space needs over the next thirty years.

There are an estimated **145** total employees at the City today.

Of these, roughly **76%** are full-time employees

While the remaining **24%** are part-time or seasonal employees

police staffing + facility level of service (LOS)

City Hall recently underwent a full renovation to preserve the historic structure and the Police Department (PD) comprises roughly 16,000 sq.ft. of the total facility space. The LOS tables below present existing service levels for staffing and facility spaces. The results indicate that the PD is adequately serviced in facility space but this should not discourage general hardware, software, and facility updates as needed. Staffing levels are expected to remain healthy over the next thirty years as well based on population projections and level of service standards.

2024 Existing Police Facility Estimates	
CATEGORY	**METRIC**
Existing Population (2022)	8,584
Existing Facility Space	16,402 sq. ft.
Existing Level of Service (LOS)	1.91 sq.ft./1,000 residents
Recommended Level of Service	0.65 sq.ft./1,000 residents
Facility Space Needed to Meet LOS	0.0

TABLE 5.2 // EXISTING FACILITY LOS

2024 Existing Police Staffing Counts	
CATEGORY	**COUNT**
Police Full-Time	26
Police Part-Time	2
TOTAL	**28**

TABLE 5.3 // EXISTING POLICE STAFFING COUNTS

2050 Future Police Facility Estimates	
CATEGORY	**METRIC**
Estimated Population (2050)	7,309
Existing Facility Space	16,402 sq. ft.
LOS with Current Facility Space	2.24 sq.ft/1,000 residents
Recommended LOS	0.65 sq.ft./1,000 residents
Facility Space Needed to Meet LOS	0.0

TABLE 5.4 // FUTURE FACILITY LOS

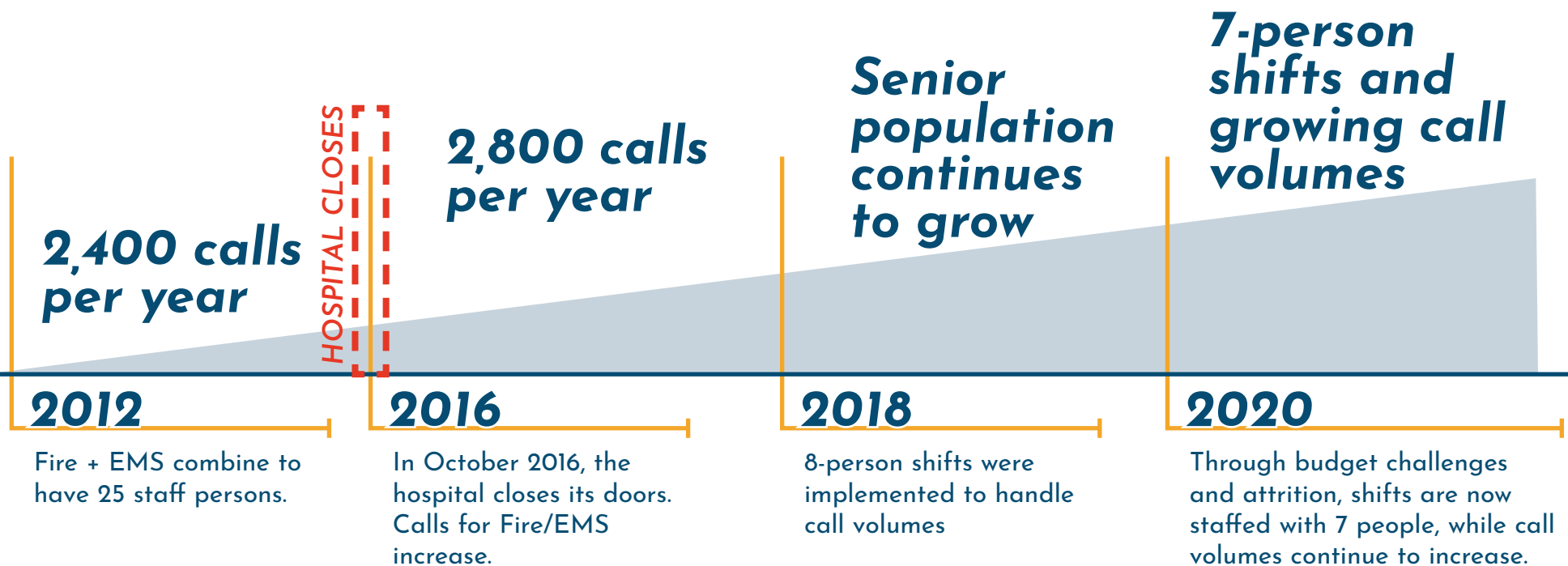| Projected Police Staffing Counts		
RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE	**LOW LOS**	**HIGH LOS**
Today	23	33
2030	22	31
2040	21	30
2050	19	28

TABLE 5.5 // PROJECTED POLICE STAFFING COUNTS

SOURCE: PLANNER'S ESTIMATING GUIDE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

fire/ems staffing + facility LOS

Fire/EMS Operations

The graphic below highlights the impacts in Fire/EMS operations since 2012 in Independence. In 2012, the Fire and EMS Departments combined to better address long-term staffing needs. This resulted in 25 total Fire/EMS employees. The loss of the hospital and re-opening of an emergency room have impacted the call volumes for the Fire/EMS Department over the last decade and should be considered greatly as staffing levels are examined long-term to ensure services are meeting or exceeding standards.

2,400 calls per year

HOSPITAL CLOSES

2,800 calls per year

Senior population continues to grow

7-person shifts and growing call volumes

2012
Fire + EMS combine to have 25 staff persons.

2016
In October 2016, the hospital closes its doors. Calls for Fire/EMS increase.

2018
8-person shifts were implemented to handle call volumes

2020
Through budget challenges and attrition, shifts are now staffed with 7 people, while call volumes continue to increase.

Understanding Fire/EMS Staffing Needs Today

Currently the numbers shown in Table 5.7 are in line with the basic national standards as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. However, actual staffing needs will should to be evaluated annually to address any additional increases in call volumes and issues related to the population and travel times for serving rural areas within Montgomery County. As call volumes continue to rise, staffing levels will need to as well in order to respond to the increased need. Additional factors, such as an aging population and housing stock or increased boundary service areas, should be included in projecting need for emergency services in and around Independence.

As it relates to facilities, the current LOS is in line with the recommended standard. The City of Independence recently completed upgrades to the Fire/EMS facility, however, supplies and technologies should be considered for upgrades as staffing and demand increases.

2024 Existing Fire/EMS Facility Estimates

CATEGORY	METRIC
Existing Population (2020)	16,738
Existing Facility Space	30,671 sq. ft.
Existing Level of Service (LOS)	1.83 sq.ft./1,000 residents
Recommended Level of Service	0.4 sq.ft./1,000 residents
Facility Space Needed to Meet LOS	0.0

TABLE 5.6 // EXISTING FACILITY LOS
SOURCE: PLANNER'S ESTIMATING GUIDE WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

The staff estimates for Fire/EMS utilize the 2020 Census Tracts and population estimates for Montgomery County that follow the Service Boundary Map for the City of Independence's emergency services. The projections in Table 5.8 utilize the 16,738 population estimate to better understand the level of service (LOS) provided today.

Existing Fire/EMS Staffing Counts

CATEGORY	COUNT
Fire/EMS Full-Time	22
Fire/EMS Part-Time	15
TOTAL	**37**

TABLE 5.7 // EXISTING FIRE/EMS STAFFING COUNTS

PROJECTED FIRE/EMS STAFF ESTIMATES	RANGE FOR LOS (1.54-1.81 STAFF PERSONS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS)
FIRE STAFF ESTIMATES	26-30
EMS STAFF ESTIMATES	5-7
TOTAL FIRE/EMS STAFF ESTIMATES	31-37

TABLE 5.8 // PROJECTED FIRE/EMS STAFFING COUNTS
SOURCE: NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION WITH INPUTS FROM CONFLUENCE

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY AND SAFE MOBILITY SYSTEM THAT CONSIDERS MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIONS	Positive trends in community satisfaction survey with road conditions	Expand the sidewalk and trail network to support walking and biking	Decreased serious injuries and fatalities in vehicular accidents	Increased usership in the SeeClickFix program

STRATEGIES

Adopt a complete streets policy to establish strong best practices for road reconfigurations.

Consider developing a Neighborhood Streets Plan that focuses on the enhancement and preservation of street corridors and prioritizes traffic calming and the pedestrian experience.

Consider adopting a set of streetscape standards for all levels of road classifications.

Continue to implement the recommendations from the Local Road Safety Plan.

Install traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic and occurrences of serious injuries.

Follow the Future Streets Plan to guide planning for future roadway connections.

Preserve rights-of-way for growth based on the Future Streets Plan.

Annually review the Future Streets Plan to ensure it accurately reflects the needs of the community and continues to support the land uses identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Continue to use the SeeClickFix program to invite residents to identify needed improvements.

Advertise the SeeClickFix program on the City's website and social media accounts to spread the word about the program.

Support incremental improvements to the sidewalk network to increase ADA accessibility throughout the city.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICES	Construct an IC-500 rated City storm shelter	Modernize infrastructure to perform efficiently and safely	City-owned facility and gear upgrades	Installation of structural + non-structural stormwater facilities
STRATEGIES				
Continue to meet or exceed all Federal or State discharge standards.				
Consider stormwater infrastructure improvements as a method of mitigating development impact.				
Explore opportunities for structural and nonstructural stormwater improvements.				
Limit development in the floodplain and instead use these areas as natural greenbelts throughout Independence.				
Continue to provide exceptional internet services and coordinate with providers for expanded services as needed.				
Design and construct water system improvements that meet demand for fire protection and adequate pressures for current and future growth areas.				
Pursue FEMA grants to receive funding support to construct a City storm shelter.				
Continue to educate residents on emergency planning and preparedness and what best practices look like.				
Coordinate utility improvements with transportation projects to ensure efficient use of funding and construction timelines.				

CHAPTER 06: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

economic development in independence

Overview

The long-term economic health of a community is closely tied to other factors such as population growth, quality of life, housing stock, and even the transportation and utility systems. Independence has a storied past filled with highs and lows tied to Sinclair and the oil industry boom, as well as more recently, stagnant and/or population decline associated with rural areas across the country. Despite some losses, Independence maintains a strong community identity and offers a high quality of life for residents with unique parks and a successful downtown core. While Independence may face challenges to attract jobs and development due to its location or size, there are many qualities it can build upon and strategies it can undertake to provide the best chance at continued long-term success.

This chapter examines current industry and market conditions, demographics and skillsets for current employees and residents, specializations within Independence, and provides a range of recommendations for consideration as Independence continues to work to attract workers and businesses to the community.

1893

J.D. Nickerson drilled the first successful gas well three miles east of Independence and the Independence Gas Company was founded as a result.

1898

Independence Vitrified Brick Company was formed and produced 75,000 bricks per day.

Kansas Cracker Company was established and produced 1,000 boxes of crackers and 800 gallons of ice cream per day until 1914.

1900

1904

Western States Portland Cement Company began production in 1904.

1901

Independence Paper Company manufactured wheat straw into wrapping paper and pulp strawboard.

1932

Sinclair Oil merges with Prairie Oil and Gas to become the largest pipeline company in the world.

GENERAL OFFICES
THE PRAIRIE OIL & GAS COME
INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

1990s

ARCO Building and supported companies close their doors.

1896

The Nellie Hockett was built and operated on Drum Creek. It was a 150-passenger paddle steamboat used to haul passengers roundtrip from Independence. Passengers embarked at Myrtle and First and could dance to violin music during the trip.

1903

Midland Glass Company began manufacturing window glass in 1903. A.E. Todd built "Glass Town," 15 houses for the workers at Midland.

1996

Cessna begins production in Independence.

industry trends in independence

Figure 6.1 on the following page shows how population and jobs by industry have changed over time between 2002-2020. In the past roughly two decades, Independence has experienced a population decline of around 1,000 residents. Job gains and losses have not always gone hand-in-hand. For instance, while jobs decreased between 2009-2013, population did not equally decline until 2014 - this was the same year total jobs rebounded to near 2008 levels. Events, such as the 2007 flooding and associated property flood buy-outs may have contributed to the population loss in excess of total job numbers. Generally, however, long-term population stability is tied to the economic development successes of Independence. If the City wants population gains, there must be associated job growth - this requires marketing, incentives, a well-trained workforce, housing development and rehabilitation, and continued investments in community character and other quality of life improvements.
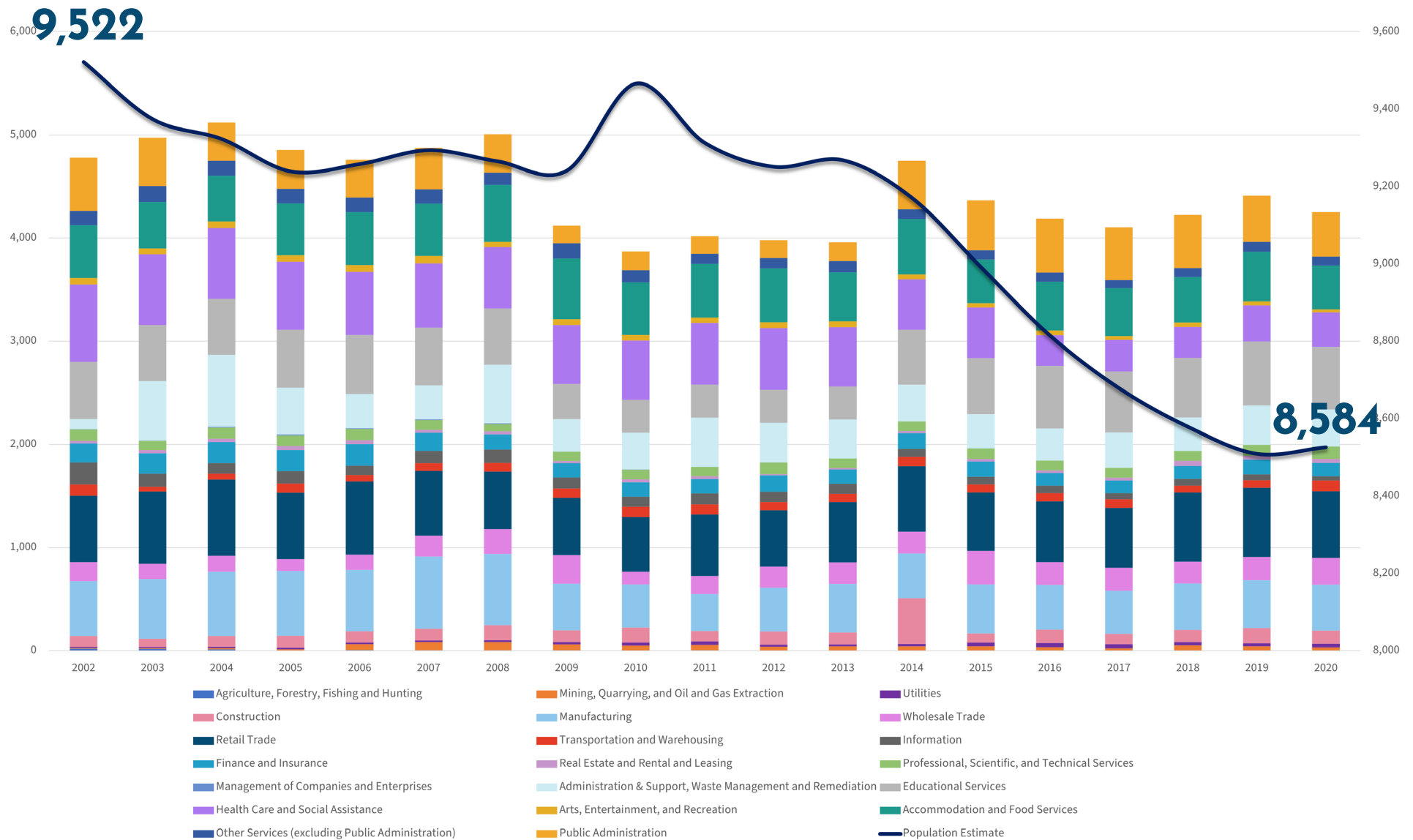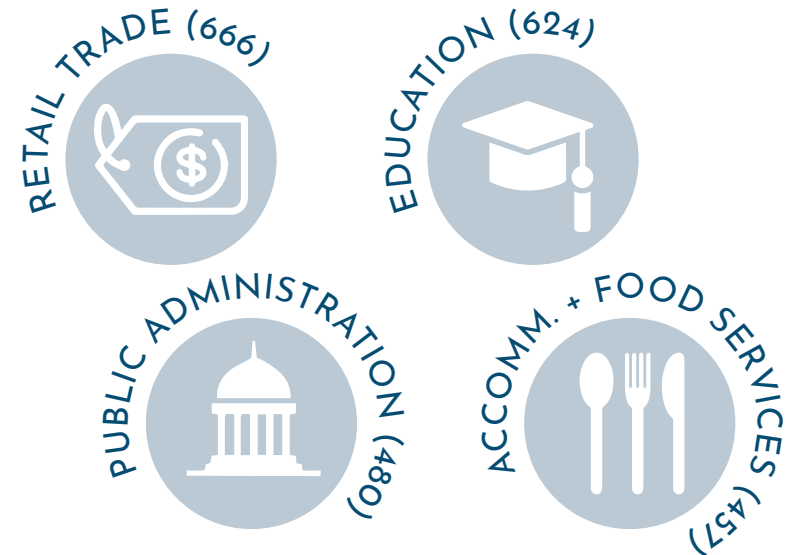
FIGURE 6.1 // INDUSTRY TRENDS IN INDEPENDENCE
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ONTHEMAP 2002-2020 ESTIMATES

Legend:
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Information
- Finance and Insurance
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Other Services (excluding Public Administration)
- Public Administration
- Population Estimate

jobs by industry

The largest industries by total number of jobs located within Independence are Retail Trade, Educational Services, Public Administration, and Accommodation and Food Services. Collectively, these represent approximately 2,227 jobs. Figure 6.2 shows the total number of jobs located within Independence by industry and the total number of jobs held by Independence residents by industry for 2021. By comparing the two, there are some areas of noticeable difference. For instance, Independence residents are far more likely to hold jobs in Manufacturing (655 jobs) and Heath Care and Social Assistance (574 jobs) than there are positions located within the city. Some industries, including Retail Trade and Educational Services, are high in both groups.

There appears to be somewhat of a mismatch between jobs available in-town and the skillsets of residents working in Independence. This will be further explored on the following pages.

JOBS LOCATED WITHIN INDEPENDENCE

RETAIL TRADE (666)
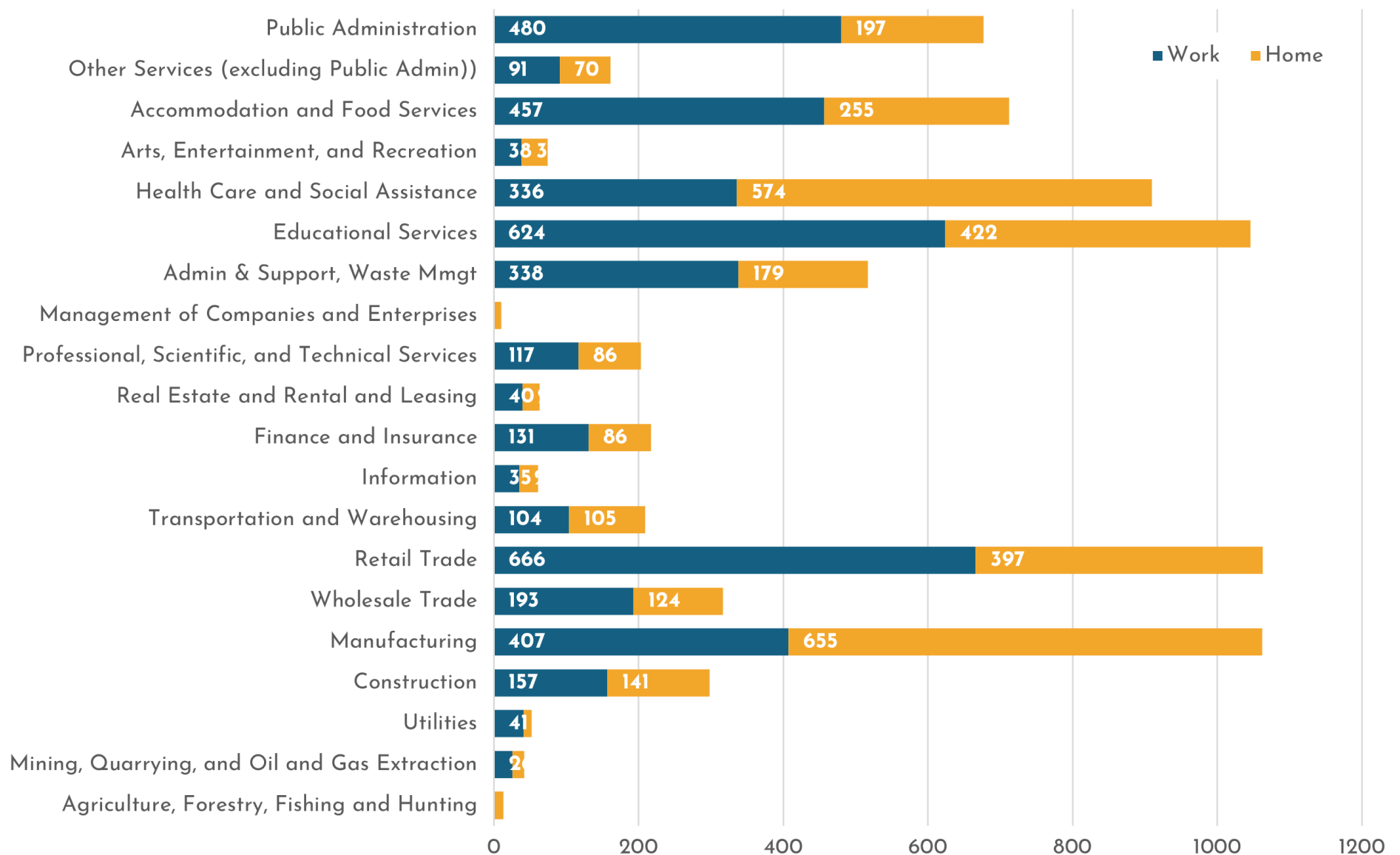
EDUCATION (624)

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (480)

ACCOMM. + FOOD SERVICES (457)

JOBS HELD BY RESIDENTS

MANUFACTURING (655)

HEALTHCARE + SOCIAL ASSIST. (574)

EDUCATION (422)

RETAIL TRADE (397)

commuting patterns

Commuting data from 2021 is summarized in Figure 6.3. Workers have been divided into three categories: In-Commuters, Out-Commuters, and Interior Jobs.

In-Commuters

In-commuters include those that work in Independence but live elsewhere. This is the largest cohort of worker types in Independence with nearly 3,000 workers that are traveling into Independence regularly for work. Often, these are targeted as potential residents because they already spend a significant amount of time in the community.

Out-Commuters

Out-commuters include those that live in Independence but travel to another place for work. The data estimates just over 2,000 Independence residents travel elsewhere for work. Some leakage of residents for work is inevitable, however, it is useful to understand how the skillsets/jobs of residents is comparable to the jobs available in a community. This is explored more in later sections.

Interior Jobs

Interior jobs are those that both live and work in Independence. The data estimates nearly 1,400 people hold interior jobs.

COMMUTER PATTERNS

WORKER DESTINATIONS

2,924

Live elsewhere,
Work in Independence

Where do these employees live?

- Montgomery County, KS (59.8%)
- Independence, KS (31.7%)
- Kansas City Metro Area (5.3%)
- Oklahoma (4.8%)
- Coffeyville, KS (4.8%)

1,357

Live and
Work in Independence

Examination of the commuter patterns of Independence highlight a particularly interesting trend in which the residents and employees of Independence and the greater Montgomery County area, including Coffeyville, trade day-time populations for employment at roughly 60% for in- and out-commuters.

2,069

Live in Independence,
Work elsewhere

Where do these employees go?

WORKER DESTINATIONS

- Montgomery County, KS (61.0%)
- Independence, KS (39.6%)
- Coffeyville, KS (7.9%)
- Wilson County, KS (6.9%)

FIGURE 6.3 // COMMUTER PATTERNS CHART
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU CENTER FOR ECONOMIC STUDIES, LEHD ONTHEMAP 2021 ESTIMATES

measuring independence's competitive edge
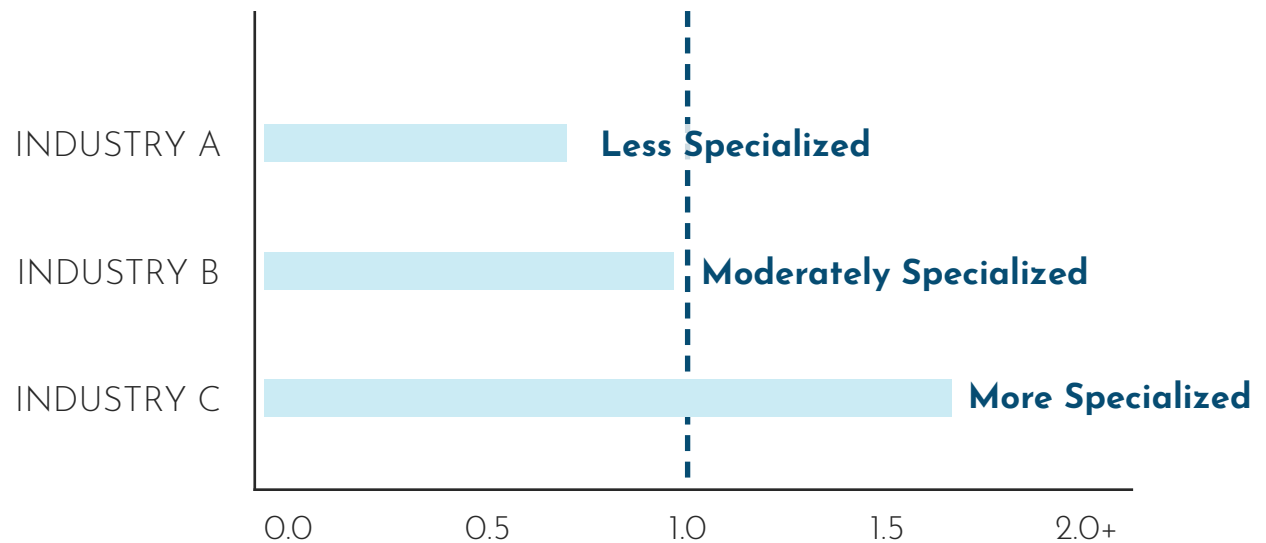
Understanding Location Quotient

Location Quotient (LQ) analysis measures the "competitive advantage" or "specialization" of a place for different industries. Essentially, the LQ compares how the local share of jobs for each industry compares to a larger (regional, state, or national) area. The LQ for each industry compared to the State of Kansas was done for Independence based jobs and jobs held by residents – the results are shown in Figure 6.4.

If the LQ is less than 1.0 the industry is typically viewed as less competitive or specialized

If the LQ is close to 1.0 the industry is right on par with the regional/national average

If the LQ is more than 1.0 the industry is considered more competitive or specialized

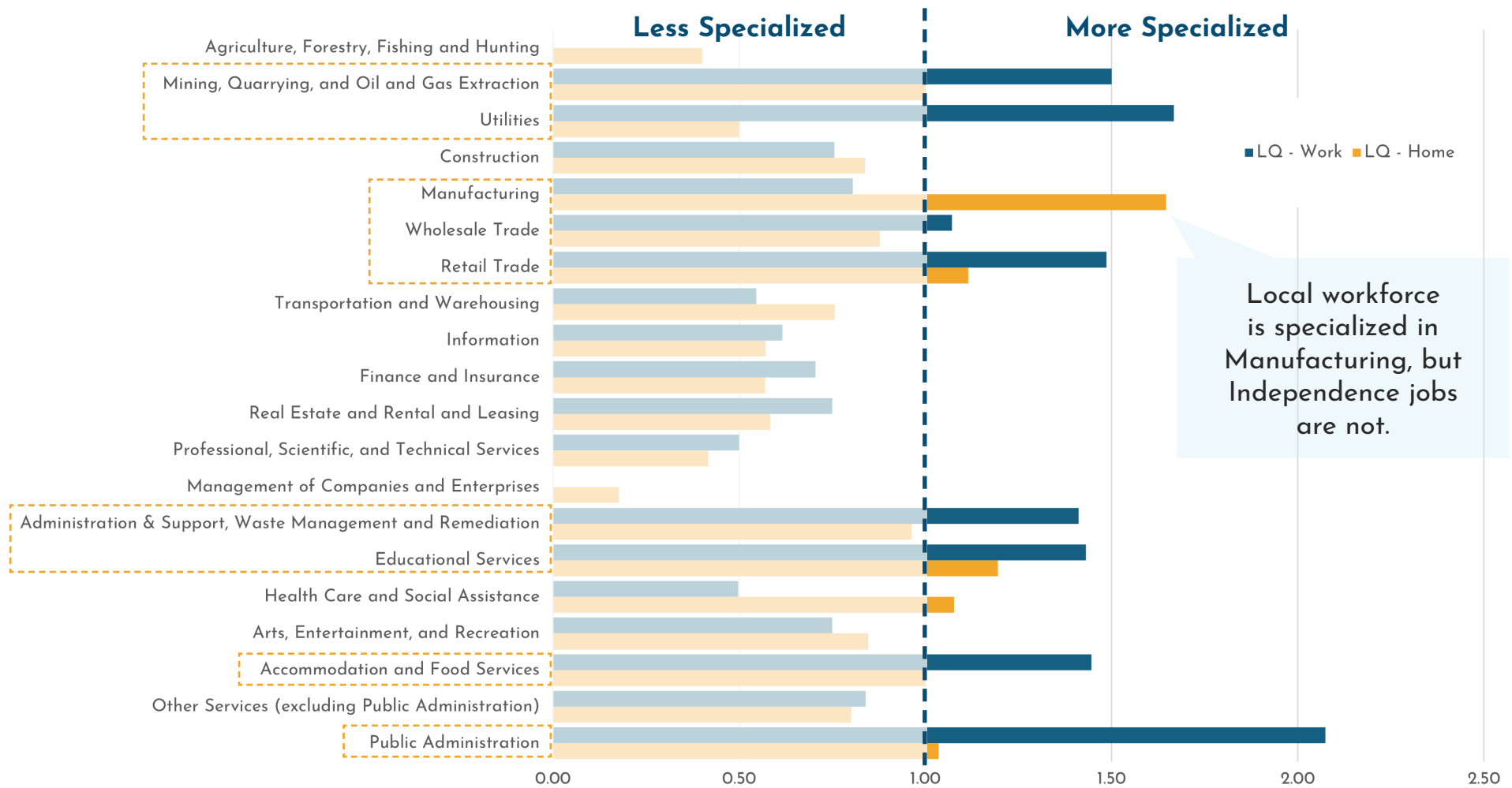**UNDERSTANDING THE LOCATION QUOTIENT ANALYSIS CHART**

INDUSTRY A — **Less Specialized**

INDUSTRY B — **Moderately Specialized**

INDUSTRY C — **More Specialized**

0.0   0.5   1.0   1.5   2.0+

Less Specialized ⋮ **More Specialized**

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
Utilities
Construction
Manufacturing
Wholesale Trade
Retail Trade
Transportation and Warehousing
Information
Finance and Insurance
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Management of Companies and Enterprises
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation
Educational Services
Health Care and Social Assistance
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
Accommodation and Food Services
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)
Public Administration

■ LQ - Work ■ LQ - Home

Local workforce is specialized in Manufacturing, but Independence jobs are not.

0.00   0.50   1.00   1.50   2.00   2.50

Opportunities to Explore: Independence residents have a specialization in Manufacturing, and this is not equally seen in Independence based jobs. Many residents must travel outside of the city for manufacturing work – this is a skillset that should be taken advantage of when attracting new industries to Independence.

major employers in independence

Major Employers

Of the top 10 largest employers in Montgomery County, three are located within Independence:

Textron Aviation
(500+ employees)

Standard Motor Products
(300+ employees)

Four County Mental Health
(200+ employees)

Other Major Employers:

- Apricot Lane Boutique
- Atmos Energy
- Barta Animal Hospital
- Coldwell Banker Pasternak-Johnson
- Commercial Bank
- Community National Bank + Trust
- Cornerstone Regional Surveying, LLC
- Cornerstone Warehousing & Aviation
- CRMC Medical Group
- Derailed Commodity Flooring & Furniture
- Dickey's BBQ Pit
- Edward Jones Investments

- Equity Bank
- Kansas Aviation/VSE
- Evergy
- Express Employment Professionals
- FAB Creative Services
- FirstOak Bank
- FedEx Distribution
- Heritage Homes Realty
- Hugo's Industrial Supply
- Independence Animal Hospital
- Independence Community College
- Independence Daily Reporter
- Independence Ready-Mix, Inc.

- Labette Health Independence Healthcare Center
- Montgomery County, KS
- Matcor
- Penmac Staffing Services
- Quality Toyota
- Romans Motor Company
- Sealtite Lining Systems
- SEKTAM of Independence
- USD 446
- WalMart
- Woods Lumber of Independence
- VT Hackney Engineering

UPCOMING MAJOR EMPLOYER

BUSINESS:
Bartlett Company Soybean Processing Facility

DESCRIPTION:
Just outside of Independence city limits is a soon-to-open, roughly $450 million dollar soybean processing facility owned by the Bartlett Company. The project received county-issued revenue bonds to help attract and build the facility. During construction, there will be an estimated 125 to 130 jobs during construction with 50 full-time permanent employees long-term. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in June 2022 and the facility is set to open in Fall 2024.

costar analysis

CoStar Overview

CoStar is a national, industry-leading data source that provides a full market inventory of properties and spaces in all asset classes for all uses except for single-family residential. This data source is what commercial brokers, franchises, and site selectors review when reviewing a community or location. Note: For smaller communities, such as Independence, the data should be viewed as a reflection of overall trends and economic health as some datapoints may be lagging on reporting.
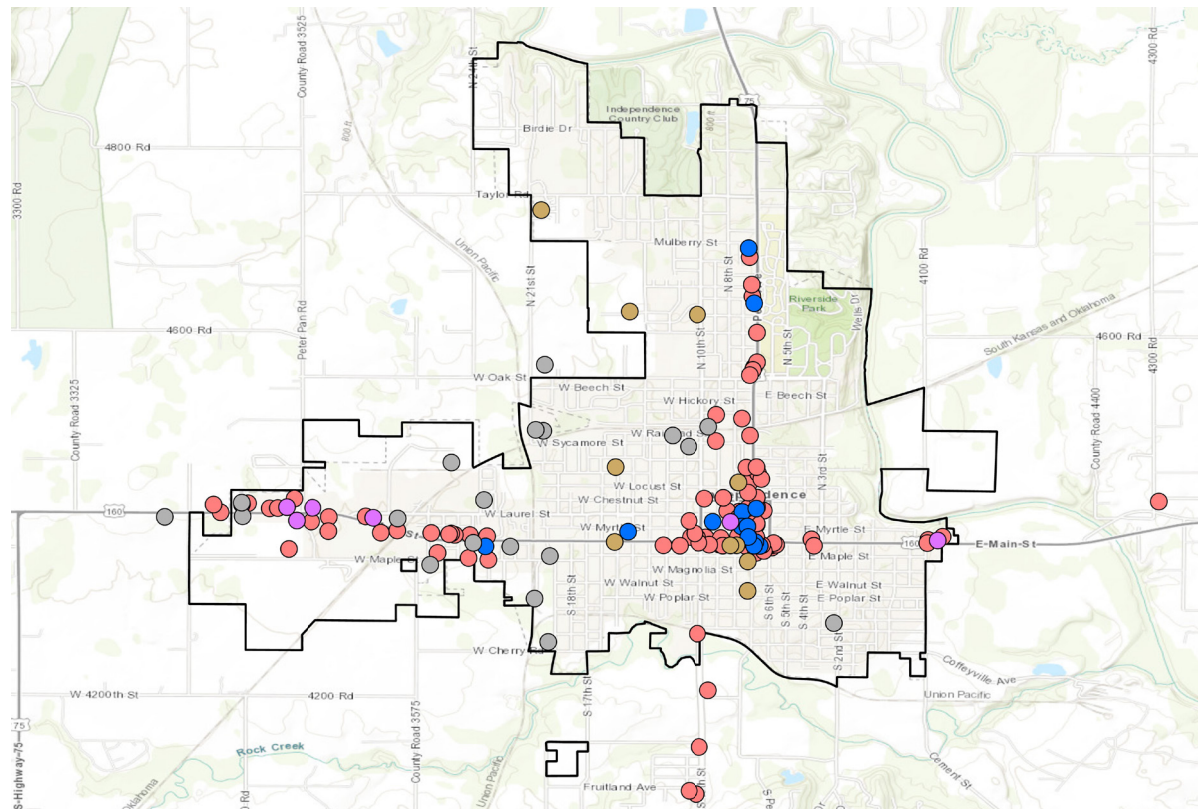
FIGURE 6.5 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

COSTAR SUMMARY - OFFICE

Approximately 243,000 sq.ft. of inventory

14 office buildings

0% vacancy rate (-1.9% from 2022)

Average market asking rent: $16.25/sq.ft.

Average market sale price: $122/sq.ft.

TABLE 6.1 // EXISTING OFFICE SUMMARY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

OFFICE MARKET ANALYSIS

The office market within Independence is not large and mainly contained in the Downtown, Penn Avenue, and W Main Street/Highway 160. There is an estimated 243k SF of inventory spread across 14 buildings. As of the first quarter of 2024, a vacancy rate of 0% was shown, which was down from the previous reporting period. The average market asking rent per SF was $16.25.
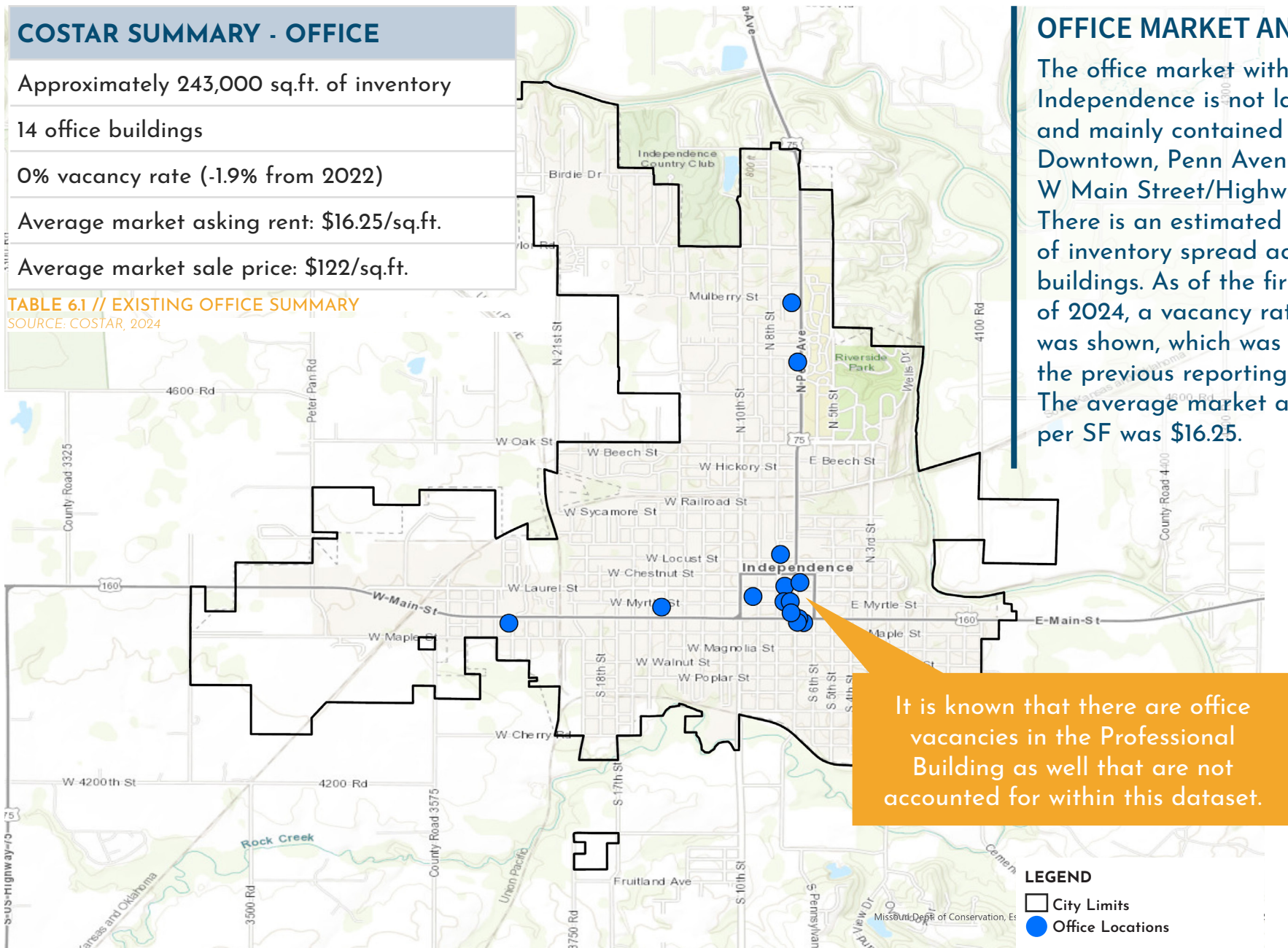
It is known that there are office vacancies in the Professional Building as well that are not accounted for within this dataset.

LEGEND

☐ City Limits
● Office Locations

FIGURE 6.6 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS - OFFICE INVENTORY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

COSTAR SUMMARY - RETAIL

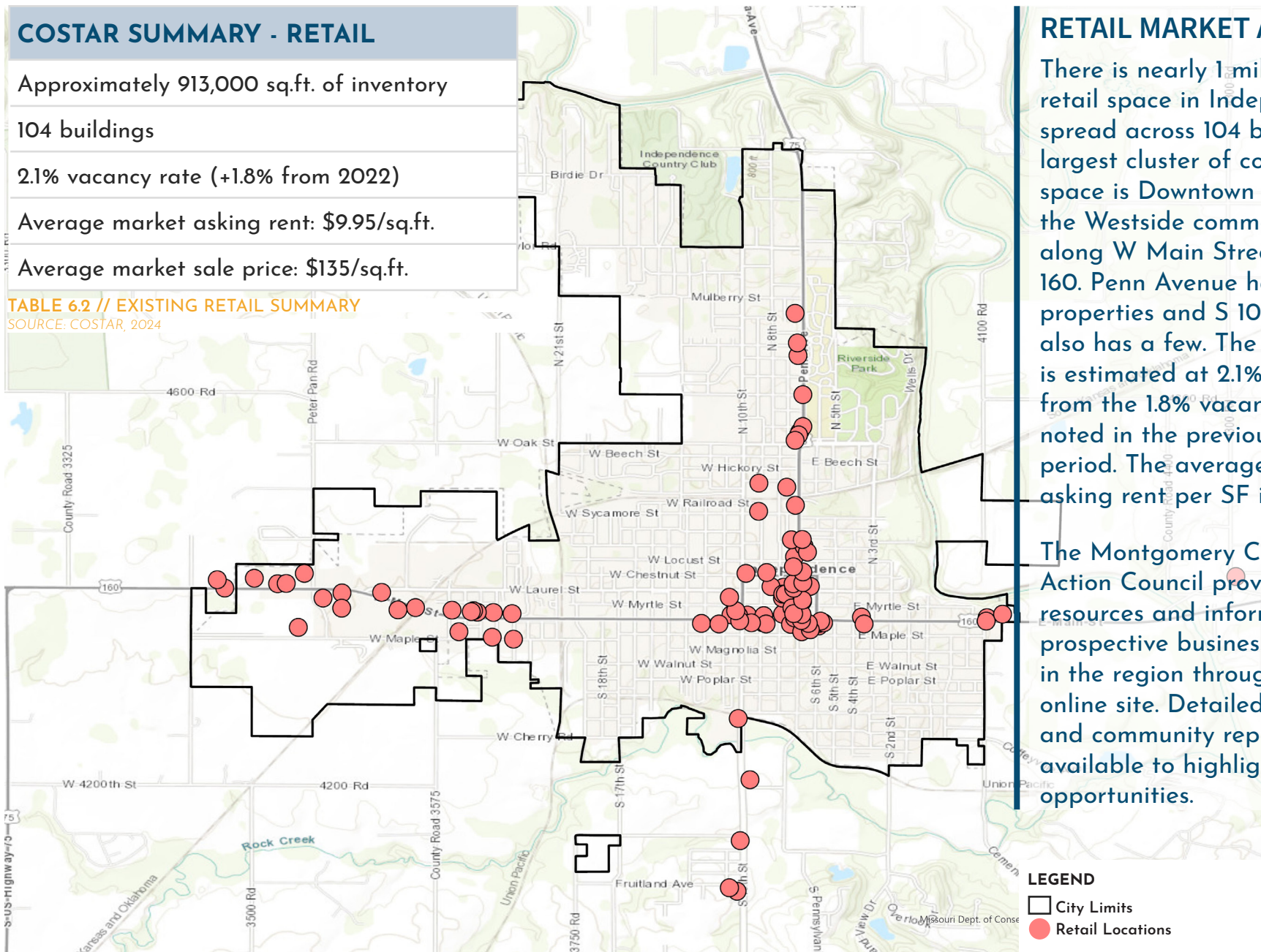Approximately 913,000 sq.ft. of inventory

104 buildings

2.1% vacancy rate (+1.8% from 2022)

Average market asking rent: $9.95/sq.ft.

Average market sale price: $135/sq.ft.

TABLE 6.2 // EXISTING RETAIL SUMMARY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

There is nearly 1 million SF of retail space in Independence spread across 104 buildings. The largest cluster of commercial space is Downtown followed by the Westside commercial district along W Main Street/Highway 160. Penn Avenue has several properties and S 10th Street also has a few. The vacancy rate is estimated at 2.1%, up slightly from the 1.8% vacancy rate noted in the previous reporting period. The average market asking rent per SF is $9.95.

The Montgomery County Action Council provides robust resources and information to prospective business owners in the region through their online site. Detailed site and community reports are available to highlight potential opportunities.

FIGURE 6.7 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS - RETAIL INVENTORY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

LEGEND
☐ City Limits
● Retail Locations

COSTAR SUMMARY - INDUSTRIAL/FLEX

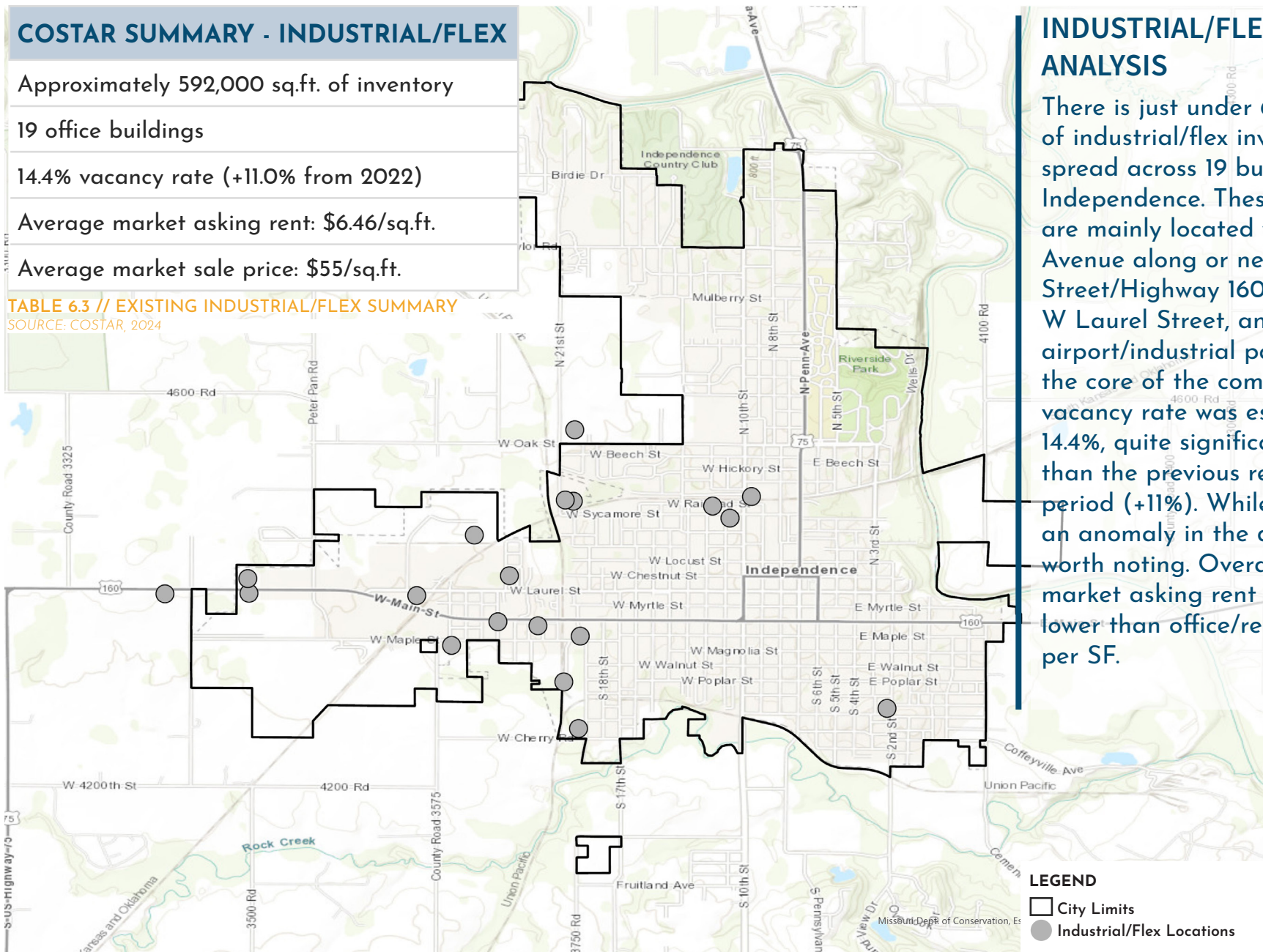Approximately 592,000 sq.ft. of inventory

19 office buildings

14.4% vacancy rate (+11.0% from 2022)

Average market asking rent: $6.46/sq.ft.

Average market sale price: $55/sq.ft.

TABLE 6.3 // EXISTING INDUSTRIAL/FLEX SUMMARY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

INDUSTRIAL/FLEX MARKET ANALYSIS

There is just under 600k SF of industrial/flex inventory spread across 19 buildings in Independence. These properties are mainly located west of Penn Avenue along or near W Main Street/Highway 160, Oak Street, W Laurel Street, and near the airport/industrial park south of the core of the community. The vacancy rate was estimated at 14.4%, quite significantly higher than the previous reporting period (+11%). While this may be an anomaly in the dataset it is worth noting. Overall average market asking rent per SF is lower than office/retail at $6.46 per SF.

LEGEND
☐ City Limits
⬤ Industrial/Flex Locations

FIGURE 6.8 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS - INDUSTRIAL/FLEX INVENTORY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

COSTAR SUMMARY - MULTI-FAMILY

Approximately 314 units of inventory

10 buildings

10.6% vacancy rate (+1.3% from 2022)

Average market asking rent: $651/unit

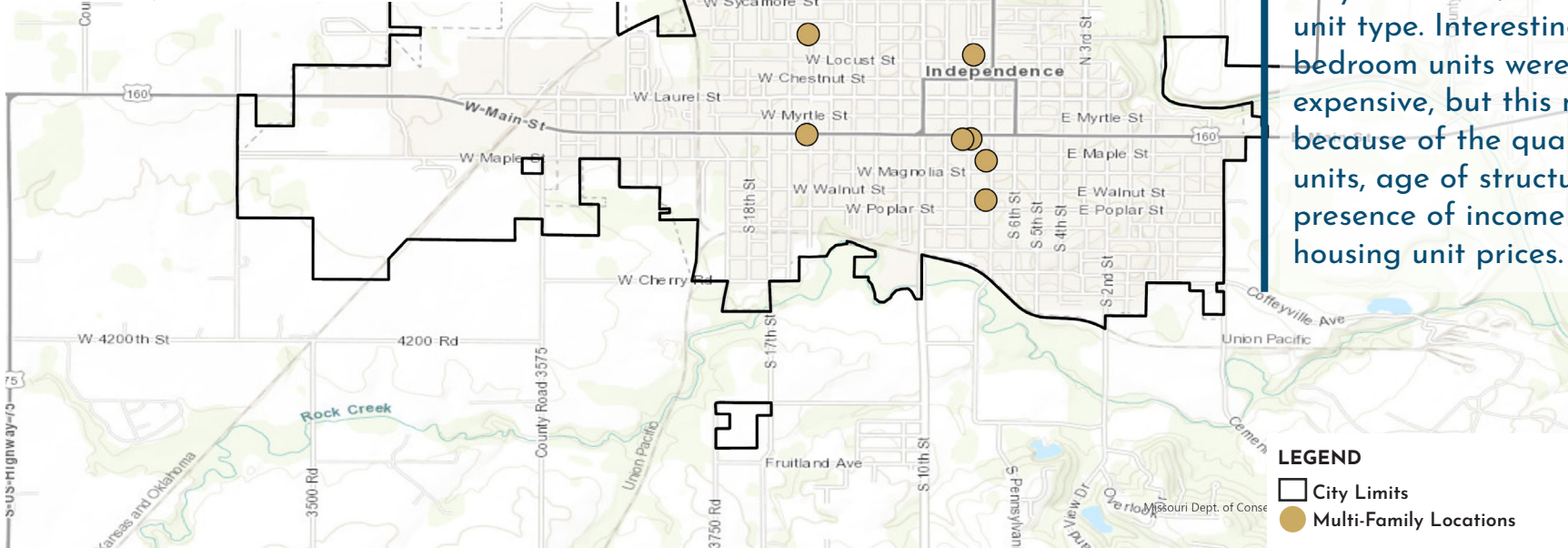Average market sale price: $62,000/unit

Asking rents by unit type:

1 bedroom: $820/unit

2 bedroom: $571/unit

3 bedroom: $659/unit

TABLE 6.4 // EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY SUMMARY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

MULTI-FAMILY MARKET ANALYSIS

There are an estimated 314 units of multi-family residential housing across 10 buildings. The multi-family buildings are located near Downtown and on the north side of Independence. The estimated vacancy rate is 10.6%, which is up slightly by 1.3% from the previous reporting period. The overall average market rent per unit is $651. Data is available for asking rents by unit type, which vary between $571 to $820 per unit type. Interestingly, the 1 bedroom units were the most expensive, but this may be because of the quality of the units, age of structure, or the presence of income assisted housing unit prices.

LEGEND
☐ City Limits
● Multi-Family Locations

FIGURE 6.9 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS - MULTI- FAMILY INVENTORY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024
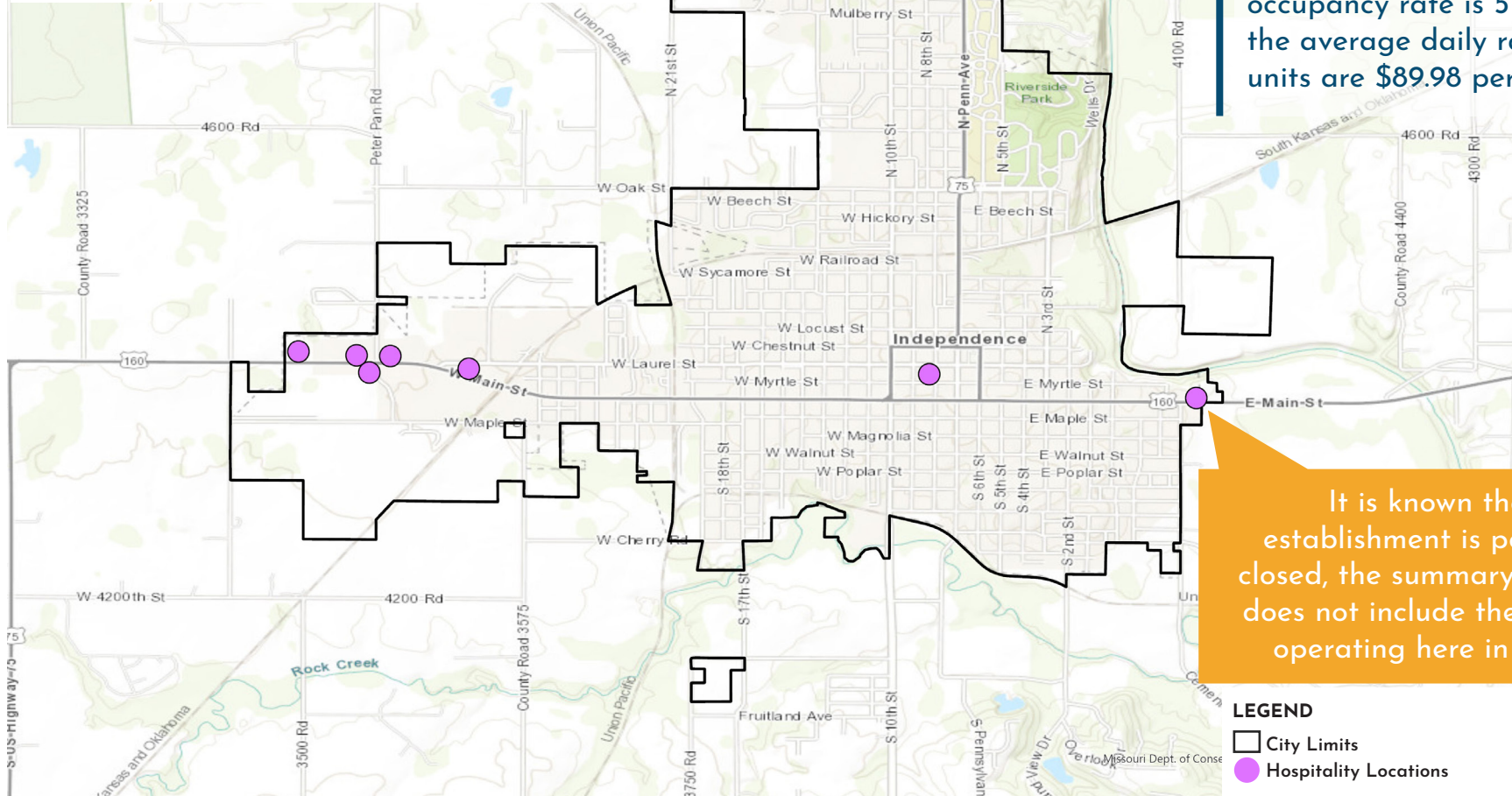
COSTAR SUMMARY · HOSPITALITY

Approximately 313 rooms of inventory

6 properties

10-month occupancy rate: 51.8%

Average daily rate: $89.98

TABLE 6.5 // EXISTING HOSPITALITY SUMMARY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

HOSPITALITY MARKET ANALYSIS

There are an estimated 313 hotel rooms spread across 6 hotels in Independence. All of the hotels are located within close proximity to W Main Street/ Highway 160. The 10-month occupancy rate is 51.8% and the average daily rate for hotel units are $89.98 per night.

It is known that this establishment is permanently closed, the summary table above does not include the rooms once operating here in its counts.

LEGEND

☐ City Limits
● Hospitality Locations

FIGURE 6.10 // COSTAR SUMMARY POINTS - HOSPITALITY INVENTORY
SOURCE: COSTAR, 2024

economic development organizations + partners

City Organizations + Local Partners

The City of Independence has an Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) that is appointed by the City Commission to help provide recommendations on programs, policies, incentives, and other economic development strategies. The EDAB, comprised of seven representatives and four ex-officio representatives, meets monthly to strategize and plan for the future of Independence.

The Chamber of Commerce and Independence Main Street organizations are local partners assisting with business attraction and retention throughout the community.

Independence Chamber of Commerce

The Independence Chamber of Commerce was Incorporated in June 1914 and represents the business interests of the Independence area. There are many services, programs, and events held by the group including business referrals, networking events, and assistance with grand opening ceremonies. The organization provides business assistance information and coordinates local events and attractions.

Independence Main Street

Independence Main Street was formed in 1985 and was one of the first five communities in Kansas to be in the Main Street Program. This non-profit 501c(3) organization helps to support the vitalization and health

city of independence	montgomery county action council	state of kansas + dept. of commerce
EDAB	**independence is a member city**	**funds main street through the state's community programs**
chamber of commerce		
independence main street		

FIGURE 6.11 // ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS + PARTNERSHIPS FLOW CHART

of Downtown Independence. The program is also part of the National Main Street Program, which is designed to bring economic revitalization to communities with an emphasis on restoration and preservation of core downtown business districts.

Montgomery County Action Council

The City also belongs to the Montgomery County Action Council (MCAC). MCAC is a county-wide resource advocating for its member cities with the intent to bring new industry to Montgomery County. MCAC offers a variety of incentives and resources to help attract businesses and support those already operating in the county.

State of Kansas + Department of Commerce

At the largest scale, the State of Kansas and Department of Commerce offers additional programs and incentives that range from business incentives and workforce services to tax credits and additional community programs. A variety of state programs fund the programs at a local level, ensuring there are ample funding opportunities to support the local economy and prosperity of Kansas communities.

economic development programs available today

Overview of City Programs

The City of Independence administers the Downtown Commercial Building Grant and Neighborhood Revitalization District programs. These two programs are vital in maintaining the Downtown District and neighborhoods throughout the community.

Additional information on State and MCAC offered programs are on the opposite page, as well as available industrial park sites.

Downtown Commercial Building Grant Program

The Downtown Commercial Building Grant Program is meant to preserve the structural integrity of existing commercial buildings located within the Central Business District of Independence. The grant provides a 25% reimbursement for eligible expenses with a maximum funding of $25,000 per building.

Neighborhood Revitalization Districts

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program uses a tax rebate to encourage residents to rehabilitate their properties within certain Neighborhood Revitalization Districts (NRDs). There is a sliding scale of rebate percentages based on the type of improvements completed.

Economic Development Incentives

The Kansas Department of Commerce and State of Kansas offers a wide variety of incentives to encourage economic development within the community. Incentives include:

- Land Incentives
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- Tax Assistance (including property tax exemption up to 100% for 10 years)
- Capital Investment Tax Credits (10%)

- Enhanced Enterprise Zone
- Utility Extensions and Electric Rate Reduction
- Local Business Incentive Program

Industrial Parks

Airport Industrial Park

The Airport Industrial Park is located four miles southwest of town and is currently home to various businesses including Cessna Aircraft. The industrial park has two sections: the Airport Industrial Park-Southwest and the Airport Industrial Park-Northwest. The Airport Industrial Park-Southwest has 163 acres available in the southwest corner of the Airport Industrial Park. Full utility services are available to the site, and it is a Kansas Certified Site. The Airport Industrial Park-Northwest has 225.98-acres available with utilities available. The site is a Kansas Certified Site as well.

West Laurel Industrial Park

The West Laurel Industrial Park has 18.5 acres available. It is located in the western portion of the community next to U.S. Highway 75/160. Access to the U.S. highway from the site is by a controlled intersection. Full utility services are available as well as a rail spur line.
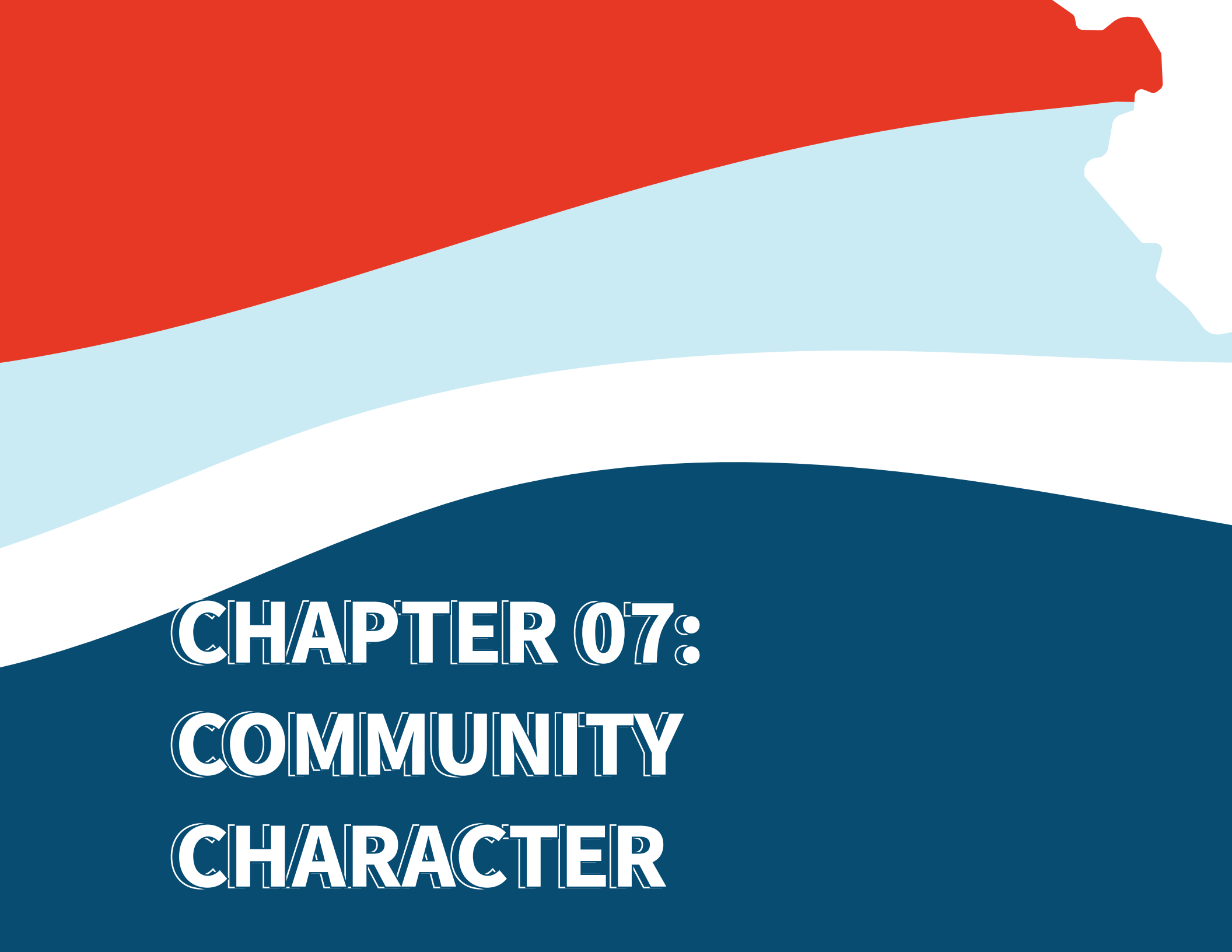
GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
WORK TO ATTRACT AGRICULTURAL-BASED MANUFACTURING + OTHER TARGET INDUSTRIES	New employers moving to Independence	Zoning and development review	Job-training and skill development opportunities

STRATEGIES
Continue to maintain an up-to-date and easy to understand economic development hub on the City's website.
Maintain a positive working relationship with nearby major employers, such as Bartlett and other organizations, to encourage word of mouth promotion of the Independence region.
Attend relevant workforce, manufacturing, or ag-technology conferences to market Independence and learn more about specific desires of potential employers.
Review zoning and development review to identify possible hurdles to attracting and maintaining industry.
Continue to advertise the industrial parks and Kansas Certified sites in Independence.
The City and MCAC should continue to be partners in pursuing economic development opportunities to expand industry in Independence.
Continue to work with the high school to encourage participation in programs that meet local demand for jobs/skills.
Encourage partnerships with Independence Community College to promote skills and programs that match target industries.
Foster relationships with non-profits supporting soft skills and job training.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
ENCOURAGE NEW AND UPDATED HOUSING AS A FORM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	New housing at all density levels and varied typologies	Allowing for creative housing types	Infill housing or housing rehabilitation	Outreach to southeast Kansas/ Oklahoma developers
STRATEGIES				
Implement the findings of the City's Housing Needs Analysis and the Housing + Neighborhoods chapter of this comprehensive plan.				
Encourage medium- and high-density residential in strategic locations, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, to provide more housing choice and flexibility for new and future residents.				
Consider expanding the City's incentive packages for new residential development to attract new development.				
Support infill and housing rehabilitation within the Residential Infill Overlay to increase the quality and modernize housing in Independence.				
Explore creative opportunities to increase housing, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), pre-approved residential designs, and new housing typologies, such as cottage courts.				
Actively reach out to southeast Kansas and Oklahoma-based home builders to try and gain traction for more new housing in Independence.				

GOAL 3	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
INDEPENDENCE SHOULD PRIORITIZE MARKETING THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOPERS, INDUSTRY, AND SITE SELECTORS.	Updates to the City's marketing strategy or rebranding	Review and update the zoning code and development review process	Reorganize and update the City's website to streamline access to information	Host a bus tour to market land availability, incentive packages, and quality of life in Independence

STRATEGIES

Continue to market Independence as a great place to live and do business. This could include an updated branding of the community that could highlight its high quality of life or identity as an ag manufacturing center.

Review the development review process and associated fees to identify areas for streamlining the process.

Update the City's website to make sure the site is easy to use, visually attractive, and reflects the latest and greatest information on not just economic development or site opportunities, but quality of life factors such as parks, Downtown, and events.

The City could hold a bus tour with developers, site selectors, industry leaders, and major employers to review all of the opportunities of living and working in Independence.

GOAL 4	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE'S RETAIL CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS	Increased attendance at community events	Low vacancy and turnover in Downtown businesses	Façade improvements along Pennsylvania Avenue	Westside commercial district retention and expansion
STRATEGIES				
Continue to promote Downtown Independence as cultural heart of Independence.				
Prioritize maintaining or expanding funding for Downtown grant programs and support for ongoing façade and beautification efforts.				
Actively market and support community events such as Neewollah, including drawing from a larger regional area.				
Continue to support the westside highway commercial district through tenant attraction/retention as well as expansion.				
Promote health and vibrancy along Penn Avenue commercial district through façade/streetscape improvements and sidewalk/trail expansion.				

CHAPTER 07: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

defining community character

What Defines Community Character in Independence?

Community character encompasses many components in any given city. Three broad categories these defining factors may be placed into include sense of place, local character, and diversity in amenities. Stemming from these broad categories are unique features and characteristics of communities that help define their respective identities and draw people to these towns. The three

categories contribute to the overall quality of life residents experience, as well as the economic prosperity of the community. Without residents, businesses, and a drive to make the community a great place to be, there is little a community can do to spark economic success. Independence has a long history of investing in quality of life features that have positively impacted its economic story since it was settled in the early 1870s.

This chapter examines the unique features

and characteristics of the community that set Independence apart from its peers and impact the quality of life of residents.

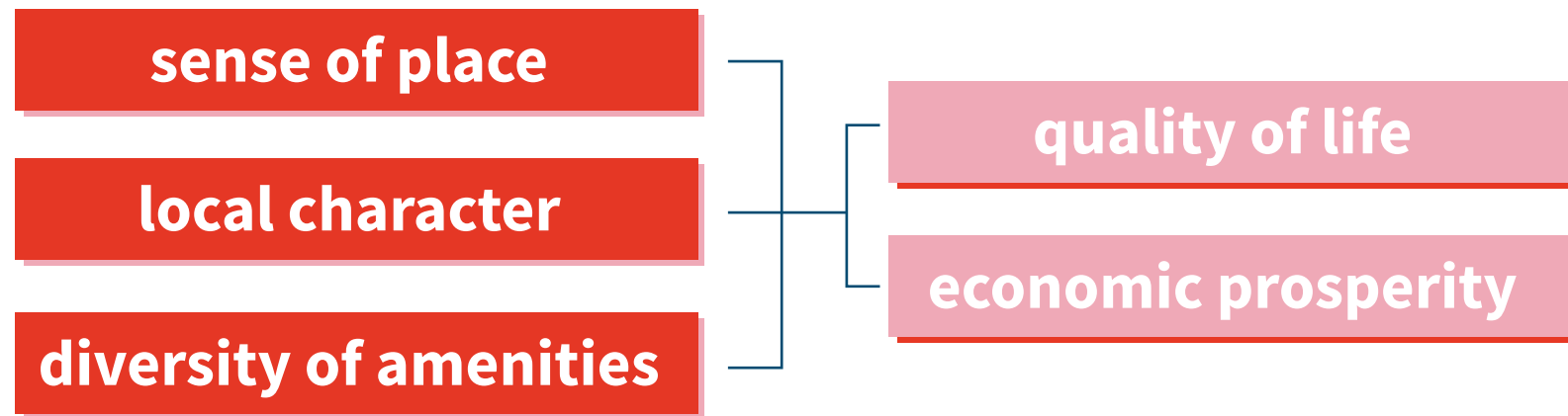What defines community character and how does it impact residents today?

| sense of place |
| local character |
| diversity of amenities |

| quality of life |
| economic prosperity |

FIGURE 7.1 // DEFINING COMMUNITY CHARACTER
SOURCE: CITY OF FLAGSTAFF, COMMUNITY CHARACTER REPORT

what defines independence's sense of place today?

southeast kansas

downtown monuments

riverside park + ralph mitchell zoo

sense of place

Sense of place can be defined as the distinguishing factors, both large and small, that indicate to people they have entered a new space. Specific to Independence these distinguishing factors can take the shape of its location in southeast Kansas, the downtown monuments that highlight character and qualities of the community, the vast parkland and recreation activities available at Riverside Park and Ralph Mitchell Zoo, the wayfinding signage directing residents and visitors to the various amenities and attractions in town, the scenery and views provided by the Verdigris River, and lastly the vibrant history and built environment that is still thriving today.

wayfinding signage

verdigris river + natural scenery

vibrant history + built environment

built community character map

Built Character

Independence has a unique position to highlight its expansive stock built character that so greatly contributes to its community character. The community's history as a boom town spurred development at a variety of scales that have had a lasting impact on the built environment today. Everything from the Queen Anne architectural styles of homes, mid-century office buildings, vibrant park structures, and a lively downtown streetscape that is active today. No matter the structure type, there are many notable pieces of architecture throughout the community that define the overall character of Independence.

Timeline of Independence

The timeline on the following page highlights some of the major milestones of Independence since it was settled in the 1870s. These points in time are only some of the significant events, businesses, amenities, and people that have influenced the character of the community over the last 150 years.

FIGURE 7.2 // COMMUNITY CHARACTER MAP

1870

Land is purchased from Osage Indians to form what would later become the incorporated village of Independence.

Mount Hope Cemetery, roughly 86 acres in size, is established.

1900

early 1900s

Oil and natural gas is discovered in Independence and a population surge occurs; a "boomtown" with oil, finance, and lore of the most millionaires per capita in the U.S.

1916

Independence Corporate Office Building is constructed. Prairie Pipe Line was later headquartered here.

1919

Neewollah, Halloween spelled backwards, begins and is the largest annual festival in the state of Kansas today.

1925

Ralph Mitchell Zoo is added to Riverside Park. Monkey Island, still there today, was constructed in 1931.

1893

J.D. Nickerson drilled the first successful gas well three miles east of Independence and the Independence Gas Company was founded as a result.

1914

Riverside Park is established. The park, designed by renowned landscape architect George Kessler, is intended to 'work in harmony with the natural surroundings' and remains a regional attraction today.

1916 + 1921

Citizen's National Bank (1916) and Commercial National Bank (1921) are constructed. The 1921 structure is slightly taller than its neighbor in an effort to out-do the other in a long-run feud between the two businessmen.

local character

1932

Sinclair Oil merges with Prairie Oil and Gas to become the largest pipeline company in the world.

1950-1965

The carousel, miniature train, 1050 steam locomotive, and Corythosaurus dinosaur from Sinclair Oil's booth at the 1963 World's Fair are added to Riverside Park.

1959

Miss Able, a rhesus monkey born in Independence, goes to space on May 28, 1959.

1949

Mickey Mantle plays for the 1949 Independence Yankees, a minor league affiliate to the New York Yankees.
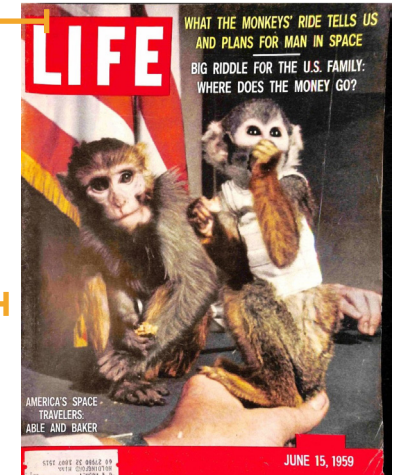
1958

Neewollah is revived by four businessmen following the Great Depression and World War II.
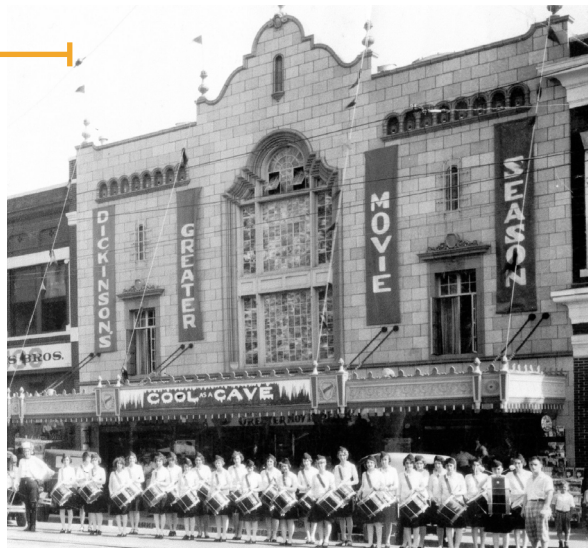
1960s

Elk City Reservoir and Elk City State Park are constructed.

1927

The Booth Theatre opens on February 4, 1927. The building, once home to offices and businesses, was designed by Boller Bros Co. and features Spanish Colonial Revival design features.

1982

The first year of The Inge Festival.

WILLIAM INGE
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

historic preservation

Existing Efforts

Due to the high number of historically significant structures in Independence, consideration and care must be taken with historic preservation. The City of Independence has a Historic Preservation and Resource Commission in place today that issues certificates of appropriateness and makes recommendations regarding changes or modifications to historic structures within the Downtown Historic District.

The Downtown Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places and is therefore eligible for Historic Tax Credits to make improvements to the structures. Additionally, the City offers the Downtown Independence Building Grant to supplement funding for improvements to Downtown structures.

The City also provides resources and information on best practices and necessary steps for the preservation of historic structures within the Downtown Historic District.

Balancing Preservation and New Development

In the Housing and Neighborhoods Chapter, the Residential Infill Overlay is discussed as a method to preserve the neighborhood character of the area and bring new residential development to the area. In the context of the greater Future Land Use Plan, there are areas within the plan that are more supportive of historic preservation (in and around the historic core) and areas that are more supportive

local character

HISTORIC CHARACTER + PRESERVATION

NEW DEVELOPMENT + REDEVELOPMENT
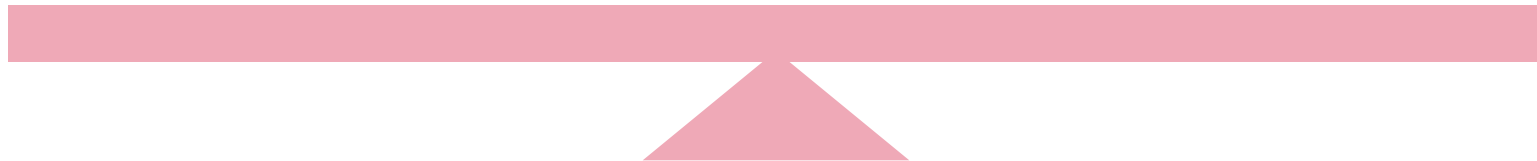
A balancing act of when to preserve vs. when to build new. How do we begin to identify priority areas for each of these development types?

to new development (the edges of the planning boundary). There is a fine line in balancing the historic character and preservation of the community and encouraging new development and redevelopment. It is recommended that the City establishes criteria and measures for the location of priority preservation areas, follow the Future Land Use Plan to identify areas for new development and redevelopment, and remain flexible in application as no two historic preservation cases are the same.

The following pages discuss some potential solutions for creative approaches to historic preservation and still providing the services and amenities the community needs.

Develop a local register and/or zoning district to track and support historic preservation efforts throughout Independence

Previous local initiatives have laid the groundwork for a local register to take shape to identify locally significant structures, sites, districts, and landmarks in Independence. Not all structures in the community are eligible for the national or state registers, but still maintain significance to the story of the community. The local register would be able to identify and support the efforts of preserving these structures and the character of Independence.

Next steps for this process could include:

- Identification of the criteria to be on the register.

- Identification of the structures, districts, sites, and/or landmarks that meet this criteria.

- Mapping the abovementioned registered items.

- Consideration for marking the registered areas with a fixed sign, marker, or other item to denote its significance to the history and character of Independence.

One potential way the City could make these local register locations official is through a zoning district overlay, similar to the Residential Infill Overlay. The case study on the opposite page highlights this in practice from the City of Springfield.

CASE STUDY

WHERE:
Springfield, MO

OBJECTIVE:
Identify and preserve historically significant sites, structures, landmarks, and districts within their community via overlay district.

DESCRIPTION:
The City of Springfield established a Landmark Zoning District to identify and preserve historically significant features of their community. As long as the site, structure, object, or district meets one of the eleven criterion, they are qualified for this designation. Criteria includes significant character/interest/value, is the work of a designer/architect/contractor whose work influenced the city, has yielded or is likely to yield information important to history, and much more.

The proposed register sites, landmarks, structures, districts or objects must meet at least one or more of the eleven criteria outlined in Section 36-404 of the zoning code.
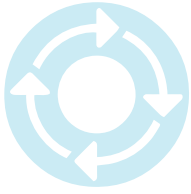
Utilize adaptive reuse practices as a historic preservation tool

Adaptive reuse is the practice of leveraging pre-existing structures and repurposing them to a different use. This practice is helpful to the cause of historic preservation because it typically maintains the structural character of the building, preserving the components that contribute to the character of the community, and provide a new service or amenity the community has more use for. Often times, churches, schools, large industrial facilities, and other similar spaces are the most viable adaptive reuse projects due to their expansive footprints, ability to be internally reconstructed easily, and require less demolition. Additionally, there is an opportunity to layer Historic Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and other funding sources to make these types of projects more viable for development.

Independence has already introduced adaptive reuse to the community with the Washington School conversion to apartments and should continue to encourage these practices where possible.

FIGURE 7.3 // WASHINGTON SCHOOL APARTMENTS

spirit of volunteerism in independence

One character trait of Independence was consistently mentioned in every opportunity for public input and engagement: Independence's spirit of volunteerism knows no bounds. No matter the need, there is a group or person there to help fellow residents in need.

Several organizations and events are in place today that provide a wide scale of services. Love Independence Day is an annual event where residents and organizations spread kindness by helping paint park equipment, give care-packages out, updating the exterior of homes, and so much more. The photos to the right highlight a before and after from Love Independence Day in 2023. Neewollah is one of the greatest testaments to Independence's spirit of volunteerism as a fully community-operated event showcasing Independence and celebrating its unique holiday. There are endless examples in which Independence sets the standard for the spirit of volunteerism.

FIGURE 7.4 // LOVE INDEPENDENCE DAY BEFORE/AFTER

existing events + organizations

Events:

- Air Strip Attack
- All Wheels Night
- Chamber Golf Tournament
- Children's Summer Theatre
- Christmas Parade
- First Friday
- Flat Rock
- High School/ICC gamedays/musicals/band events, etc.
- Jelly Roll
- Love Independence Day
- Mid-Continent Band Performances

- Neewollah
- Prairie Days
- Pub Crawl
- Riverside Park + Ralph Mitchell Zoo Opening Day
- Sip + Shop
- Trunk-or-Treat in Downtown
- Veteran's Day Parade
- William Inge Festival
- Zoo Brew
- Zooloween

Organizations:

- American Legion
- Chamber of Commerce Committees
- Eagle Rock Shredders
- FORPAZ
- Fortitude Masonic Lodge
- Independence Historic Museum
- Independence Women's United
- Knights of Columbus
- Leadership Independence/First Leadership
- Lion's Club
- Little House on the Prairie
- Main Street Committees
- Optimist Club
- Project Q&A
- Rotary Club
- Verdigris River Trail Initiative
- Verdigris Valley Arts Club
- VFW

FORPAZ
Friends of Riverside Park and Zoo

The Jelly Roll

Little HOUSE On The Prairie Museum
Independence, Kansas

downtown character today

Downtown Independence serves as the hub for activity and events, the primary corridors for local business, and the historic core of the community. So much of the character that was built in Independence's adolescence remains today and shapes the identity of the community.

Independence is fortunate to have a Main Street Program that is as resilient and active as the one it has today. Local events, such as All Wheels Night and Sip and Shop events, continue to bring people together and support local businesses. Local initiatives have spurred many creative projects throughout Downtown. These range from the stories the sculptures tell about the values and people of Independence to the programming and food truck activity at Patio 210.

The images to the right highlight some of Downtown Independence's characteristics and sources of activity throughout the year.
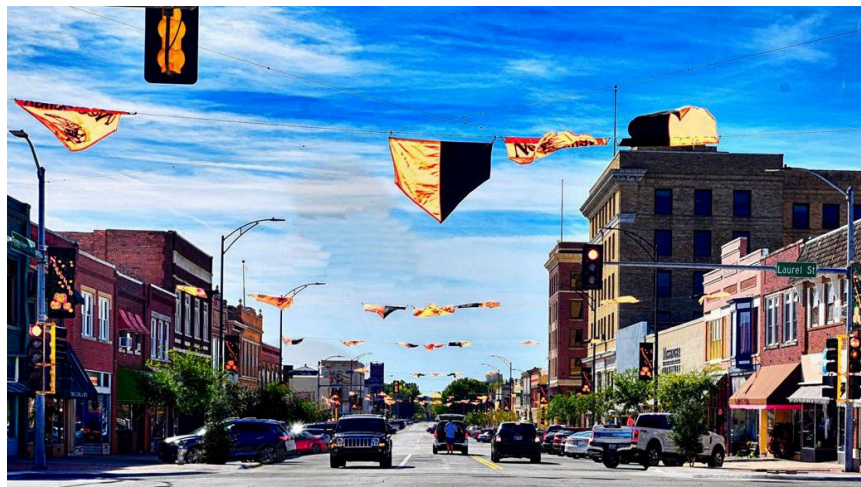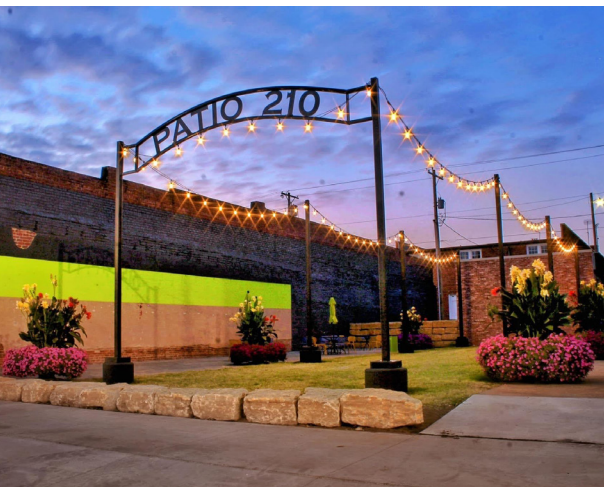
downtown occupancy today

The map to the right in Figure 7.5 highlights the type of business activity within the Downtown today. The intent of this map is to identify strengths of business types today, opportunities to fill vacancies, and creative programming considerations for under-used parcels. Many of the buildings downtown provide much needed services and amenities, such as finance, insurance, and banking. Other uses, such as shopping and public amenities are scattered throughout the rest of the Downtown. The dark blue highlights open parking lots within the district today. These are potential opportunities for a structured farmers market location, redevelopment, or gathering and green spaces. Consideration for parking demand within downtown should be addressed in a parking study to ensure ample parking for downtown businesses, residents, and visitors.

The Downtown is part of the Downtown Historic District recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. There are a variety of regulations and guidelines a renovation project must follow to ensure the character and historically contributing features remain intact on and/or within the building.

LEGEND

- Shopping
- Restaurants
- Public Amenities
- Services
- Residential
- Not in Use
- Parking Lots
- Historic District Boundary
- Contributing to National Register

1 Professional Building
2 Independence Art Center
3 Patio 210
4 Uncle Jack's Bar & Grill
5 Independence Public Library
6 Science & Technology Center

FIGURE 7.5 // DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENCE OCCUPANCY MAP

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY	Install new gateway signage at the four primary entrances to the community	Increase in use of the available City grants for preservation	Increase in participation and attendance of local events + organizations

STRATEGIES

Consider updating gateway signage at the key entrances within the community to match or complement the wayfinding signage throughout town.

Continue to fund and advertise the available City-offered grants for preservation of historic structures within the Historic Downtown District.

Maintain high quality facilities and amenities throughout the community.

Expand the locations of the wayfinding signage as-needed to highlight activities and amenities throughout Independence.

Complete a parking study in Downtown to better understand user trends, identify improvements in regulations, and demand estimates for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Encourage planters and other soft-scaping elements throughout Downtown to enhance natural streetscaping elements.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
HIGHLIGHT INDEPENDENCE'S VIBRANT PAST AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER	Adopt a Landmark Zoning District Overlay	Support for creative initiatives, such as adaptive reuse, for historic preservation	Complete a strategic plan for Downtown enhancements	Implement a local register
STRATEGIES				

Continue to foster a strong spirit of volunteerism throughout the community.

Consider completing a Downtown Strategic Plan to identify big ideas, event and gathering spaces, needs and opportunities, and other points of interest to support growth and activity within the district.

Allow and support creative initiatives to take place in an effort to preserve the historic character of Independence.

Establish a working group to define the qualities and characteristics a structure, site, landmark, or district must meet in order to qualify for the Independence Local Historic Register.

Map the qualifying components and highlight the Independence Local Historic Register initiative.

Consider adopting a Landmark Zoning District Overlay to further support the Independence Local Historic Register.

Continue to celebrate Independence's history and character through events and creative placemaking efforts.

Examine and update the zoning code as-needed to support the activities and desires of the community with special attention to Downtown's zoning code and what is or is not working in support of current efforts.

CHAPTER 08: IMPLEMENTATION

goals + strategies for implementation

Implementation

To help implement the vision of the Independence Comprehensive Plan and the recommendations noted in each chapter, a series of goals, metrics, and strategies have been created.

Table 8.1 presents the format and definition for each of these categories. This chapter is home to each of the implementation tables from the body chapters to serve as a quick reference for the community to track progress.

GOAL 1	METRIC 1
A goal is a broad theme or objective the City should strive for.	A metric is a way to measure successful implementation of the strategies toward its respective goal.
STRATEGIES	
Strategies are specific steps or policies the City should take to advance or complete a goal.	

TABLE 8.1 // EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

future land use

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
GROW EFFICIENTLY AND PROMOTE A HEALTHY MIX OF LAND USES	Fewer developments disconnected from the built environment	Completion of infill redevelopment projects	Consistency with the Growth Themes Map
STRATEGIES			
Encourage a mix of development types as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.			
Promote a mix of residential uses for increased housing choice.			
Reduce occurrences of leapfrog development.			
Identify and install infrastructure updates to support development.			
Leverage Future Land Use Plan for economic development.			
Preserve and protect sensitive natural features.			
Use transition zones, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, to gradually change densities and intensities of uses.			
Preserve right-of-way and easement corridors for utilities and future streets.			
Maintain land availability for shovel-ready and certified sites.			
Schedule an annual review between the City and Planning Commissions to review and amend the Future Land Use Plan to reflect changes in the community and development patterns.			
Support historic preservation initiatives throughout the planning boundary to maintain the historic character of Independence.			
Update population projections in the next ten to fifteen years to better prepare for the next decade of change.			

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
PROMOTE STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS AND RESIDENTIAL DIVERSITY	Increased housing choice	Improve neighborhood mobility and safety	Enhance the overall visual and physical quality of the neighborhood
STRATEGIES			
Promote residential development as proposed in the Future Land Use Plan.			
Support the development of medium- and high-density residential uses.			
Encourage residential infill in the Residential Infill Overlay districts.			
Discourage cul-de-sacs for improved thru connections throughout neighborhoods.			
Implement transitional land uses or physical buffers between residential densities.			
Improve sidewalk conditions throughout the community to support walkability.			
Enhance neighborhood aesthetics through street trees, plantings, and signage.			
Promote residential rehabilitation to preserve the historic character of neighborhoods and quality of the existing housing stock.			

housing + neighborhoods

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
EXPAND + MAINTAIN HOUSING TYPES + AVAILABILITY IN INDEPENDENCE	New development improves shares towards the residential target mix	Renter and owner-occupied unit counts increase	Residential permit activity increases	Preserve historically significant homes
STRATEGIES				
Encourage medium- and high-density developments in the identified areas from the Future Land Use Plan.				
Support unique and creative housing developments, such as cottage courts and New Urbanist neighborhoods, that expand housing choice.				
Consider expanding development incentive packages to encourage residential development.				
Meet with businesses in Independence to identify housing types that would support current and future employees.				
Pursue a public-private partnership to implement a master planned development with strategic housing composition.				
Seek out projects that meet price points and typologies that support household compositions in Independence.				
Establish and support infill redevelopment projects within the Residential Infill Overlay.				
Maintain historic character of existing homes and nodes that have been identified by the local historic register.				

housing + neighborhoods

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
REDUCE BARRIERS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	Update the zoning code's residential guidelines	Increase housing development	Reduce the number of variances granted for residential projects
STRATEGIES			
Update the zoning code, with a special focus of the residential sections to incorporate the recommendations outlined within this chapter.			
Update the residential sections of the zoning code to support alternative housing solutions, such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and other items including parking requirements, setbacks, driveways, and more.			
Establish standards and guidelines for the Residential Infill Overlay areas.			
Support and adopt a catalog and guidelines for Pre-Approved Residential Designs.			
Research and adopt a set of residential designs for the Pre-Approved Residential Plans, with potential for two sets of designs for the Residential Infill Overlay area and neighborhoods outside of the historic core.			
Review and amend the code to support varied housing types and styles, such as cottage courts and historic-style neighborhoods.			

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY PARK + RECREATION SYSTEM THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS	Updated equipment in neighborhood parks	High community satisfaction with parks from community surveying	Increased attendance at Riverside Park + Ralph Mitchell Zoo	Increased youth and adult recreation program attendance
STRATEGIES				
Continue to perform routine maintenance of facilities throughout the park system, especially neighborhood parks.				
Continue to survey residents on community satisfaction and desired amenities related to parks and recreation.				
Plan upgrades around identified lifecycles of facilities and equipment.				
Complete master plans for the long-term success of facilities, such as the Ash Youth Center and Riverside Beach Family Aquatic Center.				
Continue to implement the goals outlined in the Riverside Park + Ralph Mitchell Zoo Master Plan.				

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
EXPAND SAFE AND EFFICIENT PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY	Implement new trail segments and increase level of service	Complete sidewalk improvements and reduce network gaps	Receive high community satisfaction level with trails and sidewalks from the community survey
STRATEGIES			
Implement the Future Trails Plan by expanding shared-use paths, widening or improving side paths, adding sharrows, installing nature paths, and maintaining facility trails and on-street bike lanes.			
Consider new program solutions, such as cost sharing, to help with the maintenance and improvement of sidewalks throughout neighborhoods.			
Expand wayfinding and directional signage to connect key community assets, especially along corridors identified on the Future Trails Plan.			

GOAL 3	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
REMAIN ADAPTABLE AND FUTURE-ORIENTED TO CHANGING TRENDS IN PARK PLANNING TO SERVE ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS	Adopt new technologies throughout the parks system	Study feasibility of the Heartland Park Retrofit Project	Amend park or facility programming based on new trends	Add green infrastructure to parks and public spaces
STRATEGIES				
Be proactive in adopting new trends or technology such as integrating technology into park design through playground equipment, QR codes, VR/AR technology, and any other new technology.				
Inventory existing brownfields within city limits to identify opportunities for redevelopment. Rank or prioritize the identified brownfields to determine where focus should go in pursuit of funding and partnerships.				
Consider performing a feasibility study on retrofitting the Heartland cement property into a future park or open space, pursuing Brownfield Grants and other funding sources.				
Install green infrastructure systems in parks, along trails, and in other public spaces.				

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY AND SAFE MOBILITY SYSTEM THAT CONSIDERS MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIONS	Positive trends in community satisfaction survey with road conditions	Expand the sidewalk and trail network to support walking and biking	Decreased serious injuries and fatalities in vehicular accidents	Increased usership in the SeeClickFix program

STRATEGIES
Adopt a complete streets policy to establish strong best practices for road reconfigurations.
Consider developing a Neighborhood Streets Plan that focuses on the enhancement and preservation of street corridors and prioritizes traffic calming and the pedestrian experience.
Consider adopting a set of streetscape standards for all levels of road classifications.
Continue to implement the recommendations from the Local Road Safety Plan.
Install traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic and occurrences of serious injuries.
Follow the Future Streets Plan to guide planning for future roadway connections.
Preserve rights-of-way for growth based on the Future Streets Plan.
Annually review the Future Streets Plan to ensure it accurately reflects the needs of the community and continues to support the land uses identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
Continue to use the SeeClickFix program to invite residents to identify needed improvements.
Advertise the SeeClickFix program on the City's website and social media accounts to spread the word about the program.
Support incremental improvements to the sidewalk network to increase ADA accessibility throughout the city.

transportation + infrastructure

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICES	Construct an IC-500 rated City storm shelter	Modernize infrastructure to perform efficiently and safely	City-owned facility and gear upgrades	Installation of structural + non-structural stormwater facilities
STRATEGIES				
Continue to meet or exceed all Federal or State discharge standards.				
Consider stormwater infrastructure improvements as a method of mitigating development impact.				
Explore opportunities for structural and nonstructural stormwater improvements.				
Limit development in the floodplain and instead use these areas as natural greenbelts throughout Independence.				
Continue to provide exceptional internet services and coordinate with providers for expanded services as needed.				
Design and construct water system improvements that meet demand for fire protection and adequate pressures for current and future growth areas.				
Pursue FEMA grants to receive funding support to construct a City storm shelter.				
Continue to educate residents on emergency planning and preparedness and what best practices look like.				
Coordinate utility improvements with transportation projects to ensure efficient use of funding and construction timelines.				

economic development

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
WORK TO ATTRACT AGRICULTURAL-BASED MANUFACTURING + OTHER TARGET INDUSTRIES	New employers moving to Independence	Zoning and development review	Job-training and skill development opportunities

STRATEGIES
Continue to maintain an up-to-date and easy to understand economic development hub on the City's website.
Maintain a positive working relationship with nearby major employers, such as Bartlett and other organizations, to encourage word of mouth promotion of the Independence region.
Attend relevant workforce, manufacturing, or ag-technology conferences to market Independence and learn more about specific desires of potential employers.
Review zoning and development review to identify possible hurdles to attracting and maintaining industry.
Continue to advertise the industrial parks and Kansas Certified sites in Independence.
The City and MCAC should continue to be partners in pursuing economic development opportunities to expand industry in Independence.
Continue to work with the high school to encourage participation in programs that meet local demand for jobs/skills.
Encourage partnerships with Independence Community College to promote skills and programs that match target industries.
Foster relationships with non-profits supporting soft skills and job training.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
ENCOURAGE NEW AND UPDATED HOUSING AS A FORM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	New housing at all density levels and varied typologies	Allowing for creative housing types	Infill housing or housing rehabilitation	Outreach to southeast Kansas/ Oklahoma developers
STRATEGIES				
Implement the findings of the City's Housing Needs Analysis and the Housing + Neighborhoods chapter of this comprehensive plan.				
Encourage medium- and high-density residential in strategic locations, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan, to provide more housing choice and flexibility for new and future residents.				
Consider expanding the City's incentive packages for new residential development to attract new development.				
Support infill and housing rehabilitation within the Residential Infill Overlay to increase the quality and modernize housing in Independence.				
Explore creative opportunities to increase housing, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), pre-approved residential designs, and new housing typologies, such as cottage courts.				
Actively reach out to southeast Kansas and Oklahoma-based home builders to try and gain traction for more new housing in Independence.				

GOAL 3	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
INDEPENDENCE SHOULD PRIORITIZE MARKETING THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOPERS, INDUSTRY, AND SITE SELECTORS.	Updates to the City's marketing strategy or rebranding	Review and update the zoning code and development review process	Reorganize and update the City's website to streamline access to information	Host a bus tour to market land availability, incentive packages, and quality of life in Independence

STRATEGIES

Continue to market Independence as a great place to live and do business. This could include an updated branding of the community that could highlight its high quality of life or identity as an ag manufacturing center.

Review the development review process and associated fees to identify areas for streamlining the process.

Update the City's website to make sure the site is easy to use, visually attractive, and reflects the latest and greatest information on not just economic development or site opportunities, but quality of life factors such as parks, Downtown, and events.

The City could hold a bus tour with developers, site selectors, industry leaders, and major employers to review all of the opportunities of living and working in Independence.

economic development

GOAL 4	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE'S RETAIL CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS	Increased attendance at community events	Low vacancy and turnover in Downtown businesses	Façade improvements along Pennsylvania Avenue	Westside commercial district retention and expansion
STRATEGIES				
Continue to promote Downtown Independence as cultural heart of Independence.				
Prioritize maintaining or expanding funding for Downtown grant programs and support for ongoing façade and beautification efforts.				
Actively market and support community events such as Neewollah, including drawing from a larger regional area.				
Continue to support the westside highway commercial district through tenant attraction/retention as well as expansion.				
Promote health and vibrancy along Penn Avenue commercial district through façade/streetscape improvements and sidewalk/trail expansion.				

community character

GOAL 1	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3
CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY	Install new gateway signage at the four primary entrances to the community	Increase in use of the available City grants for preservation	Increase in participation and attendance of local events + organizations

STRATEGIES

Consider updating gateway signage at the key entrances within the community to match or complement the wayfinding signage throughout town.

Continue to fund and advertise the available City-offered grants for preservation of historic structures within the Historic Downtown District.

Maintain high quality facilities and amenities throughout the community.

Expand the locations of the wayfinding signage as-needed to highlight activities and amenities throughout Independence.

Complete a parking study in Downtown to better understand user trends, identify improvements in regulations, and demand estimates for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Encourage planters and other soft-scaping elements throughout Downtown to enhance natural streetscaping elements.

GOAL 2	METRIC 1	METRIC 2	METRIC 3	METRIC 4
HIGHLIGHT INDEPENDENCE'S VIBRANT PAST AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER	Adopt a Landmark Zoning District Overlay	Support for creative initiatives, such as adaptive reuse, for historic preservation	Complete a strategic plan for Downtown enhancements	Implement a local register
STRATEGIES				

Continue to foster a strong spirit of volunteerism throughout the community.

Consider completing a Downtown Strategic Plan to identify big ideas, event and gathering spaces, needs and opportunities, and other points of interest to support growth and activity within the district.

Allow and support creative initiatives to take place in an effort to preserve the historic character of Independence.

Establish a working group to define the qualities and characteristics a structure, site, landmark, or district must meet in order to qualify for the Independence Local Historic Register.

Map the qualifying components and highlight the Independence Local Historic Register initiative.

Consider adopting a Landmark Zoning District Overlay to further support the Independence Local Historic Register.

Continue to celebrate Independence's history and character through events and creative placemaking efforts.

Examine and update the zoning code as-needed to support the activities and desires of the community with special attention to Downtown's zoning code and what is or is not working in support of current efforts.