



IMAGINE INDEPENDENCE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040



DEAR FRIENDS:



Community,
Family, Progress
- these three
words describe
Independence
Missouri. Ours is
a City steeped in
history. Family ties
run deep and in

many cases are generations long. From our very beginning, we have been fearlessly committed to progress.

One hundred and seventy-five years ago Independence was teeming with tradesmen selling their wares and families preparing for a life-altering journey as they embarked on the Great Migration of the Oregon Trail. Just six years later in 1849, the City of Independence was officially chartered. From the early pioneers to our residents of today we have embraced grand aspirations and the values of community, family, and progress.

Independence is a nationally recognized City with a unique history and sense of place. Imagine Independence 2040 is a celebration of the successes of the past and the roadmap to our future. We thank the many, many people who share a singular vision for a safe, culturally diverse, family-friendly community with quality neighborhoods, 21st Century jobs, and a growing economy. It is a long-range plan and framework for our to help guide us toward our desired future in 2040. Independence for All is our City's strategic plan for the next five years. Both plans complement each other and are in alignment providing a short-term plan and long-term vision.

Both plans are tools to communicate how we want our City to look, function and how we hope to advance our vision.

The community was actively involved in the development of Imagine Independence 2040. We were blown away by the community's interest and enthusiasm. We had rooms packed full of residents giving their time to help us shape the future of our community. The City received an award from the American Planning Association – Missouri Chapter for outstanding public outreach. And while we are very proud of this award, I am most excited about the ideas these conversations sparked and the momentum that continues to grow in our community.

Michelangelo once said – “The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.” We will continue to set lofty goals for Independence and look for ways to make progress.

I know those residents, tradesmen, and pioneers who took that leap of faith 175 years ago would be proud of the community that developed here, the stories their families have created here, and the progress we continue to share. Community, family, progress -- this is who we are but also where we want to go. Our success depends on the community supporting each other and providing an opportunity for all of our residents to achieve personal success as we progress together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Weir". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'E' and 'W'.

Eileen Weir
Mayor, City of Independence

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR STORY

04

- [06](#) Today - Challenges and Opportunities
- [07](#) Plan Purpose
- [08](#) Community Engagement

PLAN ELEMENTS

11

- [12](#) Themes

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

13

- [14](#) Background
- [16](#) Guiding Principles
- [16](#) Land Use Building Blocks
- [16](#) Tools & Policies

BUSINESS & JOBS

17

- [18](#) Background
- [19](#) Guiding Principles
- [19](#) Land Use Building Blocks
- [19](#) Tools & Policies

PHOTO CREDITS

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NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING

21

- [22](#) Background
- [23](#) Guiding Principles
- [23](#) Land Use Building Blocks
- [23](#) Tools & Policies

FACILITIES

25

- [26](#) Background
- [28](#) Guiding Principles
- [28](#) Land Use Building Blocks
- [28](#) Tools & Policies

LAND USE

30

- [30](#) Background
- [31](#) Guiding Principles
- [34](#) Land Use Categories
- [39](#) Appendix

OUR STORY

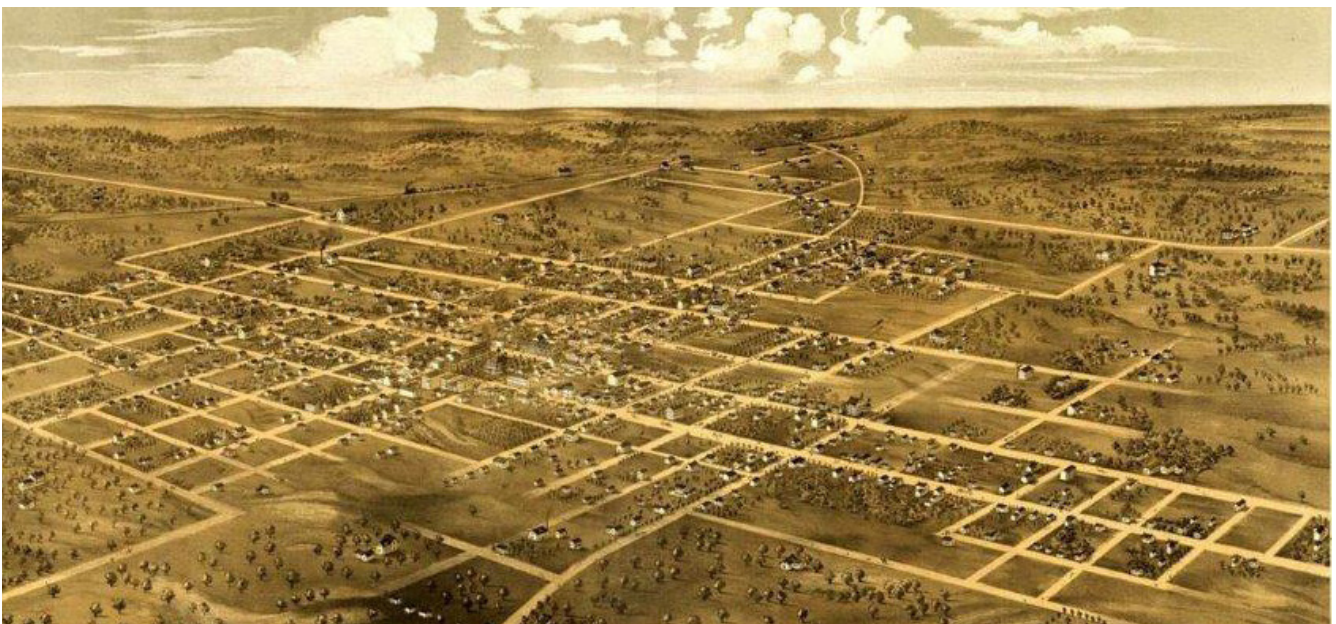
**“INDEPENDENCE
MISSOURI IS THE
CENTER OF THE
WORLD”**

Harry S Truman
33RD PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

History of Independence

As part of the Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark explored Independence in 1803 and later it became the starting point for settlers traveling westward. It's position off of the Missouri River made it the perfect frontier town. The three trails, Santa Fe, California and Oregon contributed to the City's prosperity.

Independence is a city located in the Kansas City Metro area. It is situated along Interstate 70, 470, 435 and US Highway 24, major transportation corridors in Missouri. As the hometown of Harry S Truman, Independence attracts visitors from all across the country. His legacy is forever remembered through monuments and historic places such as the Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum, and the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. Bingham-Waggoner Estate, Vaile Mansion and Harry S Truman National Historic Site are a few examples of Victorian era architecture that remain in the City today.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI 1868, DRAWN BY A. RUGER



BINGHAM-WAGGONER ESTATE



NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM



SILVERSTEIN EYE CENTERS ARENA



VAILE MANSION



TRUMAN COURTHOUSE



MISSOURI MAVERICKS



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST TEMPLE



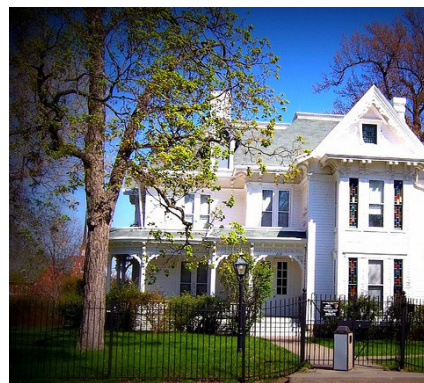
TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC TOURS



TRUMAN LIBRARY



TRUMAN MUSEUM



TRUMAN HOME



DRUMM FARM

Today - Challenges and Opportunities

Our world is changing at an exponential rate. These changes are significant when making plans to meet these challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

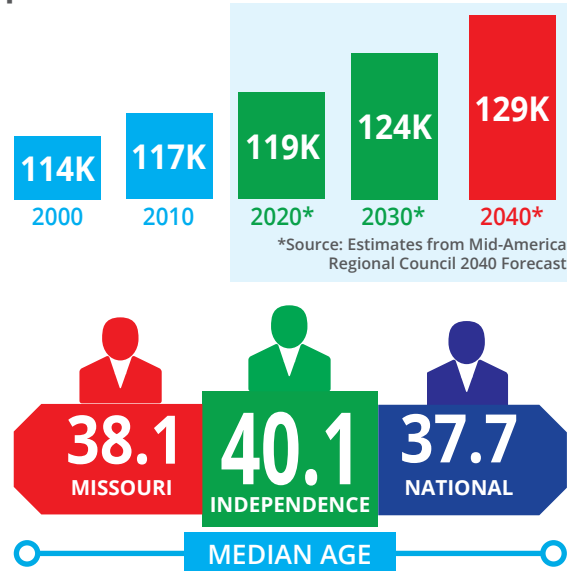
Independence is projected to continue to grow in population to 129,000 in 2040 but is the population as a whole is aging as it is nationally. The median age of Independence is 40.1, slightly higher than both the state (38.1) and national (37.7) median age. Independence must think about how to create a place to live well for people of all ages.

Independence has homes built in the early 1800s and each decade since that time with most built in the 1970s. A variety of housing sizes and types to accommodate buyers of various income and interests could mean an increased demand for quality both old and new housing in unique neighborhoods close to amenities. With median rent at \$783 per month, Independence is an affordable place to live. This is lower than both the national median rent (\$949) and the metro median rent (\$864).

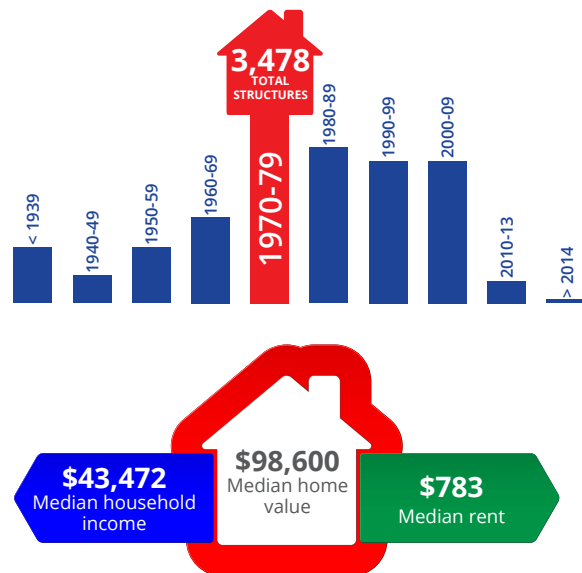
Excellence in education is a bedrock of economic development, population growth, and workforce development. All four local school districts have established successful programs to prepare students for college and careers. The percent of our population that is graduating from high school is trending up. Currently, 88.5% of the population holds a high diploma while 18.1% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Independence must train the workforce of tomorrow in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Today's challenges and opportunities informed the strategies developed for this plan in the following chapters.

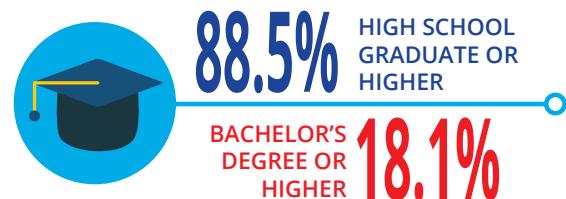
Population



Housing



Education



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

OUR VISION:

Our quality neighborhoods, 21st century jobs, growing economy, safe, family-friendly community, and cultural diversity makes Independence, Missouri a nationally recognized City with a unique history and sense of place.

Plan Purpose

The City of Independence is updating the Comprehensive Plan; the first update since 1993. Since it was established, the City has had a strong history of planning. Without careful planning the City would not have evolved to what it is today. Independence is a destination and connector to regional transportation corridors, parks, offices, shops, entertainment and housing. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that identifies the vision, goals and priorities of a community for the next 20 years. The Plan is called "Imagine Independence 2040 – A Community Vision." Public engagement played a major role in the comprehensive plan update.

This plan will provide a framework for how the City should develop in the future. This plan is a document that looks at the City and makes long term recommendations on what should and shouldn't happen in Independence. What will public spaces look like? What will the streets look like? What jobs will we have? These were some of the questions that were explored during the community engagement process. Since Independence is surrounded by other cities, there is only so much land that can be developed, through community engagement there has been input on what uses the City should prioritize.

The established neighborhoods in the City are well-developed, while new areas of Independence could see some change over the next 20 years. The City will continue to change over the next 20 years, as it has since the last comprehensive plan update. It's important to have a plan in place to guide the City over the next 20 years. This plan reflects the needs and wants of the community, elected officials, and City staff and will help shape the future of Independence.



A farmers market pavillion is under construction as part of the City's vision to create a community with a unique sense of place.

Community Engagement

Imagine Independence 2040 is supported by engagement of the community. Ideas, thoughts and concerns were gathered over a six month period from April 2017 to September 2017. Input from the community provides insights on what the community wants to see in the future. Their input is crucial and has been incorporated into the plan.

**Progress occurs when
courageous, skillful
leaders seize the
opportunity to change
things for the better.**

Harry S Truman

33rd President of the United States

The public engagement process was very robust with many opportunities for stakeholders to provide input into their vision of Independence in 2040. Local officials, steering committee members, and the community came together to develop a vision for the future of Independence. Thousands of community members provided input on the plan, served on steering committees, attended public events, participated in meetings and expressed their love and concern for the City. This graphic summarizes engagement methods used.

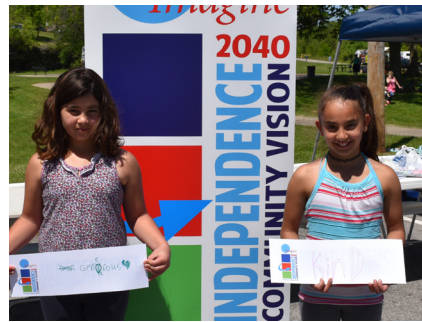
The Missouri Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized Imagine Independence 2040 as Outstanding Public Outreach Project of the Year, 2017.



Independence Residents

Imagine Independence 2040 is dedicated to you in recognition of the amazing stories and efforts you have provided in helping put this plan together.





PLAN ELEMENTS

PLAN ALIGNMENT

The City developed a Strategic Plan, Independence for All, in 2016. The Strategic Plan includes a vision, mission for the City, goals, strategies and performance measures. The timeframe is 2017 - 2021. This document frames the Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Independence 2040 with a vision, goals and strategies. The vision and goals from both documents are consistent with the desire of both elected officials and the community and describe a shared vision for the future. Throughout this document we will reference the strategic plan, showing the alignment between the two plans.

In the following five sections you will find the four topic areas and a land use section. Three themes emerged between the plans:

- Connected
- Welcoming
- Distinctive

These themes are used throughout the document. Each section begins with its connection to the strategic plan including goals and measures. In each section, guiding principles, land use, and tools and policies are described by area.



THEMES

The following themes were crafted with consideration of comments received from the public throughout the planning process and relate back to the Strategic Plan, Independence For All.



CONNECTED

There are multiple benefits to a City that is connected physically and socially. Walkability, safety and shared public spaces offer social and economic benefits.

- A complete trail system contributes to overall health and well-being, limiting congestion, building community
- Consistency throughout the City
- Shaping the overall impression of the City for visitors
- Making it easier for visitors to get around
- People in the community are connected to each other



WELCOMING

This City provides a welcoming atmosphere for community members and visitors. It is welcoming for all ages, sizes, abilities, backgrounds and ethnicities.

- Inclusive neighborhoods
- Clean, attractive corridors are gateways to the community
- Public facilities are clean and safe
- People and new ideas are embraced



DISTINCTIVE

Unlike anywhere else, Independence capitalizes on the history, tourism, natural resources, and entertainment it has to offer.

- Truman's legacy
- A hub for shopping
- Sporting events and entertainment
- National attractions
- Community events and festivals

COMMUNITY IDENTITY



Create a family-friendly, culturally diverse community making Independence, Missouri a nationally recognized City with a unique sense of place.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY



Our vision is to create a family-friendly culturally diverse community making Independence, Missouri a nationally recognized City with a unique history and sense of place.

Independence is rich in history and provides a vast array of amenities to its residents. Residents continue to invest in protecting the distinctive qualities that make Independence home. Looking forward, residents envision a strong local economy, excellent schools while respecting the historic significance the City played in the settling of the west and being home to Harry S Truman, our 33rd US President.

GOAL

Increase quality — achieve livability, choice, access, health and safety through a quality built environment.

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

The City's Strategic Plan, Independence For All, tracks progress in the area of livability using the following measures.

Improve visual appearance of major commercial corridors and historic sites.

Improve condition and maintenance of public infrastructure and facilities.

Increase population.

Increase tourism.

BACKGROUND

Even though it is intangible, a community's identity is one of its most valuable assets. Independence takes pride in its history and culture and has many ways to celebrate these. Between the charming Independence Square and Harry S Truman's legacy, the City's identity brings economic value to the community and is preserved for future generations. Along with numerous cultural events, Independence is appealing for residents and tourists. In the future, Independence will continue to embrace its past and celebrate its history.

A community's image is nearly impossible to quantify, yet it is as important and has as great an impact on the success of the community as

any other component. Most information about the City's image is anecdotal, in that it is how the community is presented by the media, people's recollection of times past and the informal discussions or comments made by citizens and non-citizens alike. It is not uncommon for a reputation earned in one era to continue, when in fact it is part of the past and not reflective of the present.

Based on the community's input they would like their City to be inviting, walkable and alive with activity; where neighbors know each other and neighborhoods are family friendly. They want to celebrate the diversity of neighborhoods with festivals, events and shops that highlight their culture.

Future Trend

As the hometown of Harry S Truman, Independence attracts visitors from all across the country. His legacy is forever remembered through monuments and historic places like, Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum and Harry S Truman National Historic Site. Vaile Mansion, Bingham Waggoner Estate and Harry S Truman National Historic Site are great examples of Victorian era architecture remain in the City today.

The Independence Square is thriving with specialty shops, boutiques, and restaurants. People will continue to come back to Independence to experience it's unique stores and restaurants.

Connecting major attractions in the City through trails will highlight to significance of trails in the City's history. Independence is known as the "Queen City of Trails" because it was the departure point for the California, Santa Fe, and Oregon Trails. This piece of history is celebrated through the Santa-Cali-Gon Days. Additionally, connecting major attractions will create opportunities to support local businesses and help people explore all of Independence.

Independence is known as "Queen City of Trails" because it was the departure point for the California, Santa Fe, and Oregon Trails.

The diversity of Independence's neighborhoods is an asset to the City. Areas like Independence Square, Maywood, Fairmount and Englewood each offer something different to visitors and residents. For example, the Englewood Arts District is home to a variety of artists, galleries and studios. It is important to connect this area to other art assets in the community.

Citywide and neighborhood festivals let people interact with people from all walks of life and celebrate the unique flavor of Independence.



ENGLEWOOD ART WALK



ETHNIC FESTIVAL



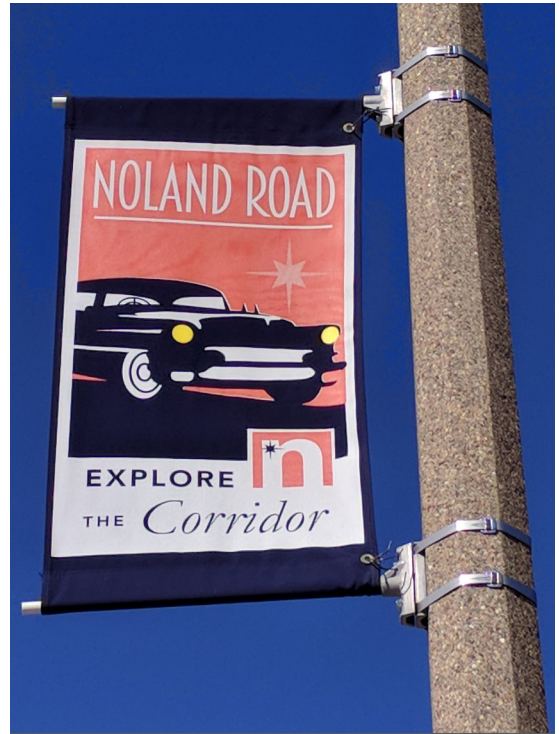
SANTA CALI GON DAYS



STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL



INDEPENDENCE CENTER



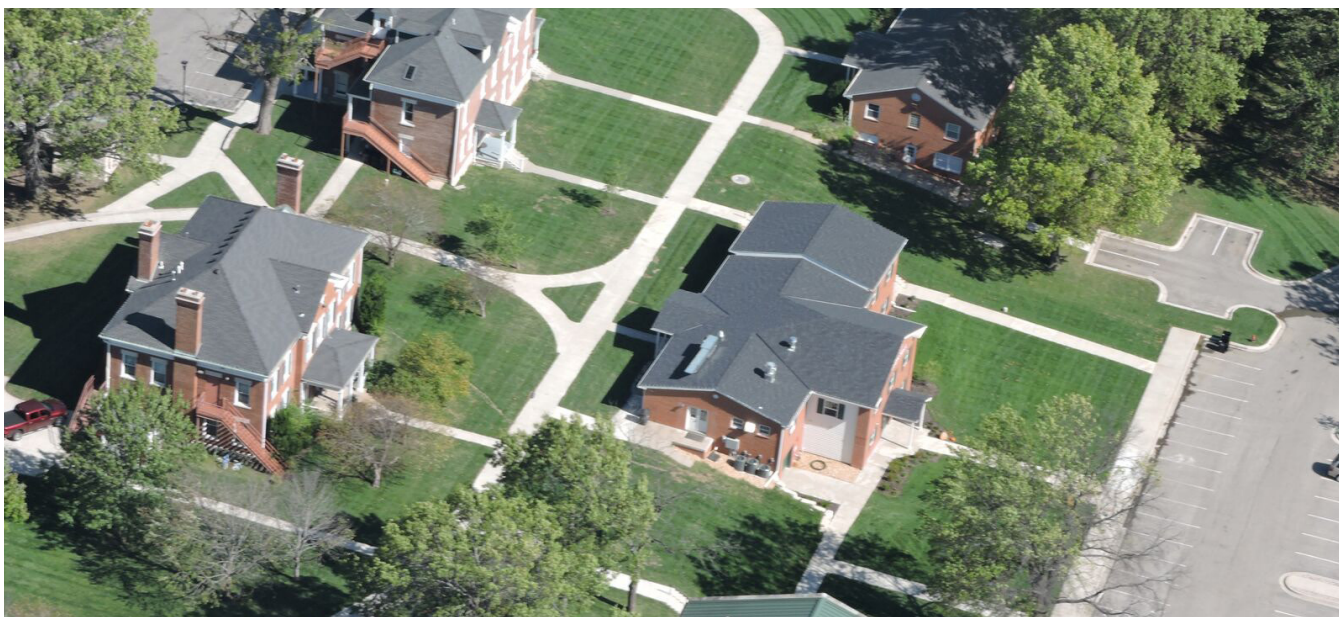
NOLAND ROAD



ENGLEWOOD THEATER CINEMA



TRUMAN DEPOT



DRUMM FARM CENTER FOR CHILDREN

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Community assets attract visitors to Independence and contribute to its economy and quality of life.

Major entrances and corridors are attractive and inviting.

Historic buildings and properties are maintained, rehabilitated and protected from deterioration and loss.

People and places are connected and celebrated for their uniqueness and diversity.

Balance open space and environmental preservation with the community's development needs.

TOOLS & POLICIES



Welcoming

Invest in major corridors with streetscape improvements, public art, green space and upgraded intersections to attract tourists.

Work in concert with the private sector to raise funds, advertise, and organize events.

LAND USE BUILDING BLOCKS



Welcoming

Foster redevelopment opportunities within the City in an effort to revitalize unused or underused property.



Distinctive

Encourage a physical character and form that reflects the historic setting.

Create a built environment that is compatible with the City's natural environment.



Distinctive

Support preservation and protection of historic areas and properties.

Cultivate a vibrant, unique City that attracts and retains residents and visitors.

Embrace Main Street accreditation to make the Independence Square the best downtown in Missouri -- rich in history, architecture and economic vitality.



"Independence and Opening of the West" - Thomas Hart Benton mural at Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum.

Policy Documents and Plans

Link Independence:

www.indep.us/LinkIndepPlan



BASS PRO SHOP



VAN HORN HIGH SCHOOL



MIDWEST GENEALOGY CENTER



TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL



WILLIAM CHRISMAN HIGH SCHOOL



GEORGE OWENS NATURE PARK

BUSINESS & JOBS



Create 21st century jobs that help our community prosper by diversifying sectors focusing on healthcare, advanced manufacturing & engineering.



BUSINESS & JOBS



Our vision is to create 21st century jobs that help our community prosper by diversifying sectors focusing on healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and engineering.

Independence is a place where paths cross for many in the region. With great access to highways and railroads, Independence is attractive to businesses. Independence is positioned to attract industries of the future including life sciences, architecture, and advanced manufacturing. Growth areas include health care and education of health care professionals.

GOAL

Increase **economic prosperity** of the **community**.

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

The City's Strategic Plan, Independence For All, tracks progress in the area of economic prosperity using the following measures.

Increase sales tax revenue per capita.

Increase household income.

Increase jobs.

Increase population.

Increase tourism.

BACKGROUND

To understand how to strengthen the economy, one must understand the current economic state, how Independence arrived at the current economic state and what trends will influence the future. The desired goal of the community as defined in the strategic plan, Independence for All, is to increase the economic prosperity of the community.

History & Current State

Retail trade is the dominant sector in Independence – over half (52%) of the industries in Independence are retail businesses. Retail businesses bring in nearly \$700 million dollars to the community each year. Many people choose Independence as a destination for shopping and dining. The majority of the retail industry started with Independence Center in the early 1970s followed by retail centers like Independence Commons, Bolger Square, Hartman Heritage, Eastland Center, and The Falls with its surrounding mix of retailers and restaurants. The largest contributing sectors to

this industry are restaurants (food and beverage), miscellaneous retail businesses including gift stores, department and general merchandise stores, clothing stores, and grocery stores. Within the retail business sector, there are only a few categories where residents shop outside of Independence – these include home furnishings, gasoline stations, non-store retailers (e-commerce, mail order and direct sales) and specialty restaurants.

Future Trend

As a municipality in the Kansas City metro, Independence will participate in the shared vision of KC Rising. KC Rising is a long-term vision for the greater Kansas City region to build capacity, bring existing businesses to scale and fully realize the KC region's potential. KC Rising is regional in focus, but global in perspective targeting high growth in trade, people and ideas. Independence will prepare its workforce for jobs of the future. The strength of the Independence business community

lies in its easy access to high quality labor force. Independence companies have access to approximately 148,000 workers within a 10 minute drive. Approximately 30% of the labor force has a post-high school degree, higher than Kansas City average.

Although retail is the dominant sector, there is room for growth in manufacturing.

Independence is uniquely positioned to grow small business and attract new businesses with it's talent and workforce, business resources, business incentives and great transportation network. Entrepreneurs are supported by the Ennovation Center Business Incubator, which provides support for start ups with focused expertise in marketing, sales, and business strategies.

The shopping of the future is all about convenience. Independence can survive the rise of online shopping by focusing on the shopper's experience. Independence Square is thriving with specialty shops, boutiques, and restaurants. Although online shopping is growing, boutique shops are becoming increasingly popular. Boutiques offer a shopping experience that doesn't compare to online shopping. Visitors want to shop in stores and visit places that have a sense of place. People will continue to come back to Independence to experience it's unique stores.

Although retail is the dominant sector in Independence, there is room for growth for light and heavy manufacturing of the future. With a boom in these industries there will be an increase in jobs that eventually leads to economic vitality and an improved quality of life. There needs to be intentional effort to connect people to jobs and give them the skills they need to land these jobs. Coordinating workforce development activities in the City and combining resources will make it easier for the unemployed and underemployed to get significant work experience. The coordination of resources will ensure they have the support system to stay employed and have the housing and services necessary to succeed.

EMPLOYMENT



7,913
BUSINESSES

E M P L O Y S

162,610
P E O P L E

PROMINENT BUSINESSES FOR 2014



RETAIL
456 BUSINESSES

**PROFESSIONAL
SCIENTIFIC &
TECH**

225
BUSINESSES

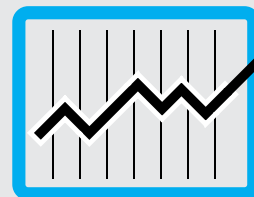
MANUFACTURING
72 BUSINESSES



HEALTHCARE
296 BUSINESSES



LARGEST INDUSTRY SECTORS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



8,382
RETAIL TRADE

6,232
HEALTHCARE

5,275
ACCOMMODATION AND
FOOD SERVICES

4,011
MANUFACTURING

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Economic Census, 2012 Economic Census of Island Areas, and 2012 Nonemployer Statistics.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Connect people to jobs and give them the skills they need to succeed in the job market of the future.

Adapt retail sector to marketplace trends.

Build supportive infrastructure to grow businesses and stabilize the local economy.

Promote growth, innovation, investment and opportunity.

Diversify sectors and advance manufacturing, engineering, green power and health sciences.

LAND USE BUILDING BLOCKS



Connected

Encourage mixed-use development to create diverse and self-sufficient neighborhoods. Residents desire small-scale retail integrated into neighborhoods including local restaurants, art, boutiques so that people can walk to them.



Welcoming

Provide opportunities for industrial development sites within the community.

Foster redevelopment opportunities within the City in an effort to revitalize unused or underused property.

Establish and maintain housing, transportation, communication and utility systems which support and foster quality development.



Distinctive

Locate and concentrate commercial development that support both the local and regional market.

Promote diversification of the commercial/ industrial base.

Adapt retail and commercial spaces to accommodate market trends.

TOOLS & POLICIES



Connected

Identify and develop physical connections between employment center and surrounding neighborhoods. Improve transportation access to education, training and employment opportunities.



Welcoming

Cultivate a vibrant, unique City that attracts and retains a highly skilled workforce.

Promote expansion of small firms and entrepreneurs by creating innovation centers.

Target business recruitment efforts on businesses that benefit from locating near existing Independence businesses.

Focus retention on high-performing, capital intensive, existing employers so they may grow in place.

Facilitate development-ready sites.



Distinctive

Preserve and promote historic assets and natural resources to attract tourists.

Invest in green energy to spur development and redevelopment.

Grow STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics industries complementary to regional market: high-tech manufacturing, engineering and health sciences.

Policy Documents and Plans

Little Blue Valley Comprehensive Plan Amendment

www.indep.us/LBVPlan

US 24 Highway Corridor Study

www.indep.us/24HwyPlan

KC Rising

<http://kcrising.com/>

NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING



Create vibrant, safe neighborhoods that are walkable and offer diverse uses, services, and housing options for all.

Englewood Arts District Plan

DISTRICT

NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING



Our vision is to create vibrant, safe neighborhoods that are walkable and offer diverse uses, services, and housing options for all.

Independence has neighborhoods that are unique, diverse, and compete well in the regional housing market. A variety of housing choices that are distinctive and safe offer housing for all interested in living in Independence.

GOAL

Increase quality — achieve livability, choice, access, health and safety through quality neighborhoods.

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

The City's Strategic Plan, Independence For All, tracks progress in the area of neighborhoods and housing using the following measures.

Improved housing conditions.

Increase median value of owner-occupied housing units.

Improve housing affordability.

BACKGROUND

Independence neighborhoods provide a wide variety of housing types and values, including attractive, affordable housing in many forms and locations. The City is not experiencing robust home building activity like some of the other communities in the region. The Home Builders Association of Greater Kansas City reports that 2017 permit activity for single-family and multi-family homes has increased nearly 13% in the Kansas City region compared to 2016. The City of Independence saw an increase of 46 permits during that same period, however it experienced significantly less permit activity than Kansas City, Lee's Summit, Lenexa, Olathe, Overland Park, and Raymore, and fell below the permit activity of Blue Springs, Grain Valley,

Shawnee, and Smithville. The median age of homes built in the late 60's in Independence is 50 years old and the median value is \$110,400 (US Census, 2010).

Going forward, Independence seeks to recreate and protect existing neighborhoods with a strong sense of community and connectivity that welcome residents of all ages, incomes and cultures. Independence values and encourages the preservation of safe, secure, quiet neighborhoods in every part of the City with well-tended yards and gardens and nearby parks. Walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods are favored with open system

Independence seeks to recreate and protect existing neighborhoods with a strong sense of community and connectivity that welcome residents of all ages, incomes, and cultures.