2023 CITY OF INDEPENDENCE ACTION PLAN

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CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI 111 East Maple Avenue, Independence MO 64050

Purpose and Purpose Statements

Purpose

Independence is a safe, inclusive community fostering civic engagement and creativity, with a thriving and diversified economy, a strong and proud history, and a high quality of life as our community grows and adapts.

Purpose Statements

1. **An Engaged Community.** We foster a culture of engagement and civic leadership based on innovation and best practices involving community members of all backgrounds and perspectives.
2. **An Innovative Economy.** We grow a diversified and innovative economy leveraging our community amenities, skilled and creative people, and educational resources to generate economic opportunities.
3. **A Safe, Welcoming Community.** We embrace a safe, healthy, welcoming and inclusive community.
4. **A Well-Planned City.** We consistently improve our community's appearance and quality of life as it grows and changes, honoring our unique history and sense of place as we plan for a livable, affordable, more connected city.
5. **A Financially Sustainable Organization.** We create long-term financial stability by using equitable and sustainable sources of funding for City services, and we deliver them in a lean and efficient manner.
6. **A High-Performance Organization.** We operate as an ethical, high performance organization anticipating future needs, utilizing best practices, and striving for continuous improvement.

1. An Engaged Community

We foster a culture of engagement and civic leadership based on innovation and best practices involving community members of all backgrounds and perspectives.

1.1 Outreach - Continue to strengthen and innovate in how we deliver information to the community and our partners.

a.) **City Communication Plan and Protocol.** Update, implement, and train for a City-wide communications protocol and outreach plan.

b.) **Communicate more effectively internally and externally.** Continue to enhance the City's primary public information tools: City 7, website, newsletters, social media.

c.) **Complete an Audio/Visual Needs Assessment for City Facilities and Implement Upgrades to Meet Current and Future Needs.**

d.) **Automate Systems for Fulfillment of Records Requests.**

1.2 Community Engagement - Broaden and deepen engagement of the community in city government, innovating methods for inviting input from the community and stakeholders.

a.) **Enhance City Committees and Advisory Boards.** Restructure or combine City boards and committees to more effectively advise the City and engage the public.

b.) **Community Engagement Plan.** Develop a plan to increase community engagement in city decision-making processes.

c.) **Create a Standard City Council, Boards, and Commissions Onboarding and Education Process.** Increase education for City Council, commissions, boards, and advisory boards.

d.) **City Charter Review.** Complete the review of the City Charter by the Charter Review Commission and seek voter approval of proposed changes to reflect best practices.

1.3 Public Agencies Collaboration - Foster successful collaboration with other public agencies and build on these successes.

a.) **Quarterly City/County Meetings.** Establish regularly scheduled meetings between the City of Independence and the Jackson County Legislature to discuss issues of mutual interest.

b.) **Continue the City's Participation in the Eastern Jackson County Shared Services Initiative and Other Regional Collaborations through the Mid-America Regional Council.**

c.) **Enhance the City's relationship with the Independence, Fort Osage, Blue Springs, and Raytown School Districts.**

d.) **Enhance the City's relationship with Blue River Community College.**

e.) **Enhance the City's relationship with the Mid-Continent Public Library.**

f.) **Enhance the City's relationship with State and Federal Agencies.**

g.) **Develop and support a legislative agenda.**

1.4 Business and Institutional Partnerships – Explore opportunities for partnerships with key business groups and non-profit organizations.

    a.) **Enhance the City's relationship with the Independence Square Association, Community Services League, Hotel and Lodging Alliance, Truman Habitat for Humanity.**

2. An Innovative Economy

We grow a diversified and innovative economy leveraging our community amenities, skilled and creative people, and educational resources to generate economic opportunities.

2.1 Business Growth – Support retention and growth of both the traded and local business sectors while welcoming and encouraging new and existing businesses, in coordination with the Independence Economic Development Partnership.
   a.) **Update the Business License Code.**
   b.) **Establish a small business support center to facilitate and guide the City's licensing and permitting process.**
   c.) **Support the continued development of the Eastgate Commerce Center.**

2.2 Infrastructure Investments – Strategically invest in infrastructure as a mechanism to encourage economic development and economic redevelopment.
   a.) **Identify Residential/Commercial/Industrial Infrastructure Needs.** Identify sites for new or redevelopment in areas that lack adequate infrastructure and develop new financing strategies to fund these investments.
   b.) **Complete the Tourism Master Plan to Attract and Retain Visitors to the City's Historic Sites, Amenities, and Events.**
   c.) **Complete the Deployment of High-Speed, Broadband Internet Service Throughout the City.**

2.3 Workforce Development – Support education and workforce development initiatives to improve the skills of our citizens.
   a.) **Develop partnerships with Independence, Fort Osage, Blue Springs, and Raytown School Districts for apprenticeship, internship, and job shadow opportunities to promote career options for high school graduates.**

3. <u>A Safe, Welcoming Community</u>

We embrace a safe, healthy, welcoming, and inclusive community.

3.1 Public Safety – Support high-quality public safety programs, emergency preparedness, facilities, and leadership.

a.) **Improve Emergency Preparedness Programs.** Improve our community's emergency preparedness by implementing outreach programs to include information and planning to assist residents in self-preparedness.

b.) **Implement the Independence Fire Department Community Risk Assessment and Standard of Cover Analysis Master Plan.**

c.) **Complete Fire Service Strategic Plan.**

d.) **Enhance the City's Relationship with the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office to Improve the Prosecution System.**

e.) **Develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy for Independence Police Department, including both sworn and civilian positions.**

f.) **Review and Update All Police Department Policies and Procedures.**

g.) **Update Public Safety Technology Systems.** Fund and implement necessary new technology systems for Police and Fire Departments.

h.) **Analyze Current and Future Staffing Needs Across the Police and Fire Departments and Shift Alignment of Personnel for Operational Efficiency and Optimal Service to the Public.**

i.) **Develop a Comprehensive Professional Development and Training Program within the Police and Fire Departments to Address Succession Planning Needs.**

j.) **Reduce Crime and Disorder.** Balance proactive policing efforts with community engagement-including neighborhood watch program and business crime prevention program-within allotted resources.

k.) **Increase Park Patrol to enhance Park Safety.**

3.2 Health & Safety Action – Work with our partners to improve education, public awareness, and to coordinate programs concerning public health, animal welfare, emergency services, criminal justice, and important social services.

a.) **Strengthen Community Services Networks.** Identify strategies to improve and expand resources for those with mental health, substance abuse and addiction, and housing challenges, including behavioral crisis and intervention centers.

b.) **Enhance the Mental Health Co-Responder and ARCH Programs.** Continue to adapt the strategies and services used by public safety to approach mental health crises.

c.) **Facilitate the Development of a Drop-In Center and Single Persons Shelter in Eastern Jackson County.**

d.) **Maintain Status as a No-Kill Animal Shelter.**

3.3 Friendly Community – Ensure Independence continues to welcome diversity through policies, public awareness, and community engagement.

a.) **Anticipate, Celebrate, and Incorporate an Increasingly Diverse Population into the Community, City Boards and Commissions, and City Staff.**

4. A Well-Planned City

We consistently improve our community's appearance and quality of life as it grows and changes, honoring our unique history and sense of place as we plan for a livable, affordable, more connected city.

4.1 Improve public infrastructure and the condition of public facilities.

a.) **Develop a Criminal Justice Facility Plan.**

b.) **Complete the National Frontier Trails Museum Master Plan to Focus Emphasis on Museum Exhibits and Visitor Experience.**

c.) **Identify Permanent Facility Solution for Animal Shelter.**

d.) **Evaluate Space and Maintenance Needs for City Buildings, Recreation Centers, and Site Amenities and Determine Priorities and Strategies for Needed Improvements.**

e.) **Increase the Rate at which Problematic Water Distribution and Transmission Mains are Replaced in Order to Replace 1% of the City's Distribution Mains Annually.**

f.) **Establish and Maintain a Database of the Material of all Water Service Lines in our Distribution System Pursuant to Revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule.**

g.) **Complete the Best Professional Judgement Study for Water Plant Sludge Discharge Pursuant to the Missouri Department of Natural Resource's Water Protection Program.**

h.) **Refine the Pavement Management Program.**

i.) **Target Street and Sidewalk Maintenance Along Major Corridors and Historic Sites.**

j.) **Determine Long-Term Plan for Independence Power & Light, Including Additional Generation Resources, Long-Term Plan for Maintaining Capacity, and Facilitating the Retirement of Existing Combustion Turbines.**

k.) **Explore Sustainable Technology.** Explore technologies to advance environmental sustainability and efficient service delivery. Examples include Advanced Metering Infrastructure, performance management systems also known as community "dashboards," electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and data analytics.

4.2 High Quality Urban Approach – Continue to support high-quality planning, ranging from building design to neighborhood layouts, while pursuing urban approaches to issues such as multimodal transportation, infill, density, connected trails and parks, and walkable neighborhoods.

a.) **Develop and Adopt Design and Construction Manual.**

b.) **Modernize Our Development Engineering Codes.**

c.) **Develop Access Management Plan and Storm and Sanitary Master Plan to Guide Development.**

d.) **Adopt a Unified Development Ordinance Amendment to Regulate Short-Term Rentals.**

e.) **Adopt a Unified Development Ordinance Amendment to Regulate the Number of Used Car Dealerships that May Operate Within the City.**

f.) **Leverage and Maximize the Historic district Designation for the Square and Explore Establishing Additional Historic Districts.**

g.) **Research and Implement Strategies in the Historic Preservation Master Plan to Protect Community Historical Resources.**

4.3 Stabilize and Revitalize Neighborhoods – Partner with citizens and businesses to promote and maintain a safe, healthy, and desirable living and working environment through the administration of property maintenance, zoning, and right-of-way codes.

   a.) **Target Incentive Programs (Including Tax Abatement), CDBG, and HOME Resources in neighborhoods, Activity Centers, and Along Corridors to Support Revitalization and Stabilization.**

   b.) **Continue Enforcement of the Vacant Building Registry Program.**

   c.) **Research and Incorporate Best Practices into the UDO to Encourage Infill Housing Units in Neighborhoods, Public Transit Nodes, and Activity Centers.**

   d.) **Support and Engage the Land Clearance Redevelopment Authority to Facilitate Redevelopment Projects.**

   e.) **Collaborate with Community Partners on Various Methods to Stabilize Neighborhoods.**

   f.) **Develop and Implement Strategies to Reduce Chronic Issues of Litter, debris, and illegal dumping within the Community.** Increase the resources dedicated to responding to these problems while also curtailing the proliferation of the issue by adopting a mandatory trash service requirement.

   g.) **Explore Land Acquisition Along Truman Road to Enable Beautification Along Major Entryways into the City.**

   h.) **Continue Project Design and Construction for the 24 Highway Complete Streets Project.**

4.4 Vibrant Commercial Districts and Neighborhood Centers – Promote and support healthy, vibrant commercial districts and neighborhood centers – including higher densities and intensification of use in these key areas.

   a.) **Continue Implementation of the Recommendations in the Adopted Downtown Redevelopment Coordinating Committee Master Plan.**

   b.) **Implement the Recommendations of the Fairmount Planning Sustainable Places Report.**

4.5 Housing and Transportation Choices – Vigorously encourage, through a wide variety of actions, the development of sustainable and lasting housing options for all individuals and families and improve mobility options that accommodate all travel modes.

   a.) **Implement the strategies of the 2022 Master Housing Study to Address Various Community Housing Needs.**

   b.) **Coordinate with RideKC partners to ensure that public transportation connects the Independence workforce to quality jobs.**

   c.) **Advance Design Work on the Noland Road Complete Streets Project.**

5. A Financially Sustainable Organization.

We create long-term financial stability by using equitable and sustainable sources of funding for City services, and we deliver them in a lean and efficient manner.

5.1 Control Long-Term Costs – Ensure City finances are stable and sustainable.

a.) **Pursue plan design changes to the Stay Well Employee Insurance Program to Control Long-Term Expenditures.**

b.) **Conduct a Market Salary Study and Implement Recommendations in the Employee Pay Plan Focused on Recruitment and Retention.**

c.) **Negotiate Fair, Sustainable Compensation and Benefit Agreements with Labor Unions.**

d.) **Promote Standardization of Technology and Centralization of IT Functions to Make City Operations More Efficient and Cost-Effective.**

e.) **Mature the City's Cyber-Security Practices to Improve Management of Cyber-Security Risks while Protecting Sensitive Information.**

f.) **Develop Cost of Service Studies for the Electric, Water, and Sanitary Sewer Utilities and Ensure Appropriate Customer Rates.**

g.) **Research, Evaluate, and Determine the Future Ownership, Governance, and Operation of Independence Power & Light.**

5.2 Capture Sustainable Sources of Funding – Obtain permanent, viable funding for City services.

a.) **Identify and Capture Additional Funding to Stabilize the Health Department.**

b.) **Identify and Capture Funding for the Parks/Recreation/Tourism Department to Continue and Expand Services and Programs.**

c.) **Identify and Capture Funding for Cemetery Maintenance and Support.**

d.) **Identify and Capture Funding for Public Transit.**

e.) **Identify and Capture Funding for Dangerous Building Demolitions and Code Enforcement Abatements.**

f.) **Research Additional Long-Term Revenue Streams and Funding Sources to Support Delivery of Basic Services.**

g.) **Seek Voter Approval of the Recreational Marijuana 3% Local Sales Tax.**

h.) **Seek Voter Approval of General Obligation Bonds for Infrastructure and Facilities Projects.**

i.) **Pursue the Museum and Tourism-Related Activities Tax to Support Tourism Needs.**

5.3 Financial Planning and Reporting – Identify and update policies, procedures, and systems to ensure transparent and efficient financial information.

a.) **Implement a Budgeting Module to Include Priority-Based Budgeting, Capital Improvements Programming, and Capital Outlay/Asset Replacement Program.**

b.) **Update the City's Purchasing Policy and Procedures.**

c.) **Revise the City's Travel Policy.**

d.) **Implement Uniform Standard Operating Procedures for Grant Reporting.**

e.) **Revise the Monthly Financial Reports for Improved Transparency and Ease of Understanding.**

6. A High-Performance Organization

We operate as an ethical high-performance organization, anticipating future needs, utilizing best practices, and striving for continuous improvement.

6.1 Values-Driven Culture – Promote a values-driven organizational culture that reinforces ethical behavior, exercises transparency, and maintains the community's trust.

   a.) **Develop a Cross-Functional Team Culture.** Use cross-functional teams to meet Independence's future opportunities and challenges.
   b.) **Create a Culture of Innovation.** Empower employees at all levels of the organization to exercise judgement and discretion within the framework of City codes, policies, and procedures.

6.2 Employee Excellence – Recruit, retain, and value a diverse, well-trained, qualified and motivated team capable of delivering superior performance. Be accountable and expect accountability from others. Make demonstrated use of good judgement a part of the evaluation process for promotions.

   a.) **Be a "Best in Class" Employer.** Enhance the attractiveness of the City as a place to work through salary and benefit packages, workplace amenities and facilities, and professional development opportunities.
   b.) **Continue New Employee Orientation Program.** Provide assistance to new employees so they feel welcomed and prepared to succeed.
   c.) **Adopt Organizational Values and Align with the Employee Recognition Program to Celebrate the Demonstration of Values in Action.**
   d.) **Develop and Administer Annual Performance Evaluation Process for All City Employees.**
   e.) **Set Employee Diversity Goals. Define the Type of Diversity the City Seeks to Achieve as an Organization (e.g. Reflecting the Community At-Large) and Develop a Program to Achieve These Goals.**

6.3 Best Practices, Creativity, and Foresight – Utilize best practices, innovative approaches, and constantly anticipate new directions and changes relevant to the governance of the City. Be adaptable and flexible with an outward focus on the customer and an external understanding of the issues as others may see them.

   a.) **Implement Department Staffing Plans.** Compile departmental staffing plans and create a system to implement the plans to address current and future workload.
   b.) **System Integration.** Identify key systems that if integrated would improve efficiency and effectiveness.
   c.) **Improve Departmental Collaboration.** Identify opportunities to improve collaboration between City departments and create subgroups on communications, community interactions, long-range planning, and other matters of common concern.

6.4 Performance Metrics – Utilize key performance and cost measures to monitor, track, and improve the planning and delivery of City programs and services and to promote greater accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.

a.) **Develop Data Analysis Tools.** Develop more sophisticated analytical tools to access, monitor, measure, and analyze data to inform decision making.

b.) **Set Performance Measures.** Set performance measures that align with the strategic plan.

c.) **Analyze and Collect Data from Performance Measures.** Analyze and collect data from performance measures to ensure implementation of the Action Plan, and redesign measures as needed.

d.) **Strategic Municipal Service Delivery Expectations.** Strategically manage community and employee expectations about the City's capacity to deliver services.