

# Independence Park Commission



Parks Improvement Sales Tax Program Report  
October 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

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## Mission and Membership

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The Independence Park Commission was established by Ordinance in 1999. The Commission's primary mission is to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council relating to public education, use, and knowledge regarding Parks and Recreation activities. The Commission also serves as the official Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

The Park Commission is comprised of seven voting members appointed by the City Council. Current members of the Park Commission include Ira Anders, Kay Douglas, Jana Evans, Diane Kyser, Paula Martin, and Dennis Tharp with one vacancy.

## Sales Tax Review

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The current Parks Improvement Sales Tax (PRST) was renewed in perpetuity in August of 2010. This tax is estimated to generate approximately \$4.9 million this fiscal year and is dedicated to fund on-going park maintenance, certain facility operations, recreation programming and various parks and recreation related capital projects. Through February 28, 2023, the tax has generated \$3,255,141, or 67%, of the PRST revenue anticipated for this Fiscal Year.

## Current Projects

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Park Services staff worked with Street Maintenance staff to repair sections of the trails in Mill Creek Park and Waterfall Park. Parks, Recreation and Tourism purchased the asphalt, and the Municipal Services Department provided the labor.

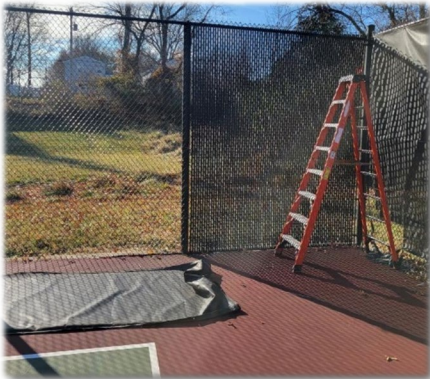


# Park Revitalization & Operations

Park revitalization is an on-going effort that addresses routine needs such as replacing park benches and trash receptacles, repairing damaged playground equipment and mechanical systems, and maintaining trails, parking lots, and concrete surfaces. Park staff addresses these needs continuously to ensure that facilities are kept in safe, working order throughout the year.



Grading and dirt work was necessary to eliminate tripping hazards at several parks and trails.



Wind screens were replaced at the Blackburn pickleball courts.



Graffiti and vandalism continue to keep Park Services crews busy. In addition, crews completed 48 unhouses clean-ups in park property.

When mowing season came to an end, Park Services crews trimmed trees, removed a dozen dead trees, and ground out over two dozen stumps.

Park restroom facilities were winterized and closed.

Park Services staff winterized both Rotary and McCoy Park splash pads, and Adventure Oasis waterpark.

During the off-season crews installed new chemical mixers at both splash pads. At Adventure Oasis they coordinated improvements to the lifeguard shack, the zero-depth entry pool and replaced lounge chairs.

During winter weather events staff cleared snow and ice from streets, sidewalks and city-owned parking lots. Newly hired Park Services employees have been receiving in-house training to attain their commercial driver's licenses.



Woodlawn Cemetery participated in the annual Wreaths Across America program to honor our country's fallen heroes. Remembrance wreaths were placed on the graves of 300 veterans, more than double the number from the previous year.



Park Services crews were instrumental in preparing for the City’s holiday events. City Hall was temporarily transformed into Dr. Seuss’ Who-Ville with a custom-made entryway arch for the popular Living Windows event. In addition, staff hung lights at the Uptown Market, Vaile Mansion, Hiram Young Park and on the Mayor’s Christmas tree at City Hall.



## Recreation Programming & Operations

Recreation Programming & Operations were in full swing with holiday programs and events. Staff continue to work diligently to provide high-quality programming and maintain operations while adhering to proper safety protocols for patrons, participants, and staff.

### Palmer Senior Center

- Home Delivered Meal Program – From October through March staff delivered a total of 5,940 meals and served 6,972 meals on-site
- Wellness Phone Calls – Staff and volunteers made 1,661 Wellness Check phone calls
- Silver Sneakers, Renew Active, Fitness Pass visits – 3,452 participants
- Classes and Programs – 11,318 seniors participated in Stretch & Tone, Wake-up Workout, 100-mile Walking Club, Peppi, health screenings & education programs, arts, music and craft programs, ice cream socials & Pickleball





- Special Activities – Campfire at George Owens Nature Park, Halloween Party, Thanksgiving Luncheon, Christmas Celebration, New Theatre Restaurant trip, New Years Party, Valentine’s Day Party, Super Bowl Celebration, Volunteer Appreciation, Native Animals of Missouri presentation by George Owens Nature Park staff, Travel Program Preview, Snowballs and More, Pickleball Tournament, Pie for Pi Day, St. Patrick’s Party and Hands-Only CPR
- Day Trips resumed with 97 patrons participating in 2 trips to the New Theatre Restaurant and Holiday Lights Tour



## Truman Memorial Building

- Mayor’s Town Hall Meeting
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Celebration
- Little Princess Ball
- Spirit of Independence Band Spring Concert and weekly rehearsals
- Private Rentals – birthday parties, church services, drill team competition & dances
- City of Independence Sustainability Commission Meeting



- TRX Boot Camp – 192 sessions
- SS Classic, Yoga – 111 sessions
- Table Tennis Club: 164 sessions
- Bridge & Duplicate Bridge – 100 sessions
- Men’s Speaking Club – 3 monthly meetings



## Roger T. Sermon Community Center

- Fitness Classes – 3,425 participants
- Fitness Visits – 12,734 participants
- Fitness Classes & Visits by City Employees - 1633 participants
- Club Visits – 559 participants
- Warming Site – 31 people served 8 days (December), 10 served 3 days (January)
- Rentals & Park Reservations of other PRT sites –
  - 4 private park reservations with 161 visitors
  - 5K by Bodies Race Company in February with 250 in attendance
  - 5K by KC Running Company in March with 50 in attendance
- Rentals – 102 private rentals with 7088 visitors
- Events - Jackson County Election Voting Site, Best Little Arts & Crafts Show with approx. 2000 in attendance, “Powerpalooza” fundraiser for Powerhouse Theatre Foundation, family fun carnival with approximately 400 in attendance
- Encore Theatre – “Clue on Stage” in October, attendance 287
- City Theatre of Independence – “Death Trap” in November, attendance 286  
 “Miracle on South Division Street” in January, attendance 355  
 “Moonlight and Magnolias” in March, attendance 178
- Children’s Performing Theatre – “Haphazardly Ever After” in December, attendance 510  
 “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” in February, attendance 841



## Independence Uptown Market

- Farmers Market with EBT snap tokens program – Saturdays in October, 35 – 45 vendors, 750 – 1000 patrons weekly
- Santa’s Village in conjunction with the Square Christmas Tree Lighting – Families visited with Santa, enjoyed hot chocolate, cookies, games and made a craft.
- Winter Market – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday from December - April; Crafts, baked goods & meats from local vendors.
- “Crafts for a Cause” – Community members made dog and cat toys for the City’s animal shelter and placemats for the Palmer Senior Center.
- DIY Snow Globes – Participants made their own holiday snow globes. Response was so great that a second session was added.
- CSL Christmas Store - Community Services League utilized the Uptown Market for their annual Christmas Store to provide gifts to families in need during the holiday season.
- Holiday Market - The market featured handmade gifts from local vendors, gourmet artisanal favorites, a holiday DIY station, drinks, snacks, and more.
- CSL Winter Clothing Drive – CSL partnered with City Departments to collect coats, hats, scarves, and gloves.
- Hogabaloo – 2 events commemorated Groundhog Day. Homeschool students came in the afternoon and the community in the evening to meet two award-winning adorable hedgehogs and made a craft.
- Valentine’s Paint and Sip – Participants painted pictures of their choice while enjoying an adult beverage.
- Book Swap – The public could bring a book & take a book for free.
- Employee Recognition Dinner – The City of Independence honored retirees and current employees with 20+ years of service.
- DIY Chia Pets – Participants made their own and took them home to grow their hair.





## Wellness, Sports, Aquatics, Inclusion

- Adventure Oasis – Off-season improvements:
  - First Aid Area – new back boards, new flooring
  - Lifeguard Shack – installed air conditioning, new flooring, lockers, and break area
  - Lounge Chair Replacement – new chairs around the lazy river and in the kiddie area
- Homeschool Recreation Program – 22 sessions with 633 participants
- Couch to 5K Kickoff – Weekly walks ending with the Truman Trot 5K in May



## George Owens Nature Park & Family Programs

- On-Site Programs – Chess, Stories by the Campfire, Missouri Mammals (2 sessions), Winter Trees, World Wildlife Days, Let's Love Bugs, Scavengers, Native Animals, Learn about Taxonomy
- Off-Site Programs – Presentation to Women's Civic Club, Career Day at Fort Osage High School, Animals & Winter Activities at the Fairmount Christmas Block Party, Backyard Birds and Bird Bingo at the Palmer Center, Smores at Fairmount Community Center



- Enchanted Forest – 5 evenings in October in conjunction with the City Theatre of Independence
- Eagle Scout Bridge Project – New pedestrian bridge was constructed October 26 & 27
- ISD AVID Class – volunteers completed several projects in October
- 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Solstice Torch-Lit Hike – Partnership with Fort Osage High School to make tree cut-outs for sale to the community. Decorated trees were displayed along the Butterfly Trail. All funds raised benefited Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity.



# In Closing

It is the opinion of the Independence Park Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects supported by the Parks Improvement Sales Tax are in keeping with the program’s intent, and that the work of the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department continues to enhance the quality of life in Independence.

The members of the Independence Park Commission, on behalf of the residents of Independence, express our gratitude and appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their continued support of providing the best possible parks, recreation facilities, and programs for the residents of Independence.



**INDEPENDENCE**  
★ PARKS ★ RECREATION ★ TOURISM ★