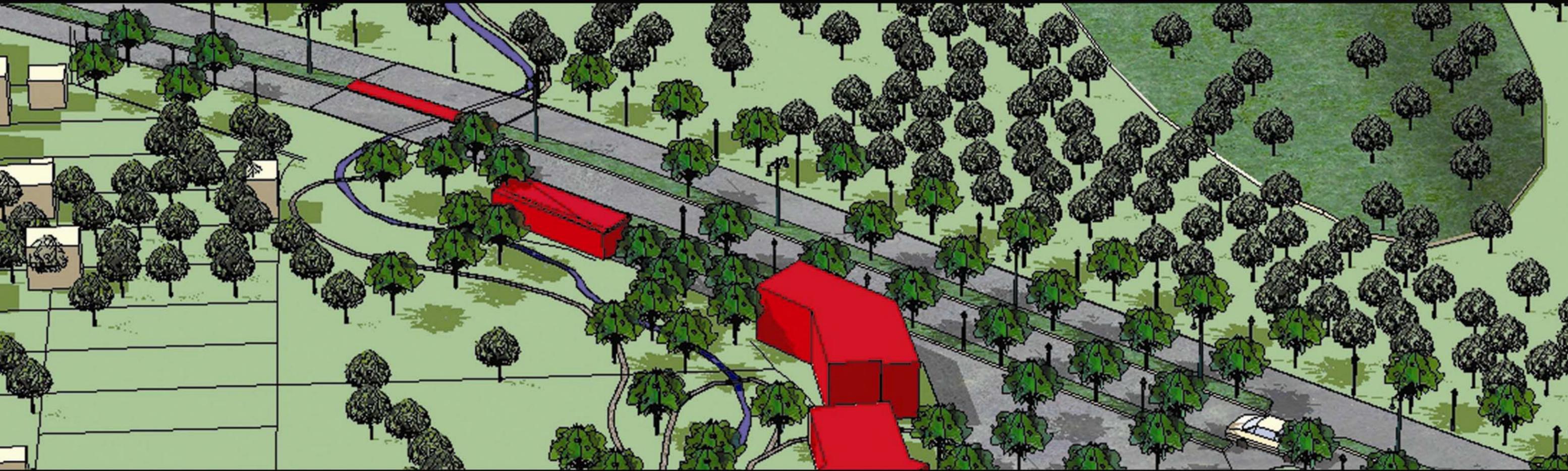


The Framework Plan



CHAPTER 5

I. Introduction

Successful revitalization of the Corridor will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach to social services, housing improvements, and economic development by the Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek. It is based on the premise that obstacles to economic revitalization, namely decreasing population, deteriorating housing stock, retreating businesses, and crime, can be solved only through a coordinated effort. No single public agency or private investor can solve these complex problems alone.

In this light, building on the efforts of current, effective programs is a key building block. For example, the Weed and Seed Strategy, a collaborative effort by the United States Attorney, Jackson County, and the City of Independence, as well as several community-based organizations and non-profits, exemplifies the integrated approach required to resolving the complex problems faced along the U.S. 24 Highway Corridor area. These efforts, in combination with the market opportunities described in Chapter 2 create a bright outlook for the Corridor. The Plan outlines a comprehensive, long-term strategy for the revitalization of the Corridor. The Framework Plan, illustrated in Figure 5-1 located on page 5-3, includes the following components:

Corridor Wide (CW) principles that apply to the entire Corridor which help ensure the long-term health of the area.

Residential Neighborhoods (NH) offering a range of housing types for new families and seniors will surround the Corridor.

Fairmount Business District (FB) will form the economic and civic heart of the area. Development intensity, land use, building height and urban design elements will create a sense of identity for the Corridor.

Mixed-Use (MU) centers will concentrate on commercial, office and housing in compact nodes.

Commercial (CD) strip areas will be redeveloped, reinvented and revitalized.

Gateways (GW) of appropriate character consisting of commercial and civic uses will anchor the eastern and western portions of the Corridor.

Transportation (TS) system consisting of multi-modes will connect neighborhoods with the Fairmount Business District, mixed-use areas, and other destinations in the community and region.

Natural Resources, Parks, and Open Space (NR) will create the foundation of a comprehensive greenway system, improving the quality of life of residents and attracting new families to the area.

Within the key component sections of Gateways, the Fairmount Business District, and Mixed-Use Areas, the plan outlines potential development scenarios that were developed by the staff, Technical Advisory Group, Citizens Advisory Group and the community. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, these potential development scenarios describe one of many potential futures for the area. Key to these scenarios is the concept of directing future growth into key development nodes and the matching of future development with forecasted additional market demand of approximately 76,000 square feet of neighborhood shopping space. The scenarios also considered the potential re-population of adjacent neighborhoods which would result in the additional demand of 40,000 square feet.

Principles and Policies

Principles and policies provide guidelines to help achieve the vision and goals expressed by the community for the Corridor. The principles and policies statements described below were developed through a 12-month process which consolidated the values and ideals expressed through stakeholder interviews, public workshops, planning staff meetings, a Steering Committee, and a Technical Advisory Group. Previous plans described in Chapter 1 were consulted for general direction when developing specific principles and policies.

A **principle** is defined as a general or fundamental rule, doctrine or assumption; a **policy** is defined as a definite course or method of action, selected to guide and determine present and future decisions. The following pages contain a complete list, with the principles in bold. The first section contains principles and policies that are applicable Corridor-Wide (CW). The next six sections are directly related to the places depicted in the Plan. Each policy has been named and is also identified by letters that designate the section of the Plan where it is located and numbers that indicate the sequence of principles and policies within each section. In the Transportation section, for instance, a policy might be called "T-2.3." This would be "T," a Transportation policy; "2," in the second principle of the Transportation section; and "3," the third policy for that principle. Additional information on tools related to principles and policies can be found in Chapter 6.

Throughout the planning process, residents of Northwest Independence have faced challenging decisions about how the Corridor might redevelop. Each principle and policy represents a choice, and each choice requires balancing complex, and sometimes conflicting, issues. Each represents a significant decision to be made about the future form and pattern of the area. Additionally, the comprehensive nature of revitalization efforts requires that each principle and policy be understood in its proper context. The spirit of this Plan is one that:

- Strives to achieve a fair and proper balance among conflicting interests, to protect the rights of citizens, and to affirm community values as they have been expressed by citizens throughout the community participation process.
- Is designed to realize interrelated goals for land use, historic preservation, housing, transportation and economic development.
- Builds on desirable existing conditions while recognizing and improving undesirable conditions.
- Uses the authority and influence of local government to realize this vision by coordinating many public efforts and developing partnerships with private sector efforts to support this vision.

II. Plan Components

Corridor-Wide (CW)

This section contains principles that apply to the length of the Corridor as defined by Figure 5-1, the Framework Plan located on page 5-3.

Principle CW 1. The principles and policies of the Plan should be consistent with the general direction set forth in related plans.

Principle CW 2. The Plan should utilize the private market to make change work for the Corridor.

Policy CW 2.1 Market Based. Sugar Creek, Independence, the Northwest Communities Development Corporation, cooperating agencies, developers and the community will use current and induced market demand to redevelop key locations of the Corridor. A market based analysis demonstrated the need to increase the Corridor’s housing stock, focus development at key intersections of Sterling Avenue, River Boulevard and U.S. 24 Highway and then redevelop key areas such Fairmount Business District, and areas near Crisp Lake and Bundschu Park.

Policy CW 2.2 Phasing. The Northwest Communities Development Corporation, the Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek, cooperating agencies, developers and the community should work toward implementing the plan in phases over a 20 year period.

Policy CW 2.3 Implementation. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek, the Northwest Communities Development Corporation, cooperating agencies, developers and the community should work toward completing each implementation item necessary to achieve the vision outlined in the Plan.

Principle CW 3. The revitalization of the U.S. 24 Highway Corridor will be based on Public and Private Partnerships.

Policy CW 3.1 Private Partners. The City will continue to work with the development community to enhance the services, amenities, and products available in the Corridor by providing predictable permitted uses, design standards, and an efficient development review system.

Policy CW 3.2 Public Partners. The City will continue to coordinate and implement revitalization strategies with the City of Sugar Creek, Sugar Creek Community Development Corporation, Northwest Communities Development Corporation, the City of Kansas City, MODOT and other allied agencies such as the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) to achieve Plan objectives.

Policy CW 3.3 Key Public/Private Initiatives. The City will continue to coordinate, support and assist BP and the City of Sugar Creek with the implementation of the Sugar Creek Business Park, community center, housing projects and the connection to the Lewis & Clark Expressway.

Principle CW 4. The physical environment of the Corridor will be improved as a functional, beautiful, decent, healthful, interesting, and efficient setting for human activities.

Policy CW 4.1 Creation of Streetscape. New streetscape features will first be added to the redevelopment areas and then to the remainder of the Corridor over the next 20 years. These features will be implemented in conjunction with the design and construction of each area.

Policy CW 4.2 Streetscape Improvements. Deteriorated streetscape, especially sidewalks, should be repaired and upgraded.



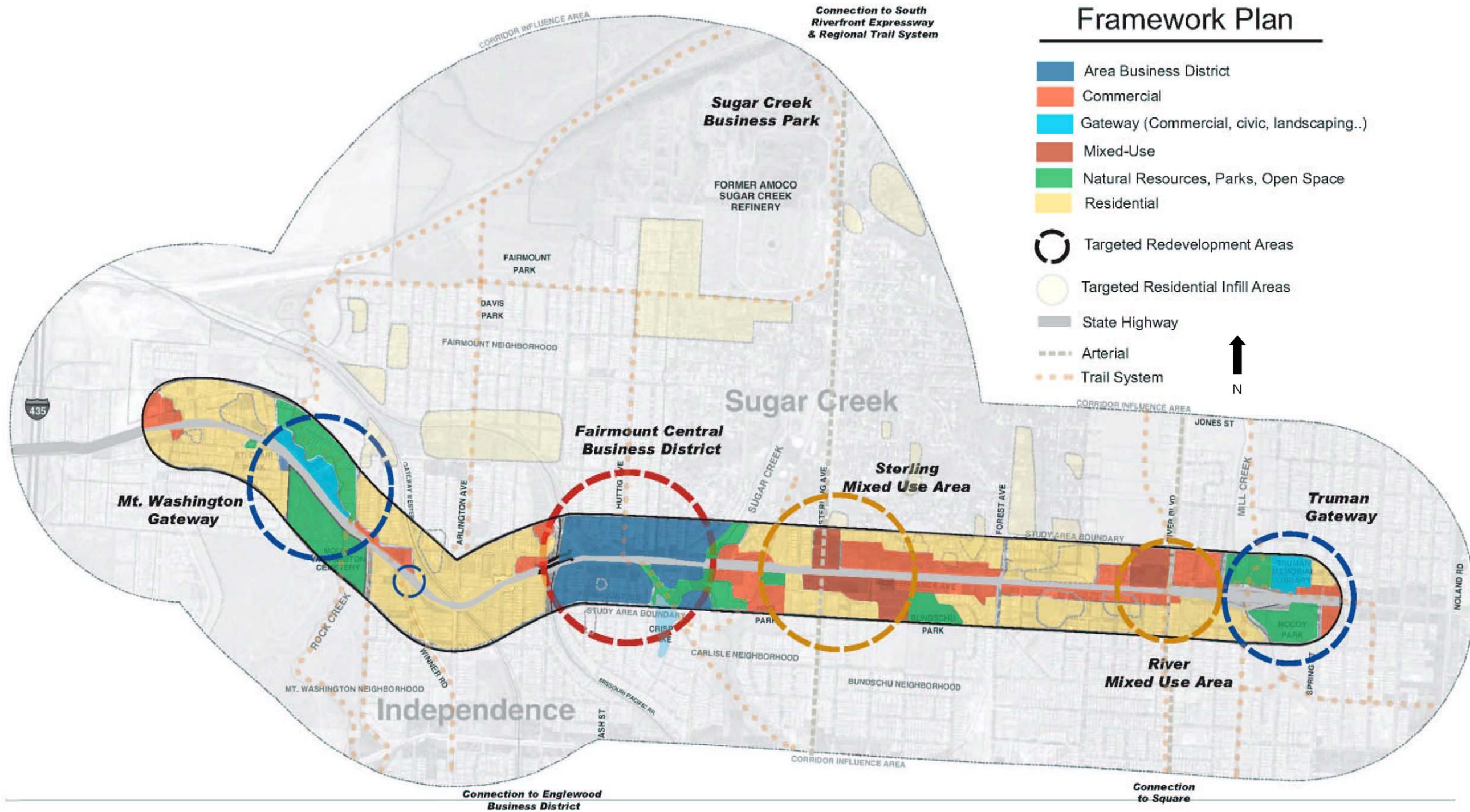


Figure 5-1

Policy CW 4.3 Visual Blight. The appearance of the area will be improved through the removal and prohibition of overhead utility line and billboards.

Policy CW 4.4 Sign Enforcement. The Sign Code will be enforced and new sign regulations developed to further improve the physical environment of the Corridor. This should include the prohibition of pole signs and billboards.

Policy CW 4.5 Image. Transportation and streetscape elements should be designed to create a unified, cohesive and significant image.

Policy CW 4.6 Separation. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic will be separated with landscape and hardscape barriers.

Policy CW 4.7 Landscaping. Developers will be encouraged to plant trees and shrubs or provide public art.

Policy CW 4.8 Public Spaces. New commercial development and redevelopment opportunities will incorporate public spaces to create a prominent civic component in core commercial areas.

Policy CW 4.9 Location of Commercial / Mixed-Use. Mixed-use developments should be encouraged and when possible concentrated in the Fairmount Business District or mixed-use redevelopment nodes as a way to maintain commercial viability, property values, aesthetics, quality of life, and to promote quality development.

Policy CW 4.10 Pedestrian Scale. Retail areas will be designed with a pedestrian scale and building character that is comfortable to pedestrian users.



Policy CW 4.11 Orientation. When feasible, buildings should be moved forward toward the street to screen parking and promote pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. The City will encourage parking areas to be oriented to the side or behind commercial buildings. Entrances to the building shall be oriented toward the street.

Policy CW 4.12 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.



Principle CW 5. Walking, bicycling, or riding the bus will be a practical and enjoyable means of travel.

Policy CW 5.1 Multimodal Options. The City will continue to provide alternative transportation options including pedestrian and mass transit along with existing vehicular access. New sidewalks, bus routes, and pathways should be developed.

Residential Neighborhoods (NH)

The first Strategic Goal of the Independence City Council calls on the City “to revitalize and rebuild neighborhoods that contain deteriorated private property or infrastructure through a cooperative partnership with owners and tenants” (City of Independence, 2002). The City has a responsibility to ensure that residents have access to safe, secure, and healthy housing, a goal that can only be achieved in collaboration with property owners. As described earlier in this plan, renewed population growth in areas with deteriorating housing is critical to achieving economic development objectives. The rejuvenation of the Corridor’s neighborhoods will provide an opportunity for first-time homebuyers, young or small families, and retirees. These families will need new amenities that will be provided within walking distance.

Long-term improvements should not only be focused solely on housing conditions, but on how the surrounding neighborhoods function (Ferrell, 2004). Pedestrian pathways should be created that link neighborhoods to the Fairmount Business District and mixed-use areas. Each neighborhood should have a public transit stop, and many ways of getting to, through, and between it and other neighborhoods and activity centers by driving, walking and bicycling. Sidewalks and other

pedestrian improvements that improve the walkability of neighborhoods will become more important as demographics change and the population ages. At the same time, these improvements are necessary to attract younger families into the area.

Revitalizing neighborhoods will partly depend on increasing population through redevelopment and infill housing. In some areas this will include the transition from housing for seniors to housing for new families. New housing areas will be developed as part of the BP redevelopment in areas where vacant parcels can be assembled and within the redevelopment sites along U.S. 24 Highway. As depicted in Figure 5-1 on page 5-3, compatible infill should occur in targeted areas throughout the Corridor influence area. Neighborhood associations will be encouraged, and housing programs will help residents transition from rental to home ownership. For example, the long-term areas in close proximity to Crisp Lake could be developed into a primary housing area for both new families and seniors. The proximity to the Fairmount Business District and Crisp Lake could be considered a vital amenity by new residents. Parts of Crisp Lake may be opened and public access to the area provided. Greenways and trails will integrate these resources into the larger neighborhood fabric.

A variety of housing types will be provided in these neighborhoods. These housing choices will provide residents with the ability to live in these neighborhoods through all their life cycles, from raising a family to retirement. The affordability of housing in the study area provides choices to low- and moderate-income families that are not found in most suburbs.

New housing types should be provided as have been successful in other communities. Products including single-family detached homes, row houses, apartments, live/work units, condominiums and multi-unit buildings should be incorporated into the neighborhoods. New residents will be willing to pay for characteristics associated with different product types.

The following principles and policies relating to neighborhoods and housing offer a multi-faceted approach to rebuilding the Corridor's older neighborhoods.

Principle NH 1: Through partnerships with the City, individuals, public agencies and private organizations will work to improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods by stabilizing the existing housing stock.

Policy NH 1.1 Accountability. Property owners will be accountable for the maintenance and improvement of their property through code compliance and rental licensing.

Policy NH 1.2 Access to Programs. The City and its partners will provide information regarding available resources, assistance, and on property rehabilitation programs.

Policy NH 1.3 Code Compliance. The City will assist and ensure that residents have access to safe, secure, and healthy housing types and sizes.

Principle NH 2. The City will work with individuals, public agencies and private organizations to reverse the trend of rental occupancy through the construction of new owner-occupied housing units and the conversion of existing rental units back to owner-occupied single-family units.

Policy NH 2.1 Support for Low Income Homeowners. The City will support a single family emergency minor home repair program for low and very low income homeowners.

Policy NH 2.2 Rental Inspections. The City will explore the possibility of scheduled rental property inspections to improve housing conditions.

Principle NH 3. The City will stimulate neighborhood revitalization by encouraging new housing options with a diversity of housing types and sizes throughout the Corridor.

Policy NH 3.1 Infill and Redevelopment. Through public-private partnerships, new housing products will be created on redevelopment sites along U.S. 24 Highway, where vacant lands can assemble, on areas identified by BP, along River Boulevard, adjacent to Crisp Lake and near Bundschu Park.



Policy NH 3.2 Density. The City will encourage a variety of housing types and densities within these areas to meet the needs of residents of different economic levels and age groups.

Policy NH 3.3 Incentives. The City will encourage the redevelopment of key areas using a variety of tools including the exploration of the use of waiving building development fees.

Policy NH 3.4 Circulation. The design of new housing or the redevelopment of existing housing will encourage walking, social interaction and neighborhood connectivity.

Policy NH 3.5 Traditional Neighborhood Design. New residential development will promote homes designed with traditional neighborhood principles, such as:

- Buildings are aligned and close to the street.
- Houses have front porches.
- Vehicle storage, garbage and mechanical equipment are away from the street.
- Recessed garage elements.
- Sidewalks on both sides of street.
- Improved landscaping.

Incorporating these concepts into future design guidelines should be investigated.



Policy NH 3.6 Introduction of Neighborhood-Related, Non-Residential Development.

New services, conveniences, and/or gathering places will be supported in existing neighborhoods provided they respect the neighborhood's positive characteristics, level of activity, and parking and traffic conditions.

Policy NH 3.7 Infrastructure. Infrastructure improvements should continue to support existing and future neighborhoods.

Policy NH 3.8 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.

Principle NH 4. The City will promote the social capital of neighborhoods.

Policy NH 4.1 Leadership Capacity. Neighborhood groups and homeowner associations will be reinvigorated. These groups will have training and opportunity to provide leadership that works toward the good of the neighborhood and the whole community.

Policy NH 4.2 Safety. In coordination with its partners, the City will support and expand the 2003 Weed and Seed Strategy, specifically but not limited to prevention, early intervention, and treatment for truancy, family violence, and crime and drug activity.

Policy NH 4.3 Gathering Places. Each neighborhood will have a safe park, school, shared facility, or other gathering space to encourage recreation and dialogue.

Policy NH 4.4 Mobility. Each neighborhood will have access to a minimum of one transit stop and pedestrian-friendly streets with adequate sidewalk width, quality, and connectivity, and traffic calming measures as needed. Neighborhoods will connect to adjacent commercial areas.

Policy NH 4.5 Education. Neighborhood residents will have access to high quality educational opportunities.

Principle NH 5. In partnership with other organizations, the City will preserve the rich cultural history of the area.

Policy NH 5.1 Historic Survey. Continue to promote surveying of unsurveyed buildings along the Corridor and Area of Influence to determine areas of greatest significance for possible listing.

Policy NH 5.2 Historic and Conservation Districts. Investigate the creation of a local or National Register Historic District for neighborhoods around Fairmount Business District.

Policy NH 5.3 Restoration. Focus historic revitalization efforts on areas that have the highest potential. Efforts should include grass-roots initiatives and tax credits programs.

Policy NH 5.4 Education. Develop a primary interpretive exhibit and satellite interpretive signage to tell the story of the history of the area.

Policy NH 5.5 Agency Coordination. Emphasize building partnerships and coalitions with a wide variety of organizations and agencies such as the State Historic Preservation Office, historical societies, the Heritage Commission and the Preservation Renaissance of Independence to increase awareness and interest in preservation of the area.



Principle NH 6. The City will involve local citizens in the planning and decision-making processes of government.

Policy NH 6.1 Communication. The City will continue to be committed to inclusive, democratic government and a continuing dialogue between government and the residents of northwest Independence.

Policy NH 6.2 Collaboration with Surrounding Residents. The City will ensure that neighbors will be advised of changes and be requested to comment on, including but not limited to, acceptable intensity and character of infill and redevelopment.

Policy NH 6.3 Support Citizens' Efforts. The City will support efforts by citizens' organizations to promote and improve their neighborhoods, in accordance with the following considerations:

- Neighborhoods and the City will work hand-in-hand to identify neighborhood needs, resolve issues, establish lines of communication, and maintain and improve the quality of life.
- Neighborhood groups and Homeowner Associations will have training and opportunity to provide leadership that works toward the good of the neighborhood and whole community, such as addressing neighborhood concerns through matching grants which would allow residents to initiate projects for their area; and direct assistance from City staff and Northwest Communities Development Corporation members who act as neighborhood liaisons.
- Every area of the Corridor will be within a recognized neighborhood boundary and represented by a neighborhood group.
- Every neighborhood will contain a neighborhood gathering facility that people can use, such as a park, school, or other activity area.
- The City will continue to involve, advise, and support individuals and neighborhood groups in identifying and addressing issues.

Fairmount Business District (FB)

Like most first ring suburbs of Kansas City, the Fairmount Business District enjoyed enormous prosperity in the early 1900's serving as a trolley stop and central location for destinations such as the Mt. Washington and Fairmount Amusement Parks. The decline of similar business districts and an increase in strip commercial, accompanied by decreasing population and housing conditions has reduced the area's vibrancy.

Lessons learned from the recent renaissance of the Englewood Business District shows that the active leadership of the business community, the retention of existing businesses, private investment in key properties, and phased investments in streetscape and infrastructure improvements are critical to rejuvenating the health of historic retail districts. Kansas City has a rich tradition of successful areas that fill this role; the Country Club Plaza, Brookside, Downtown Overland Park, Prairie Village Shopping Center, Downtown Weston, Liberty Square, and Independence Square are examples of commercial areas that also instill community pride (MARC, 2004).

Building off the market demand for additional 76,000 square feet of neighborhood shopping presented in Chapter 2, the conceptual plan shown in 5-2 on page 5-9 demonstrates one vision of how to return Fairmount to a symbol of community pride. The described vision is only one possible future and serves to demonstrate the potential to reinvest in this District. In this concept, the renewed District will provide a needed identity for both the Corridor and the surrounding

neighborhoods. Its location is strategic as it is positioned in the center of the neighborhood, but also serves as the Western Gateway to the Truman Library. Key historic buildings on the south side of the Fairmount Business District will form the core of the Business District. These buildings will be preserved and the facades restored and will provide a key connection to the history of the area. Other buildings on the north side of U.S. 24 Highway and on the south side near Crisp Lake would be redeveloped. Redevelopment of commercial areas would permit an additional 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of retail space. These new landmark buildings will be a focal point as travelers pass through the District.

These two to three story buildings will have ground floor retail and upper stories will accommodate residential apartments and office uses. These services will be designed to serve local residential neighborhoods and larger trade areas with small-size specialty shops and services such as antique shops, travel agencies, art galleries, and other related activities (TND, p. 70). New uses will be unique and notable, with some uses encouraging people to visit at different times of the day. The area will serve as a destination for neighborhood residents, the region and tourists.

The Fairmount Business District will not only provide convenient locations for goods and services, but its public spaces will create a forum for dialogue, recreation, and foster a distinct sense of place. These new civic areas will include small plazas, parks, trails and courtyards. Elements within these civic spaces will celebrate the local and regional history not told in other places within the City. A primary interpretive exhibit may accompany a civic use which celebrates the history of Native Americans, trolley systems, the Fairmount Business District, Englewood Business District, the Square, the Truman Library, the Mt. Washington Cemetery, or local amusement parks. Smaller interpretive exhibits located in Mt. Washington Cemetery, the former site of the Fairmount Amusement Park, and other locations will lead visitors to the Fairmount Business District as well as provide an additional destination.

The District will be expanded both to the north, south and east, to ensure that the area is large enough to be self supporting and be considered a destination by citizens of Independence and adjacent municipalities. Key non-residential land uses around the Fairmount Business District would need to be transitioned into complementary uses as it would be difficult to integrate certain uses into adjacent neighborhoods. These include the light industrial areas to the northwest, adjacent to the bridge, and auto dealerships located on the north side of the street.

Re-population, infill and redevelopment in adjacent neighborhoods will create a critical mass of population surrounding the Business District. Higher density residential development will be located within walking distance of the District. This will include a variety of senior housing, including a new independent living apartment building and small apartment houses that provide an affordable and low-maintenance lifestyle. The small apartment houses will provide a transition from the higher density buildings to adjacent detached single-family units.

As shown in Figure 5-2 on page 5-9, moving key transmission line towers will allow for a new street grid to be established, creating new north-south and east-west connections to efficiently move people. The new street grid will create several new corners and blocks large enough for feasible development. The street system will include a new east-west road located one block to the north of U.S. 24 Highway increasing the depth of the District and creating a population density that will help support new businesses. Streetscape and housing improvements will be centered on this street and later expand outward into the adjacent neighborhoods. The street will be anchored on either side by key building and design elements. The bridge will also be realigned to the north to improve safety and to enhance the entry into the Fairmount Business District. Design features associated with the bridge will complement the character of the District.

Pedestrian activity is vital to the success of the Fairmount Business District. The District should be compact, walkable, and provide visual interest to both pedestrians and automobiles. The area will be serviced by an efficient multi-modal transportation system, including bus, foot and bicycle. To facilitate this, sidewalks will be improved along U.S. 24 Highway and streets leading to the District. Additional connections behind buildings fronting the Corridor will provide new north-south and east-west connections. These systems could connect to a larger greenway system using an old railway bed linking to new public areas around Crisp Lake. This system will also be able to directly connect to the Sugar Creek Greenway and the new Bluff's Business Park to the north.

Additional parking and service areas behind buildings will provide an aesthetically-pleasing environment to integrate neighborhoods and the Fairmount Business District. This will be complemented by on-street parallel parking on both sides of U.S. 24 Highway for the length of the District. This new parking will help create a new feel to the area, protect pedestrians, and act as a traffic calming measure.

The area will be supported by a new mixed-use area surrounding Crisp Lake. This unique area will be designed as an extension to the District. The area will provide places to live and work in the same location. Small scale tree lined streets will be lined with compatible commercial uses on one side and residential areas on the other. Other units will be created to serve both as residence and a business with separate entrances for both. Located at the terminus of these key streets will be a new senior center that will help establish this new area.

Principles and policies for the Fairmount Business District area are described below. These statements work in addition to the Corridor-Wide and Neighborhood Principle and Policies statements.

Principle FB 1. The City will strengthen the neighborhood economy by retaining, supporting, and encouraging the growth of existing businesses.

Policy FB 1.1 Leadership Development. The City will strengthen the effectiveness of the NWCDC as a liaison with the City and a catalyst for infrastructure improvements, business retention, and promote a sense of community in the Fairmount Business District. A new District business organization should be created in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and ICED to assist in the redevelopment effort.

Principle FB 2. In partnership with the NWCDC and property owners, the City will assist in stabilizing and ensuring the safety of existing commercial buildings.

Policy FB 2.1 Existing Buildings. The City will assist in evaluation and improvement of the existing building stock. Buildings will be evaluated for their condition, code compliance, owner history, and historic and reuse potential. Buildings with no historic significance and in poor condition will be replaced with new development. Barriers to business owners redeveloping and taking advantage of existing programs will be listed and actions determined to overcome them. The City will encourage the reuse of historic buildings. Potential uses should be compatible with the vision of the District.



Principle FB 3. The City will partner with the Chamber, ICED and other organizations to strengthen the neighborhood economy by encouraging new job-creating investments.

Policy FB 3.1 Incentives. The City and ICED will implement financial incentives to attract new businesses and investments in the Fairmount Business District.

Policy FB 3.2 Awareness. In partnership with the Northwest Communities Development Corporation, the City will increase awareness of economic incentives available in the study area. A website should serve as a resource to residents, investors and visitors. The current plan and market study should be made available to decision makers, developers, activists, and investors.

Principle FB 4. Fairmount Business District will provide a resilient balance of retail, office, housing, entertainment, service and civic uses.

Policy FB 4.1. Compatible Uses. Compatible land uses will be permitted, while incompatible land uses such as car dealerships and light industrial areas will be phased out.

Policy FB 4.2 Strategic Retail Locations. Provide niche and amenity-based retail at strategic places, such as pedestrian linkages to neighborhoods, key corners, trails, transit stops, and adjacent parking areas.

Policy FB 4.3 Types of Business. Target and support businesses that provide neighborhood and niche services. These would include small grocery store, specialty food services, restaurants, antiques artists and other service related businesses. Community buildings and monuments will be located in the area to create a sense of identity. Small scale cultural facilities, day cares, and meeting halls could also provide a center of activity for an area.



Principle FB 5: Commercial buildings will contribute to the character of Fairmount Business District as a unique place (see Figure 5-3).

Policy FB 5.1 Appropriate Character. Appropriate use of scale and architectural diversity will emphasize Fairmount Business District's "image" and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Policy FB 5.2 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future architectural design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.



Policy FB 5.3 Durability. Building design should be flexible and adaptable to meet the shifting consumer needs over time and allow for the expansion and contraction of a variety of businesses.

Policy FB 5.4 Compatibility. The design of new commercial buildings and associated site planning for properties in the Fairmount Business District should be in character with the adjacent commercial properties and residential neighborhoods. Buildings should reflect traditional architectural patterns; the facades of incompatible buildings should be rehabilitated. Compatibility in character is achieved through techniques such as: repeating roof lines and pitches, using similar proportions in building mass and outdoor spaces, using similar relationships to the street, window and door patterns, and/or the use of building materials that have color shades and textures similar to those existing in the immediate area.



Policy FB 5.5 Architectural Elements Based on Human-Scale (see Figure 5-3). Human-scale design and architectural elements will be encouraged in the Fairmount Business District.



- **Visual Interest.** Blank walls should be avoided along streets, plazas and parks. If that is not possible, building facades lacking windows should have other architectural details facing or visible from public spaces. Buildings should also be screened by landscaping to buffer the impacts of building mass.
- **Relationship of Buildings to Public Space.** Buildings will reinforce and revitalize streets and public spaces by providing an ordered variety of architectural features that may include entries, awnings, storefronts, windows, bays and balconies, and other human-scale building details along public ways. While vertical mixed-use is encouraged, maximum building height will be limited to three (3) stories.

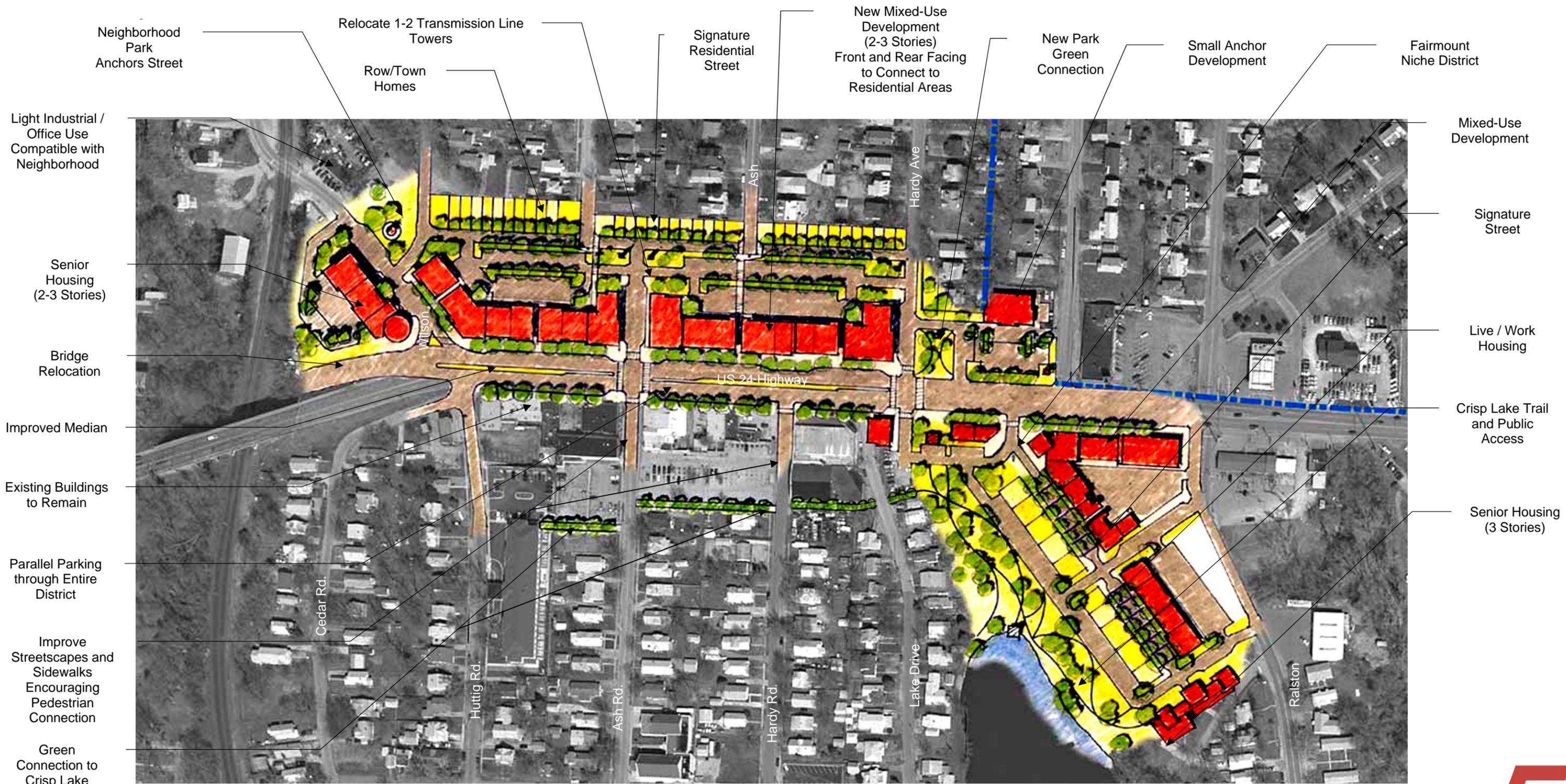


Figure 5-2 Conceptual Revitalization Sketch for Fairmount Business District

Principle FB 6. The design of streets, parking areas, and public spaces in the Fairmount Business District will reinforce its unique and distinctive character (see Figure 5-3).

Policy FB 6.1 Incorporation of Public Spaces.

New development and re-development opportunities will incorporate public spaces to create a prominent civic component in core commercial areas. A diversity of types and scale of public areas will ensure a wide range of pedestrian destinations throughout the District such as civic plazas, courtyards, fountains, pocket parks, art, and sidewalks. These public spaces will provide meeting and gathering points for people and will be within close proximity to work, shopping, civic, cultural, entertainment activities and activity centers.



6.2 Pedestrian Experience. The design of streetscapes, parking lots, signage, and landscaping will provide a safe, dignified pedestrian shopping experience. If the land between a commercial building and parking area is hard-surfaced, the area must contain two or more pedestrian amenities such as benches, drinking fountains, planters, kiosks, public art, outdoor eating areas, vending space or other design elements

Policy FB 6.3 Landscaping.

Shade trees, seasonal plantings, and “soft” spaces will be installed and maintained to mitigate the intensity of U.S. 24 Highway and summer climate, and to contribute to an attractive retail environment. New parallel parking will assist in protecting pedestrians.



Figure 5-3. Fairmount Business District Character

Policy FB 6.4 Pedestrian Safety. Potential accidents at points of conflict among transportation choices (i.e., pedestrian crosswalks) will be reduced by changing the paving materials, enhancing traffic lights, parallel parking and utilizing access management techniques along U.S. 24 Highway and arterial streets.

Policy FB 6.5 Public Safety. The design of buildings, parking areas and streets will provide a sense of security and safety for users. Adequate lighting, visibility and location of facilities collectively will add to a secure 24-hour environment for employees, tourists, and visitors. New parallel parking will assist in protecting pedestrians.

Principle FB 7: As funds are available, the City will work with private and other public entities to invest in a comprehensive infrastructure improvement program for strategic, “model” blocks, streets, or buildings, including but not limited to improvements to water mains, sewer lines, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, street pavements and street trees in order to define the District and encouraging private reinvestment.



Principle FB 8: The Fairmount Business District will be served by a balanced transportation system designed for motor vehicle, bus transit, pedestrian, and bicycle.

Policy FB 8.1 Design of Streets and Public Spaces. Streets and public spaces within the District will be attractive, accessible, functional, and designed to enhance pedestrian and bicycle activity. New model streets demonstrating these characteristics will be created surrounding the commercial areas.

Policy FB 8.2 Connectivity. The Fairmount Business District’s sidewalks, streets, and gathering spaces will provide connections between Crisp Lake, businesses, surrounding neighborhoods, and greenways. The street grid through the District will be reconnected to further integrate neighborhoods and create new signature spaces. New streets will help relieve congestion in the area by dispersing traffic to multiple areas. This will also create activity on streets other than U.S. 24 Highway, reducing crime and increasing the appeal of the area.



Policy FB 8.3 Balanced Transportation Access. The City will work to lessen the effect of auto congestion and intensity by emphasizing other transportation means, including walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy FB 8.4 ADA and Special Transportation Services. The transportation needs of disabled and senior populations will be assessed and addressed appropriately in the Fairmount Business District.

Policy FB 8.5 Parking. Parking is a critical factor in the future of the Fairmount Business District. Parking will be convenient, economical, affordable and accessible to meet diversified parking demands. Reduced parking standards may be applied to the Fairmount Business District as its proximity to high-frequency transit service, walkable environment, and mix of uses increases. In addition:

- The replacement of angled-parking with on-street parallel parking should be explored along U.S. 24 Highway for the expanded Fairmount Business District and intersecting local streets to provide close access and add to the pedestrian nature of the District.
- Shared parking allowances will be encouraged for nearby uses with staggered peak periods of demand, such as for retail and entertainment uses. A portion of any project’s parking requirements in the Fairmount Business District will be considered satisfied by on-street parking.
- Parking lots must be located to maintain their accessibility while minimizing their visibility from primary pedestrian streets, plazas and public spaces. Lots should be located behind buildings, in side yards, or in the interior of blocks throughout the District. Their visual impact shall be softened and screened with a perimeter landscape buffer.



- Large-surface parking lots will be visually and functionally segmented into several smaller areas. Land devoted to surface parking lots should be reduced, over time, through redevelopment and/or construction of structured parking facilities.

Principle FB 9. Adjacent neighborhoods will be integrated into the Fairmount Business District.

Policy FB 9.1 Transitions. Neighborhoods will be integrated into the Fairmount Business District with active development types centered closer to commercial areas. The District will transition to less intense uses, such as from mixed-use commercial areas to apartments, to row houses, to patio homes, to detached residential units.



Policy FB 9.2 Neighborhoods. Appropriate infill and redevelopment will occur in adjacent neighborhoods especially along U.S. 24 Highway, south of the former BP refinery site and adjacent to Crisp Lake.

Policy FB 9.3 Neighborhood Integration. Adjacent neighborhoods will be integrated with the Fairmount Business District's through sidewalks, off-street and on-street trails.

Mixed-Use Areas (MU)

As emphasized in the Mid-America Regional Council's Report, "Creating Quality Places", mixing development types has definite market benefits. The intent of new mixed-use areas is to meet existing and future market demand by focusing land use patterns in compact developments that locate jobs, shopping, and services near housing along arterial, transit-supportive corridors. These multi-purpose activity center areas should be designed with transit-supportive and traditional neighborhood principles such that they accommodate a range of densities and uses as markets change. Retail stores, civic buildings, offices, and residences, including single-family, townhouses, and apartments will be encouraged.

A number of mixed-use centers are proposed, including the previously described Fairmount Business District, creating activity areas for people to walk, shop and live. Figure 5-4 on page 5-14 describes one potential conceptual mixed-use plan for the southeast corner of Sterling Avenue and U.S. 24 Highway. In this concept, the existing strip center would be redeveloped in conjunction with the adjacent multi-family development. The redeveloped commercial uses would consist of a total of 40,000 square feet of neighborhood shopping commercial space. The concept

includes fronting buildings on U.S. 24 on either side of Claremont Avenue. The result will be the creation of a gateway to a pedestrian-friendly street consisting of row homes and a new multi-family development. The area would transition to single family homes closer to Bundschu Park. Access to the park would be provided from several trailheads located in the new neighborhoods. Alternatively, the primary commercial redevelopment area could occur on the northeast or northwest corner of U.S. 24 Highway and Sterling Avenue. Development in these areas would require the removal of existing businesses, some residences, and the consolidation of a number of parcels. Depending on the location of the primary commercial development, other areas should continue to be redeveloped into supporting residential uses with complementing smaller scale mixed-use commercial development.

Figure 5-5 on page 5-15 describes a conceptual plan for the northwest corner of River Boulevard and U.S. 24 Highway. The concept is centered on the redevelopment of the existing strip commercial center into a larger commercial development consisting of an additional 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of retail space. To further support this development, adjacent vacant and underutilized properties would be developed with a variety of housing types, including single and multi-family housing. Housing would be located adjacent to open space, creating a break from the intensity of the Corridor. Smaller open spaces between developments and within the interior of medium to high density housing areas will provide additional green space. Trailheads and overlooks for the open space would provide vital amenities to local residents and the community at-large. Trails will connect local neighborhoods, Sugar Creek, and the larger regional trail system. The result will be a transition in land uses to types more compatible with the adjacent Truman Presidential Museum and Library.



Principles and policies for the Mixed-Use Areas are described below. These statements work in combination with the Corridor-Wide, Neighborhood, and Fairmount Business District Principle and Policies statements.

Principle MU 1: The City will promote compatible infill and redevelopment in targeted areas within the Corridor.

Policy MU 1.1 Targeted Redevelopment/Infill. Redevelopment and infill development will be encouraged at the intersections of Sterling Avenue and U.S. 24 Highway, and River Boulevard and U.S. 24 Highway, and other targeted locations. The purpose of these areas is to channel growth where it will be beneficial and can best improve access to jobs,

housing and services with fewer and shorter auto trips. These targeted areas are parts of the Corridor where general agreement exists that development or redevelopment is beneficial. A major goal is to increase economic activity in the area to benefit existing residents and businesses and, where necessary, provide the stimulus to redevelop.

Policy MU 1.2 Priority. U.S. 24 Highway nodes at Sterling Avenue and River Boulevard should take priority for land use, streetscape and urban design improvements to promote its transition to a series of mixed-use commercial centers.

Policy MU 1.3 Land Use. Redevelopment will be encouraged to locate and design buildings such that a percentage of the fronts of buildings directly face adjacent streets, provide a mix of types and size of businesses, provide pedestrian-oriented site design, and incorporate convenient, safe and attractive parking areas. Retail uses will include the redevelopment and expansion of existing commercial uses. Commercial areas should include a primary anchor and complementing smaller retail stores. To support these areas, higher density housing should be located adjacent to these districts. A mixed-use commercial area may include just one side of U.S. 24 Highway, rather than bridging both sides.



Policy MU 1.4 Mixed Use. A variety of commercial and residential uses should be included in these areas. Where appropriate vertical mixed-use developments (2-3 stories) consisting of office, commercial and residential uses should be considered.

Policy MU 1.5 Flexibility. Types of developments permitted in mixed-use areas will remain flexible to accommodate the densities, mix of uses, and shifting consumer needs over time.

Policy MU 1.6 Integration. These intense development areas will quickly transition to lower intensity uses by reducing the height and scale of buildings. These areas will include pedestrian and street connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

Principle MU 2: Mixed-Use Areas will be served by a balanced transportation system designed for cars, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle.

Policy MU 2.1 Transportation Access. Mixed-Use Areas should be easily accessible by the automobile and transit. Internal areas within the Mixed-Use Areas should be pedestrian oriented. Streets connecting to the areas will be attractive, accessible, functional, and designed to enhance pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Policy MU 2.2 Connectivity. Mixed-Use Area sidewalks, streets, and gathering spaces will provide connections to surrounding neighborhoods and greenways.

Policy MU 2.3 ADA and Special Transportation Services. The transportation needs of disabled and senior populations will be assessed and addressed appropriately in each Mixed-Use Area.

Policy MU 2.4 Parking. Parking lots must be located to maintain their accessibility while minimizing their visibility from primary streets and public spaces. Lots should be located behind buildings. Their visual impact shall be softened and screened with a perimeter landscape buffer.



Principle MU 3. The design of each area will contribute to the character of each Mixed-Use Area

Policy MU 3.1 Buildings. A variety of building scales and heights should be used. Buildings should include common design elements that create a unified feel.

Policy MU 3.2 Streetscape. The design of streets, parking areas, and public spaces should reinforce the distinctive character of each redevelopment area.

Policy MU 3.3 Adaptability. Building design should be flexible and adaptable to meet the shifting consumer needs over time and will allow for the expansion and contraction of a variety of businesses.





Figure 5-4. Conceptual Revitalization Sketch for Sterling Avenue Mixed-Use Area



Figure 5-5. Conceptual Revitalization Sketch for River Boulevard Mixed-Use Area

Policy MU 3.4 Human-Scale. Human-scale design and architectural elements will be encouraged.

Policy MU 3.5 Signage. The Sign Code will be enforced and new sign regulations developed for Mixed-Use Areas. This should include the removal of pole signs.

Policy MU 3.6 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.



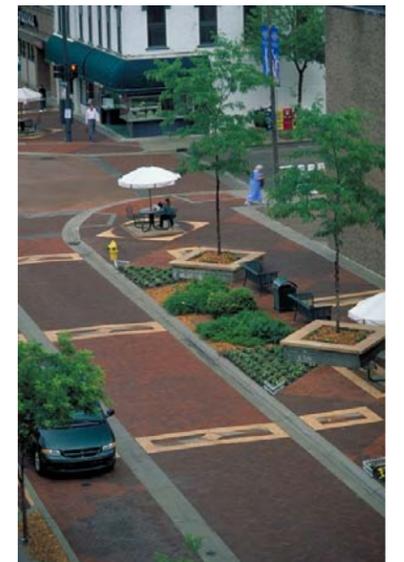
Source: MARC

Principle CD 2: The design of Commercial Districts should provide for convenient access by all modes of travel, with efficient and cost effective pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

Policy CD 2.1 Linkage to Neighborhoods Adjacent to Commercial Districts. New models for retail development will be necessary to link neighborhoods with retail areas. Pedestrian and bicycle linkages from surrounding neighborhoods to Commercial Districts will be provided, particularly at key transit stop locations and from multiple directions, if practical.



Policy CD 2.2 Arterial Crossings. Improve pedestrian/bicycle linkages across arterial streets and along commercial corridors. Pedestrian travel routes should be clearly identified and distinguished from auto traffic through parking areas, across streets, and along building frontages. Pedestrian/bicycle linkages through existing parking lots to commercial destinations should be improved when opportunities arise.



Policy CD 2.3 Transit Facilities. Transit stop facilities will be located at safe and convenient destinations -- strategically distributed within Commercial Districts to serve users in the area. Benches, shelters and other drop-off sites will be aesthetically designed and be located away from arterial street curb lines in order to provide a safe, accessible, secure and positive experience for transit users.

Policy CD 2.4 Parking. Parking lots will not dominate the frontage of streets or interrupt pedestrian routes. Large-surface parking lots will be visually and functionally segmented into several smaller areas. Land devoted to surplus surface parking lots should be reduced, over time, through redevelopment. Their visual impact shall be softened and screened with a perimeter landscape buffer. All parking must provide for visibility, personal safety and security.

Commercial Districts (CD)

Commercial areas outside of the mixed-use districts such as banking, service, and lodging locations, are typically composed of strip commercial uses. New vitality will be infused into these areas over time through the gradual redevelopment of underutilized properties. Redevelopment will include new higher quality commercial developments and medium to high residential housing. Access improvements, including reducing curb cuts, will improve safety along the corridor. The pedestrian environment will also be improved, connecting these areas to adjacent neighborhoods, Mixed-Use Areas and the Fairmount Business District. Principles and policies for the Commercial Districts are described below. These statements work in addition to the Corridor-Wide Principle and Policies statements. Transportation System Principle and Policy statements are especially applicable to these areas.

Principle CD 1: The size and scale of businesses within Commercial Districts will vary. New development and redevelopment will include a mix of commercial uses avoiding dominating parking areas.

Policy CD 1.1 Existing Strip Commercial Conversion. The City will encourage and support the gradual evolution of existing, auto-dominated strip commercial areas to compact, multi-modal-oriented, commercial places with enhanced walking connections between destinations.

Policy CD 1.2 New Development. New development in Commercial Districts will locate and design buildings such that a percentage of the fronts of buildings directly face adjacent streets, provide a mix of types and size of businesses, provide pedestrian-oriented site design, and incorporate convenient, safe and attractive parking areas into the block.

Principle CD 3: The physical environment of the Corridor will be improved as a functional, beautiful, decent, healthful, interesting, and efficient setting for human activities.

Policy CD 3.1 Streetscape Improvements. Deteriorated streetscape, especially sidewalks, should be repaired and upgraded.

Policy CD 3.2 Visual Blight. The appearance of the area will be improved through the removal and prohibition of overhead utility lines and billboards.

Policy CD 3.3 Sign Enforcement. The Sign Code will be enforced and new sign regulations developed to further improve the physical environment of the Corridor. This should include the prohibition of pole signs and billboards.

Policy CD 3.4 Image. Transportation and streetscape elements should be designed to create a unified, cohesive and significant image.

Policy CD 3.5 Separation. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic will be separated with landscape and hardscape barriers.

Policy CD 3.6 Orientation. When feasible, buildings should be moved forward toward the street to screen parking and promote pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. The City will encourage parking areas to be oriented to the side or behind commercial buildings.

Policy CD 3.7 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.

Gateways (GW)

Creating and maintaining memorable *places* are the result of a synthesis between good design, economic vitality, activity, ecology, and a community's heritage. Each day, incremental decisions regarding where redevelopment occurs, how it occurs, and what it looks like affect the long-term character of the Corridor.

A collective vision and public investment is prerequisite to private reinvestment. Gateways to Independence provide a unique opportunity for the City to "make a statement" regarding its heritage and civic pride in order to stimulate redevelopment. The Plan seeks to build upon a historic and modern gateway. The Mt. Washington Cemetery and Truman Presidential Museum and Library contain landmark open spaces that are home to some of Independence's most meaningful memories and provide a respite from the often overwhelming intensity of the highway environment.

The most prominent visual landmark upon arrival along U.S. 24 Highway to Independence is Mt. Washington Cemetery, which has been an important gathering site in the community for almost one-hundred years. Rock Creek, which flows through the Cemetery and north across the Corridor, is another unique visual amenity in the urban environment and holds significant potential as a recreative greenway. An existing transit stop maintains a high intensity of use by families and workers living in this area. At present, this area consists of several commercial properties and open spaces, many of which are underutilized and could be used to promote Independence and the Fairmount Business District area. Investments stemming from its designation and incentives will increase property values to neighborhoods and commercial properties on the north and east.

One possible vision for the future illustrated in Figure 5-6 and 5-7, develops this key area into a major gateway. Key to this concept is the redevelopment of properties along the north side of U.S. 24 Highway, across from Mt. Washington Cemetery. Suitable businesses of a modest size, less than 15,000 square feet, could be intermixed with adjacent open space. Limiting the size and scale of these buildings will create a suitable gateway, avoid competing with the Fairmount Business District and allow the integration of open space and other design elements. Businesses such as a restaurant or nursery could overlook Rock Creek to the north. A new trailhead for Rock Creek would provide a valuable recreational amenity. Users of the new trail will be able to head north along Rock Creek or south through the Cemetery or along Brookside Avenue or Winner Roads. A new median, lighting and other streetscape features for this short stretch will reinforce the character of the place. Signage noting the entrance to the City of Independence will complete the picture.

The Corridor's eastern gateway, the Truman Presidential Museum and Library, is also a destination. Over 100,000 tourists visit the Library each year, fueling the growth of businesses along the Corridor and Independence Square. The Library is picturesquely situated near McCoy Park, Mill Creek, and several trails. Recent road improvements, landscaping, lighting, and signage have enhanced the image and accessibility of the Library. Existing elements at this gateway will be extended westward to meet up with new mixed development area at River Boulevard.

Commercial land uses and an architectural character befitting of an entrance to Independence and complementary to Mt. Washington Cemetery and the Truman Library will be encouraged. The application of carefully planned strategies and principles, targeted private investment, and public reinvestment to the streetscape along Winner Road and Truman Library can enhance the economic, aesthetic, and cultural role of Independence.

Principle GW 1. Gateways will reinforce the heritage, community pride, and improve the overall image of the City of Independence.

Policy GW 1.1. Mt. Washington Gateway. Entry to the Corridor at Mt. Washington Cemetery will reinforce the historic cultural and natural character of the Corridor at set the stage for entry into the Fairmount Business District. The City will work with the private developers, the Chamber, MODOT, MARC and other agencies to initiate gateway improvements in this area which would be a catalyst for the Corridor. A minor gate located at Brookside Avenue and Winner Road will have complementing landscaping and signage.

Policy GW 1.2. Truman Library Gateway. Entry to the Corridor at the Truman Library will reinforce the historic character related to the Truman Library and set the stage for entry into the Corridor and the River Street Redevelopment Node.



Principle GW 2. Streets, transit stops, trails, and sidewalks will continue to be upgraded to provide a dignified and accessible experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

Principle GW 3. The design of new gateway developments will be attractive and possess a distinctive architectural character.

Policy GW 3.1 Design Standards. Policies contained in this section should form the basis for future design standards that will be incorporated into the Independence City Code as supplemental regulations for development review of properties.

Policy GW 3.2 Aesthetic Appearance. Design standards will enhance the aesthetic appearance of new buildings, site planning, landscaping, and signage. Infrastructure will be improved and enhanced by using urban standards.

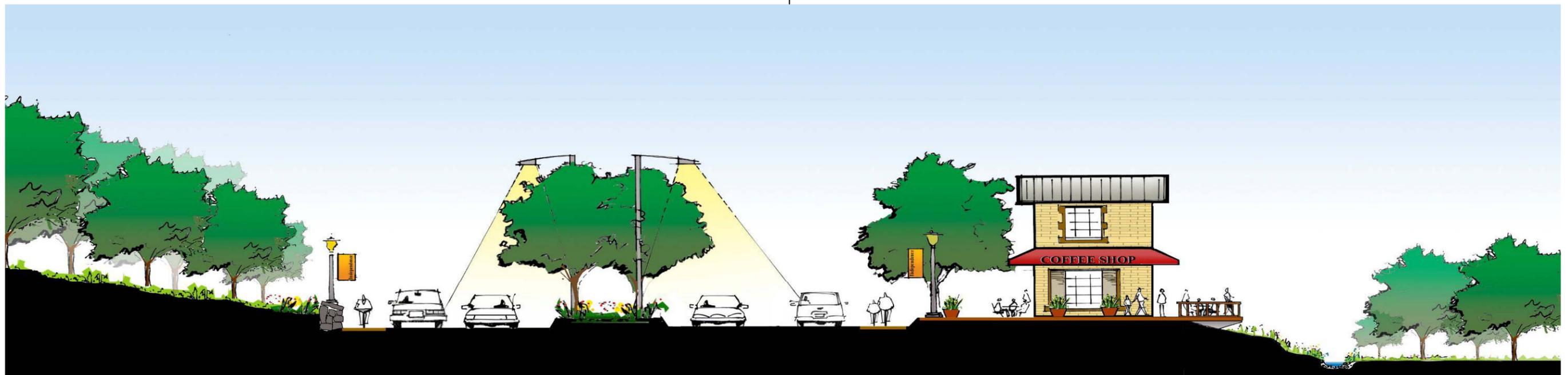


Figure 5-7. Conceptual Revitalization Cross-section for the Western Gateway Character

Policy GW 3.3 Landscape Enhancements. Landscaping along public right-of-ways, screening of undesirable views, street tree plantings, and proper maintenance will enhance the open, green character of the gateways.

Policy GW 3.4 Streetscape. Streetscape improvements including signage and lighting will capitalize on the architectural character of the Truman Library and Mt. Washington Cemetery.

Policy GW 3.5 Partnerships. The Truman Library, MODOT and the City should partner to expand existing streetscape features and to implement elements of the plan. The identified gateways should provide key areas to focus these activities.

Policy GW 3.6 Types of Business. Target, market and support businesses that would be appropriate to the Western Gateway. These would include restaurants, sports related commercial uses, nurseries and other related businesses.

Transportation System (TS)

The City of Independence has a rich history as a multi-modal hub including a vital stop for merchants heading westward on the Santa Fe Trail, California or Oregon Trails. Fairmount Business District owes its origin, in part, to the Metropolitan Railway Company which provided service to the Business District and the Fairmount Amusement Park in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the most recent decades, however, progress gave sole dominance to the personal vehicle. Today trails, trolleys, buses, and even sidewalks are almost absent on several segments of the Corridor. Furthermore, U.S. 24 Highway and its arterials are designed as highways, not as city streets. This designation makes them difficult to cross, and not supportive of pedestrian activities. Previous plans have indicated that a lack of transportation choices has hampered economic redevelopment efforts in northwest Independence (Weed and Seed Strategy p. 32).

In contrast, enhanced multi-modal connectivity catalyzes economic development and neighborhood improvement. Bus services enhance neighborhood livability, decrease parking needs, increase economic development potential, and support a pedestrian friendly environment. How a community chooses to manage personal mobility and provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the community has a profound effect on the character of the City and the quality of life enjoyed by its residents.

The Plan envisions an integrated transportation system that provides a variety of transportation choices for all abilities, ages, and income levels. In coordination with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Jackson County, and other regional transportation organizations, fixed and flexible routes will enhance the connectivity of existing neighborhoods and commercial/retail

sites. Pedestrian, bicycle, and bus routes would be closely interrelated with the new multi-modal Independence Transit Center located near Independence Square.

As described in each concept plan, clear pedestrian pathways will be established from commercial and mixed-use areas into the neighborhoods. Trees and appropriate landscaping will provide a separation between the pedestrian and traffic as well as improve the aesthetics of areas.

The Plan also recognizes the importance of the automobile. Traffic from U.S. 24 Highway is vital to the success of the District. Future transportation improvements such as the new interchange in Sugar Creek with the Lewis and Clark Parkway at Sterling Avenue will form a new vital transportation connection to the Fairmount Business District, the new Bluff's Business Park and mixed-use areas at Sterling Avenue and Bundschu Park.

The following section provides principles and policies for developing an effective multi-modal transportation system to help achieve the Corridor's land use and economic development goals.



Principle TS 1. U.S. 24 Highway and its supporting transportation system will be improved to provide a variety of safe and efficient transportation choices, thus increasing mobility for all sectors of the population, including all ages, income levels, and people with disabilities.

Policy TS 1.1 Multimodal Network. Highway improvements will incorporate bikeway, pedestrian, and transit networks as essential parts of the transportation system.

Policy TS 1.2 Traffic-calming. Traffic-calming techniques will be explored for arterial, collector and residential streets leading from U.S. 24 Highway to existing and future neighborhoods to increase the safety of adjacent neighborhoods, such as in conflict points at the Fairmount Business District, Winner Road, Sterling Avenue, Bundschu Park, and River Boulevard nodes.

Principle TS 2. The Corridor's transportation, land use, and redevelopment decisions will be mutually supportive, and structured in a compact pattern that facilitates pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel.

Policy TS 2.1 Transit Supportive Design. The City will explore and integrate Transit Oriented Design strategies with respect to new development, redevelopment, and infill development opportunities.

Future Open Space or Passive Commercial Uses

Entry Signage for Independence

Gateway Commercial Uses

Landscape and Lighting Median

Pedestrian Trail / Interpretive Signage



Rock Creek Greenway and Trail System

Trailhead

Off Street Trail for Bicyclists

Redeveloped Commercial Uses

New Landscaping and Signage with Commons Elements

Figure 5-6. Conceptual Revitalization Sketch for the Western Gateway

Principle TS 3. City streets and walkways will be planned, built, and maintained as safe, attractive public spaces.

Policy TS 3.1 Access Management. Efficiency and safety will be increased by utilizing access management techniques along U.S. 24 Highway and arterial streets, including but not limited to reducing the number of curb cuts, improving access points, and installing medians.

Policy TS 3.2 Street System Improvements. Streets should be improved, relocated and redesigned to support a safe and efficient transportation system. Such improvements could include improving the street system with the Fairmount Business District.



Principle TS 4. The City will provide leadership to support and maintain a comprehensive, efficient and high-quality public transit service for the U.S. 24 Highway Corridor.

Policy TS 4.1 Partnerships. The City will partner with MODOT, KCATA and MARC to improve the transportation system in the Corridor and integrate future design elements.

Policy TS 4.2 Independence Transit Center. New and existing transit routes will connect the Independence Transit Center to key redevelopment nodes such as the Western Gateway, Fairmount Business District, Sterling Avenue, Bundschu Park, and River Boulevard.

Policy TS 4.3 Transit Stops. Easy pedestrian access and a mix of uses are encouraged at existing and proposed transit stops to allow transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile. Interfaces with the existing bus system will be passenger friendly and will accommodate bicyclists and the disabled to the greatest extent possible (Regional Transit Association).



Policy TS 4.4 Quality Facilities for Transit Users. The design of passenger/transit interfaces will provide a dignified experience for the transit user by including quality benches, shelters, adequate lighting, and landscaping as needed.

Policy TS 4.5 Convenient Connections. Frequent and convenient connections will be provided to employment sites, major attractions, and other activity centers.

Principle TS 5. The safety, security, aesthetics, and convenience of the pedestrian and cyclist will be a fundamental consideration in the design of the transportation system.

Policy TS 5.1 Bicycles. The bicycle will be a practical transportation choice for residents and should use a combination of on and off-street trail systems. The system will be enhanced with the adoption of a new bikeway and trail plan.

Policy TS 5.2 Convenience. Directness, continuity, street crossings, visual interest, amenities, and security for pedestrians will be incorporated into site planning and infrastructure improvements. Streets and sidewalks will be pedestrian friendly with appropriate traffic calming, tree plantings, landscaped strips, sidewalk width, sidewalk connectivity, sidewalk quality measures as needed.



Policy TS 5.3 Sidewalks. All areas within the Corridor shall be connected with walkways that are well lit, ADA compliant, and physically separated from driveways and parking spaces by landscaping, berms, barriers, or crosswalks. Crosswalks will be clearly marked, with raised grade and/or distinct paving materials if possible. Parking lots shall not interrupt pedestrian right-of-ways.

Policy TS 5.4 Accessibility. Interconnected multi-use trail network will be designed to function as both recreational and transportation routes for all skill and user types, with well-connected trail access points and wayfinding materials to nearby community features, such as the Truman Library, Fairmount and Englewood Business District, City of Sugar Creek and Mt. Washington Cemetery.

Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space (NR)

Natural resources areas and green space will provide a release from intense urban areas. A greenway system based on the existing floodplain will form the foundation for the Plan.

Principle NR 1. Natural resources within the Corridor study area will be maintained and protected to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy NR 1.1 Riparian Interface. The interfaces between Rock Creek, Sugar Creek, and Mill Creek and development along U.S. 24 Highway should be coordinated to retain environmental quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and accommodate, with appropriate buffers, multi-use trails.



Policy NR 1.2 Natural Features. Natural features such as existing trees, ridgelines, steep slopes, riparian areas and ponds will be integrated into new developments.

Policy NR 1.3 Natural Hazards. Protection from natural hazards and public safety will be a primary concern. Areas prone to flooding or having steep slopes shall be preserved as natural areas.

Policy NR 1.4 Riparian Areas. The City of Independence stream setback requirements should be implemented and enforced to create a riparian open space buffer that will help absorb floodwater, enhance water quality and protect wildlife habitat.

community should continue to preserve open space in areas that include and surround the 100-year floodplain, sensitive wildlife areas, water bodies and steep slope.

Policy NR 2.4 Parks. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek should continue to improve the recreational amenities in existing parks and where appropriate provide additional parkland.



Policy NR 2.5 Recreation Amenities. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek should encourage recreational facilities such as community and recreational centers to be located along the new trail and greenway system.

Policy NR 2.6 Local Connectivity. The trail system will provide functional and recreational linkages to commercial areas, neighborhoods, parks, open space and greenways including Mt. Washington Cemetery, Englewood and Fairmount Business Districts, Bundschu and McCoy Parks. In addition, the trail system should be used to interconnect the Sugar Creek and Independence park systems.



Policy NR 2.7 Regional Connectivity. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek will cooperate with Jackson County, MARC and adjacent governmental entities to ensure the development of an interconnected trail system according to the MetroGreen trail plan joining the urban and rural green corridors throughout a seven-county region.

Principle NR 2. The Corridor study area will be served by parks, multi-use trails and other recreational facilities to support existing and future neighborhoods.

Policy NR 2.1 Off-Street Trail System. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek, in conjunction with MARC and the private development community, should actively pursue the expansion of a multi-use paved off-street trail system to increase transportation options and serve recreational needs. Key locations for trails should include stream corridors and abandoned rail lines.

Policy NR 2.2 On-Street Trail Connections. Off-street and on-street trails should be connected in order to efficiently link destinations within the Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek.



Policy NR 2.3 Open Space. The Cities of Independence and Sugar Creek, in conjunction with MARC and the private development