

THE CITY - PAST AND PRESENT

2.1 - HISTORY OF THE CITY

Very little is known about the early history of the Indians inhabiting Mid-America prior to the coming of the white man. Father Marquette located the Osage tribe near the Osage River in 1673. Archaeological discoveries in Jackson County have uncovered burial sites and what might be the remnants of communal living by the Indians of the Hopewellian Culture. Local findings indicate that they flourished in the Jackson County area from approximately 500 BC to 500 AD.

Journals of the early explorers and pioneers make many references to the Great and Little Osage Indian nations which occupied much of the land that became Western Missouri. Indians at this time were nomadic and had what might be termed a horse oriented culture. With such mobility, the Indians from the Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Sioux, and Fox tribes rode the many trails that wound their way across Jackson County, camping and utilizing the same springs which the early settlers used.

The earliest voyageurs who crossed what they called the "blue country" of the Great Plains would have encountered several tribes of Indians in the area now surrounding the City of Independence. Kaw Indians, settling along the juncture of the Kaw and Missouri rivers met the trader Sieur de Borugmont in their village of Canzes. Shawnees were camped to the south of the Kaw and Delawares to the north. The Osage tribe inhabited much of what later became Jackson County; all three were themselves immigrants to the area, having come originally from the Ohio valley. Early trappers and explorers like Morgan Boone (a son of Daniel) would have followed the Osage "trace," a trail which crossed what is now the "courthouse

square" and they trapped beaver on the Big and Little Blue rivers.

The United States consummated the Louisiana Purchase from Spain in 1803. The explorations of this recently purchased Territory (1804-1806) impressed upon Lewis and Clark the immense trading potential of the area and the need for means to protect the new territory from the hostile Indians, the British, and the Spanish intruders. Fort Osage, located on a bluff overlooking the Missouri a few miles northeast of Independence, was built by Federal troops and territorial militia under the command of General William Clark in 1808. This Fort was not only a center of trading operations, headed by George C. Sibley, an Indian agent and trader, but also was an outpost of frontier hospitality.

Many expeditions to the Fort and beyond profoundly affected the development of Independence; for example, it was from Fort Osage that Captain William Becknell set out for Santa Fe in 1821. In 1825, Major Sibley was appointed one of the commissioners to survey the route of the trail which followed the old Osage trace through the center of what was later to become Independence. The first steamboat west of the Mississippi, the Western Engineer, passed by the fort in 1819, setting a precedent for later river travel. Also, as a result of negotiations by Clark and Sibley, Jackson County was opened for settlement in 1825 after a treaty with the Osage Indians was negotiated, ceding to the State a strip of land twenty four miles wide extending from the Missouri River to the Arkansas River.

James Shepherd was probably the first permanent resident of this new County to stake out his homestead in what was soon to become Independence. In 1825 Shepherd, accompa-

nied by his wife and slaves, arrived at Fort Osage, awaiting the final settlement of the treaty which would open the 'blue country' to eager pioneers, squatters, and speculators. When the word came that a settlement was approaching Shepherd and his household camped near the public spring just east of the square. Shortly afterward, Shepherd's next door neighbor John Young built his home about a mile away. After the first of January, 1826 (when the land was officially opened), settlers mostly from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee began to pour into the new land. The inhabitants of the area soon recognized the need for the organization of a county government.

At the time the treaty with the Osage Indians was being negotiated the Missouri Legislature decided that when the newly-acquired land became a county it should be called Jackson, after Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans and the idol of many frontiersmen. At that time "Jackson" county was attached to Lillard, later renamed Lafayette county. On December 15, 1826, scarcely a year after the first settlers began to arrive, the Missouri Legislature separated Jackson County (which then included Cass and Bates counties) from its neighbor, and appointed David Ward, Julius Emmons, and John Bartleson commissioners to select a site for the "county seat." The three men decided upon an area near the Shepherd homestead, contending that it was near the center of the wooded portion of the county, and called it Independence, perhaps after one of the qualities they admired most in "Andy" Jackson. This little town, governed by the County Court for twenty-two years, soon took its place as one of the most famous frontier villages in American history.

The first courthouse for Jackson County was commissioned in February, 1827, and built under the direction of Daniel P. Lewis for \$150. Fort Osage was abandoned in 1827 and the federal troops were transferred to Fort Leavenworth. About this same time, entrepreneurs began to open stores and other service establishments in Independence. As a

trading town, Independence developed around the constant influx of pioneers, mavericks and mountain men. Hotels and taverns, like the Smallwood Noland Hotel located on the north side of the square, sprung up around the public square, along with such supply houses as Owens and Aull, Lucas, Agnew, and Courtney. Mills, such as the Overfelt mill on Spring Street, and the Brock mill on Liberty where the Vaile mansion was later built, supplied travelers with flour and meal. The Overfelt mill was the forerunner to the Waggoner and Gates milling operation, part of which enterprise still stands near another favorite watering springs of Santa Fe traders and pioneers, on Spring Street. The Overfelt home, located on the southeast corner of Spring and Walnut dates back to these early days. Independence was also home to several blacksmith shops where the great prairie schooners were built and outfitted, horses and oxen shod, and guns repaired.

Hiram Young built a successful wagon manufacturing and outfitting business in Independence that served travelers jumping off for Santa Fe, California and Oregon.. People on the trails west of Independence knew all about Young because their very existence depended on his handiwork. The wagon design used on the seal of the city of Independence is a drawing of a wagon made by Hiram Young.

Independence was the starting point for the Oregon, California and Sante Fe Trails. Hundreds of Missouri farmers, discouraged by low prices on their produce, left en masse for Oregon in 1842 and '43. These participants in the "Great Emigration" outfitted their wagons in Independence. A few years later the '49ers crowded the border towns of Missouri, headed for 'Californy', full of hopes for striking it rich.

The constant influx of traders and others on their way west soon brought Independence the reputation of a rough and tumble frontier village. Nevertheless, the roots of civilization were creeping into the town and blossoming. The early schools in this area were, for the most part, privately owned like the schools in most

southern settlements. The period also saw the construction of numerous churches in the city. During this early period of frontier America, the first migration of Latter Day Saint settlers came to Independence. Their reasons for coming were basically two fold: the early missionaries came in 1831 to bring their story of the Book of Mormon to the Indians in the Kansas reservation; and secondly, Joseph Smith, the prophet-leader of the church came to Independence and dedicated a 'temple lot', and a central place for their 'gathering'. The early influx of Mormon settlers totaled approximately 1,500, or approximately one-third of the total population of the County.

The years preceding the Civil War were marked with spectacular growth for Independence, but the town was not without its rivals. During the 1840's, the center of trade and westward travel began to shift gradually from Independence to Westport. This was due in part to the fact that Westport was situated west of the Big Blue River, and wagons starting from Independence in the spring would frequently have to wait for weeks at a time for the water in the Big Blue to go down enough to permit fording the river. Therefore, wagons starting from Westport often had as much as three or four weeks head start. The strategic position of Westport was further improved by its proximity to 'Westport Landing' which provided a natural dock frontage for steamboats on a rock ledge outcropping of Bethany Falls limestone.

In an effort to help Independence regain its former trade, a narrow gauge railroad line was built in 1849 from the center of town to the steamboat landing at Wayne City, located at a point near the extension of River Boulevard north. This railroad had a terminal at Maple and Osage, and extended through what is now the eastern portion of the City of Sugar Creek. Mule drawn freight cars were utilized to transport the merchandise from the River to downtown Independence. Unfortunately, the Missouri River formed a sandbar at Wayne City, prohibiting the landing of steamboats. Thereafter, the boats went upstream to Westport Land-

ing and the railroad to Independence was abandoned in 1852.

The shift in trade did not prevent Independence from retaining its position of leadership in the County for many years. In 1849, Independence was incorporated as a city, with William McCoy as mayor. The City originally consisted of three wards; its earliest boundaries were College on the north, Noland on the east, Pacific on the south, and Pleasant on the west. This was the original Town Plat of the City of Independence. In 1851 its city limits were extended west to Forest, north in an elongated strip to include Wayne City landing along the Missouri River, east to Leslie, and south to 23rd Street and Aberdeen. These city limits remained for almost one hundred years. The city later de-annexed Wayne City.

Independence was also the site of some encounters and events related to the Civil War. Because the State of Missouri had been admitted into the Union as a "slave state", the sympathies of the citizens of Independence were generally with the South. This Southern sympathy coupled with the City's proximity to the free State of Kansas and its strategic importance as a trading area left the City thronged with Federal troops. In the summer of 1862 Colonel James T. Buel, with a force of about 500 men, was in control of Independence while a few miles to the south Colonel Upton Hays set up a camp to recruit new soldiers for the Confederacy. Early in the morning of August 11th, 1862, Hays and his men, joined by the guerilla band led by William Clarke Quantrill, attacked the Federal post in Independence. The Federal army, camped along Pleasant near Lexington, was taken by surprise and scattered before the fury of Hays' troops. Quatrill and his men attacked Buel's headquarters in the old McCoy Bank building located on Lexington west of Liberty. Although the Confederates took the City of Independence and defeated the Union forces there, they left shortly afterwards, taking with them the supplies they had confiscated from the Federal outpost.

The Civil War left its scars on Independence. Some young men who had fought for the Confederacy during the War refused to settle down to the ways of civilian life during the reconstruction and continued to terrorize the area in outlaw bands, robbing trains and banks. But despite the hurt which lay heavy in many an Independence household, the City recovered from its wounds to grow and re-establish itself as a thriving community.

In 1865 the Missouri Pacific Railroad reached Independence, and in 1879 the Chicago and Alton Railroad brought still more commerce to Independence, and to its rapidly growing neighbors to the west. Several banks were established in the period from 1877 to 1887 and numerous churches were built. Woodland College was established in 1869 and held classes until the end of the century. Several early public schools were also established in Independence.

During the early 1880's, William E. Winner, a land speculator, planned a street and residential development along a dummy railroad line leading into Kansas City. When Winner's plans failed in 1890, the City took over the rail line and converted it into a streetcar line in 1896, which served Independence and Kansas City until the 1930's.

The latter part of the 19th century saw numerous improvements to the City. In 1898 streets around the central business district were paved, and shortly before that the Courthouse underwent an extensive remodeling. Telephone service came to Independence for the first time in 1881 and grew at such a rapid pace that the main office was moved at least three times before it established an office at 310 West Maple in 1911. In 1901, a bond election brought the first electric lights to the City of Independence. An electric plant was built near the old public spring on East Lexington, and operated for many years on water obtained from the spring.

Although the population grew slowly dur-

ing this period, Independence was gradually developing into a well established nucleus around which a residential city of sizable proportions revolves today.

ANNEXATION AND GROWTH WHITHIN THE CITY

The City of Independence started out small insofar as the original Town Plat was concerned. It measured one-half mile east to west between Pleasant and Noland, and three-fourths mile north to south between College and Pacific. This area included 240 acres, or approximately 0.4 sq. miles at the time the town was incorporated in 1849. Since then, the City has executed a number of annexations which have led to the current boundaries of the City. Figure 2.11 shows the historic growth of the corporate boundaries of the City of Independence since 1849.

The first annexation occurred in 1851. This expanded the City west to Forest, north in an elongated strip to include the Wayne City landing on the south bank of the Missouri River, east to Leslie, and south to 23rd street and Aberdeen. The elongated strip north of Jones Road was de-annexed in 1881.

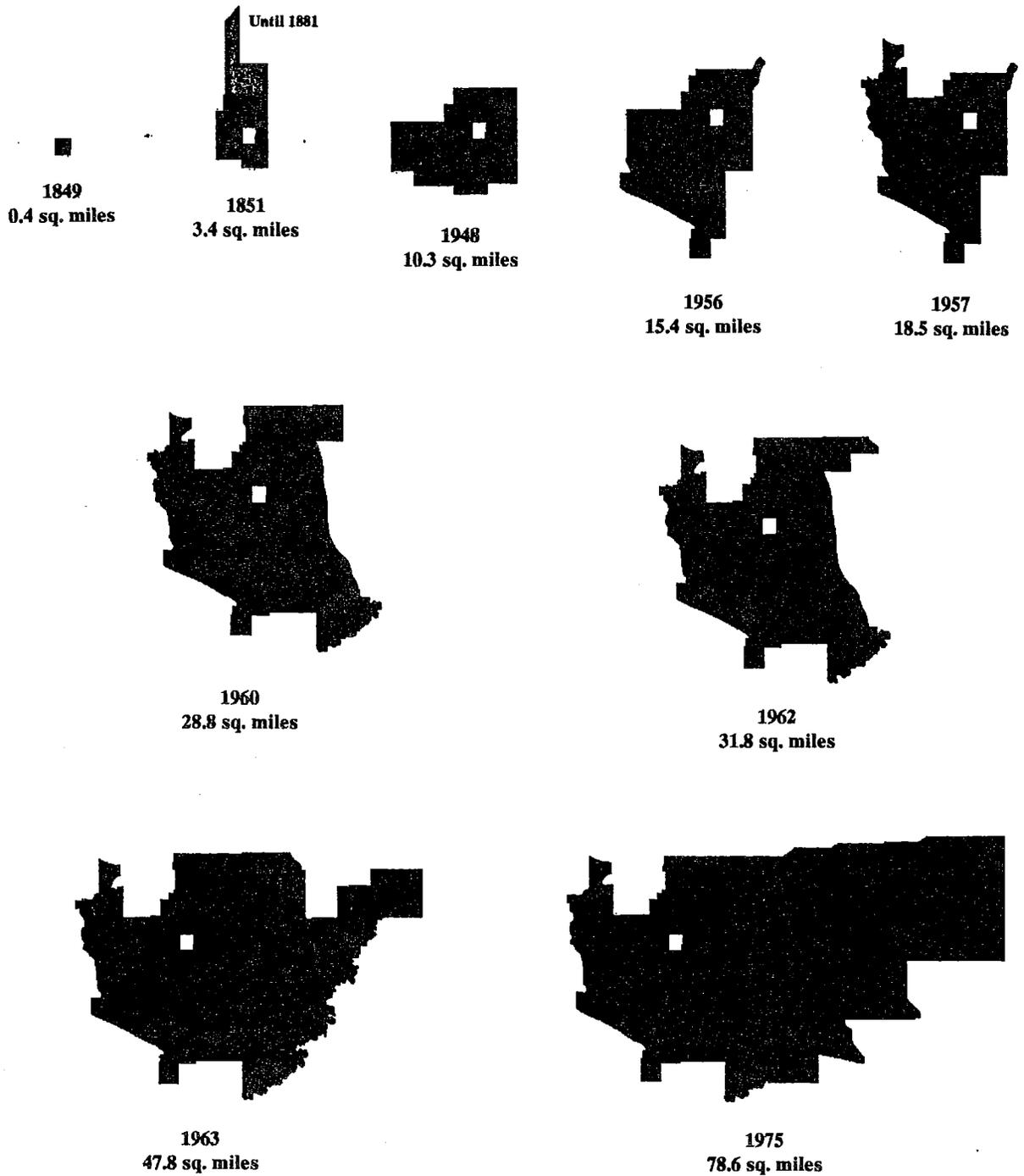
The next annexation did not occur until almost a hundred years later. In 1948 the City approved annexation eastward to a block east of Kiger, south to 31st and 33rd streets, and west to a block west of Brookside.

The decade of the 50's saw two annexations by the City. In 1956 an annexation occurred to the southwest including everything west of Noland Road to the present City limits, plus a small strip north to the south edge of the old Hilltop Girls School, and a strip along U.S. 24 to Allen Road. In 1957 the annexation of the Fairmont area became effective to the present City limits north and west.

During the 1960's four annexations were executed by the City expanding the City's area extent to 47.8 square miles. In 1960 a major

FIGURE 2.11

**HISTORY OF ANNEXATION 1860-1990
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI**



annexation extended the City limits southeast to the Little Blue River, south of I-70, east along along M-291 Highway including the development in Susquehanna and Farview Heights, and north to the present City limits along Kentucky Road. A small annexation occurred in 1962 which added the area east of Farview Heights to the present City limits north of Bundschu Road. In 1963 an annexation occurred which extended the City limits along the Little Blue River to Lake City, and north along an irregular line south of Bundschu Road.

In the 1970's a series of annexations occurred in 1973, '74, and '75 which brought the City to it's current boundaries, increasing it's size to over 78 square miles. These annexations were contested by residents of the annexed areas and the status of these areas remained in limbo until 1979, at which time the Court upheld the annexations.

The annexation of property which is in the eastern portion of the City has proved to be a significant factor in the evolution of Independence. The western portion of the city, which is more representative of older, traditional urban settlement patterns, is considerably different than either the central or eastern portions of the City that were annexed from Jackson County. The Population Section also includes current data for the population that resides in the various annexation areas.

Smaller residential lot sizes, neighborhood shopping districts, limited open space and small single family dwellings characterize the western portion of the City. The eastern portion of the city is characterized by extremely low residential densities and urban sprawl; active agricultural production and farmsteads; wooded, rolling topography; narrow, winding, poorly surfaced roads and lanes; abandoned farm houses and barns; and an absence of residential subdivisions, commercial and industrial land uses.

The center portion of the City is very representative of post World War II suburban

development which provides an interesting transition between the older urban pattern and the rural fringe. The center portion contains typical post war single family subdivisions with curvilinear streets and cul-de sacs; suburban regional shopping centers; well distributed parks and open spaces; neighborhood schools; strip commercial developments along major streets; multi-family apartment complexes; churches and a variety of community facilities; medical and health care facilities; office parks; and, isolated agricultural parcels, vacant spaces, and tracts in transition from rural to urban.

THE PRESENT CITY

The City of Independence has changed considerably since both the first and second Comprehensive Plans were prepared. In fact, there has been a variety of changes, including physical, geographic and demographic. One significant change that affects the update of the plan is that the city is considerably larger than it was at the time of the last major plan. Significant portions of the area that are now in the City had not been considered in the major previous planning efforts. There is also no previous existing land use survey data to compare with the recent survey.

The Planning Department staff has conducted a detailed existing land use field survey as a part of this planning update process. The results of the survey have been analyzed to portray the present City and also will serve as a base of comparison between the previous existing land use surveys. Again, there will be a significant difference since a large portion of the present City was not included in the corporate boundaries at the time of the last plan or survey.

The results of the existing land use survey indicate that Independence is really three distinct communities contained in the same municipality. The first, which extends east of the western corporate limits to approximately Noland Road, is the older, more urban densely

populated part of the City; the second, which extends generally from Noland Road east to approximately Mo. 291, is the post war suburban part of the City; and, the third, which extends east roughly from 291 to the eastern corporate limits, is a very extensive rural and picturesque portion of the City. This eastern rural portion of the City comprises approximately 35 percent of the present City's boundaries.

The eastern and western portions of the City represent extremes in urban forms and settlement patterns. The western portion contains older moderate and high density single family residential neighborhoods; spotted multi family conversions of older, larger single family structures; low rise multi family residential structures; older neighborhood commercial districts; indoor and outdoor heavy industrial activities; grid street patterns; railroad tracks and freight yards; and the remnants of the central business district.

The eastern portion of the City is as divergent from the western portion as one could imagine and still be within the same municipal jurisdiction. The eastern portion is extremely rural with considerable reaches still engaged in active agriculture; heavily wooded slopes and water courses; magnificent vistas of valleys from long steep sloped ridges; narrow, rough winding country roads with open bar ditches; abandoned farms and dilapidated barns; livestock grazing in open pastures and feed lots; large lot estate type single family homes in non urban subdivisions; few public facilities save some park preserves, conservation areas, and fire stations; mineral extraction areas; scattered enclaves of urban sprawl, and single family residential homes "strung out" along existing public roads; numerous single family homes on unplatted homesites; and few isolated commercial and service establishments.

Data contained in future sections of this document describe the various neighborhood planning units, which have also been grouped to roughly coincide with the three major divisions described above. In addition to the demographic

differences, the visual images are also very different. The older urban areas in the western portion of the city are relatively level with some rolling topography while the rural eastern portions have more abrupt topographic changes and broad sweeping valleys separated by steep wooded ridges.

This plan update, therefore takes on four different perspectives: first, an update for the older western portions of the city that were included in both of the previous major planning efforts; secondly, the preparation of a plan for the middle, more suburban areas of the city; third, the development of a sound set of comprehensive policies for the rural eastern expanse of the City; and fourth, to link the three distinct areas of the City together into one comprehensive plan. It should be noted that some planning for the present city limits area has been done by the Planning Department since the last published Comprehensive Plan. These efforts include a comprehensive street plan and a future land use plan graphic. These past efforts will provide some basis for the fourth task described above.

In developing a comprehensive plan for the city, one realization is that the policy statements for the three areas are markedly different, given the difference in the nature and character of the three areas. The goals and objectives which address the three areas are also somewhat different. Both the Policy and Goal sections of the Plan are divided into subsections that reflect either the city as a whole or some functional or other division of the City.

2.2 - HISTORY OF PLANNING IN INDEPENDENCE

BACKGROUND

Since 1961, the City of Independence, Missouri has undertaken a variety of Planning and Development studies. The purpose of this section of the Comprehensive Plan Update is to

both record those prior planning efforts and provide some continuity between those former studies and and this document.

This section will not deal with "plans for specific improvements" such as engineering or architectural plans or drawings, but rather studies and plans which relate to either the growth of the community as a whole or some significant functional element, such as the Central Business District.

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1961

In October 1959 the City of Independence contracted with Hare and Hare, a well Known Kansas City consulting firm, to develop a Comprehensive Plan. The Plan took about a year and a half to complete and was transmitted to the City in March of 1961. The letter of transmittal indicated that the plan, "...should serve as a workable and sound guide for the growth and improvement of the city."

The Plan was undertaken, in part, so that the City could qualify for federal urban renewal funds which were then administered by the Housing and Home Finance Agency, HHFA. The Housing Act of 1949, as amended, required cities to adopt a Workable Program for Community Improvement as part of the qualification process to receive certain federal funds. The Workable Program's requirements included a provision that units of government must adopt a comprehensive plan. The federal government also provided grant funds to pay for a portion of these plans. Subsequently in the process, projects included in urban renewal plans had to be certified as being in conformance with the comprehensive plan before they could receive federal funding.

In February 1959 an application for urban renewal funds was submitted to HHFA for the purpose of redeveloping a 520 acre tract in the center of the city. A more detailed statement of the city's urban renewal history is included in a

later section of this chapter.

Proposed Land Use was one main thrust of Independence's first Comprehensive Plan. According to the section on recommendations, the Proposed Land Use Plan was intended to serve as a guide for all phases of urban growth.

The different characteristics of this plan are as follows:

1. A majority of the future city area is proposed for single-family dwellings. This land use is general in nature and is not intended to exclude small areas of duplex, apartment or neighborhood shopping uses which may be developed in the future. The residential areas of a community should include a planned variety of different housing types and densities in order to best serve the public.

2. A large section of the older part of the city is proposed for multi-family or medium-density residential use. The city had only one-half as much land used for multi-family purposes as compared to the average of other selected cities.

3. The amount of strip business areas shown along the major thoroughfares is not desirable, but must necessarily coincide, in general, with the zoning maps now [then] in effect in the city and county. In most cases, it is impractical to change the use of the land from business to residential. These commercial strips are the result of a popular belief that business is the only feasible use for property fronting on highways. Using good planning principles, residential areas can be developed along highways and thoroughfares for the benefit of the entire community. In many cities, some of the finer homes face on highways utilizing greater setbacks in order to reduce noise and commotion.

4. Several shopping centers will probably be needed to serve the outlying areas of the city; however, none have been shown on the Plan due to the difficulty of locating these centers before development. Because of a congenial shopping atmosphere, the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, sufficient on-site parking, and easy access from its trade area, the modern shopping center has many advantages over strip commercial districts.

5. To encourage the establishment of industrial plants in Independence, large tracts of land are shown reserved for industrial development along the Missouri and Little Blue Rivers. These sites are ideally located on level ground near railroad and highway facilities. The city should consider the problem of flood control in lower sections of these areas in order to facilitate complete development.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan also included a Thoroughfare Plan. The thoroughfare plan utilized the existing grid system of streets and extended that system out into the undeveloped areas of the future city. Proposed thoroughfares are laid out roughly in north to south and east to west directions about one mile apart to create neighborhood units roughly one mile square. The proposed thoroughfares in the eastern section of the city are aligned in relation to the topography, and they frequently follow a valley or ridge in order to avoid crossing steep slopes. Several county roads in the future city areas have been built through hilly sections without due regard to the topography, and should be realigned to allow for safer traffic.

The Plan also included sections on rail and air transportation. Air Transportation, as referred to in the first plan, is still an issue in Independence. The sections in the first plan

provide some rather interesting background. They are included as follows:

“III. AIR TRANSPORTATION: The importance of a suitable airport in a community is continually increasing. In the future, the role of the local airport will be as vital to the life of the community as the highway and railway system is now. Less than 20% of all flying activity is devoted to pleasure flying. Business and industrial firms especially are turning to the use of small, private aircraft as their chief form of executive transportation. In 1960, the total sales of business and utility aircraft was nearly \$200 million or about eight times the 1950 retail volume.

Because a private owner of an airport is not responsible for the permanence of the facility, it is the city's responsibility to control and develop it. Many cities and towns have lost their only air facility because the private owner sold out to other interests for development into residential, business or other uses. Due to the importance of this facility to the city, it is recommended that the city purchase the existing airfield and sufficient surrounding land to adequately provide for future air traffic demands.

In its present location, the airfield could be enlarged toward the north and west to provide for one 3,800-foot runway with approaches for twin-engine craft, and one cross-strip for smaller craft. There is sufficient level ground around the present field to construct these runways in accordance with standards of the Federal Aviation Agency with a minimum of grading expenses. A major asset of the present location is its proximity to the large proposed industrial district along the Lake City-Buckner Road. This close relationship between industrial sites and airfield along with the service of the existing railroad and improved thoroughfares will create excellent conditions for attracting business and industrial firms. Therefore, the city should take immediate steps toward the purchase of the airport and surrounding areas to create a field of about 520 acres in size. Although the cost of such a facility will run over a million dollars, financial aid could be obtained from the Federal Aviation Agency.”

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The City's first Comprehensive Plan also contained a section on Community Facilities. The plan stated, "One of the finest opportunities to express the civic pride of a community is through the provision for and the careful planning and maintenance of the public properties in the city. Attractive and adequate public buildings and well-maintained schools, parks and playgrounds indicate the interest and pride of the citizens, and make a city a desirable place in which to live."

The plan identified several major sub-headings under community facilities, which included: Schools, Recreation Facilities, Public Buildings, Fire Stations, Public Facilities and Other Facilities.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The plan included a section on the Central Business District, CBD. Several issues related to the CBD were identified: access, circulation, parking, land use and economic health. The issues related to the CBD have changed during the past almost thirty years, but generally they have remained the same. The CBD is still very much an issue for this plan update and as a matter of public policy.

HOUSING

The plan included a section on housing. This normally would be treated as a land use issue, but since this plan was in part developed in response to the need for urban renewal, it probably was identified as a separate issue. Some of the findings and opinions expressed in the first plan bear repeating here. "Many of the older residential neighborhoods in Independence appear to be reasonably stable with decent, livable housing conditions. These stable areas will probably retain their value for years to come providing the individual homes are given a normal amount of maintenance. The

city can secure the immense investment in these areas by improving the streets, installing curbs, sidewalks and street trees where needed. The creation of small parks and playgrounds would enhance the value of these neighborhoods far above the cost of the facility.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE- MARCH 1968

The last complete Comprehensive Plan was developed in the late 1960's and published in 1968. It has served as the City's guide for growth and development since that time. It is not the intent of this section to imply that no planning has taken place in Independence since 1968. On the contrary, numerous planning studies and other activities have helped guide the city since that time. The City has maintained an active planning department and the planning commission has continued to meet on a regular scheduled basis since created in 1961. The fact that the City has not published a new comprehensive plan document certainly does not mean that no planning has taken place. In fact, several future land use plan maps have been developed and other numerous special studies have been undertaken and published. These studies will be discussed later in this section.

In March of 1968, the Independence City Planning Commission published the second Comprehensive Plan document for the City. It was prepared by Runnells & Winholtz & Associates, a local consulting firm.

The second plan was broader in scope than the first and was more reflective of what the planning profession had come to recognize as the standard for a comprehensive plan. The introduction to the plan described some of the philosophy and methodology that went into the development of the plan. The following paragraphs are taken from that section of the document.

"A community is the summation of its population, expressed by its likes and dislikes,

needs and wants, etc. Hence, each community is somewhat distinct and unique from all others, and expresses a composite personality which is different from the others. Therefore the study and analysis of a particular community logically begins with a historical introduction. Further background information deals with the natural geographic setting, including climate, soils, geology, topography, etc. Next, an inventory and analysis of population characteristics, the local economy, land use patterns (residential, commercial, industrial, public and semi-public), transportation facilities, community services and utilities, etc. are important elements to complete the background picture.

The physical expression of a community represents a reflection of the socio-economic and political attitudes of the people who reside there. The City of Independence is today [1968] what the collective attitudes of its people want it to be. Otherwise, it would be something different.”

Much of the same philosophy and methodology that guided the preparation of the earlier plan will be reflected in this plan update.

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan, herein referred to as the Plan, was based on a 20 year projection. It is interesting to examine those results now that the planning period has expired. The plan document suggested that the plan should be updated every year or two in order to provide an official guide for evaluating the necessity, desirability and relationship of every major public improvement and private development effecting the future development and redevelopment of the community.

The principal thrust of the plan was the physical growth and development of the City. As the text described in the plan, it noted that the upland areas are preserved primarily for residential development and the lowlands within the Missouri River valley and the Little Blue River valley for industrial development. The total urbanized area shown on the plan map was projected to serve an ultimate population of over 400,000 persons.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The plan indicated that single family housing would be the predominant form of land use development in the City. Multi-family was shown in a few selected locations in the city, however, the text provided that other locations might be acceptable, but should be evaluated on an individual application basis. The current generalized land use data, as contained in another section of this document, will indicate that multi family development has taken place in a variety of locations. Settlement patterns were taken into consideration during this update process.

SCHOOL SITES

The plan, which was based on the neighborhood unit concept, placed an elementary school site at the center of each residential neighborhood area. In more traditional settings, this part of the neighborhood unit concept may be possible to incorporate into long range planning. However, Independence is presently served by five separate school districts, whose jurisdictions may cut across planning district boundaries. Trends in changing school site service areas; significant downward shifts in average household size; the economics of constructing, staffing and maintaining smaller school facilities; and other factors make it very difficult to base neighborhoods or planning districts around elementary schools for purposes of this plan update. School planning has been coordinated with all the school districts that service the present corporate boundaries of Independence. The section on future community facilities contains more information on long range school planning as it relates to the Comprehensive Plan for Independence.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

The plan identified four basic levels of parks, in order of priority, that were needed for the future of the city. The first was the vest

pocket park for pre-school children; the second was the neighborhood park, which would be built in conjunction with the elementary school site; the third was for district-wide sports activity facilities at Junior High or High school sites; and the fourth was for citywide parks.

The plan mentioned the fact that the Jackson County Park Department had begun to provide a series of metropolitan parks with inter-connecting trails. Some of the projects noted in the plan are still being implemented and have been included in this update effort. The section on future community facilities contains more information on the park and playground components of the plan update.

COMMERCIAL

The plan described a classification of commercial areas which included Neighborhood Shopping Centers, District Shopping Centers and Regional Shopping Centers. The plan also discussed the Central Business District as a potential regional shopping center. The plan update recognizes that over the past twenty years commercial development in Independence has not fit these neat dichotomies, but rather, the City now has a mix of extensive "strip" commercial developments and traditional centers of varying sizes. As some of the commercial areas have matured or changed, they no longer fulfill the function that they once did. Several of the commercial centers and many of its strip commercial areas no longer have the economic viability that they once had or they were anticipated to have and have become blighting factors in the community. The problem of blighted commercial areas is probably the most significant land use issue that faces the city of Independence in the development of this comprehensive plan update. The section on commercial land use in the plan update contains more information on the subject.

INDUSTRIAL

The plan recognized the fact that in the

late 1960's, Independence did not have an extensive industrial base. The plan called for the development of industrial activities along the Little Blue River valley and in the Atherton bottoms. To date the proposed development has not become a reality. In 1987-88 the US Army Corps of Engineers completed the flood improvement program for the Little Blue River which allowed the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reduce the severity of the flood classification of certain properties in the Little Blue Valley. This administrative action will allow property in designated areas to be developed. At the time of this writing several proposals for development have been discussed with the city and at least one major property owner has contracted with a land development consultant for the preparation of a major development plan.

The Atherton bottoms are still predominately agricultural in nature. One notable exception has been the development of a regional sewerage treatment plant in the bottoms.

The period of time that has elapsed since the earlier plan was developed has seen the development of industry in areas of the city that were not anticipated in the plan. Generalized existing land use data indicates the location of industrial land uses in Independence.

The concepts as contained in the 1968 plan generally still hold true for this update. The proposed Independence/Eastern Jackson County Airport will be built in the Atherton bottoms near the treatment plant, instead of improving. This proposal is part of a major change in land use which will see the creation of major industrial parks in the area that can be served by the airport. Several major street and thoroughfare proposals will improve the feasibility of these developments and will provide additional linkage to other transportation facilities in the region. The economic development and industrial land use sections of this document will provide more information on this subject.

PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC

The plan identified parks and playgrounds, school sites, other institutional and governmental needs that could be met generally in most residential areas. Private schools, churches, lodge buildings, clubs, and recreation facilities are some of the types of public and semi-public land uses that occur as part of the urban fabric.

In addition, sewage treatment plants, water treatment plants, power generating plants and related facilities were located as part of the plan. The community facilities section of the plan update contains more information on this subject.

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The plan identified proposed thoroughfare, a major road system and a collector road system within each neighborhood area. The document identified several proposed projects which would be needed to support the land use element of the plan. The projects were all considered and several of them have continued to be included on the Major Thoroughfare Plan, which has been updated regularly by the planning department. The Thoroughfare Plan section on contains more information on this subject.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, CBD

The plan devoted significant energy to the subject of the CBD. The underlying concept was that the CBD could become a regional shopping center. Since the plan was developed, several significant trends have emerged that probably undermines the basic premise contained in the plan. First, the number and type of retail establishments in the CBD has continued to change. Second, the number of major shopping centers in and near Independence has continued to increase and to grow in size. Older neighborhood commercial areas have continued to struggle in order to remain open and the

amount of retail floor space in buildings and complexes along major streets which lead into the City have continued to decline from lack of maintenance and usage.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The 1968 Comprehensive Plan contained a rather complete section on Physiographic Features. The physical environment in a particular location does not change markedly in a short period of time, so this plan update will not include an extensive effort to collect and analyze physical data since that process was undertaken as part of the previous planning effort. However, for reasons such as changes in the corporate boundaries; redefinition of flood prone areas by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and the US Department of Agriculture's issuance of a new soil survey for Jackson County, some attention has been given to the collection and analysis of the most current physical features and environmental data. The section on Physical Environmental Factors, contained in this document, will concentrate on providing current physical features and environmental data for the area contained in the present corporate boundaries.

1968 GOALS FOR INDEPENDENCE

One contribution that the 1968 Plan made was to provide a statement of goals and objectives that was developed as a result of a planning commission sponsored citizen's goals conference. The section on goals, which is contained in this document, contains a summary of the goals developed and contained in the 1968 document. That section of this update document also contains revised goal statements which have been used as a basis for the development of this plan update.

The 1968 Plan also contained some description of "The Neighborhood Concept", which is a classic bit of city planning theory.

Numerous changes in the way society does business in a contemporary sense reduces the possible and practical application of this theory in the future of Independence. One principal reason has to do with the relationship of our urban areas to the location and frequency of public schools, and in particular elementary schools. The principal of one neighborhood elementary school for each neighborhood district will probably not work in Independence, except possibly in portions of the recently annexed areas in eastern Independence that have large neighborhood districts. Therefore, this plan update is based on a series of planning districts that have been delineated by the planning department rather than on the concept of a theoretical neighborhood. Figure 2.21 indicates the planning districts that have been delineated. These districts also serve as the basis for reporting population and economic data.

The 1990 Census of Population will be released by the US Department of Commerce in separate computer tape files. When the results are available, the appropriate portions of this update document will be revised and made available for insertion into the plan.

SMALL AREA AND SPECIAL PLANNING STUDIES - 1968 TO 1989

Since the publication of the Comprehensive Plan in 1968, numerous special planning studies have been undertaken. These have been done in part as a response to the planning department's interest in maintaining a planning effort within the changing climate of the planning process, and the involvement with individual planning districts. Other special studies, such as the plan for the Truman Historic District, have been the result of some special concern. In addition, other plans were undertaken relative to urban renewal or community development activities or as part of some private development process such as one related to a 353 Private Redevelopment Corporation Plan. The following sections identify the more signifi-

cant studies and provide a brief summary. The studies discussed are identified on Figure 2.22.

TRUMAN HERITAGE DISTRICT MASTER PRESERVATION PLAN

This plan was prepared by Solomon and Claybaugh Architects Inc., in September 1977. According to the report, the City established the Harry S. Truman Heritage District on January 21, 1974, which generally coincided with the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark that was designated on February 20, 1972. The Heritage Commission later recognized that the boundaries of the district excluded important historic elements and did not provide sufficient protective "buffer zones" for these landmarks. This plan made a series of recommendations that included the expansion of the district and some specific improvements within the boundaries.

1979 MASTER PARK PLAN

The Master Park Plan is based, in part on the standards as adopted by the Mid America Regional Council Technical Advisory Committee on Parks, Recreation and Open Space. These standards recommend thirty acres of park land per thousand population for the Kansas City Metropolitan Region. The Jackson County park plan recommends that major parks, those larger than one hundred acres, be developed by the County without regard to corporate city limits. The Independence Master Park Plan recognizes three types of parks that the City should provide: District Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Playgrounds.

The following descriptions are given for the three categories.

DISTRICT PARK: Usually serves a specific section of the city or group of neighborhoods that would use it extensively. The service area is approximately one mile in radius, but it may draw people from outside this area. Size is

FIGURE 2.21

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DISTRICTS - 1968
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

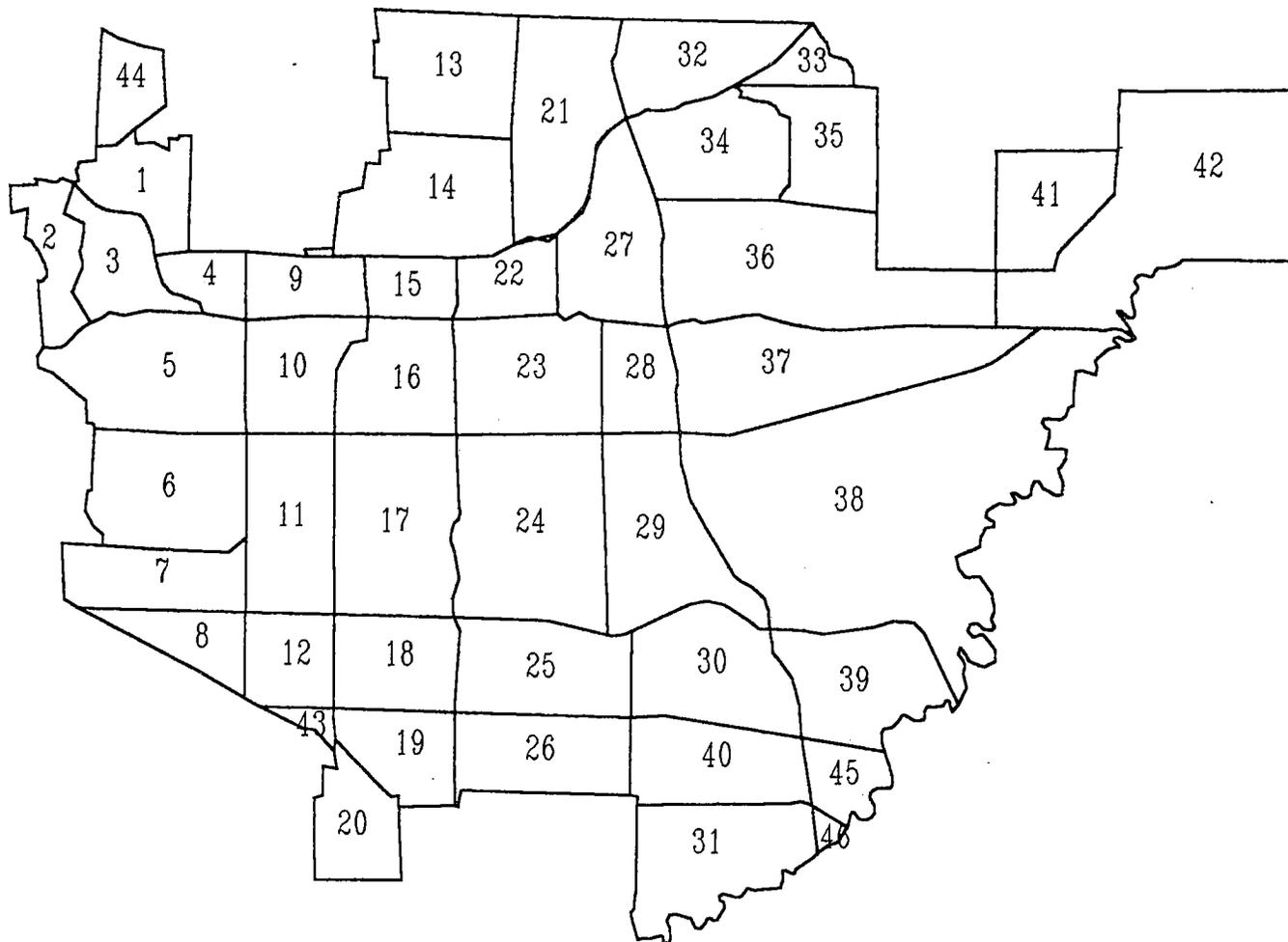
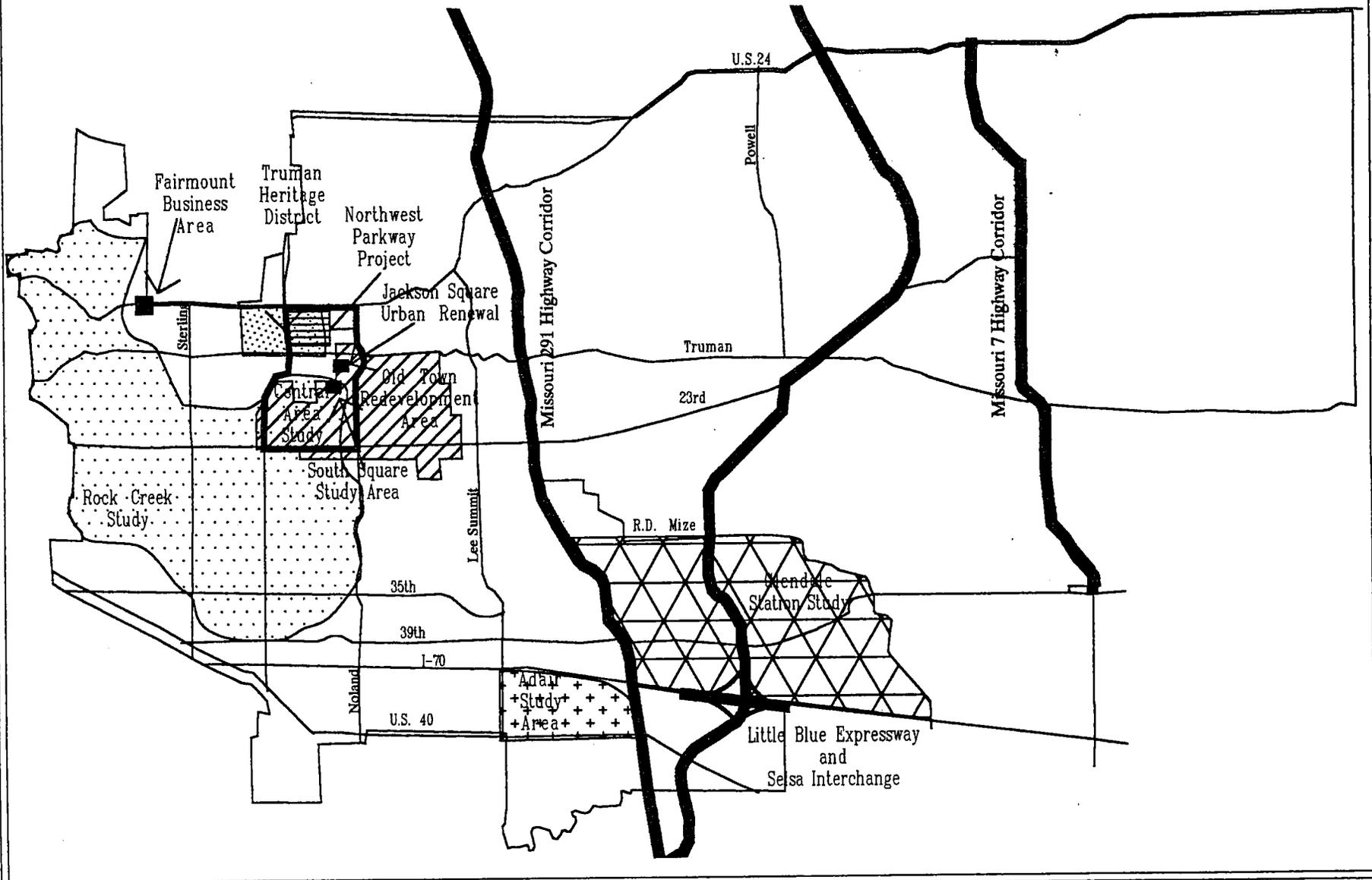


FIGURE 2.22

SMALL AREA AND SPECIAL PLANNING STUDIES 1968 - 1989
INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI



determined by multiplying six acres per thousand persons and would range from thirty five to one hundred acres. It would provide large play fields, community centers, and open space for passive enjoyment. District parks often include areas of scenic value and are meant to enhance the appearance of the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS: Serves the same area served by an elementary school, about one-half mile radius (walking distance for children). Size is determined by multiplying three and one-half acres per thousand persons and would range from ten to thirty-five acres and should include tot lots for young children and junior play areas for elementary school children. The neighborhood park should be located adjacent, or as close as possible, to a school. The park should provide easy access for maximun use and facilities for organized activities, such as softball, football, and tennis.

PLAYGROUNDS: Range from a vacant lot to ten acres. There should be one and one-half acres of playground space per thousand persons, and have a service area of approximately one-quarter mile radius, which is easy walking distance for pre-school and elementary school children. A playground should be located adjacent, or as close as possible, to an elementary school.

The plan recognizes that the city's park needs are greater than the ability to finance them. A priority-rating system has been included in the plan document which is maximize available resources. The following factors were given equal numerical value:

1. High neighborhood population density
2. Vacant land available for park development
3. Low cost of land acquisition
4. Probability of owner concurrence in sale
5. Low development costs
6. Absence of privately owned recreational facilities in neighborhood
7. Non-availability of other public recre-

ational facilities

8. Non-proximity of other existing or proposed neighborhood parks

After being rated according to these criteria, the parks included in the plan were placed into one of three priority categories (high, medium, or low) or were not given a priority rating, either because local park requirements have been filled or because existing population is not of sufficient density to warrant a park of desirable size.

One of the most promising aspects of park development in 1970 was a joint agreement between the City Council and the Independence School District Board to develop permanent parks on the grounds of four elementary schools. This supplemented the summer playground program, which allowed the Parks and Recreation Department to make use of schoolgrounds during the summer months for organized recreation programs, but which did not permit physical improvements that would result in attractive parks for general community use.

The Park Plan included two other provisions, namely Parkway Landscaping Standards and Street Beautification and Landscaping Program. The Parkway standards are intended to apply to improvements which were not yet being implemented and the second is in response to a condition that exist with existing major streets. The plan states that,"One of our worst unsolved problems is the appearance of our major streets. The solution of this problem is complicated by an unusual situation. The city does not own any of the major arterial streets within the city limits. These roads are owned and maintained by Jackson County, the State of Missouri, or the Federal Government. Because of this, a street beautification program must be a two-point program:

- (1) Beautification and landscaping of collector streets adjoining existing and proposed parks. This program would be

coordinated with the program to develop a system of parkways connecting parks and points of interest in Independence.

(2) Legislation to provide for specified improvements by property owners fronting on major arterial streets.

The objectives of a beautification and landscaping program for major streets would be (1) to increase visual order of the streets, (2) to increase the value of the land through association with attractive thoroughfares, (3) to promote safety through simplification of the urban landscape, and (4) to develop pride in the city and thus influence the development of individual residences and commercial establishments.

The beautification and landscaping program must develop as a joint venture between various city departments, all working together and aware of one another's responsibilities. The program should be divided into three basic areas: design responsibility, execution responsibility, and financial responsibility. Design responsibility would include definition of major streets that require improvement, designs for each project, priorities for projects, and a tentative timetable for completion.

Execution responsibility entails actual implementation of individual projects. It can be defined in terms of the actual construction of each project and the on-going maintenance. The cost of implementing such a program offers several routes that may be followed. The most common would be to budget such capital improvements by department; in this case, the Street Department and Parks and Recreation Department. An alternate method would be general obligation bonds for street improvements. Two other possibilities involve private organizations. Private developers should be required to landscape new streets to established standards. Second, civic organizations should be encouraged to donate improvements to beautify their city, such as sculpture, trees,

landscaping with shrubbery, and other improvements, such as benches.

The beautification and landscaping program that the city should undertake would involve both provision of new elements and improvement of existing conditions. Natural elements should be added to soften the character of the street. Trees, bushes, and ground cover of a low-maintenance nature would be most suitable. Pedestrian walks and rest areas should be provided. Sculpture accent areas should be provided to increase the diversity and interest of roadways. Legislation should be passed to encourage fronting property owners to improve the appearance of the lots. This could include rigid sign controls, promotion of improved graphic design, rehabilitation of store fronts, and underground placement of power lines and telephone lines.

The streets that offer a potential for beautification have been designated on the 'Master Park Plan' map. The park system is coordinated with the parkways plan in order to develop a street system that is aesthetically pleasing and one that also connects the existing and proposed parks.

The existing park plan is based on the 51 Planning Areas designated by the Planning Department. The number has since been changed to reflect the same boundaries as the Neighborhood Councils, which currently has 49 districts. The plan document contains a graphic of each planning area and indicates existing and proposed parks and playgrounds. The graphic also indicates private recreation facilities and schools. The text that accompanies each graphic describes the existing and proposed facilities located within each planning area."

The Parks and Recreation section of the Comprehensive Plan Update will include park and open space recommendations. The improvements contained in the Master Park Plan will be evaluated for inclusion in that section of this document.

ADAIR STUDY AREA

This area is bounded by four major transportation routes in the southeastern portion of the city. The area is largely undeveloped, with one residential subdivision and some strip residential along the boundary streets. The area also contains some strip commercial development along US Highway 40.

The plan, as contained in the document, calls for the development of a circulation system which will link some existing "stub" streets and open the interior of the area for development. Future land use in the area consist of single and multi family residential; commercial; and greenspace, which generally follows drainage coarses and the remaining 100 year flood plain area.

FAIRMOUNT BUSINESS AREA

Fairmont is an older neighborhood shopping district that was annexed into the city of Independence several years ago. This area continues to serve the population in the northwest portion of Independence, northeast Kansas City, Sugar Creek and the traveling public on Independence Ave. which is also US Highway 24. The plan generally calls for the stabilization and improvement of the properties in the district.

SOUTH SQUARE STUDY AREA

This area is generally south of the CBD and contains portions of the City which were included within earlier urban renewal and Neighborhood Development Program boundaries. The area was later identified as one of the sub-areas of the Central Area Study, which is also discussed in this section.

The study discusses existing land use and some of the background and history of the general area. The area has undergone several periods of transition and some analysis of these

shifts is included. The study concludes that some changes in land use would be desirable and would be consistent with the significant public investments, namely the development of the National Frontier Trails Center and the Bingham-Waggoner Mansion, located in and near the southern edges of the study area. The study also contains a priority ranking of property acquisition and improvements for identified sub-areas.

The study contains a future land use plan which proposes a mixture of multi-family residential; community facilities; commercial; and industrial land uses.

The study contains a recommendation that the study area be incorporated into a Tax Increment Financing District. This would provide a source of revenue which could be used to finance the suggested improvements, however, plans by the State of Missouri to acquire additional property in the area adjacent to the Trails Center may reduce the amount of taxable land to a point that the remaining taxable land maybe insufficient to support the project. At the time of this writing, the future of the TIF District is still in doubt.

MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY 291 STUDY

This study dealt with the background to the improvement of MO. 291. It did not include a future land use component. In addition to the question of 291, it also includes references to the Little Blue Valley Expressway, which is still in the planning phase.

MISSOURI 7 HIGHWAY CORRIDOR STUDY

This study contains two significant items for the update of the comprehensive plan: first there was an area arterial street network proposed, and second there is a future land use graphic included. The land use pattern includes single family and multi family residential developments; commercial; industrial; public; and

parks. In addition, there is a system of arterial and collector streets necessary to support the land use pattern.

GLENDALE STATION STUDY

This study area consist of 2,870 acres located between M-291 on the west to Woods Chapel Road on the east, from I-70 on the south to R. D. Mize Road on the north. The area takes its name from a historic railroad site in the area. According to the study, the James Gang conducted two train robberies in the area in 1879 and 1881. The station name was later changed, "...to Selsa to hide its larcenous past."

According to the study, "...the commercial and industrial uses have been located along high volume traffic corridors, where noise and movement will have a minimal effect, and in the valley floor and where the utility and site requirements of higher intensity uses may be readily served. The upland wooded areas have been preserved for varing densities of residential use, providing a pleasant and quiet environment for homeowners and apartment dwellers with easy access to the work, trade, and service centers of the community." The document further states that, "Preservation and conservation have been significant considerations in the development of the area. The proposed perservation of the historic Glendale Station site, creation of a public park on the site of a completed landfill, preservation of the floodways and development of an adjoining park and recreation area in the Little Blue Valley, and the protection of hundreds of acres of land designated as an urban forest are some of the efforts toward balancing the needs of man with the systems of nature."

The Proposed Land Use graphic, as included in the document, identifies future locations for the following land uses: low density residential, medium density residential, high density residential, commercial, industrial, community facilities, parks and recreation and the historic site.

The document also contains proposed arterial street improvements which will be necessary to support the land use configuration as proposed. The recommended improvements are included as part of the major street plan section of this document.

ROCK CREEK STUDY

This study is a flood control management plan for Rock Creek which drains 9.2 square miles of property located in the city of Independence. The watershed is presently urban and contains approximately 295 structures and 26,000 residents. The study does not contain a proposed land use section, however, it does recommend several detention basins and bridges which will influence land use patterns. The report also indicates that flood plain zoning has been accomplished in the area and "...that redevelopment in future years will not be permitted in the floodway and will be elevated or floodproofed in other parts of the flood plain to the 100-year level." At the time of the study, the city had budgeted three detention basins in the Rock Creek watershed.

LITTLE BLUE VALLEY EXPRESSWAY / I-70 AND SELSA ROAD INTERCHANGE STUDY

This study, published under both titles indicated above, proposes an interchange at I-70 and Selsa Road. Selsa Road is part of the Little Blue Valley Industrial Expressway. The proposed expressway would begin in Lee's Summit at the present intersection of old US 71 Bypass and I-470 and proceed north. The interchange at I-70 is a major element of the expressway and a key to the development of this general area.

The document contains two land use graphics: A Proposed Land Use graphic for an area of the City; and a land use model that identifies land use for a portion of the corridor of the Little Blue Expressway and some limited contiguous areas. The model also indicates general

boundaries of the Little Blue Trace. The Land Use Model designates future areas of residential, recreational, institutional, industrial and commercial land uses. The Proposed Land Use graphic identifies general areas for residential, industrial and parks or open spaces uses. The information contained in these two graphics will be evaluated as input into this comprehensive plan update process.

CENTRAL AREA STUDY

The Central Area Study included the area bounded by Crysler on the west, 24 Highway on the north, Noland Road on the east and 23rd Street on the south. The Area was divided into the following seven sub-areas: Truman North, West Square, Square, Temple Lot, South Square, South Cottage and South Main. The study document contains a section on each of the seven sub-area as well as a Proposed Land Use Plan for the entire study area. The area land use pattern includes: low density housing, moderate density housing, high density housing, institutional, industrial, governmental, commercial, park, utilities and retention. .

AIRPORT PLANS

There have been three airport plans prepared by consultants, and several Planning department reviews of possible airport sites, since the first Comprehensive Plan was developed in 1961. A master plan was prepared in 1964, with an update in 1968, a site selection report was prepared in 1978 and another airport master plan was prepared in 1987. The need for a new full-service public use airport in eastern Jackson County has long been recognized by Local and Federal Officials, and MARC. The Regional System Plan prepared by MARC has identified this need from the first Plan adopted in 1974, through the most recent update completed in 1984.

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 1964

The plan evaluated several potential sites for development of an airport. Based on the criterion considered at that time, the report concluded the existing Independence Memorial Airport site was the best location for the expanded airport development. A development plan was prepared by Burns & McDonald for the new facility with the expanded runway located to the north and east of the existing airport. The runway was to be oriented in a northeast-southwest direction with the crosswind runway in an almost east-west orientation. In addition to the runway development the plan proposed an administration building and automobile parking area.

The 1968 update amended the original 1964 plan to include the most recent Federal Aviation Administration development criteria, revised the air traffic estimates, and revised the cost estimated for the development of the airport.

EASTERN JACKSON COUNTY AIRPORT MASTER PLAN, 1978

The City selected Bucher Willis & Ratliff to locate a site for a full-service public airport for Independence and eastern Jackson County. The consultant investigated approximately nine potential sites in the Independence/Eastern Jackson County area. The number of sites was narrowed down to four that could possibly meet the FAA design criteria and the City's needs. The four sites were; 1.) the Atherton Bottoms, located north of the Santa Fe Railroad tracks and south of the Missouri River; 2.) Levasy, located in the extreme eastern portion of the County approximately one-half mile east of Route H and south of the City of Levasy; 3.) Lake city, located north of the Lake City Army Ammunition plant and south of U.S. Highway 24; and 4.) the existing Independence Memorial Airport, located north of R.D. Mize Road and west of Necessary Road. The study concluded that the best site for the airport was the site in the Atherton bottoms.

EASTERN JACKSON COUNTY AIRPORT, 1978

This study prepared by the Independence Planning Department staff, discussed the type of airport facility needed in Independence and the Eastern Jackson County, and reviewed from a planning perspective, the four sites identified by Bucher, Willis & Ratliff in the "Eastern Jackson County Airport Master Plan".

The report summarized that the type of airport needed was on the scale of a general utility airport that could be expanded to a basic transport field in the future as demand indicated. The airport site should also be capable of being upgraded and expanded further if the need should arise.

The report identified difficulties with the development of each of the four sites studied. The problems with all sites indicated the absence of the ideal airport site in Eastern Jackson County. The report concluded that from a land use point of view that the Atherton Bottoms site was the only feasible location for an airport in Independence/Eastern Jackson County.

INDEPENDENCE/EASTERN JACKSON COUNTY AIRPORT MASTER PLAN, 1987

Bucher, Willis & Ratliff was selected as the consultant to prepare a master development plan for an airport to be located in Eastern Jackson County, north of Independence. The location of the airport was the result of the further refinement of previous studies identifying potential airport sites. The final review of potential sites, conducted by the City Planning Department with the City Airport Committee, determined that the site in the Atherton Bottoms was the only site that would meet the current needs of Independence and the Eastern Jackson County area and provide for future expansion capabilities.

A detailed discussion of the current airport proposal is provided in the Transportation chapter

of this Plan Update.

URBAN RENEWAL

The Federal government developed the Urban Renewal grant program for eligible cities in 1949. Urban Renewal provided a mechanism to assist cities in the redevelopment of deteriorated areas of the city. A direct grant to the city was provided to do certain specific redevelopment projects, that were approved by the federal government. The original objective of the program was to redevelop city central business districts, and the surrounding areas. These areas were generally the older areas of the city and had deteriorated over time. The City of Independence participated in the Urban Renewal program with two such projects, the Northwest Parkway project and the Jackson Square Project.

The Urban Renewal grant program evolved into the Neighborhood Development Program in the late 1970's. The neighborhood development program was an alternative program to previous urban renewal programs. Neighborhood development was generally geared more toward conservation and rehabilitation activities than it was toward clearance and redevelopment. This program required annual applications in accordance with federal guidelines. As a result of this process, greater flexibility was given to cities to determine a program to deal with their specific redevelopment needs. The annual applications included the work program for the year. Many of the proposed projects which were implemented dealt with individual properties rather than with major land use changes at the neighborhood level.

This program was the start of what is now the Community Development Block Grant program, which is continuing today.

NORTHWEST PARKWAY PROJECT

This was the first Urban Renewal project in the

City. It was a clearance and redevelopment project located to the north and east of the Independence Square. The area was predominantly a dilapidated single-family residential area, on the fringe of the Central Business District. The area now is redeveloped with single-family residences, an elderly housing development and a major city park.

east of Noland Road was developed in part by this program. Other portions of Pacific Street in the NDP area were developed later using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The NDP program was short lived, and it was replaced by the CDBG program after only a few years in existence.

JACKSON SQUARE PROJECT

This was the traditional Urban Renewal project of the central business district. There was some acquisition and clearance for redevelopment, and rehabilitation of existing commercial structures. The plan also included the creation of a mall type atmosphere around the court house square, with a one-way serpentine street pattern, fountains, canopies in front of the stores, and pedestrian areas. This was a common solution of this period in time for older central business districts trying to compete with outlying regional shopping centers.

The project was implemented and did not provide the desired long term results. Most of the "Mall" type improvements have been removed and the original development pattern restored. However, the infrastructure improvements, and other new development generated by the Urban Renewal project have had a positive impact on the central business district.

OLD TOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PROJECT

This Neighborhood Development Program project area was bounded generally by Truman Road on the north, approximately Lee's Summit Road on the east, Fair Avenue on the south, and Chrysler Avenue on the west. The primary activity of this program was the rehabilitation of the existing residential neighborhoods and the development of a major street circulation system in the area. The improvement of Pacific Street