



Independence

Parks and Recreation
2010 Master Plan

Credits

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The City of Independence, Missouri

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Executive Summary

The Vision of the IP & R Department is clarified in its values statement which states, "Individuals of all abilities, ages, interests, and needs, will feel truly welcome in IP & R programs, parks and facilities."

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Introduction

The implementation of this Parks and Recreation "Master Plan" at the end of the first decade of the 21st century presents a number of intriguing opportunities, including the continued development of partnerships with groups, other entities, and individuals. The achievement of many of the goals in this plan will require such partnerships as neighborhood groups, volunteers, developers, the Independence School District, LINC (Local Investment Commission), athletic associations, the Independence Chamber of Commerce, the Town Square Association, and many others who have expressed a willingness to work together to leverage their resources so that the citizens of Independence

can enjoy the benefits resulting from the projects and programs outlined in this 2010 Master Plan.

To move forward with this Master Plan, the Independence Parks and Recreation Department (IP & R Department) will strive to achieve

This Master Plan is intended to advance the vision and benefit the citizens of Independence.



the goals set forth in it by making and implementing decisions which advance its vision which ultimately **adds to quality of life in Independence.**

Key Issues

Key issues facing the IP & R Department include:

- Caring for what the City has as a top priority, as well as enhancing existing facilities and services.
- Adding trails and greenways which link parks, schools, points of interest and the environment.
- Acquiring land for a variety of park types.
- Assuring that planned growth includes new facilities which are aligned with the Master Plan.
- Continuing to provide the delivery of recreation programs, services, and facilities.
- Assuring equitable access to programs and facilities throughout the community.
- Recognizing programs, facilities, and services must be planned carefully and customized to meet community needs.
- Understanding that most, if not all of these goals, will require maintaining existing partnerships and developing new partnerships with those who share a common mission so that IP & R resources can be leveraged to maximize the implementation of this master plan.



The City will continue to take care of existing parks and facilities with improvements and enhancements.

What The Plan Suggests

IP & R will provide sustainable quality developed parks, passive parks, trails, greenways, and appropriate active recreation facilities and recreation programs.

Demographics - Provide opportunities for an increasingly diverse population.

Citizen Preferences – Regularly engage citizens in the planning process so that their program and facility preferences are understood.

Greenways and Trails – Update and implement a trails master plan.

Partnerships – Proactively identify and manage existing partnerships and develop new ones with agencies who share a common or complimentary goal.

Park System Maintenance - Improve park maintenance by filling vacant positions when possible, updating equipment, and over time, reduce the number of acres mowed by planting native grasses, trees, and shrubs.

Environmental Protection - Restore and protect the natural environment and continue to be conscious of green infrastructure and green space and their direct impact

on water quality. Native plants, trees, and shrubs along streamway corridors and in selected areas in the park system will further this goal.

Take care of what the City has by repairing, and/or replacing playgrounds, spraygrounds, restrooms, picnic sites, benches, fountains, etc.

Take care of what the City has by overlaying and repairing, tennis courts, existing trails, parking areas, concrete sidewalks and patios.

Take care of what the City has by improving park lighting and renovating athletic fields at Mill Creek and Santa Fe parks.

Enhance existing parks by:

- Increasing Connectivity / Accessibility to Neighborhood Parks
- Increasing the Number of Opportunities for Disabled Persons to Utilize the Park System
- Providing Connectivity to Other Parks and Special Interests
- Providing greater access to Natural Amenities
- Specific additions will include: water park attractions at Adventure Oasis Water Park, spraygrounds, destination playgrounds, picnic facilities, restroom facilities, a new dog park, park system security, additional parking, renovating certain elements within George Owens Nature Park and completing the amphitheater at the athletic complex.
- Build for the future of the City by adding new capital projects which include multi-use trails, mountain biking trails and trail connections that are city wide, Sermon Center renovation both indoor and outdoor which would include moving the Spring Cabin to a location near the Frontier Trails Center, Choplin Hood Park renovation, Van Hook Park renovation, and land acquisition for future park development in underserved areas. Once environmental studies have been done and a funding source outside the current Park sales tax is identified, the City could also plan for a Special Event park near the Independence Square. Likewise, the research indicates that the community would support a new recreation center with a large fitness component.



Renovations at George Owens Nature Park and other community parks can help build for the future.

Consider facility, program, partnership, and management opportunities that are detailed in this Master Plan which include new and renovated community and fitness centers.

Adapt a new model for providing recreation programs and services by:

- Expanding the number of partners with whom IP & R works to provide more targeted services. IP & R should work closely with LINC and the Community School Concept, theater groups, athletic associations, the Town Square Association, school districts with schools in Independence, and historic sites to create opportunities and improve services.

- Becoming a better facilitator in addition to being a direct provider of family programs. By developing numerous partnerships, IP & R can expand its neighborhood-based program.
- Improving the marketing and promotion efforts necessary to inform citizens. Available communication tools include:
 - A website that utilizes Facebook and Twitter
 - Email blasts of monthly newsletters and “breaking news”
 - Distribution of the Activity Guide to parents. Because this can be extremely difficult, IP & R may consider full-page displays in the local newspaper four times through the year (spring, summer, fall, winter)

Continue to emphasize the value and importance of the volunteer program by recognizing volunteers on a regular basis, calculating the economic impact of their hours and the savings it provides to the IP & R budget, and providing a volunteer staff coordinator with the necessary resources to sustain the volunteer program.

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Introduction

Reasons for the investment in the park system, or, **Why We Do It**, have been well documented in Independence and have resulted in citizen support of the sales tax for park operations and new facilities. Citizens recognize the benefits of a strong park system and recreation program; those benefits include:

- An improvement in the quality of life.
- Improved property values.
- Future generations inherit a healthy environment and quality programs and facilities.

The culmination of the 2010 master planning process has led

to the development of a series of recommendations that represent the Department's Guiding Principles as shown below. By collaborating with others to leverage resources, incorporating sustainable management and maintenance concepts into each project, and continuing to actively solicit citizen input into the key initiatives that are spelled out in this master plan, the Independence Park System in 2020 will represent the "preferred future" that has been envisioned since the initial Master Plan was developed in 2002.

With that in mind, the Guiding Principles in order of importance are:



It is important that future generations inherit a healthy environment.

- 1. To take care of what the City has .
- 2. To enhance current parks and facilities.
- 3. To plan, preserve, and build for the future.

Guiding Principle #1: To Take Care of What the City Has

Recommendation: To protect the environment.

This recommendation is intended to provide park system users with a variety of experiences that are part of the passive and active programming within each park. Management practices that should be implemented would benefit the community by reducing maintenance costs, increasing plant and wildlife diversity, and improving water quality within the park system. Here are specific initiatives to be taken:



- Work with the Water Pollution Control Division to retrofit stream banks and low lying areas in parks and green spaces with vegetation that is better for stabilization of flood areas and wetlands.
- Stabilize erosion within park system.

Recommendation: To improve park system maintenance.

This recommendation is for the two most significant actions to be taken:



Guiding Principle #1: To Take Care of What We Have, including playgrounds and picnic sites.

- To upgrade park system maintenance by adding staff and equipment as detailed in the Park System Analysis Chapter of this report.
- To reduce the number of acres that are mowed by introducing native grasses, trees, and shrubs into the system.
- Implement park standards and evaluation procedures.

Recommendation: Develop and implement a schedule to:

- Repair and replace playgrounds, picnic sites, benches, fountains, concrete sidewalks, and patios system wide.
- Repair and renovate spraygrounds and restroom facilities, system wide.
- Renovate ball field complexes at Mill Creek and Santa Fe.
- Overlay and repair tennis courts, basketball courts, existing trails, and parking areas system wide.
- Finish installing park lighting system wide.
- Develop renovation and implementation plans for Sermon Center, Palmer Center, and the Truman Memorial Building.
- Develop park renovation and implementation plans for Choplin Hood Park, Van Hook Park, and George Owens Nature Park.
- Form partnership to upgrade the Fairmount Center; e.g. Fitness Center.

Recommendation: To provide additional resources to the Volunteer Coordinator's Office to meet requirements of the position.

- Current job responsibilities and service demands indicate a need for an additional staff person.
- Job responsibilities require staff to visit job sites around the community and to attend meetings which requires a vehicle.
- Program responsibilities require office and operating supplies that need additional funding.

Recommendation: To increase citizen awareness of IP & R offerings; e.g. programs, activities, facilities, special events, and volunteer opportunities, this Master Plan recommends the following adjustments to the "the marketing mix":

- Continue to develop a modern website that is managed daily to keep it current, informative, and a tool that can be used easily to register for programs, etc.
- Expand the use of e-mail blasts, RSS feeds, Twitter, and Facebook. Continue use of the monthly newsletter and, as needed, for "breaking news".
- Distribution of the Activity Guide in a manner that it gets into the hands of parents right in their homes.
- Purchase of full-page displays in the local newspaper on four occasions throughout the year (spring, summer, fall, winter).

Guiding Principle #2: To Enhance Current Parks and Facilities

Recommendation: The IP & R Department should create and utilize a cost recovery policy. Currently, recreation facilities and programs are affordable for users. If the City decides to increase prices so that a higher percentage of costs are recovered, the approach which must be adopted is as follows:

- Step 1 - Continue to calculate all costs associated with the operations and maintenance of programs and facilities.
- Step 2 - Categorize all programs and services into one of three groups: a) public services; b) merit services; and, c) private services.
- Step 3 - Determine the percentage of costs that the IP & R Department wants to recover from each of the three categories listed above; e.g. public services such as special events may be free; merit services such as CPR training that benefit the user somewhat and the community somewhat, may be asked to recover 50% of their costs; and, private services such as swim lessons may be asked to recover 100% of their costs.



The cost recovery target for the Adventure Oasis Water Park is 100%.

Cost Recovery Targets

Given the step by step approach that was detailed above and national best practices, this Master Plan offers a basis for realistic cost recovery targets that are applicable for the Independence Athletic Complex, recreation programs, Adventure Oasis Water Park, special events, the George Owens Nature Center, the Truman Memorial Building, the Palmer Center, and the Sermon Center as shown in Table 7.

Recommendation: To adopt standards for selected recreation facilities.

Restroom Standard - The normal practice is to not provide restrooms in neighborhood parks; however, if these conditions exist, it will be considered:

- If there is a consistent heavy use pattern.
- If the distance between the park and the neighborhood is significant - more than ¼ mile.
- If the visibility of the park is high; e.g. the park is on a main thoroughfare, thus attracting more attention to quality facilities that may be of interest beyond the neighborhood level.
- If there is an activity in the park that attracts organized users; e.g. an athletic field that is used by teams.

Pavilion Standard

- Small pavilions to be placed in neighborhood parks or at trailheads.
- Medium size pavilions to be placed in community level parks.
- Large size pavilions to be placed in destination parks.

Sprayground Standard

- To be geographically located in each Council District.
- To be placed in parks that are in areas whose age demographic is young families.
- To be placed in parks where there are other activities that provide family experiences; e.g. playground, athletic field, trail.



Continue programming at existing recreation facilities and partner with community groups.

Table 7: Cost Recovery Targets

Facility	Cost Recovery Target
Athletic Complex	No percentage is specified; however, economic impact data from all tournaments should be tracked; tournament sponsors should pay for all costs associated with their tournament in addition to a percentage of the gross dollars collected from participating teams. This, coupled with the economic impact data should be combined and weighed against the complex's cost of operating to determine current cost recovery percentages. An acceptable cost recovery target can be determined.
Adventure Oasis Water Park	100%
Recreation Programs	The national average ranges between 40% to 60%
Community Centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sermon Center • The Palmer Center • The Truman Memorial Building 	Given the lack of modern amenities in Sermon Center (dedicated walking track, dedicated fitness center, leisure pool, etc.), the long history in Independence of providing citizens with affordable recreation opportunities, the senior adult age group using the Palmer Center, and the conflict at the Truman Memorial Building between active uses of the gym, parking facilities and the noise effecting meeting room users, it is recommended that the Department do the following to determine a cost recovery target: <p>Step 1 – calculate operating costs for each facility</p> <p>Step 2 – work with the City Manager, City Council, Park Board and user groups to reach consensus on the appropriateness for assigning a cost recovery target for these facilities; e.g. if the economy continues to worsen, the Department may have to take a more aggressive approach toward a higher cost recovery percentage</p> <p>Step 3 – Establish an initial cost recovery target which may differ for each of the facilities depending on realities such as the Palmer Center and its user group of older adults</p> <p>Step 4 – Based on the comments provided in Steps 1 thru 3, the initial recommended cost recovery target for all these facilities is likely to fall within a range of 10% on the low end to 30% on the high end</p>
George Owens Nature Center	The process to determine the cost recovery target for the George Owens Nature Center is as follows: <p>Step 1 – calculate all costs associated with the operations of the facility</p> <p>Step 2 – work with the City Manager, City Council, Park Board and user groups to reach consensus on the appropriateness for assigning a cost recovery target for this facility</p> <p>Step 3 – Research what other similar facilities are charging in the area</p> <p>Step 4 – Establish a cost recovery target which may be as low as 10%</p>
Special Events	No cost recovery percentage target; however, the process to be used by the Department is as follows: <p>Step 1 – calculate all costs associated with each event</p> <p>Step 2 – assess vendors a fee for their participation in the event, usually a percentage of their gross revenues of 10% on the low end and consider event sponsorship.</p>

Recommendation: To increase the number of citizens who use the recreation programs, the recommendation is detailed below:

- Continue, and/or become, a strategic partner with numerous community groups to advance, and/or provide more programs and services. For example:
 - LINC is a strategic partner with whom the **Community School Concept** can be expanded. LINC has developed a strong relationship with the school district, they have access to all schools, and their mission is compatible with the IP & R Department. A partnership with LINC will allow the Recreation Division of the Department to provide its expertise and resources to make a difference in the lives of all age groups on a consistent basis.
 - The **theater groups** need help with marketing/promotion and operations. In addition, these groups could partner with the Recreation Division to provide activities throughout the community at neighborhood events, etc.
 - The **Town Square Association** needs advice and support on any number of events that may help create more awareness of that area of town
 - **Athletic Associations** need support and management advice to ensure that their programs remain strong and viable.
 - Various groups involved with the management of the **historic sites** are in need of assistance; for example, develop programs and activities that educate the public, attract visitors, and generally celebrate our history in Independence.
- Family programs, a point of emphasis in the 2002 Master Plan, were introduced to the community in 2004. Currently, the program is staffed by one full-time person with some assistance from part-time staff and other recreation specialists within the Department, as needed. The Department's role has been to offer programs as a direct provider, to utilize city-owned parks and green space for its special events, and to provide services in each neighborhood.

Family programs were introduced to the community in 2004.



The reality is that each neighborhood may only have access to a program one time every three years due to the limitations of staff, equipment, and supplies. This Master Plan prefers that the old approach be abandoned. In its place, staff would become a facilitator of family programs. In the role of a facilitator, staff would identify, solicit, contact neighborhood groups and others to produce programs at the neighborhood level on a regular basis. For example, rather than once every few years, a neighborhood could have an event on one to three occasions per year such as an annual block party, Popsicles in the Park, movies in the park, etc.

- Due to economic and age-related conditions in some areas of town which result in transportation problems, it is extremely important to customize programs in these areas by providing close-to-home activities that provide access to services they would not otherwise have and that they want.

Guiding Principle #3: Design a sustainable park system. A sustainable system will:

- Provide high quality maintenance and security, embrace strong partnerships that preserve land and build future parks and sustainable facilities, and provide citizens with personal and community-wide benefits.

Recommendation: To leverage IP & R Department resources with partners who share a common mission to develop new facilities and to organize and produce future programs.

This recommendation is intended to manage existing partnerships while developing new ones, adopting a formal partnership policy, and utilizing partnerships to maintain and develop facilities.

Examples of partnerships that have been recognized in this Master Plan:

- New parks on the east side in collaboration with developers, Water Pollution Control (WPC), School Districts, etc.
- Numerous indoor and outdoor activities in collaboration with the Independence School District.
- Numerous opportunities with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) groups.

Recommendation: To develop new capital projects and facilities that will complement the existing park system as detailed in the cost estimate spreadsheet in this Plan.

- New water park attractions at Adventure Oasis Water Park every five to ten years.
- A community of this size could support four additional spraygrounds at Choplin Hood Park and three new park locations.
- Destination playgrounds at McCoy Park and a location on the east side as development occurs.
- Picnic facilities at Benton Park, Carriage Hills Park, Firehouse Park, McCoy Park (large pavilion), the Athletic Complex (large pavilion) and George Owens Nature Park (one large pavilion and two small pavilions).
- Restroom facilities at George Owens Nature Park (replacement), Santa Fe Park (replacement), Choplin Hood, the Athletic Complex (three), Bundschu Park, and two at future sprayground locations in the eastern section of Independence.
- Off-leash area at the new animal shelter.



Recommendation: Spraygrounds at the Fairmount area, Choplin Hood Park, and on the east side of Independence as development occurs.



Recommendation: New large pavilions and picnic facilities at several parks.

- Improve park security system by using technology, increased park police patrols, and neighborhood park watch programs.
- Relocation of the Spring Cabin to the National Frontier Trails Museum Area.
- Completion of the amphitheater at the Athletic Complex.
- Additional meeting space for seniors is needed. Currently, the Palmer Center serves 200 to 300 guests each day which is nearly full capacity for the building. Given the number of older adults who are eligible to use the facility, it is important to anticipate the need for additional upgrades to the Palmer Center, possible use of space in the vacant school administration building adjacent to the Palmer Center, and arrangements for satellite senior centers. Geographically, locations for satellite centers should be:
 - In the Susquehanah area.
 - Partnership with neighboring communities with the hope that their expressed interest in a community center is compatible with the needs of Independence.
 - Partnership with LINC at the Fairmount Center to augment its senior services.
- Tennis Courts at new parks which are shown on the Proposed Park Site Map and partnership with Blue Springs to upgrade the courts at Pink Hill Park.
- Construct t-ball/machine pitch baseball/softball triplex at the Independence Athletic Complex to allow the Department to provide improved playing conditions to this program and decrease the reliance on School District fields for practices.



Development of trails is a top priority.

Recommendation: To develop new large capital projects and facilities that will complement the existing park system. It is understood that the success of all these projects will depend on strong partnerships with those who share a common mission and, when possible, on grants and other funding sources that are outside the standard park and recreation budget.

Top Priorities

Trails, identification of funding outside of the current Park sales tax for the development of a Special Event Park, and land acquisition for future parks and trails have surfaced during this planning process as priorities in the category of Guiding Principle #3 for several reasons: a) because of their support by citizens-at-large (citizen survey) and organized special interest groups and City management; b) because of the advanced planning that has been given to each; e.g. there is a conceptual plan for the Special Events Park, trail routes have been identified but not formalized in a trail master plan, and this Master Plan's GIS mapping has shown the need for new park sites. Specifically, this Plan suggests the:

1. Development of a trail master plan and to work toward its implementation by developing multi-use trails and trail connections that are city-wide, in collaboration with developers and the Public Works Department.

2. Review and update the Master Plan for a Special Event Park near the Independence Square after conducting necessary environmental reviews (a park that could become the county fairground, farmers market, close-to-home park for nearby residents, home for major special events such as Santa-Cali-Gon, concerts, etc). This project is a high priority for several reasons: a) citizens rated festivals, concerts, and special events as very important on the citizen survey; b) the area designated for the event park is blighted and near the Town Square, thus improvements to that area would make a significant visual and property value impact on that area; c) development of the special event park would attract visitors to town, thus contributing dollars to the local economy; d) and, this addition to the park system would continue the streak of recent major recreation facility improvements such as the Adventure Oasis Water Park and Events Center to elevate the City of Independence to a position in the Kansas City Metro Area as a destination for family recreation. Development of this Special Event Park will require funds outside the City's current Parks sales tax.

3. Land acquisition for future park development in underserved areas as designated on the maps in this report. Because of its uniqueness, special emphasis is placed on the rural area that is east of Highway 7. In that area, it is recommended that sites of 20 to 40 acres be identified, in collaboration with the property owner, to be used as future nature preserves. This recommendation is based on the assumption that the city's existing Park Land Reservation Ordinance would be used which stipulates that any transaction for property in this area would occur in no more than 5 years after the property has been identified. During the period not to exceed 5 years, the city would either identify funding for the purchase, or, the owner would donate. If neither of these options occur, the property can be sold in the open market.

4. Development of a feasibility study and eventual construction of a contemporary recreation center (a minimum of 75,000 sq. ft.). There is a need for a contemporary recreation center in Independence. The feasibility study should be completed to determine the most appropriate location, facilities that should be included, and user fees. Potential partners for a center on the east side of Independence include:

- The developer and Blue Springs School District,
- Blue River College and the Independence School District in an area near the college, or
- A partnership with the Community of Christ Church at their facilities

5. Addition of classroom space at the Events Center. There is a demand for off-ice space to accommodate special events; e.g. birthday parties, classes, and other program-related uses that are in demand at the facility.



Potential partners for a recreation center on the east side of Independence include Blue Springs and Independence School Districts.



There are opportunities for additional fitness centers in Independence.

6. Fitness Centers - Because there is limited indoor space in Independence for fitness equipment, and because individual fitness is the highest individual need that citizens have expressed, this Plan has identified several opportunities for fitness components that should be investigated as opportunities arise:

- To be included in a new community center, if and when, one is built by others.
- To be included in the Sermon Center as upgrades are made.
- To be included in the Fairmount Center through a partnership agreement with LINC.
- To be included in a city/school district co-location agreement, if and when, an agreement is developed.
- To be included in a community center to be developed on the east side in partnership with Forest City Developers, the Blue Springs School District, and others, provided that project is developed.
- To be developed at the Boys and Girls Club, provided a partnership agreement is developed.

7. A new athletic complex may be needed in the future, contingent upon growth east of the Little Blue River and with the assumption that participation in sports remains strong. Future consideration in conjunction with the proposed business park on 7 Highway may be in order.

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The IP & R Department is well established in the City with records dating back to the era of John Van Hook who was the Park Director in the 1950's, to be followed by Bill Brewster and others over the years.

History

Introduction

The Department continues to evolve by adding more facilities, programs, and services that are managed by a full-time staff who are responsible for all planning, staffing, visioning, coordinating, budgeting, maintenance, and daily management of the department. Advice is provided to the Director by three Commissions:

- **Park Commission** – This seven member volunteer committee was created in 1995 by the City Council to promote park and recreation activities, facilities, and fundraising efforts in Independence. The group also serves as the oversight

committee for improvements that are funded by the park sales tax.

- **Tree Commission** – This five member advisory group explores tree-related issues in the Independence community. This commission investigates concerns related to those trees in public areas and rights-of-way, promotes the City’s annual Arbor Day Event, and assists in the development of workshops and other public education efforts.

- **Sports Commission** – This volunteer commission provides input for youth and adult athletic issues at a quarterly meeting with the Director of Parks and Recreation.

Department Highlights

Prior to 1998, scarce resources made it difficult to maintain and upgrade the park system. However, with citizen support of a sales tax referendum in 1998, significant park upgrades, new programs and facilities have flourished. Details of the sales tax are provided below:

- 1997 sales tax initiative for park improvements and new facilities failed.
- In 1998, a 1/8 cent sales tax initiative passed, allowing for improvements to be made at Crysler Stadium, five city parks, and the Truman Memorial Building. This tax ended in 2002.
- The 2002 sales tax initiative for park improvements and new facilities also passed. This funding source provided:
 - 1/8 cent sales tax into perpetuity for park maintenance, security and inspection; operation of recreation facilities; and development of family recreation programs; and
 - 1/8 cent sales tax for the revitalization of old parks and the development of new parks and facilities; this portion of the tax is set to expire in 2012



The Tree Commission explores tree-related issues in the community.

Expectations

As a mature Department, numerous management decisions have been made over the years that will impact its future, especially for a sustainable department. A sustainable department is characterized by a predictable budget and realistic opportunities to leverage resources by working in partnership with other providers who share the same mission. Some detail is provided below about a budget-related expectation (pricing) and partnerships:

- Pricing – Citizen access to programs and facilities in Independence can be classified as “very affordable”. As a result, the percentage of cost recovery for services provided will be on the low side and will require a subsidy, in most instances. Current variances from this issue are the Centerpoint Ice Facility and the Adventure Oasis Water Park.





The Park Commission promotes park and recreation activities, facilities, and fundraising efforts.

The result of providing affordable access to recreation programs and facilities in a “down economy” is that budget dollars are more scarce, thus continuing to offer a strong recreation program is more challenging.

- Partnerships – Written agreements with various user groups must be formalized and reviewed annually to ensure that each party feels that they have entered into a win/win situation.

Market Analysis

The City of Independence is anticipated to grow during the life of this 2010 Master Plan, especially eastern Independence.

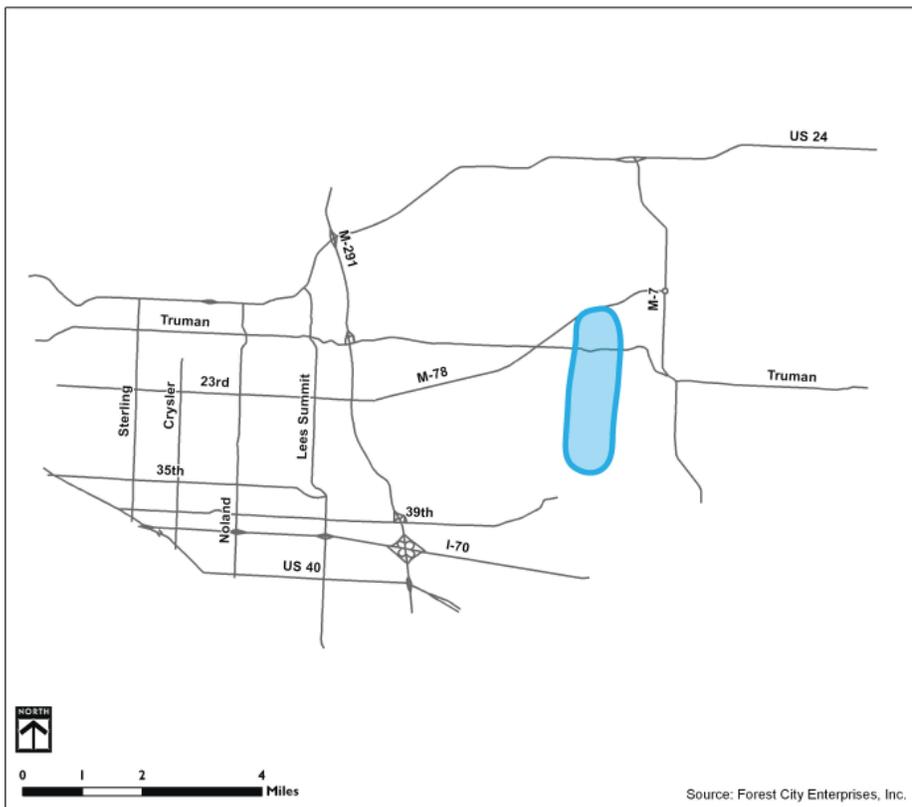
Growth is unpredictable at this time, depending on the nation's rate of recovery from its current economic condition; however, it is clear this Plan should provide for future park and trail locations based on trends at that time.

Introduction

Information is provided from the U.S. Census Bureau, including the 2000 Census and 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with a fresh look at how they are changing. These 3-year estimates are available for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more.

of Missouri were taken from the Missouri Office of Administration. Projections were not available for the City of Independence, but growth in eastern Independence is expected, especially within the Harmony master planned community (see map below). New residents in that area may be supportive of recreation facilities that may include tennis courts, athletic fields, or a sprayground.

2020-2030 population projections for Jackson County and the State



**Anticipated Eastern Growth at Harmony
City of Independence, Missouri**

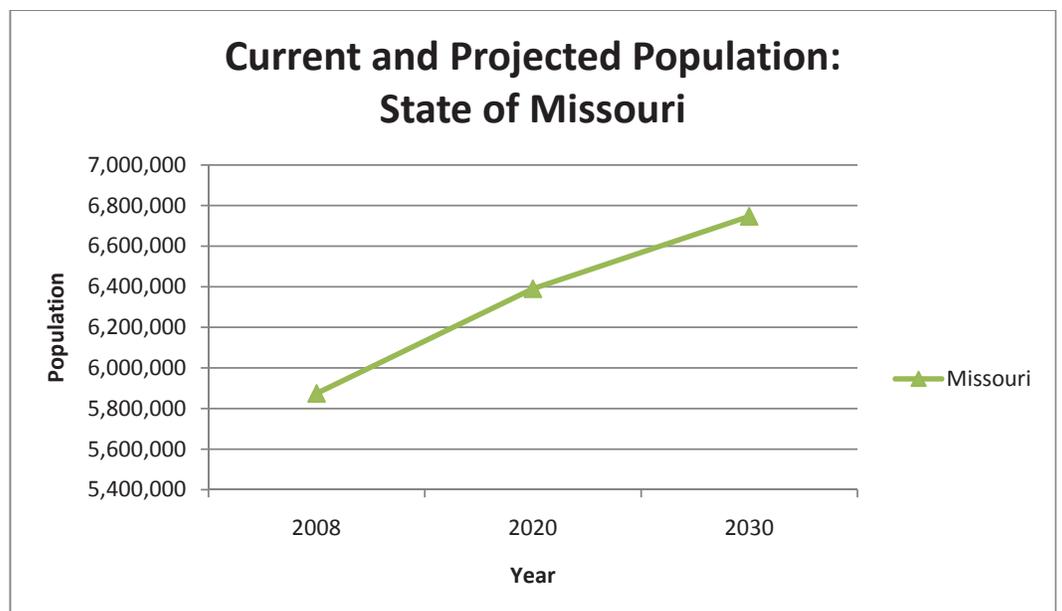
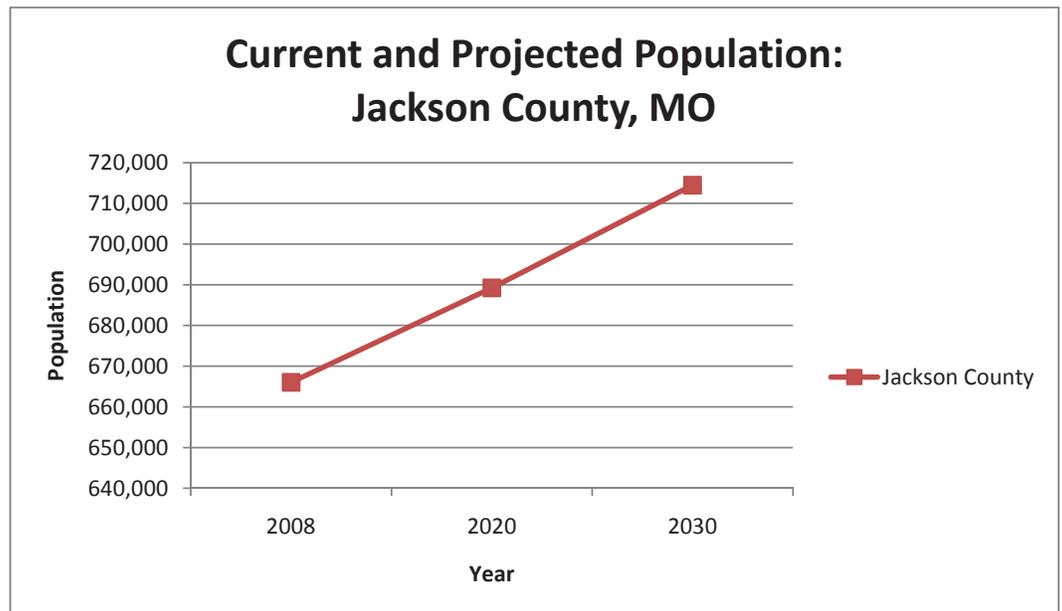
Source: Forest City Enterprises, Inc.

Population Trends

The current estimated population of the City of Independence is 119,178, a 2.6% increase from 2000 population estimates. Population for Jackson County is anticipated to grow by 7.3% from 2008-2030, whereas the statewide population is estimated to grow at a rate almost double that of Jackson County: 14.9% from 2008-2030.

Observations and Implications

When the eastern development occurs, that growth will place an increased demand on existing facilities and programs and result in the need for new parks and programs in that area. Locating new trails and park areas prior to development will be important, especially for trails.



Population by Age

With regard to age, Independence's age distribution is similar to Jackson County's and Missouri's distribution. The maps shown on Pages 12-14 show population by age group in each census tract.

Observations and Implications

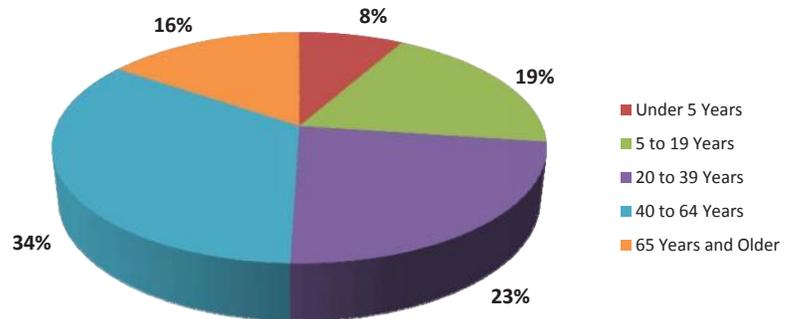
Much of the research regarding age preferences for parks and recreation has been done by Texas A & M University for activities that can be offered in an outdoor setting. Nonetheless, their research provides hints about what different age groups might prefer in Independence.

Older Adults

- By 2030, 16% of the population is likely to be over age 65.
- Older adults in this era will be characterized as healthier, more active, and longer living than previous generations. Their activity and facility preferences will not be much different than younger age groups; however, activities will need to go at a slower pace for this age group and facilities may be desired at slightly different times than the younger age group.
- Use of parks and participation in outdoor recreation tends to go down with age.
- Older adults are more likely to cite personal constraints (fear of crime, lack of companions and family members and/or self are in poor health) as factors which limit their use of outdoor recreation facilities.
- Perception of park safety is enhanced by lighted park areas, accessible trails, and visible park employees.

Percentage 2008 Total Population By Age: Independence, Missouri

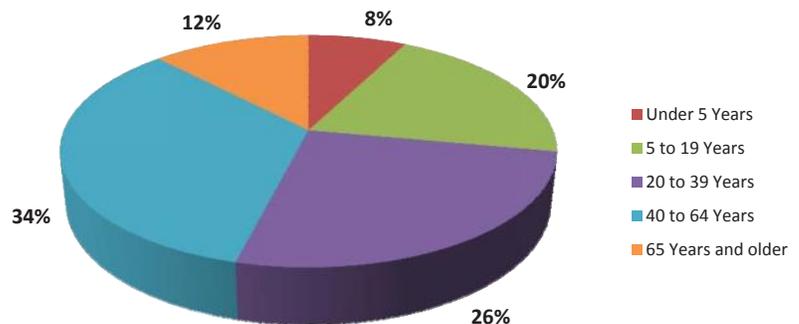
2008 Population: 118,520



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Percentage 2008 Total Population By Age: Jackson County, Missouri

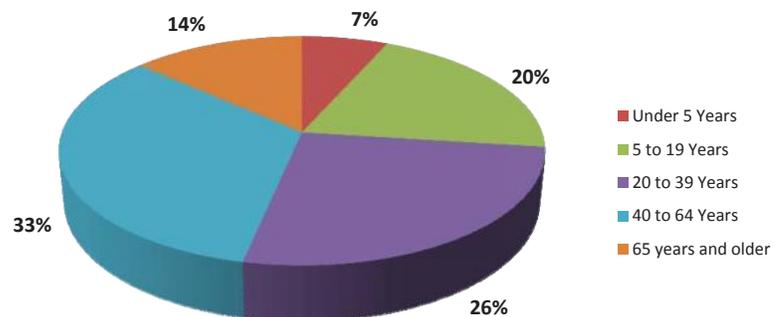
2008 Population: 666,007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Percentage 2008 Total Population By Age: State of Missouri

2008 Population: 5,874,327

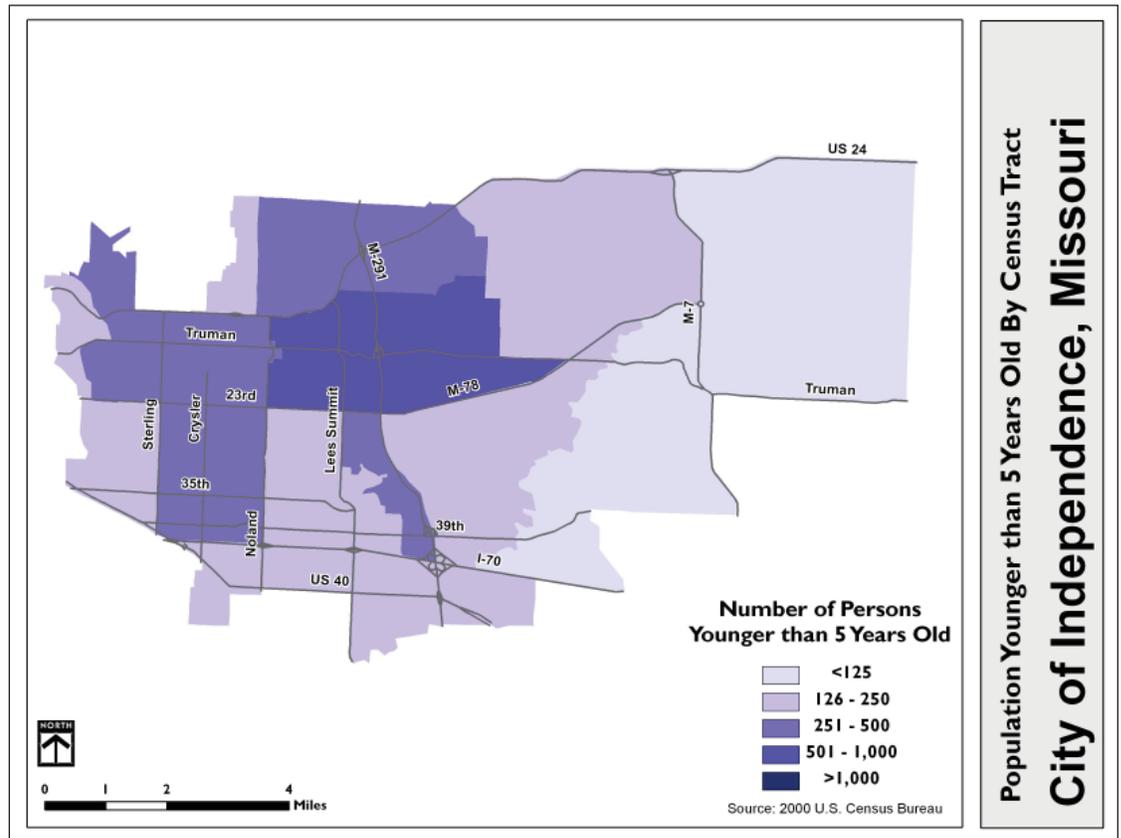


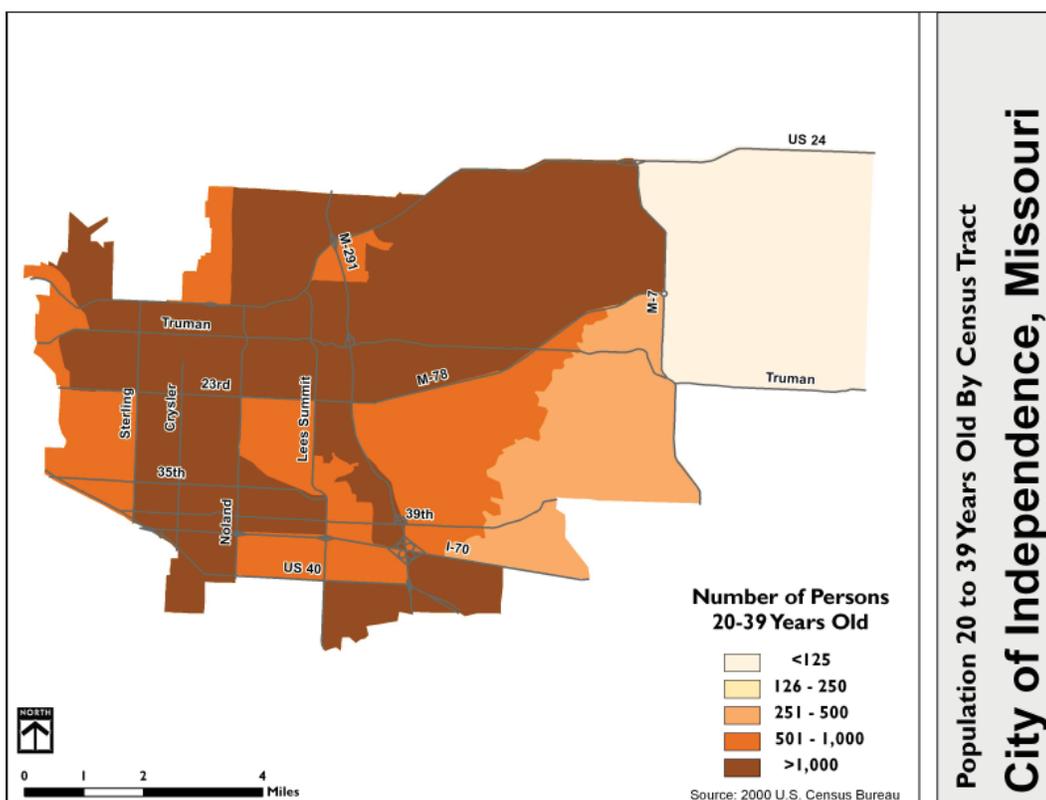
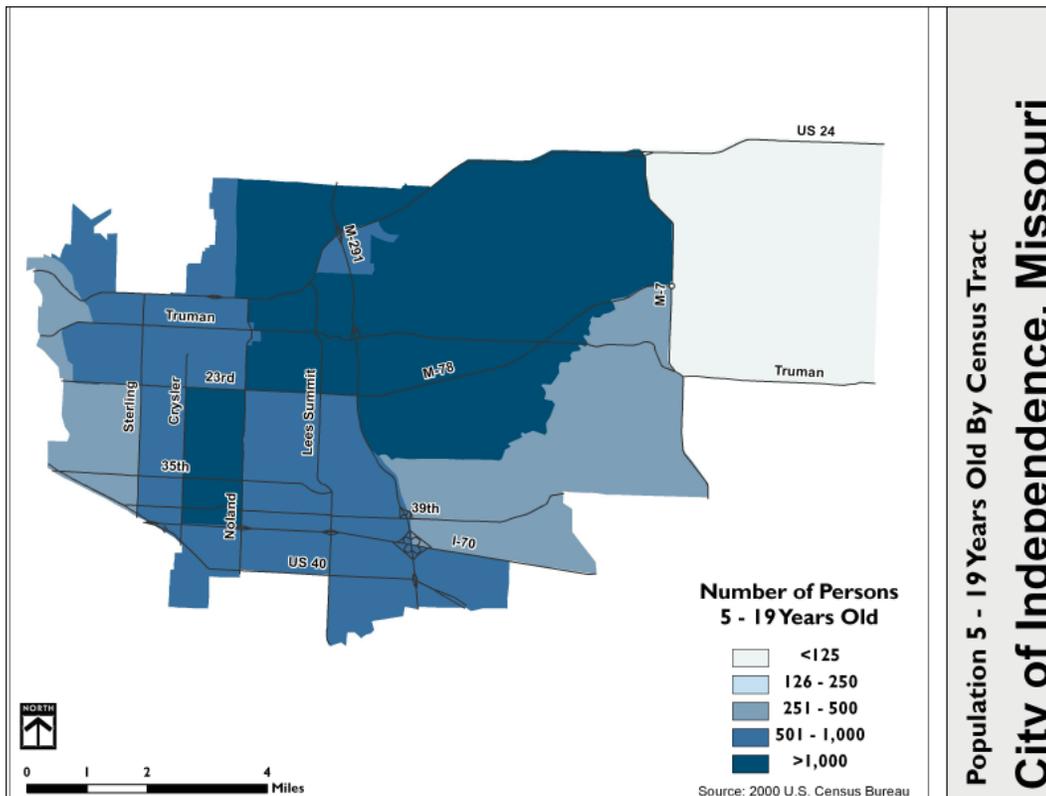
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

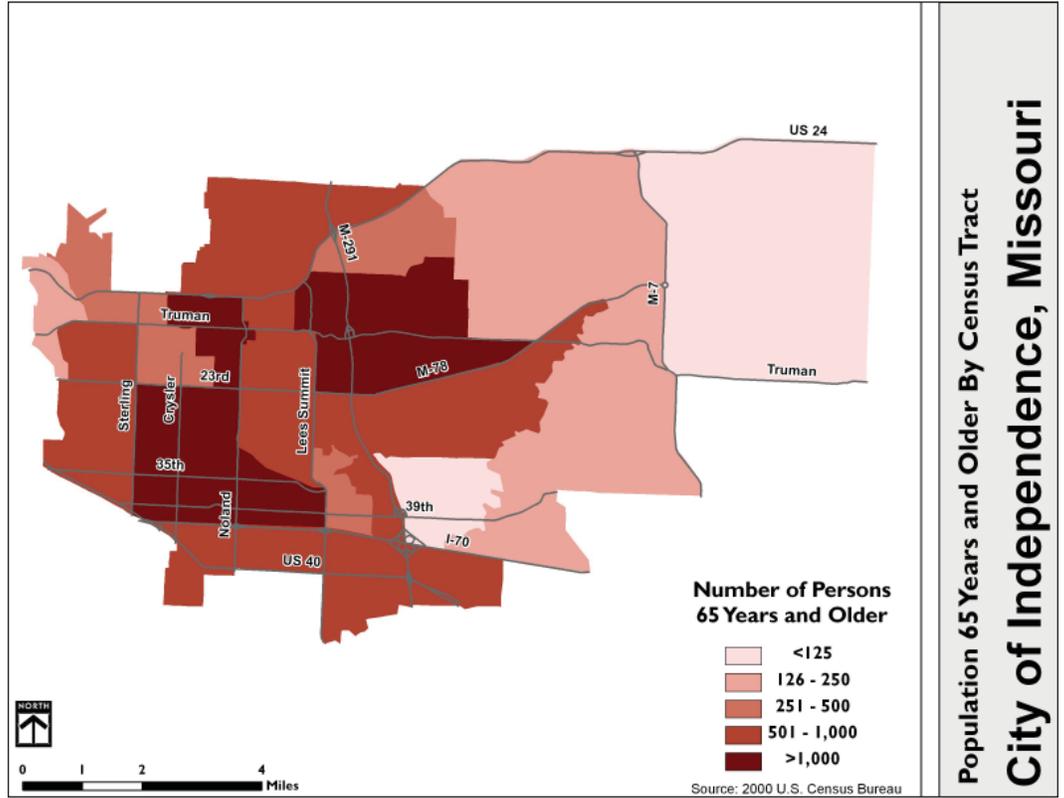
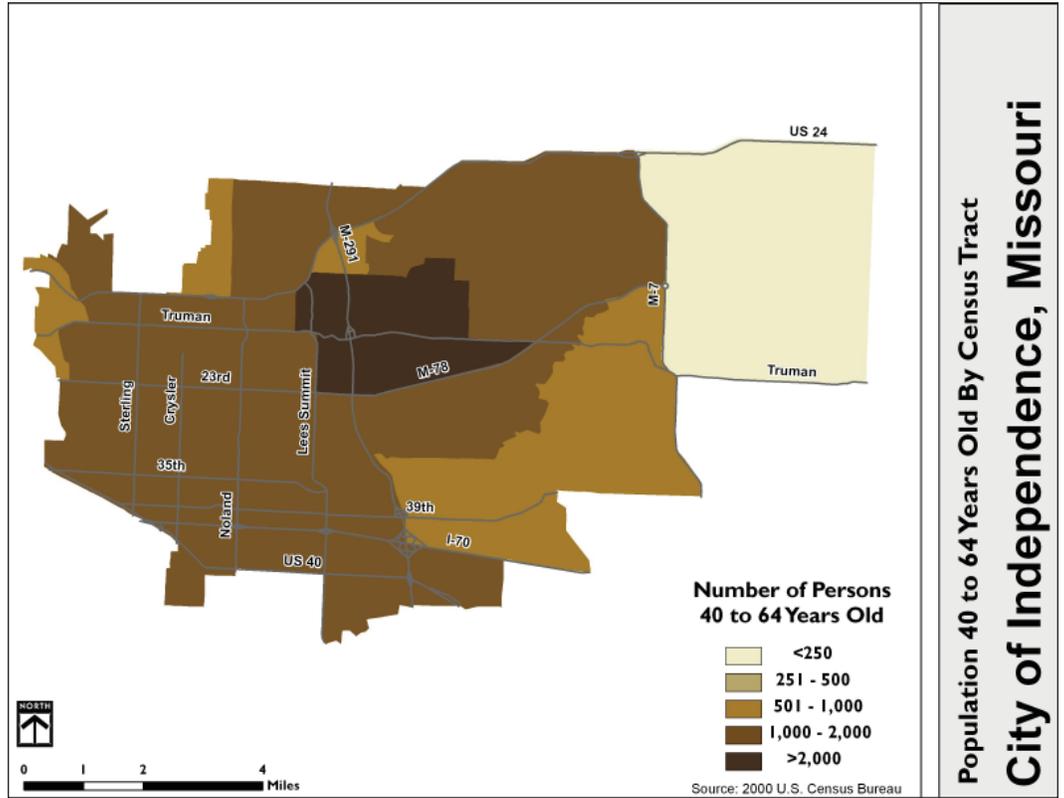
- Older women feel more secure in groups and may be attracted to parks to participate in interpretive programs, walking clubs or other group related activities.
- Staff should take steps to understand the needs and interests of an aging population and those factors that stymie participation in later life.

Younger Adults

- Younger adults are far more likely to cite information and access constraints (parks and recreation areas are too far away) and time constraints.
- Other providers tug at the discretionary time of younger adults and include television and the media.
- Independence and its partners can attract more young adults to activities by improving and expanding opportunities to make advanced reservations so patrons can use time more precisely.
- Independence and its partners must provide shorter and more self-directed opportunities. For example, ski areas, amusement parks and golf courses now provide half day tickets or nine hole rounds of golf in recognition of the time constraints faced by many young adults.
- Independence and its partners can attract more young adults to activities and facilities by providing complete information concerning time requirements.

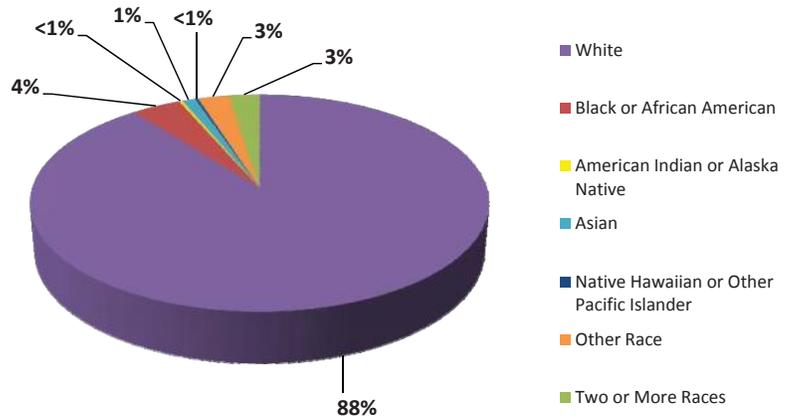






2008 Population by Ethnicity: Independence, Missouri

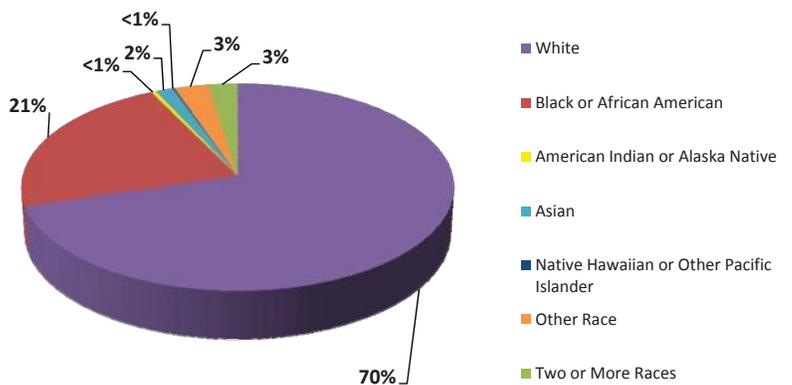
2008 Population: 118, 520



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Jackson County, Missouri

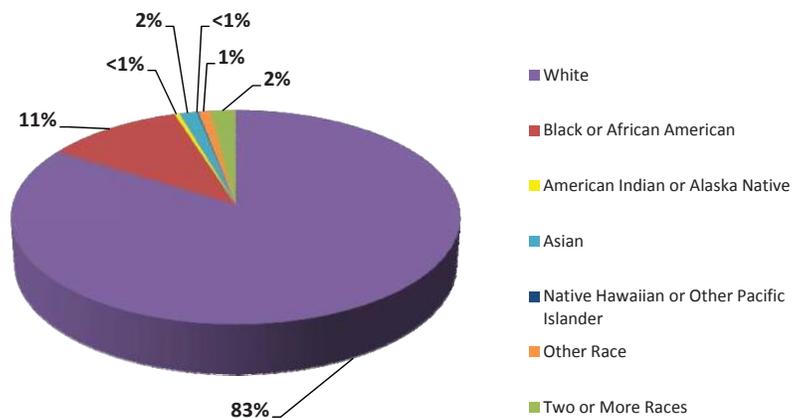
2008 Population: 666,007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

2008 Population by Ethnicity: State of Missouri

2008 Population: 5,874,327



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Population by Ethnicity

The population in Independence is almost 90% white, compared to 70% white in Jackson County and 83% white statewide.

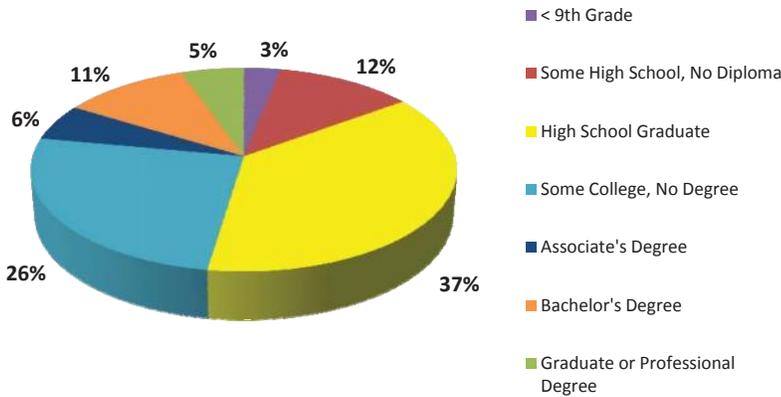
Observations and Implications

Research indicates that there are more similarities in the leisure patterns of diverse ethnic groups than there are differences. Any differences that do exist may actually reflect differences in other areas, such as household income, rather than differences in ethnic background and need for recreation facilities and programs.

From a programming perspective, a more diverse Independence population will create opportunities for new festivals and events that celebrate different cultures and create new educational opportunities.

2008 Population by Level of Education: Independence, Missouri

2008 Population: 118, 520



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Population by Educational Attainment

Independence population differs slightly from Jackson County and Missouri. For instance, Independence has a higher percentage of the population that received only a high school diploma. Also, the percentage of the population receiving Bachelor's or Graduate degrees is less in Independence.

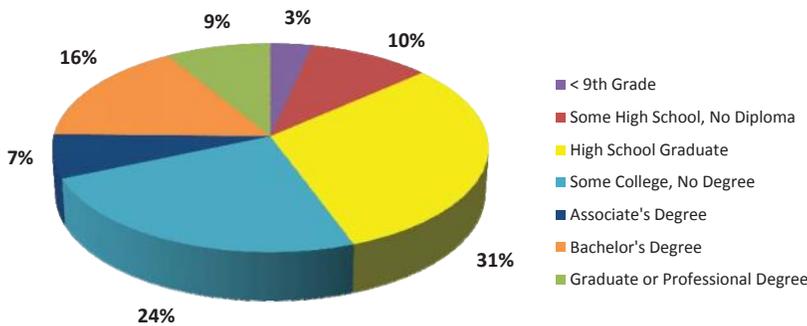
Observations and Implications

From a planning perspective, there is research which concludes that leisure services are selected, in part, based on one's educational achievements. The Parks and Recreation Department should be aware of the choices that one will make for services, based on their educational level and corresponding higher income earning power and provide choices for services; for example:

- Offer services that are priced for those who earn a modest amount of money, but also, provide services that are priced for those who can afford to spend more on those services that are important to them.

2008 Population by Level of Education: Jackson County, Missouri

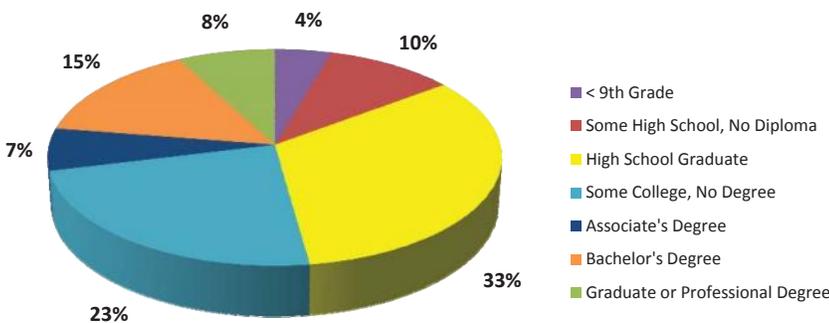
2008 Population 18 Years and Older: 495,808



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

2008 Population by Level of Education: State of Missouri

2008 Population 18 Years and Older: 4,450,742



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

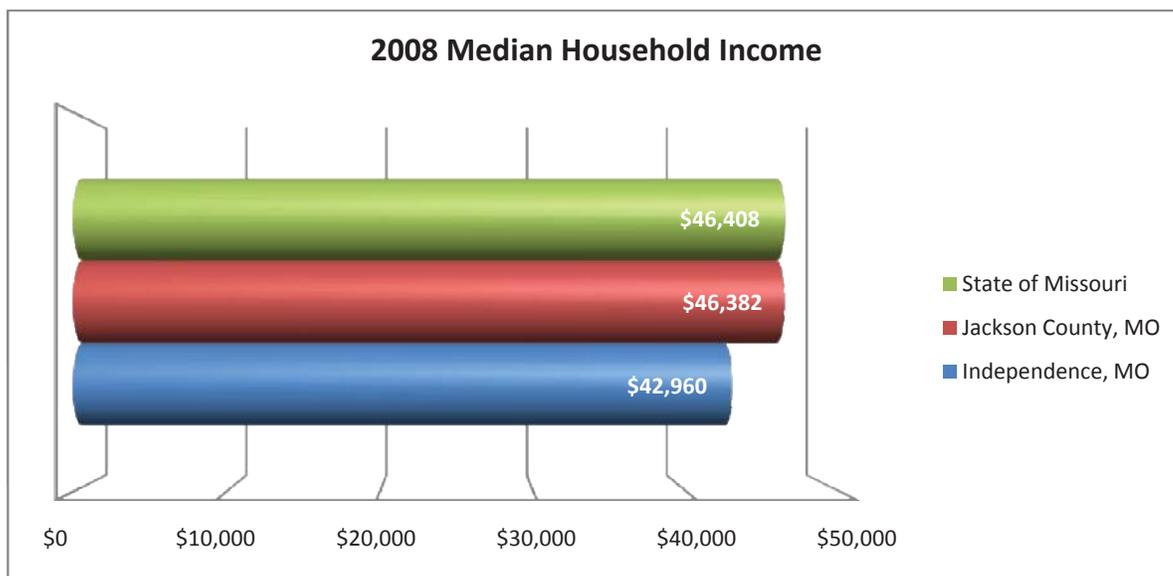
Median Household Income

Median household income in Independence is \$42,960; approximately \$3,400 less than the median household incomes in Jackson County and Missouri.

Observations and Implications

In most communities, program costs are not the reason that programs and facilities are not heavily used, rather, citizens indicate that they are less likely to use programs and facilities when:

- They do not know what is being offered.
- They do not know the locations of parks and facilities.
- They do not have enough time.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Overall, Independence has a system of parks that have a great deal of natural beauty.

Park System Analysis

Introduction

The citizen survey administered in March 2010 reported that 66% of the citizens use the park system which is near the national average of 70%. To provide users with the level of experiences they are seeking, the ongoing process of upgrading existing parks and facilities and when appropriate building new ones, will need to focus on a few key issues; public engagement, and improvement guidelines.

Public Engagement

Public outreach is critical to the success of effective park and recreation system management. It is a process that needs to be proactive rather than reactive and one that

consistently emphasizes the economic, environmental, and health and social benefits to the community. If the public doesn't know and understand what is happening within their park system, they will likely see the changes in management practices as neglect; i.e. switching to native grasses to reduce mowing cycles. When management practices are considered for change, the process should start with prioritizing the parks that are to be included in the management plan, where to begin in each park, and education of the public about management practice changes from the beginning of the process to the end and beyond. Popular educational opportunities to get the public involved include:

- Children love to play in the dirt as much as gardeners do, so give them opportunities to plant rain gardens or trees.
- Wildlife viewing is one of the fastest growing passive recreation activities people get involved in and spend money on, so use this as a selling point for getting people interested and involved.
- Restoration events could be established that focus on one particular park project at a time (as recommended by the Master Plan).
- Water quality can be emphasized in events held on a neighborhood or city-wide scale.



Environmental Considerations

Community parks can provide users with a variety of experiences that are part of the passive and active programming within each park. A number of management practices can be implemented to reduce maintenance costs, increase plant and wildlife diversity, and improve water quality within parks. Such practices would enhance the user experience as well.

Integration into Existing Programs

The City of Independence has two existing programs within the City's Water Pollution Control Division that park planning could readily complement: retrofits of stream banks and low-lying areas, and the stream setback ordinance. Both programs are utilizing native plants to protect and improve water quality in streams throughout the City. The Parks and Recreation Department could interpret these initiatives through demonstration plantings, interpretive signage, and public outreach.

Use of Native Plants

The following reasons best describe why native grasses and plants should be used where possible.

- Adapted to our climate and thus are more drought tolerant and disease resistant.
- Increase infiltration - plant roots stabilize soil and increase water absorption which in turn reduces increase groundwater recharge.
- Increase water quality - prevent pollutants and sediments from reaching streams and other water bodies.
- Decrease flooding and protect stream banks.
- Provide habitat for wildlife.
- Create outdoor classroom opportunities for schools and neighborhoods.
- Enhance recreational opportunities - wildlife viewing.
- Lower long-term maintenance increases availability of City funds for other projects within the park system.

Vegetation Establishment and Management

Vegetation establishment and management are critical to the success of native plants. To be successful, a



Public and stakeholder outreach is critical to the success of management within parks.

restoration program will need a good, workable long-term plan with follow-through. Establishing native plants takes time, generally three to five years for a healthy stand of prairie plants and longer for large wetland plantings. Consider starting with small demonstration areas in higher use parks and larger areas in bigger parks that have more passive uses.

Rain gardens are an easy and quick way to deal with small (<1/4 acre) drainage problems and to introduce people to the functional and aesthetic value of native plants. Also, put the right plants in the right place and keep a defined border between native and non-native planting areas.

Safety and Vandalism

It is commonly understood in the park and recreation profession that users want to feel safe and secure when using parks and facilities. Independence, just like all communities, is aware of this and works hard to ensure that this goal is met. Existing efforts to provide security include police patrols and neighborhood watch programs while the future includes the use of security cameras and more patrols when this master plan is funded and implemented.

Staffing

The Park Division, which includes the cemetery, is currently staffed by 19 full-time employees. There are position vacancies and expanded responsibilities at this time which cause a hardship on the Division. Expanded responsibilities are a result of



Native plants are recommended for many reasons, including their adaptability, infiltration capability, and lower long-term maintenance.

the 2002 sales tax initiative and include an athletic complex, Waterfall Park, Clothier Park, and trails.

The most significant issue facing the Park Division relates to the challenge of mowing 634 acres of developed park land more often than is possible with existing resources (labor and equipment). Currently, the mowing cycle ranges between 10 to 15 days, and the desire is to have a mowing cycle of 7 days or less. The conversion of some common areas will help, but in order to increase the mowing rate, staff or contract mowing must be added.

Benchmarking Measures

The Independence park system was compared with others in the metro area (Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Olathe, and Overland Park) in three categories: dollars spent per resident for total expenditures; total dollars spent per acre for maintenance; and, total park land per 1,000 residents. Table 2 on the following page shows:

- Independence spends less money per resident for parks and recreation than benchmarked communities.
- Independence spends less dollars per acre for maintenance than benchmarked communities.
- The number of acres available for citizen use is enhanced by combining the 6.98 acres per 1,000 residents that is owned by the City of Independence and the 1,071 acres that is owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation at Burr Oak Woods.

Table 2: Benchmarking Measures

Item	Local Communities	Independence
Dollars spent per resident	\$66.40 at Olathe \$69.76 at Overland Park \$57 at Blue Springs \$79 at Lee's Summit	\$40
Dollars spent per acre for maintenance	\$2,171 at Olathe \$2,016 at Overland Park \$2,779 at Blue Springs \$3,995 at Lee's Summit	\$1,231
Total park land per 1,000 residents	14.4 acres at Olathe 14.6 acres at Overland Park 12.1 acres at Blue Springs 3.5 acres at Lee's Summit	6.98 acres in Independence. Does not include 1,071 acres at Burr Oak Woods owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation

Facility Guidelines

Table 3 on the following page quantifies the number of existing recreation facilities and the current need, if any, and projected need, if any based on future population growth.

Table 3: Recreation Facility Guidelines

Item	Provided by City	Provided by Others	Recommended Level of Service	Current Need based population of 120,000	Future Need as population grows
Baseball Fields	25		1/5,000 residents	0	To be determined as population grows and the specific interests those residents have. Also, at that time, trends may have changed which will affect preferences
Softball Fields	4	4	1/30,000 residents	0	
Football Fields	5	10	1/30,000 residents	0	
Soccer Fields	11		1/10,000 residents	0	
Water Park	1		1 per community	0	
Tennis Courts	20		1/20,000 residents	0	
Outdoor Basketball Courts	15		1/10,000 residents	0	
Off-Leash Areas	2		1 per district	1 or 2	
Destination Playgrounds	1		Evenly spaced by geography	2	
Spray Parks	2		1 per district	2	
Small Pavilions 4-6 tables	8		Based on need as determined by staff	2	
Medium Pavilions 8-10 tables	8			2	
Large Pavilions 25-40 tables	0			2	
Skate Parks	1		Only as needed to respond to current conditions	0	
Skate Spots	1			0	
BMX Trail	1		1 per community	1	



It is important to plan for ADA accessibility in park design.



Adair Park is an example of natural amenities found within the local park system.

General Opportunities

Increase Connectivity / Accessibility to Neighborhood Parks

- Neighborhood parks should be connected to neighborhoods by sidewalks and trails, when possible.

Increase the Number of Opportunities for Disabled Persons to Utilize the Park System

- ADA access should be enhanced to park facilities and amenities.

Connectivity to Other Parks and Special Interests

- A trail master plan should be developed to determine how parks and points of interest can be connected

Realization of Natural Amenities

- The park system has many natural amenities such as rock outcroppings and creeks that can be enjoyed by users when greater access is provided by trails within the system. Examples of these natural features can be found at Waterfall Park, Hill Park, and Country Club Park.

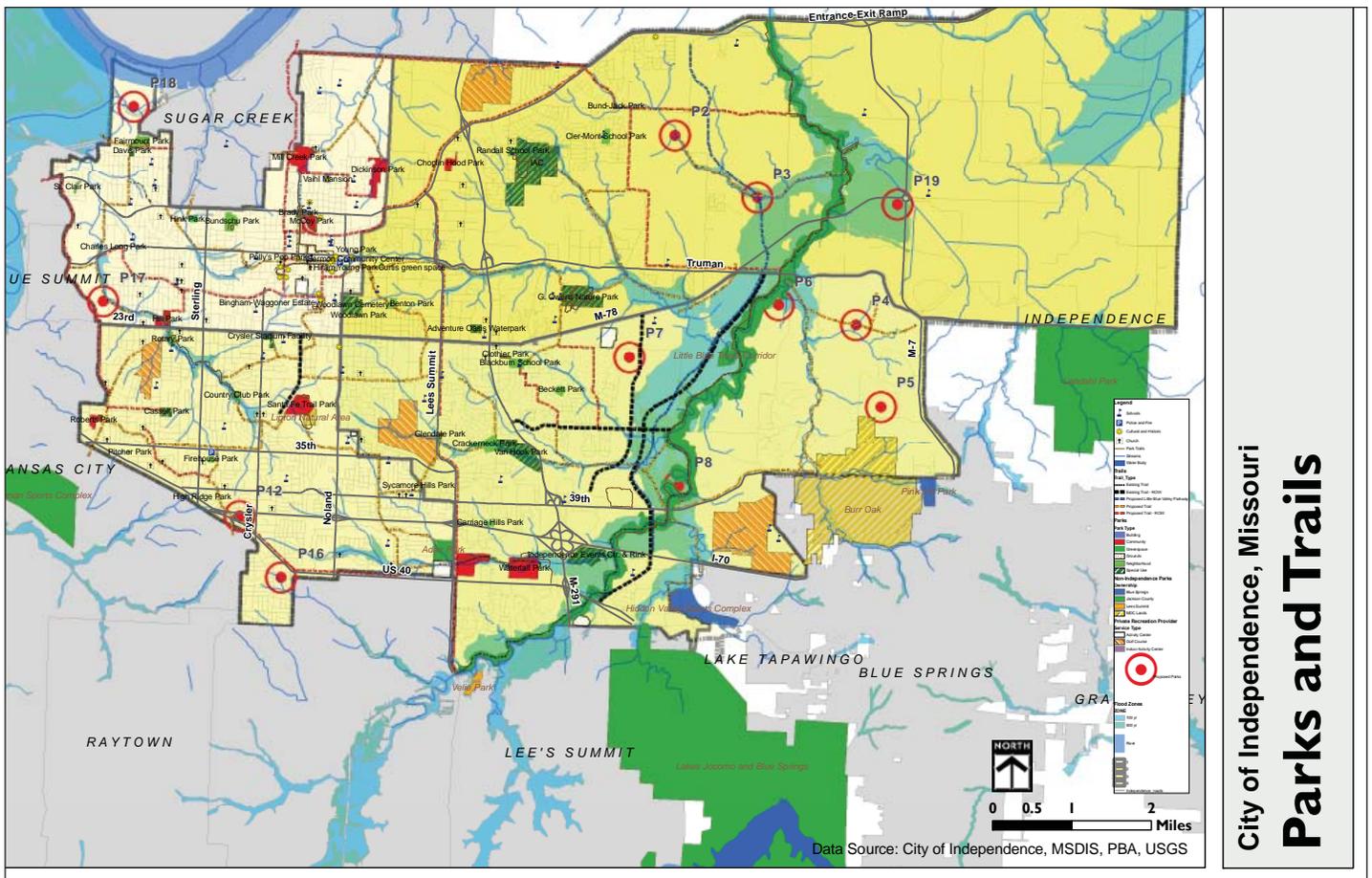
Park System Mapping

Maps shown on the next several pages depict existing conditions in Independence, as well as a natural resource inventory of the City. Full-size maps can be found in the Appendix.

Existing Parks and Trails

- This map illustrates existing parks owned by the City of Independence; existing, planned, and proposed MARC Regional Bikeways; and County park land.

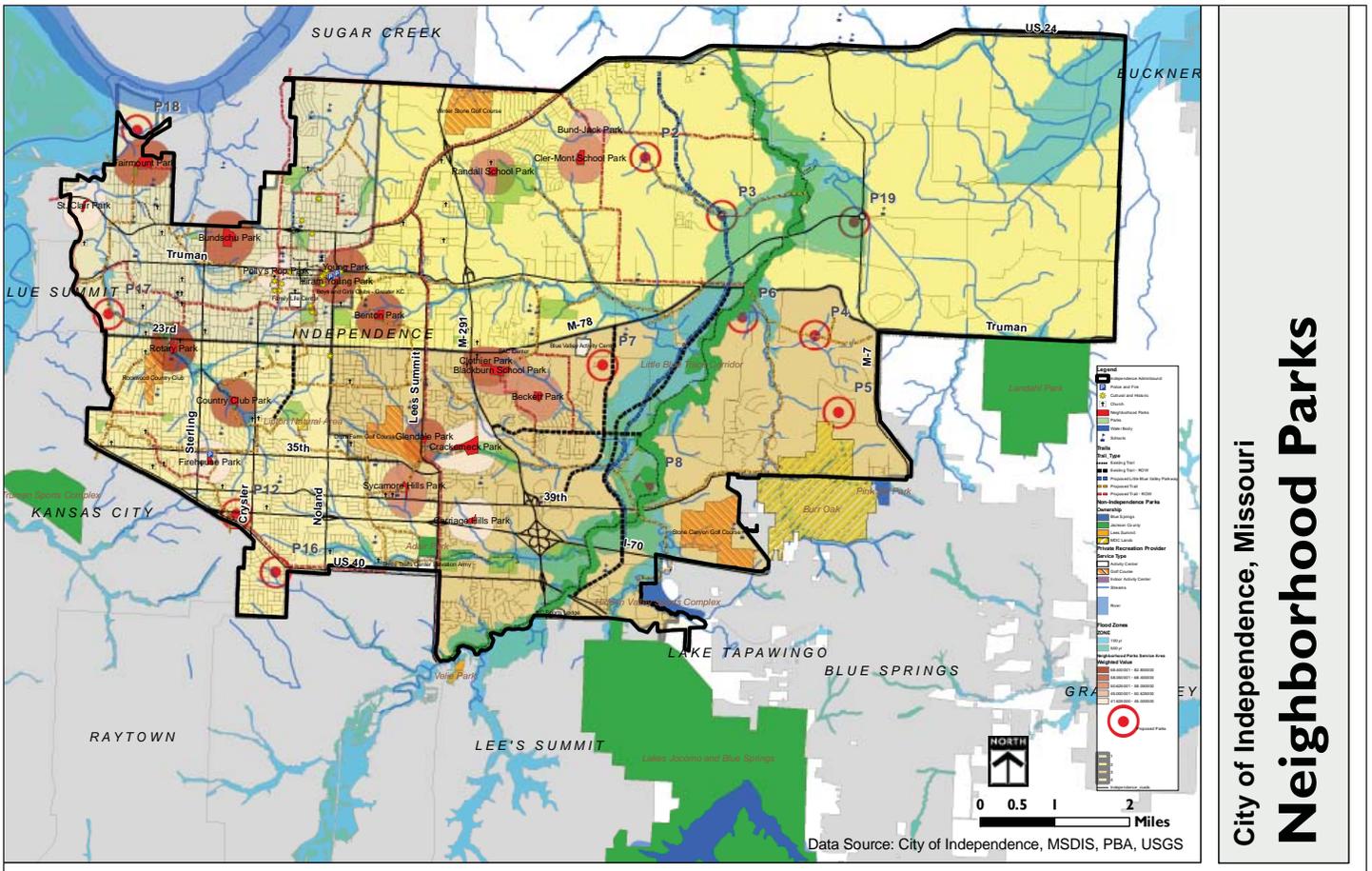
Map 1: Existing Parks and Trails



Neighborhood Parks

- This map illustrates where the existing neighborhood parks are located. A darker color represents that the condition of the park is rated higher than those of a lighter color.

Map 2: Neighborhood Parks

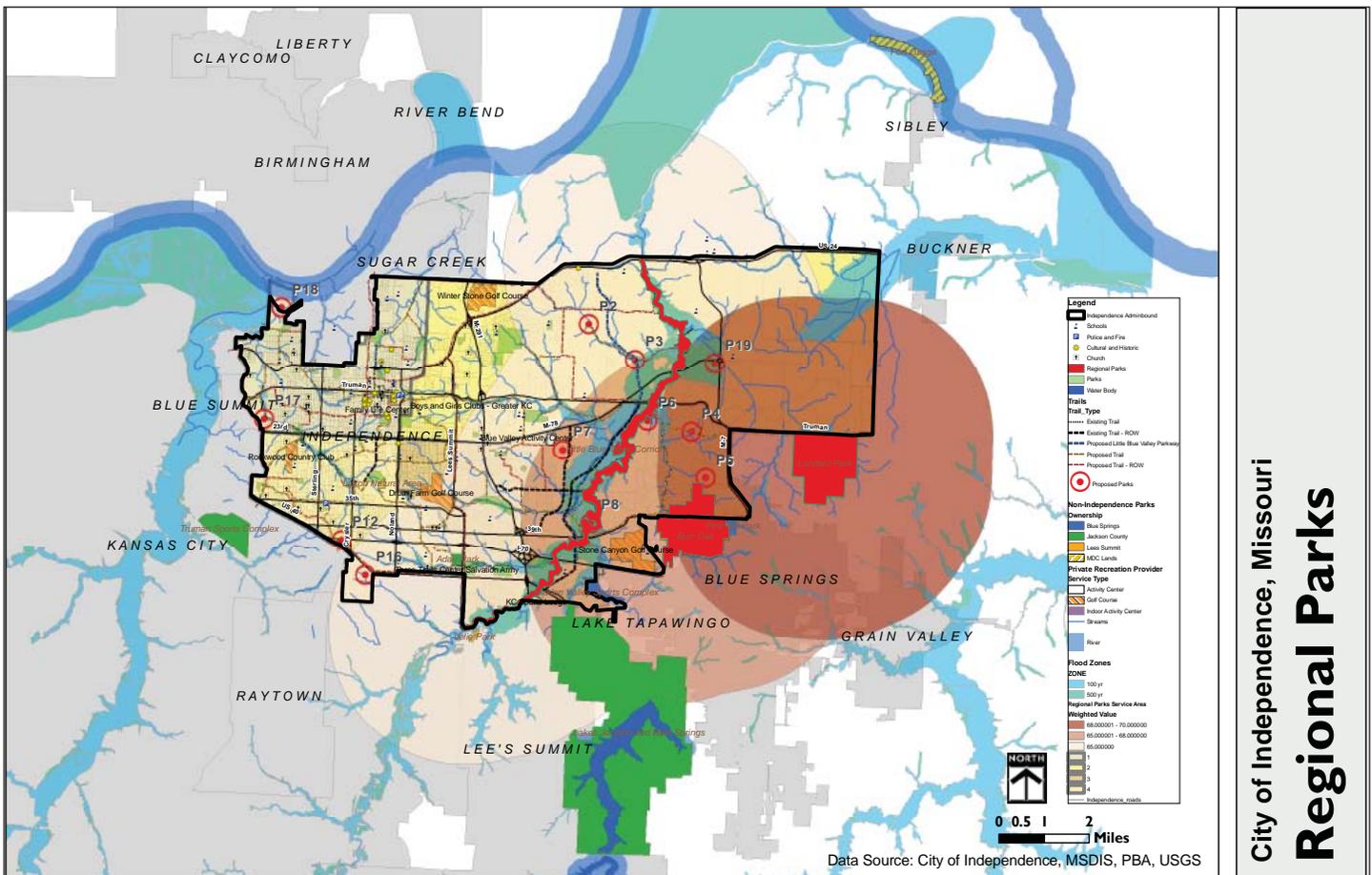


City of Independence, Missouri
Neighborhood Parks

Regional Parks

- This map illustrates the location of regional parks that are located in/near Independence. Some of the regional parks are owned by others such as Jackson County, the Missouri Department of Conservation, etc. The darker color represents that the condition of the park is higher than those of a lighter color.

Map 4: Regional Parks

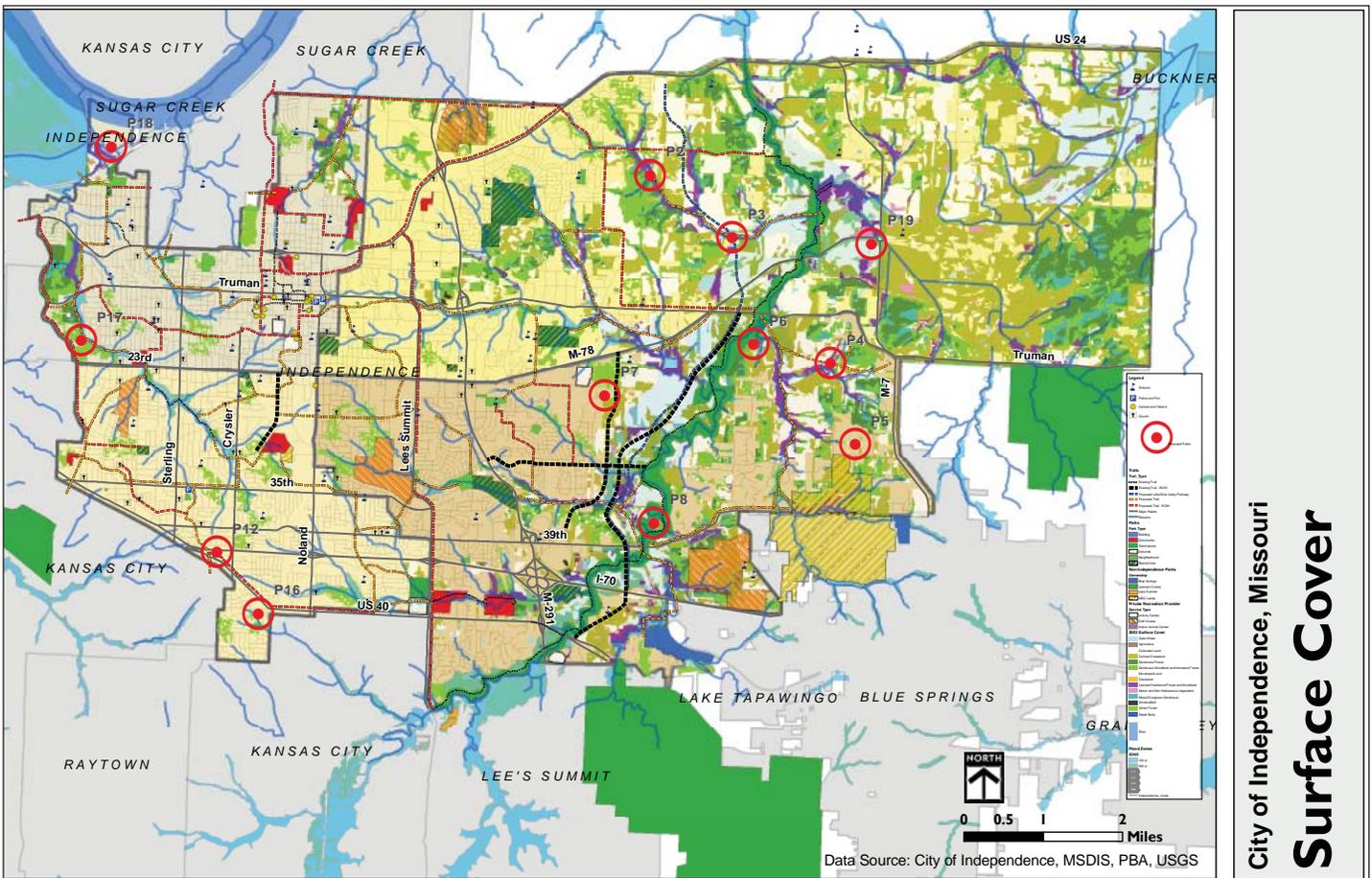


City of Independence, Missouri
Regional Parks

Surface Cover

The Natural Resources Inventory indicates the distribution of vegetated surface cover and development. Much of the vegetated surface cover in Independence is forestland associated with the Little Blue River Valley, and upland grassland/pastureland in the uplands east of the Little Blue River. A majority of the upland area west of the Little Blue River is urbanized land with some minor distributions of urbanized tree cover in pockets between suburban neighborhood development.

Map 6: Surface Cover



Recreation Facilities & Program Analysis

Introduction

As the program evolves, it has already been influenced, and will continue to be influenced in many ways: special interest groups; current trends which have captured the interest of participants; and availability of recreation facilities provided by the Department.

Program Benefits

The importance of this chapter cannot be overstated because the targeted allocation of resources for the recreation program can produce **individual benefits** that result in healthy lifestyles, greater self-esteem, and lifelong interests that are priceless. Programs also produce **community benefits** that result in economic activity, make Independence a place where citizens desire to stay while attracting new citizens for the same reasons, and generally make Independence a preferred place to live.

Staff Responsibility

This chapter emphasizes the enormous responsibility that the Department has to the citizens of Independence as it creates, organizes, and produces the program as detailed below:

- Managers have a responsibility to build their program and

service offerings in a professional, systematic, and studied way; e.g. the need for program goals, the importance of analyzing the life cycle of each program, the fundamental need to balance the program between program types, formats and age groups.

- A well-rounded program should provide opportunities in all program areas or fields. Each of these program areas should provide for varying levels of proficiency and take into account community demographic characteristics such as age, income, gender, racial and ethnic origin, and socioeconomic levels.

Recreation Program Analysis

Recreation Facilities

The IP & R Department offers in excess of 150 programs and services each year. City-owned recreation facilities where programming occurs as a direct provider or as a facilitator include the Sermon Center, the Palmer Center, the Oasis Water Park, the George Owens Nature Center, the Independence Athletic Complex, and the Truman Memorial Building. Family activities that were recommended in the 2002 Master Plan as a major new initiative are held at city parks and green spaces throughout the city.

The IP & R Department was formed in the 1950's. The Recreation Division greatly expanded its program base in 2004. Because it is relatively new in the programming market with a modest budget, it has not yet had the opportunity, nor the resources, to engage a significant percentage of potential users.



Recreation programs can produce both individual and community benefits.

Since 2002 and citizen support for the sales tax initiative, many of the recreation facilities have either been upgraded, or, have been newly constructed. In either case, continuous investment into these assets is critical for two reasons:

- Facilities must be capable of accommodating the uses for which they are intended; and
- Citizens are searching for quality experiences that are worthy of their investment of time and dollars. Those experiences can vary for many users but it is clear from national best practices and user group research that the details listed in Table 4 (Page 33) are realistic for the City of Independence as it evaluates and prioritizes future expenditures for facilities.

Each of the recreation facilities in Table 4 was evaluated to determine its potential for accommodating the programs that occur in them. As shown in the table, the Adventure Oasis Water Park and the Independence Athletic Complex were rated as High, the Palmer Center and Truman Memorial Building were rated as Medium, and rated as Low were the Sermon Center, the George Owens Nature Center and the older athletic fields.



The top three passive programs that citizens have used are downtown and community festivals, concerts on the square, and special events held in the parks.

Recreation Program Survey Data

Data collected from a statistically valid survey of Independence households in April 2010 reported:

- 14% of the citizens say they have participated in the recreation programs offered by the city, which is well below the national average of 30%.
- 12% of the citizens say they learn about the recreation program from the Activity Guide which is well below the national average of 48%, whereas the utility bill insert was rated as the most effective tool for marketing programs.
- 45% of the citizens say that a benefit of parks, trails, recreation facilities and services is to improve physical health and fitness. This is typical throughout the United States and is most often the number one benefit mentioned.
- The top three active programs that citizens prefer are fishing, youth sports leagues, and recreational swimming.
- The top three passive programs that citizens have used are downtown and community festivals, concerts on the square, and special events held in the parks.

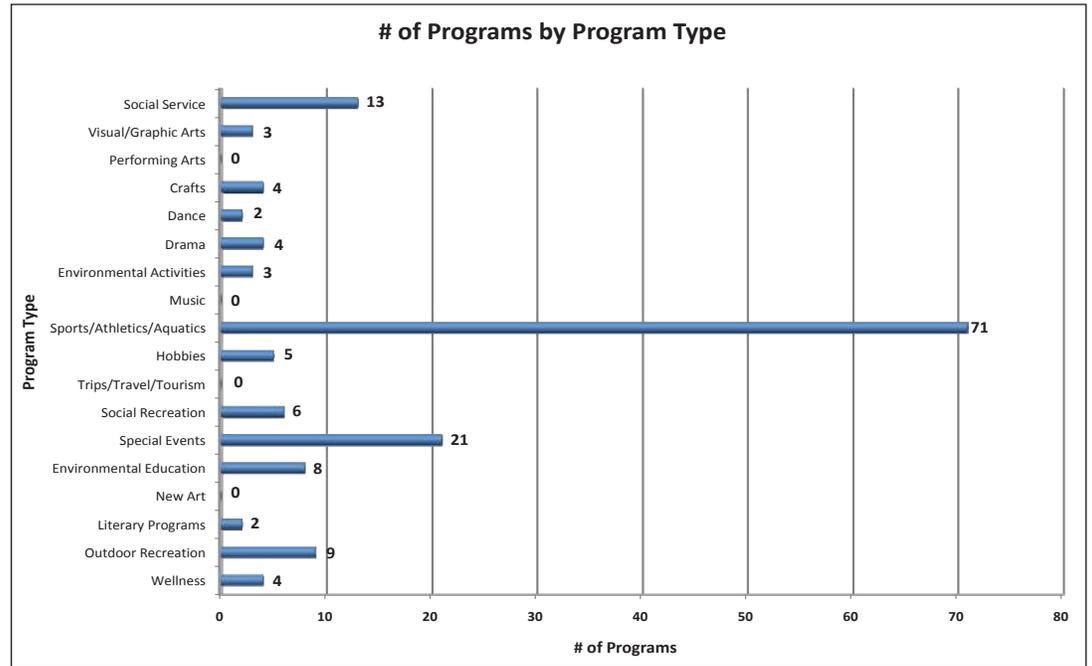
Table 4: Recreation Facility Evaluation*

Facility	Comments
Sermon Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofit of an historic building that was not designed to be a community center • Does not have a dedicated walking track • Does not have a true dedicated fitness area • Does not have dedicated spaces for exercise classes • Does not have storage space for program needs • Upgrades are overdue to repair an aging infrastructure and to develop an ambiance that is attractive to users
The Palmer Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parking is a barrier for many older adult users who will not want to, or are incapable, of dealing with the distance from the parking lot, and/or, the fear of walking across the street from the parking lot to the center • They are cramped for space, limited gathering space in the lobby and no meeting space on the main level • The reception area is set back from the front door and a lot of people bypass it and go downstairs, thus no interaction with some users who enter the building • The facility has been open for six years; updates are needed
The Truman Memorial Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table and chair replacement • Need wireless access • Flat screen tv's or drop down projection screens for presentations • Lighting and modern stage amenities (curtains, acoustics, sound system, etc.) • Ground floor meetings rooms need a dimmer switch; currently, lights are either on or off • Need to buffer sound between floors; e.g. when there is a gymnasium event, use of lower level meeting rooms is not conducive • The office area is too small, all conversations at the window and between staff (private conversations) can be overheard • Need to bump the office further out into the lobby to provide those entering with immediate site of the office and allow more office space
George Owens Nature Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need indoor programming space as rental groups and programs are competing for the same space; hard to accommodate more than 20 at a time • The building is 30 years old and is deteriorating and does not lend itself to permanent displays
Oasis Water Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New features are required on a regular basis to continue to attract users
Athletic Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older athletic fields are in need of upgrades to 2010 standards. Field observations identified numerous issues with drainage, turf, parking, bleachers, fences, and lighting
Athletic Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected examples of anticipated future improvements include additional restrooms, storage space, maintenance equipment, additional concession stand, shelters, and field expansions

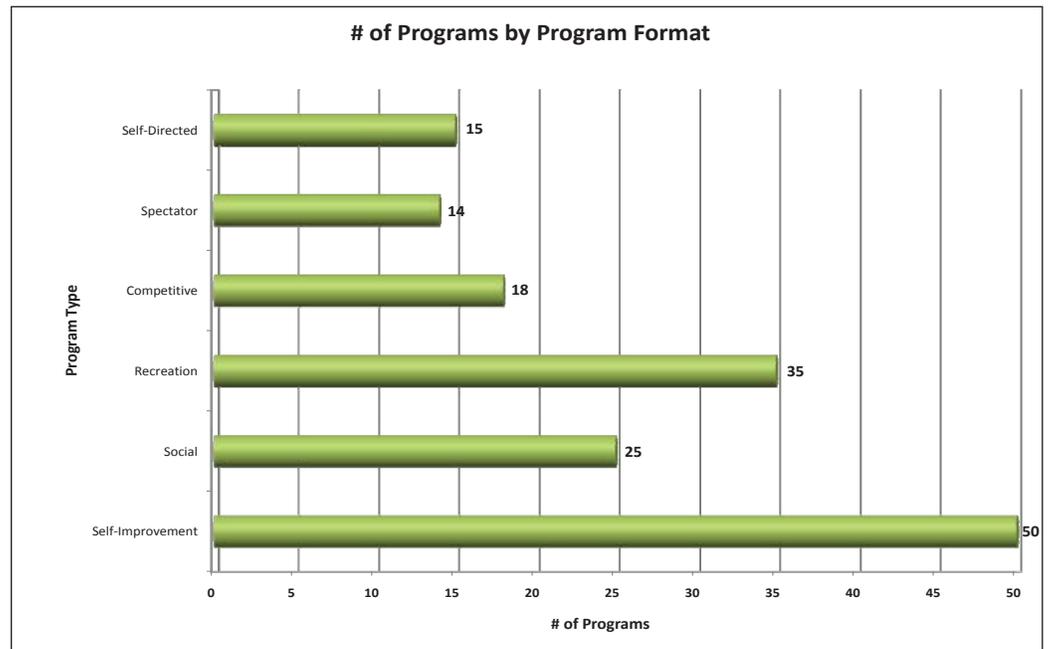
*Recommended improvements can be found in the Appendix of this report, titled Park System Cost Analysis.

Recreation Program by Type, Format, Age Group, and Life Cycle

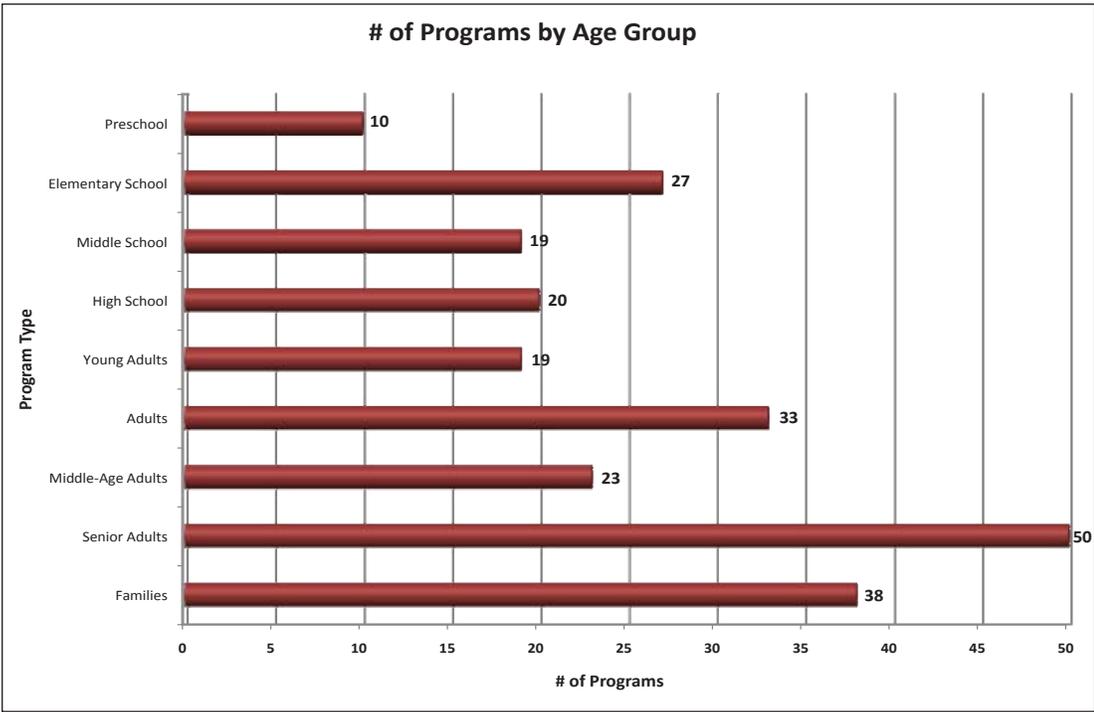
The exhibits on the following pages detail the number of programs by type, format, age group, and each program's position in the program life cycle (introductory program, growth stage, maturation stage, or a program in decline).



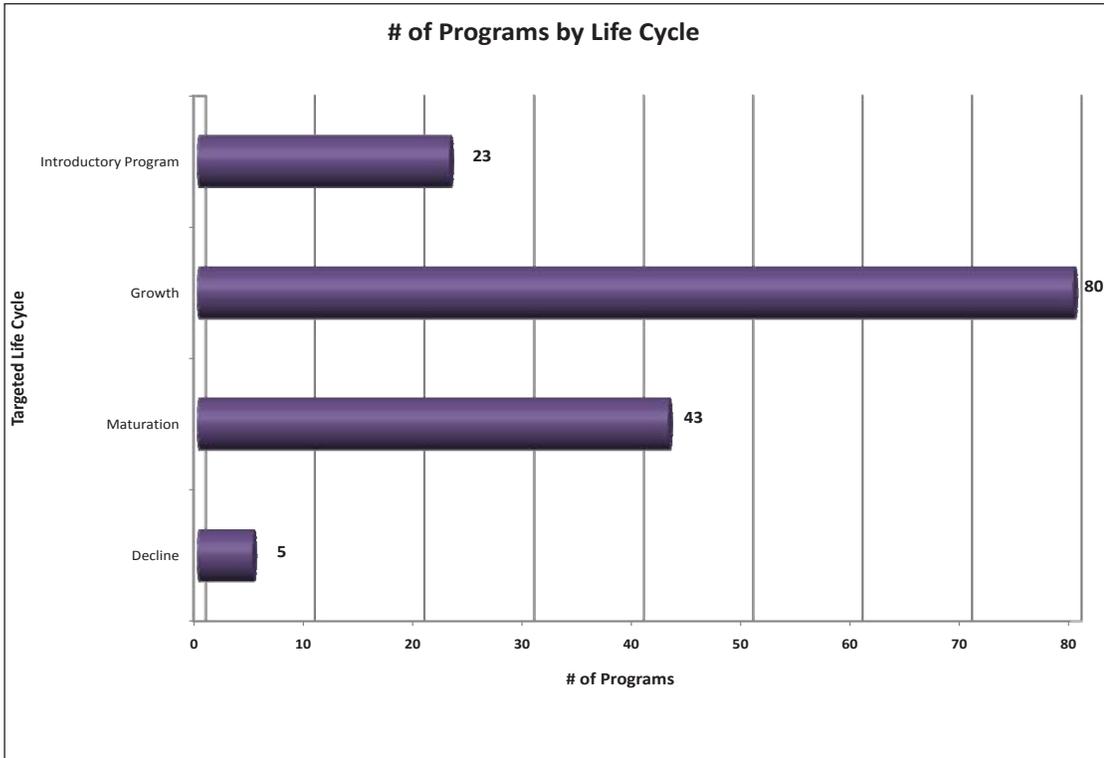
The majority of programs offered in the community by type are sports/athletics/aquatics. This is indicative of two things: a) organized parent volunteer groups who organize and produce these programs; and, b) the Department has not had a history and resources available to devote to recreation programming, either as a direct provider or facilitator.



The preferred program format is for self-improvement programs. This may be indicative of the national trend by citizens who seek improved fitness and the influence of the Palmer Center which programs for approximately 200 persons per day. Programs by format need to be monitored at all times by staff as they work with citizens to determine what their program preferences are.



The senior adult age group benefits from the greatest number of programs which is an indication of the vast number of participants who use the Palmer Center while family programs are indicative of the programming provided directly by the Department as a result of funding from the last sales tax referendum.



The majority of programs are in a growth cycle while very few are declining. New programs should be added each year; growth programs should include at least 60% to 70% of repeat customers to be successful; the maturation stage varies for each program but should be monitored closely to see when participation is beginning to decline; the decline stage is an indication that a program may need to be dropped.

Management Guidelines

Table 5 below cites recreation program guidelines developed by the LERN Network. LERN is a highly regarded group located in Wisconsin whose focus is on lifelong learning programming. According to their guidelines, the number of new and mature programs offered by the Independence Recreation Division are about right.

Table 5: Management Guidelines for Program Life Cycle Evaluation

Life Cycle Stage	Management Guidelines
Introduction	Should offer a minimum of 10% new programs each year
Growth	Maximize the marketing of this program
Maturation	Should not offer more than 90% old programs each year and reduce the marketing budget, if there is one, for this program
Declining	Consider rule changes, different day, different time, different season, different facility, different instructor, etc. as consideration is given to eliminating the program

Issues

Program Participation

As previously stated, program participation is 14%, as compared to a national average of 30%. Further study to include programs that the Department supports (i.e. youth athletic leagues, theater programs, etc) is warranted to gain a better understanding of the issue.

Marketing and Promotion

As previously stated, only 12% of the citizens are learning about the recreation program from the Activity Guide which is distributed twice each year.

Facility Deficiencies/Upgrades

As mentioned earlier, there are several facility upgrades that are needed to provide citizens with the type of experiences they are looking for.

Senior Services

The Palmer Center serves 200 to 300 guests each day which is nearly full capacity for the building. Given the number of older adults who are eligible to use the facility, it is important to anticipate the need for additional upgrades to the Palmer Center, possible use of space in the vacant school administration building adjacent to the Palmer Center, and arrangements for satellite senior centers. Geographically, locations for satellite centers could be:

- In the Susquehanah area.
- Lee’s Summit Road and Highway 40 area.
- Partnership with neighboring communities with the hope that their expressed interest in a community center is compatible with Independence needs.
- Partnership with LINC at the Fairmount Center to augment its senior services.



The Palmer Center serves 200 to 300 area seniors each day.

Fitness Center

There is a need for fitness centers geographically located throughout the community. This need is validated in the citizen survey when 45% of survey respondents indicated that the most important benefit they can receive from the parks and recreation program is improved physical health and fitness. Opportunities may include:

- Upgrades to the Sermon Center.
- Partnership with LINC at the Fairmount Center.
- Partnership with Blue River College or the Independence School District in that area.
- Partnership with the Community of Christ Church in several areas.
- Partnership with Forest City Development and others such as the Blue Springs School District for a community center that would include a fitness area.

Imbalance Between Indoor and Outdoor Spaces

- There is an imbalance between outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities. The imbalance is due to far more outdoor opportunities in the park system than indoor. To bring balance to the system, there are at least two actions that would need to be taken:
 - new indoor fitness opportunities would have to be developed by the City, or in cooperation with partners
 - a new contemporary community center would have to be constructed that would provide opportunities that are not currently available

Family Programs

- Recommended in the 2002 Master Plan, family programs were introduced to the community in 2004.
- Due, in part, to the lack of indoor recreation facilities that are geographically located around the community, the family programs are produced in the parks and green spaces that are managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Staff balances the various programs among the four councilmanic districts; however, due to limited resources (staff, operating supplies and equipment), the program may only reach each neighborhood once every three or four years.

Demographics

- There is a need to provide equitable access to recreation programming by councilmanic district to meet community needs. In that regard, knowledgeable officials have characterized the demographic characteristics as follows:
 - District 1 – single family housing area where household income is lower than in other districts and an area that is more transient than other districts. Looking for instructional, social aptitude for children, adults, and families, organized sports.



Programs should attempt to serve a variety of age groups.

There are no social service agencies in this District

- District 2 – the west side of District 2 is home to the Hawthorne Apartments which is a 900 unit subsidized housing complex and its size makes it the largest complex of this type in the State of Missouri. Programming is provided in this area by the Boys and Girls Club. The east side of District 2 is more rural with larger lots and newer homes
- District 3 – this is a District where growth will happen, current housing stock is newer
- District 4 – this is a District that is older and it is normal to see residents who have lived there for several decades

Partnerships

- Development and growth of the recreation program must be done in collaboration with others who share a common mission as the Parks and Recreation Department. Partners can provide indoor and outdoor facilities, relationships with other partners that the Department does not currently have, political benefits that result from being associated with one another, and cross-marketing. Realistic existing and future partnership opportunities include:



One example of an opportunity for partnership could be created between LINC and the Fairmount Center (shown here).

- LINC/Caring Communities
- Volunteer Associations such as youth sports
- PTA School Groups
- The Independence School District
- Encore Theater
- Children's Theater
- City Theater
- Chamber of Commerce
- The Square Association
- The Independence Area Art Association
- The Community of Christ Church
- Sub-division Developers
- Blue River College
- The Events Center

Partnerships

Definition

Partnerships have become a widespread component of park and recreation service systems. One definition cited by many authors is that a partnership is an umbrella term that includes agreements, cooperative relationships, joint arrangements, alliances, collaborations, coalitions, and work forces.

Introduction

Entering into formal partnerships to achieve common goals is a relatively new concept in the Parks and Recreation profession. Its importance, issues, and opportunities were only officially analyzed by leaders in the National Recreation and Park Association in 1995 when an article was published in the Journal of Park and Recreation Administration.

There are three basic types of partnerships:

- Public/Private.
- Public/Public.
- Public/Not-for-Profit.

At the most basic level, good partnerships are possible when two parties share a common vision; a vision which is clearly defined, and a vision that is perceived as a priority to all of the participating organizations. If this initial requirement has been met, there must be a formal contract as detailed below and acknowledgement of the four characteristics that must be present to have a successful long-term arrangement.

Personal Characteristics

Although most partnerships are designed at the organizational level,

The value and importance of partnerships has been recognized by virtually every author and practitioner in the park and recreation profession as well as the "father of modern management", Peter Drucker, who once was quoted as saying that long term solutions to problems will only be possible through effective partnerships.

they are implemented at the personal level. It is critical to have the right mix of people and must include strong leaders who are committed to the partnership cause.

Interpersonal Characteristics

The success or failure of partnerships hinges on interactions between individuals. Each partner must participate in the sharing of information, be an active listener, and be direct rather than vague. From these characteristics, a level of trust should develop over time.

Organizational Characteristics

The commitment of each partner must ensure that staff is available when needed and that other resources are also made available within the structure of the formal agreement that has been signed by each party.

Operational Characteristics

All partnerships must be managed. To that end, it is important that a regularly scheduled meeting between the participants be held to make sure that everything is in order and that the agreement has resulted in a win/win situation for each.

Conditions for Independence

Completed projects from sales tax proceeds that have leveraged resources with partners include:

- Waterfall Park- The City of Independence, Bass Pro and the Development Falls at Crackerneck Creek partnered to develop Waterfall Park and Lake
- IP & R and Eastland Development LLC partnered with Jackson County to fund an extension of the Little Blue Trace Trail.
- Little Blue Parkway/Park Development- IP & R and Public Works partnered with local developers to secure park land and right-of-way for the Little Blue Parkway and two new 14 acre park sites.
- IP & R partnered with Forest Cities Development Corporation to secure a 14 acre park site
- IP & R partnered with the Missouri Department of Conservation for a trail connection through the Lipton Conservation Area.
- North West Communities Development Corporation, IP & R, and the City of Sugar Creek have partnered to expand senior programming opportunities.
- LINC/Caring Communities and IP & R is partnering to provide targeted after-school programs.
- Independence Square Merchants and Independence Parks and Recreation

partner to produce movies and concerts on the Square.

- City of Independence has partnered with the Boys and Girls Club and various youth athletic associations to provide services for kids in Independence.
- Independence Parks & Recreation partners with the Independence School District sharing indoor gym space and outdoor athletic fields

Formal Contract

Once it has been determined that the participating partners share a common vision, a formal contract must be signed by each. The contract should include key information such as:

- Contact information.
- Age group served.
- Official start/end date of the agreement.
- Desired outcomes, how measured, by whom, and when by each partner.
- Dollar value contributions by each partner.
- Expected revenue by each partner.
- Ongoing communication method.
- Insurance requirements.
- Other general agreement terms.

Current Partnership Opportunities

The success of the projects detailed above is indicative of the type of opportunities that may be available in the future. Current new opportunities include:

- Use of a meeting facility owned by the Salvation Army for programs.
- Community center on the east side in partnership with the developer and the Blue Springs School District.
- Trails of all types in collaboration with developers.
- Positive sports and wellness programs in partnership with LINC/Caring Communities and the School District that promote active learning and provide youth mentoring opportunities such as sports, wellness, arts, and culture.
- Enhancement of safety and security by continuing to partner with the Police Department and Neighborhood Watch Programs to continue patrol of park facilities and develop a safety audit and security program while increasing visibility of staff and security in the park system.
- Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and the entire business community to promote health, wellness, and quality of life benefits such as economic benefits resulting from a strong park program.



Waterfall Park is a result of public and private partnerships.

- Leveraging sales tax proceeds with partner contributions and state, federal, and private sector grants.

Volunteer Programs

The City’s existing volunteer program will continue to be an extremely valuable asset which allows the department to leverage its resources. Use of volunteers helps to stretch budgeted dollars and increases the social sustainability of the community by increasing the investment of community members into the park system.

Summary

While each partnership opportunity is unique, there are basic similarities that are common to each. Of extreme importance are the following:

- Each partner must share a common mission with the Parks and Recreation Department.
- In many cases, the city does not have formal agreements signed by both parties. There should be a written agreement that is reviewed annually.
- Projects funded by the IP & R Department but managed by others (if any exist or develop in the future) must be designed, maintained, and operated at a standard that is approved by the Department and detailed in the written agreement.

The table below details shared goals among partners.

Table 1: Shared Goals Among Partners

Partner Name	Goal (s)	Parks and Recreation Capabilities for Advancing Partners’ Goals
Independence City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy economy • Safe and secure neighborhoods • Excellent public services • Pride in the city’s history • Targeted services for community needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parks and Recreation Department is capable of generating tourism dollars from its athletic facilities, the Events Center, and special events.
Independence School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life improved through education • Achieve skills and self-confidence to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through targeted programming, the Department can work with others to provide opportunities that result in higher skill levels and improved self-esteem.
LINC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation facilities and targeted programming can result in safer places for children and families to recreate
Independence Parks and Recreation Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality facilities, programs, and services for all age groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of all resources

Community Involvement

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Important to the planning process is the feedback provided by citizens.

Process

Introduction

As priority projects are considered in this Plan, emphasis and high priority should be given to those projects and needs that citizens said were most important to them in each of the venues; e.g. stakeholder interviews, focus groups, public meetings, citizen survey, and park board meetings.

One of the most important values upon which the goals in the 2002 IP & R Master Plan was that it be citizen-focused; this 2010 Plan accomplishes that goal.

The Approach

The approach to actively engage citizens in the 2010 update was very dynamic. It included seven types of opportunities and options so that citizens could select the best way for them to express their preferences. Each of the opportunities and options is detailed below:

- Individual Interviews of Key Stakeholders. The first step in the process was to interview members of the City Council, City management, and staff of the IP & R Department. The importance of these interviews as the first step was to ensure that the consultant team was knowledgeable of the key issues facing the Department. Awareness of the key issues was important as the consultant prepared for all subsequent community involvement meetings.





Independence citizens were actively engaged during the planning process.

- **Statistically Valid Citizen Survey.** A “Community Attitude and Interest Phone Survey” was used to contact 1,200 randomly selected households in March 2010. From that process, 300 contacts were made. The results from the returned surveys provided decision-makers with statistically reliable data at a confidence level of 95% and a precision of +/- 5.7%. In other words, if the survey was done 100 times, the same results would be returned 95 times within a range of +/- 5.7%. All survey results are in the Appendix of this report.
- **Citizen Team Meetings.** Members of the Citizens Team included active and knowledgeable stakeholders from all geographic areas of the City. The advantage of meeting with this group was to ensure that geographic preferences were made known to the consultant team.
- **Steering Committee Meetings.** The Steering Committee included members of the City Council and senior City staff. The advantage of meeting with this group was to ensure that all phases of the planning process (the public involvement process, responsiveness to urgent issues, political ramifications, etc.) were in alignment with the vision of the group.
- **Public Open Houses.** On four occasions, the public-at-large was invited to attend an Open House at one of the following locations:
 - Science Center at Pioneer Ridge
 - Bass Pro Shop
 - Fairmount Community Center (Senior Focus Group and General Public)
- **Park Commission.** As appointed by the City Council, members of the Park Commission are entrusted with a very high level of responsibility as they work closely with Parks and Recreation Staff to recommend policies which ensure that resources are being allocated in a manner which is consistent with the recommendations in this master plan update. The Park Commission has been involved during this process as a “sounding board” as the plan has been developed.
- **Focus Groups.** Several focus group meetings were held on issues of importance. Examples include the development potential on the east side of the community, parking around the Truman Memorial Building and the Palmer Center, the special issues facing residents living on the west side of the City, and the Parks and Recreation Department’s recreation staff. Purposes for the focus groups were:
 - To engage citizens in the process and create ownership
 - To update attendees about the status of the master planning process
 - To learn about current projects and critical issues that are going on around the City and to listen to their ideas and preferences regarding future parks and recreation needs in the community

Input

Introduction

Input and results of the citizen survey, stakeholder interviews, and four public open houses are presented in this chapter.

Four public open houses were held to get input from area citizens, in addition to stakeholder interviews and a citizen survey.

We Need Your Input!

Welcome!

You are invited to attend an upcoming Open House for the Independence Parks Master Plan as we help plan for the community's future into 2020. The informal Open House format will allow you to express your desires for future Parks and Recreation programs, facilities, services, ask questions, and talk one-on-one with staff. Your ideas about potential enhancements to the Parks and Recreation system will help the City plan for future recreational facilities, activities, programs, and city-wide trails.

Several Opportunities To Attend:

April 13, 2010
6:00pm - 8:00pm
Science Center at Pioneer Ridge

April 14, 2010
6:00pm - 8:00pm
Bass Pro Shop

April 15, 2010
10:30am - 11:30am
(Senior Focus Group)
4:00pm - 7:00pm
(General Public)

Fairmount Community Center



For other questions regarding the Independence Parks Master Plan or if you are in need of special assistance at the Open House, please contact Richard Horton, Project Manager by phone at (816) 756-5690 ext. 3043 or by email at rhorton@pbassociates.com.



Citizen Survey

The Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Community Interest and Needs survey during March 2010 to establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities and services within the City. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Independence. The survey was administered by phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with City officials and the Patti Banks Associates team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Leisure Vision called approximately 1,200 households that were randomly selected to ensure statistical reliability.

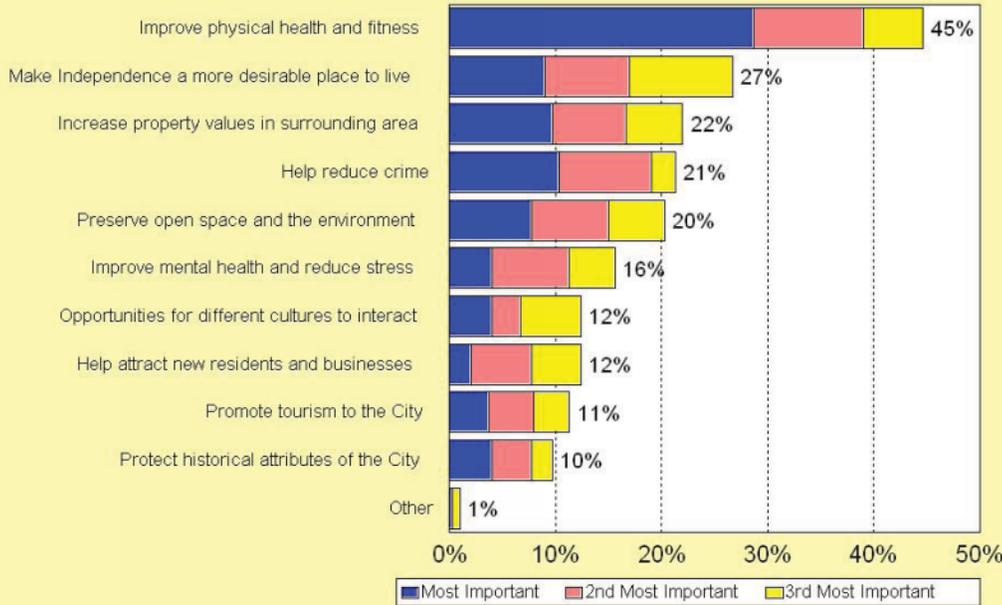
The goal was to obtain a total of at least 300 completed surveys from City households. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 300 surveys having been completed. The results have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-5.7%.

Major Findings

Key findings from the survey are shown here; survey results can be found in the Appendix in their entirety.

Q10. Potential Benefits of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities and Services That Are Most Important to Households

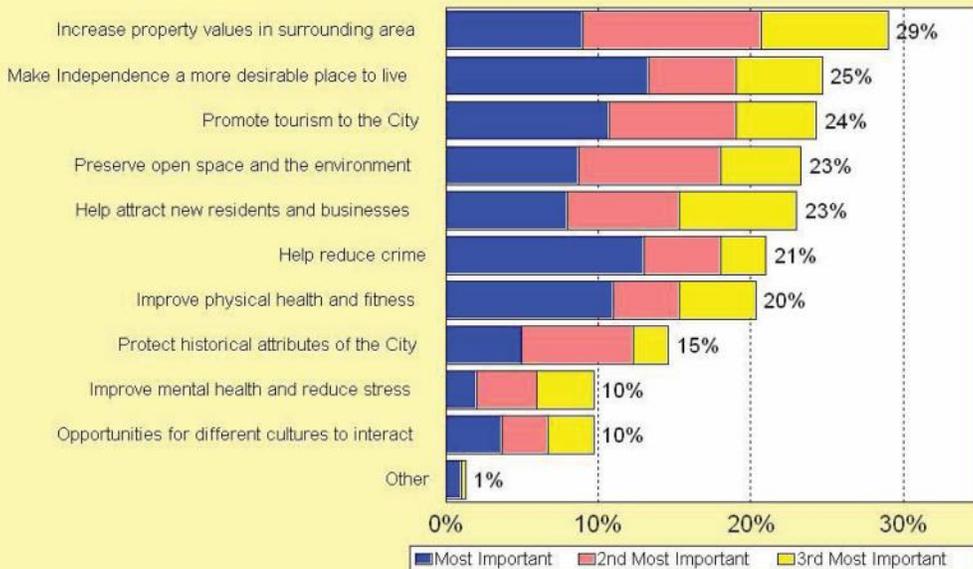
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q11. Potential Benefits of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities and Services That Are Most Important to the Future of Independence

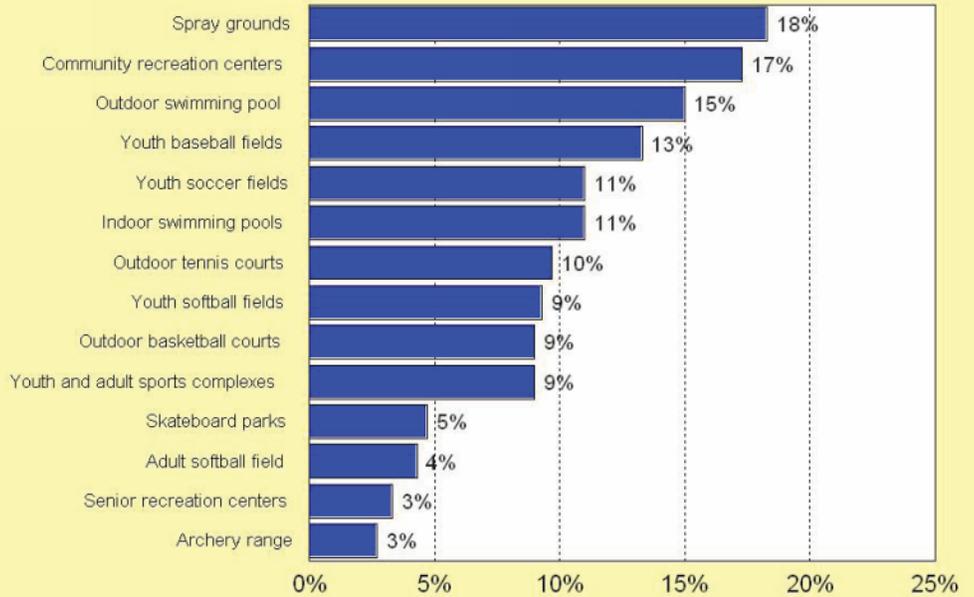
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q12. Active Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited Over the Past 12 Months

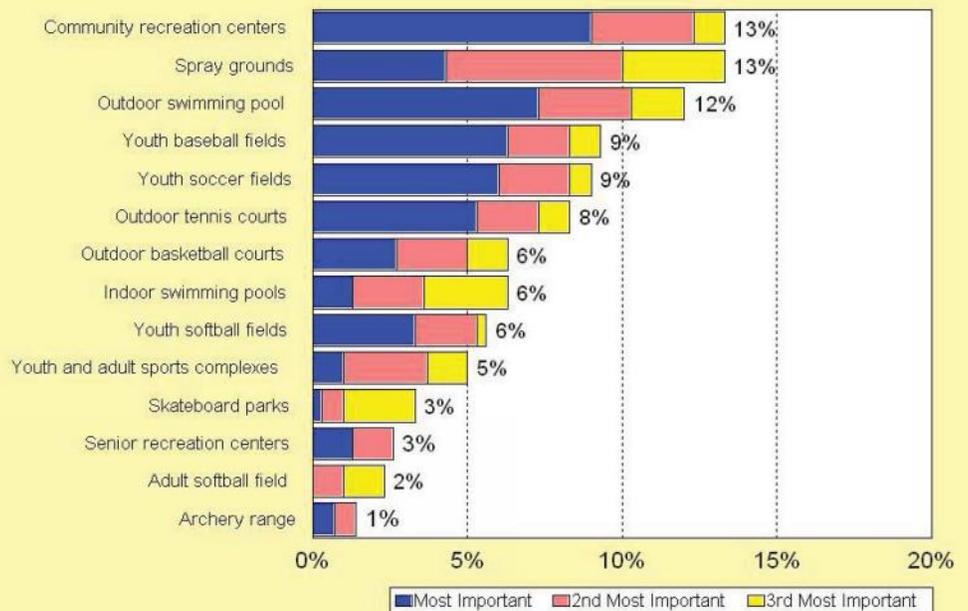
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q13. Active Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

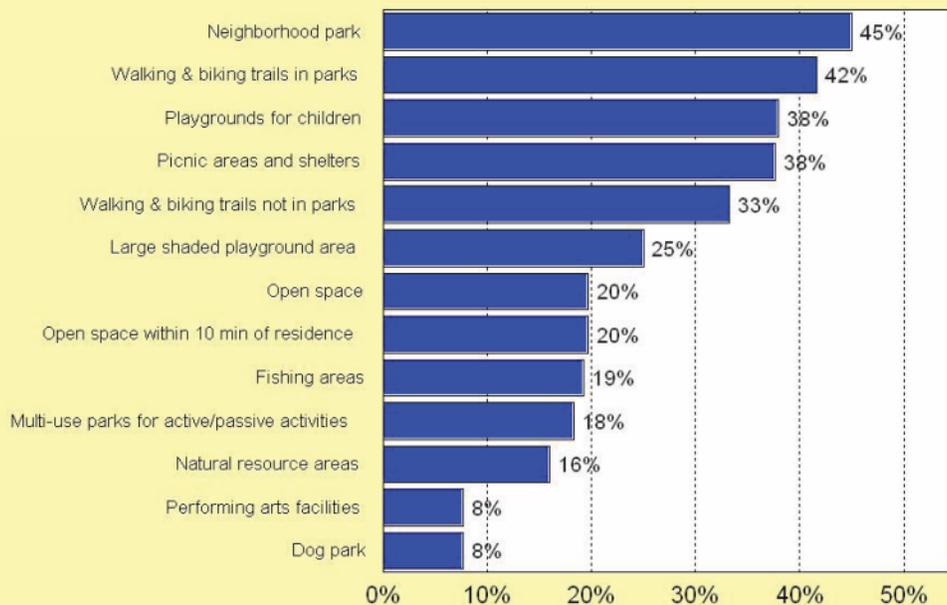
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q14. Passive Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited Over the Past 12 Months

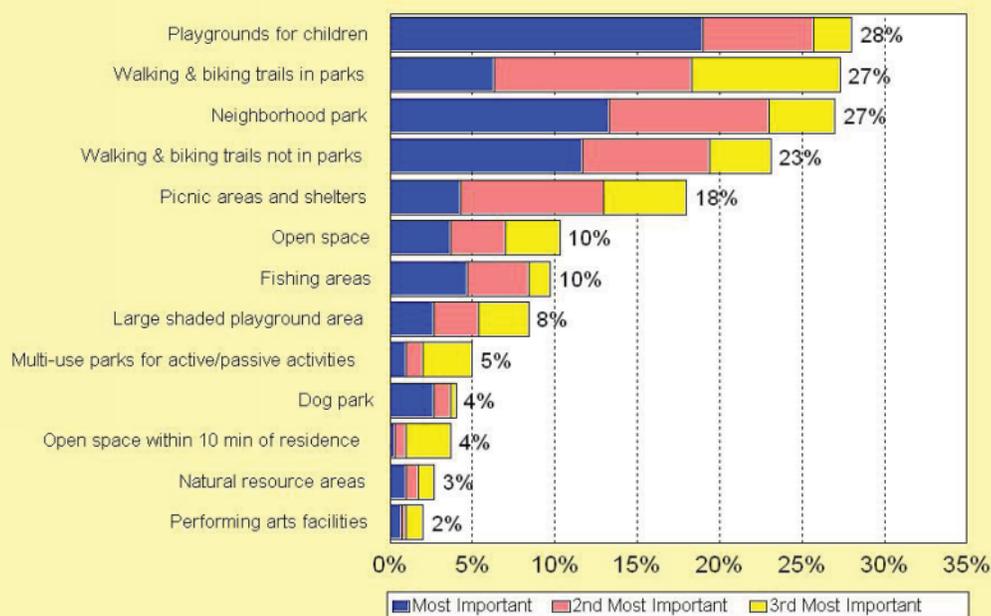
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q15. Passive Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

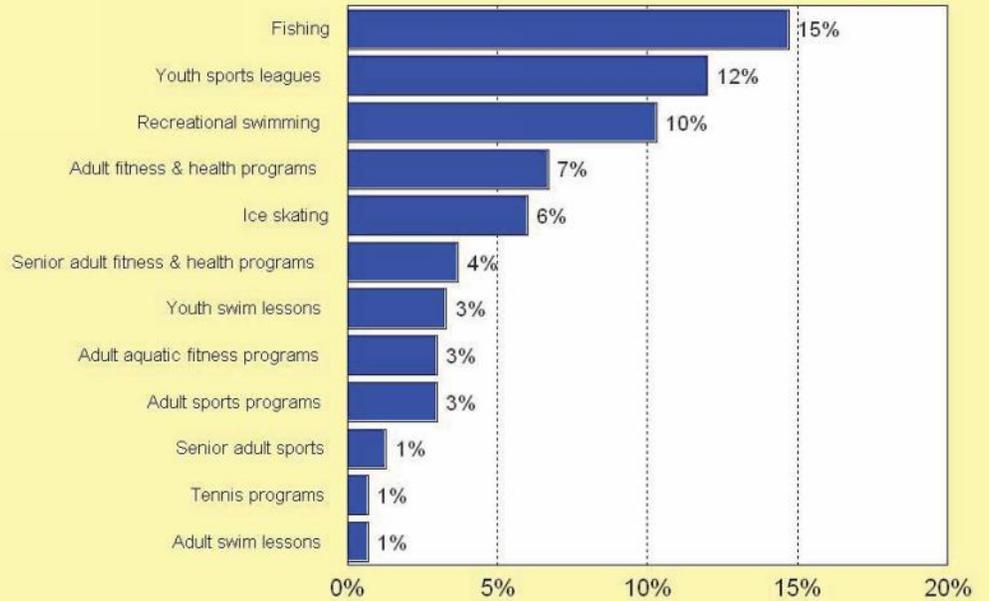
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q16. Active Sports and Recreation Programs That Households Have Used or Visited Over the Past 12 Months

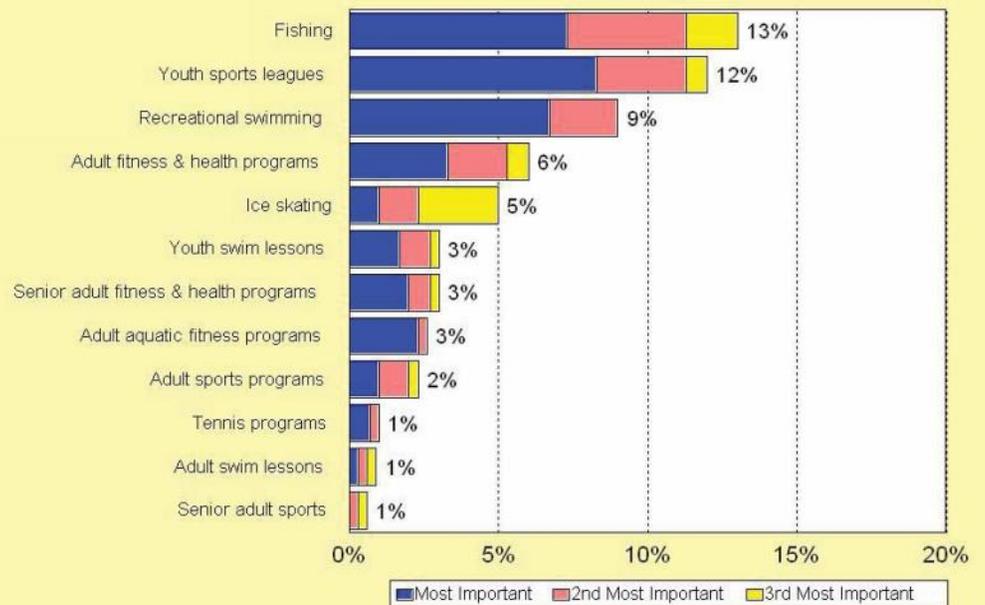
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q17. Active Sports and Recreation Programs That Are Most Important to Households

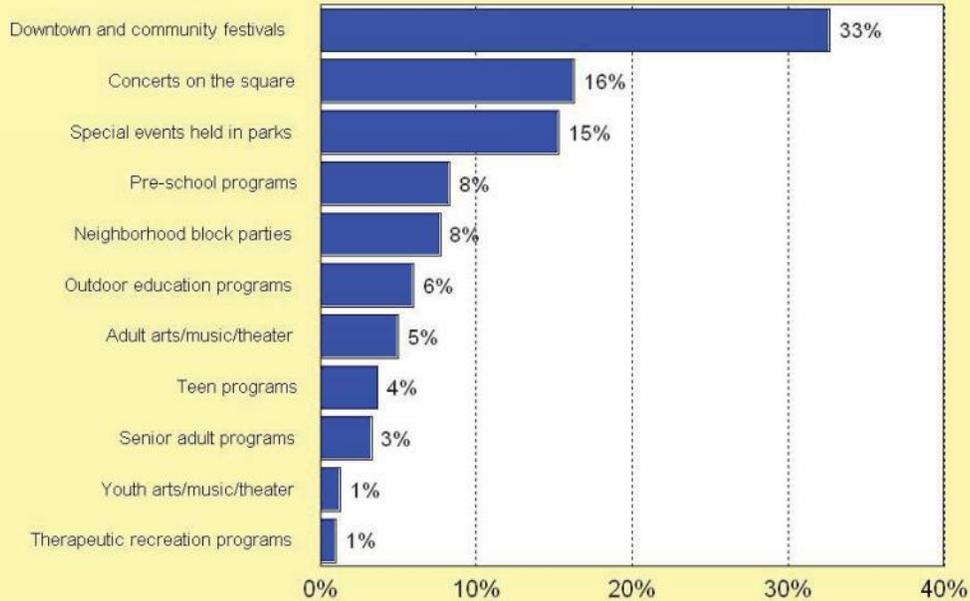
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q18. Passive Sports and Recreation Programs That Households Have Used or Visited Over the Past 12 Months

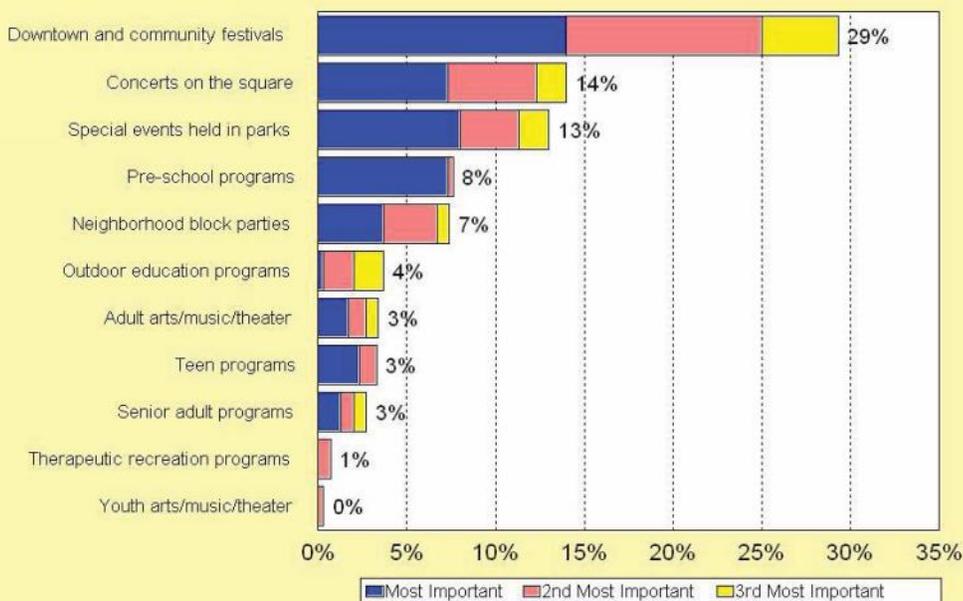
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q19. Passive Sports and Recreation Programs That Are Most Important to Households

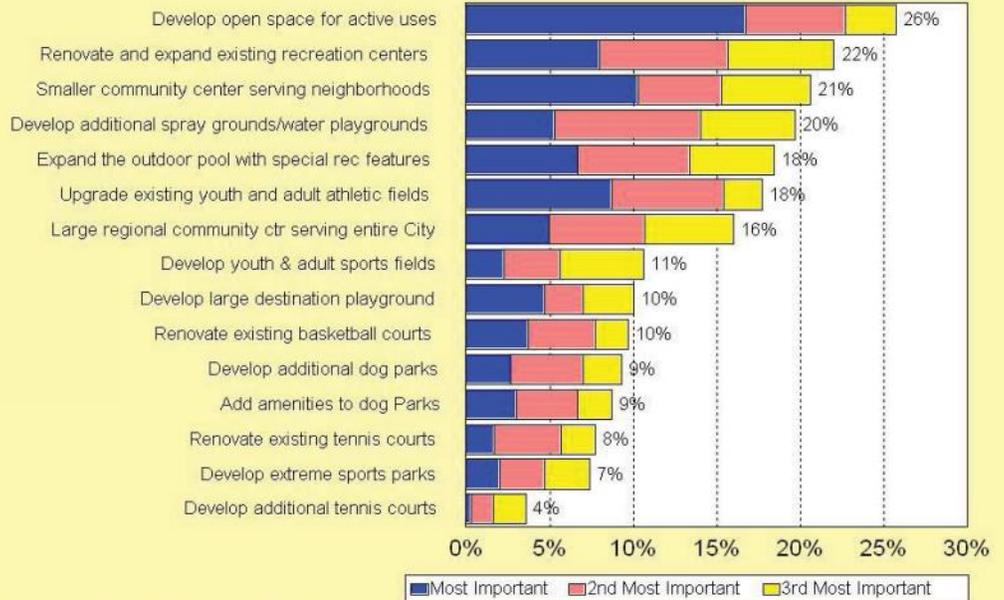
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q21. Most Important Actions the City Could Take to Enhance Current & Develop New Active Parks and Recreation Facilities

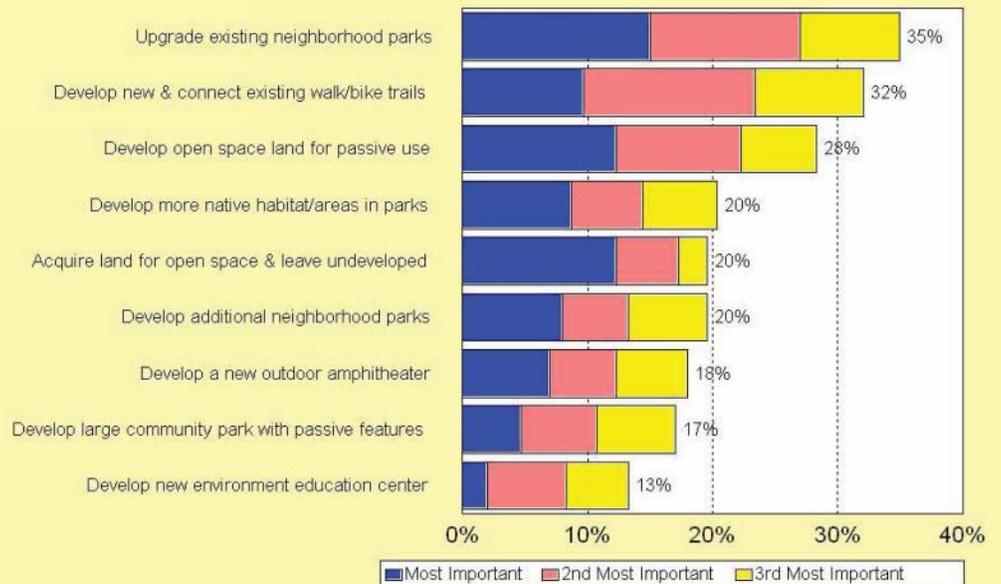
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q23. Most Important Actions the City Could Take to Enhance Current & Develop New Passive Parks and Recreation Facilities

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



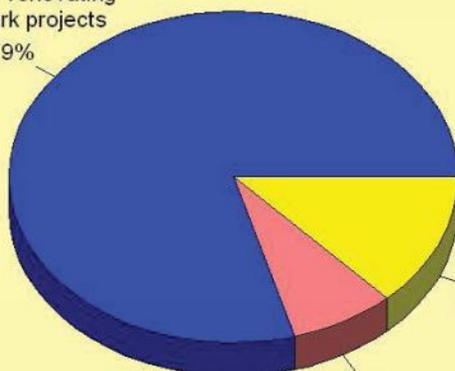
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q24. Action That Respondents Most Support Regarding the Sales Tax Revenue Used for Renovating Existing Parks and New Park Projects

by percentage of respondents

I would support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and new park projects

79%



I would not support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and new park projects

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

"We have had good success with citizen support of the sales tax because they have been able to see the benefits to their home and neighborhood."

*-Roberta "Poo" Coker,
Community Activist*

Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews

Groups who participated included the Children's Theater, The Town Square Association, American Legion Baseball, Soccer Association of Independence, the Independence Girls Softball Association, Encore Theater, Independence Tennis Association, Independence Arts, Historical Society, LINC/Caring Communities, United Methodist Church, Community of Christ Church, Tim Locher Development, Independence School District, Jackson County Parks and Recreation, Independence Police Department, Midwest Pools, Blue River College, Independence Chamber of Commerce, members of the Independence City Council, Park Commission, Parks and Recreation Staff, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Senior Staff in the Public Works Department, Community Development Department, and the Water Pollution Control Department.

Comments from those who were interviewed are included in the table below. Comments are not prioritized.

Table 6: Focus Group and Stakeholder Preferences

Category	Item (s)
Existing Facility Upgrades	Sermon Center Palmer Center George Owens Nature Park Athletic Fields Storage at all facilities Parking at the Palmer Center and TMB Adventure Oasis Water Park
Trails	Need a formalized trail plan Continue connector trails effort Mountain Bike Trail
New Recreation Facilities	Fitness Center Community Center Archery Range Destination playground (s) Spray Parks Large Pavilions Restroom Facilities Fishing Access
Environmental	Natural resource restoration/protection Conscious of infrastructure and greenspace as they relate to water quality
New Parks	East side development area Special Event Park near Town Square

Public Open House Summary

Four open houses were held in April for the general public. Attendance at these meetings was generally light. On April 13, 2010 the public gathered at the Science Center at Pioneer Ridge, then at Bass Pro Shops on April 14, 2010 and finally twice at the Fairmount Community Center on April 15, 2010. A public meeting was held in the morning on April 15, 2010 and another general public meeting on the evening of April 15, 2010.

First Open House Meeting Summary

Six people attended the first open house, held April 13, 2010 at the Science Center at Pioneer Ridge. The meeting was held from 6pm - 8pm. Those in attendance commented on their desires for expanding the children's theater group and additional trail opportunities.

Second Open House Meeting Summary

12 people were in attendance at the second open house, held April 14, 2010 at Bass Pro Shops from 6pm - 8pm. Topics of discussion at this meeting included:

- Special Event Park.
- Little Blue Trace Trail.
- The need for marketing and promotional help for the theater groups.
- The need for storage space for the theater groups.
- The desire to take care of what we have before we build new projects.
- The importance of providing comfortable places to sit (benches) along the trails.
- The importance of building bird houses in appropriate areas in the park system.
- Needed upgrades at the George Owen Center.

Third Open House Meeting Summary

A special public meeting was held with area Seniors at The Fairmount Community Center on April 15, 2010 from 10:30am - 11:30am. Topics of discussion at this meeting included:

- Theater group spoke about their need for storage at the Sermon Center and their need to inform the public about their events as there is no exterior signage at the center.
- Facilities are available at Mt. Washington and Fairmount Schools for public use (auditoriums).
- The community schools concept is in place through LINC and the Department's Recreation Division is welcome to partner with them to expand services.



Citizens provided input at the open houses.

- Some groups are willing to be trained by the Parks and Recreation Department to learn how to organize and produce family programs/special events in their neighborhood.
- Wondering if a bridge can be added to connect Korte School to Rotary Park to replace the one that was removed.

Fourth Open House Meeting Summary

The final public open house was held on April 15, 2010 from 4:00pm - 7:00pm at The Fairmount Community Center. Topics of discussion at this meeting included:

- Older youth need somewhere to go, somewhere to be, doing productive activities; a recreation center.
- A regular activity in the evenings for teens to get together; e.g. dancing, sports.
- Green space that is clean, natural places to recreate.
- Need to always engage citizens about future decisions that are being made and LINC would be more than happy to help with getting the word out, facilitating the process, etc.
- Van Horn is remodeling its outdoor facilities; e.g. track, fitness trail, etc.
- Students would like dancing activities; perhaps the city can partner with a dance studio to use space at Truman Memorial Building or Fairmount Community Center for dance classes, etc.
- Very few students at Van Horn drive to school as compared with other schools in the city – transportation, therefore it is important for getting programs closer to students.
- A sprayground in the area is needed.
- Send flyers to high schools to see what teens want for programs.
- Need regular programs during the summer for teens; e.g. 3 on 3 basketball like at Cler-Mont Park, poetry, art, music, singing.
- Want more trails.



Citizens expressed a desire for programs such as music and dance activities.

Survey Instrument

The survey and results of the survey are presented here.

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Hello, this is _____ calling on behalf of the City of Independence. The City of Independence is currently updating the Park, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan and would like your input to help determine park and recreation priorities for our community. May I have a few minutes of your time?

1. **Have you or members of your household visited a City of Independence park over the past 12 months?**
 (1) Yes
 (2) No [Please skip to Question #4]

2. **Approximately how many times have you or members of your household visited City of Independence parks over the past 12 months?**
 (1) At least once per week (3) At least once per month
 (2) A few times per month (4) A few times during the year

3. **Overall how would you rate the level of maintenance of ALL the City of Independence parks you have visited?**
 (1) Excellent (3) Fair
 (2) Good (4) Poor

4. **Have you or other members of your household participated in any recreation programs offered by the City of Independence during the past 12 months?**
 (1) Yes [please ask questions #5]
 (2) No [please go to question #6]

5. **How would you rate the overall quality of the programs that you and members of your household have participated in?**
 (1) Excellent (3) Fair
 (2) Good (4) Poor

6. **Please tell me ALL of the ways you learn about City of Independence programs and activities.**
 (01) Parks and Recreation Activity Guide (06) Utility Bill Insert
 (02) Website (07) Newsletters/Brochures
 (03) Newspaper (08) Cable television
 (04) Radio (09) Visited with parks and recreation staff
 (05) Word of mouth (10) Other: _____

7. From the following list, please tell me ALL the organizations that you and members of your household use for parks and recreation programs and services.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ____ (01) YMCA | ____ (07) Private fitness and health clubs |
| ____ (02) Churches/Places of Worship | ____ (08) Homeowners Associations |
| ____ (03) City of Independence Parks and Recreation | ____ (09) Boys and Girls Club |
| ____ (04) Jackson County Parks | ____ (10) Other: _____ |
| ____ (05) Neighboring cities | ____ (11) None |
| ____ (06) State of Missouri Parks | |

8. For each of the following age groups, please tell me which TWO organizations listed in Question #7 you and your household USE THE MOST for parks and recreation programs and services.

	<u>Agency Use Most</u>	<u>Agency Use 2nd Most</u>
Ages 0 to 17 years	_____	_____
Ages 18 years and older	_____	_____

9. The following are some of the benefits that you and your household may receive from parks, trails, and recreation facilities and services. For each potential benefit, please tell me your level of agreement with the benefits being provided by parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

<u>Benefits</u>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
A. Improve physical health and fitness	1	2	3	4	5	9
B. Help reduce crime	1	2	3	4	5	9
C. Make Independence a more desirable place to live	1	2	3	4	5	9
D. Preserve open space and the environment	1	2	3	4	5	9
E. Increase property values in surrounding area	1	2	3	4	5	9
F. Improve mental health and reduce stress	1	2	3	4	5	9
G. Increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact	1	2	3	4	5	9
H. Help attract new residents and businesses	1	2	3	4	5	9
I. Protect historical attributes of the City	1	2	3	4	5	9
J. Promote tourism to the City	1	2	3	4	5	9
K. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	9

10. From the list I just read, which THREE of the BENEFITS are most important to you and members of your household

1st _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

11. From the list I just read, which THREE of the BENEFITS are most important to the future of the City of Independence?

1st _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

12. From the following list, please tell me ALL of the **ACTIVE** parks and recreation **facilities** you or members of your household have used or visited over the past 12 months.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ___(01) Youth baseball fields | ___(08) Adult softball field |
| ___(02) Youth soccer fields | ___(09) Spray grounds |
| ___(03) Youth softball fields | ___(10) Senior recreation centers |
| ___(04) Community recreation centers | ___(11) Indoor swimming pools |
| ___(05) Outdoor tennis courts | ___(12) Skateboard parks |
| ___(06) Outdoor basketball courts | ___(13) Youth and adult sports complexes |
| ___(07) Outdoor swimming pool | ___(14) Archery range |

13. From the list I just read, which **THREE** of the **active** parks and recreation **facilities** are *most important* to your household?

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

14. From the following list, please tell me ALL of the **PASSIVE** parks and recreation **facilities** you or members of your household have used or visited over the past 12 months.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ___(01) Performing arts facilities | ___(08) Walking and biking trails not in parks |
| ___(02) Open space | ___(09) Walking and biking trails in parks |
| ___(03) Natural resource areas | ___(10) Picnic areas and shelters |
| ___(04) Playgrounds for children | ___(11) Open space within 10 minutes of your residence |
| ___(05) Dog park | ___(12) Large multi-use parks for active & passive activities |
| ___(06) Neighborhood park | ___(13) Large shaded playground area |
| ___(07) Fishing areas | |

15. From the list I just read, which **THREE** of the **passive** parks and recreation **facilities** are *most important* to your household?

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

16. From the following list, please tell me ALL of the **ACTIVE** sports and recreation **programs** you or members of your household have participated in over the past 12 months.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___(01) Recreational swimming | ___(07) Senior adult fitness and health programs |
| ___(02) Youth swim lessons | ___(08) Tennis programs |
| ___(03) Adult aquatic fitness programs | ___(09) Senior adult sports |
| ___(04) Adult sports programs | ___(10) Adult fitness and health programs |
| ___(05) Youth sports leagues | ___(11) Adult swim lessons |
| ___(06) Fishing | ___(12) Ice skating |

17. From the list I just read, which **THREE** of the **active** sports and recreation **programs** are *most important* to your household?

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

18. From the following list, please tell me ALL of the **PASSIVE** sports and recreation **programs** you or

members of your household have participated in over the past 12 months.

- ____(01) Pre-school programs
- ____(02) Special events held in parks
- ____(03) Teen programs
- ____(04) Youth arts/music/theater
- ____(05) Adult arts/music/theater
- ____(06) Senior adult programs
- ____(07) Concerts on the Square
- ____(08) Downtown and community festivals
- ____(09) Therapeutic recreation programs
- ____(10) Outdoor education programs
- ____(11) Neighborhood block parties

19. From the list I just read, which **THREE** of the passive sports and recreation programs are *most important* to your household?

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ NONE

20. Following are major actions that the City of Independence could take to **ENHANCE CURRENT** and **DEVELOP NEW ACTIVE** parks and recreation facilities. Please tell me whether you would be very supportive, somewhat supportive, or not supportive of each action.

<u>How supportive are you of having the City of Independence:</u>	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Not Sure	Not Supportive
(A) Develop open space for active uses, i.e. baseball, soccer, softball fields...	1	2	3	4
(B) Upgrade existing youth and adult athletic fields	1	2	3	4
(C) Renovate and expand existing recreation centers to include walking track, aerobic rooms, fitness center, locker rooms, more parking, etc.	1	2	3	4
(D) Expand the outdoor pool with special recreation features i.e. water slides, spray fountains.....	1	2	3	4
(E) Renovate existing basketball courts.....	1	2	3	4
(F) Renovate existing tennis courts	1	2	3	4
(G) Develop additional tennis courts.....	1	2	3	4
(H) Develop additional spray grounds/water playgrounds.....	1	2	3	4
(I) Add amenities to Dog Parks	1	2	3	4
(J) Develop additional dog parks.....	1	2	3	4
(K) Develop new youth and adults athletic and adult sports fields.....	1	2	3	4
(L) Develop extreme sports parks (skate park, BMX Bicycle Park, etc.) ...	1	2	3	4
(M) Large regional community center to serve all of the City	1	2	3	4
(N) Smaller community centers to serve neighborhoods areas in the City..	1	2	3	4
(O) Develop large destination playground	1	2	3	4

21. From the list I just read, which **THREE** of these items are **MOST IMPORTANT** to your household to improve the current parks and recreation system and develop new active parks and recreation facilities?

1st Most Important _____ 2nd Most Important _____ 3rd Most Important _____ NONE

22. Following are major actions that the City of Independence could take to **ENHANCE CURRENT** and

DEVELOP NEW PASSIVE parks and recreation facilities. Please tell me whether you would be very supportive, somewhat supportive, or not supportive of each action.

<u>How supportive are you of having the City of Independence:</u>	Very <u>Supportive</u>	Somewhat <u>Supportive</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	Not <u>Supportive</u>
(A) Acquire land for open space and leave undeveloped.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(B) Develop open space land for passive usages, i.e. trails, playgrounds, picnic areas	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(C) Upgrade existing neighborhood parks (picnic areas, benches etc.).....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(D) Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(E) Develop large community park with passive features (picnic areas, shelter houses, playgrounds, informal game fields, etc.).....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(F) Develop new environmental education center with spaces for nature and interpretive programs.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(G) Develop a new outdoor amphitheater	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(H) Develop additional neighborhood parks.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
(I) Develop more native habitat/areas in parks	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....

23. From the list I just read, which THREE of these items are MOST IMPORTANT to your household to improve the current parks and recreation system and develop new passive parks and recreation facilities?

1st Most Important
 2nd Most Important
 3rd Most Important
 NONE

24. The City of Independence currently dedicates 1/4 of a cent in sales tax revenue for parks and recreation services. Half of the revenues from the sales tax are used to maintain, operate and program existing parks and recreation facilities, and the other half is used to renovate existing parks and for new park projects. The portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and for new park projects expires in 2012.

Knowing this, which ONE of the following actions would you most support?

- _____ (1) I would support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and for new park projects.
- _____ (2) I would NOT support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and for new park projects.
- _____ (3) Not sure

25. What is your age? _____

26. Your gender: ____ (1) Male ____ (2) Female

27. How many years have you lived in Independence? _____ years

28. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)

____ (1) White

____ (4) American Indian/Eskimo

____ (2) Hispanic

____ (5) Black/African American

____ (3) Asian/Pacific Islander

____ (6) Other: _____

29. What is your household income?

____ (1) Under \$25,000

____ (3) \$50,000-\$74,999

____ (5) \$100,000-\$149,999

____ (2) \$25,000-\$49,999

____ (4) \$75,000-\$99,999

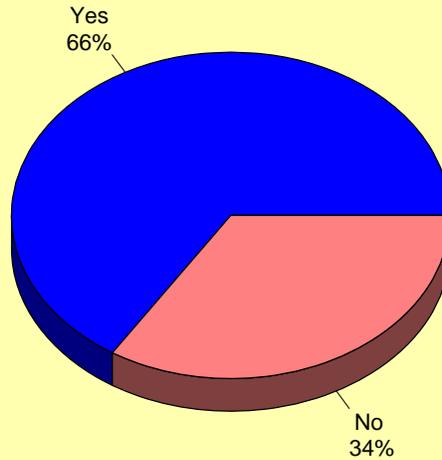
____ (6) \$150,000 and over

30. What is your zip code? _____

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time.

Q1. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited a City of Independence Park Over the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

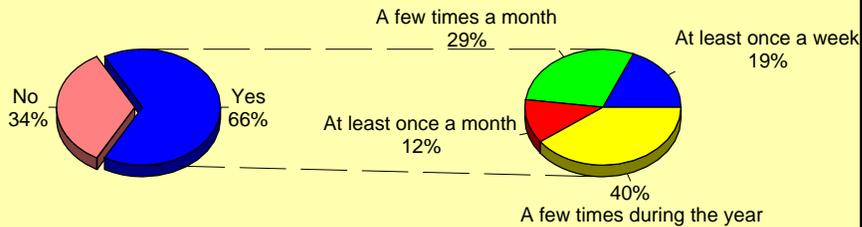


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q1. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited a City of Independence Park Over the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

Q2. Approximately How Many Times Has Your Household Visited City of Independence Parks Over the Past 12 Months?

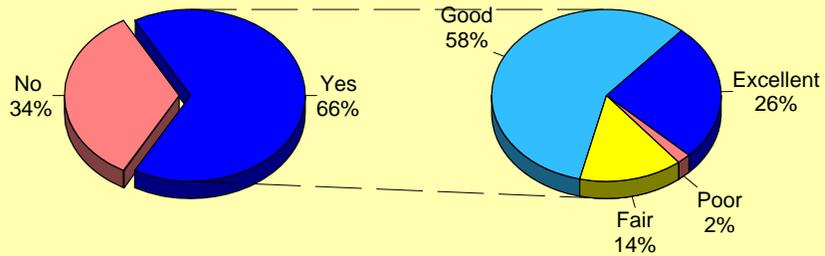


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q1. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited a City of Independence Park Over the Past 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents

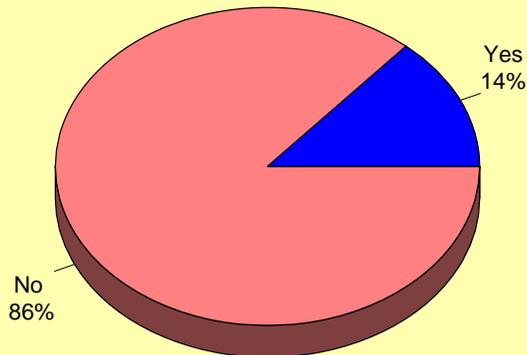
Q3. Overall, How Would You Rate the Level of Maintenance of All the City of Independence Parks Your Household Has Visited?



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q4. Have You or Members of Your Household Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Independence During the Past 12 Months?

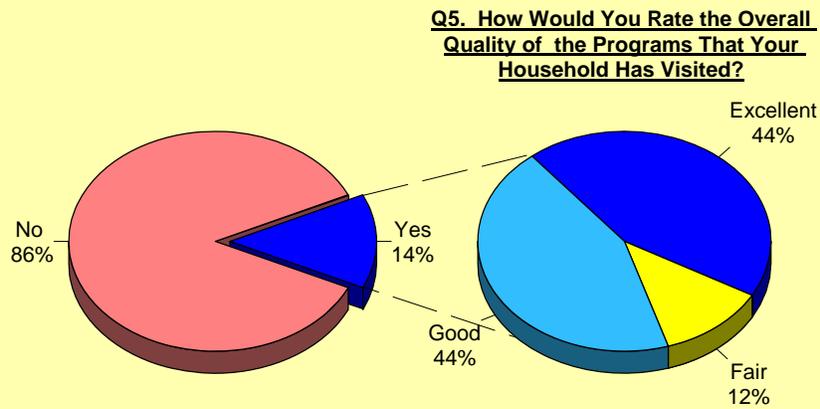
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q4. Have You or Members of Your Household Participated in Any Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Independence During the Past 12 Months?

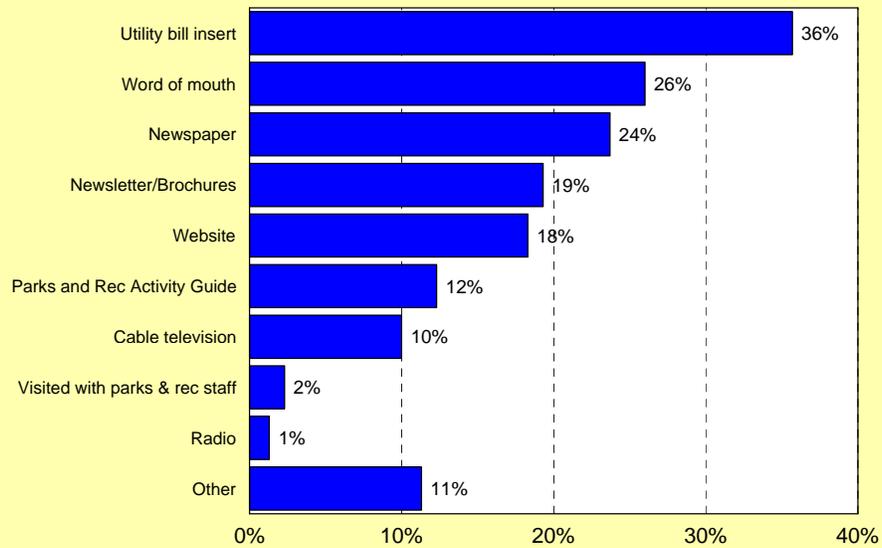
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q6. Ways Respondents Learn About City of Independence Programs or Activities

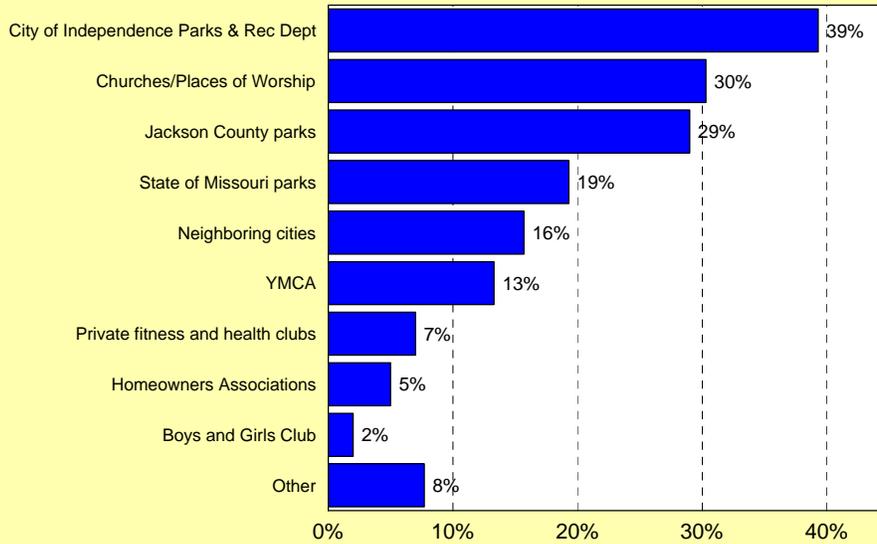
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q7. Organizations That Households Use for Parks and Recreation Programs and Services

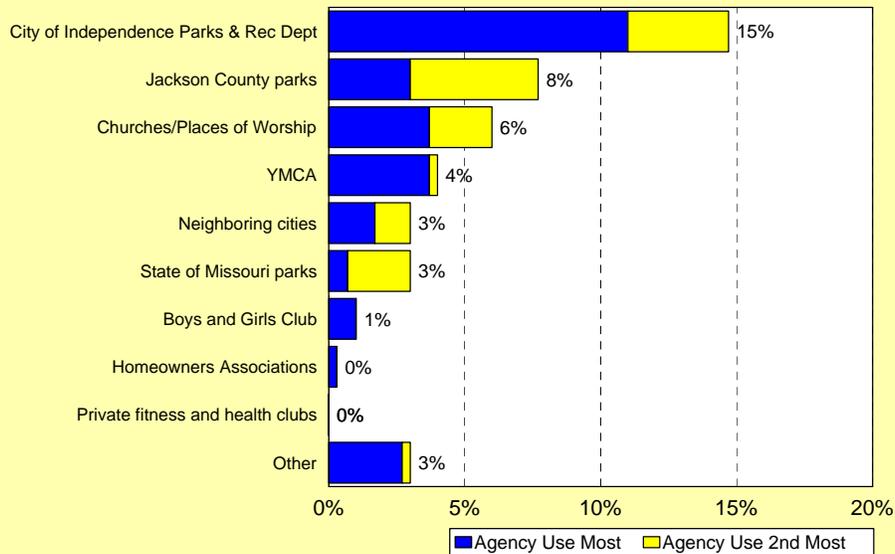
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q8. Organizations That Household Members Ages 0 to 17 Use Most for Parks and Recreation Programs and Services

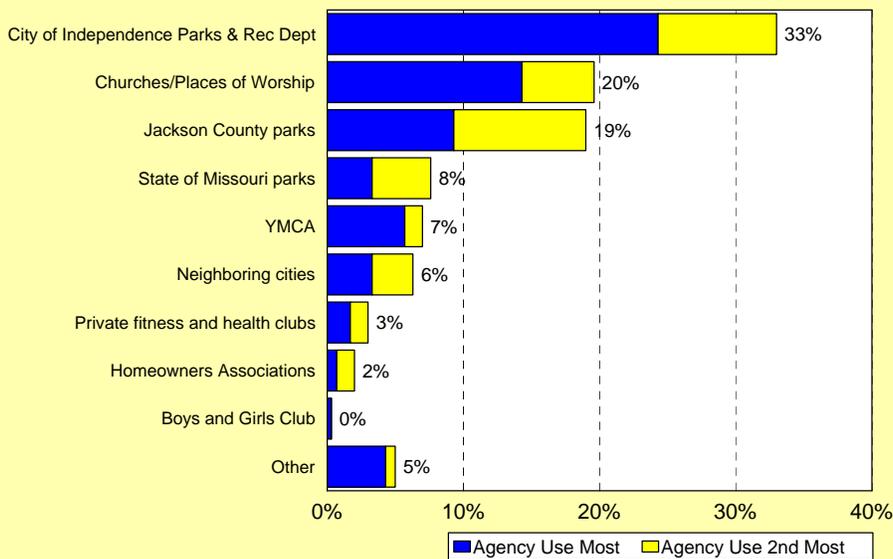
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q8. Organizations That Household Members Ages 18+ Use Most for Parks and Recreation Programs and Services

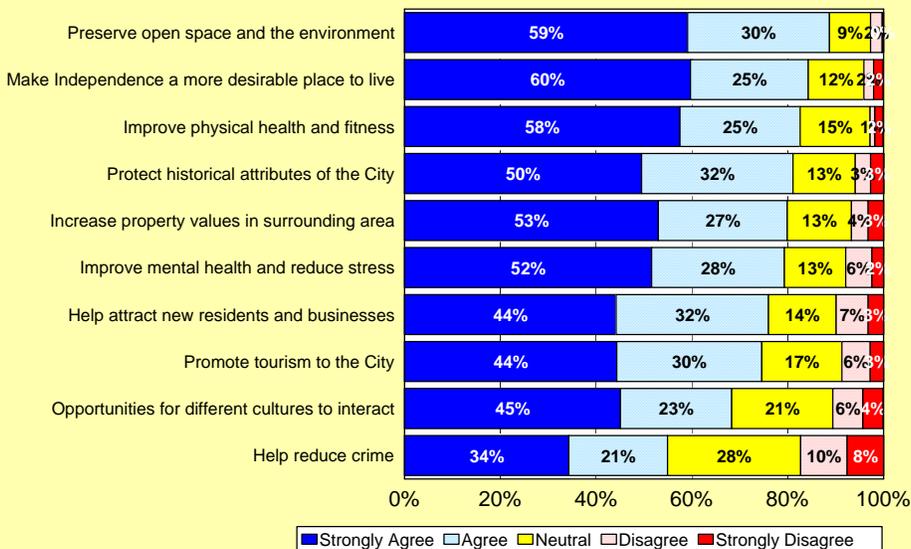
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q9. Level of Agreement with Potential Benefits Provided by Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities and Services

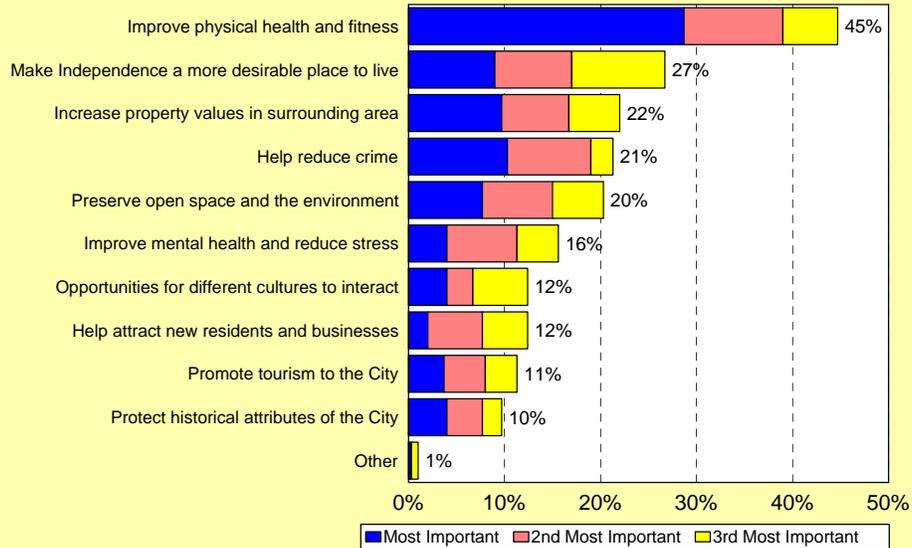
by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q10. Potential Benefits of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities and Services That Are Most Important to Households

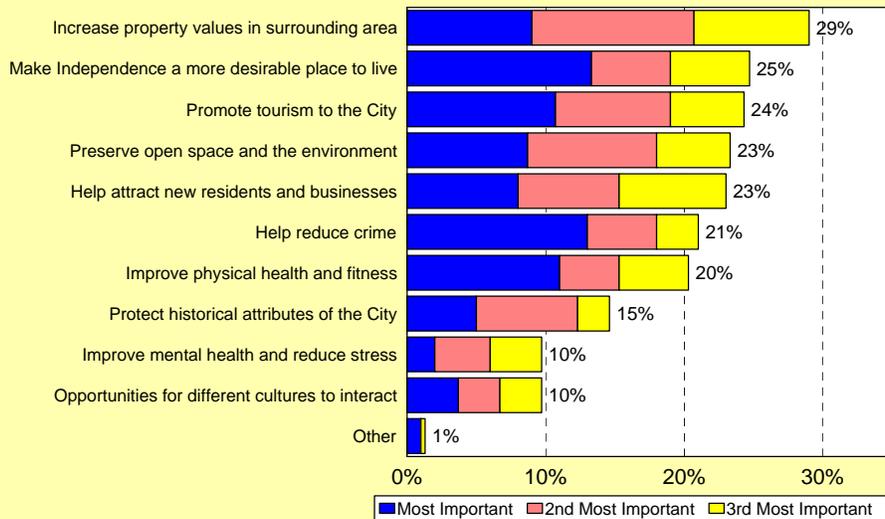
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



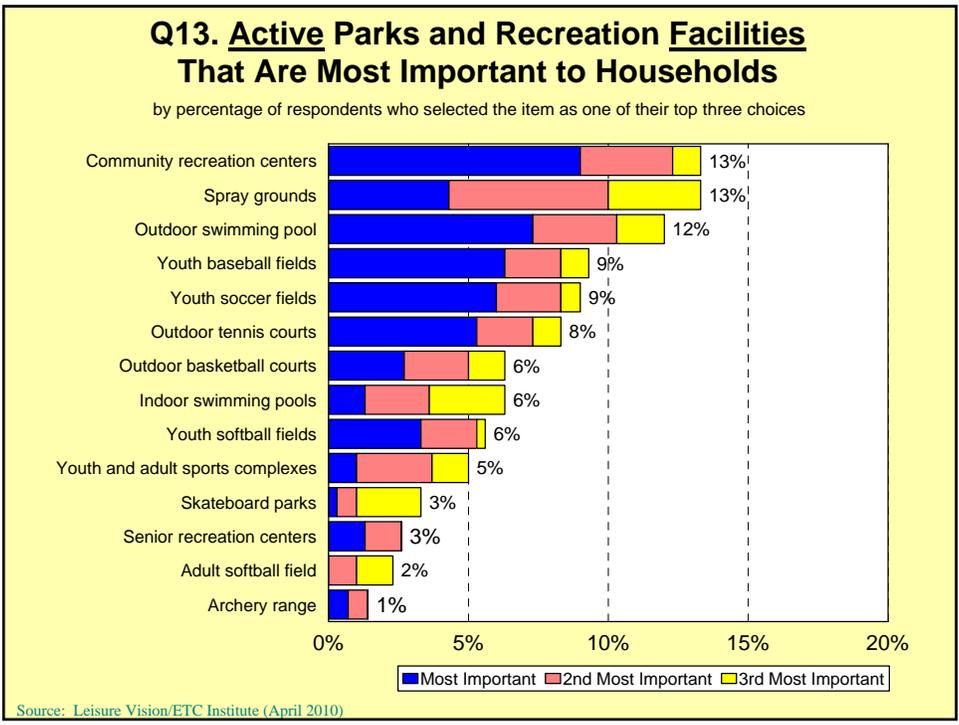
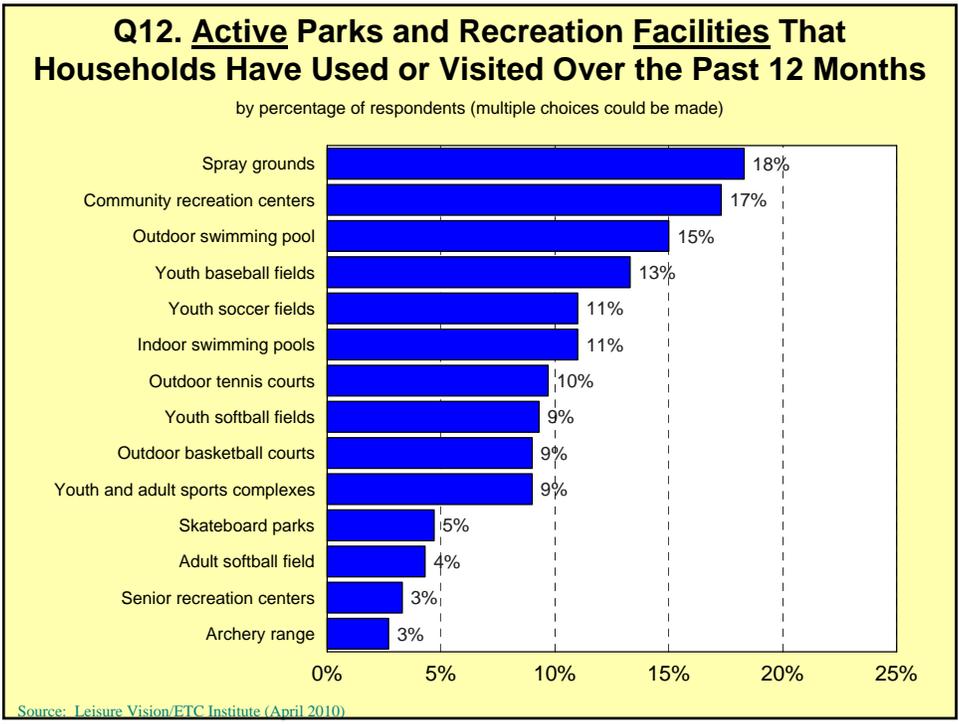
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q11. Potential Benefits of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities and Services That Are Most Important to the Future of Independence

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices

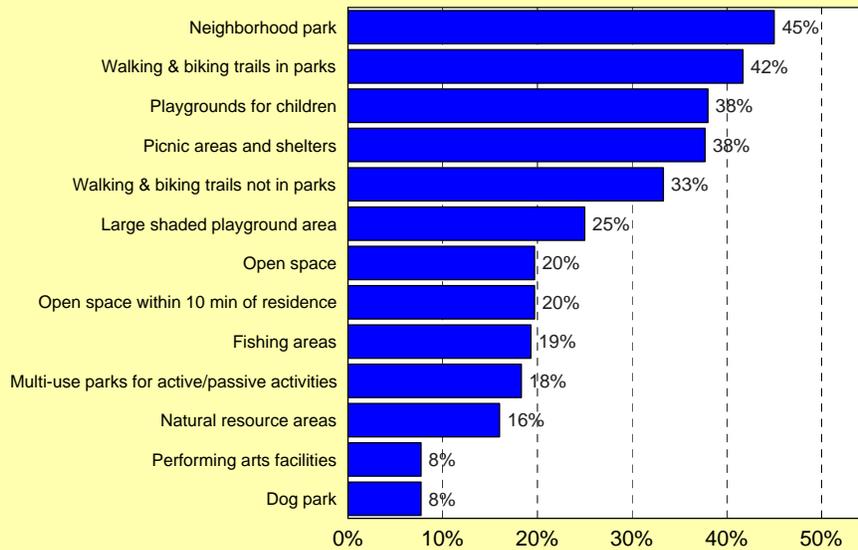


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)



Q14. Passive Parks and Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited Over the Past 12 Months

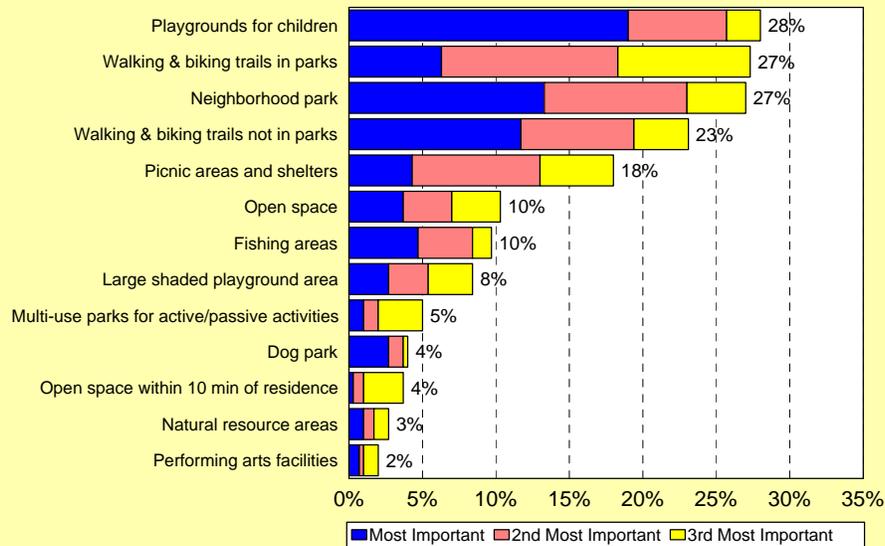
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



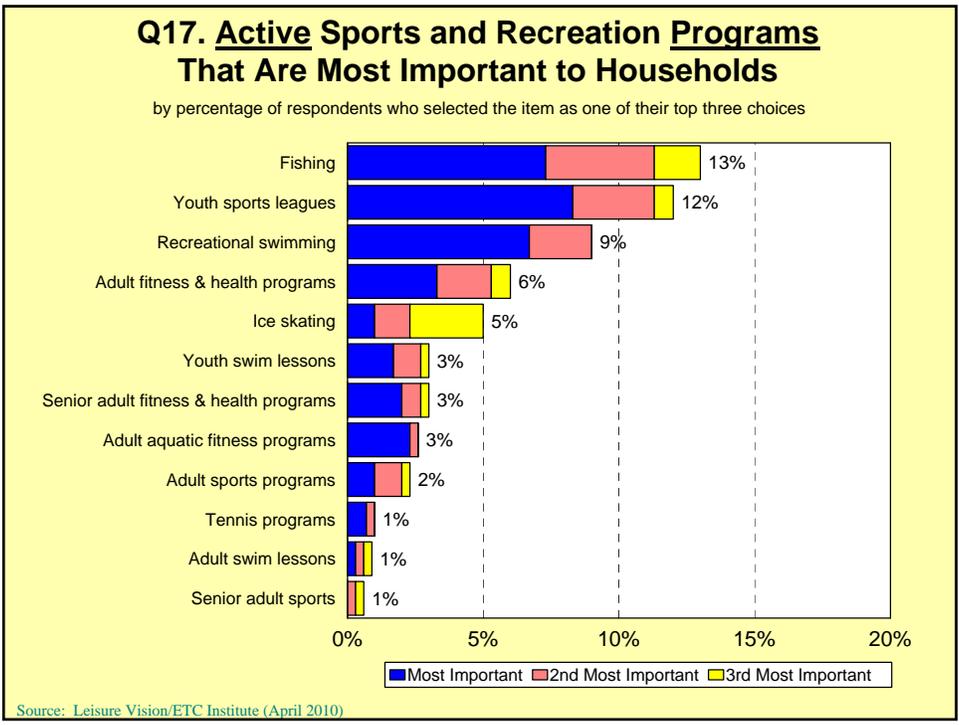
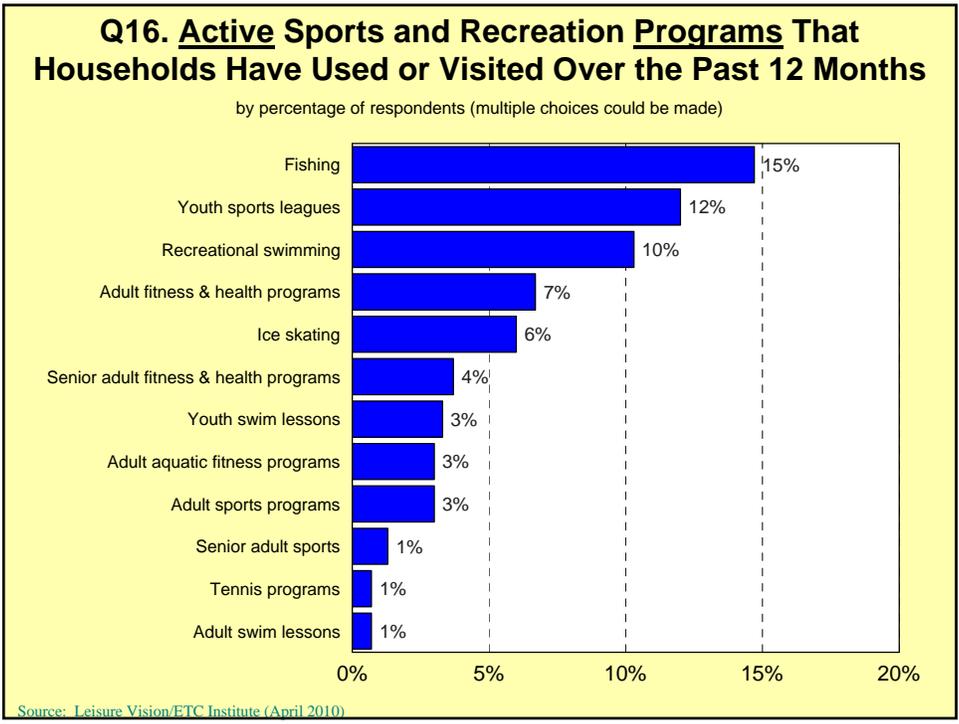
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

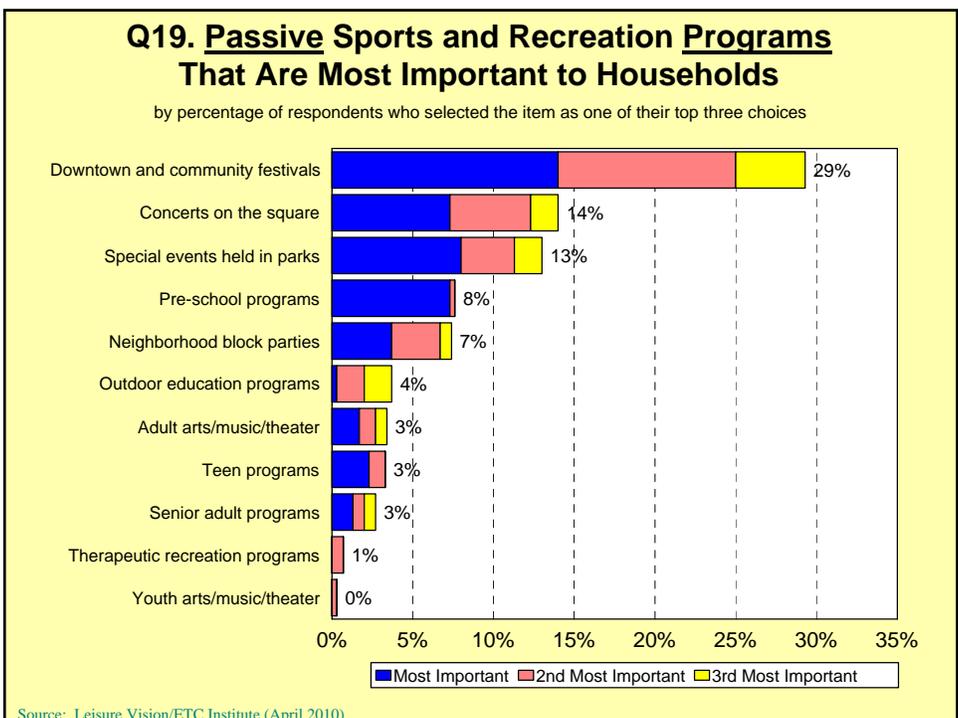
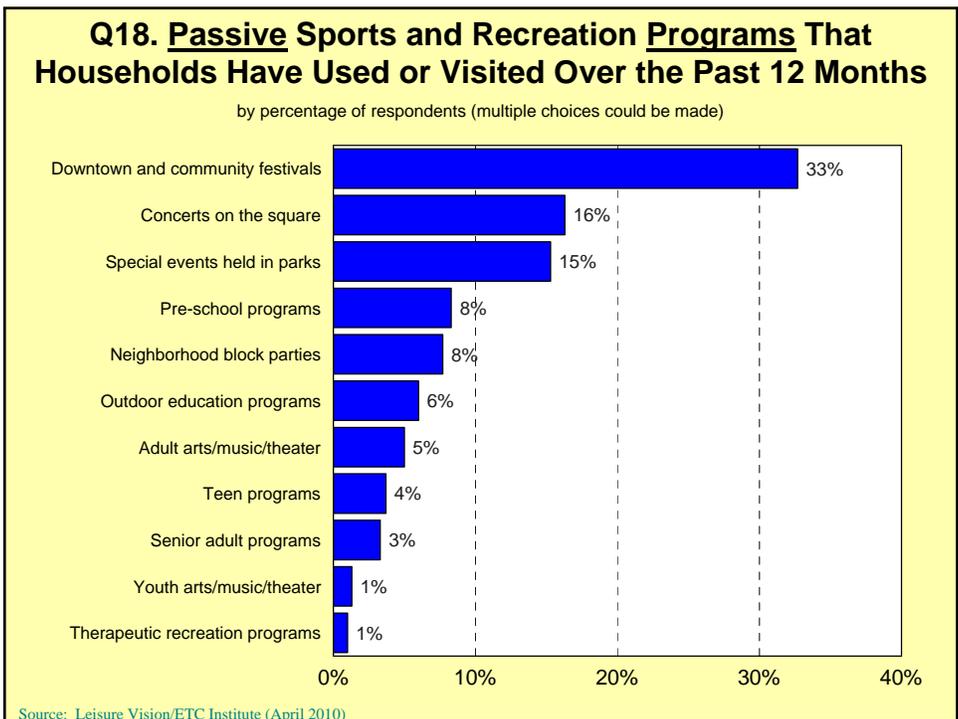
Q15. Passive Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



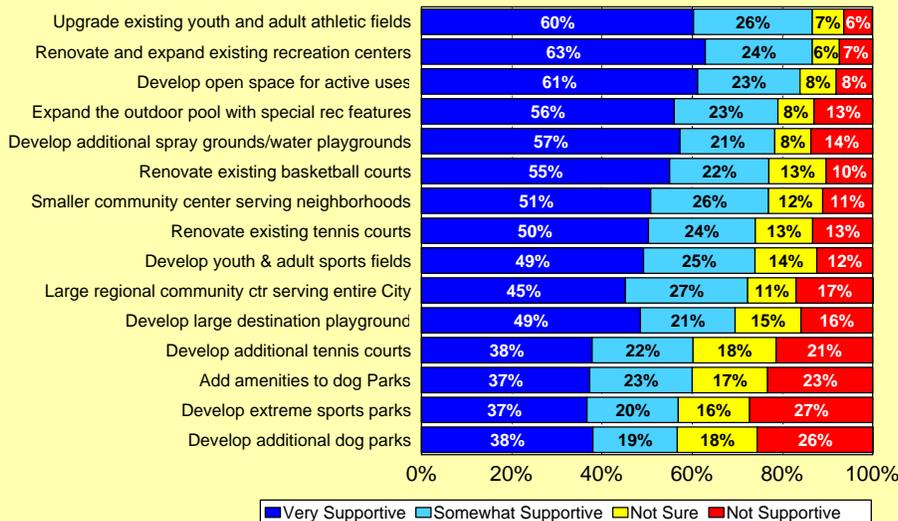
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)





Q20. Level of Support for Various Actions the City Could Take to Enhance Current and Develop New Active Parks and Recreation Facilities

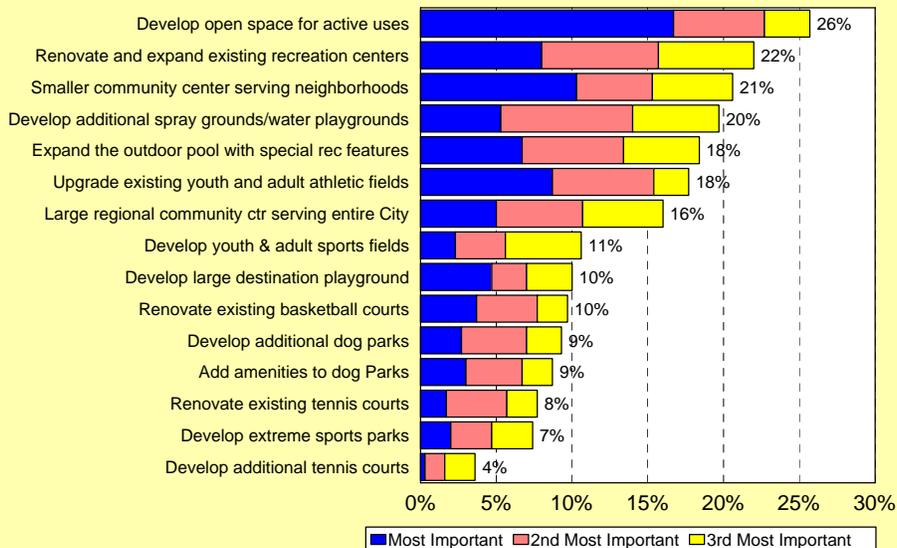
by percentage of respondents



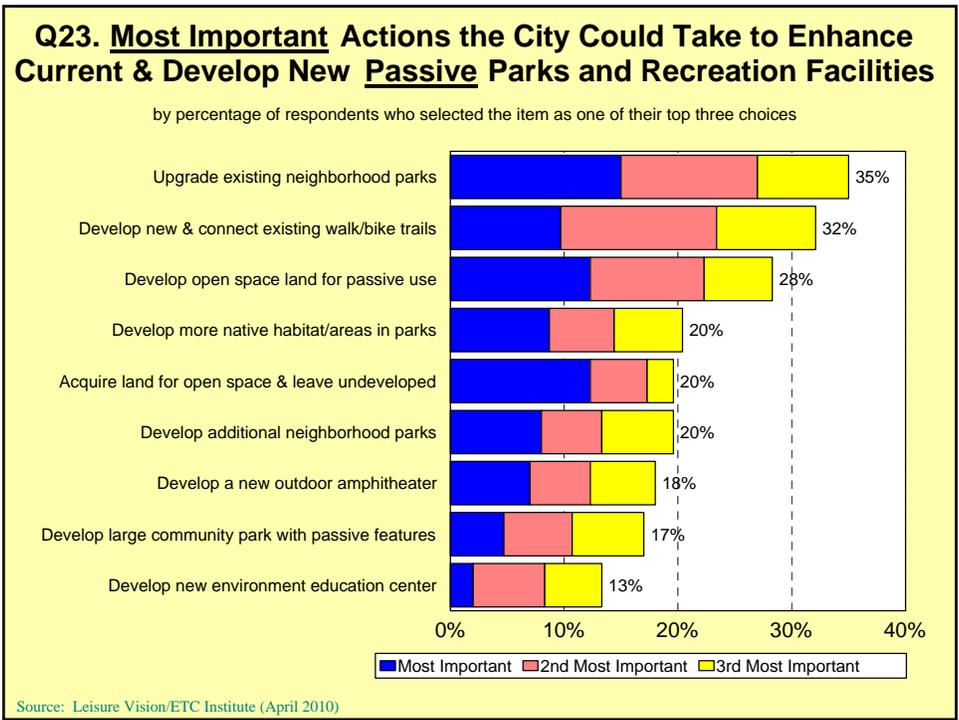
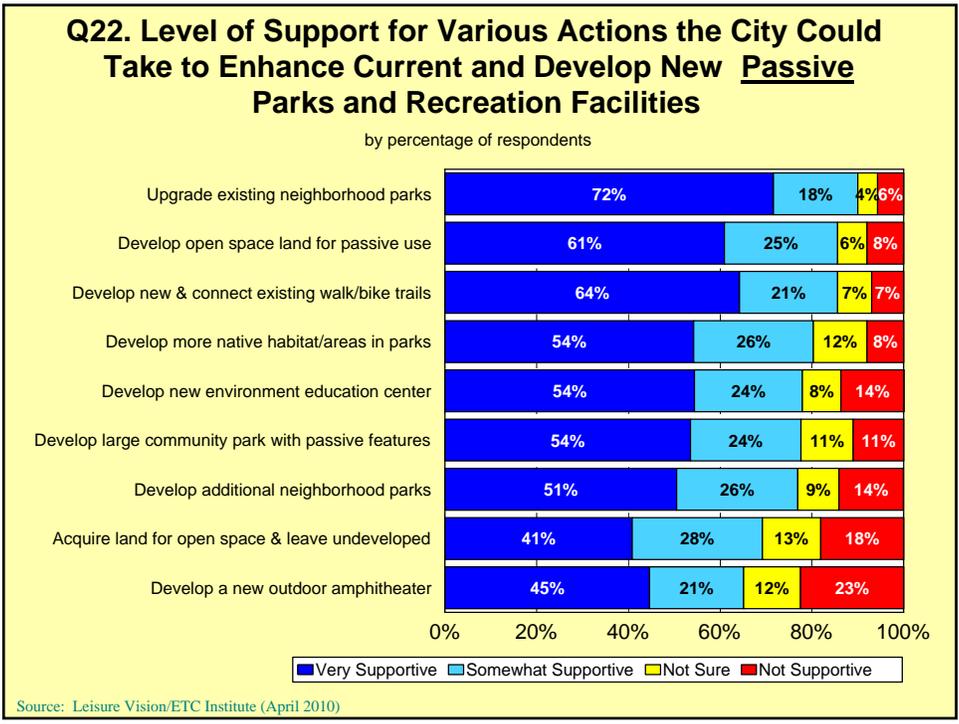
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q21. Most Important Actions the City Could Take to Enhance Current & Develop New Active Parks and Recreation Facilities

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



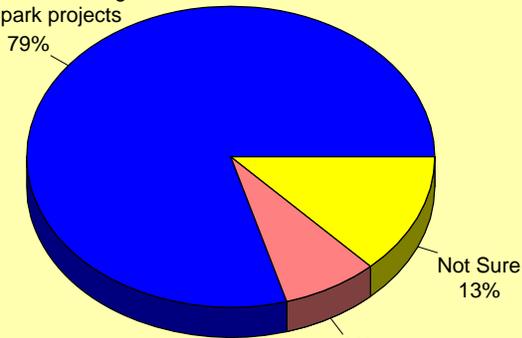
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)



Q24. Action That Respondents Most Support Regarding the Sales Tax Revenue Used for Renovating Existing Parks and New Park Projects

by percentage of respondents

I would support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and new park projects

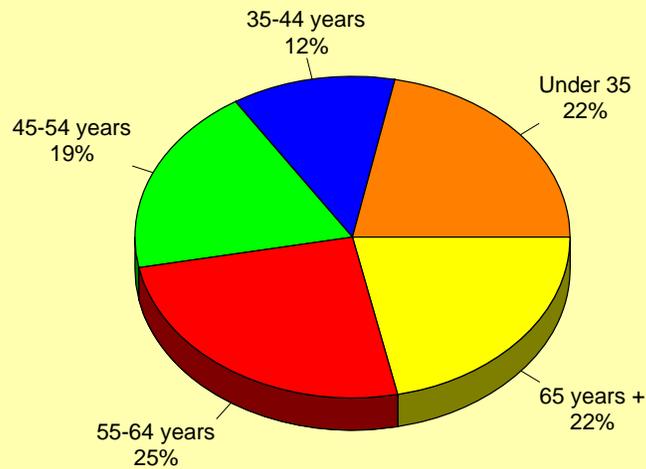


I would not support continuing the portion of sales tax revenue used for renovating existing parks and new park projects

Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q25. Demographics: Age of Respondents

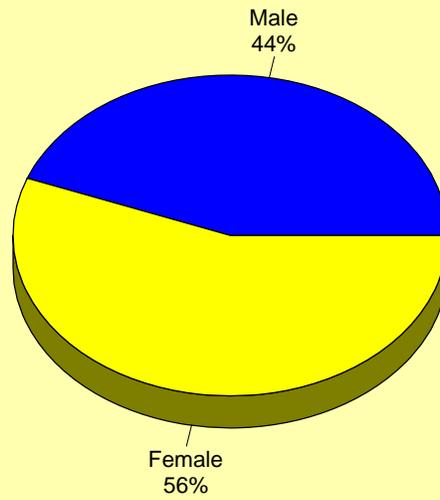
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q26. Demographics: Gender

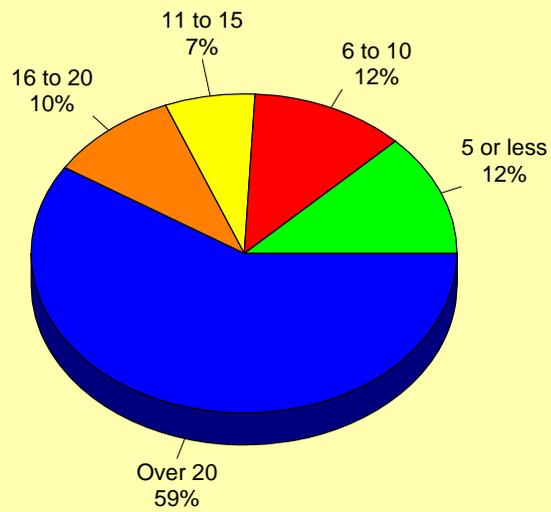
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q27. Demographics: Number of Years Lived in the City of Independence

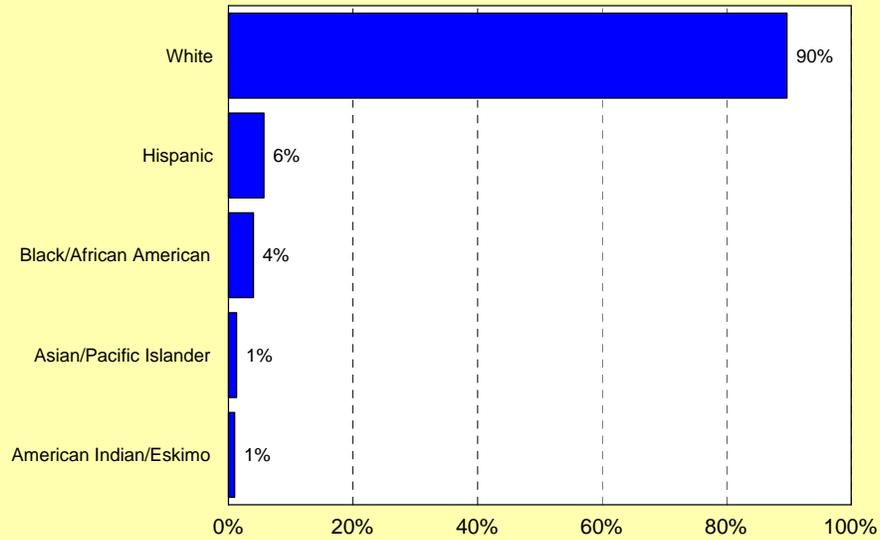
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q28. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

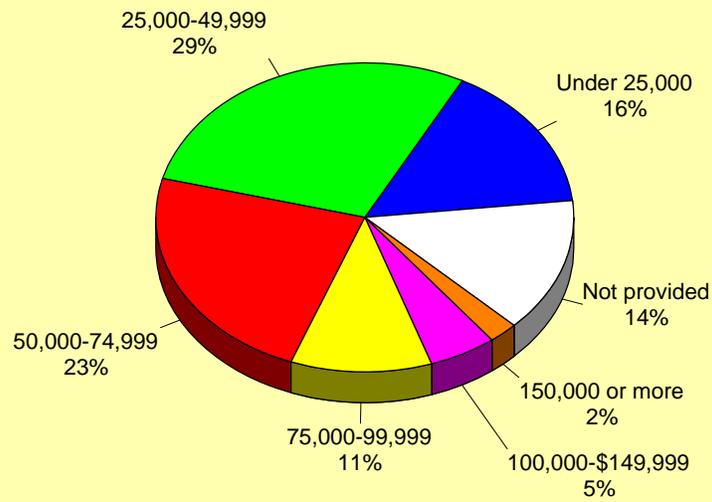
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Q29. Demographics: Total Annual Household Income

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (April 2010)

Implementation

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Technical Data

Introduction

The City of Independence has accomplished much since 2002 to improve its park system and recreation program. Trails, spray parks, an athletic complex, a water park, and family programs are just a few of the improvements that have been made.

This updated Master Plan is based upon citizen preferences and needs

for parks, trails, recreation facilities and open space in the City. The Plan will be a valuable tool to help guide the allocation of resources as the Department strives to enhance livability for citizens and for attracting future residents and visitors.

The Park System Master Plan is a citizen-driven guide for the Parks and Recreation Department to follow and

will provide a proactive approach for responsible development and management of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Master Plan identifies many needs and challenges. As in the past (since 2002), it will require an ongoing commitment by the City Council, the Park Commission, City management, IP & R Department staff, and key stakeholders to advocate for the updated Plan. As has been seen and often noted in various forums in the City, the benefits are enormous and worth the effort. Independence is already an attractive destination and its quality of life will be reaffirmed and further enhanced when this Plan is implemented.

Evaluation Filters

All project-related discussions, prioritization, and funding should flow through evaluation filters. At the core of these filters is the **GUIDING PRINCIPLE** of the IP & R Department that each be citizen focused, sustainable, and collaborative. It is clear from the planning process that each of these filters represents the vision that citizens share for their park system. The filters are:

- Citizen preferences - As expressed and supported in the statistically valid survey, focus groups, public meetings, Park Commission, and the political process.
- Geographic considerations – Relationship between the project and the location where the majority of users live, with balance across the city so that all shall benefit.
- Life cycle of the program – Evaluation of the popularity of the program to determine if it is growing, stable/mature, or declining.
- Demographics – Assessment of demographic characteristics that will affect the success of the project, including age, household income, ethnicity, education, and gender.
- Facilities provided by the City and others – Availability of facilities provided by the City and others such as the private sector, churches, schools, and not-for-profits.
- Best practices in the park and recreation profession – Consideration of the successes of others who are highly regarded in the profession throughout the United States.
- Quality of life – Consideration for equitable citizen access to quality parks and facilities. Evaluation of proposed projects or programs to significantly contribute to our quality of life.

*2010 Park Project
Recommendations and
Cost Estimates*

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Note: Cost Estimates were developed and categorized. The three funding categories are:

A = Taking Care of What We Have

B = Enhancing Existing Facilities

C = Building for the Future

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
Beckett Park		
A	Replace site amenities	\$13,900.00
A	Erosion Control	\$23,300.00
A	Landscaping / Native Habitat Restoration	\$5,000.00
A	Loop Trail	\$26,400.00
A	Playground Renovation	\$65,000.00
Benton Park		
A	Replace Shelter	\$23,500.00
A	Replace Backstop	\$14,000.00
A	Renovate infield	\$3,000.00
A	Erosion control	\$7,600.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$15,600.00
B	Post and Rail Fencing	\$24,000.00
A	Trail Bridge Replacement	\$12,600.00
A	Replace Playground	\$65,000.00
A	Overlay Court	\$165,000.00
Bingham Waggoner Estate Park		
A	Overlay Trail	\$32,000.00
A	Replace Trail Bridge	\$21,000.00
A	Repair Fence	\$25,890.00
Blackburn School Park		
A	Overlay Tennis Courts	\$45,128.00
A	Connecting Trail	\$24,000.00
A	Renovate Ballfield	\$17,000.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$2,996.00
A	Relocate Soccer Field to MCI Park	N/A
Brady Greenspace		
	Nothing in new plan	
Bund-Jack Park		
A	Replace Footbridge	\$9,400.00
A	Connecting Trail	\$39,600.00
A	Shade structure for play area	\$14,000.00
A	Replace Playground	\$33,719.00
Bundschu Park		
A	Resurface Courts	\$35,691.00
A	Replace access path to courts	
A	Resurface Trail	\$16,000.00
A	Replace amenities	\$18,147.00
A	Resurface Parking Lot	\$17,500.00
B	Restroom	\$76,000.00
A	Replace Playground	\$65,000.00
A	Property Line Survey	\$6,000.00
Carriage Hills Park		
B	Shelter	\$27,398.00
B	Playground	\$33,719.00
B	Site Amenities	\$6,000.00
A	Resurface Trail	\$14,500.00
Cassell		
B	Land Acquisition	TBD
A	Pave and organize parking	\$215,000.00
B	Post and Rail fencing	\$14,400.00
A	Renovate Ballfields	\$51,000.00

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
B	Site Amenities	\$6,000.00
B	Shelter	\$27,398.00
B	Loop Trail	\$48,300.00
B	Lighting	IPL Program
B	Restroom	\$76,000.00
Charles Long Park		
A	Remove Remaining Amenities	\$400.00
A	Landscaping	\$1,800.00
A	Restore Mural	\$5,000.00
Choplin Hood Park		
B	24 Hwy access	\$135,000.00
B	Shelter	\$86,512.00
B	New Playground	\$65,000.00
B	Trails	\$16,500.00
B	Sprayground	\$350,000.00
B	Restroom	\$99,320.00
A	Renovate Ballfield	\$17,000.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$9,571.00
A	Landscaping and Erosion Control	\$15,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
A	Replace Playground	\$33,919.00
Cler-Mont School Park		
A	Renovate Infield	\$3,000.00
A	Replace site Amenities	\$7,226.00
A	Replace Playground	\$45,790.00
A	Overlay the Multi-purpose courts	\$29,000.00
A	Overlay Loop Trail	\$9,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
Country Club Park		
A	Resurface trail	\$14,500.00
A	Replace Playground	\$33,919.00
A	Stream Bank Stabilization	\$72,000.00
Crysler Stadium		
A	Replace Outfield Fence	\$67,000.00
A	Stadium Seating	\$160,000.00
B	Construct Storage Building	\$55,000.00
A	Overlay Parking Lot	\$51,435.00
B	Shelter/Picnic Area	\$86,512.00
A	Replace Lights	\$207,409.00
A	Renovate Scoreboard	\$48,061.00
A	Convert Sand Volleyball to Batting Cages	\$165,000.00
B	Artificial Turf	\$360,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
B	Landscaping	\$12,000.00
Curtis Greenspace		
	Nothing in New MP	
Davis Park		
A	Renovate Ballfields	\$34,000.00
A	Overlay Parking Lot	\$34,000.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$12,000.00
A	Erosion Control	\$13,500.00
A	Site Amenities	\$6,000.00
Dickinson Park		
A	Dredge and Renovate Lake	\$160,000.00
B	Fishing Piers	\$69,000.00
B	Wildlife Viewing Platform	\$57,000.00

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
B	Trails	\$150,000.00
B	Lakeside Site Amenities	\$8,000.00
B	Land Acquisition from ISD	\$200,000.00
B	Lakeside Parking	\$28,000.00
B	Lakeside Lighting	IPL Program
A	Renovate Playground	\$39,000.00
A	Overlay Parking Lot	\$38,000.00
B	Off Leash Dog Area	\$16,000.00
Fairmount Park		
A	Renovate Playground	\$78,000.00
A	Overlay and Expand Trail	\$14,500.00
B	Construct New Parking Area for Playground	\$9,500.00
A	Overlay Parking Area	
B	Shelter	\$27,398.00
Firehouse Park		
B	Playground	\$33,719.00
B	Parking lot	\$25,000.00
B	Walking Trail and Bridge	\$165,000.00
B	Picnic Sites	\$6,000.00
B	Lighting	IPL Program
French Acres Park		
	Nothing identified in new plan	
George Owens Nature Park		
A	Indoor Classroom	\$4,000,000
A	Parking Loop	
B	Accessible Fishing Pier (Lorrain)	
B	Landscaping	
A	Dredge Bullhead Lake	
A	Stabilize Shoreline	
B	Shelters (3) by Lake (Bullhead)	
B	Accessible Fishing Pier and Trail (1) (Bullhead)	
A	Slope Stabilization	
A	Replace Trail Bridges (5)	
B	Play Structure	
A	Erosion Control	
B	Park Overlook	
B	Entry Feature	
B	Expanded Maintenance Facility	
A	Overlay Park Drives	
B	Interpretive Signage, Displays and Program	
B	Interpretive Center	
A	Resurface Parking	
B	Interpret	
B	Parameter Fencing	
B	Parkland Acquisition	
A	Resurface Parking	
A	Trail Development/Restoration	
B	Fiber Connection	
Glendale Park		
A	Resurface Parking	\$12,000.00
A	Replace Playground	\$66,822.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$24,000.00
High Ridge Park		
	Nothing in New MP	
Hink Park		
	Nothing in New MP	

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
	Hiram Young Park	
B	Loop Trail and Benches	\$21,000.00
B	Landscaping	\$7,200.00
A	Renovate Picnic Patio Feature	\$63,400.00
	Little Blue Park	
B	Leash Free Zone	
	McCoy Park	
A	Replace Playground	\$82,000.00
A	Expand Parking	\$200,000.00
A	Replace Large Pavilion and Patios	\$462,000.00
A	Renovate Ballfield	\$52,000.00
A	Overlay Existing Parking	\$68,000.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$22,000.00
A	Replace Bridge	\$75,000.00
A	Renovate Horseshoe Complex Corridor	\$82,000.00
A	Renovate Pavilion Lawn	\$41,000.00
A	Renovate Sprayground	\$87,000.00
A	Resurface Tennis Court	\$56,988.00
A	Replace Playground Shelter	\$27,398.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$70,563.00
A	Overlay Entry Circle and Landscape	\$12,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
	Mill Creek Park	
A	Ballfield Fences & Backstops	\$313,522.00
A	Ballfield Light Systems	\$310,000.00
A	Ballfield Dugouts & Bleacher Areas	\$55,600.00
A	Ballfield Walkways & Patio Areas	\$93,318.00
A	Ballfield Scoreboards	\$80,000.00
A	Expand Parking	\$400,000.00
A	Resurface Existing Parking Lots	\$80,000.00
B	Connector Trail and Bridge	\$150,000.00
A	Selective Site Clearing	\$16,000.00
B	Shelters (2)	\$91,656.00
B	Restroom West of Parking Lot	\$93,363.00
A	Renovate Playgrounds	\$156,000.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$14,000.00
A	Replace Perimeter Fencing	\$13,214.00
A	Resurface Tennis Courts	\$132,191.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$82,389.00
B	Property Acquisition	\$9,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
	Pitcher Park	
	Nothing in New MP	
	Polly's Pop Park	
B	Loop Trail and Benches	\$16,000.00
B	Lighting	IPL
B	Landscaping	\$7,000.00
B	Entry Feature / Sculpture	\$15,000.00
B	Parking Lot	\$60,000.00
B	Fencing	\$12,000.00
	Randall School Park	
A	Renovate Practice Fields	\$16,000.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$12,000.00
	Roberts Park	
B	Fence @ Cemetery Site	\$6,852.00
A	Resurface Parking Lot	\$15,000.00
A	Resurface Trail	\$10,000.00

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
A	Replace Shelter	\$35,991.00
B	New Site Amenities	\$10,679.00
Rotary Park		
A	Expand Parking	\$63,000.00
A	Overlay Trail	\$25,000.00
A	Renovate Playground	\$78,000.00
A	Renovate Sprayground	\$76,596.00
B	Connector Trail	\$150,000.00
Santa Fe Trail Park		
A	Replace Tennis Restroom	\$93,363.00
A	Renovate Ballfields	\$243,114.00
A	Renovate Tennis Courts	\$198,996.00
A	Renovate Playgrounds	\$98,919.00
B	Site Amenities	\$51,672.00
A	Expand Parking	\$120,000.00
A	Tennis Cul-de-sac	\$60,000.00
A	Replace Shelter	\$63,986.00
A	Overlay / Expand Trails	\$25,000.00
A	Overlay Roads and Parking Lots	\$70,000.00
A	Restore Wetland	\$11,200.00
B	Landscaping	\$8,900.00
Sermon Community Center		
A		\$5,000,000
B	New Full Scale Fitness Center	
B	New Locker Rooms	
B	Large Aerobics Room	
A	Building Systems Upgrade	
A	New Front Façade	
A	Overlay Parking	
A	Refurbish Gymnasium	
A	New Windows	
A	Renovate meeting rooms	
B	Create new large storage areas	
B	Indoor Playground	
A	Move Admin Offices	
A	Finish Upgrades to Theater	
A	Renovate Restrooms	
A	New Landscaping	
A	Walking Track	
B	New FF&E	
A	Replace Flooring	
St. Clair Park		
A	Renovate Playground	\$43,259.00
A	Resurface Access Trail	\$12,000.00
Sycamore Hills Park		
A	Resurface Trail	\$21,000.00
A	Replace Bridge	\$80,000.00
A	Renovate Playground	\$39,137.00
B	New Site Amenities	\$8,661.00
B	Property Line Survey	\$4,000.00
Truman Memorial Building		
A	Complete the Stage Renovation with Sound and Lighting systems	\$200,000.00
A	Office and Lobby Renovation	\$700,000.00
B	Sound systems for Presidential Hall	\$15,000.00
A	Replace FF&E	\$370,955.00
A	Replace Tile Flooring	\$100,000.00
A	Parking Structure	
A	Repair Water Infiltration	\$60,000.00
B	WIFI for City Network	\$50,000.00

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
	Van Hook Park	
A	Convert Lower Area to Native Prairie	\$62,500.00
A	Create New Entrance off of 291	\$200,000.00
B	New Park Signage	\$13,995.00
B	Trails	\$250,000.00
A	Restore Wetlands	\$11,200.00
B	Interpretive Signage	\$10,000.00
A	Overlay Road and Parking	\$104,125.00
A	Replace Shelters	\$83,805.00
A	Renovate Playground	\$78,273.00
A	Replace Restroom (1)	\$102,188.00
	Woodlawn Greenspace	
	Nothing in New MP	
	Young Park	
A	Renovate Playground	\$33,919.00
A	Overlay Court	\$28,557.00
B	Site Amenities	\$4,810.00
	Trailwood Park	
	Nothing in New MP	
	Palmer Community Center	\$2,000,000
B	Purchase Palmer School Wing	
B	New Fitness Center	
B	New Exercise Room	
B	New Meeting Rooms	
B	New Offices for Staff and Lease	
B	Create Storage Areas	
B	Replace FF&E	
B	Locker Rooms	
	Independence Athletic Complex	
B	3 New Restrooms	\$255,470.00
B	Storage for 6 Athletic Associations (Space Center)	\$60,000.00
B	Grounds Maintenance Equipment	\$132,700.00
B	1 New Concession Stand	\$254,605.00
B	Park Storage Building (Space Center)	\$120,000.00
A	Field Renovations	\$363,000.00
A	Field Expansion	\$640,000.00
B	(4) Shelters	\$251,504.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$155,565.00
A	Replace Equipment	\$30,765.00
B	Off Leash Area	\$30,000.00
B	Sprayground	\$415,000.00
A	Overlay Parking Lot	\$350,000.00
A	Overlay Trails	\$200,000.00
B	Fiber Connection	TBD
A	Expand Irrigation	\$343,800.00
B	Restroom South of Salisbury	\$85,157.00
B	Playground South of Salisbury	\$66,557.00
B	Shelter South of Salisbury	\$62,876.00
	Adventure Oasis Water Park	
C	Speed Slides/Wading Pool	\$1,800,000.00
C	Expand Deck Area	\$150,000.00
C	Add Second Feature	
C	Replace Pool and Concession Equipment	
C	Replace Pool FF&E	
C	Renovate Slides	
C	Renovate Concession Stand	
C	Repair Pool Tanks	

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
C	Refurbish Interior Spaces	
C	Shelter	
C	Outdoor locker pavilion and Satellite Concession	
C	Storage Building	
MCI Park		
A	Resurface Trail	\$12,500.00
A	Resurface Basketball Court	\$20,321.00
A	Renovate Playground	\$32,498.00
A	Replace Site Amenities	\$10,140.00
B	Practice Soccer Field (from Blackburn)	\$17,000.00
B	Connector Trail	\$12,000.00
B	Property Acquisition	\$80,000.00
B	Parking Lot	\$65,000.00
Trails		
C	Fairmount Trail Phase 2 (Arlington to Davis Park)	\$200,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 2 (Hill to Rotary)	\$70,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 3 (Country Club to Santa Fe Park)	\$350,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 4 (Santa Fe To 35th Street)	\$60,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 5 (35th To Kiger)	\$500,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 6 (Kiger to Glendale Park)	\$250,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 7 (Glendale to Van Hook Park)	\$750,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 8 (Van Hook Park to R.D. Mize Road)	\$250,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 9 (Country Club to Phil Roberts Parks)	\$350,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 11 (Hill Park to Truman Road)	\$1,000,000.00
C	Rock Creek Trail Phase 12 (Truman Road to Arlington Ave)	\$1,000,000.00
C	Truman Trail Phase 1 (Fairmount Shopping Area to Truman & Sterling Ave.)	\$500,000.00
C	Truman Trail Phase 3 (Noland & Truman to Lee's Summit & Truman)	\$700,000.00
C	Truman Trail Phase 4 (Lee's Summit & Truman to George Owens Park)	\$1,300,000.00
C	Truman Trail Phase 5 (Truman & Swope to Little Blue Trace Trail)	\$2,500,000.00
C	Spring Branch Trail Phase 1 (Sports Complex to Truman Road)	\$750,000.00
C	Spring Branch Trail Phase 2 (Truman Road to Jackson Drive)	\$150,000.00
C	Adair Creek Trail Phase 2 (Lee's Summit & Bass Pro Drive to Phelps Road)	\$1,348,616.00
C	Adair Creek Trail Phase 3 (Phelps Road to 35th Street)	\$700,000.00
C	39th Street Trail Phase 1 (R.D. Mize Road to Little Blue River)	\$1,300,000.00
C	39th Street Trail Phase 2 (Bridge Over Little Blue River)	\$2,500,000.00
C	Crenshaw Creek Trail Phase 1 (Truman & Little Blue River South to Strode Road)	\$750,000.00
C	Crenshaw Creek Trail Phase 2 (Strode Road S to Pink Hill Road)	\$150,000.00
C	Crenshaw Creek Trail Phase 3 (Truman to 7 Hwy)	\$500,000.00
C	Crenshaw Creek Trail Phase 4 (7 Hwy East on Truman to Landahl Park)	\$850,000.00
C	Burr Oak Trail Phase 1 (R.D. Mize East to & Hwy)	\$2,500,000.00
C	Burr Oak Trail Phase 2 (Ped Crossing at Black Forest Road to Burr Oak Woods N)	\$250,000.00
C	Bundschu Road Trail (Bund Jack Park East to Little Blue Parkway)	\$1,200,000.00
C	Resurface Neighborhood Park Loop Trails	\$950,000.00
Woodlawn Cemetery		
A	Mausoleum Repairs	\$38,000.00
B	Fencing	\$45,790.00
A	Overlay Roads	\$46,000.00
A	Office Building Door/Windows	\$24,700.00
A	Shop Building Upgrades	\$14,600.00
B	Site Amenities	\$8,750.00
Hill Park		
A	Renovate Playground	\$87,711.00
A	Resurface Parking	\$21,000.00
A	Resurface Loop Trail	\$27,600.00
B	New Site Amenities	\$26,757.00
B	Connect to Fiber Ring	TBD
Waterfall Park		
A	Renovate Playground	\$106,151.00
A	Resurface Parking	\$15,000.00

Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
A	Resurface Trails	\$70,000.00
B	New Site Amenities	\$49,118.00
B	New Bluff Drive Trail	\$300,000.00
B	Fishing Piers (2)	\$138,000.00
B	Accessible Dock (1)	\$21,000.00
Park Maintenance Facility		
A	Renovate Exterior Façade	\$153,000.00
A	Overlay Parking Lots	\$60,000.00
B	2 Cold Storage Buildings	\$174,000.00
B	6 Materials Storage Bins	\$31,200.00
B	Green House	\$18,950.00
B	Fencing	\$28,500.00
A	Renovate Mechanics Bay	\$61,400.00
New District 2 Park (P2)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
New District 2 Park (P3)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$66,557.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Wetland Restoration	\$75,000.00
New District 2 Park (NMP1 - New Ft. Osage Elementary School)		
C	Ballfield	\$42,000.00
C	Trails	\$240,000.00
C	Picnic sites	\$6,700.00
C	Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Overlook	\$28,000.00
C	Multi-Use Court	\$158,557.00
New District 2 Park (P4)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Tennis Courts	\$242,696.00
New District 3 Park (P5)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Sprayground	\$415,000.00
New District 3 Park (P6)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00

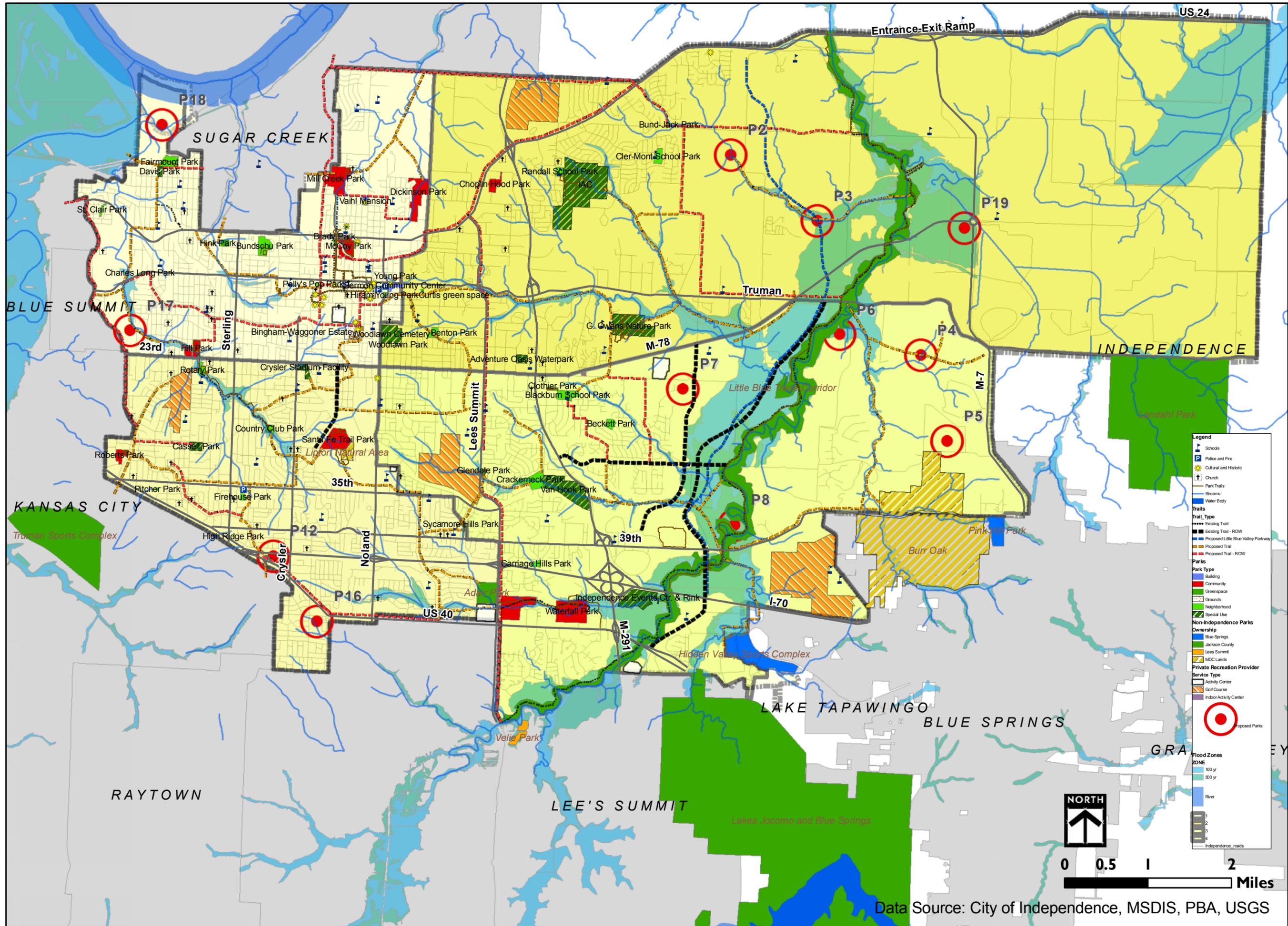
Funding Category	Project	Cost Estimate
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Bridge to Trace Trail	\$500,000.00
C	Overlook	\$28,000.00
New District 3 Park (P7 - New ISD High School)		
C	Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Tennis Court	\$242,696.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
New District 3 Park (P8 - Trace Trail)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Parking	\$65,000.00
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Wetland Restoration	\$75,000.00
New District 3 Park (NMP2 - Children's Hospital)		
C	Sprayground	\$415,000.00
C	No Boundaries Playground	\$374,932.00
C	Loop Trail	\$24,000.00
New District 4 Park (NMP3 - Trace Trail)		
C	Leash Free Zone	\$26,000.00
C	Bridge to Lee's Summit Park	\$375,000.00
New District 4 Park (P16)		
C	Playground	\$66,557.00
C	Open Play Space	\$18,000.00
C	Picnic Shelter	\$62,876.00
C	Loop Trail	\$27,720.00
C	Parking	
C	Lighting	IPL Program
C	Sprayground	\$415,000.00
C	Multi-Purpose Court	\$158,557.00
2010 Projects Resulting From Citizen Involvement Process		
B	2 Destination Playgrounds	\$1,000,000
B	Security For all Parks	\$1,000,000
A	Volunteer Program	\$50,000
A	Marketing and Promotions	\$100,000
A	Park System Maintenance	\$500,000
B	Land Acquisition (\$20,000/ acre)	\$1,000,000
A	Fairmount Center Upgrades	\$1,000,000
B	Complete Amphitheater at Athletic Complex	\$1,500,000
C	Event Center Classroom Space	\$3,000,000
B	Spring Cabin Relocation	\$500,000
B	Theater Storage	\$50,000
Special Projects Outside Current Park Sales Tax		
	Special Event Park near Town Square	\$11,500,000
	Contemporary Recreation Center	\$30,000,000

Park System Mapping

The following maps are illustrated here:

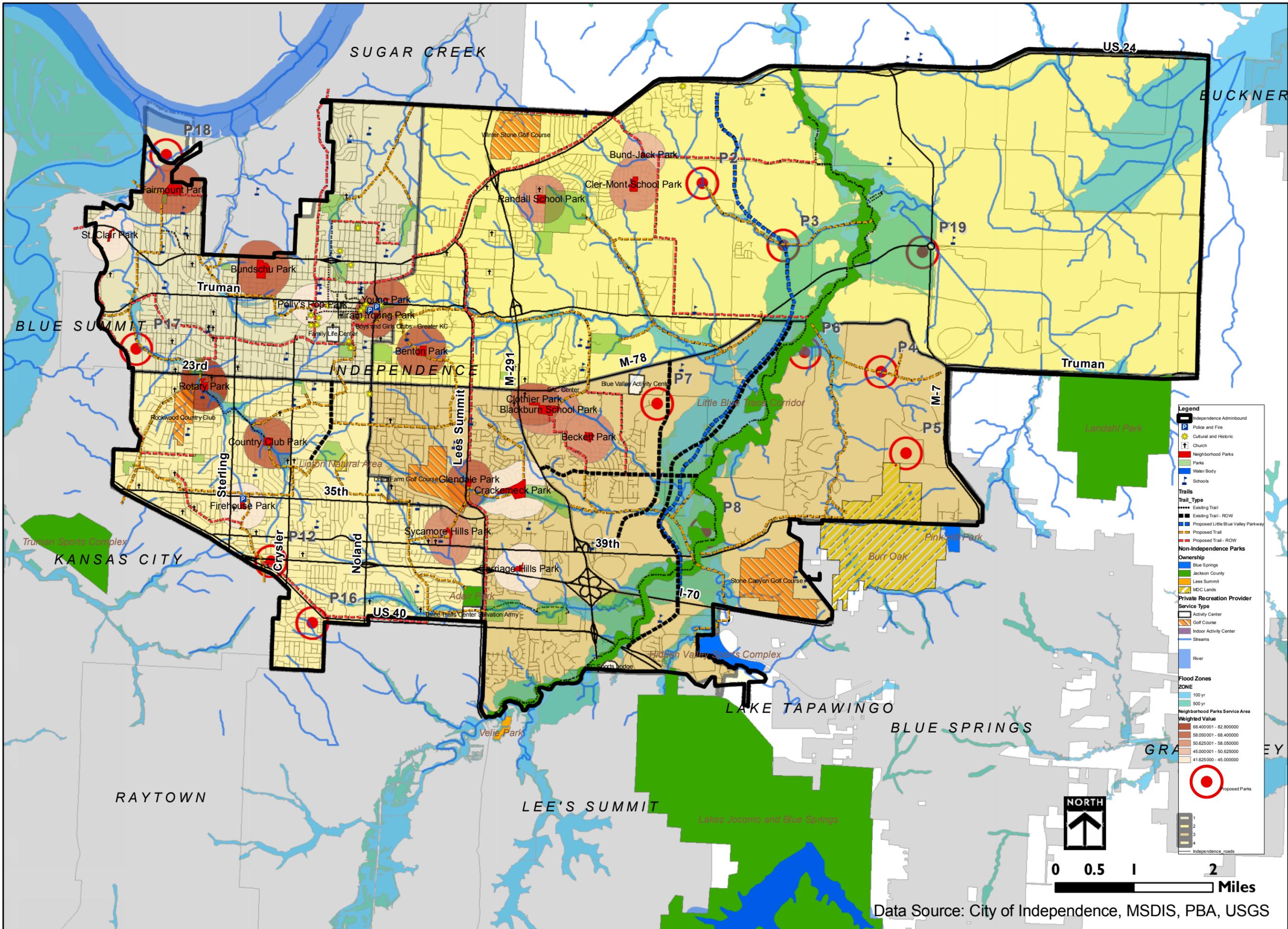
- Existing Parks and Trails
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks
- New Park Sites
- Transit Stops and Trails
- Parks, Buildings, and Grounds
- Special Use Areas
- Surface Cover
- School Locations
- Playgrounds
- Spraygrounds
- Shelters
- Picnic Areas
- Restroom Facilities
- Off-Leash Areas

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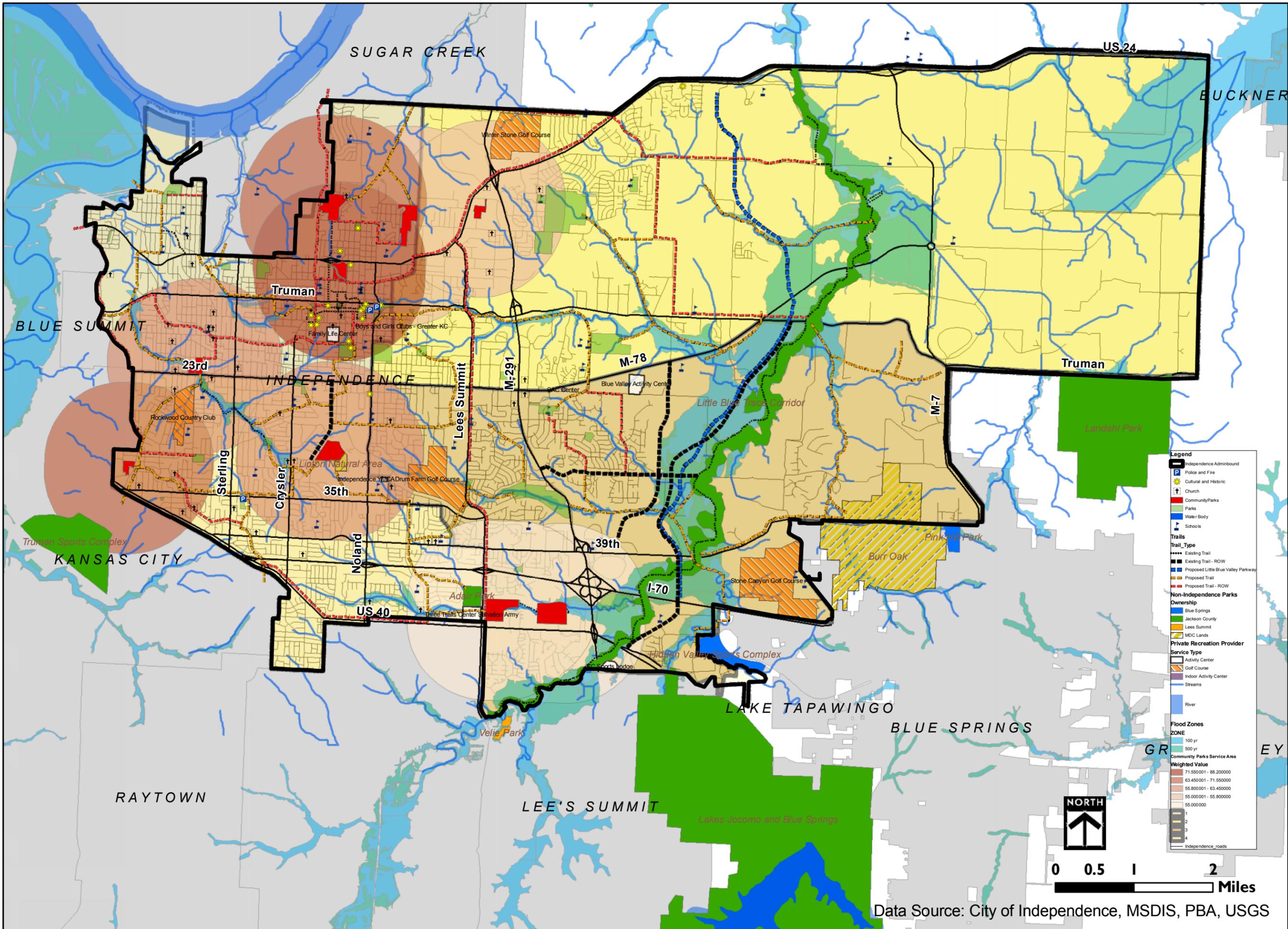
Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

City of Independence, Missouri Parks and Trails

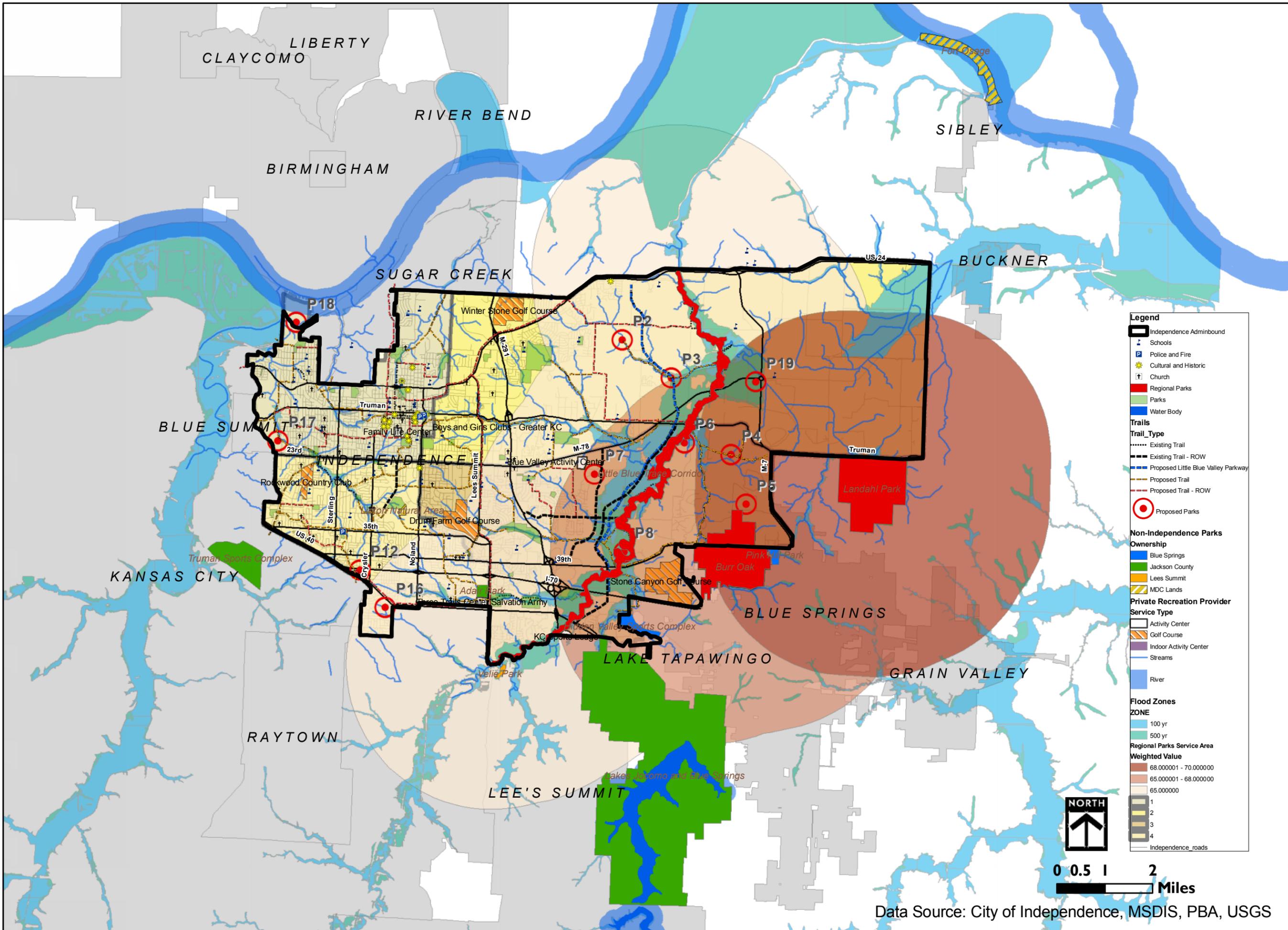


City of Independence, Missouri

Neighborhood Parks



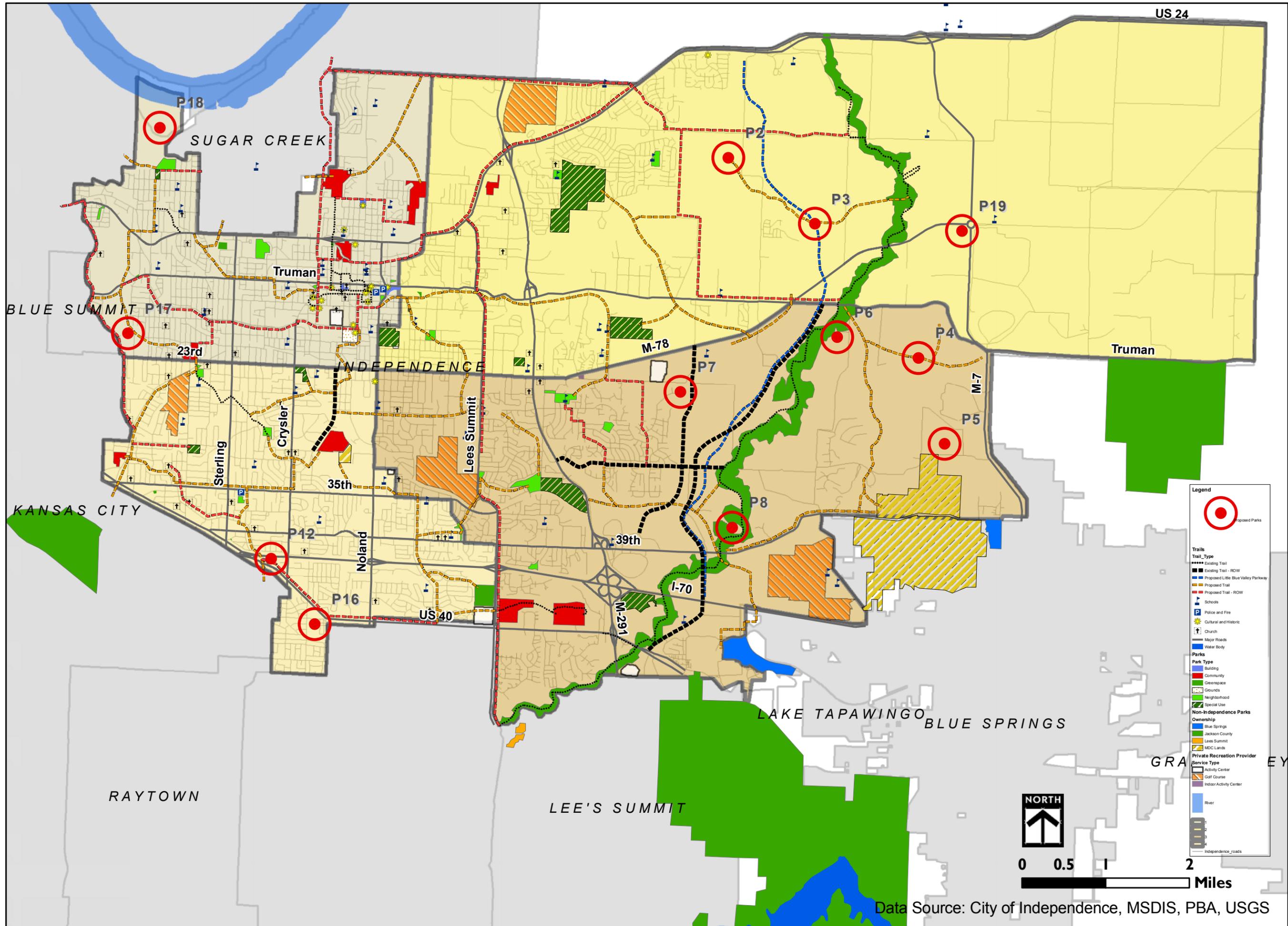
City of Independence, Missouri
Community Parks



City of Independence, Missouri

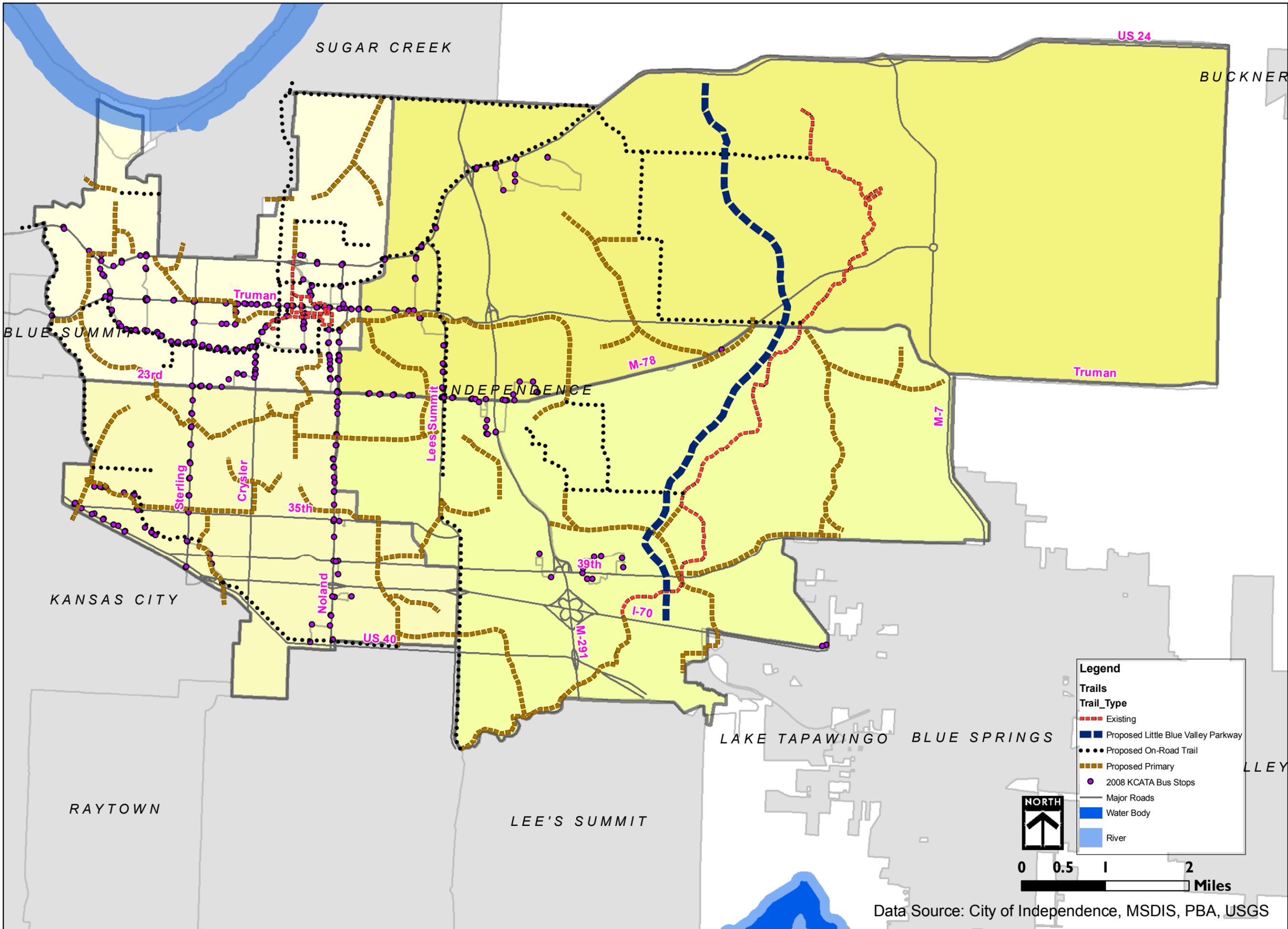
Regional Parks

Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS



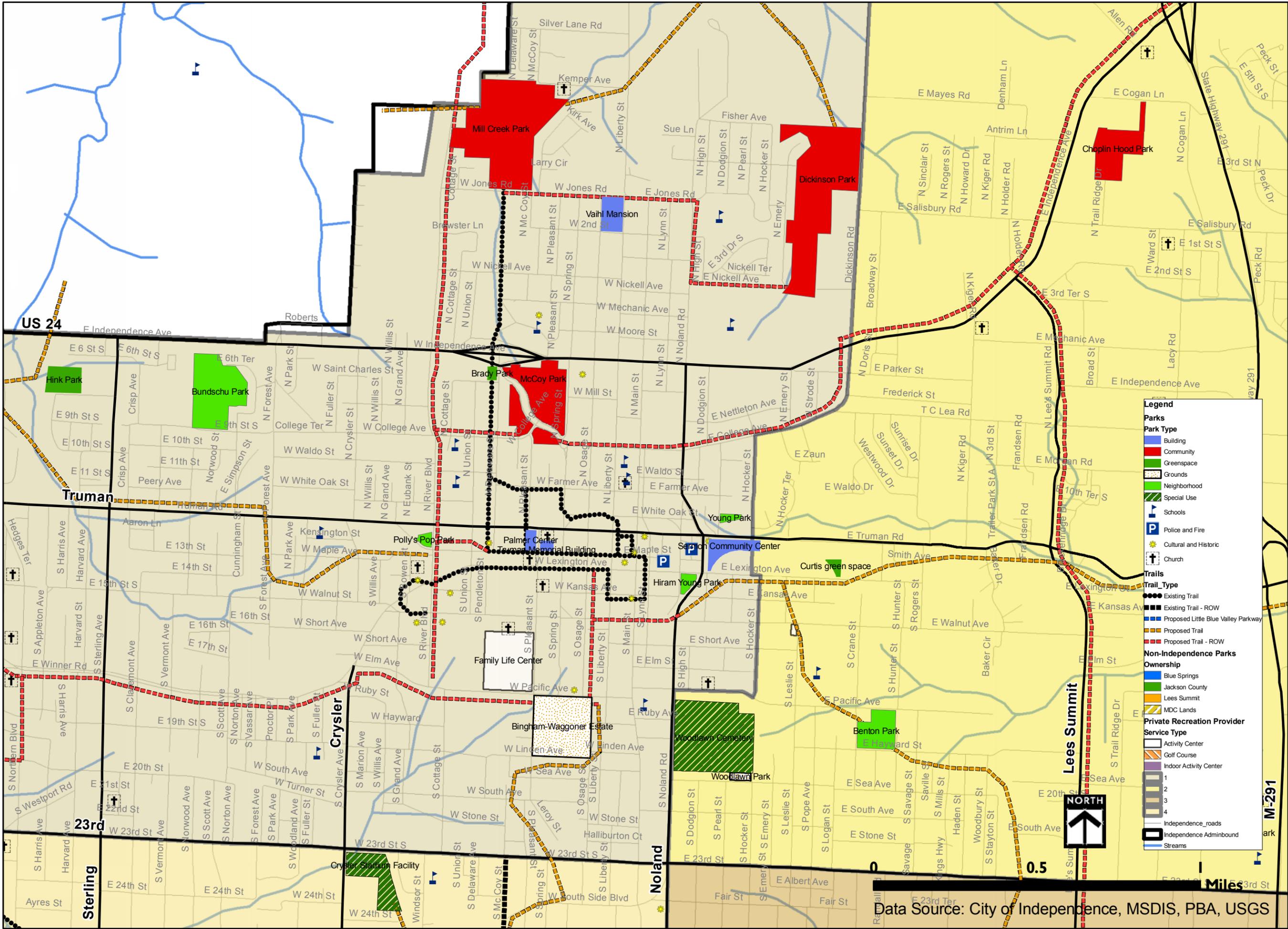
City of Independence, Missouri New Park Sites

Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

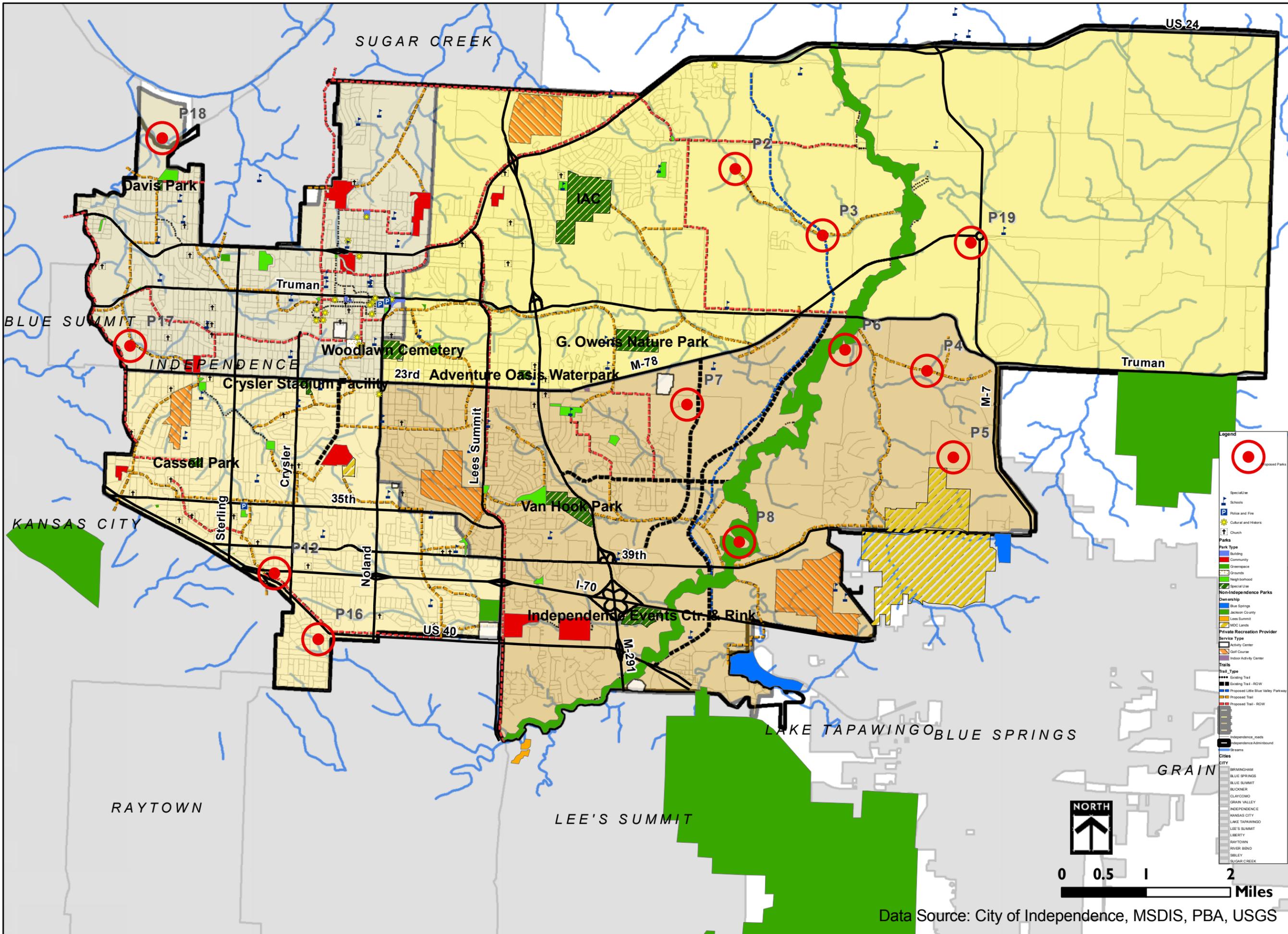


City of Independence, Missouri

Transit Stops and Trails

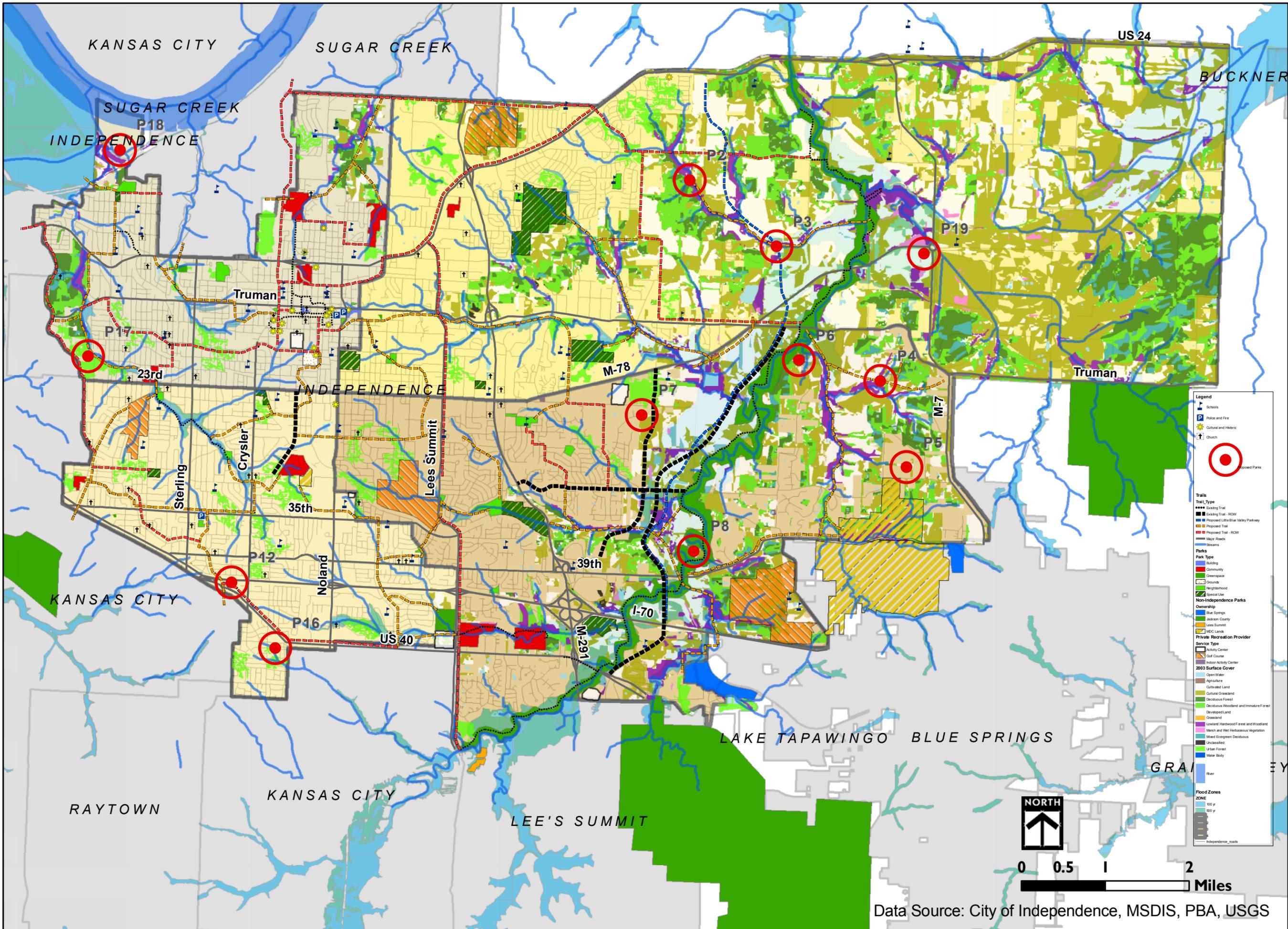


City of Independence, Missouri
Park Buildings and Grounds



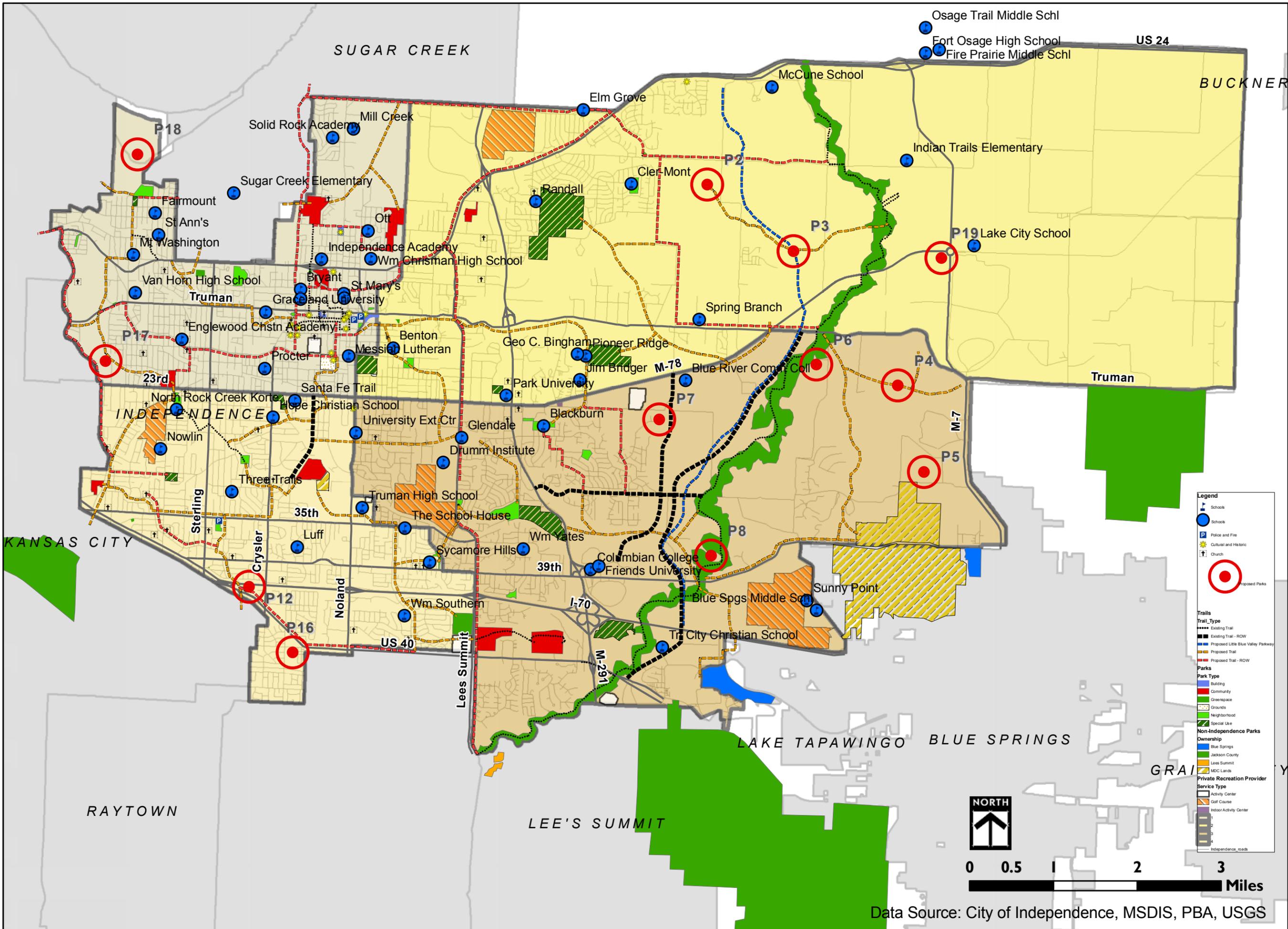
Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

City of Independence, Missouri Special Use Parks



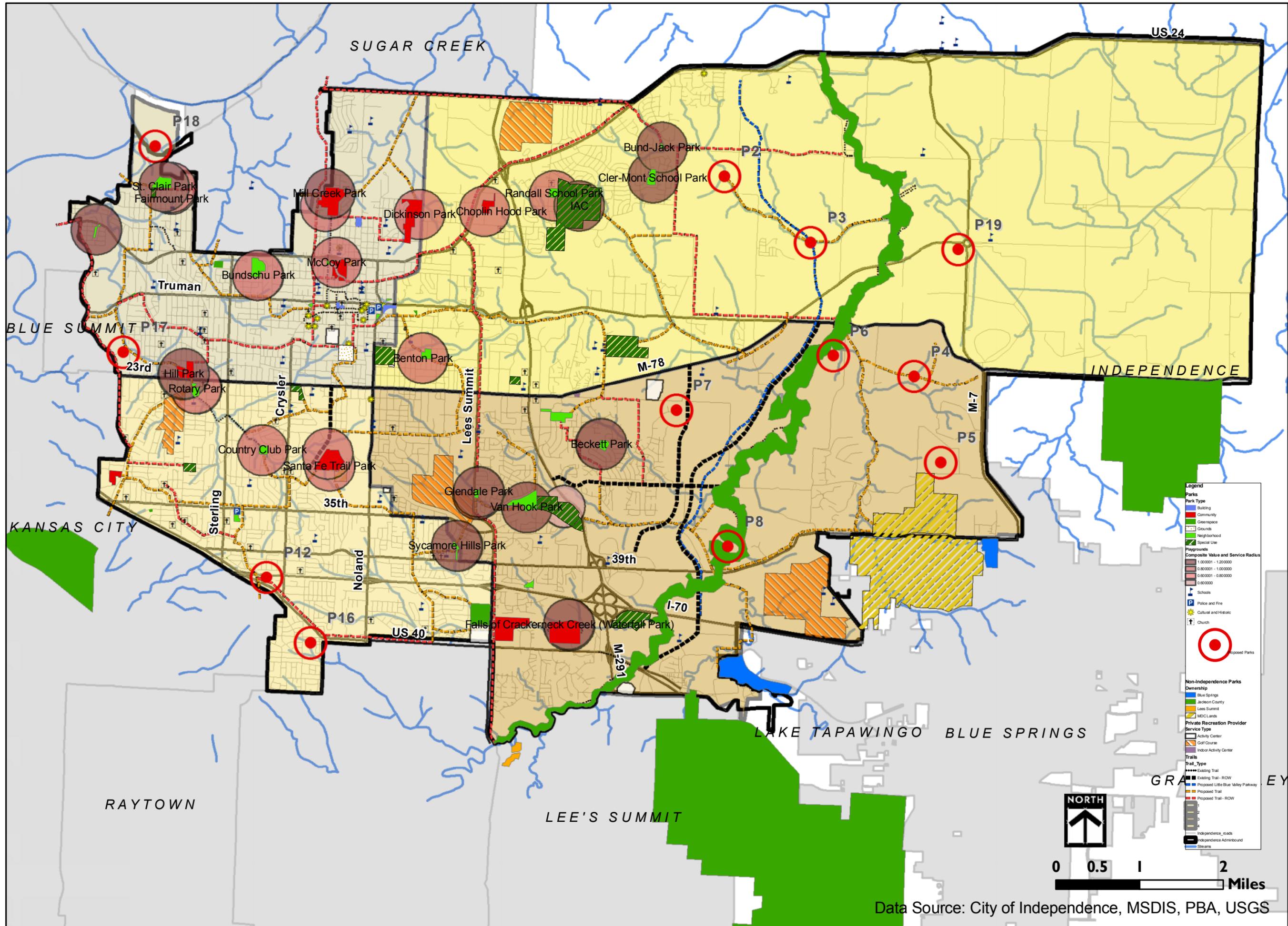
City of Independence, Missouri

Surface Cover



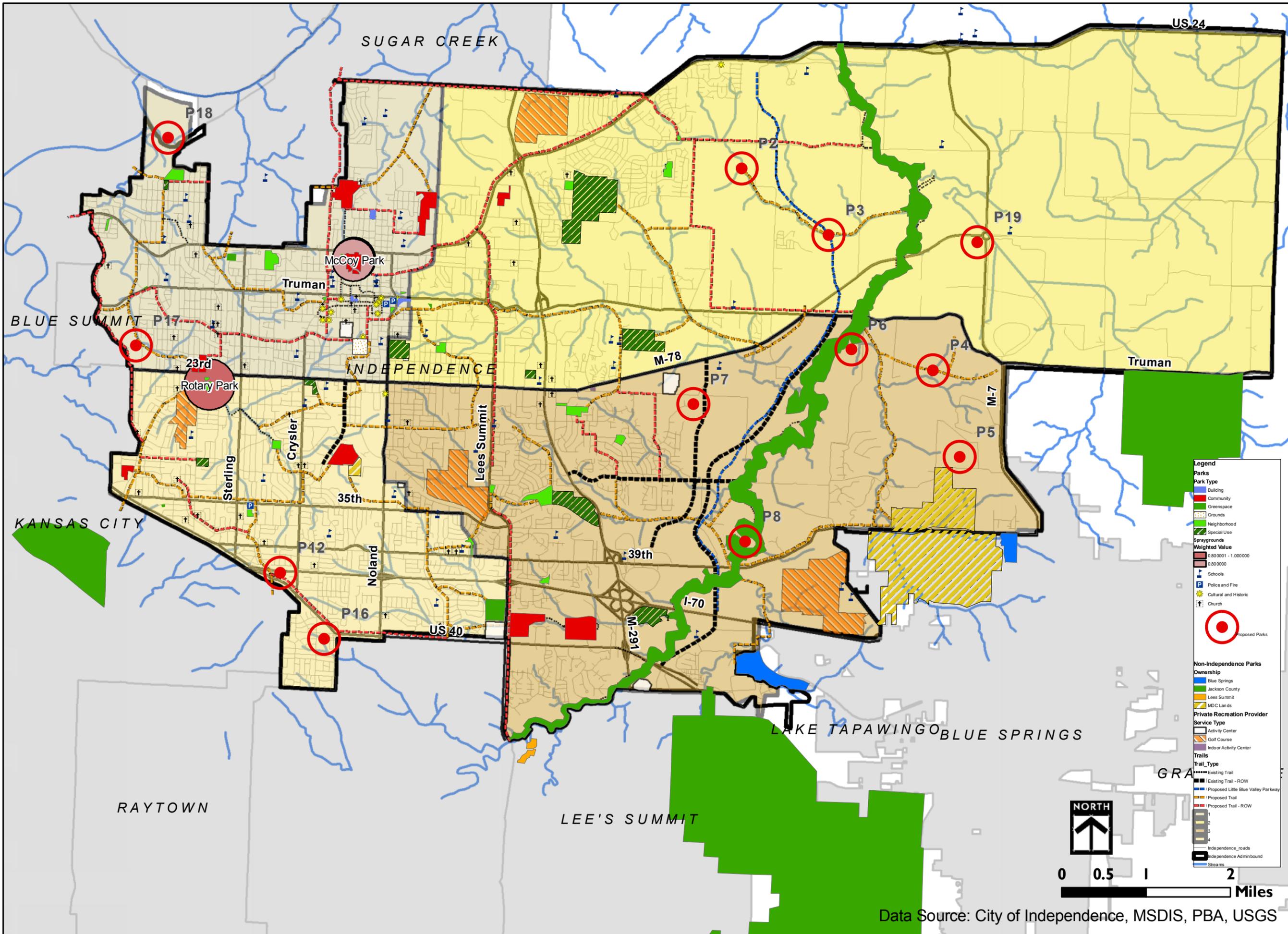
City of Independence, Missouri

Schools



City of Independence, Missouri

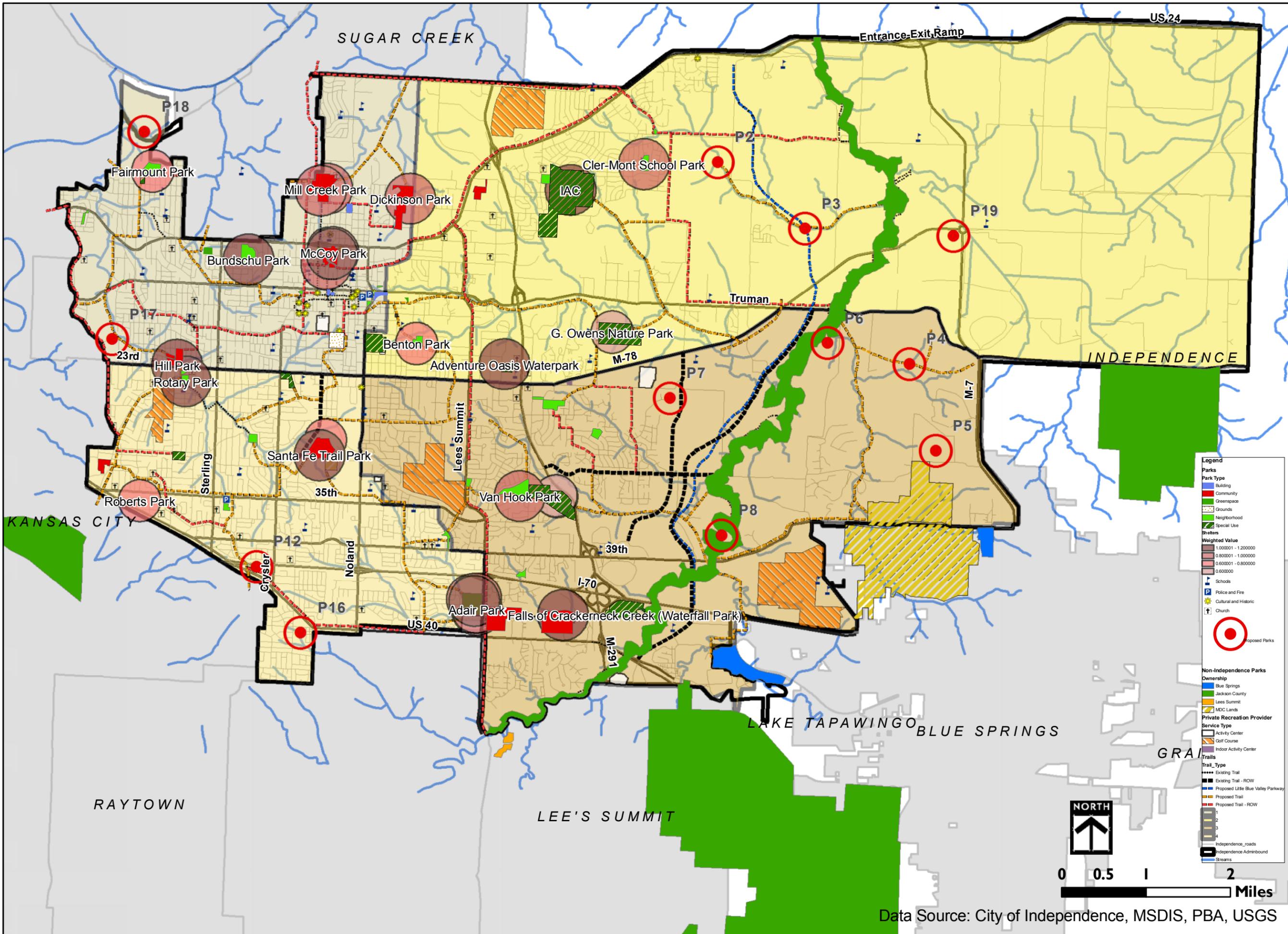
Playgrounds



Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

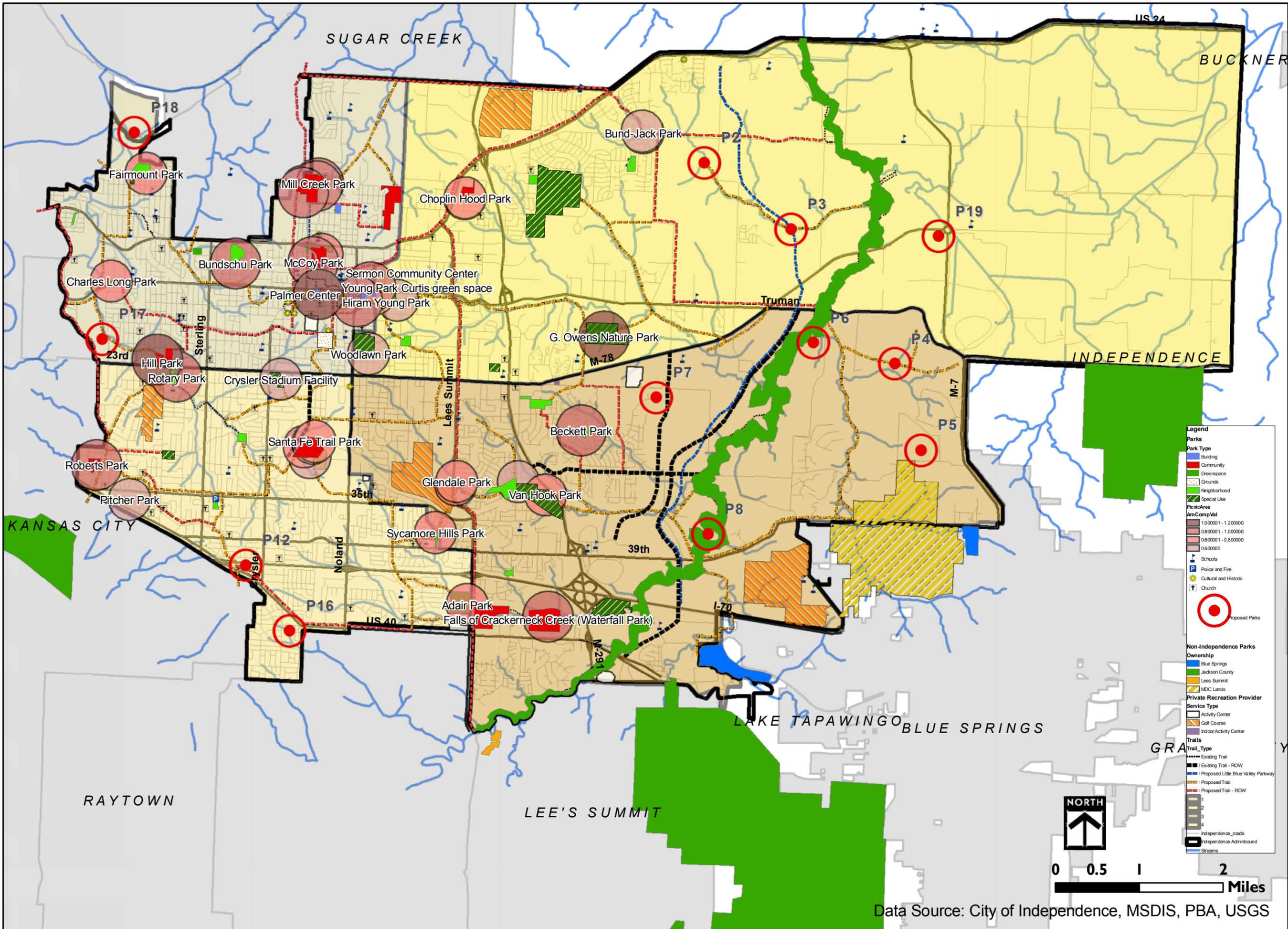
City of Independence, Missouri

Spraygrounds



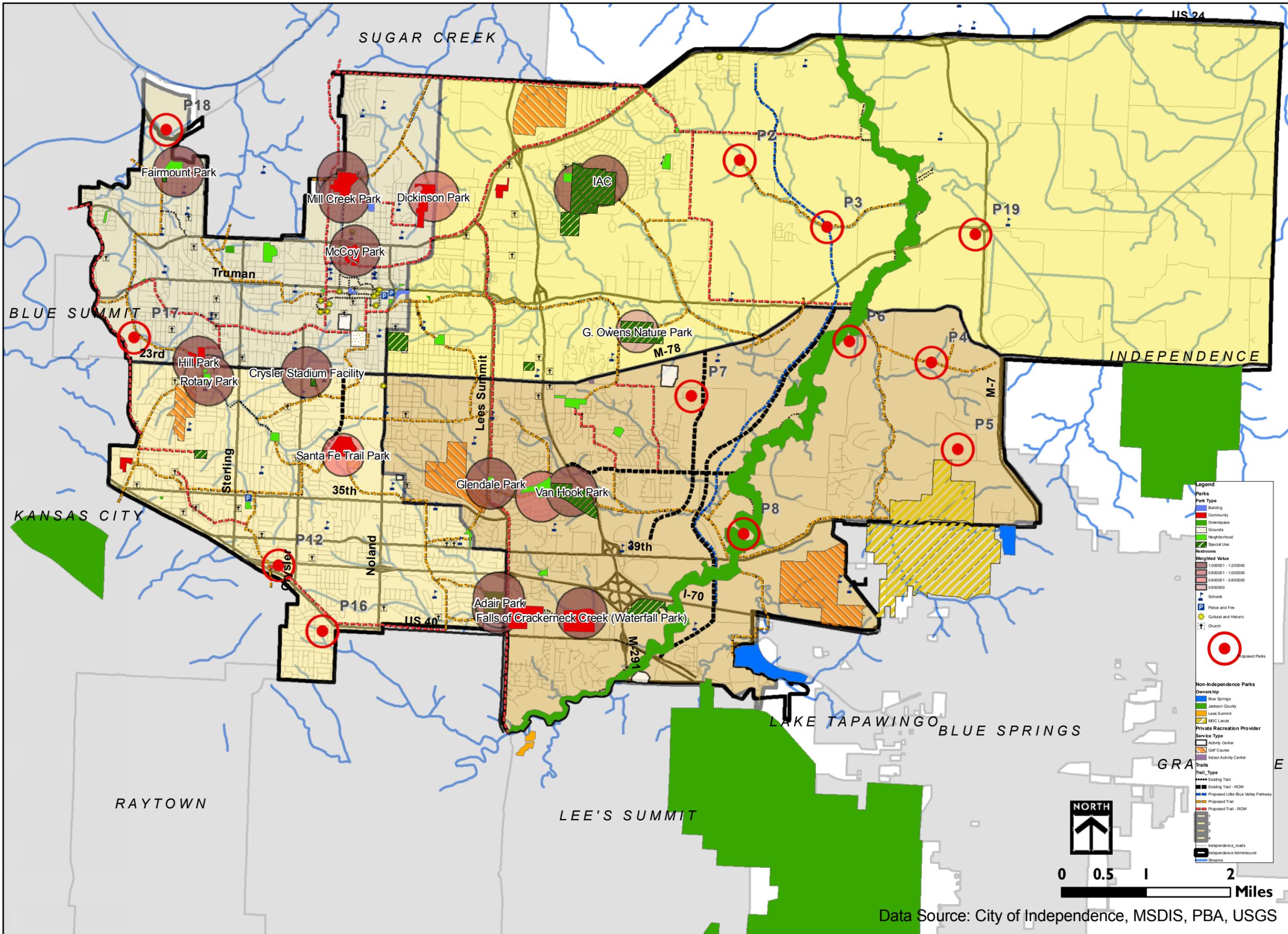
Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

City of Independence, Missouri Shelters

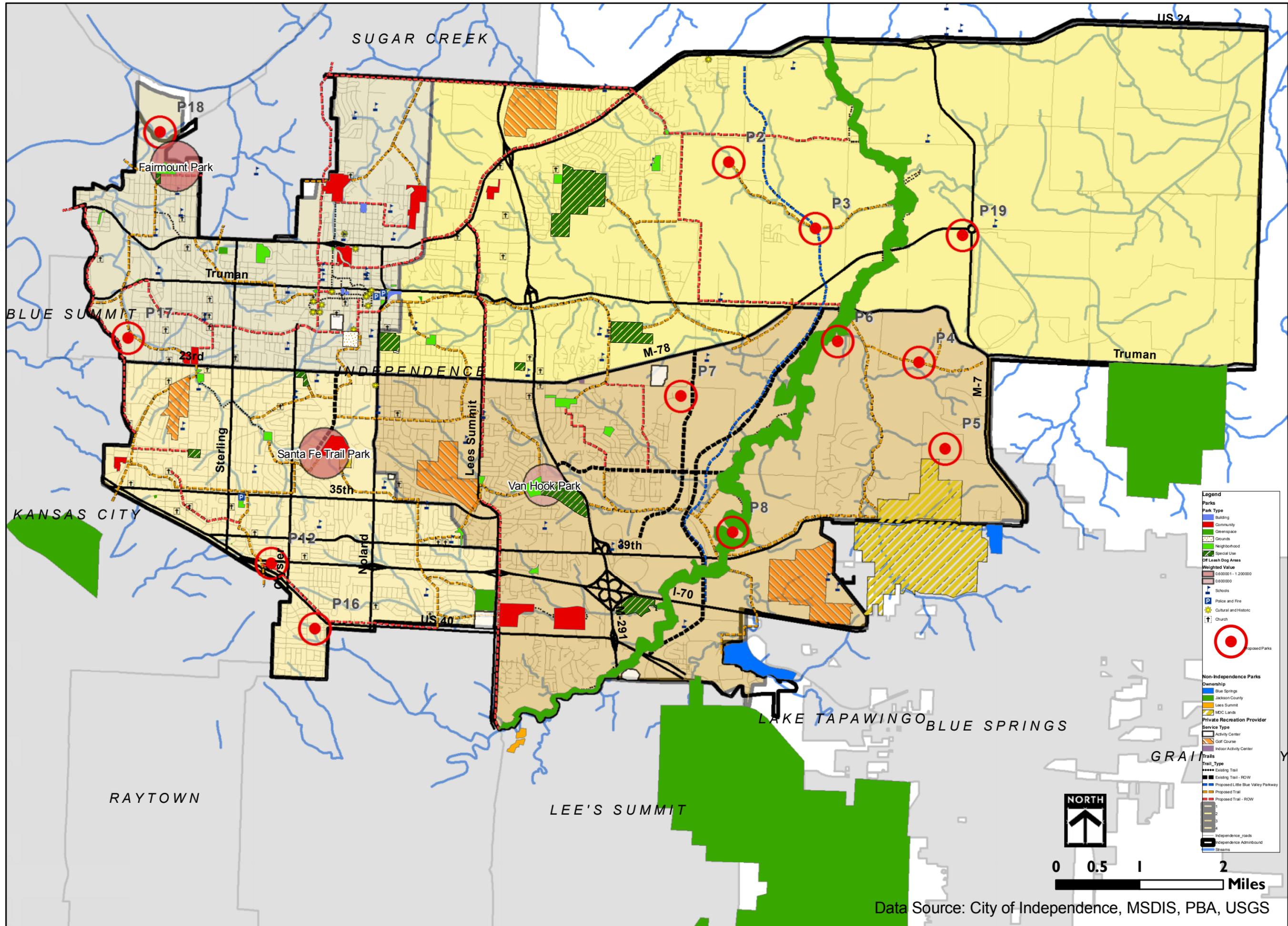


City of Independence, Missouri Picnic Areas

Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS



City of Independence, Missouri Restrooms



Data Source: City of Independence, MSDIS, PBA, USGS

City of Independence, Missouri Off Leash Dog Areas

2001 PROPOSED NEW PARK SITES and UPDATED IN 2010

Site P1 **THIS PROJECT WAS COMPLETED**

Classification: Community Park (Independence Athletic Complex)

Approximate Size: 168 acres

Recommendations:

It is an existing park and refer to the cost estimate sheet for future planned improvements

Site P2

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type A)

Approximate Size: minimum of 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)

Usable open space (4 acres)

Picnic area (1)

Walkway/trail (1,500 LF)

Parking (20 stalls)

Lighting

Characteristics:

This site is situated in the vicinity of Bundschu and Truman Roads. Exact location will depend on future development.

Site P3

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type B)

Approximate Size: Minimum of 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)

Usable open space (4 acres)

Picnic area (1)

Walkway/trail (2,500 LF)

Parking (35 stalls)

Lighting

Basketball (1)

Tennis (1)

Characteristics:

This site is generally located near Bly Street and Bundschu Road with final location being determined by private development needs.

Site P4

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type A)

Approximate Size: minimum of 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)
Usable open space (4 acres)
Picnic area (1)
Walkway/trail (1,500 LF)
Parking (20 stalls)
Lighting

Characteristics:

This site is located near the eastern limit of Truman Road and exact location will be determined with the Little Blue Valley Development.

Site P5

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type B)

Approximate Size: 20 to 25 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)
Usable open space (4 acres)
Picnic area (1)
Walkway/trail (2,500 LF)
Parking (35 stalls)
Lighting
Basketball (1)
Tennis (1)

Characteristics:

Site will be determined as Little Blue Valley Development progresses.

Site P6

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type A)

Approximate Size: 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

- Bridge (1)
- Playground (1)
- Usable open space (4 acres)
- Picnic area (1)
- Walkway/trail (1,500 LF)
- Parking (20 stalls)
- Lighting

Characteristics:

This park site will be located near Jackson County Little Blue Trace Trail as a part of the Little Blue Valley development.

Site P7

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type A)

Approximate Size: 18.45 acres

Recommendations:

- Playground (1)
- Usable open space (4 acres)
- Picnic area (1)
- Walkway/trail (1,500 LF)
- Parking (20 stalls)
- Tennis (1)
- Lighting

Characteristics:

This site is near the Spring Branch Creek generally located near Holke Street and Little Blue Expressway.

Site P8

Classification: Neighborhood Park (Type B)

Approximate Size: minimum of 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

- Playground (1)
- Usable open space (4 acres)
- Picnic area (1)
- Walkway/trail (2,500 LF)
- Parking (35 stalls)
- Tennis (1)

Basketball (1)
Lighting

Characteristics:

This site is located along Jackson County's Little Blue Trace trail near R.D. Mize Road and 32nd street.

Site P9 **FULFILLED BY CLOTHIER PARK**

Classification: Neighborhood School Park

This park has been fulfilled by the adjacent Clothier Park.

Site P10 **NOT BEING PURSUED**

Classification: Neighborhood Park

This site is not being pursued as it is a detention basin, thus there is limited development capacity.

Site P11 **NEEDS FULFILLED AT GLENDALE PARK**

Classification: Neighborhood School Park

Approximate Size: 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)
Picnic area (1)
Walkway/trail (1,500 lf)

Characteristics:

Needs fulfilled at Glendale Park.

Site P12 **NO LONGER PURSUED**

Classification: Urban Style Park

Approximate Size: 15 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)
Sprayground (1)
Picnic area (1)
Walkway/trail (1,500 LF)
Parking (20 stalls)
Lighting

Characteristics:

No longer pursued.

Site P13 **NO LONGER PURSUED**

Classification: Neighborhood Park

Approximate Size: 15 to 20 acres

Recommendations:

Off-leash area
Trailhead

Characteristics:

No longer pursued.

Site P14 **NO LONGER PURSUED**

Classification: Neighborhood Park

Approximate Size: minimum of 2 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)
Sprayground (1)

Characteristics:

No longer pursued.

Site P15 **COMPLETED**

This park was completed by the development of Waterfall Park.

Site P16

This property was sold. The Department will look for redevelopment opportunities in this area as they occur or for property outside the city.

Site P17

Classification: Trailhead

Approximate Size: minimum of 2 acres

Recommendations:

Playground (1)

Picnic area (1)

Characteristics:

This site is located along Rock Creek Trail near 20th and Arlington Streets.

Site P18

Classification: Ecological Park/Natural Area

Approximate Size: 50 to 80 acres

Recommendations:

This park will provide access to the Missouri River and the KCMO Blue River Trail

Characteristics:

A potential partnership with the Corps of Engineers, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and/or the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Site P19

Classification: Athletic Complex

Approximate Size: 50 to 80 acres

Recommendations:

Athletic fields

Restrooms

Concession stand

Shelter

Parking

Lighting

Characteristics:

Developed in cooperation with Industrial park development.

Parks and Facilities Inventory

An inventory of existing parks and facilities is presented in the following pages.

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Adair Park

Although not a City park, this County park is a prominent recreation site in Independence. This park has a natural beauty with giant native limestone outcroppings. Picnic areas are nestled in shaded areas next to outcroppings, hiking trails lead up above stone faces to semi-good views; ball fields are in good condition with batting cages to accompany needs; Shelters are in good condition overall and are adequate to support a number of large gatherings. Game fields are in very good condition. Batting cages could use some landscaping to dress it up since it is near the park entry and also to soften the large amount of chain-link fencing. This is primarily a softball park, but with the addition of a few amenities Adair Park could serve a wider range of park users who would enjoy the park's natural beauty.



Adventure Oasis

This water park serves a wide range of users from youth to adults. There are four main water amenities including waterslides, play area for tots, lazy river, and a lap pool. Future expansion is possible to the north where the city has purchased open green space. This open green area to the north of the waterpark would be a nice shady place for families to get out of the sun and water for a lunch break or birthday picnic party. Although tucked behind buildings, the waterslides are somewhat visible from nearby collectors and arterials. Park signage has been installed along MO Hwy 291. This inventory was taken prior to open park season, so evaluation does not reflect the park in use. Adequate parking was therefore indeterminable.



Beckett Park

This is a very nice park with roughly 7 acres and many beautiful mature oak trees, no parking except street parking, amenities are not ADA accessible from road. There are many places to picnic, however grills need to be replaced.



Benton Park

Benton Park serves as a neighborhood park and was one of the first revitalization efforts as a result of the 1998 sales tax. After more than a decade of use, it is time for improvements to be made. There are some erosion issues on slope near playground. The Basketball court needs repair. The shelter is ok, but will need roof repair in the next 5 years. The asphalt path will need repair in the next 5 years as well. Playground equipment is in good condition, but in 10 years will likely need repair/replacement.



Bingham - Waggoner

The interpretive trail of this park is ADA accessible but will need repair in the next 5 years. Very nice, well maintained grounds, stream access (visually and physically) would be nice. Some of the mowed areas on the south property where the interpretive trail is could be restored to native prairie (upon verification of local historic records). This would reduce mowing needs and add to the historic setting of the amenity. Bingham-Waggoner is a tourist attraction and is under the jurisdiction of the Independence Tourism Department.



Blackburn School Park

The Tennis court, connectivity to the adjacent neighborhood, and the open green space are the best features of this park. The practice baseball field needs repair. There appear to be a few areas of standing water after a rain in the area near the tennis court. Installation of a rain garden would be a nice green solution addition. Parking is shared with the nearby school. Overall the park amenities are in fair to good condition.



Brady Green Space

This is a nice greenspace, however it is somewhat difficult to access given it's topography. Adjacent McCoy Park lends many amenities to accommodate park users. This park serves as visual open space along Truman Road and no park improvements are recommended. A historic landmark is located on this property near the sidewalk.



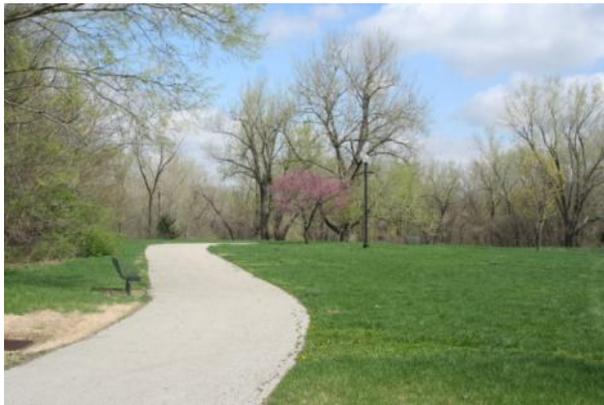
Bund-Jack Park

This park is currently under renovation. Playground equipment is under construction; access is poor at the moment, sidewalks lead down to the park amenities, but do not connect to the nearby neighborhood sidewalks. Adjacent streets are busy and not designed for on-street parking. The existing bridge should be removed and picnic sites replaced as part of the project. The stream which bisects the park is a nice natural amenity that could be enhanced by selective clearing, adding some native plantings to stabilize bank, and physical access to the water.



Bundshu Park

A nice park with plenty of users, all amenities appear to be in good condition, and well used; however, ADA accessibility into the park falls short; natural landscape is very pleasant with mature trees. Basketball courts are in a shady hollow and will need repair soon. Low maintenance seeding on east slopes is needed to reduce mowing.



Carriage Hills Park

This park is an undeveloped neighborhood greenspace characterized by topography and woodlands. Park needs development to function as a public park. The recent installation of the loop trail is a nice feature.



Cassell Park

This park serves primarily as a baseball practice field. Baseball fields appear to be used frequently and are aging. They will need repair in the next five years. Consideration should be given to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood. There were a number of older adults walking, jogging, and walking their dog(s). Community appears to be an older population. Amenities should be added which serve a wider range of users. Parking is ill defined and although is pervious, could be defined a little better; seems like a trail would be in demand here. The site is owned by the Independence School District; before investments are made, use agreements should be formalized.



Charles Long Greenspace

This greenspace is a city entry landscape which should be enhanced, but not to serve as a park. This site should be designated as public open space. Picnic area is not a comfortable setting and both parking and picnic area should be removed and the landscape restored to create an attractive gateway to the city.



Choplin Hood Park

This park has a lot of natural beauty with rolling topography, mature trees (sycamore) and a stream bisecting the site. Stream could use restoration and stabilization. Better visible and physical accessibility to the stream, along with a potential trail crossing near the vernal pool would be a nice connection to the natural amenities of the site. The ballfield needs to be improved, and the tennis court needs to be removed completely. Future amenities should be consolidated to the south portion of the park for better visibility (especially frontage long 24 Highway), improved security, and ease of maintenance. This site should be developed as a signature park for the district.



Cler-Mont School Park

This is a good location for a park/school combination. Neighborhood connectivity is better here than most parks, but could still be enhanced. The layout of park amenities could be more efficient. The overall condition of the amenities is fair to good. The large detention area could be planted in natives to reduce mowing. Sidewalk link to neighborhood and asphalt path will need repair in the next 5 years. Signage should also be replaced.



Clothier Park

Park amenities are under construction. A future connection to Blackburn School Park should be made.



Country Club Park

Giant, gorgeous oaks canopy this park, giving it an impressive natural beauty. The location of the park is however not very visible and signage is lacking. Rock Creek Trail users travel between here and Rotary park (about 1.5 miles in distance) and say it is a nice walk. The basketball court needs repair in the next five years and the playground equipment will need it in the next ten. Parking is needed and native plantings to enhance the stream would be nice.



Crysler Stadium

Ball field is nice, but stadium will need renovation soon and outfield fence should be addressed in the next 5 years. Consider formalized parking where the practice field is. The practice field is deteriorating and hard to get to. This area could be returned to native grasses to reduce mowing needs. Sand volleyball courts are the only ones in town and are in good condition.



Curtis Green Space

This park is a small space with no real means of accessibility, without picnic tables or benches. This area should be designated as public open space and could be planted in native vegetation to reduce mowing demands.



Davis Park

The extent of park amenities is two ballfields. Other amenities are accessible in the adjacent Fairmount Park. Backstops and infields need repair in the next five years as well as the paved trail. Connection to the paved trail in Fairmont park would be nice. The basketball goal needs to be removed, replaced, or relocated.



Dickinson Park

Park amenities appear to be in good condition; lots of opportunities to integrate natural beauty into planned activities/amenities; fishing pond could use seating and nodes to get down to water's edge. Unmarked trail connects two park areas separated by topography and drainage way; currently being used by dirt bikers, mountain bikers; hikers; and is in rough condition but could be a very desirable amenity; access to lake should be improved and a sidewalk connection to the neighborhood established.



Fairmont Park

Gorgeous mature trees, very stately; sidewalk should be removed and a wider paved trail to match existing asphalt trail should be installed; sidewalk at play equip does not extend to street pavement, ADA is not served; some large areas could be naturalized to reduce mowing needs.



Falls of Crackerneck Creek (Waterfall Park)

Very nice park with some beautiful natural features (grove of london planes, lake, stream); no pedestrian access to waterfalls which seems a shame. Should install a debris collector in the stream west of the lake. Fishing pier has ADA cut outs, but access to the pier is steep; great new family park with connectivity to shopping (Falls of Crackerneck Creek). More fishing access should be considered.



Firehouse Park

The property for this park has been purchased and there is a focus on developing this site per neighborhood requests, including the addition of a small playground, limited parking, loop trail, natural areas, and fishing access. Park is hard to find and needs signage on street; honeysuckle needs to be thinned out; large open greenspace behind pond is nice, but inaccessible; dead timber needs to be removed along residential lots. Large open space beyond pond is an open, mowed green space with no trail or path leading to it. It's a nice area, but not currently accessible. There is no signage yet to let citizens know there is a park here and parking is on the Fire Station property.



George Owens Nature Park

This park has a lot of amenities, both man-made and natural in various stages of development. Overall the park is in good condition although the lower pavilion and restrooms near the lakes need to be replaced. Structures in general are showing signs of age. ADA accessibility needs to be improved such that a wheelchair could access more of the trails. Neighborhood connectivity is poor and there is no additional park connectivity. Large open green spaces near the entry could be restored to native prairie to reduce mowing needs. Land donation in Bison Park is currently pending. DeWitt Hall is a class room and shelter that is to be constructed at George Owens Nature Park in 2011.



Glendale Park

A nice neighborhood park that has a variety of amenities to offer; some landscaping and young trees have been planted along Lees Summit Road and help to buffer the park from the busy traffic; would be nice if sidewalks connected this park to the adjacent neighborhood; parking lot was full at 9:30am on Fri. perhaps a few more spaces are needed.



High Ridge Greenspace

A small neighborhood greenspace in a large road median with no structures; sign is in the middle of the space limiting use. Consideration should be given to a neighborhood park adoption to create and maintain a landscaping project similar to the median at Glendale Park. Otherwise, this area should be designated as "Public Open Space".



Hill Park

A very nice park with gorgeous natural amenities which could be a bit more realized. The park is well used and has the potential to be a destination playground park; trash cans could be closer to shelter and bar-b-que grills need replacing; would be nice to have seating, or picnic areas along creek as well as better access to engage creek; spectacular rock outcroppings; nice mature trees; neat park with a lot of unrealized potential natural amenities could be more revealed. Existing amenities are aging from constant use. Playground is in good condition, but skate park will need some repair in the next five years.



Hink Greenspace

Sign should be relocated and this site should remain a greenspace.



Hiram Young Greenspace

This is a nice greenspace, but is landlocked between major arterial roads. Seating and picnic area could be a bit more accessible to wheelchairs. Serves the community best as simply a landscaped open space to enhance the visual aesthetic of the heart of the city.



Independence Athletic Complex (IAC)

Brand new sports complex with excellent ball fields, efficient parking layout, a long linear trail within that passes along wooded edge, very clean and well maintained landscape; native practices are signed to inform; native vegetation is still in establishment period. There are some drainage issues in the large open green space near the northwest, upper baseball fields. Some BMP practices have been implemented, native vegetation practices have been implemented as well. Additional BMP opportunities should be investigated.



Independence Events Center

Brand new indoor sports and entertainment venue. Grounds are well landscaped and maintained. Parking seems adequate and efficient. Additional classroom/meeting rooms and possibly public fitness space should be considered.



McCoy Park

Well used park, majority of amenities appear to be in good condition but aging, Parking should be expanded and ADA accessibility should be improved. Opportunities exist for BMP's; plaza area near horseshoe pits needs resurfacing and benches would be nice, picnic/chess areas need updating; great family park with connectivity to Truman Library and Mill Creek trail and Park. Shade trees need to be planted near playground equipment. The addition of a destination playground and a large picnic shelter should be considered.



Mill Creek Park

A well used park; baseball fields are aging and in need of an upgrade, tennis complex and linear trail disconnected from main park area; city should proceed with planned trail connection; nice mature trees and natural beauty; ADA accessibility should be improved and additional parking next to fields considered.



Mill Creek Trail

A nice walk from the Mill Creek Tennis Complex to the on ramp at Truman Road. Large areas which could be left unmowed, mowing one swath on either side of trail. Trail will need to be repaired in the next 5 years. Connectivity to Mill Creek proper from the Tennis complex would further enhance the service the trail provides to the community. Crosswalks and pedestrian signage should be placed at on- and off-ramps at 24 Highway to improve connectivity to McCoy Park.



Palmer Center

The Palmer Center was purchased from the Independence School District and renovated for use by senior adults. Its amenities include meeting rooms, kitchen, gymnasium, library, office space, and a commons area for meals, programs, and large meetings. The Center attracts approximately 200 senior adults per day which is near maximum capacity for the facility, staff and their resources. The facility is in good condition but warrants a new floor to accommodate tennis and active programming, more office space for staff, renovations of the front office at the entry to the building to ensure that all visitors pass by the main entry point to the building, and more parking that is close to the front entry as possible. Given the age of the participants, year round use of the building, and width of the road in front of the building, there is a need for parking improvements.



Pitcher Greenspace

Greenspace sign is right in the middle of the space and should be relocated. The picnic site should be renovated and the site designated as open space. Pitcher Elementary School nearby has available park amenities. The city may also consider surplusing this site.



Polly's Pop Greenspace

The greenspace is situated in a very busy vehicular area, best to sell this land and generate revenue to update other existing parks. Otherwise, designate as "Open Space". See Maple Spur Park Plan for ways to turn this park into a gateway feature.



Randall School Park

Playground equipment located at the elementary school is in good condition, rubber surfacing will likely need repair in 5-10 years; ballfields are in need of renovation, however, adjacent park may satisfy ballfield needs. Recommend removing ballfields and rethinking amenity choice; loop trail should be enhanced with landscaping to enhance the experience.



Phil Roberts Park

Park has some nice features, amenities need some updating and nature trail needs clearing in some areas; 150 year old chinkapin oak is a neat feature; a playground would be a nice addition to this neighborhood park.



Rock Creek Trail

Very nice trail about 1.5 miles long with beautiful mature trees along the way; stream banks could be cleaned up a little; lots of wide open green space along the trail with potential to be naturalized to reduce mowing costs. The City should continue the effort to extend the trail to Hill Park.



Rotary Park

Nice, well used park, with nice mature trees; Green space area to the southeast with loop trail. This could become a no-leash zone as there seem to be a lot of folks walking their dogs at this park and along the Rock Creek trail. Natural amenities such as the stream could be a bit more realized. Amenities will need repair and/or replacing in the next ten years.



Santa Fe Trail Park

A well used park with lots of amenities and people; amenities are showing age and need to be renovated or replaced soon; overall a nice park. Lots of mowed green space. The city should consider naturalizing some of this space.



Sermon Community Center

Activity center is main amenity of this site; trail east of parking lot leads to two picnic areas that need to be replaced; limestone outcroppings could be more visible to the road; trail to east of parking lot overtaken by earth and impedes walkability to picnic areas - remove all and naturalize. The main portion of the building is older with a modern addition. The building is on the historic site register, thus improvements to the building must be made in accordance with their guidelines. Currently it's programmed for social, health and theater related activities and accommodates small groups up to 500 people. It has four meeting rooms, a gymnasium, lobby area, weight room, game, park offices and a theater. There is a lack of modern indoor facilities such as a dedicated walking track, dedicated space for exercise classes, a leisure pool, dedicated fitness center and storage space for recreational and theater activities. Parking is adequate but if expansion or upgrades are desired it will need to be addressed. The site also is home to the Spring Cabin which should be moved to a new site near the National Frontier Trails Museum Area. The City should consider a feasibility study to plan for future renovations.



St. Clair Park

Small park with a few benches, two new climbing boulders and a new tire swing. ADA access should be improved. Park serves a very small demographic but is important to the neighborhood.



Sycamore Hills Park

A nice little park with beautiful natural features such as mature trees and stream. Landscaping is nice and wildflowers could be planted along stream. Directional signage from the road should be considered. Street parking only. Amenities are in fair to good condition. Outdoor classroom bench and bench swing should be replaced soon.



Truman Memorial Building

Building has three very nice memorials with seating opportunities; landscaping is well maintained and memorial courtyard is a pleasant experience. Truman Memorial Building is located on the corner of Truman Road and Maple Street. It is a historic structure which has recently been renovated and no apparent exterior improvements are needed at this time. It has an auditorium\gymnasium, stage area, historical exhibit, veteran's hall, several multi-purpose meeting rooms and a kitchen. Parking is limited to a small lot to the north that is owned by the Church and on-street availability and needs to be addressed for larger functions. In fact, scheduling for larger functions is very difficult because of potential conflicts with parking (owned by the Church), thus a barrier to large event organizers to take a chance that the church will not be using the parking lot during the organizer's event. Stage needs to be outfitted and meeting rooms should be updated with latest audio-visual and wireless technologies.



Vaihl Mansion

Beautiful alley of trees, fountain seating area is nice; house is the key feature of the site; parking seems small. Sidewalk connectivity to neighborhood would be nice, but must be in keeping with historical nature of the site.



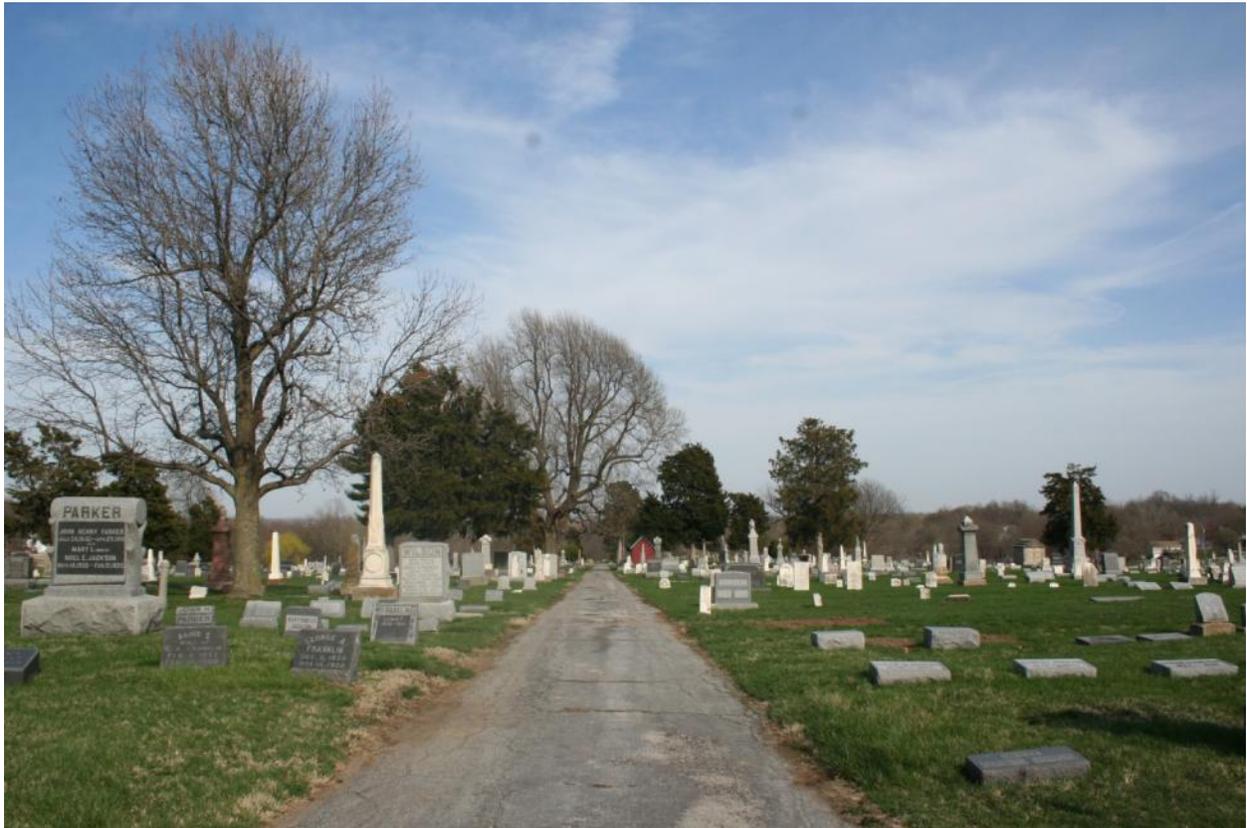
Van Hook Park

Van Hook Park is the site of a former landfill and currently has baseball fields and soccer fields and playground equipment. Once a very active recreational park, it is transitioning to more of a natural area due to issues with the former landfill. To accommodate the transition to a passive park, the Park Department has developed a plan to over seed with native plants and allow the lawn areas to grow into a native landscape. With the construction of the Independence sports complex near this site, the Department is in a position to remove the softball and football fields over time to accommodate the transition and return to a native state. Regarding the old landfill, the Department is working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage the site in a way that protects the environment. There is an area of the park that lends itself to some use; therefore, a new playground and shelter have been added to the southwest corner along Crackerneck Road. These amenities will need to be replaced in about 10 years.



Woodlawn Cemetery

Cemetery path needs replacing, but overall the site is well maintained. A map or markers pointing out people of interest would help develop a programmed use and draw more visitors.



Woodlawn Green Space

Picnic tables should be reintroduced or pads removed. Otherwise, site could be designated as "Public Open Space", or surplus.



Young Park

Park is heavily used; trees could be added along the south side of the basketball courts to add more shade. Amenities are in fair to good condition. The city should continue efforts to improve ADA accessibility and add a new playground structure.



Related Planning Document Review

The following table is a review of planning and development documents related to Parks and Recreation, with a summary of key findings from each.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Missouri Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey	None	March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% of Missouri residents indicated that recreational activities are important to their overall quality of life. • 78% indicated that they visit their local community parks frequently or sometimes. • Conservation and environmental protection were highly rated and ranked. • 92% of parents rated government spending on recreational services for children as important and half of the parents would make educating their children about the outdoors a higher priority. • 84% like having a park or open space near their home and is an important criterion in their purchase of a home. • Governmental agencies should strive to maintain a balance of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. • Cost is not a factor to those who do not participate in programs, rather, it is work obligations or time constraints which limit participation. • Benefits of most importance to citizens are air and water quality, healthy childhood development, and positive family activities. • 95% of citizens agreed that spending time in the outdoors leads to happier and healthier lives while 85% agreed that local communities have a responsibility to preserve and maintain open space. • 56% of citizens agreed that parks and recreation agencies should be budget priorities even in difficult economic times. • Citizens who feel safe in their parks also rate highly the availability and quality of their local parks, the quality of services of park, recreation and conservation agencies at all levels of government and are frequent users of the parks. Conversely, those who do not feel safe rate the availability and quality of those parks a fair or poor, rated agencies lower in quality, and do not visit parks regularly.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
City Department Director Questionnaire on Land Use and Transportation	Questionnaire administered for Comprehensive Plan Update 2009-2010	February 18, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population in eastern Independence and revitalization occurring in western Independence. • Asks about appropriateness of mixed use development in Independence and how policies supporting “complete streets” may impact existing services.
Glendale Gardens Landfill Revised Gas Management Plan	None	September 1, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glendale Gardens Sanitary Landfill is located immediately west of 291 Highway, east of South Shrank Road and north of the Gateway Western Railroad. The northwest cell is presently part of the City-operated Van Hook Park and has been developed as baseball fields with associated asphalt parking. • The structures the City proposes to monitor must include the storage trailer by the soccer fields. The city intends to permanently remove this trailer.
Farm Park Memo	From Tom Garland to Eric Urfer	August 31, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest was raised in developing an urban farmstead in Independence similar to the City of Overland Park, Kansas’ Deanna Rose Children’s Farmstead.
Independence Fire Training Center	Site Plan	October 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan developed for Fire Training Center southeast of MO-78 Highway, west of Metropolitan Community College Precision Driving Center.
Parks Master Plan Map Amendment Memo	From Eric Urfer to Mayor and City Council	September 17, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several minor amendments to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that should be reflected in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. • First – remove the “proposed” park symbol located east of 291 Highway and north of Salisbury Road; replace it with the “existing” park shading and outline for the new athletic complex. • Second – shift three of the original proposed neighborhood park locations in response to the Harmony Plan which included the donation of three park sites.
Street Improvements Information Book	Sales tax proposal for August 2007 election	Draft May 11, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks to Parks Program recommended the following connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Jennings/Salisbury to Athletic Sports Complex -Norledge/Arlington to Fairmount Park -35th Street and Sterling to Firehouse Park -Hedges/24th Street to Rotary Park -Crackerneck to Glendale Park

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Preliminary Development Plan for Harmony	1,375 acre master planned community in the Little Blue River Valley, approximately 5 miles east of downtown	April 11, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with City's Comprehensive and Thoroughfare Plan. • Goal to enhance quality of parkway and development in the Little Blue Valley by parkway design, land uses, and development standards. • Parkland dedication includes 4 acres west and north of the Little Blue Parkway and Bundschu Road. Should be physically connected and accessible to Little Blue Trace Park. • An additional minimum of 4 acres on the southern part of the development, along the Spring Branch Creek shall be made continuous to the mitigation wetland area. • 4/4/2008:Amendment to Preliminary Development Plan for portion of Harmony East. An area previously planned for open space/housing at the southeast corner of Truman Road and Crenshaw Road is sought to be planned for a Blue Spring High School.
ETC/Leisure Vision Direction Finder Survey	None	March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities increased to 67.7% from 64% in 2004.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Special Event Park	None	Concept dates back to 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On April 4, 2006, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sent a letter to Daniel Larsen of DML Consulting which referenced AGCO's responsibility for investigating, monitoring, and remediation of historical spills, waste management practices and leaking underground storage tanks. Further, the April 2006 letter states that AGCO did provide the DNR with documents that assured that an environmental restoration program was agreed to as specified in AGCO's October 1995 Site Characterization and Remediation Report. • The park would encourage economic development by attracting visitors to the community for any number of special events that could be hosted at the site. • When developed, the Special Event Park would offer a new site for the Santa-Cali-Gon annual festival which would allow for improved safety and security, less traffic congestion and less disruptions to businesses and residents on the Town Square. • Close to home park space would be a benefit to those living in the area around Special Event Park. • The park would provide a permanent home for the Farmers Market. • Development of the site would lend itself to plans for the National Frontier Trails Center. • The development of a special event park will require funding sources outside of the parks sales tax. In addition, if a blighted area is chosen as the park site, environmental studies must be conducted to determine the suitability of the site.
Regional Plan Integration	Meeting summary with local area planners and MARC	No date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MARC begins work to integrate its regional plans for transportation and natural environment. Complete Metrogreen. • At the meeting, identify areas where future parks or public spaces are planned. • August 2007 maps of Future Land Use and Natural Resources for the Independence area were included in this summary.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Proposed Park Sites Along the Little Blue Expressway	Word document	No date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park #1 north of 78 Highway and West of Powell Road. Neighborhood park, 16 acres total with minimum 4 acres useable open space. Playground, picnic area, walking trail, parking, security lighting. • Park #2 north of 78 Highway and West of Bly Road. Neighborhood park, 19 acres total with minimum 4 acres useable open space. Playground, picnic area, walking trail, parking, security lighting. • Park #3 south of Truman Road and West of Crenshaw Road. Neighborhood park, 16 acres total with minimum 4 acres useable open space. Playground, picnic area, walking trail, parking, security lighting. • Park #4 south of 78 Highway and East of Necessary Road. Neighborhood park, 19 acres total with minimum 4 acres useable open space. Playground, picnic area, walking trail, basketball, tennis court, parking, security lighting.
Other Recommendations	Leaflets, brochures, and flyers	No date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Independence may have an interest in developing an outdoor low-impact exercise “playground” for seniors. • The Susquehanna community has voiced their desire for a sprayground. • Waterslides and other aquatic amenities could be incorporated into the aquatics center, such as a looping waterslide.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
2007 Citizen Survey	None	February 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program registration appears to be most difficult for those living on the west side while most respondents appear to be neutral about it. • Of those who are dis-satisfied with the recreation program, most live to the south and west, while the northeast appears to be satisfied with a large number who are neutral which is indicative of the current state of the program which is in a growth mode. • Satisfaction with the adult fitness programs appears to be more in the northeast than in other areas of the city where it is either dis-satisfied or neutral. • Those living in the north are satisfied with the number or soccer fields while other areas of the city are not. • Most citizens are neutral about the number of tennis courts which indicates the decline in tennis for a number of years. On the other hand, it is important to recognize that tennis is growing again. • Satisfaction with swimming pools is strongest in the central part of the community while the rest of the community is not satisfied. • Satisfaction with trails is strongest in the central part of the city while other areas are either neutral or dis-satisfied. • Satisfaction with the number of city parks is strongest in the central part of the community and the northeast while other areas are either neutral or dis-satisfied. • Maintenance of city parks shows the highest level of satisfaction versus other survey questions. • Overall satisfaction with the quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities is quite strong throughout the community with a pocket on the west side and south central size that are dis-satisfied. • Pockets to the west and south central part of the city are satisfied with senior center services while most people are neutral. • Satisfaction/dis-satisfaction with community centers is split throughout the community with a large area that is neutral. • Affordability of recreation programs show satisfaction in the central part of the city while the west and south sides are mostly dis-satisfied.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Park Land Dedication Ordinance	None	January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Draft Park Land Dedication and Fee Ordinance was prepared by the Independence Law Department in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Department in May 2003. • The Ordinance requirements would be applicable to subdivision of all property for residential purposes except for condominiums. • Land dedication formula called for 7.5 acres per 1,000 persons and that park size should range between 15-100 acres and serve multiple neighborhoods within a radius of 3 miles. • Land shall be suitable for park and recreation purposes. • Land shall be dedicated buy plat as a public park at the time of final plat approval. • All private property to be used for park purposes must be dedicated by plat to a homeowners' or property owners' association for park use in perpetuity. • Fees in lieu of land may be required by the city.
Historic Independence Square Streetscape Master Plan	Draft Master Plan	October 31, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape guidelines for Independence Square. • Maintain compact and diverse critical mass of activity. • Create a pedestrian environment that is comfortable and inviting for people.
Fort Osage Elementary School #5	Site Plan	October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan for elementary school located north of Bundschu Road – west of the UP Railroad tracks and east of Missouri Highway 7
Northwest Independence 353 Plan	Blight study for Fairmount, Carlisle, Bundschu Neighborhoods	June 21, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater demand for multi-family housing and larger single family homes. Led development towards southeast and east sections of town instead of utilizing redevelopment techniques. • Infrastructure deficiencies. • High percentage of renters and low-income households within the plan area. 39% renter-occupied, 7% higher than the City average.
Wetlands Mitigation Bank	CDA Draft	January 9, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a 60 acre wetlands mitigation bank and creation of a city park in the same 60 acre site for new trails and quality recreation along Spring Branch Creek. • Provide connectivity of trail systems from north Independence to Little Blue Trace park, along Spring Branch creek. • Create an innovative and effective new approach for stormwater management. • Environmental preservation of important riparian corridor. • Provide habitat for wildlife.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
Independence Stormwater Initiative Presentation	Presentation on Independence Stream Buffer Draft Ordinance given by PBA	April 20, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5: Stream buffer and setback ordinance amendments. • Stormwater should rank as a high City priority. • Develop a Riparian Management Plan.
Highway 24 Corridor Study	Chapter 5 – The Framework Plan	March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources within the Corridor Study Area will be maintained and protected to the maximum extent feasible. Interfaces between Rock Creek, Sugar Creek, and Mill Creek and development along Highway 24 should be coordinated to retain environmental quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and accommodate multi-use trails with appropriate buffers. Natural drainage ways and floodplains will be preserved and protected. • The Corridor Study Area will be served by parks, multi-use trails and other recreational facilities to support existing and future neighborhoods. The trail system will provide connections to parks and greenways including Mt. Washington Cemetery, Davis, Fairmount, Bundschu and McCoy Parks.

Document Name	Other Notes	Document Date	Any Key Information Applicable to Parks and Recreation
City of Independence, Missouri Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan	None	January 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Master Plan listed 42 recommendations for the existing park system, including recommended amenities, maintenance improvements, new landscaping, upgraded equipment and new signage. • The Master Plan also made recommendations for 17 proposed park sites, a new family aquatics center, spray grounds, a major active use sports complex, 29 miles of new trails and greenways, a community skate park, re-designation of remnant parkland, and a new indoor recreation center. • Regarding program recommendations, the community would like to see more programs in the following areas: festivals, adult fitness, concerts, recreational swimming, youth sports and senior adult programs. The Master Plan outlines recommendations for additional program staff, volunteer program, a revenue plan, performance measures, staff training, and utilizing partnerships to maximize resources.

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Athletic Field Analysis

The following pages include an analysis of the following types of fields/courts in Independence, including current and future needs:

- Softball
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Football

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Athletic Field Analysis

Softball in Independence

League/Association Name	Ages Served	# of Participants	Participation Trend
Independence Girls Softball Association	5 to 18	450 participants	slightly down
High Schools	13 to 18	78 participants	stable

Current need for game field met: Yes

Current need for practice fields met: The demand for practice fields for recreational softball is met, in part, because recreational leagues are smaller and consist primarily of players from the City of Independence. However, the demand for practice fields for competitive teams is not being met as those leagues are larger and draw from areas outside the city limits. The demand for fields is primarily in the southeast quadrant of the city.

Baseball in Independence

League/Association Name	Ages Served	# of Participants	Participation Trend
Queen City Athletic Association	4 to 14	730 participants	down from 800
High Schools	13 to 18	97 participants	Stable to declining
Kiwanis Baseball	15 to 16		Stable
American Legion Baseball	17 to 19	192 participants	Stable

Current need for game field met: The need for game fields has been met recently with the addition of the Independence Athletic Complex. As far as amenities and condition of fields there is a need to upgrade Mill Creek Park and Santa Fe Trail Park.

Current need for practice fields met: The demand for practice fields for recreational baseball is met, in part, because recreational leagues are smaller and consist primarily of players from the City of Independence. However, the demand for practice fields for competitive teams is not being met as those leagues are larger and draw from areas outside the city limits. The demand for fields is primarily in the southeast quadrant of the city.

Soccer in Independence

League/Association Name	Ages Served	# of Participants	Participation Trend
Soccer Association of Independence	3 to 18	650 participants	Slightly down (Economy)
High Schools	13 to 18	236 participants	Increasing

Current need for game field met: The additional eight soccer fields at the Independence Athletic Complex provides adequate field space for user groups and allows some space for growth.

Current need for practice fields met: Van Hook Park is the only facility that the Soccer Association of Independence utilizes for practice. Van Hook Soccer Complex fields hold water in some areas. Other fields could be used but they lack goals.

Tennis in Independence:

League/Association Name	Ages Served	# of Participants	Participation Trend
Parks and Recreation Programs	4 and older	73 participants	Increasing
High School Programs	13 to 18	103 participants	Increasing
Independence Tennis Association	8 to 70	145 participants	Increasing

Current need for game and practice courts met: Needs for courts is mostly being met, but interest in more courts in the eastern part of town is growing.

Indoor Needs: There is no indoor facility, so year-round programs are limited. Indoor tennis can be improved, according to the Department's tennis instructor by doing the following:

- Purchase/install tennis standards and a multi-purpose floor at the Palmer Center.
- Priority time at Palmer and Truman Memorial Building for practices during inclement weather, usually from 3:30 to 6:30 (Mon thru Friday).
- Construct four indoor courts in Independence.

Football in Independence:

League/Association Name	Ages Served	# of Participants	Participation Trend
Heart of America Pop Warner	5 to 13	600 participants	Stable
High Schools	13 to 18	241 participants	Stable

Current need for game courts met: Pop Warner has their own facility that they use for their games. Each High School uses their own fields for practices and games.

Current need for practice fields met: Practice field space is at a premium. The lack of lighted practice fields can create a problem due to sunset times in the fall.

Summary

Athletic Fields - Based on the current population of 120,000 the need for game fields is being met. However, there is a need for practice fields for all sports.

Tennis – The need for game and practice courts is being met. However, there is a need to provide for some indoor space for practices and matches during inclement weather. Peaked interest in tennis courts in the east part of the City may warrant the addition of several courts in the future.

Future Needs - As planned development occurs on the east side of the city, there will likely be a need for additional game fields, practice fields and tennis courts, provided the current level of participation continues.

