

Independence Independence Independence
Independence Independence Independence
Independence Independence Independence

3.0
public process



3.0 Public Process

The planning process for the Community Small Area Study involved intensive public participation. A goal of this planning process was to include citizen and stakeholder vision to strategically direct the revitalization plan for the study area. The concepts, as presented, are an outcome of extensive research and input from residents both inside and outside of the study area, public officials, and business owners.

The public involvement was in the form of:

- + Advisory Committee
- + Stakeholder Interviews
- + Survey
- + Interactive Design Workshop
- + Public Presentations

Introductory Design Workshop Informative Presentation February 22, 2007



3.1 Advisory Committee

At the inception of the planning process, the City of Independence nominated members of the community to participate on an advisory committee. It included property owners from both inside and outside of the study area, public officials, representatives from various organizations and business owners.

The Advisory Committee convened for the first time on December 2, 2006 to discuss the various issues and opportunities as a part of the urban audit process of the study. The Committee met again on January 6, 2007 to plan for the "Interactive Design Workshop" and to gather comments for the preliminary urban audit. The Advisory Committee meeting on April 23, 2007 was convened to present the findings of the stakeholder interviews, survey and the charrette. The following meeting of Advisory Committee on May 14, 2007 was a working meeting to discuss the draft recommendations and implementation techniques. With the guidance of the Advisory Committee members, the planning team also finalized the "Rules for Independence", which was created to more adequately describe the vision and guide the recommendations for this project. The final Advisory Committee meeting was held on May 31, 2007 following a public open house to provide feedback of the draft study document by the Advisory Committee members to the planning team. A property owner's meeting was also convened on May 29, 2007 to explain the study process and the specific recommendations to the residents of the study area.

3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

A stakeholder is any person who has vested interest in the community and has the ability to affect the outcome of the study. They can range from large lot landowners, real estate person, small and large business owners, industrialists, representatives from neighborhood groups, members from service profession, political leadership, institutional representatives etc. It is imperative to gather their thoughts regarding issues and opportunities within the study area.

The Planning Team scheduled interviews with the stakeholders throughout a one week period from February 10 to February 14, 2007. Issues were put forward during the individual interviews to be discussed with the stakeholders. The topics of discussion included:

- + Area of residence with respect to study area and specific interest related to the study
- + Items that need to be preserved along Madison Pike (KY 17) and specifically in the downtown area
- + Items that needed to be changed in the Madison Pike (KY 17) and downtown area to create a sustainable socio-economic condition
- + Issues covered were quality of life, aesthetics, land uses as it relates to farmland, housing, business, demographics, road condition, traffic situation, and public facilities.

The following are important comments, as expressed by the stakeholders, which are categorized by growth, amenities, appearance and downtown core:

Growth Management & Character

- + Retain the rural, small-town feel of the City
- + Adjoining land uses to be harmonious
- + Balance of residential and commercial development with buffers
- + Retail growth outside of residential area but with quick access, should not be like strip malls
- + Clustering of development along "New" KY 17
- + Not a good market for industrial development
- + Farmland preservation from sustainability viewpoint
- + Historic nature of downtown to be preserved with opportunity to create cultural corridor along Madison Pike (KY 17)
- + Lesser traffic and more walkable
- + Mixed responses regarding "big box" stores



Amenities

- + Need more neighborhood services and restaurant/entertainment choices
- + Develop higher end housing to expand tax base
- + More recreational choices for the youth
- + Need more medical facilities



Neighborhood Appearance

- + Sidewalks to connect “newer” and “older” parts of the City
- + Preservation of existing park system with interconnected trails/ bikepaths with safety measures such as well lit and paved paths etc.
- + A wayfinding program



Downtown Core

- + Emphasize rural town center with public activities
- + Historic preservation and new infill
- + Buildings need facade improvements
- + Convenience shops
- + Concept of one-stop with coffee shops, banks, post-office, antiques, ice-cream, hardware store, professional offices etc.
- + Walkable
- + Charming, nice, classy, and creation of “niche” character for the community
- + Develop a “cultural trail”



3.3 Survey

A survey was conducted to expand the public involvement process of the study. It was formulated to gather opinions of the issues and opportunities within the study area as expressed by the survey respondents, which included residents and other stakeholders. A sampling of 650 surveys were mailed to local residents. Additional surveys were available at the Library, Senior Center and City Hall. It was also posted on the internet on the City of Independence’s website with a link to the NKAPC website where there was both a fillable (to be submitted online) and a printable format. The following process outlines the way how the sample size was arrived at:

Sample size info for survey: Total population within study area = 1914
 Total population within 1/2 mile of study boundary = 1627

For appropriate sample size calculation go to <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

Margin of error = 5%

Confidence level = 95%

Response distribution = 50%

Total sent a survey in study area = 321

Total sent survey in area 1/2 mile outside boundary = 311

Total = 632

Total sent survey = 650

The survey provided a short explanation of the study and listed additional opportunities for public involvement. The survey was categorized and based on three important aspects of existing conditions and future efforts of revitalization. The issues are explained below:

Amenities

- + Features of neighborhood to make it a desirable place to live like parks, playgrounds, retail, convenience shops, restaurant/entertainment etc.

Neighborhood Integrity & Appearance

- + Surroundings and general community character like street, sidewalks, lighting, wayfinding, open spaces etc.

Growth Management/Development

- + Restrictions, recommendations and/or design guidelines that affect the character of the community like location, extent and type of land use etc.

Community Small Area Study Survey

Project Summary:
 The City of Independence is the largest City, geographically, in Kentucky and is experiencing unprecedented growth and development due to improved road systems and its location. The goal of this study is to provide more detailed guidance for future land use in the study area surrounding the Madison Pike corridor. The small area plan will build upon, augment, and refine the policies and vision of the City that will be folded into Kenton County’s comprehensive plan.

Independence Small Area Study

As part of this community planning effort, the design team seeks your comments regarding your ideas and opinions of issues and opportunities within the Independence Small Area. We have divided the questions into three areas:

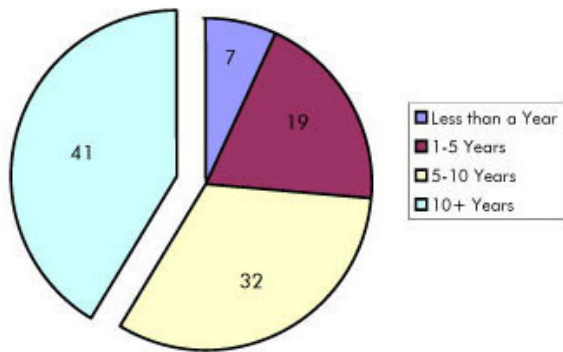
- Amenities:** The features of a neighborhood which make it a desirable place to live such as nearby parks, playgrounds, retail, grocery, restaurants, community centers, health care, banks etc.
- Neighborhood Integrity and Appearance:** These are the surroundings, the circumstances, objects, and conditions such as general community character, street and sidewalk design, street lighting, wayfinding, green spaces, landscaping etc.
- Growth Management/Development:** Examples are restrictions, recommendations and/or design guidelines that affect the character of community. These can include the location, extent and type of land use suitable for an area.

Your input regarding the following questions will be invaluable to the design team for drafting principles and making recommendations for the downtown development.

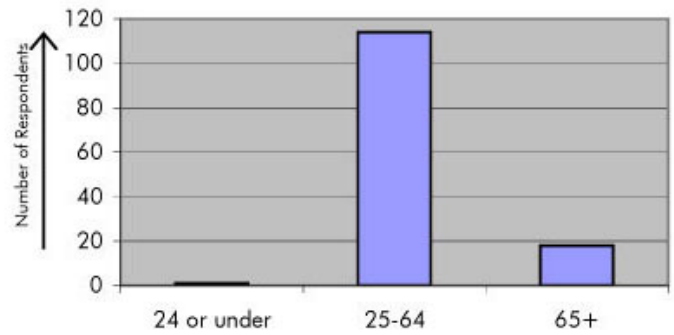
Citizen/Stakeholder Questionnaire

With a response rate of over 20%, it was evident that the majority of the survey respondents were homeowners within the study area for over 5 years or more. The following graphic reflects the information with relation to time of residence, employment and homeownership of survey respondents.

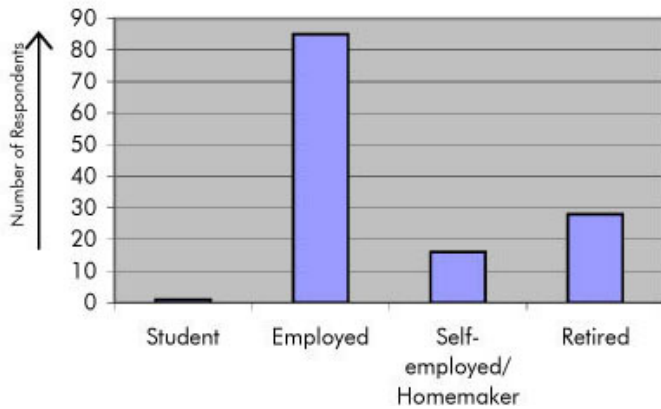
Number of Survey Respondents Living in the Area



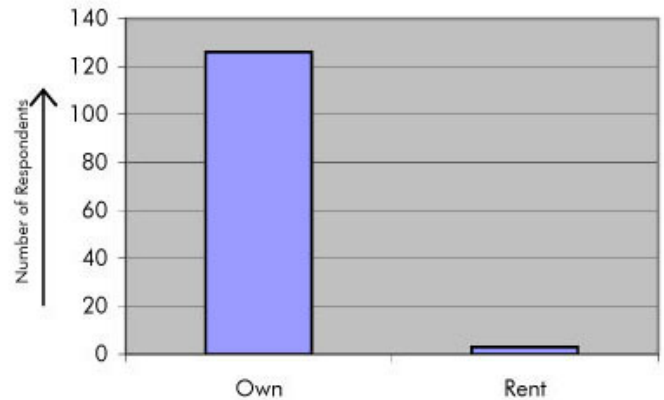
Age



Occupation



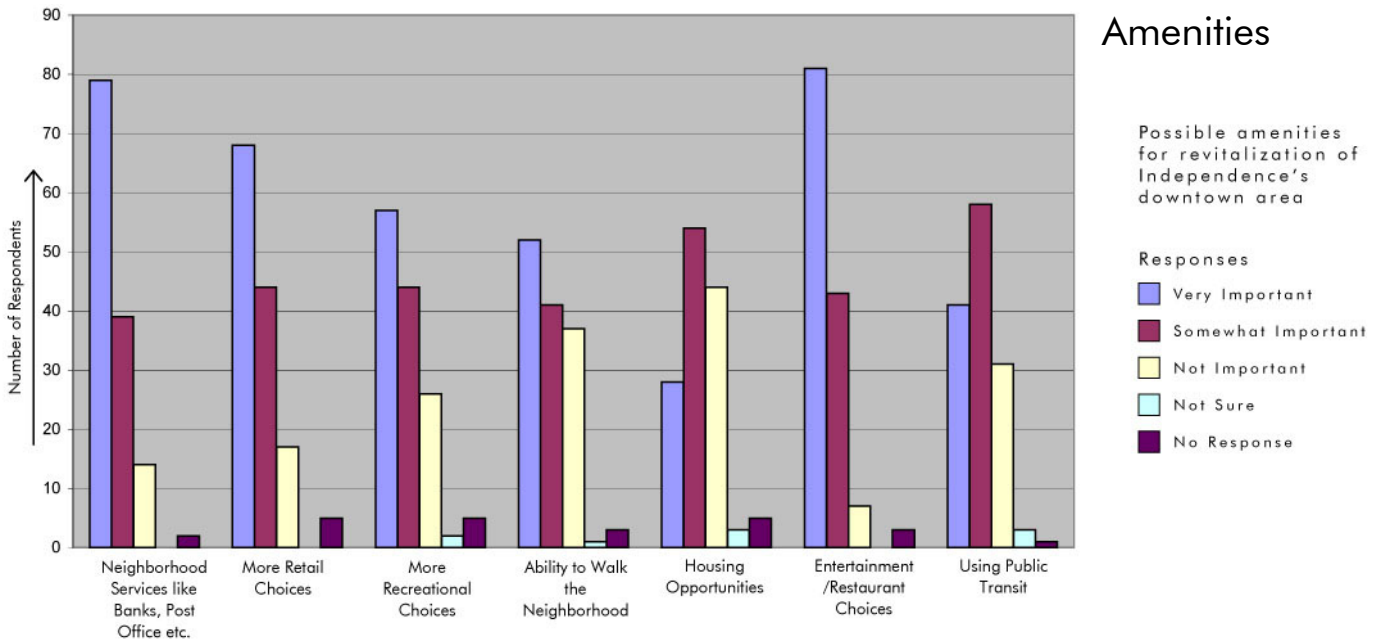
Ownership



Survey Analysis

The following graphs on the next couple of pages summarize the important outcome of the survey based on the chosen categories as it relates to the Community Study. The categories also list the important visions as shown in the graphs.

Amenities

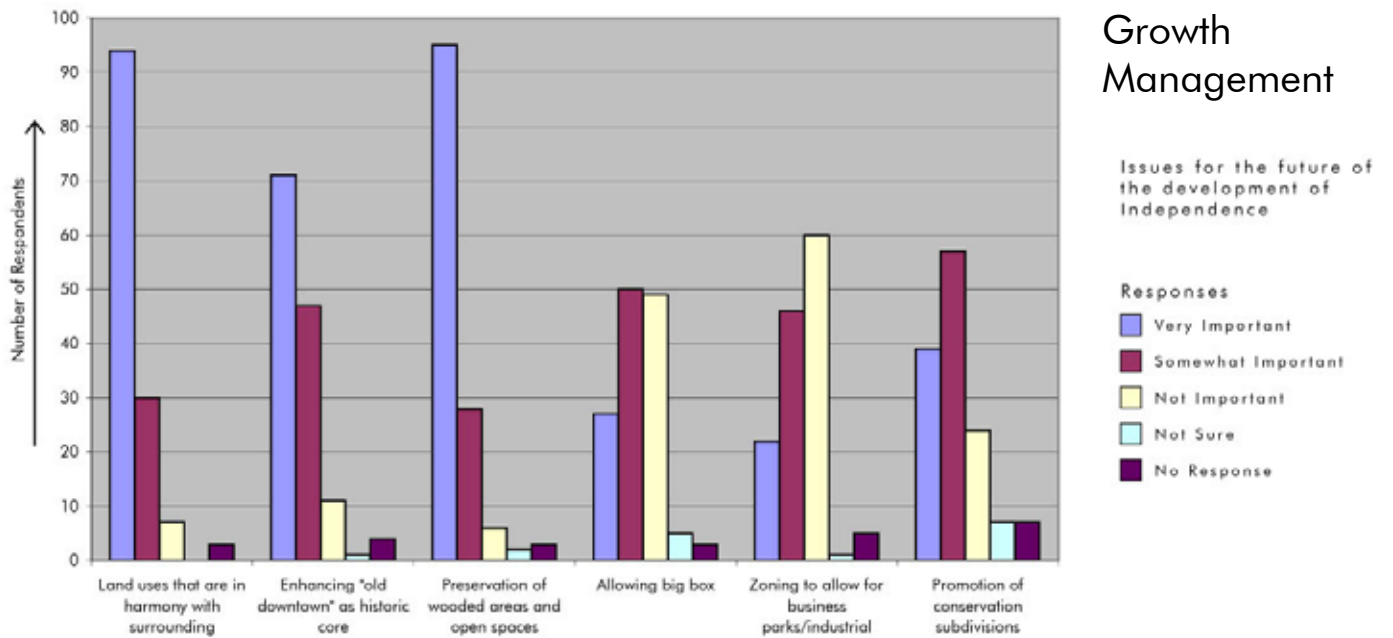


- Need for more entertainment/restaurant, recreation choices

- More neighborhood services like banks, post office, professional offices etc.

- More retail

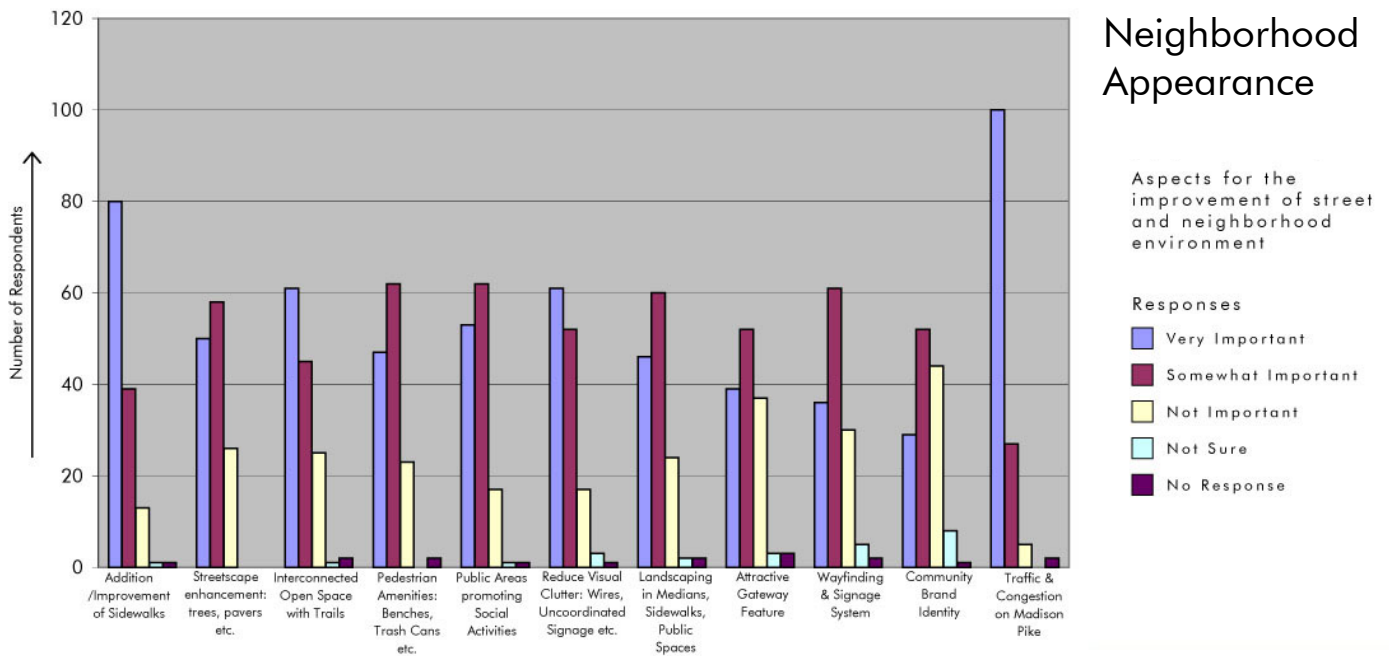
Growth Management



- Harmonious surroundings

- Preservation of open spaces & "old downtown"

- Not in favor of "big box" retail commercial centers



Neighborhood Appearance

Aspects for the improvement of street and neighborhood environment

- Responses
- Very Important
 - Somewhat Important
 - Not Important
 - Not Sure
 - No Response

- Reduce traffic congestion on Madison Pike (KY 17)
- Open Space & Sidewalks connecting the community
- Public areas for social activities
- Reduction of visual clutter
- Need for wayfinding but not very much for developing brand identity

3.4 Interactive Design Workshop

The Planning Team conducted an Interactive Design Workshop to engage the residents, business owners, public officials and stakeholders in creating a vision for the Community Small Area Study. The purpose for the Interactive Design Workshop was to further involve the community in visualizing alternative concepts of development. Citizens were involved in the process for planning their own community and were given the opportunity to give their opinion through visioning and critique.

Design Workshop at St. Cecilia School
February 24, 2007



The interactive design workshop was divided into three parts. The first part was the “Introductory Presentation” which was held at the Independence Municipal Building on February 22, 2007. It involved Doug Harnish from GEM Public Sector Services, who provided a summation of the executive summary of the Market study. This summary was followed by a presentation on the existing conditions urban analysis audit by KKG. The urban audit, among other things, included the formal introduction of the Planning Team, the problem statement and related issues and opportunities as expressed by the stakeholders, the survey responses, and a physical site inventory.

The Planning Team also gave visual examples of different community aspects, which would act as ideas for future consideration for the participants of the workshop to give their viewpoints on.

These aspects included:

- + Community Values
- + Growth Management, Land Use & Sustainability
- + Downtown Values & Historic Resources
- + Comfort, Safety & Transportation Issues

Examples of three similar and significant projects in the regional geographical area were presented to illustrate issues involving concept development and relative success factors.

The second part constituted the “Interactive Design Workshop” and was held in the St. Cecilia School Cafeteria on February 24, 2007. It involved the participation of community members in reviewing the existing conditions report exhibits which included maps of land use, zoning, physical elements and transportation data. Workshop participants were asked to review photographic examples illustrating potential development character elements for the study area. Participants were then asked to indicate their preference.

Each of the categories included 3-4 images of differing character styles or prototypes for residential, commercial and recreational spaces. The participants chose what they thought would be most appropriate for the City of Independence, in each specific category. The outcome of the image preference survey is shown below which includes the “most preferred” image followed by similar type of images, in each category.

The workshop participants were engaged in sketching their vision of development for different sections of the study area. The Planning Team used the sketches in evolving conceptual designs of the study area.

Design Workshop at St. Cecilia School
February 24, 2007



The categories for the photographic examples included the following:

- + Residential Type & Density
- + Single family residential character and streetscape
- + Commercial character and streetscape
- + Downtown character and streetscape
- + Recreational areas and gateways

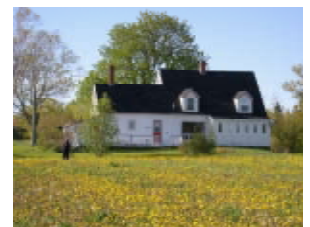
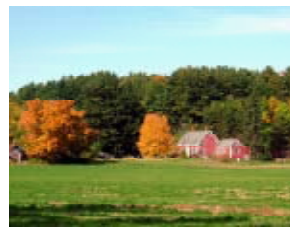
Residential Type

Preferred Design - Conservation subdivision



Residential Character & Density Mix

Preferred



Residential Streetscape

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Kettering, OH



Norton Commons, KY

Commercial Character

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Mariemont, OH



Davidson, NC

Commercial Streetscape

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Oxford, OH



Downtown Character

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Lebanon, OH



Granville, OH

Downtown Streetscape

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Oxford Uptown, OH



Granville, OH



Shelbyville, KY

Parks & Recreation

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



M.L. "Red" Trabue Park
Dublin, OH



Englewood Metro Park
Englewood, OH

Gateways

Preferred



Similar to the Preferred



Bristol Village
Waverly, OH



As a follow-up to the Design Workshop the Planning Team presented the findings of the Image Preference Survey and the conceptual designs to the public for critique and refinement process. This presentation was held in the Independence Municipal Building on February 26, 2007, and was recorded and broadcasted on cable television and posted on the NKAPC website.

3.5 Rules for Independence

After the conclusion of the Design Workshop, the design team, along with the Advisory Committee, developed “Rules for Independence” to help guide and promote an overall vision for the study area. The “Rules” were a summation of the public input process capitalizing on the wants and needs of the community. These should act more as visions to enhance the overall character of the study area. New development should look to these rules as a guidance mechanism to compliment the existing context within the City. The “Rules for Independence” include: Community Scale, Connectivity/Circulation, Destination/Sense of Place, Variety of Land Use, Landscape, Use of Materials and Massing, Multi Purpose Recreational Spaces, and Maintenance.

Community Scale

Encourages the new development to be in harmony with the existing neighborhood. The design should consider context sensitive setback and building height. The architecture and site design should be given significant thought and equal consideration. While retail and commercial development is a critical component to the success of the community, large lot development designs have the tendency to segregate the relationships between the building, parking lot, and streetscape. Developers should work closely with the city and involve a variety of design professionals early on in the project to ensure that community scale standards are met.



Connectivity/Circulation

While the automobile may be the most common mode of transportation in Independence, citizens should have a variety of transportation alternatives available. The average person will walk a half of a mile to a destination (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials). Community amenities should be strategically placed so they are within reasonable distance to each other and residential neighborhoods. A complete transportation system includes bike facilities, walking paths, sidewalks, trails, and roadways that simultaneously connect points of destination. They can be used as functional facilities as well as recreation facilities.

Destination/Sense of Place

If there is nowhere to go, then why go there? People are naturally drawn to areas of activity. They are social beings. As Independence continues to grow it is important to encourage and demand that new development and proposed activity destinations are complimentary to the community. New businesses should be designed and strategically located to help strengthen the existing commercial/institutional corridor. A sense of place is community identity with a consistent theme, use of materials, building size and scale. Independence should create a variety of accessible destinations with consistent community character and hierarchy of spaces utilizing the concepts of scale, and consistent materials, complimentary land use activity, and connectivity.

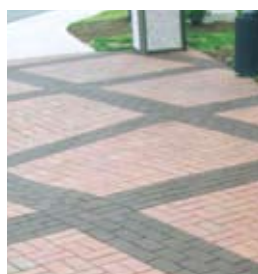


Variety of Land Use

A variety of land use promotes a healthy sustainable community consistent with a walkable community. As evident in the Market study produced by GEM Public Sector Services, Independence is growing and is in need of a greater variety of land uses and activities. Expanding the housing market is one way to enhance the quality of the community. Providing places for young professionals, newly weds, and elderly populations to live will help the community to continue the sense of pride and sense of belonging so evident in the community today. Offering a variety of activities for citizens to do in their leisure time can also be attractive to people wanting to become part of the community. A good mix of land use and activity destinations helps provide economic stability and continued interest in the well being of a community.

Landscape

The rural landscape is one of the most significant aspects of Independence. However, what is the rural landscape? While agricultural activity is not the economic backbone of Independence, the rural aesthetic is still attributed to the open fields and forested lands visible while traveling through the community. Independence is characterized by a series of ridge tops and pastoral views. Preserving these ridges and views is important to maintaining the rural character. Roadway treatments, tree plantings, strategic landscape screening, and use of conservation subdivisions can all be used to enhance the rural feel and preserve the natural landscape.



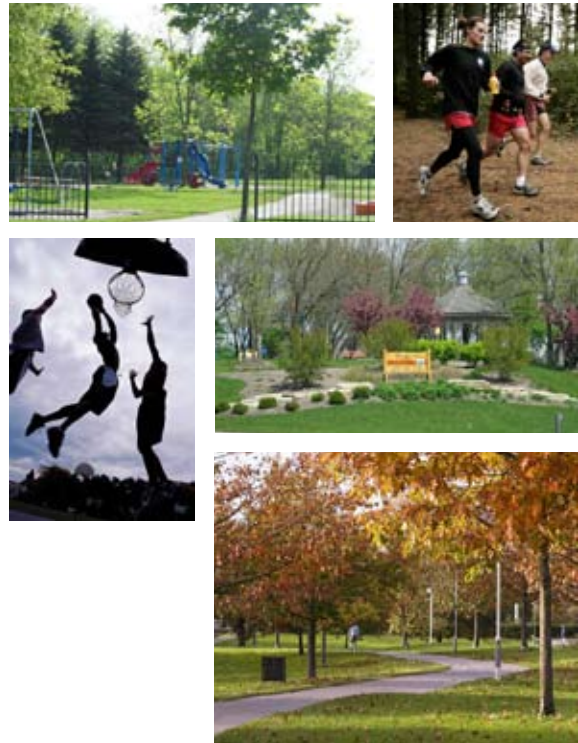
Use of Materials and Massing

A palate of compatible materials can help minimize visual clutter and enhance neighborhood character by establishing a consistent theme and a balanced variety of building techniques and styles. The uniqueness of Independence can be expressed by using a complimentary set of building materials inspired by existing structures and landscape elements. Currently, many of the historically significant buildings in the study area are composed of brick and stone facades. Older farmhouses have large front porches, siding, and many windows. The use of color and texture can improve the look of simple buildings and help define entryways. Individual building components such as awnings, storefront windows etc. contribute to the human scale and enable the pedestrian to relate to the built environment. Special paving, lighting and planting patterns can also be used to create a more pronounced theme appropriate for Independence.

Multi Purpose Recreational Spaces

Recreational spaces are a key component in maintaining a quality of life that all residents can enjoy. They can be used for active and passive recreation and both spontaneous activities and organized sports. They can also be used simultaneously for environmental enhancement and transportation. With the increasing number of newcomers moving to Independence there has to be a balance of open space and developed areas. Independence already has a great resource of green open spaces, however, these spaces should be accessible to people of all ages and located in close proximity to residential areas. They should also be incorporated into a regional park and trail system promoting walking, running, and bicycling activities.

Sports and recreational facilities help cultivate a sense of community by bringing residents and families together at a common place of interest. Parks should be designed as social spaces to help foster a feeling of community by promoting opportunities for public gatherings and interaction.



Maintenance

Deteriorating buildings, unkempt lots and trash detracts from a positive community identity and quality of life. Proper care and maintenance of existing buildings and public spaces shows the pride and overall vitality of Independence. Property owners should take responsibility and pride in showcasing Independence as a sustainable, inviting, and community-based city.

Maintenance is the key to preservation. The historical essence of the downtown is evident in the design, layout and size of the existing buildings. These buildings are a part of the history of Independence and should be preserved as a cultural downtown with in-fill buildings being of the complimentary quality and character. It should include public areas such as the front lawn of the court house, sidewalks and parking lots. The landscape should compliment the surrounding areas and buildings while being maintained on a regular basis. Continual efforts to improve and maintain both private and public properties should be a priority.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK